

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 177
MARCH 20, 2014**

CAREER CONNECTED LEARNING

Background

Since 2011, the Workforce Board has made youth employment and career readiness a critical component of its research and advocacy efforts. This focus informed a number of activities including: federal grant applications, legislative research and policy reports, legislative work session presentations, and new policies and programs.

Moving forward, board staff continues to identify existing best practices, building partnerships with those providing quality work-based and career-connected learning opportunities for students across the entire K-12 spectrum.

Behind this tab are briefs for three programs, in varying stages of development, that are providing work-based and career-connected learning opportunities in our state. Representatives of these programs will present to the board and offer suggestions for advancing their efforts at the state level.

Board Action Requested: None. For discussion only.

Pacific Education Institute

Pacific Education Institute (PEI) is a 501(c)(3) education organization based in the greater Puget Sound area. Board members include representatives from the timber industry, the shellfish industry, the fisheries commission, state education leaders, and others. PEI is driven by the mission of using the environment as a context to provide teachers with tools and support to help students become socially and scientifically literate and adept at critical thinking. PEI promotes changes in the way schools help children learn through real world learning opportunities.

Just how do they do it? PEI takes a unique approach by supporting teacher collaboration with the industry and community around their classroom. By engaging business and industry leaders in the development of applied outdoor science curriculum, project-based instruction, field observation, and facilities access, the institute extends learning beyond the bounds of a traditional classroom in a real world context. In the 2012-2013 school year, 729 teachers, 129 work-based mentors and over 18,000 students participated in experiences outside of the classroom. Program participants from 79 school districts visited outdoor sites to learn about the ecosystem and how it intersects with the industries that drive our economy. Participants used salmon tanks and hatcheries to explore the impacts of storm water run-off and the job of a storm water engineer, and they visited oyster beds to learn about the fisheries industry and the path an oyster takes from the mud flats to the plate.

The institute also supplements the professional development needs of teachers by hosting workshops that help teachers use hands on applied curriculum in conjunction with their classroom activities. Workshops include STEM education, field observation and investigation techniques, project-based storm water curriculum, applied systems thinking, and many more.

By helping business and industry to connect to local classrooms, Pacific Education Institute advances community collaboration in the school system in both theory and practice giving students and educators the opportunity to see how their classroom learning connects to the environment and economy around them.

Wenatchee Learns

Wenatchee Learns is a community initiative first launched in 2011 that engaged nearly 4,000 participants in the development of a common vision for the future of learning in Wenatchee. Largely supported by the Wenatchee School District, Wenatchee Learns actively engages business and community partners to connect with students and supports career exploration and exposure to the world of work.

Wenatchee Learns provides both online and brick and mortar supports for engagement in the Wenatchee School District. The Wenatchee Learns Connect Community Partnership Center is a storefront located in downtown Wenatchee. The downtown office will eventually house three staff members and serve as a soft entry point for organizations that want to play a more active role in supporting the Wenatchee School District and the workplace success of its students. Staff positions

include a lead coordinator, a service specialist, and a volunteer and parent coordinator. The downtown office is scheduled to open at the beginning of the 2014 school year.

Online resources include: an online career exploration system for students powered by Career Cruising. This is a web-based matching tool that links students and community partners in work-based learning opportunities. Technical assistance materials tailored to support teachers, staff, and community members in the creation of work-based learning opportunities are also available.

Wenatchee Learns is supported by a community guidance coalition that includes representation from the Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce, Wenatchee School District students, local recruitment managers, economic development representatives, and others.

Cleveland High School

Cleveland High School, redesigned in 2010, is a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) focused and project-based options school in the Seattle School District for 9th-12th grade students. Cleveland is a majority minority school that, since becoming a STEM options program, has improved high school completion and statewide-standardized test results.

Cleveland provides increased focus on science and math instruction by running a block schedule that gives students more time to dive deeper into content. Students also benefit from taking science and math all four years of their high school career, ensuring continuity in their studies and offering more challenging course work for students in their junior and senior year. Students are offered a number of summer learning opportunities, which may include job shadow activities, to ensure they remain on track with content and credit attainment. In addition, all courses are taught using project, problem, and/or service based methods in a high technology environment that requires students to apply learning in a real world context.

The school houses two STEM academies, the School of Life Sciences and the School of Engineering and Design. These academies provide students two different pathways, each designed to encourage success in high school and connect that success to a number of education and training opportunities after high school graduation. The academy courses are offered in addition to core content aimed at providing a broad base of STEM instruction. In addition, students engage with a number of Cleveland High School partners (including business, community, higher education, and others) when exploring complicated course work and complex problems. These partnerships give students the ability to see their learning in action as it relates to the world of work.

Cleveland's unique approach has produced positive outcomes for their students in terms of high school completion and test performance. Traditionally underserved and underperforming students have outperformed their peers in end of course exams, proficiency exams, and high school graduation rates. Before the redesign in 2010 to the most recent completed school year, Cleveland high school has seen a near 28 percent increase in its school-wide graduation rate.