

School Board Executive Summary



Topic: “Find the Why” Career Discovery with Symphony Workforce

Date: February 9, 2026

Presented by: Dr. Mark Weichel, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning

Recommended Action:

- ☒ Information Only
- ☐ Presentation/Discussion
- ☐ Discussion/Action by Board of Education
- ☐ Presentation/Action Next Meeting

Recommendation(s): None at this time. Update to the Board of Education regarding a career exploration partnership with Symphony Workforce. <https://symphonyworkforce.org/>

Background: Westside Community Schools has the opportunity to serve as the anchor public school district for a regional career exploration and workforce initiative with Symphony Workforce, and in partnership with the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce and the Aksarben Foundation. This opportunity centers on “*Find the Why*”, a nationally recognized platform that connects students to real-world, industry-aligned challenges and skill-based learning experiences. The platform continues to gain traction locally, with Nebraska Medicine shifting its high school and college recruiting exclusively to “*Find the Why*” and Clarkson College, requiring all 1,200 students to onboard through the platform.

As an anchor district, Westside would help shape how this work is implemented locally, while positioning our students for early access to employers, industry challenges, and career exploration opportunities aligned to district priorities.

“*Find the Why*” is a career exploration and talent discovery platform that allows students to demonstrate skills through authentic, real-world challenges rather than grades or resumes. Students engage in short, meaningful challenges tied to industry problems and may earn microcredentials based on demonstrated skills, all while exploring interests without early commitment to a specific pathway.

Participation is flexible and can be embedded into existing coursework, co-curricular opportunities, or stand-alone challenges, with no schedule changes required. The focus remains on relevance, exploration, and helping students see clear connections between learning and future opportunities.

This opportunity aligns directly with the District's focus on student engagement, relevance, and postsecondary readiness. It also complements the opening of the College, Career, and Life Readiness Center and Innovation Lab by providing a scalable platform for employer-aligned experiences.

Through partnerships with the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce and the Aksarben Foundation, Westside has access to the *"Find the Why"* platform, with student licenses supported through external funding. This evening, the Board will hear directly from the CEO of Symphony Workforce, who will outline the program in more detail and share examples of student experiences through the platform.

Attachment(s): None