



# 6 LESSONS FOR EMPLOYERS ON WORK-BASED LEARNING IN DELAWARE

Throughout 2023, members of the Delaware Business Roundtable Education Committee (DBREC) got the inside scoop from students, educators, employers, and trainers on work-based learning experiences for high school students.

About 60% of Delaware pathway graduates reported that their high school classes and activities provided skills, knowledge, or contacts that helped them in their current job. This percentage was higher among graduates who completed an immersive work-based learning experience (71%) than among those who hadn't (38%).

## What is work-based learning?

Work-based learning educational experiences are directly linked to real-world workplaces. Work-based learning ranges from guest speakers or workplace tours to an immersive apprenticeship.

### Work-based learning:



Helps student identify career options and start building relevant skills



Opportunity for junior senior staff to build their management skills



Introduces employers to their future workforce and connects industry to new and diverse perspectives



Creates a qualified local workforce for Delaware – securing the state's economic future



Supports schools in meeting state-wide workforce development standards

Alanna Denault

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## Employer lessons:



**1 Pilot a work-based learning program to see what works**

Looking to jump into work-based learning? Start small, see what works, then continue to build.

"We started with one to three students in a summer internship to see how it would go. It was an easy way to get started and now we're looking to expand." Dave Gilardi, CSC

## 2 Investing early means investing local.

Investing in college-aged interns is still a helpful way to attract talent, but many are likely going back to other states where they live. Investing in local high school students means that there's a higher likelihood that they'll stay in Delaware.



## 3 Pressure test the limits of working with students under 18.

There are many assumptions about working with students under 18—and not all are true. Seek out experts like the Office of Work-Based Learning to get the facts.

"In our healthcare environment, we thought there would be rigid restrictions on working with students. But when our legal team looked into it, there wasn't any real barrier in writing."

~ Margaret LaFashia, Director of Workforce Partnerships, Nemours Children's Health

## 4 Explore collaborations between college and high school interns.

Already offer internships for college students? Consider what can be transferred to the high school level.

"Our college internship program has been a successful part of WSFS's recruitment strategy. Now we're eager to see how college students can provide mentorship and support to our new high school internship program." Arthur J. Bacci, Executive Vice President, Chief Wealth Officer and Interim Chief Financial Officer, WSFS Bank

## 5 Align pathways with our larger workforce development strategy.

With 24 career pathways, Delaware is poised to build a platform that connects the dots between what employers need and the career pathways.



## 6 Consider students' needs, and make it more than just a summer job.

Support wraparound needs—logistics like transportation, internet access, and others into consideration—and offer something of value to high schoolers.

"Student interns who participated in the Yes We Tech program gained polished resumes, and two credentials valued by industries focused on digital skills and workplace readiness."

-Zakiyyah Ali, Director, Tech Council of Delaware

**Ready to get involved? Visit:**

Delaware Office of Work-Based Learning:  
[www.dowbl.org](http://www.dowbl.org)

Delaware Pathways: [www.delawarepathways.org](http://www.delawarepathways.org)

Tech Council of Delaware:  
[www.techcouncilofdelaware.org](http://www.techcouncilofdelaware.org)

Delaware Workforce Development Board Strategic Plan:  
<https://bit.ly/3JdDWyy>

Visit us at: [www.dbrec.co](http://www.dbrec.co)