



# Workforce Development Starts with K-12

Presented by:  
Meredith Dennis



# Meredith Dennis

## College and Career Readiness Specialist

- Ensuring Oklahoma schools connect students to quality work-based learning opportunities
- Expanding WBL programs through partnerships with local business and industry

## Experience

- Workforce Development - Work Ready Oklahoma
- Counseling - Center for Children & Families Inc.

## Education

- Bachelors Psychology, OU
- Masters Clinical Mental Health Counseling, OU



**College and Career Readiness  
Specialist**

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# Agenda:

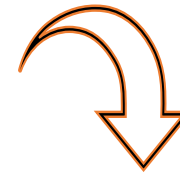
- Introduce the Individual Career & Academic Plan (ICAP)
- Focus on Work-Based Learning Initiatives
- Understand the Value of Working with Youth
- Explore Next Steps and Expectations of Schools



# ICAP *The Individual Career and Academic Plan*

## CONNECTING TO WORKFORCE

To ensure students have the tools to create their individual career paths, students are required to update electronic career portfolios complete with annual career assessments, goal setting tools, and other future planning resources. Students are also required to complete a work-based learning or service-learning experience, creating seamless connections to workforce.

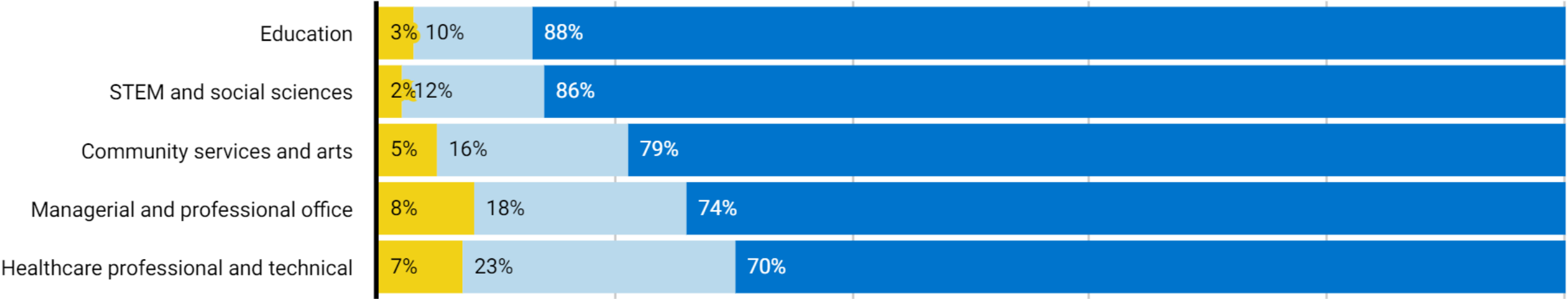


*The fastest-growing occupation and industry sectors are those that have workers with the most postsecondary education and training. The economy will continue to create jobs for workers with a high school diploma or less, but these jobs, in many cases, do not offer high enough earnings for the workers who hold them to achieve upward economic mobility.*

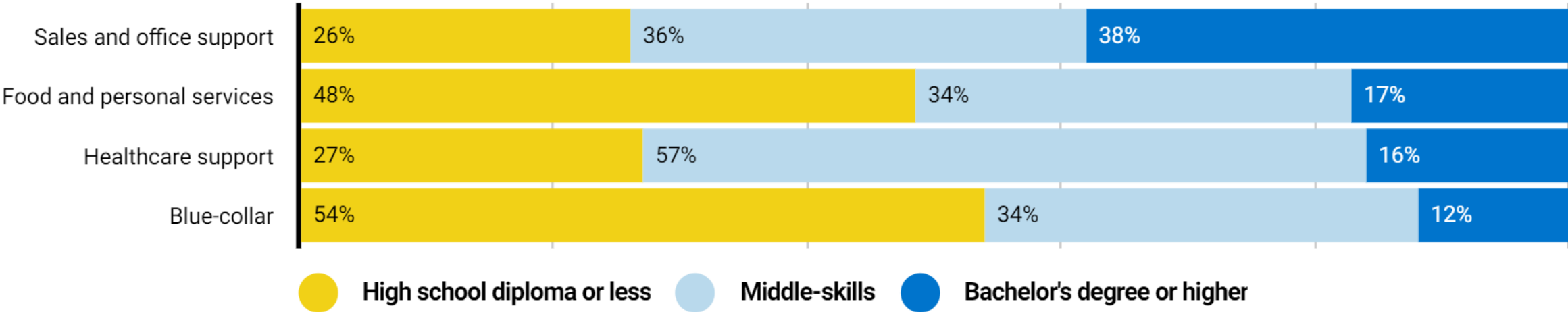


Occupations in the managerial and professional sector of the economy will have the greatest proportion of postsecondary-educated workers in 2031

Managerial and professional economy



Blue-collar and skilled-trades economy



# Demand for CCR

## *The Individual Career and Academic Plan & Why We Need It*

- By 2031 at least *70% of jobs* will require post-secondary education
- Two-thirds of all employer requests are for just *50 credentials* out of more than 2,000 different credentials earned by K-12 students nationally
- 40% of business leaders feel that recent graduates are *unprepared* for the workforce
  - Analytical thinking and creative thinking remain the most important skills for workers in 2023, but students perform both at a low level
- A minimum wage worker has to work an average of *88 hours per week* to afford a one-bedroom rental apartment in the state





# ICAP

## *The Individual Career and Academic Plan*

An ICAP identifies student interests, skills, postsecondary and workforce goals and experiences that lead to a meaningful plan that charts the progress needed to prepare students for college, career and life. It should include:

- Career and college interest surveys
- Written postsecondary and workforce goals and progress toward these goals
- Assessment scores (required state & federal assessments and CCR)
- Experiences in work-based learning
- Intentional sequence of courses that reflects progress toward the postsecondary goal
- Academic progress



# ICAP

## *Outcomes*

When students complete a meaningful ICAP process, they:

- Connect the relevance of education to their future goals
- Create secondary and postsecondary course plans to pursue their career and life goals
- Strategically select a postsecondary pathway to align with self-defined career, college and life goals
- Establish better communication and engagement between home and school
- Understand and demonstrate career exploration and career planning
- Create a pathway of hope





# ICAP

## *Building Hope & Resiliency*

In the Fall of 2020, OSDE and the Hope Research Center of Oklahoma engaged in a partnership to investigate the effect to which ICAP participation is associated with student hope. **Creating a pathway of hope is key to ensuring students are able to thrive in classrooms.** Once viable pathways are formed, students are able to identify potential barriers and develop problem solving strategies to overcome the barriers or to select an alternative pathway.

- Students with high hope report higher levels of engagement with future aspirations and goals
- Students with higher hope scores reports higher levels of engagement with their teachers
- Students with higher hope scores report higher grades and missing fewer entire days of school
- Hopeful students report higher levels of well-being



# ICAP

## *Building Hope & Resiliency*

The *Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2013-2023* provides the most recent surveillance data, as well as 10-year trends and 2-year changes in health behaviors and experiences of high school students in the US. The report focuses on adolescents' sexual behavior, substance use, experiences of violence, mental health, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

- As seen in 2021, female students are faring more poorly than male students across almost all measures of substance use, experiences of violence, mental health, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.
- LGBTQ+ students were more likely than their peers to have used or misused substances included in the report. They were also more likely to experience all forms of violence, signs of poor mental health, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.



# ICAP

## *Actions to Improve Adolescent Health and Well-Being*

Schools play a large role in youths' lives and development. Partnering with and supporting schools has the potential to reach large numbers of young people with strategies that can make a positive impact.

- Promoting mental health in schools
- Ensuring quality health education, access to needed services, and safe and supportive learning environments
- Increasing connectedness for young people
- *...Building a pathway for their future*

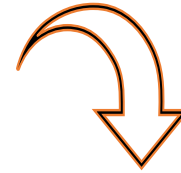


# WBL *Work-Based Learning*

## CAREER EXPLORATION

GPS Education Partners defines WBL as programs that “give students exposure to the world of work through a set of sequenced and coordinated activities. It addresses the shared goal of educators and employers in preparing students with the knowledge and skills necessary for productive careers.”

Students must complete **at least one** work-based learning activity between ninth-grade and graduation that reflects their desired career field.



*Together we can build a better workforce by merging classroom theory and technical training so students can experience and master work-related skills in a live setting. Work-based learning helps students decide which future pathways are appropriate for their strengths and interests, saving them time and money while ensuring they find meaning in their career.*



# WBL

## *Opportunities*

With the help of community partnerships, districts can provide opportunities for professional learning, including:

- Internships
- Mentorships
- Pre/Youth Apprenticeships
- Job Shadows
- Career Fairs
- Guest Speakers
- Workplace Tours/Field Trips
- Community Service/Volunteer Work
- CareerTech Programs of Study
- Resume Development
- Mock Interviews
- Informational Interviews
- Financial Literacy
- Part-Time Employment

LABOR  
OMNIA  
VINCIT





# Work-Based Learning Activities

As a partnership between business and education, work-based learning allows students to experience and master skills in live settings that reflect their career goals. There are many types of work-based learning activities that can differ in terms of complexity, employer involvement, location, and time invested. The following list breaks down and defines the most common types of work-based learning activities and highlights their expected duration. This guide can be shared with employers who express interest in working with students but are unsure what activities are supported by the school.

Supporting Partners = Low Level of Engagement

Leading Partners = Medium Level of Engagement

Championing Partners = High Level of Engagement

## Career Fairs/Career Exploration Days

*Career Awareness & Exploration / 2 - 4 Hours / Ideal for Supporting Partners*

Career days are structured activities that allow employer representatives from one or more industries to share information with students about their career field, company, available jobs, and what it takes to be successful with the employer. Career fairs are useful for students of all ages to explore a variety of career options in one setting. Employers should be aware this type of activity is to spark interest and gather information, not recruit immediate candidates.

### Points to Consider for Employers:

- Connect academic or other preparation now to careers in the industry
- Share information about other work-based learning activities the company may offer students
- Bring job-related activities or handouts
- Share advice on pursuing a career, skills and knowledge needed, and career roles and responsibilities

## Guest Speakers

*Career Awareness / 30 – 90 Minutes / Ideal for Supporting Partners*

A guest speaker is a person from a business, the community, or industry group who delivers a speech or presentation to a student group or class. It may be in the classroom, virtual, or on

site. Industry experts are given opportunity to share their perspectives on what the world of business is like and their passion for what they do, to make connections with duties and daily activities of the job and to offer their well-earned words of advice.

### Points to Consider for Employers:

- A quality guest speaker experience may include multiple staff members from the business and activities connected to their industry
- Include information on a variety of careers and connect school preparation now to careers in the field
- Be available for questions from students after the initial discussion
- Bring materials and handouts for students and teachers

## Workplace/Facility Tours

*Career Awareness & Exploration / 1.5 – 2 Hours / Ideal for Supporting Partners*

A workplace tour is a type of career exploration activity that involves a one-time trip to a company or organization to learn about the business, meet employees, ask questions, and observe work in progress. Workplace tours give students the chance to visit a worksite, connect with a local employer, hear from employees about their educational and professional pathways, and participate in work-based problems or activities. These experiences are designed to increase the relevancy of K-12 education, give students insight into what careers are possible and forge deeper relationships between employers and schools.

### Points to Consider for Employers:

- Make introductions
- Tour every department within the business
- Share aspects of a typical day on the job
- Point out the various careers available within the company and the education they require. Allow opportunities for students to speak with employees representing these career positions
- Stress the importance of various aspects of employability, such as attire, attendance, punctuality, and workplace manners
- Discuss what you look for in a potential employee
- Allow students to ask questions at the end of the tour to help them process and connect what they are learning in the classroom to the workplace

# WBL

*Opportunities*



Career Awareness

*Supporting Partners*



Career Exploration

*Leading Partners*



Career Preparation

*Championing Partners*

Levels of Engagement



Jobs for  
the Future



Report/Research

## Career and College Exploration Experiences: Planning for Success

This guide offers detailed information and resources to help you provide middle and high school students with opportunities to explore their options for the future through Career and College Exploration Experiences.





# WBL


## *Benefits for Students*

- Provides a pathway of hope
- Increases self-sufficiency, responsibility, and autonomy with meaningful tasks
- Explores multiple industries and links students to businesses unknown to them
  - Connects youth to mentors and professionals
- Creates an understanding of the prevalence of education in careers
  - Connects students to educational and professional resources
- Creates equitable programs
- Creates opportunity to explore industries not previously deemed achievable
- Increases student motivation, enrollment, and graduation rates



# WBL

## *Benefits for Students*

- Supports communication between school, parents & guardians, and students
  - Analyzes job structure and labor statistics in a student's area
  - Encourages students to be proactive
- 
- Bridges the gap between education and workforce
    - Supports the development of soft skills
  - Engages students in critical thinking and interpersonal skills



# WBL

## *Employer Involvement*

Work-based learning can be a talent development strategy where employers can train and potentially hire young people to fill their hiring pipelines. Work-based learning coordinators often find that recruiting and keeping employers is the hardest part of their work.

- Employers' investment in early career talent development has declined over the last several decades. *Why?*
- A reliance on the college degree to signal soft skills
- A shift to external recruiting rather than internal training
- A loss of key talent development capabilities



... but things are changing



# WBL

## *Employer Benefits (If I must convince you...)*

The main reasons that employers are motivated to engage in work-based learning boil down to quality and quantity. They need enough workers with the right skills.

- Work-based learning can deliver on quality and quantity.
  - Provide employers the opportunity to influence their future workforce and attract talent
  - Build a pool of skilled workers for project needs
  - Serve as a recruitment strategy for motivated emerging workers
- Emphasize work-based learning's ability to burnish a company's reputation.



# WBL

## *Employer Benefits*

If multiple employers in a region are struggling with long times to hire, high turnover, and talent poaching, there might be an opportunity for schools to help them work together to grow the local talent pool for their industry.

- Collaboration benefits employers by creating more talent for everyone and sustainable programs
  - When multiple employers engage students, the pool of skilled and transferrable talent grows
  - Student involvement will be steadier from year to year, allowing education and training providers to keep their programs going



# WBL

## *Employer Benefits*

Employers have long lamented young people's lack of workplace skills and pressed schools for better student preparation. Work-based learning can offer a connection between employers and educators that leads to real change.

- Work-based learning gives employers a mechanism to influence what's being taught in classrooms.
  - Providing administrator externships can allow course content to stay up to date
  - Setting checkpoints during activities can help employers give feedback on student skillsets and classroom curricula and programs





# WBL

## *How to Get Involved*

- Contact school administrators directly
- Advertise local programs to community organizations, chambers of commerce, employment development agencies, etc.
- Reach out to the Office of College and Career Readiness with OSDE to learn how your business can fit within a school
- Register for free on Connect2Business to promote your organization and be visible for students





## C2B

## Design Ready Controls

## Status

Approved

[Change Status](#)

## Industry

Manufacturing

## Size

501-1000 employees

DESIGN  
READY  
CONTROLS

## Description

DRIVEN BY DATA. DEFINED BY INNOVATION. Design Ready Controls is unique among control panel manufacturers. We are the leading supplier of control panels in North America, providing products and services to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) from many industries, including power generation, HVAC, oil and gas, water, alternative energy, and more. We specialize in manufacturing the highest quality control panels for high-volume OEMs. With proprietary processes such as our Automated Panel Expert (APE®) and Automated Manufacturing Expert (AME®), we provide exclusive advantages for our customers. Using process efficiencies, advanced logistics, and rapid customization, we're able to reduce lead times in quoting and production, deliver cost savings, and provide the highest quality products in the industry. Strategically located with manufacturing facilities in Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Virginia, we have a location to best serve your needs. All of our facilities are ISO 9001 registered.

## Provided Work-Based Learning Opportunities

- Mock Interview
- Job Shadowing
- Workplace Tour/Field Trip
- Employment (FT)
- Career Fair
- Volunteering
- Career Mentorship
- Employment (PT)
- Internship
- Guest Speaker

[+ Create New Opportunity](#)

[Explore Opportunities](#)[Explore Businesses](#)

## Explore Opportunities

Find opportunities that align with your interests.

[Recommended Opportunities](#)[All Opportunities](#)[Saved Opportunities](#)

Opportunity Type



City



Region

[Clear all Filters](#)

Opportunity Title	Opportunity Type	Business Name	City	State	Region	Date Posted	
<a href="#">Astrum Aspernatur Consequatur</a>	Part-Time	Boyle LLC	Norman	OK	Oklahoma	9/15/2023	
<a href="#">Engineering Internship</a>	Internship	Alliance Expert Services	Oklahoma City	OK	Oklahoma	9/15/2023	
<a href="#">Lorem Distinctio Velit</a>	Virtual	Wyman Group	Oklahoma City	OK	Oklahoma	9/15/2023	
<a href="#">Nobis Exercitationem</a>	Part-Time	ABC Corporation	Stillwater	OK	Oklahoma	9/15/2023	
<a href="#">Sciunt Laborum Consequatur</a>	Mentoring	Abernathy Inc	Tulsa	OK	Oklahoma	9/15/2023	



## Guest Speaker

Design Ready Controls



<b>Type</b> Guest Speaker	<b>Related Occupations</b> Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other	<b>Interested in this opportunity?</b>  <a href="#">Request to Participate</a>
<b>Start Date</b> 1/2/2024	<b>Industry</b> Manufacturing	
<b>End Date</b> 1/2/2025	<b>Spots Available</b> 5	

### Opportunity Description

Contact our local HR Generalist Karen Dennis:  
Email: karen.dennis@designreadycontrols.com  
Phone:405-421-9275

### Application Instructions

Contact our local HR Generalist Karen Dennis:  
Email: karen.dennis@designreadycontrols.com  
Phone:405-421-9275

### Location

3800 Harmon Ave  
Oklahoma City, OK 73179

### Website:

<https://www.designreadycontrols.com/>

### Employees:

501-1000 employees

### Contact Details

#### Name:

Karen Dennis

#### Email:

karen.dennis@designreadycontrols.com

#### Phone:

405-421-9275



## C2B

## Bridging Education & Workforce Development



### Build Awareness

Create a custom business profile to highlight key details about your business to engage students.



### Drive Engagement

Post opportunities, including internships, part-time jobs, and more. You can also track views and interest.



### Strengthen Connections

Schools, workforce agencies, and businesses connect to create a strong talent pipeline from education to employment.



# Thank you!

*Workforce Development Starts with K-12: Invest in the Future Now*



**College and Career Readiness  
Specialist**

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