

# **From Classroom to Career: Scaling Work-Based Learning Across Michigan**

Stephen DeWitt,  
Deputy Executive Director

# Overview

- Quick Introduction to ACTE
- ACTE's Quality CTE Program of Study Framework
- WBL Program Examples
- Other ACTE resources
- Discussion and Q & A

*Largest national education association of professionals  
dedicated to the advancement of CTE*

- Achieving policy victories & increasing legislative activity around CTE
- Nurturing a culture of excellence & leadership in CTE for almost 100 years
- Delivering robust professional learning & networking opportunities
- Growing a partnership network that provides added member value





**ACTE WBL Division Vice  
President**

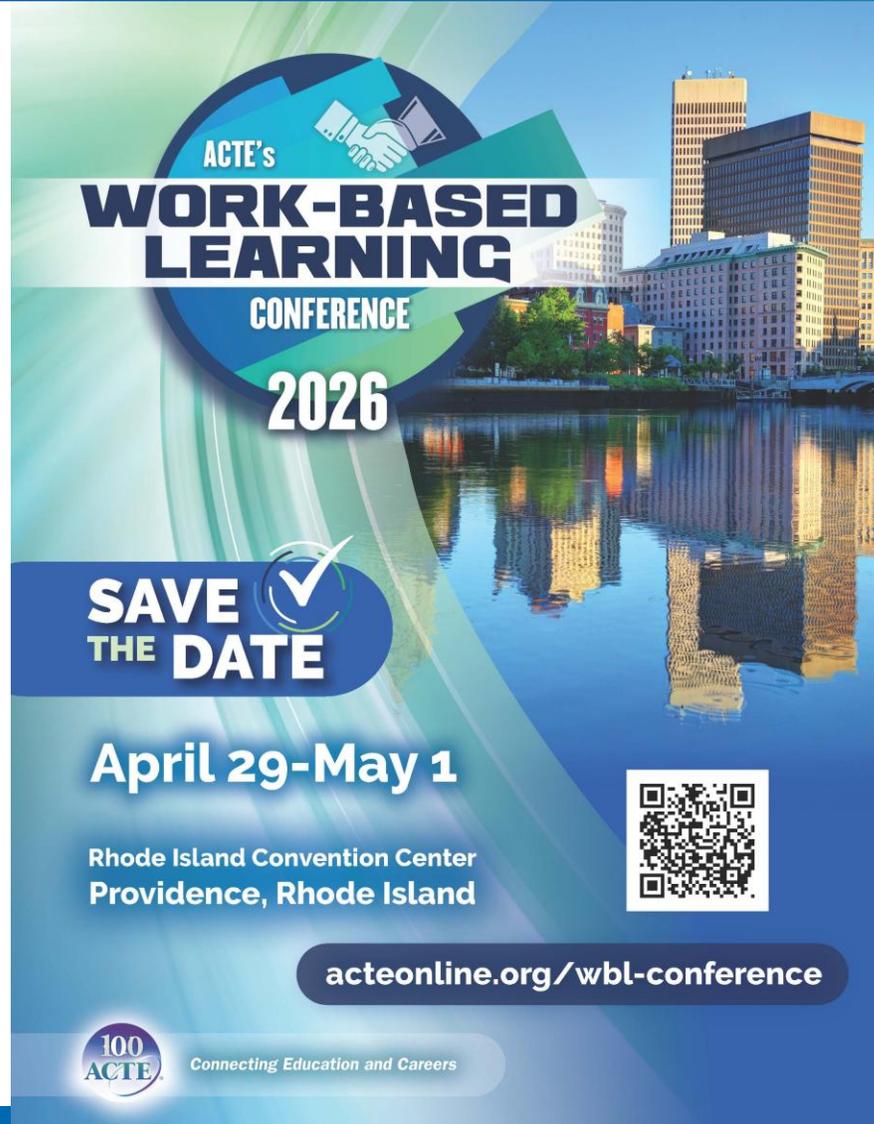
Provo CAPS Director & District  
WBL Coordinator Provo, Utah



- Resources
- Leadership Alliance **Applications will be accepted through January 30**
- Community of Practice
- YouScience Brightpath WBL Professional of the Year Award
- Division Zoom Calls



# ACTE's Work-based Learning Conference



ACTE's  
**WORK-BASED  
LEARNING**  
CONFERENCE  
2026

**SAVE** ✓  
**THE DATE**

**April 29-May 1**

Rhode Island Convention Center  
Providence, Rhode Island



[acteonline.org/wbl-conference](https://acteonline.org/wbl-conference)

100  
**ACTE**  
Connecting Education and Careers

Focused programming for  
WBL professionals in secondary &  
postsecondary institutions

*Save the date for 2026!*



# WBL Challenges

- Time and Capacity Constraints for Educators
- Administrative Burden and Compliance Requirements
- Employer Engagement and Sustainability
- Alignment Between Classroom Instruction and Workplace Experiences
- Student Access and Equity Barriers
- Inconsistent Quality and Lack of Standardized Processes
- Limited Professional Development for Educators
- Data Collection and Outcome Measurement Challenges



# ACTE's High-Quality CTE Program of Study Framework



- 12 elements of High-Quality CTE and criteria for each element
- Self-evaluation assessment
- Helps target improvements and recognize successful elements that should be scaled
- High-Quality CTE Library



# High-quality CTE Elements

Standards-aligned and Integrated Curriculum

Sequencing and Articulation

Student Assessment

Prepared and Effective Program Staff

Engaging Instruction

Access and Supports

Facilities, Equipment, Technology and Materials

Business and Community Partnerships

Student Career Development

Career and Technical Student Organizations

Work-based Learning

Data & Program Improvement

# Work-Based Learning Element

This element addresses the delivery of a continuum of work-based learning involving sustained, meaningful interactions with industry or community professionals that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field. Experiences may be delivered in workplaces, in the community, at educational institutions and/or virtually, as appropriate, and include a range of activities such as workplace tours, job shadowing, school-based enterprises, internships and apprenticeships.

# WBL Criteria



- A full continuum of work-based learning experiences, progressing in intensity, is accessible to every student at some point during the program of study.
- Work-based learning experiences are aligned with relevant national, state and/or local standards.
- Work-based learning experiences develop and reinforce relevant technical, academic and employability knowledge and skills.

# Michigan's State-Approved CTE Work-Based Learning Continuum

- ✓ Every student must access multiple experiences
- ✓ Experiences are intentionally sequenced to increase intensity
- ✓ Activities are matched to student interests and program level
- ✓ Reflection and documentation are required
- ✓ Closely mirrors ACTE's High-Quality CTE Framework

## WORK-BASED LEARNING CONTINUUM



# WBL Criteria

- Work-based learning experiences are intentionally aligned with each student's education and career goals.
- Work-based learning experiences are provided through delivery methods that maximize meaningful interaction with business professionals.



# Case Study: John Overton HS



- **Continuum of experiences that progress in intensity:** Integrates dual enrollment with hands-on experiences in the Networking Systems pathway, it moves students from classroom learning to postsecondary transition.
- **Defined learning objectives:** Provides "meaningful, hands-on experiences" specifically tied to the Academy of Information Technology curriculum.

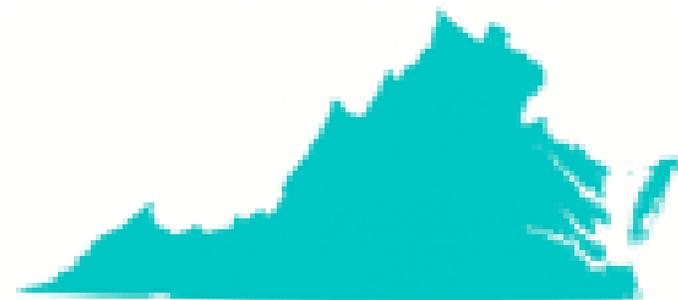


# WBL Criteria

- Requirements and procedures for work-based learning experiences that address access, selection, liability, supervision, rights and responsibilities, safety, transportation, learning objectives and evaluations are formalized and shared in advance of work-based learning experiences with employers, students and parents/guardians (as appropriate).



# Case Study: Northern Virginia Community College



- **Variety of Experiences:** Provide diverse options ranging from micro-internships to registered apprenticeships.
- **Standards Alignment:** Formal apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs align with the criterion that WBL should be aligned with national or state standards, such as those governing registered apprenticeships.

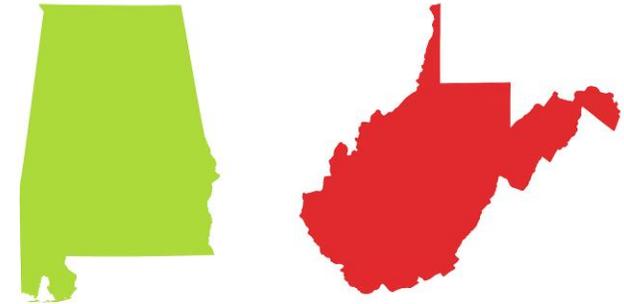


# WBL Criteria



- Work-based learning experiences comply with relevant federal, state and local laws and regulations.
- Work-based learning experiences are supervised by CTE staff with clearly defined roles.
- Students engage in reflection and document learning resulting from work-based learning experiences, such as through a portfolio or presentation.

# Case Study: Simulated Workplaces in West Virginia and Alabama



- **Industry-Led Evaluation:** Business partners help develop and monitor WBL environments by ensuring the school-based businesses maintain "realism and industry alignment".
- **Application of Skills:** Students apply technical and professional skills in an authentic scenario, even when the setting is school-based rather than a traditional job site.



# Taking Business to School

- Publication brief series focused on specific CTE program and their partnership with business and industry
- Resource Guide for Building an Employer Partner Engagement Plan
- Video series with overviews of industry sectors related to careers.

*Thanks to our sponsor, Xello!*



# Sample Forms

**TAKING BUSINESS TO SCHOOL**  
A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS BY EMPLOYER PARTNER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

In each project phase, you will find a RASCI table. The RASCI table is filled out for you in phase one as an example, but is left blank in the subsequent phases. Use this blank table to define the roles and responsibilities of your advisory committee members that are necessary to complete that phase of the project plan.

Alternatively, you can use this method to assign roles and responsibilities for specific tasks, as seen in the example below:

Tasks	Status	WBL Coordinator	School Counselor	CTE Teacher	Administrator	General Education Teacher	DEI Coordinator	Transition Coordinator	Employer partner	Parent/Community Liaison
Invite & convene advisory committee		R			A					
Schedule monthly advisory committee meetings		R	I	I	A	I	I	I	I	I
Survey student interest in WBL		R	R	R	A	S	S	S	I	S

Of course, there are many methods for managing a project and you will need to find and use the one that works best for you.

**Free Digital Project Management Tools**

- [Airtable](#) (free for up to 5 users per team)
- [Trello](#) (up to 10 boards free)
- [How to use Google tools for project management](#)
- [How to use Microsoft OneNote and Outlook for project management](#)

20

**TAKING BUSINESS TO SCHOOL**  
A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS BY EMPLOYER PARTNER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Brainstorm who you will invite and add additional individuals you would like to include in the spreadsheet below:

Role	Name/Email	Planning Period
School Counselor		
CTE Teacher		
Administrator		
General Education Teacher		
Special Education Teacher		
DEI Specialist		
Transition Coordinator		
Employer Partner		
Parent/Community Liaison		

**The RASCI Method**  
The RASCI method defines individuals involved in a project plan as Responsible, Accountable, Supportive, Consulted, or Informed. These roles are further defined in the chart below:

<b>R</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	Responsible for completing a task assigned or for the completion of the project
<b>A</b>	<b>Accountable</b>	Has ultimate control over the project and related resources
<b>S</b>	<b>Supportive</b>	Provides assistance to the Responsible team members
<b>C</b>	<b>Consulted</b>	Gives advice to the Responsible team members
<b>I</b>	<b>Informed</b>	Needs to be kept in the loop at all stages of the project

19

# Sector Sheets

- Infographic series to help audiences understand the value of specific career pathways
- Excellent resource for school counselors
- 14 infographics with older written series

*Thanks to our sponsor, Pearson!*





# Online Learning Network



## Work-based Learning

-  HQ111 - High-Quality CTE: Work-Based Learning
-  CS130R - Creating Work-Based Learning Programs - First Steps
-  CS131 - Creating Work Based Learning Programs - Next Steps
-  EC111 - Learning Through Student Based Enterprises
-  ED121 - Creating Service Learning Opportunities for Students
-  ED207 - Outside the Classroom: Experiential Learning
-  EL119 - Virtual Internships

# Riipen

- Transform CTE programs by incentivizing institutions to build cultures that scale quality experiential learning and CTE programs.
- Help CTE institutions create sustainable models that strengthen connections with business and industry partners.
- Scale work-based learning opportunities to increase access for students and improve skill-building and workforce outcomes.
- Establish a long-term program where work-based learning models are tested, iterated, and improved.

# Riipen Case Study: Small College in Michigan

- Rural-serving
- 1,200 enrollments
- Goal for all learners to have an internship
- Challenged by geographic location
- No local employer partners, working with employers across the country
- Understaffed career services office
- Physics, finance, accounting, UX/UI design
- Would also like to scale co-curricular opportunities



# Recommendations for Scaling WBL

- Translate WBL by Task Chunking
- Normalize Small, Low-Risk WBL Models
- Make Employer Engagement More Concrete and Less Intimidating
- Tie WBL Directly to Career Pathways and Credentials
- Provide Implementation Accountability (Lightweight, Supportive)
- Equip State and District Leaders to Enable the Field



A vibrant event poster for ACTE's CareerTech VISION 2026. The background features a stylized cityscape of New Orleans with various buildings and a streetcar. A large, glowing circular graphic composed of dots in shades of blue, green, and yellow arches over the text. The text includes the event title, location, dates, and a centennial celebration logo.

ACTE's CareerTech  
**VISION**  
2026  
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center  
**New Orleans**  
DEC. 2-5  
*Celebrating 100 Years of Connecting Education and Careers*

**100**  
**ACTE**  
Centennial Celebration  
1926-2026

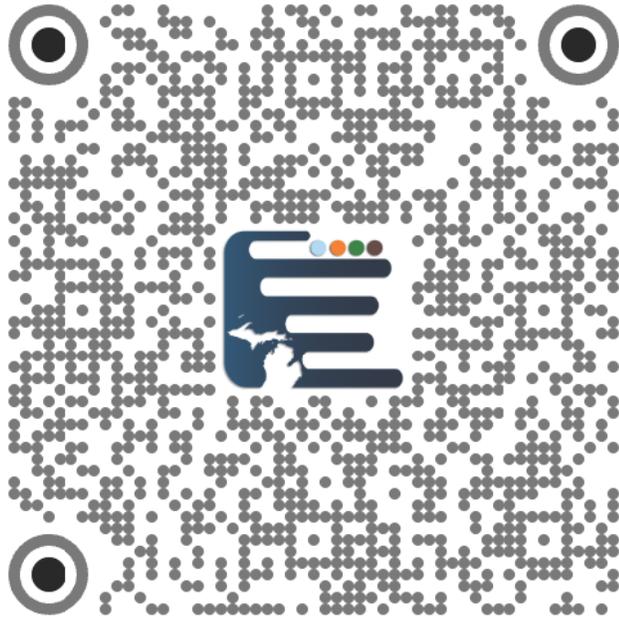
[WWW.CAREERTECHVISION.COM](http://WWW.CAREERTECHVISION.COM)

Join us for  
**ACTE's Centennial Celebration**  
at **VISION 2026!**

***Call for presentation proposals:***  
***Jan. 15-March 15***

## From Classroom to Career: Scaling Work-Based Learning Across Michigan

Scan the QR Code to



receive your SCECHs



Association for Career and Technical  
Education<sup>®</sup>

1410 King Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

800-826-9972 | [acteonline.org](http://acteonline.org)

Stephen DeWitt [sdewitt@acteonline.org](mailto:sdewitt@acteonline.org)

- From Michael - No, I put that in because there are resources on the WBL mini-site with these examples. One of the resources I wanted to talk about is the Career Fair resources, and the other is the webinars, including resources like this powerpoint <https://www.acteonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ACTE-Webinar-May-2022-1.pdf>
- And don't forget to look at and/or mention the COP in CTE Learn.

# Case Study: Provo (UT) Center for Advanced Professional Studies

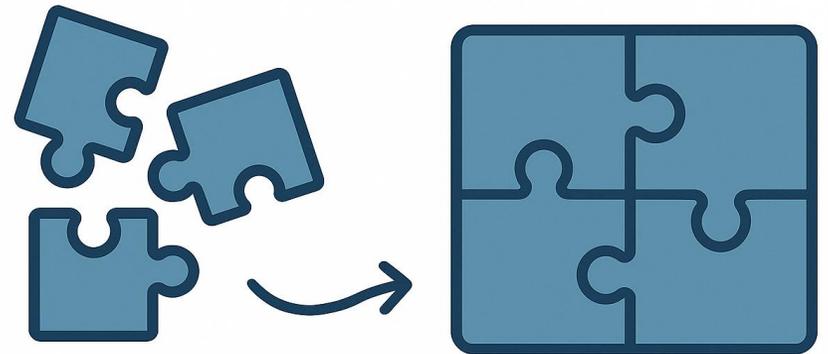
# Case Study: Riverside High School health care pre-apprenticeship

- Pre-apprenticeship within the Health Occupations CTE program. The program at Riverside HS allows participants to explore the health care industry as a potential career path and prepare participants for a Medical Assistant (MA) or Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Registered Apprenticeship:

<https://www.jff.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/240612-CAWBL-Framework-for-High-Quality-Pre-App-CTE-Brief-AH-V2.pdf>

# Translate WBL by Task Chunking

- *What can I do in the next 90 days?*
  - *What does WBL look like at small scale vs. full scale?*
  - *What policies or approvals do I need?*
- WBL Entry Point Guides for different staff roles



# Normalize Small, Low-Risk WBL Models

Actively promote micro-WBL models:

- Employer-designed projects
  - Virtual site visits
  - Industry critique panels
  - Job shadow “clusters” (multiple students, one day)
- 
- Brand these explicitly as legitimate WBL, not “lesser” versions



# Make Employer Engagement More Concrete and Less Intimidating

Develop plug-and-play employer engagement kits, including:

- Sample outreach emails
- One-page “Why Partner with CTE?” briefs (industry-specific)
- Sample MOUs scaled by WBL intensity



# Purpose of the ACTE WBL Toolkit and Session Outcomes



## **Toolkit Purpose and Users**

The WBL Toolkit supports program leaders in enhancing work-based learning through employer engagement and quality student experiences.

## **Session Learning Goals**

Participants learn to assess readiness, apply the WBL continuum, and use advocacy for stakeholder buy-in.

## **Action Planning and Outcomes**

Educators develop measurable goals and 90-day action plans to pilot new WBL experiences aligned with Perkins V.

## **Focus on Equity and Sustainability**

The toolkit emphasizes equitable access, sustainability, and meeting state and federal accountability standards.

# Readiness Indicators for Using the Toolkit



## **Career Awareness Activities**

Established career awareness activities like fairs and guest speakers build a foundation for work-based learning engagement.

## **Employer Relationships**

Maintaining existing employer connections helps programs develop structured partnerships for work-based learning.

## **Administrative Support**

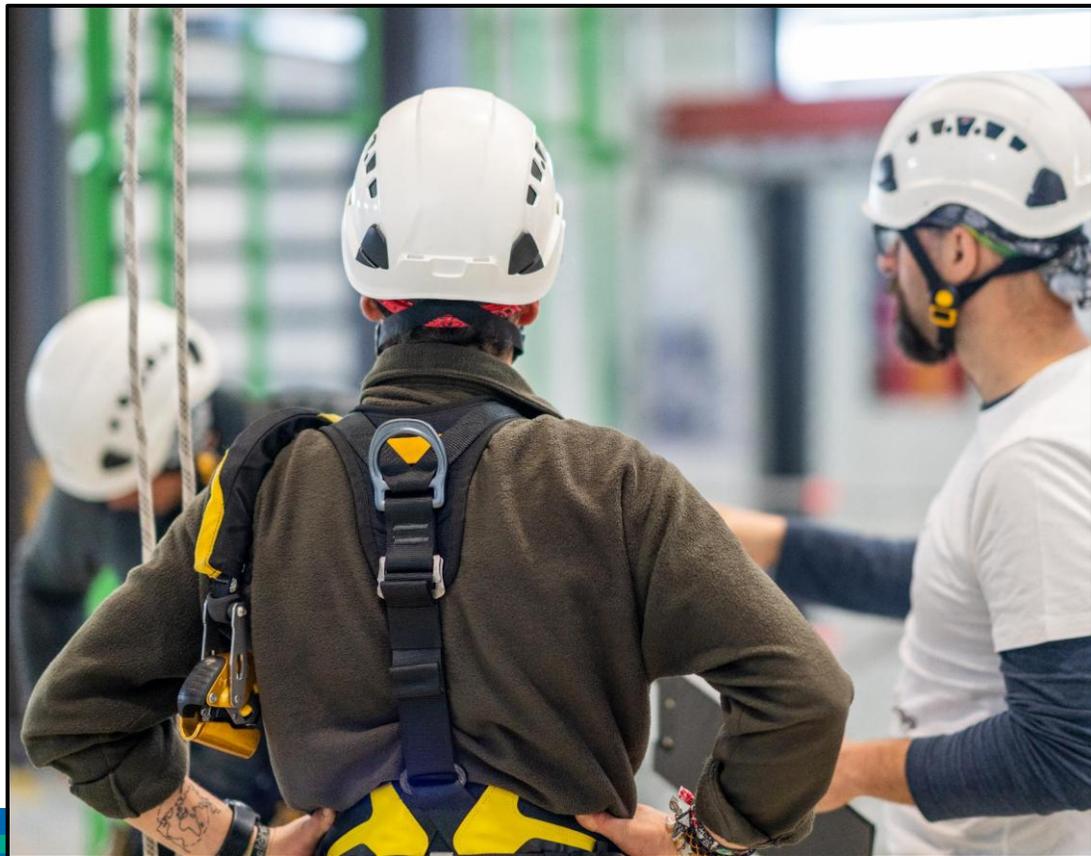
Strong administrative backing ensures resources and staff time are allocated to work-based learning initiatives.

## **Cross-role Team Formation**

Forming advisory committees with educators, counselors, and industry partners promotes shared ownership and sustainability.



# Criteria for High-Quality WBL Experiences



## **Comprehensive Access and Alignment**

WBL experiences provide full access to all students and align with academic and technical standards to ensure relevance and inclusivity.

## **Safety and Supervision Procedures**

Formal procedures for safety, liability, supervision, and transportation are essential and communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

## **Reflection and Documentation**

Reflection activities and documentation like portfolios reinforce learning and demonstrate student outcomes effectively.

## **Continuous Quality Improvement**

Prioritizing key areas for improvement supports ongoing program enhancement while maintaining feasibility.

# Equity Considerations and Learner Impact



## **Addressing Participation Barriers**

Programs overcome barriers like transportation and scheduling with stipends and flexible plans to increase access.

## **Support Services for At-Risk Learners**

Employability training and mentoring support learners with disabilities and those at risk, enhancing engagement.

## **Paid Work-Based Learning Benefits**

Paid WBL experiences validate student contributions, providing income and encouraging persistence.

## **Data-Driven Equity Targets**

Educators analyze participation data to identify gaps and set equity goals to close achievement disparities.



# Resources and Next Steps



## Primary Toolkit Resource

The ACTE WBL Toolkit provides comprehensive guidance on readiness, advocacy, goal setting, and project planning for educators.

## Additional Resource Platforms

Resources like Apprenticeship.gov and ACTE's community support professional development and apprenticeship information.

## Implementation Strategies

Educators should use readiness checklists and sample plans to design pilot programs and inspire innovation.

## Data Collection and Impact

Simple data collection methods help track participation, quality, and equity to ensure program sustainability.