

A WORK IN PROGRESS

Putting the Learning in WBL



As we consider the daunting task ahead of us in response to the pressure on the availability of a workforce, many are seeking both short-term and long-term solutions. With over a quarter of a million Ohio job openings (per ohiomeansjobs.com) and the anticipation of the many thousands more coming to our state, HR and talent professionals are seeking connections to educational providers as early as the lower grades to build a pathway from school to work.

When we talk about Work-Based Learning (WBL) in 2022, the view shared by the business community has changed drastically. In 2006, a study by Cassner Lotto & Barrington revealed that only 20% of the businesses surveyed felt it was their responsibility to help create pathways from high school to workforce. Let's compare that statistic to our work at the Chamber Foundation. We have met with over 100 businesses this year that are seeking counsel on workforce. To date, over 43% are asking for help connecting to emerging talent or finding interns to join their company.

As a result of these consultations, we recently convened a panel of subject matter experts for our March 16th Experience Series: Power of Emerging Talent Pipelines. We sat down with Christine Boucher with Eastland Fairfield Career & Technical Schools; Angie Dye with Mid-Ohio Food Collective; John Hambrick with The Educational Service Center of Central Ohio; and Tiffany Marr with Wemblr.

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“All career tech programs start with the business community. We need those who know what the necessary skills are in the room with us. We want to be training our high school juniors and seniors so they are ready for the in-demand jobs of today and the future.”

-Christine Boucher, Business Partnership Coordinator Eastland Fairfield Career and Technical Schools

Education That Works

Career and technical education have been around for decades. The original vocational school models have morphed into learning centers with high-tech labs that provide training for in-demand high wage jobs.

It is important to note that the classes and career pathways offered are driven by the needs of the local business community and are constantly changing to best meet the hiring needs. For example, Eastland Fairfield Career Center is launching a brand new Mechatronics program for high schoolers this fall. The course is a hybrid of mechanical, electrical, and computer engineering. Students will create smart, innovative robotic machines that contribute to industries such as manufacturing, mining, aviation, and supply chain/logistics.

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How to Prepare for High School Interns:

- Create an intern/student worker guide that includes a company profile, job description, company policies, workplace etiquette and behavior expectations, timesheets, and necessary reporting
- Send a welcome letter to intern/student that includes start date, hours to be worked, mentors and key “go-to” staffers, and how and when to communicate with management
- Notify incumbent workers that they should welcome the intern/student, short bio, and what they plan to accomplish while in your workplace
- Review parking, workstation, breaks, cell phone and internet usage, pay period, and paychecks

Remember, this is most likely their first time in a workplace and what we take for granted may be new information to them. Your local school district or Educational Service Center can be a great resource for learning more about the stages of development and what is to be expected at certain ages.