

Decision Brief: Internship/Externship Options for Credit and 5 C's Documentation

Background

The Code of Virginia at § 22.1-227.1. requires guidelines for the establishment of High School to Work Partnerships between public high schools and local businesses to create opportunities for students who may not seek further education after high school to (i) participate in an apprenticeship, internship, or job shadow program in a variety of trades and skilled labor positions or (ii) tour local businesses and meet with owners and employees.

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) curriculum has long supported and coordinated Work-based learning (WBL), a school coordinated, coherent sequence of on-the-job experiences that are related to students' career goals and/or interests, are based on instructional preparation, and are performed in partnership with local businesses, industries, or organizations in the community. Work-based learning enables students to apply classroom instruction in a real-world business or service-oriented work environment.

The [*Career and Technical Education Work-Based Learning Guide*](#) focuses on seven types of WBL methods of instruction used in Virginia: job shadowing, mentorship, service learning, internship, clinical experience, student apprenticeship, and cooperative education. It includes Virginia regulations and guidelines for the administration of WBL and provides training materials for teacher-coordinators.

Proposal for Consideration

As the Board develops a Profile of a Graduate, it is asked to consider encouraging, but not requiring, work-based learning experiences for all students. The WBL experiences provide opportunities for students to experience and implement the 5 C's - creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship.

Explanation

The proposal supports the belief that students enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitudes by participating in WBL experiences that are not possible to replicate in a classroom. WBL are workplace experiences that are related to students' career goals and/or interests and enable students to apply classroom instruction in a real-world business or service-oriented work environment.

Advantages of Action

- WBL experiences enable students to apply classroom instruction in a real-world business or service-oriented work environment. These experiences are valuable because it helps students get jobs once they graduate from high school or complete postsecondary programs, including college. Students who participate in WBL experiences are often able to continue to work for their placement companies after high school graduation or even after college graduation. The seven WBL methods described vary in degrees of engagement.

Considerations

- There are challenges in having all students complete internships. Some students engage in a program of studies that does not allow opportunities within their schedules to participate in an internship or WBL experience.
- A second challenge for some communities is having enough businesses or community partners to provide internship opportunities for all students. Transportation logistics can also present barriers in some communities.
- Capacity of schools to monitor internships should also be considered.

Legislation/SOL Innovations Committee Recommendations to Consider

In its Fall 2015 Report, the SOL Innovations Committee recommended that *“the Board of Education and Virginia Department of Education should undertake the redesign of the current high school model, so that students spend the early high school years developing core skill sets, and the later years following one of several alternative paths toward college and career readiness (e.g. internships/apprenticeships, early college, career readiness, certifications, a student portfolio that demonstrates mastery of essential skills).”*

Legislation passed by the 2016 General Assembly and approved by the Governor (HB 895) requires the Board to establish high school graduation requirements that establish multiple paths toward college and career readiness for students to follow in the later years of high school that include internships, externships, and credentialing.

Stakeholder Summary

- Stakeholders from the Governor’s STEM Academies, High School Innovation Grants, and CTE Centers discussed internships as being a necessary part of their work.
- Educators also noted the desire to provide more exposure to internships and externships during the school day, but noted logistical challenges related to transportation and access to businesses in rural communities.

Actions from other States

Many states, including Virginia, offer internships for credit as part of a CTE program. Connecticut is piloting an ‘Unpaid Experiential Learning Program’ which has currently been implemented in 25 high schools. In Tennessee, ‘work-based learning’ can be used to satisfy the three-credit progression allocated for electives in the state graduation requirements.

NEXT STEP

- Accept for Immediate Inclusion (First Review in June)
- Approve, but Not Ready for the Initial Phase
- Reject