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Work-Based Learning Guidance for COVID-19

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As districts determine how to manage instruction and expanded learning opportunities in 2020-2021, the Nebraska Career and Technical Education Team offers this additional guidance for Work-based Learning experiences.

These recommendations have been made in collaboration with Nebraska CTE staff, teachers, and colleagues across the country. The goal of this document is to provide guidance in the variety of settings where Work-Based Learning (WBL) could take place. The primary purpose of this document is to outline protocols schools should consider given their particular level of risk as determined by their Local Health Department and/or the Department of Health and Human Services. An additional purpose of this document is to provide resources and ideas for providing WBL experiences during a pandemic.

An Important Note Regarding Changing Conditions

Schools must be able to respond as quickly as possible given changing conditions, whether a school is moving to virtual learning OR a student is attending school remotely during a period of quarantine. Addressing the items in this document as early as possible will help to minimize the disruption.

Safety Considerations

Because WBL is delivered primarily outside the local school or community college, it is important to work closely with the community organizations and businesses to review current safety policies and procedures. To ensure that students remain safe and healthy schools and community colleges should consider the following:

- Review current state, county, and local COVID-19 safety requirements. The website **Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services** (DHHS) describes current state recommended guidelines.

- For more general COVID-19 guidelines for CTE classrooms, please visit the **Launch Nebraska** website and review the document "**Nebraska Career and Technical Education Guidance for Reopening**."

- Refer to the **Advance CTE Guidance** when making decisions for work-based learning experiences.

- When virtual experiences are not practical (e.g., experiences in agriculture or other businesses deemed essential and where in-person work may be expected), all local health guidelines must be followed.

- Be sure to regularly follow up with all partner employers to ensure company safety practices follow current recommended COVID-19 safety guidelines issued by the local community and county for student employee safety prior to the beginning of the WBL experience.

Programmatic Considerations

Nebraska Career and Technical Education (CTE) acknowledges that WBL may need to look a little different this school year to ensure the safety of all students, instructors, and employers. To ensure that students receive high quality WBL experiences, schools and community colleges should consider the following:

- Consider virtual opportunities to connect with employers and companies about establishing WBL experiences. Collaboration tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams may be helpful.
- Develop a plan to include strategies to supervise and monitor students who are taking part in immersive work-based learning opportunities. The plan should include addressing the following:
  - ◊ Specific knowledge and skills students need to obtain on safety and cleanliness policies
  - ◊ Additional school and employer safety and workplace training to occur
  - ◊ Actions to take if a student is exposed or contracts COVID-19 at home, school, or workplace
  - ◊ Innovative methods for student supervision and documentation like online record keeping, skill journal systems, photo documentation, video conferencing, etc. instead of in-person visits
  - ◊ Create a plan with the employers to limit the number of monitoring visits required.
  - ◊ Contingency plans if the school district or business closes again.
  - ◊ Consider remote projects students can transition to for the business allows the work-based learning to continue if the student is unable to be on-site (e.g., research projects, social media management projects).
  - ◊ How are students intentionally engaged in opportunities for self-reflection and supported to work independently?
  - ◊ What is the guidance for employers to communicate safely and provide intentional mentoring to students?
  - ◊ How are expectations for work products and outcomes being communicated to students?
- Connect with Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation team members to coordinate opportunities for students.
- Look at alternative opportunities at the local school.
- Inform families and students enrolled in career and work-based learning experiences of the options and requirements to continue to participate or opt out.

Advisory Committees/Councils

Successful WBL programs require the knowledge and advice of people in business and industry. They can be a very productive and relevant method of involving the community in the educational process, so it is important to continue to hold advisory council meetings during this time. While it is possible to hold advisory council meetings face-to-face with proper precautions in place, virtual meeting methods should be strongly considered.

The CDC page, **Considerations for Events and Gatherings**, provides suggestions and principles around making the decision whether to hold an in-person meeting and what precautions should be taken in that case. If the decision is made to hold an advisory council meeting, the document, **How to Run Safe In-Person Meetings and Workshops in the Time of COVID-19**, shared by PreventEpidemics.org gives clear, detailed "how to" recommendations.

If the decision is made to hold the advisory council meeting remotely, it is important to recognize that this may be a new experience for some of your council members. In advance of the meeting date, it is recommended that logistics, guidelines, and an agenda be shared with attendees. Due to variations in computers and internet access, it may be necessary to send test links to all attendees to make sure they have the ability to connect.

A great set-by-step guide for hosting a meeting remotely is "**The Complete 8-Step Guide To Conducting An Effective Virtual Meeting In 2020**" and it has a checklist with timelines. Another great resource is the blog post, **How to Host an Inclusive Virtual Meeting**, which also gives great recommendations to prepare for and host your meeting.

School Stores, School-Based Enterprises, Student-Run Companies and Concessions

Regarding safety for School Stores, School-Based Enterprises, Student-Run Companies and Concessions (SBEs), be sure to review CDC basic guidance for employers (**https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html**), as well as guidance provided by your regional Health Department office. Please check out the School-based Enterprises/School Stores section of the *Nebraska Career and Technical Education Guidance for Reopening*.

Additionally, there are other things you may want to consider regarding operating SBEs during this time. Businesses of all types and sizes have had to pivot to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic, and businesses run by students will be no different. Learning to revise business practices, channels, and models to adapt to the current environment can help develop analytical and creative problem-solving skills.

For some examples of ways to start or adapt SBEs, check out these pages on DECA's website: "**Level Up Your In-Person or Hybrid SBE**" and "**Next Level Ideas for Your Virtual SBE**." For general information about starting an SAE and links to more resources, visit the **School-Based Enterprises** page of the Nebraska Workplace Experiences website.

Credentialing

If there is certification tied to the WBL experience (CNA, for example), ensure students have access to the equipment and tools they need to complete the requirements. Contact appropriate career field specialists for specific certification requirements and confirm the access to any such equipment and tools with the employer. For contact information of your NDE Career & Cross-Field Leaders and Student Leadership Specialists, please visit our webpage of **Office of Career and Technical Education Staff**.

Resources

Best Practices, Examples, and Ideas for WBL in a Remote Environment

Note: These resources are for teacher use only, not for student use.

- CTE Distance Learning Lesson Plan Resources for Multiple Sectors: **https://www.acteonline.org/lesson-plan-resources/**

- Simulated Work-Based Learning Instructional Approaches and Noteworthy Practices: **https://www.gfcmsu.edu/revup/documents/SWBL_Report.pdf**

- Junior Achievement, High School Entrepreneurship Resources: **https://sites.google.com/ja.org/ja-k-12-prog-resources/ja-hs-resources/ja-hs-en**

- Article: Teachers get creative to make hands on classes work virtually **https://www.witn.com/2020/08/28/teachers-get-creative-to-make-hands-on-classes-work-virtually/**

- Article: R.I. tech high school builds virus-symptom screening app **https://www.providencejournal.com/news/20200827/ri-tech-high-school-builds-virus-symptom-screening-app**

- Article: Culinary students get virtual lessons about food **https://www.13abc.com/2020/08/28/virtual-field-trips-for-clay-high-school-culinary-students/**

- Questions & Answers and Suggested Resources from the NTACT/WINTAC Sponsored Webinar on Work Based Learning Experiences in a Virtual World – Though presented with SPED/VR/Transitions program staff in mind, this document contains great ideas, examples, and resources remote WBL, in general: **https://www.transitionta.org/system/files/covid19/Q%26A_and%20Related%20Resources_WBLEVirtual_Webinar_4-10-20.pdf**

Guidance and Consideration Regarding Re-opening and/or Remote WBL

- Launch Nebraska – *"Tools, actions, opportunities, and resources to support the complex planning and preparation needed by Nebraska school systems as they work to restart schools and support students as they transition back to school buildings."* **https://www.launchne.com/**

- Nebraska Career and Technical Education Guidance for Reopening: **https://www.launchne.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CTEGuidance.pdf**

- CDC Guidance on Worker Safety & Support: **https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/worker-safety-support/index.html**

- Shift to At-Home and Online Learning Underscores the Importance of Culturally Responsive Education Practices in Schools – This episode of On the Evidence podcast, a principal and an education researcher share insights from research and the field on implementing culturally responsive practices: **https://www.mathematica.org/commentary/shift-to-at-home-and-online-learning-underscores-the-importance-of-culturally-responsive-education**

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