

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 182
October 17, 2014**

CAREER CONNECTED LEARNING VIDEOS AND WEBSITE WORK PLAN

Background

The agency is in the process of finalizing a new Career-Connected Learning web portal. To help explain this concept, the agency contracted with North 40 Productions of Wenatchee to develop several videos to better inform people about career-connected learning, why it is important, and how educators, employers and community members might join the effort. The videos encourage the creation of more opportunities both inside and outside the classroom. As the Board directed, the new website is designed to compile best practices in career-connected learning from across the state.

The videos were electronically distributed to Board members the first week of September. After receiving feedback, they were edited earlier this month. Board members will be able to view the videos at today's meeting.

Three of the videos were filmed in a documentary style, with segments filmed on location at schools and workplaces. A fourth video is animated and tells the story of career-connected learning through the eyes of a student who struggles to find her career path despite graduating from high school and heading to college.

We expect to use these videos in a variety of ways, including posting them on education and industry association websites, screening them during presentations, and promoting them through the agency website and newsletter.

Also included in this tab, is a work plan that covers the goals and objectives involved in launching a new Career Connected Learning website and touches on duties and deliverables, up to six months after. The Board will determine the value of continuing with this effort, and how it might be prioritized in the agency work plan and budget.

Board Actions Requested: Approval of the videos and a determination on whether a career-connected learning website should be launched.

Draft Work Plan for Career Connected Learning website

Introduction and background

The Workforce Board, at its 2013 summer retreat, directed staff to develop a mechanism to do three things:

- Compile accessible information on work-integrated (career connected) programs that are proven to be successful,
- Create a learning community for practitioners who are currently offering, or desire to offer, career-connected learning opportunities for their students,
- Establish a network of career-connected learning champions from across the state who could join the Board in their advocacy efforts.

Through the exploration and early development phase of this work, it was clear that a framing of the “problem statement” as well as establishing an umbrella definition was needed. The animated video is an attempt to do this. The documentary style videos were developed to help clarify aspects of career-connected learning and to show real efforts occurring across the state. Once these platform pieces are complete and accepted by the Board, the website that would help us accomplish the above goals could be launched.

This work plan covers the goals and objectives involved in launching a new Career Connected Learning website and touches on duties and deliverables, up to six months after. The Board will determine the value of continuing with this effort, and how it might be prioritized in the agency work plan and budget.

Mission and Goals

Mission: Increase and improve access to career connected learning opportunities for K-12 and college students across the state.

Goals:

1. Create and sustain a website that highlights proven best or promising practices
2. Create a connecting point (community hub) for those interested in exploring this concept
3. Expand career-connected learning to classrooms and employers statewide; establish a platform for “experts” to teach others
4. Inspire policy changes that support this expansion in a systemic way

Immediate Objectives (before website launches)

Create two active and engaged Review Panels to assess and grade submissions, and solicit new ones.

- Currently, we have a short list of six people who have agreed to sit on a panel or have been appointed to the panel by their supervisor. We will need to solidify this list and break into two groups. (See page 4 for Review Panel Process and Duties).

Create an electronic platform for Review Panels to discuss findings with one another.

- We are looking at the Asana platform. This does not require a separate email address. We need time to train on this and then train the two Review Panels on how to use this tool.

Solidify submission guidelines

- We have circulated submission guidelines and received relatively little feedback. One concern is that the data will be difficult to obtain and that it may reduce the number of submissions. (See Page 5 for proposed guidelines.)

Generate initial content for site

- Workforce Board staff will generate examples using existing reports, such as Multiple Pathways for Young Adults. We will need to ensure all content meets data-driven submission thresholds.

Post new Career Connected Learning videos to the site

- Pending Board approval. Once approved we can move videos to the site and promote.

Possible: Ask Governor’s Office to help launch site and videos at October educators’ conference (Oct. 27-28)

Medium Term Objectives (one to six months after launch)

Generate ongoing, fresh content that meets data-driven submission thresholds

- We expect the Review Panels and other partners to help encourage high-quality submissions to the website.
- Workforce Board staff will promote the site and solicit submissions through the newsletter and at conferences.

Highlight the “best of the best”

- Review Panels will need to agree on top examples to highlight
- These examples will be flagged in newsletter, other Workforce Board publications, and at conferences
- “Best practice” submissions will be rewarded with a “Program to Watch” seal of approval

Ensure website is promoted by partners, stakeholders

- Work with OSPI, SBCTC, WSAC, WSSDA and others so they link to website off their websites
- Work with AWB and other business organizations to ensure cross linkage

- Work with Washington State Labor Council and other labor organizations to ensure cross linkage

Promote to media

- Create press releases and other media outreach to promote site.

Longer Term Objectives (six months and more after launch)

- Website and best-practice examples referenced by policymakers in education and youth legislative discussions
- Website builds community of like-minded “champions” to further the discussion
- Word of mouth generates high quality submissions from across the state
- Site stays fresh and relevant for the long haul
- Additional Review Panels are added as needed
- Site page views consistently grow

Staff Resources

The Workforce Board’s communications department consists of two people, Communications Director Marina Parr and Communications Consultant Lindsay Elwanger. In addition to a wide range of editing/writing/graphic design and media outreach duties, they support and/or oversee two websites: the agency’s main website (www.wtb.wa.gov) and the Career Bridge website. This will be the third web portal in their electronic portfolio, in addition to posting to, and managing the Workforce Board’s Facebook and Twitter feeds, and creating and delivering an “almost weekly” e-newsletter.

Time Constraints

The Workforce Board goes into overdrive during the time period leading up to, and during, the Legislative session. The following publications are due before the end of the 2014:

- Workforce Training Results 2015 (printed executive summary) and extended online chapters
- The Workforce System Matrix poster
- Annual Aerospace Report
- Evergreen Jobs Report
- Health Workforce Council Annual Report
- Youth Unemployment Report

These publications come due at the same time the new website is launching. In addition to the above publications, Communications staff work on Power Points, one-pagers, emails to external stakeholders, media calls, and legislative outreach, often on tight time frames.

Larger workforce initiatives--Communications staff will also be busy promoting the Governor’s new \$1.9 million Youth Works Initiative, which launched this September and involves the Employment Security Department and the 12 Workforce Development Councils to better connect low-income youth with learning and careers. A bonus: Youth Works will likely surface best practices that can go on the website.

Review Panel Duties and Process

Each panel will appoint a Team Leader who will act as spokesperson for their group. The panel members will receive submissions as they are available. They can begin their scoring process right away, or if they choose, wait until the end of the quarter to review them all at once. We will provide the document in a format that allows panel members to contribute comments online, communicating with each other as they arrive at their overall score. The Team Leader will compile the score for each submission and forward to the Workforce Board. Review panels will evaluate items originating from their area of the state. However, in the event the item comes from one of their schools, they will need to have it evaluated by a different review team so scoring remains impartial. The top scoring items will be “spotlighted” as programs to watch. Others will populate the website if they meet thresholds for relevance and rigor.

Quality is Important

To ensure that the projects we feature are high quality and worthy of expanding or replicating in other parts of the state, our Review Panels will use a structured framework that evaluates submissions based on solid criteria.

Time commitment and recognition for reviewers

We will provide each Review Panel with no more than 15 items per quarter. We will include their names on the website to highlight their participation. We will encourage them to reach out locally to make sure their schools and programs are highlighted. This will help bring more people into the learning community and advocacy network. We will hold a quarterly conference call with each Review Panel.

What we’re looking for in broad terms

A good submission will be about systemic reform, not individual success stories. That is, we want to highlight ideas that are transformative for an entire classroom of students, or possibly an entire school. If a submission doesn’t contain all the necessary elements we want the Review Panel to be able to contact the submitter with questions or continue the dialogue. We would like to know when these discussions are occurring and help facilitate constructive feedback and dialogue.

Career-connected learning can take many forms, including:

- Career fairs/career exploration through tools such as Career Bridge.
- Applied learning, where students apply academic concepts to real-world situations or hands-on projects.
- Work-based learning, where students learn job skills in a school setting or in the community.
- Employers visiting classrooms to talk about what they do/ workplace expectations.
- Internships, where students have a structured experience at an area employer.

Submission guidelines

A great Career Connected Learning submission:

- Is inspiring, sometimes surprising, and always useful. Think: Does this example give others good ideas they can apply in their own classrooms and workplaces? Does this advance the conversation on career-connected learning?
- Is short and to the point. We want to respect our readers' time.
- Is specific and includes key details. Ages of students. Course of study. Location of school or workplace. What are they doing, exactly? What are they learning?
- Offers a blue print for others to learn from. What types of tools were used? What obstacles needed to be overcome? Lessons learned?
- **Includes results.** How do you know these activities are making a difference? We realize some projects are new, but what kind of data are you collecting to prove what holds promise will work over the long term.
 - With established projects, can you point to tangible results—increased high school graduation rates, students gaining jobs with area employers, increased connection between high school and postsecondary?
 - Sometimes it's difficult to obtain information about a student after they leave the class or school. Consider surveying students about their participation experiences, and compare with surveys of students who do not participate in such a program, or compare pre and post surveys. Or perhaps there are others who could attest with their own evidence to the impact of your program.
 - If a program is new: What will success look like? How will you recognize it? How will you measure it? What data will you use to measure your progress toward your goals? At what intervals will you have data that indicates progress towards success?