

The Individual Career and Academic Plan: Addition of Work-Based Learning

Introduction

Legislation was passed during the 2022 legislative session under [SF 2382 Division II](#) which adds a new component to the Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) process under [Iowa Code section 279.61](#), [HF 2392](#), requiring school districts to incorporate work-based learning (WBL) into the student's individual career and academic plan (ICAP).

Specifically, the addition states:

Identify the coursework and work-based learning needed in grades nine-twelve to support the student's postsecondary education and career options.

What does this mean?

Districts should identify the WBL courses and courses with embedded WBL experiences in grades nine through twelve. Once courses are identified, districts will need to incorporate WBL information, embedded coursework and WBL experiences into the student's 4-year planning process. This also includes the annual review and revision of their course selections to provide students with the opportunity to select coursework and identify opportunities to gain hands-on experience. The thoughtful planning through the individual career and academic plan supports each student in moving towards graduation with a plan for their postsecondary path.

For a full overview of work-based learning, including the updated WBL definition with the passage of [Senate File 2411](#) in May 2024 and subsequent restructuring of the prior WBL continuum to the umbrella term, career-connected learning (CCL), please refer to the [Iowa Department of Education's CCL website](#).

Common Questions

What does "identify the coursework and work-based learning" mean?

Identifying coursework and work-based learning (WBL)" requires students to select academic courses and hands-on experiences that align with their career and educational goals. WBL includes structured activities where students engage with industry professionals in real-world settings, applying academic, technical, and professional skills. These experiences help students connect classroom learning to real-world tasks, providing valuable insights into different career fields. In the context of the Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP), this process involves choosing opportunities that directly support postsecondary and career aspirations. By integrating WBL into their academic plan, students gain both the knowledge and practical skills needed for success in higher education and their future careers. This combination of coursework and WBL not only helps students make informed decisions about their career paths but also builds a solid foundation for their postsecondary goals.

Once courses have been identified as a WBL course, what are opportunities for districts to indicate this for reporting purposes as well as sharing with students and families?

Districts have been requested to review the [Work-Based Learning Course Naming and Coding](#) to communicate WBL courses. By using the identified course naming and coding guidelines, district WBL courses will automatically report during the secondary CTE reporting application and communicated on the [Iowa Student Outcomes website](#).

Districts are encouraged to think about how they share information with students and families as part of course selection and yearly course plan review and incorporate WBL information into the process. One consideration is for districts to designate WBL embedded courses in their course selection handbook. This would be similar to the process that districts use to connect students with concurrent enrollment opportunities, NCAA considerations, college admissions requirements, etc.

How should a district begin identifying work-based learning experiences to include in their district plans?

District teams should identify experiences currently available to students and how to thoughtfully expand work-based learning in the district.

1. Take inventory of work-based learning courses and courses containing embedded work-based learning experiences available to students. Consider using the [WBL embedding worksheet](#) to support the inventory process.
2. Record the collected work-based learning courses and embedded experiences in the updated [District Career and Academic Plan template](#).
3. Consider completing the [Work-Based Learning Self-Assessment Tool](#) as a district team to identify opportunities to increase quality work-based learning with an array of accessible experiences available to students.

For a full overview of ICAP, please refer to the released [ICAP Overview](#) document.