Work-Based Learning Script

5 Hour

ILLINOIS
STATE BOARD OF
EDUCATION

Slide 1: Title Slide – Work-Based Learning Designation Renewal

"Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the Work-Based Learning Designation Renewal: Updates and Best Practices for Illinois Educators.

My name is _____ from _____ (your organization), and today we will explore updates, resources, and practical strategies to enhance Workplace Experience courses in your schools and communities. By the end of today's session, you will leave with strategies, tools, and ideas that you can immediately apply to your own programs."

Slide 2: Introductions and Icebreaker

"Before we jump into today's session, let's introduce ourselves and engage in a short reflection exercise. Turn to the person next to you, introduce yourself, and share:
What was your first paid job, and how old were you when you started?

This simple question helps us reflect on our personal entry points into the world of work. Whether it was babysitting, working in a fast-food restaurant, or helping with a family business, those early experiences often taught us valuable life lessons — like responsibility, communication, and time management. Work-Based Learning builds on these foundational skills, helping us grow them in more structured and intentional ways. Let's start by recognizing the journey we've all taken to get here."

Slide 3: Agenda

"Here's our roadmap for today. We will start with an overview of the Work-Based Learning Manual and explore the Illinois frameworks that support work-based learning. From there, we'll take a closer look at the components of the Workplace Experience Course and discuss agreements, barriers, and legal considerations. After lunch, we will return to cover those components and then transition into developing your own implementation plans and reviewing final steps for designation renewal. We'll wrap up the day with open questions and discussion."

Slide 4: Differences Between WBL and Cooperative Education

"Let's take a closer look at how Work-Based Learning differs from the previously used Cooperative Education model.

Work-Based Learning (WBL) offers a much broader and more integrated approach than the outdated Cooperative Education model. WBL spans from kindergarten through Grade 12 and into early career development, creating a continuous pathway for students. It intentionally connects curriculum and career pathways with real-world experiences, emphasizing technical

skills and essential employability skills. Students benefit from structured opportunities such as career development experiences, internships, and apprenticeships. This modern framework prepares students not only for success in high school but also for postsecondary education and employment.

By contrast, Cooperative Education was limited in its approach, primarily serving only Grades 9-12 and often focusing only on seniors. It frequently overlooked the connection between academic learning and professional skills, concentrating mainly on technical skill development. Career development experiences varied widely in quality and were not consistently linked to a student's college and career pathway. Participation required completion of Cooperative Education coursework but offered little guidance on postsecondary continuation.

The transition from Cooperative Education to Work-Based Learning reflects a shift toward a comprehensive, skills-focused, and future-ready model that better equips students for lifelong success."

Slide 5: WBL General – Definitions
"When we talk about Work-Based Learning, it's important to clarify our definitions. **Work-Based Learning** is a broad term that encompasses the full continuum of career-connected activities — from career awareness in elementary grades, through exploration in middle and high school, all the way to apprenticeships and internships. A **Workplace Experience Course**, however, is more specific. This involves students partnering with a community employer, participating in real work settings, and intentionally building skills aligned with their career goals. The key is intentionality — moving from simply 'having a job' to learning with purpose, in alignment with student goals and educational outcomes. This experience is supported through class time and support from a trained Work-Based Learning teacher."

Part I

Slide 6: Work-Based Learning Manual
"In the next section, we'll explore the Work-Based Learning Manual in depth."

Slide 7: WBL Manual
"As we explore the WBL Manual, we will discuss its purpose, navigating the content, how to apply components of the WBL continuum, and key elements for implementing work-based learning."

Slide 8: About the WBL Manual

"While reading through the Work-Based Learning Manual, you will find that it is located online and updated as needed. The manual offers guidance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) educators and outlines qualifications for educators teaching Workplace Experience courses. It also identifies potential strategies for engaging community partners and presents ideas regarding legal liability considerations."

Slide 9: Where to Find the WBL Manual

"You can locate the manual online by visiting www.isbe.net and using the search bar with the query 'work-based learning manual.'"

Slide 10: Purpose of the WBL Manual

"The purpose of the manual is to provide non-regulatory guidance and direction for schools when developing and implementing components of WBL experiences, as defined in the state's WBL Continuum and outlined in the Perkins V State Plan. It offers recommendations for integrating WBL as a vital component of CTE programs. The manual also aims to provide resources that support the implementation of Work-Based Learning opportunities for students through a continuum of engaging activities."

Slide 11: WBL is Defined by Perkins V Legislation

"As defined by federal Perkins legislation, WBL involves prolonged interactions with professionals in workplace settings or simulated environments where work tasks align with educational instruction. These interactions engage students in real-life, authentic occupational experiences. They incorporate structured Work-Based Learning activities into the curriculum, allowing students to apply knowledge and skills learned in class while connecting to the workplace. Finally, they provide opportunities for students to engage and interact with industry experts while demonstrating essential employability skills for today's workforce."

Slide 12: WBL Continuum

"The manual breaks WBL into three main areas of a continuum:
1. **Career Awareness** – Often starting in elementary school, this phase focuses on exposing students to the world of work and helping them identify their interests and strengths.
2. **Career Exploration** – Typically covering upper elementary through high school, students engage more directly with employers through site visits, mentoring, and hands-on projects.

3. **Career Preparation and Training** – This is the most intensive phase, where students participate in internships, clinical experiences, student-led enterprises, youth apprenticeships, or Workplace Experience courses.

Each stage is intentional and builds upon the previous one. Therefore, schools do not need to jump straight into internships; they should scaffold experiences along the continuum."

Slide 13: WBL Framework

"The framework thoughtfully integrates curricular planning with real-world workplace experiences, fostering meaningful interactions between students and community partners. These connections are designed to cultivate lasting relationships that can lead to mentoring opportunities. Through this structured approach, students gain valuable chances to build professional networks and strengthen their career-ready skills."

Slide 14: WBL Manual – First Three Sections

"We will begin by covering the first three sections of the manual, which address career awareness, career exploration, and workplace experiences."

Slide 15: Section 1: Career Awareness Activities

"In the WBL Manual, on pages 9-20, you will find a variety of activities designed to engage students in gaining knowledge about the world of work and career pathways. This information establishes a baseline understanding of the types of careers available to students and how they can seek further information about pursuing those careers. These experiences can start as early as elementary school."

Slide 16: Section 1: Career Awareness Activities Defined

"You'll notice that in this section and others, the manual provides definitions of key terms, rationales explaining their importance to student development, and planning sections that outline how these experiences are being implemented in our schools and workplaces.

This is the first stage of the Work-Based Learning continuum, and it focuses on helping students understand the world of work. Career awareness is all about introducing possible career clusters, specific jobs, and guiding students to explore their own abilities and interests."

Slide 17: Section 1: Career Awareness Activities

"One of the most effective ways to introduce WBL to students is through career awareness activities. Within the WBL Manual, starting on page 9, you will find a variety of activities along the WBL continuum starting with career days. As you review this section, you will notice

additional activities such as career-based service learning, lunch and learns, guest speakers and panels, multimedia tools, and other introductory career projects. These activities connect students with professionals from a variety of industries – whether in the classroom, virtually, or in community settings – giving them the opportunities to hear real-world experiences, learn about different roles, and ask questions. Please take a few minutes to look through pages 9-20 and think about which activities you are already doing, and which new ideas could you implement to expand career awareness for your students."

Slide 18: Section 2: Career Exploration Activities

"Career exploration activities include experiences such as a job shadow, attendance at a career exposition, or employer site visits, which provide individuals with the opportunity to engage directly with employers to gain insight into various professions and knowledge of one or more industry sectors or occupations."

Slide 19: Section 2: Career Exploration Activities

"Career exploration is relevant across K-12 grade levels and provides students with hands-on interactions with community partners. A key component of these hands-on interactions is to include team-based challenges that place students in real-world situations where they must solve authentic problems. Industry and community partners are invited to participate in the development of these challenges to provide feedback on the students' problem-solving approaches and to encourage critical thinking."

Slide 20: Section 2: Career Exploration Activities

"The career exploration section of the manual begins on page 21. Please take a moment to review this section, which contains various career exploration activities."

[Ask: "Would anyone like to share how their school or district is implementing career exploration?"]

Slide 21: Section 3: Workplace Experiences

"This section focuses on more advanced and intensive activities that require high levels of engagement from community partners. Opportunities include student-led enterprises, school-based enterprises, immersion experiences, supervised agricultural experiences, clinical placements, internships, and youth apprenticeships."

Slide 22: Section 3: Workplace Experience Courses

"This section also covers Workplace Experience courses designed to provide students with practical, hands-on learning opportunities. These experiences may be opportunities in person, virtual, or simulated. Within these Workplace Experience courses, students have access to career development experiences, internships, youth apprenticeships, and apprenticeships that may be paid and/or offered for course credit."

Slide 23: Section 3: Workplace Experience Courses

"Page 40 outlines the six main types of experiences included in workplace experiences. While students frequently engage in on-site skill development with local companies or community partners, it is essential to recognize the role of direct instruction. Schools are responsible for providing structured support to reinforce and deepen students' learning experiences."

Slide 24: Section 3: Workplace Experience Courses

"Workplace Experience courses help students apply academic knowledge in practical settings and develop essential employability skills. Pages 39-56 provide a more in-depth discussion of each specific type of workplace experience mentioned in the manual."

Slide 25: Section 3: Workplace Experience Courses

"You can see on this slide the example of School-Based Enterprises (page 43) where students manage and operate a business within the school, such as a school store or tech help desk. These enterprises teach responsibility, teamwork, and problem-solving while connecting learning to business operations. Each Workplace Experience option in this section details recommended duration, pay, credit options, related instruction, and other eligibility requirements."

Slide 26: Other Work-Based Learning Opportunities

"You may be familiar with a program in the special education field called the Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP), a work-based learning initiative designed for students with disabilities. STEP was developed to provide supports for students with disabilities while giving them opportunities to build essential work and life skills. Collaborating with your special education team can create stronger alignment of essential employability skills and technical competencies across your work-based learning efforts. Another example is the Regional Safe Schools Program (RSSP), which serves students facing expulsion or suspension. Some RSSP sites offer tailored Work-Based Learning opportunities that meet the unique needs of these

students. These programs differ from traditional Work-Based Learning models but share the same goal: preparing students for success.

Slide 27: Work-Based Learning Management

"Pages 61-71 provide additional information on the following topics:
- Educator qualifications
- Recertification
- Quality components of work-based learning
- Practical work experience
- Connecting students with industry partners
- Industry partner engagement
- Considerations for students under 18 years old involved in work-based learning
- Alignment of workplace experiences with CPPE

Please take 1-2 minutes to flip through this section."

Slide 28: Educator Qualifications

"Pages 61 and 62 outline the requirements for the CTE Workplace Experience course and who is qualified to teach it. The Workplace Experience course can be taught by a CTE teacher-within their endorsement area without any additional training or certification. However, outside an educator's endorsement area, a currently endorsed CTE teacher with a Work-Based Learning designation can teach the course. This WBL designation is valid for five years, after which teachers will need to participate in a designation renewal process. "

Slide 29: Quality Components

"On page 62, you will find a detailed overview of the practicum components for a Workplace Experience course, including direct instruction, compensation, individualized student plans, and professional skills assessments. The practicum offers two pathways: one through real-world workplace experiences such as apprenticeships or job placements, and the other through in-school simulations designed to replicate professional environments. Direct instruction is provided by a qualified teacher of record holding a Work-Based Learning designation. Students may receive paid opportunities, or if unpaid, must receive academic credit. The ideal situation is when students receive both pay and academic credit. Each student should have an Individual Career Plan aligning their work in this course with their college and career aspirations. Additionally, students should complete an evaluation that addresses their professional skills as part of their Workplace Experience coursework."

Slide 30: Practicum Components

"Pages 62-63 discuss the 60-hour requirement for Workplace Experience courses, which must include at least one worksite visit from an educator, collaboration with student worksite supervisors and their teacher, and specific opportunities for students to be evaluated on skill development."

Slide 31: Connecting Students to Industry Partners

"What tips would you suggest for reaching out to employers?"

[Pause for answers]

"How can students demonstrate that they have learned the necessary skills?"

[Pause for answers]

"Consider how we can establish better communication channels with our partners and offer a variety of opportunities for them to be involved in work-based learning. We should also address any concerns that employers and partners may have while implementing these programs."

Slide 32: Industry Partner Engagement

"In this section, we will go through the seven steps to engaging your industry partners. These steps include: getting to know the students, emphasizing safety and health, allowing for decision-making, teaching workplace culture, providing mentorship and supervision, being clear with directives, and offering opportunities for students to succeed."

Slide 33: Students Under 18

"As we know, students under 18 are often met with barriers when employers are hesitant to allow minors in certain workspaces. We recommend utilizing the resources available, such as the 'Navigating Legalities and Logistics' resource created by the Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University. You can also refer to pages 66-68 of the Work-Based Learning Manual for further insights on this topic."

Slide 34: Aligning with CCPE

"For school districts that offering college and career pathway endorsements, the Workplace Experience course allows students to complete the required 60 hours of a career development experience. For more information on ISBE's College and Career Pathway Endorsement (CCPE),

please refer to the ISBE CCPE webpage. Additional details can be found in the Work-Based Learning Manual on pages 68-71."

Slide 35: Appendices

"The appendices section of the Work-Based Learning Manual provides guidance on Workplace Experience courses, examples of work-based learning, core elements of pre-apprenticeship programs, and advice for incorporating embedded work-based learning in Career and Technical Education courses."

Activity 1

Slides 36: Knowing your WBL Environment

"We acknowledge that a lot of information has been covered regarding the Work-Based Learning Manual. Now, we want to ensure you understand how to apply this knowledge. For our first activity, you have two options.

Item A: Discuss with a partner what the work-based learning continuum looks like in your district and complete the WBL Renewal Participant Workbook on page 6. In this activity, list the components and activities that fall under each category in the worksheet."

Slide 37: Knowing your WBL Environment

"**Item B:** Review your list of continuum activities and indicate whether you offer them with a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. If you answer 'no' to any options, provide a brief explanation of how you could offer these opportunities for your students in the future.

Please get started!"

[We will have a 5-minute discussion focusing on the questions from slide 38.]

Slide 38: Questions to Consider

"Let's start with the first question. Are you missing any major experiences in your career continuum? [Allow teachers to respond to this]

"Is there an activity that you want to dedicate time or resources to in order to develop or enhance your Work-Based Learning environment?

[Let teachers respond and share out]

Part II

Slide 39: WBL Planning Components

"In this next section, we are going to provide an overview of planning and implementing Workplace Experience courses."

Slide 40: Work-Based Learning in General - Requirements

"WBL is a structured approach to connecting classroom learning with real-world work experiences. This framework includes five key components:

1. **Requirements** – These outline what schools and programs must have in place to implement WBL effectively, including compliance with state guidelines and safety standards.
2. **Building and Maintaining Community Partners and Advisory Councils** – Partnerships are essential for providing authentic work experiences. Advisory councils help align WBL activities with industry needs.
3. **WBL Skills** – These are the Employability and Technical skills students develop through WBL, such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork.
4. **Teaching and Planning** – Educators play a critical role in designing and integrating WBL into curriculum, ensuring experiences are meaningful and connected to learning goals.
5. **Assessment** – Measuring student growth and program effectiveness is key. Assessment ensures students gain the intended skills and competencies.

Together, these components create a strong foundation for successful WBL programs."

Slide 41: WBL Requirements

"The requirements for WBL include the following:

- Aligning work to students' career goals through an Individual Career Plan (ICP).
- Teaching essential employability skills to students.
- Providing real-world assessments in relevant career fields.
- Meeting the 60-hour work requirement.
- Ensuring that opportunities are either paid or for course credit, or provide both. Unpaid opportunities are still valid, but it is important to check with your WBL partners to provide the best support for our students."

Slide 42: Other Minimum Requirements

"Additional minimum requirements include ensuring safe and permissible work conditions, not displacing existing workers, having written agreements for every offered experience, and complying with all local, state, and federal laws."

Slide 43: Individual Career Plan

"The Individual Career Plan is essential for these experiences as it allows us to monitor, track, and guide students along a pathway that provides resources for their high school graduation. These resources encompass career-focused instructional sequences, diverse WBL experiences, alignment of experiences to individual student goals or interests, postsecondary financial aid, career preparation (resume writing, college essays, financial aid applications), postsecondary planning, and support in non-remedial math or reading."

Slide 44: Individual Career Plan

"This component of the Workplace Experience course is vital for aligning our efforts with individual student needs. While the implementation of ICP requirements is up to each district, it is highly recommended that work-based learning teachers receive training and access to Individual Career Plans. This will enable them to provide comprehensive post-secondary and career planning while assisting students in creating and facilitating discussions about their career goals."

[Stop and Ask]

"Are there any questions about this important strategy before we continue?"

Slide 45: Students Not in a Career Pathway

"Even if students are not enrolled in a college or career pathway, it is expected that schools will have an Individual Career Plan for all students participating in a Workplace Experience course. This may require teachers to have additional access to student records or collaborate with counseling staff to establish a strategic implementation process."

Slide 46: Individual Career Plan Example

"There is an example of an Individual Career Plan in the WBL Renewal Participant Workbook. Teachers can use this as a model for their practice within the Workplace Experience course. This is one of many examples, and modifications can be made to suit your specific program needs. Please take a moment to review it."

Slide 47: Workplace Experience for Teachers

"Page 61 of the Work-Based Learning Manual outlines specific qualifications for Educator Coordinators and the Workplace Experience course. For the most up-to-date information on any changes, please refer to the Work-Based Learning Manual available on the ISBE website."

Slide 48: Comparisons to Cooperative Education

"Let's now spend some time discussing the differences between Work-Based Learning and Cooperative Education. There are three main components to consider:

1. Work-Based Learning offers students an integrated pathway opportunity that combines academic instruction with hands-on experience.
2. The focus is on developing both technical and essential employability skills, ensuring that students gain not only work-related competencies but also lifelong skills.
3. Finally, Work-Based Learning enhances the likelihood of postsecondary employment or pursuing further certifications or degree programs."

Slide 49: Facilitating Workplace Experience Courses

"In this model, the teacher serves as a facilitator, guiding students through real-world training and assessments conducted in partnership with employers. The training focuses on both essential employability and technical skills and is often co-developed with industry partners to ensure relevance and rigor. A variety of assessment methods are used to evaluate student progress. To support this process, teachers should be provided with relevant resources and training release time to engage in meaningful assessment and dialogue with WBL partners while students are on-site."

Slide 50: Direct Placement or Simulated

"Students can participate in either direct or simulated workplace settings. You will find more details on page 86 of the WBL manual. Both options have specific requirements outlined in Section 2 of that page. Simulated experiences are especially valuable for equitable access. They can support students who face transportation challenges or when schools cannot provide transportation. They can also allow students to engage virtually with companies that cannot offer in-person placements. In addition, simulated placements help schools connect students with hard-to-access industries or employers located outside the immediate area. For example, some fields such as Information Technology operate almost entirely online. In these cases, simulated experience makes sense for students providing IT support or working exclusively online.

Slide 51: Worksites and Classroom Setting

"As part of the course, students are placed at a worksite where they perform various skill assessments and job requirements. Additionally, students are also required to participate in

classroom activities, which may include assessments, career goal setting, resume development, college essays, safety training, and other authentic learning exercises."

Slide 52: Work-Based Learning in General - Building and Maintaining Community Partners and Advisory Councils

"A crucial aspect of our assessment process involves engaging community partners to assist with this work. It is vital to maintain relationships with community partners and industry experts, as they can provide mentoring, skills evaluation, and activities that enhance student learning."

Slide 53: Building and Maintaining Partnerships

"Reviewing the WBL Continuum is one method to assess how community partners support us in this work. The collaboration with our advisory councils is also significant. We should consider how both our advisory councils and the WBL continuum can be supported by community partners as we continue our engagement in this work."

Slide 54: Building Community Relationships – Definitions

"The terms 'Community Partners' and 'Industry Partners' are often used interchangeably. Community partners highlight that much of this work occurs outside traditional industry settings, involving organizations such as government, non-profits, fraternal organizations, and public or private organizations. In contrast, 'Industry Partners' refers more specifically to sectors like manufacturing, technology, and healthcare. Both terms describe the groups with which schools collaborate. Advisory councils are defined as a group of community partners that provide advice, planning, implementation, and additional resources needed for WBL initiatives."

Slide 55: Role of the Advisory Council

"Advisory councils play a vital role in expanding Work-Based Learning opportunities. They help identify and support classroom-based experiences such as guest speakers, site visits, mentoring, and apprenticeships. Councils also facilitate teacher externships and contribute to skill-building instruction, often providing valuable resources such as supplies, tools, and volunteers to enhance student learning."

Slide 56: Building and Maintaining Community Partners and Advisory Councils

"It's important to recognize that community partners play a significant role in the skill-building work we want our students to participate in. We can invite them to school events, involve them in teacher externships, celebrate annual events with CTE teachers, include them in parent-

teacher conferences, invite them to speaking engagements, and foster social interactions outside of school."

Slide 57: Building and Maintaining Community Partnerships

"Understanding who your partners are and how they assist you in the WBL continuum, and identifying any gaps in that collaboration is crucial. By identifying these gaps, we can find ways to address them and expand our network to recruit individuals for this work."

Slide 58: Understand Roles – Community Partners and Assessment

"Community partners and teachers have different roles and responsibilities. We rely on our partners to share the skills they use regularly in the workplace and to model professional standards for students. Their experience creates an environment where students receive authentic mentoring and feedback.

In turn, teachers guide partners by explaining the technical and essential employability skills that are emphasized in course assessments. Teachers assist in identifying and sharing common assessments and reflections, and complete final grading with community partner feedback included in the process."

Activity 2

Slide 59: Community Partners Considerations

"For our next activity, please locate the Mapping the Continuum with Partners or the Community Partners Gap Analysis in the WBL Renewal Participant Workbook. Use these resources to spend 10 minutes identifying gaps in your current work. After that, we will take 5 minutes to discuss your conclusions.

The directions are as follows:

Item A: Use the provided sheet to identify your partners and the specific activities in WBL where you need additional assistance. For each current or potential community partner, indicate which activities they currently support or could support under the appropriate column. If a partner does not provide activities in a certain category, leave the cell blank.

Item B: Use the document to select some continuum experiences listed in the top row. Record them in the table and include the name of the community partner you currently work with – or would like to work with – for each corresponding experience.

Slide 60: Engaging Community Partners – Discussion

"Now that you've had a chance to review what your community partner support looks like and where you might have possible gaps in your work, take a moment to share with the group what some of those gaps are."

[Allow time for sharing.]

"What strategies can we implement to re-engage partners or families in this work?"

[Provide time for sharing. If partners are hesitant to contribute, feel free to suggest the following:
- Utilize digital tools to engage partners and families.
- Use traditional methods such as phone calls to reach out for assistance from partners.
- Send out communications or newsletters.
- Reflect on our current engagement methods with parents and students, identifying what is working and what is not.]

Slide 61: Work-Based Learning in General – WBL Skills

"As we continue to involve community partners in this area, it is crucial to ensure that we are equipping students with the skills they need to succeed in both the workplace and college. This requires us to discuss the essential employability skills being taught to students in our schools."

Slide 62: Essential Employability Skills/Technical Skills

"In this section, we will explore why WBL is focused on skills and outline the key differences between the skills. We will provide additional resources for teachers and explore ways teachers can use reflection and skill applications to enhance teaching and learning in a Workplace Experience course to support student success at their placement site."

Slide 63: Skills Definitions

"Let's define these two types of skills. Technical skills are specific to industry sectors. This means that students prepare for complex actions, tasks, and processes within the skill set of a particular industry. Essential employability skills, on the other hand, are life skills that apply across all industry sectors. These skills offer students practice in areas such as teamwork, communication, ethics, and dependability. When we refer to WBL skills, we are typically talking about the combination of essential employability skills and technical skills."

Slide 64: Why are Essential Employability and Technical Skills Important?

"Why are essential employability and technical skills so important? Employers consistently report that skills are a critical factor in hiring. Many even prioritize skills over degrees. They view CTE and WBL programs as essential pipelines for workforce readiness. This is why programs like ours are in high demand — employers want to expand partnerships and strongly support these initiatives. Skills are what matter, and WBL experiences and courses are how we intentionally develop them."

Slide 65: What's Most Important

"When considering 'what's most important' in WBL, it ultimately comes down to balance. Technical skills provide students with industry-specific knowledge, while essential employability skills prepare them for any workplace or career path. Both are necessary for long-term success and must be explicitly taught, practiced, and reflected upon in our programs. However, this graph illustrates just how crucial essential employability skills are for developing life-ready students."

Slide 66: Key Differences in Essential Employability and Technical Skills

"There are significant differences between the two sets of skills. Technical skills are sector-specific — examples include welding in manufacturing, coding in IT, patient care in health science, or creating lesson plans in teaching.

In contrast, essential employability skills are universal — skills such as collaboration, professionalism, adaptability, and teamwork provide students with the competencies needed in any career. These skills form the foundation for success in college, career, and life overall. Our challenge as WBL educators is to help students recognize how these skills intersect and why both are important for career development."

Slide 67: Technical Skills

"This slide highlights the six major career pathways in Illinois and provides a resource link to the technical and employability skills emphasized in WBL. Please open the link shown at the bottom of the slide. A resource will open giving you access to the recommended technical skills for each career pathway. Each pathway includes 10 clearly defined technical skills, with simple explanations of what students learn through each skill. These competencies were vetted by Illinois industry professionals to ensure they reflect real-world expectations. The resource uses consistent language, supporting alignment and implementation across regions. We encourage you to integrate these skills into your planning, classroom activities, and conversations with students and industry partners."

Slide 68: Technical Skills

"Here are some specific applications of technical skills. For instance, business students might learn about business operations through student-led enterprises, while Health Sciences students demonstrate procedures in clinical settings. In the example outlined in the slide, human and public services students illustrate how to create a positive learning environment. The key with technical skills is that students apply these skills in real or simulated settings, rather than just in theoretical contexts within the classroom."

Slide 69: Essential Employability Skills

"Essential employability skills, sometimes referred to as 'soft skills,' are far from soft. They include communication, reliability, leadership, and cultural competence. For example, a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) student discussing patient care illustrates not just medical knowledge, but also verbal communication and empathy. These skills are transferable across all career sectors."

Slide 70: Skills Alignment Discussion

"Now, let's take a moment for interaction and discussion. What actions are we taking as a school or in a WBL course to better engage students in both technical and essential employability skills?

Think about how we are addressing curriculum planning, instruction, team activities, and communication with stakeholders."

[Wait for and interact with responses from the participants.]

"Is your program already aligned? Before answering, consider one way you could further enhance skill development."

[Wait for and interact with responses from the participants.]

"We will now take a break and then move into an activity about resources that assist in skill development."

Slide 71: 15-minute break

"Please take some time to grab a snack, use the restroom, or do whatever you need to before we continue with the second part of our morning session. Please return in 15 minutes."

Activity 3

Slide 72: Essential Employability Skills Development

"Welcome back. For the next activity, Activity 3, we will turn to pages 12-15 in your workbook. You'll find three options: a bell ringer or exit ticket, a self-assessment tool, and a performance rubric. Choose one of these resources and think about how you might integrate it into your WBL program. Let's briefly review each option so you can gain a better understanding of them and modify them as needed."

Slide 73: Item A – Bell Ringers and Exit Tickets

"One strategy to consistently reinforce skills is through short daily or weekly activities like bell ringers or exit tickets. For instance, you might ask students to reflect on how they solved a problem during their shift or how they adapted when something didn't go as planned. These quick activities require minimal time but keep employability skills at the forefront, making them visible and intentional in the classroom."

Slide 74: Item B – Student Self-Assessment

"Student self-assessments are another powerful tool. The workbook features a template where students rate how often they used a skill during their WBL experience and how proficient they feel in that area. For example, under teamwork, a student might reflect on whether they consistently encouraged others' ideas or assisted in resolving conflicts. This structured self-reflection empowers students to take ownership of their growth and facilitates coaching conversations with teachers and employers."

Slide 75: Item C – Essential Employability Skills Resources with Rubrics

"Using rubrics is an effective way to focus on skills in Work-Based Learning. You are encouraged to use the rubrics outlined in the WBL Renewal Participant Workbook and make modifications to provide students with much-needed feedback on their skills development. Remember, rubrics work best when they serve as a source of information and conversation between the teacher and the student."

Slide 76: Activity 3 – Discussion

[At this point, spend up to 5 minutes discussing the resources. Discussion questions include: Which resource (A, B, or C) do you think would have the greatest impact on your students' skill development? Why? How can these resources be integrated into your Workplace Experience course? How can you make essential employability skills discussions more intentional? What modifications would you make to fit your students' needs? How do you currently assess

essential employability skills in your WBL program, and how could these tools enhance that process?]

Slide 77: WBL Skills Assessment

"Now, let's talk about how we assess skills in Work-Based Learning programs. First, there are different types of WBL skills assessments—these can include performance rubrics, self-assessments, employer evaluations, and project-based assessments. Each type helps us measure how well students are developing essential employability skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.

Additionally, community partners play a critical role in assessment. Employers and mentors can provide authentic feedback on how students apply skills in real workplace settings. Their input adds credibility and helps students understand industry expectations."

Slide 78: Types of WBL Assessments – Summative

"Summative assessments evaluate a student's overall performance at the end of a learning experience. In WBL, examples include final portfolios, industry-recognized certifications, or employer evaluations at the conclusion of the experience. These assessments demonstrate what students can do after extended practice and provide documentation confirming that they have met key technical and employability standards and where there are areas for continued growth and development."

Slide 79: Types of WBL Assessments – Formative

"Formative assessments, on the other hand, consist of ongoing checks for understanding and growth. In WBL courses, this might be manifested as weekly student reflections, supervisor check-ins, or peer feedback during projects. These assessments are intended to guide instruction and support learning, rather than merely evaluate.

Slide 80: Unit and Lesson Planning

"When planning units and lessons for WBL Workplace Experience courses, skills engagement and assessment should be embedded from the start. Consider how each activity ties to both essential employability and technical skill development. The WBL Manual encourages teachers to connect curriculum, workplace experience, and mentoring — making sure students not only practice skills but also reflect on them. A strong lesson plan doesn't just outline what students will do, but also how their growth will be measured along the way."

Slide 81: Assessment and Community Partners

"We strongly encourage teachers to collaborate with local community partners to emphasize the importance of developing essential employability and technical skills. This collaboration will help integrate these skills more effectively and allow for co-development of rubrics that align with practical work in the field."

Part III

Slide 82: Barriers, Challenges, and Legal Liability Considerations

"This section of the training addresses the barriers and challenges that programs encounter in WBL, as well as the legal and liability issues that may arise in this context."

Slide 83: Questions Often Asked by Schools

"Schools often raise similar questions when starting or expanding WBL programs: How will this be funded? Can we approach this differently than other districts? What about transportation barriers, or challenges specific to rural versus suburban settings? Additionally, communities may sometimes feel unprepared. These are valid concerns, and the WBL Manual, along with today's training, is designed to help you explore various solutions."

Slide 84: Using Our Best WBL Resources

"We don't have to face these challenges alone. Resources are available from your Educational Focus Entity (EFE), the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) staff, community partners, post-secondary institutions, advisory councils, chambers of commerce, and professional associations. These partners can assist in troubleshooting barriers and sustaining work-based learning programs."

Slide 85: Barriers and Struggles

"New programs or implementation strategies often come with challenges. It is important to recognize that systems with multiple moving parts can create significant problems if they are not carefully planned. Each component — staffing, communication, resources, and training — must align to avoid breakdowns. For example, inadequate staffing can delay implementation, poor communication can lead to misunderstanding, and insufficient resources or professional development can hinder success. Additionally, rethinking past programming adds complexity, as old habits and structures may conflict with new goals. Anticipating these barriers and addressing them proactively is key to smooth execution."

Slide 86: Barriers and Struggles in Implementing WBL

"Before we move forward, let's take a few minutes to think about the challenges that can arise when implementing Work-Based Learning. The question is: What barriers or struggles exist for different groups involved in WBL? Consider these four areas:

- **Student Barriers** – For example, transportation issues, lack of parental support, or scheduling conflicts.
- **Classroom or Teacher** – Think about time constraints, curriculum alignment, or lack of training.
- **Districtwide** – This could include funding limitations, policy restrictions, or staffing shortages.
- **Community** – Challenges might involve finding willing business partners or addressing liability concerns.

Take a few minutes to reflect and jot down your thoughts. Then, we'll share ideas as a group."

[Pause briefly for discussion and then call one or two tables to share out.]

Slide 87: Common Barriers in Work-Based Learning

"When we talk about barriers in Work-Based Learning, the first step is to identify what those barriers are. Ask yourself: What challenges are our students facing? And what barriers exist within our own institution?

Once we've identified the barriers, the next step is to dig deeper into the contributing factors. What's causing these issues to be problematic? And importantly, is this something we can solve right now — or does it require a longer-term approach?

Finally, we need to address how staff and community partners can help. Teachers, counselors, administrators, and local partners all play a role. Use your networks to find solutions and make sure these conversations happen openly and collaboratively."

Slide 88: Common Barriers and Struggles

"Now, let's look at some of the most common barriers and struggles we see in WBL programs. These include student-related challenges, regulatory requirements, and transportation issues. Social barriers — such as those related to gender, race, or ability biases — can also impact participation. Concerns include on-the-job safety, communication gaps, and economic factors,

whether at the worksite, school, or for the students themselves. And of course, student performance can sometimes be a barrier to successful placement."

Slide 89: Success is Within Reach

"While barriers exist, success is attainable. Utilize your strengths and strategies that have already proven effective in your community. Start small with pilot programs, experiment with different approaches, and celebrate successes with students, families, and partners. Momentum is built when everyone can see success stories, especially when your advisory councils are involved in discussions and activities."

Slide 90: Insurance and Legal Issues

"Legal and liability matters can seem overwhelming, but they can be managed with proper preparation. Most districts carry liability or student accident insurance. Employers typically provide protection for students working under a W-2. However, there are gray areas — such as coverage for minors or unpaid placements — that require consultation with your district's legal team and insurance providers. Don't make assumptions; verify by discussing with your district's legal staff."

Slide 91: Activity 4: Barriers and Struggles Introduction

"On the next seven slides are scenarios that highlight a variety of issues that can arise in Work-Based Learning . Please join members at your table and work as a team to review the barrier assigned to your group. Identify whose responsibility it is to address this barrier — does it fall on the student, the teacher/school, or the employer? Then, brainstorm solutions. How can we effectively solve this barrier? You'll have about 10 minutes for discussion, and then we'll share out as a group.

The goal is not just to identify the problem but to brainstorm practical solutions that could be adapted to your school or district.

Slide 92: Incident A: Injury on the Jobs

"Rodrigo is injured at work and lacks medical insurance. Consider:
- Who is responsible for the injury?
- How should the school respond?
- What preventative measures could have been taken?
- Should Rodrigo continue participating in the program?

This highlights the need for safety planning and clear agreements."

Slide 93: Incident B: Transportation

"Shavina wants to participate in WBL but can't afford transportation. Discuss:

- Should we make an exception to the rule?
- How else can we assist her?
- What can the school do to ensure equity in access?

Transportation is a common barrier — think creatively about solutions."

Slide 94: Incident C: Toxic Work Environments

"Betsy reports harassment at her worksite. Consider:

- How should the school or WBL teacher respond?
- What is the employer's responsibility?
- How could both parties be proactive?

This is a vital discussion about workplace culture and student safety."

Slide 95: Incident D: Worksite Safety

"Rick reports unsafe work habits, but no action has been taken. Reflect on:

- How should the teacher proceed?
- What questions should be asked?
- What proactive steps could have helped?

Safety protocols and communication are key."

Slide 96: Incident E: Paycheck Management

"Students haven't received pay despite a contract. Discuss:

- What options does the teacher have?
- How could the school have been more proactive?
- How can we prevent this in the future?

This scenario underscores the importance of clear agreements."

Slide 97: Incident F: Student Follow-Through

"Kenny keeps forgetting paperwork and hasn't been placed. Consider:

- What options does the teacher have?
- How could the school be proactive?
- How can we prevent this?

This focuses on accountability and support for students."

Slide 98: Incident G: Re-entry-Friendly Employer

"An employer hires individuals with prior felony convictions. Discuss:

- What conditions should apply for students?
- Who should the teacher consult?
- What protections are needed?

This raises important questions about policy and safety."

Activity 4

Slide 99: Share

[Allow time for the various groups to share their specific barriers.]

"Now we are going to examine these various scenarios to see how each group addressed their specific barrier. Team 1, would you like to go first and share how your team decided to handle the issue you discussed?

[Continue through all teams.]

Slide 100: Barriers and Struggles

"In the activity you just completed, you addressed these barriers and struggles. This slide highlights practical solutions for some of the most common challenges in Work-Based Learning:

- **Full Participation from Community Partners** – Build strong relationships through advisory councils and regular communication.
- **Transportation** – Coordinate with local transit authorities or school transportation services.
- **Insurance Issues** – Work with district risk management teams to clarify liability coverage.
- **Workplace Issues** – Provide pre-placement safety training and clear expectations.
- **Documentation** – Use templates from the WBL Manual to streamline processes.
- **Compensation, Employee Rights, and Labor Law** – Educate students and employers on labor laws and youth employment regulations."

Slide 101: Recommendations for Establishing Protocols

"To ensure smooth operations and mitigate risks in Work-Based Learning programs, we recommend three key protocols:

1. Prioritize clear communication among staff to maintain alignment and address issues promptly.
2. Assign a dedicated administrator to oversee WBL-related matters and serve as the central point of contact for dealing with tough questions, student issues, or program assistance

3. Engage legal counsel whenever questions arise or when navigating high-risk situations to ensure compliance and protect all parties involved."

Slide 102: Open Communication

"Ensure that there are open channels of communication both internally among your administration and legal department, as well as externally with parents, students, and community partners.

External communication tips:
- Be sure that external communication with stakeholders looks professional and happens with both students/parents and employers so that they are on the same page.
- Make sure language is consistent.
- Share your calendar and other means as to how people can contact you if they have a question.

Internal communication tips:
- Be sure to keep administration, teachers, and counselors up to date on information that they need to know.
- When legal issues arise, seek the assistance of an administrative team member for support.
- Have open communications channels — be proactive so that the communication doesn't sit or wait on important issues.

High levels of communication are key to a successful WBL program."

Slide 103: Lunch Break

"Please return in one hour from your lunch."

Part IV

Slide 104: Workplace Agreements and Resources

"Section four of the presentation focuses on workplace agreements and resources that support your WBL course."

Slide 105: Work-Based Learning in General – Teaching and Planning

"As we keep in mind the big-picture view of Work-Based Learning, we are going to turn to the fourth component, Teaching and Planning. This is where we design experiences that integrate classroom learning with workplace application."

Slide 106: Resources

"To support you in implementing WBL effectively, we will highlight three key resources:

1. The Student Personnel File and Agreements, which help manage documentation and ensure compliance.
2. The 18-Week Planner for the WBL Experience Course, which is a practical tool for structuring your course and aligning activities with learning objectives.
3. The Training Plan Examples and Reflection that gives you real-world ideas, plus space for reflection to improve your own planning.

These resources are designed to make your job easier and help you deliver high-quality WBL experiences for your students."

Slide 107: Student Personnel File

"The first resource we will review is the student personnel file. This document will help ensure that your course and overall WBL learning approach remain systematic, even before entering the WBL experience course. This version is just a template for schools to consider when implementing tracking for various pieces of information within their WBL system. Having contact information for students and partners in one spot is helpful for communication."

Slide 108: Student and Parent Agreement

"The second resource is the Student and Parent Agreement. This document clearly articulates the expectations for each stakeholder. Districts and schools should establish some form of agreement to hold everyone accountable to the highest standards, ensuring that students and families know exactly what is expected of them as part of this program."

Slide 109: WBL Implementation Strategies

"When implementing these resources and strategies, ensure consistency across various portions of your continuum, including skills development and worksite operations. It is crucial that worksite monitoring is part of your programming and that follow-up visits occur with students to ensure professional skills assessments are conducted."

Slide 110: 18-Week Planner Introduction

"As we go through the next slides, please refer to Activity 5 in the WBL Renewal Participant Workbook. This planner is designed to help teachers provide both essential skills and technical skills training throughout the semester. It's modeled on a traditional 18-week schedule, but there are a few important considerations:

- Block schedules may look different depending on your school's structure.
- Additional release time is often necessary for students who are working at career sites.

On the right, you can see an example of how the planner is organized. It includes key dates, activities, career competencies or essential skills to address, and both formative and summative assessments. This tool is meant to keep everything aligned and ensure students meet the required competencies by the end of the term."

Slide 111: 18-Week Planner – Start at the End

Let's explore the process to ensure you understand why we recommend planning in this manner. This tool helps teachers intentionally map out:

1. Key activities each week,
2. Alignment to technical and essential employability skills, and
3. Assessment strategies (both formative and summative).

We suggest starting with the end in mind — consider the portfolio, project, or presentation students will complete — and then working backward.

Next, identify the specific skills - both technical and essential - that students must demonstrate. Finally, link activities and assessments directly to those skills. We will walk you through some resources and give you time to work on this objective."

Slide 112: 18-Week Planner – Start at the End

"Starting at week 18, think about how students will complete their final assessment. Will they be working on a project, delivering a portfolio, presenting at the end of the year, obtaining a certificate, or doing some other type of summative assessment? The students' skills developed throughout the semester should be showcased as evidence of their learning and ability to apply those skills in the workplace. If you're unsure about the specific assessment, you can revisit this later, but it's essential to identify some of the key skills they will need."

Slide 113: 18-Week Planner – The Final Weeks

"This slide encourages you to contemplate weeks 15-17. These weeks may involve preparation and work related to the final assessment, depending on its nature. If the assessment entails a

comprehensive presentation or project, students will need dedicated time within the course to complete their work."

Slide 114: 18-Week Planner – Identify Career Skills

"In this slide, we focus on the skills that will be demonstrated through the final assessment. It's important that the assessment aligns with the skills students learned throughout the semester. Showcasing the technical and essential employability skills that led them to this point illustrates both what they have learned and their level of understanding. At some stage after this training, a rubric and the assessment criteria will need to be developed."

Slide 115: 18-Week Planner – Skills Comparison

"Utilize the technical skills that correspond to your career pathway and choose essential employability skills that are crucial for the students' development in that pathway. For instance, business operations are integral to Finance and Business Services, but they often require adaptability and flexibility as well. Having students reflect on their learning could be a component of the final assessment, highlighting how they plan to use adaptability in the field and how they have shown improvement in that skill over the semester."

Slide 116: 18-Week Planner – Career Skills

"When considering skills, acknowledge there are 10 essential employability skills and 10 technical skills specific to each career pathway. With about 18 weeks to teach, educators can effectively cover 2-3 skills each week without overwhelming the students. Following the mantra of "less is more" when teaching these skills allows for deeper learning, richer discussions, and more intentional application during the learning process."

Slide 117: 18-Week Planner – Activities

"As you plan for these 18 weeks, consider the various activities you can implement to deliver the skill content. Activities such as safety training, teamwork exercises, individual tasks, projects, presentations, skill-building simulations, and goal development should be included to ensure that the skills align with the final assessment."

Slide 118: 18-Week Planner – Activities

"Some activities focus more on specific skills. For example, certain exercises may be better suited for enhancing communication skills, like having students create a marketing or informational document related to their pathway. Conversely, activities that require cultural competence might be better executed as team-based or multi-person activities."

Slide 119: Work-Based Learning in General – Assessment

"At this stage of the training, we want educators to carefully consider the assessment component of the Workplace Experience course. The assessment should provide evidence of learning. When students demonstrate their understanding, they must showcase what they have learned through the assessment."

Slide 120: 18-Week Planner – Assessment

"Think critically about which assessments are crucial for students, particularly those planning to enter the workforce. You may want to build some flexibility into the assessments, allowing students to choose based on the work they are engaged in as well as allowing for coordination with industry partners. For example, a student in a manufacturing setting might need to create a part using the company's processes as part of their assessment, while a student in a teacher assistant role might have to develop and present a lesson plan."

Slide 121: Formative Assessments

"Assessments can greatly vary across different career pathways and experiences. Selecting assessments that mirror the skills students require in their career paths is exactly what WBL aims to achieve. Consider examples such as student reflections, skills practices, goal documentation, report creation, portfolios, safety checks, skills simulations, team challenges, and resume building when designing various assessments."

Slide 122: Summative Assessments

"Summative assessments serve as a culminating measure of student learning, demonstrating mastery of key concepts and skills acquired throughout the program. These assessments should provide clear, tangible evidence that students can apply what they have learned in real-world or simulated contexts. The examples listed — such as a final portfolio, major project, or comprehensive presentation — allow students to integrate and showcase multiple competencies. By incorporating diverse formats, these assessments not only confirm knowledge but also highlight practical application, creativity, and problem-solving abilities.

Slide 123: Worksite Visits

"One of the most common practices in WBL includes completing assessments where students are evaluated based on a training plan and engage in reflection. These documents can be incorporated into your 18-week planner.

Next, we will look at each of these practices in more detail."

Slide 124: Common Practices

"The Worksite Visit Training Plan is an excellent document that you can modify to meet the specific skills and training needs of your individual students. Teachers can schedule biweekly or monthly meetings with employers to ensure that students are evaluated on skills that align with their career goals. Feel free to use this resource and customize it for each student you visit. Make sure that this time is thoughtfully planned with your community partner."

Slide 125: Training Plans

"Remember that these training plans should be reviewed by both the community partner and the teacher to ensure alignment with the work the student is currently doing at the worksite. These assessments serve as a roadmap for students to demonstrate mastery of their skills and allow for reflective learning, placing a strong emphasis on student growth."

Slide 126: Employer Evaluation

"Next, let's transition to the employer evaluation assessment. This assessment can serve as a summative evaluation at the end of the semester and can be used to guide discussions on the skills the student needs to further develop as they advance in their career field.

Feel free to modify this document to suit your assessment needs and provide opportunities for variable skills development. When reviewing the document, pay particular attention to the technical skills section. Ensure that the skills listed are relevant to the student's placement and aligned with their career pathway.

Keep in mind that while the community partner may provide feedback on this document, the teacher is responsible for assigning the final grade."

Slides 127: Assessment Reflection

"Refer to page 29. Here, we will briefly examine Bloom's Reflection. When incorporating reflection into the workplace experience, encourage students to reflect on the skills they have learned. Ask them questions like, 'What are some ways you believe you are succeeding?' or have them consider 'What are some ways you can improve your skill development?'"

Slide 128: Reflection Example – Information Technology

"When using reflection in the IT pathway, students can focus on specific skills. For this example, students will reflect on the essential employability skill of teamwork and the technical skill of

building networks. They will describe their successes and opportunities for growth through the process of building a computer network.

Additionally, they will set goals based on their reflection activity. This practice allows them to enhance their skills while developing metacognitive abilities that enable them to anticipate challenges and plan for their growth in this area."

Slide 129: Reflection Example – Health Sciences and Technology

If you utilize the reflection document in Health Sciences, it should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the students in that pathway and correspond with the skills practiced in that field. This example emphasizes skills such as cultural competence and health care delivery practices, which are commonly applied in that space. Students will focus on their successes and identify ways they can continue to grow within the Health Sciences field."

Activity 5

Slide 130: 18-Week Planner Preparation

"Before we dive into Activity 5 and start working with the 18-week planner, let's take a moment to think about how this tool could fit into your planning process. The goal here is to help you connect the planner to your own teaching context. This reflection will make the activity more meaningful and give you a head start.

- How could an 18-week planner help you organize instruction in your pathway?
- What benefits might come from planning with the end in mind?
- What challenges do you anticipate when mapping out 18 weeks?

Take 2-3 minutes to jot down your thoughts or questions. These will guide your work during the activity."

Slide 131: 18-Week Planner

"Take 15 minutes to begin planning your 18-week planner. A copy of the planner can be found in the WBL Renewal Participant Workbook on page 19. You can use either a hard copy or access a digital version to start working on it.

Consider what skills you want students to focus on throughout the semester, what activities align with those skills for relevant learning, and how assessments will be conducted."

[At this point, provide participants with 15 minutes to work on their 18-week plans.]

Part V

Slide 132: Developing an Implementation Plan – Delphi Activity

[Be cognizant of how much time you spend going through the slides and how long the activity takes. You only have 12 minutes for slides 134-138, including the activity.]

"Great job on the 18-week planners. Next, we'll transition to a broader discussion, focusing on high-level conversations that examine your WBL program as a whole."

Slide 133: Action Planning – Needs, Wants, and Dreams

"As we evaluate our WBL programs systematically, we must conduct a deeper analysis of the Needs, Wants, and Dreams for our programs.

- **Needs** — The non-negotiable elements required to run your program.
- **Wants** — Resources that would enhance your program.
- **Dreams** — Visionary goals that would elevate your program to a top-tier model."

Slide 134: Needs, Wants and Dreams

"This slide presents an example of what a school's needs, wants, and dreams could look like. You'll notice that the needs encompass much more than just equipment or supplies; they also consider professional development, space requirements, gaps in the program continuum, technology, program flexibility, transportation issues, and community partner needs."

Slide 135: Needs, Wants and Dreams Example

"This slide shows an example of how to map out your Work-Based Learning program using the Needs, Wants, and Dreams framework.

On the left, we start with the Pathway — in this case, Construction Trades. Then we break down what's required at different levels:

- Needs are essential, like common building materials, Shop-Vacs, and fasteners. These are the items and supports you must have to run the program effectively.
- Wants go a step further — things that would enhance the experience, such as specialty tools, blocked course periods for extended fieldwork, and formalized agreements with parents and students.
- Dreams represent the ideal scenario: a larger shop space, full-blown apprenticeships, dual credit courses, and district systems that guarantee every student gets paid for WBL experiences.

You should note categories like Supplies, Professional Development, Communications, Teaching and Learning, Space, Districtwide Supports, and Community Partners. These remind us that building a strong WBL program requires more than just materials — it's about collaboration, planning, and systemic support.

As you review this example, think about your own pathway. What are your needs, wants, and dreams? And how can you leverage partnerships and resources to move closer to that dream column?"

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Activity 6
Slide 136: Needs, Wants, and Dreams – Delphi Activity

"For this activity, we will conduct a mock needs assessment. We will refer to our school as Dreamland Academy. Each of you will share one need you would like to see addressed at your school. This exercise is commonly known as a Delphi exercise and will help us compile a comprehensive list of needs, wants, and dreams that you can take with you after this presentation. One aspect I appreciate about Delphi exercises is that if someone articulates an idea you had, you can still use it; I will place a tally next to that idea to indicate it was mentioned multiple times."

[Presenter will write each need on a whiteboard. If any needs are duplicated, a tally will be placed next to them. The presenter will follow the same process for the wants and dreams sections. This activity engages every participant and allows them to share their insights, helping them to generate more ideas than they might have considered prior to the exercise.]

"Take a minute to reflect on the essential elements of the Need, Wants and Dreams Framework. You have a version of this document in your WBL Renewal Participant Workbook. We strongly encourage you to return to your school and collaborate with counselors, administrators, and other staff to create a Needs, Wants, and Dreams plan for your Work-Based Learning program."

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Slide 137: 15-minute break
"Please take some time to grab a snack, use the restroom, or do whatever you need to before we continue with the second part of our afternoon session. Please return in 15 minutes."

Slide 138: Action Planning – Greatest Area of Need

"This next activity calls for us to think strategically and explore meaningful, systematic changes for our students. The upcoming slides will outline several ways we can intentionally foster this systematic change through the development of an Action Plan. This slide shows how to organize your plan into actionable steps. For each priority, you'll identify:

- The **action item**
- Who needs to be involved
- Resources required
- Potential barriers
- Timeframe and steps
- And most importantly, the **impact on students**

This structured approach ensures your plan is realistic, collaborative, and student-centered. By mapping out these details, you'll have a clear roadmap to strengthen your WBL program over the next several years."

Slide 139: Action Planning – Greatest Area of Need

"This slide introduces the process of creating a **3- to 5-year plan** that addresses your top five greatest areas of need, or GAN. You'll use two tools to guide this process:

- Your **18-Week Planner**, which helps structure your course and activities.
- Your **Needs-Wants-Dreams list**, which ensures your plan is comprehensive and forward-thinking.

Some common focus areas include:

- Community support
- Teacher training
- Tools and resources
- Certifications
- Dual credit and postsecondary goals

As you work through this, think about what's essential now and what will elevate your program in the future."

Slide 140: Example A: Gotham School

"Let's look at Example A: Gotham School. Gotham developed a 3- to 5-year plan to address five critical needs identified in its needs assessment. These needs emerged from challenges such as low community buy-in, transportation issues, and limited certification opportunities for graduates. The five areas they focused on were:

- Certified staff

- Advisory council engagement
- Professional development
- Individual career plans
- Support from postsecondary partners

This example illustrates how a school can adopt a strategic approach to enhance its work-based learning program by targeting specific gaps."

Slide 141: Example A: Gotham School

"Now, let's see how Gotham turned those needs into an actionable plan. Each row represents a key action item, along with the individuals involved, the resources needed, potential barriers, timeframes, and the expected impact on students. For example:

- To secure certified staff, they identified CTE teachers and planned course offerings with a goal of implementation by Summer 2025.
- Advisory council engagement required time, materials, and participation from leadership and community partners, with barriers such as budget constraints and program development.
- Professional development was scheduled for Spring 2026 to ensure all staff understood WBL principles.
- Individual career plans for students and support from postsecondary partners were also outlined with clear steps and timelines.

Notice how each action is connected to student impact — whether it's access to WBL classes, improved alignment with industry needs, or increased opportunities for apprenticeships."

Slides 142: Example Metropolis High School

"Now, let's look at Example B: Metropolis High School. Their 3- to 5-year plan focused on five top priorities: community support, teacher training, tools and resources, curriculum updates, and dual credit and postsecondary goals. These priorities reflect a strong emphasis on both instructional quality and partnerships to expand opportunities for students."

Slide 143: Example Metropolis High School

"Metropolis also broke down its plan into actionable steps. For instance:

- Increasing community support involved engaging the local chamber of commerce and advisory councils, with planning documents and course lists as resources.
- Teacher professional development was phased in over multiple years, addressing barriers such as time constraints and budget limitations.
- Purchasing tools and resources, as well as updating the curriculum, were scheduled for Summer 2026 onward, ensuring alignment with WBL skills and pacing guides.

Again, the key takeaway is how each action is linked to student outcomes — whether it's increasing WBL opportunities, improving instructional practices, or expanding dual credit options."

[Prior to the next activity, ensure there are four designated tables (with chairs) spaced out around the room with signs for each of the table labels (i.e., Table 1 – Vision and Reflection). Participants will move to one of the designated tables based on the table descriptions below and work with other similarly minded individuals on their Action Plan.]

Activity 7

Slide 144: 4-Corners Discussion and Action Planning

"Now we're moving into our 4-Corners Activity, which gives you the chance to choose the type of planning that best fits your program's needs. For this Action Plan activity, you will go to one of the designated tables, selecting one of four action planning styles based on your current Work-Based Learning programming. Use the following descriptions to decide which approach works best for you, then head to the corresponding table. Here are the different tables you have to choose from, including the purpose for that table and how your time can be used during your action planning.

Table 1 – Vision & Reflection
Purpose: For educators and program leaders who wish to reflect on their current state and envision the future direction of their programming.
Use this table to: Identify gaps, strengths, and opportunities for growth.

Table 2 – Aspirational Planning
Purpose: For high-performing programs ready to pursue bold, transformative, goals.
Use this table to: Develop Action Plans that may seem ambitious but are achievable with strategic effort and innovation.

Table 3 – Balanced Improvement
Purpose: For programs that are solid but need refinement.
Use this table to: Combine one visionary goal with practical steps to enhance overall quality and effectiveness.

Table 4 – Full Program Reset
Purpose: For new educators or programs that need complete overhaul due to outdated practices or materials.

Use this table to: Reimagine and rebuild your program from the ground up with fresh strategies and resources.

What are two components you absolutely need to accomplish in the coming year? Once you have finished discussing it, you may begin drafting your Action Plan."

[Provide time for participants to work on their action planning, while walking around to help any of the tables].

Part VI

Slide 145: Final Steps
"We will reconvene in our full group to wrap up the discussion and provide you with final details for completing your renewal."

Slide 146: Items to Consider
"Before we conclude, we invite you to consider the various strategies, resources, and materials available to you as you return to your schools to implement quality Workplace Experience courses. Think about strategies that build capacity, improve communication, and enhance resources for you and your staff."

Slide 147: Building Capacity for WBL
"To establish effective Work-Based Learning programs, it's essential to look beyond the classroom and foster partnerships that enhance opportunities for students.

Begin by engaging with your local chamber of commerce; they can connect you with businesses eager to support education. Collaborate with your Education for Employment system director and utilize resources available through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Community colleges and universities are vital allies for dual credit programs and postsecondary pathways. Don't forget to engage with local government — county and city municipalities often have workforce initiatives that align with WBL objectives.

Other valuable partners can include the Farm Bureau, libraries, arts organizations, and even museums. Additionally, fraternal organizations and alumni groups can offer mentorship and funding support. The aim is to create a network that enhances your program and ensures students have access to diverse experiences."

Slide 148: Communication

"Building partnerships is only part of the process; you must also communicate your intentions clearly. Inform your community about your goals, such as:

- Increasing student skills
- Providing career development pathways
- Aligning strategies for workforce development
- Investing in local youth

Once you've defined your message, develop a comprehensive communications plan. This may include letters to the editor, a WBL blog or podcast, and regular updates for students and parents."

Slide 149: Resources to Develop

"When implementing this work, consider the many resources you can develop and improve each year.

- 18-Week Curricular Plan
- Training Plan
- Workplace Agreements
- Basic Framework for Individualized Career Plan
- Additional Resources
- Action Plan"

Slide 150: Staying Current on WBL Initiatives

"Work-Based Learning programs will continue to evolve as legislation, funding priorities, and labor market needs change. Illinois regularly updates Career and Technical Education requirements. Additionally, technological advancements, like AI, will impact the types of opportunities our students need. To keep programs relevant, educators must stay informed and adaptable. ISBE will provide updated resources, including the WBL Manual, to support best practices."

Slide 151: WBL Designation Renewal

"WBL designations must be renewed every five years to ensure programs align with current standards and innovations. Staying current requires ongoing professional development, engagement with ISBE resources, and collaboration with peers. These continuous learning efforts will ensure your WBL program remains relevant and impactful. Your Education for Employment director can help you access the latest professional development offerings, updated information and renewal opportunities."

Slide 152: Evaluation Forms for PDHs.

"Please fill out the evaluation forms to help us improve this designation renewal offering. Your WBL designation will be updated in ELIS under 'Additional Credentials' once all evaluations have been received. Please check your ELIS account in the coming weeks to confirm your designation has been updated accordingly. Finally, please also submit your ISBE PDH evaluation form before leaving today."

[Allow for a few minutes for participants to complete the evaluation.]

Slide 153: Questions

"At this time, we would be happy to take any final questions you may have. If you have any questions, please contact me at _____."

[Insert email address/place on a dry erase board]

Slide 154: Thank you

"Thank you for attending this Work-Based Learning Designation Renewal. We hope you have found it valuable and that it will help you continue to develop and enhance your Workplace Experience courses."

Slide 155: Additional Resources

"Thank you for your participation today. Remember, the WBL Manual and WBL Renewal Participant Workbook are your guides. Use them, adapt them, and share your successes with ISBE and your networks. You can find additional resources here to review at your convenience!"