

Aligning Higher Education with Workforce Needs



NASBO Analyst Professional
Development Seminar

June 13, 2025

Agenda

- Welcome and ECS Introduction
- Overview and Framework
- Principles and State Examples
- Policy Trends
- Q&A



Lauren Peisach

POLICY ANALYST

Education Commission of the States

WHO WE ARE.

The essential, indispensable member of any team addressing education policy.



WHAT WE DO.

We believe in the power of learning from experience, and we know informed policymakers create better education policy.



HOW WE DO IT.



Research



Report



Convene



Counsel

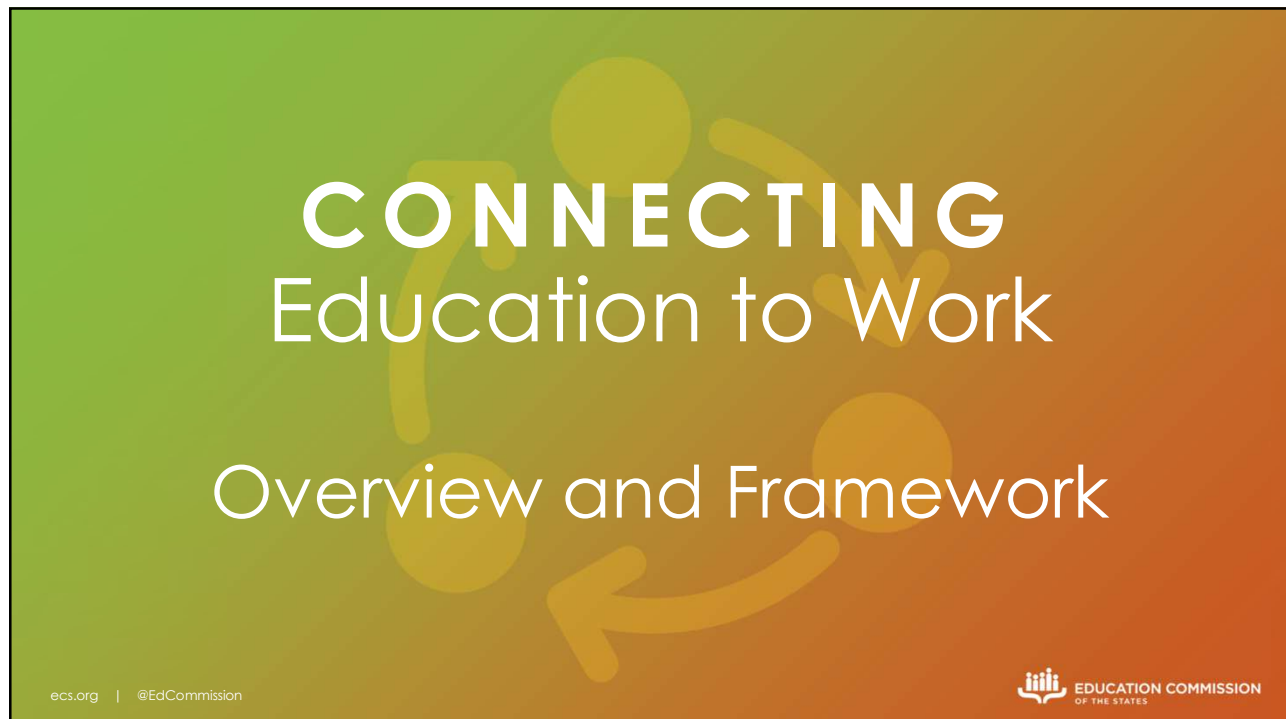




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CONNECTING
Education to Work

Overview and Framework

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Workforce Development SYSTEMS



JUL 2019

noun [wurk-fohrs, dih-vel-uhp-muhnt]

¹ An aligned system within a state charged with **developing** and **administering workforce development activities**.

² Encompasses, but is not limited to, **governing bodies, funding entities/mechanisms** and **interagency coordination**.



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Who are the actors in a workforce development system?




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Work-Based Learning: Overview



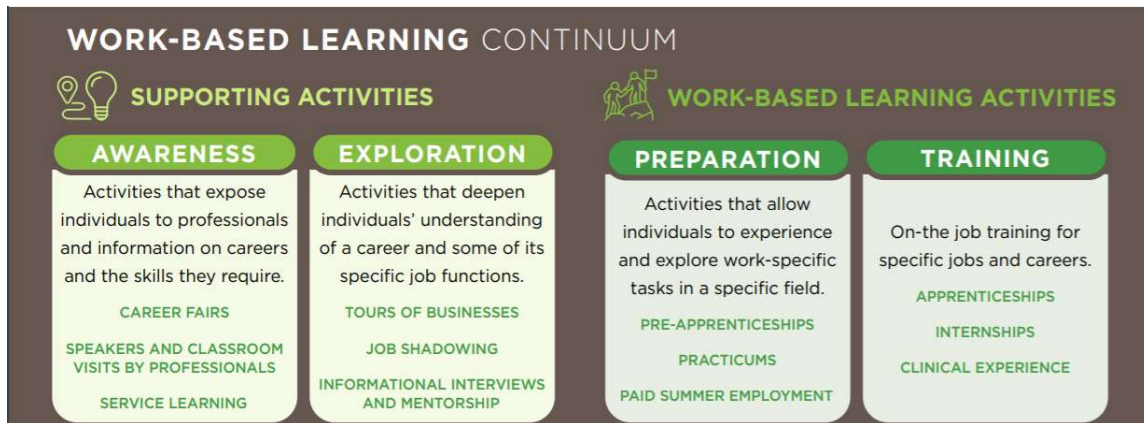
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Defining Work-Based Learning

Sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.



Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, 2019



Creating a Work-Based Learning Continuum

Supporting Activities vs. Work-Based Learning

Supporting Activities

Activities that expose individuals to professional and information and allow them to explore different fields and occupations.

Work-Based Learning

Activities that allow individuals to experience work specific tasks and engage in hands-on training for specific jobs and careers.

Awareness



Activities that expose individuals to professionals and information on careers and the skills they require.

Examples:

- Career Fairs
- Classroom visits by professionals
- Service Learning

Exploration



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Activities that deepen individuals' understanding of a career and some of its specific job functions.

Examples:

- Tours of businesses
- Job shadowing
- Informational interviews and mentorship



Preparation



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Activities that allow individuals to experience and explore work-specific tasks in a specific field.

Examples:

- Pre-apprenticeships
- Practicums
- Paid summer employment
- Internships



Training



On-the job training for specific jobs and careers.

Examples:

- Apprenticeships
- Internships
- Clinical experience

Stop and Chat

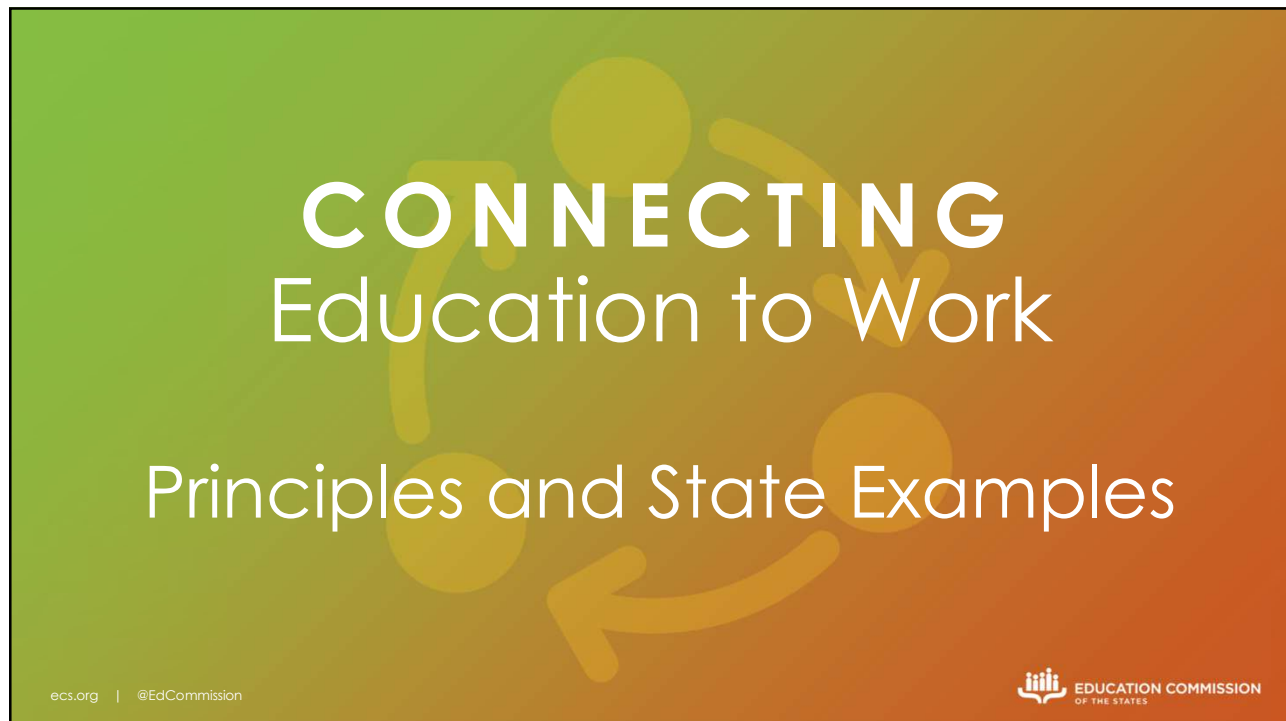
- Have you encountered any barriers to alignment between Postsecondary and Workforce?
- Which types of activities are most prevalent in your state? (awareness, exploration, preparation, training)



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CONNECTING
Education to Work

Principles and State Examples

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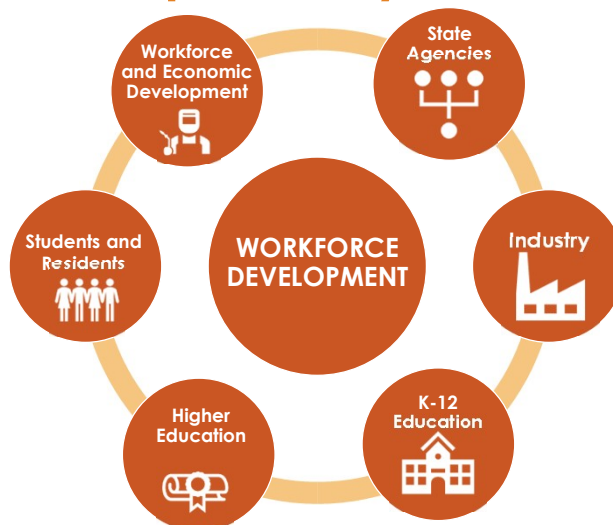


HOW DO STATES CONNECT EDUCATION AND WORK?



- Create opportunities for individuals to engage in education and training to support their current and future careers.
- Align and connect labor market and economic demands to education and training in the state.
- Consider and engage a range of stakeholders to inform and connect education paths that support people in building skills for jobs and careers.

Perspectives: Who informs state workforce development systems?



Considerations When Connecting Education to Work

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Principle 1

Design policy to support the diverse needs of people engaging, or re-engaging, with work-relevant education.

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Connecticut



CT Pathways Program

- Free classes to anyone who is eligible for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
- Available at all 12 community colleges with access to over 60 programs with high industry demand.

Principle 2

**Collaborate to develop
state and regional systems
that go beyond WIOA requirements.**

South Carolina



Supports technical colleges working with employers in their communities to develop educational curricula related to high-demand industries.

Principle 3

**Leverage existing data
and financial investments to align efforts
with policy goals.**

Kentucky



Kentucky Center for Statistics

- Compiles state data on education and the workforce in an accessible format that enables policymakers to identify local and regional opportunities and needs.

Missouri



Fast Track Workforce Incentive Grant

- Uses data from the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center each year to identify high-demand occupations for which students will receive financial aid.

Performance-Based Funding

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Louisiana



Board of Regents implements a performance-based funding formula at all public institutions

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Stop and chat:

- **Principle 1:** Design policy to support the diverse needs of people engaging, or re-engaging, with work-relevant education.
- **Principle 2:** Collaborate to develop state and regional systems that go beyond WIOA requirements.
- **Principle 3:** Leverage existing data and financial investments to align efforts with policy goals.

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State Education Policy Tracking

Search for enacted and vetoed education bills across the country.



CONNECTING Education to Work

Policy Trends

TK1
TK2

WORKFORCE Legislation Trends

Industry Specific Pathways

Teacher Pipeline

Postsecondary Access

Financial Incentives and Support

K-12 Transitions to Postsecondary Education and the Workforce

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INDUSTRY SPECIFIC PATHWAYS POLICY TRENDS

- Grants to support training and pathways for specific in-demand industries
- Pilot Programs to support a training pathway

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TK1 Lauren:

- partnerhips and working groups
- postsecondary access
- teacher pipeline

Tom Keily, 10/7/2024

TK2 Tom:

- Financial incentives and support
- K-12 transitions

Tom Keily, 10/7/2024

Georgia

- Established several working groups and commissions to study expanding the semiconductor industry.
- Goal of maximizing economic, educational, and workforce benefits provided to the state.



TEACHER PIPELINE POLICY TRENDS

- Certification and Licensure
- Recruitment and Retention
- Teacher Apprenticeship and Grow Your Own

Washington

- Established requirements for teacher apprenticeship and residency programs



POSTSECONDARY ACCESS POLICY TRENDS

- **Leveraging statewide data systems** and workforce data to equip students with the information they need to evaluate education and training options.
- **Engaging adult learners** with some college and non degree and individuals without a GED or high school diploma.
- **Creating high quality pathways** by easing transitions between institutions and supporting entry into the workforce.



FINANCIAL INCENTIVES AND SUPPORT POLICY TRENDS

- Funding to incentivize businesses to start and grow registered apprenticeships.
- Funding to procure equipment for instruction at schools and postsecondary institutions.
- Funding for individuals to pursue educational pathways in specific sectors.

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Kentucky

- Establishes the Kentucky Aerospace, Aviation, and Defense Investment Fund.
 - Aviation Training Scholarships.
 - Grants for equipment at high school vocational programs and public postsecondary education institutions.

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K-12 TRANSITIONS POLICY TRENDS

- Creating, offering, and supporting career exploration and work-based learning pathways for high school students.
- Connecting CTE coursework with credit toward high school graduation.
- Providing information and guidance for students on education and career opportunities.

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Maryland

- Requires schools to inform students of certain employment and skills training opportunities.

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Looking Ahead

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CREATING CREDENTIAL PATHWAYS IN HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

Establishing processes and a set of criteria for identifying and aligning nondegree pathways with degree pathways in high-demand and high-need fields.

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Upskilling and Reskilling

Creating pathways and partnerships
between education and employers.



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JV19



THANK YOU

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Slide 52

JV19 This version of the thank you slide is used for all Thought Leadership presentations.

Jacquelyn Villa, 3/7/2022

