



# **CAC Study Report: Student Internships/Student Career Partnerships**

## **Student Internships/Career Partnerships**

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## **Study Objectives**

What are the best practices in developing a high school student internship/career partnership program? What resources are available to partner with in the Wyoming Community and throughout the Cincinnati region? What scheduling structures and teacher assignments allow for the greatest flexibility for our students to participate in an internship/partnership? How do we maximize our ability to establish partnerships to support this endeavor?

## **Methodology and Research**

In order to best understand and advise the Board on the subject of Student Internships and Career Experiences, our team researched the following questions, categorized by the broader questions of the WHY, the HOW, and the WHO of a Student Internship or Career Partnership program:

Why:

- In what ways would a Student Internship/Career Partnership program benefit the students in Wyoming?

How:

- What has the district done in the past in this area?
- What existing models can we look to as examples or possibilities?
- What obstacles can we anticipate as we look towards a student internship program?

Who:

- What resources can we leverage in building a successful Student Internship program? (Personnel, business networks, finances)
- Who would run this program, and who would participate?

To explore these questions in depth, we used a variety of methods. We spoke formally and informally with current WHS staff members, administrators from other districts, business leaders, and the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) members and leaders. We researched other schools- public and private- that run successful internships or programs that achieve similar goals. Finally, we examined a variety of high school schedules, keeping in mind the massive impact that providing such a program would have on the high school schedule.

**Why (Purpose):**

Internship programs promote collaboration between schools, families, and the broader community. By forging partnerships with local businesses and organizations, students gain access to valuable learning experiences beyond the classroom.

Internships epitomize innovation in education by providing students with hands-on, real-world learning experiences. These programs empower students to take charge of their educational journey, aligning with the student-centered approach advocated by the district.

Engaging in real-world settings through internships builds character and integrity. Students learn the importance of responsibility, ethical behavior, and accountability, instilling values that extend beyond the classroom.

Internship experiences contribute to the holistic development of the whole child. Beyond academic growth, students acquire social, emotional, and practical skills, ensuring they are well-rounded individuals ready for the challenges of the future.

The College, Career, Workforce, and Military Readiness component (CCWMR) of the Ohio school report card is intended to measure how prepared the graduating class from a district or building is to go on to post-secondary education, enter the workforce, or join the armed forces. This component will not be rated or included in the overall rating for schools and districts until the 2024-2025 school year at the earliest, but the district would like to begin building a foundation now in order to meet the requirements of this component in the future.

**How (Logistics):**

If Wyoming is looking to implement an internship/career experience program in the future, there are countless models to look to, from low-stakes to high-stakes, from experiences that are minimally disruptive to those that would require an overhaul of the high school’s bell schedule. Listed below are a handful of models, organized by Experience Type:

<b>Experience Type</b>	<b>Timing/ Schedule</b>	<b>School/ District that currently uses this model</b>	<b>Special Features/ Notes</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
Shadowing	One Day, during the school year or summer (employer decides)	<a href="#">University School of Milwaukee;</a> <a href="#">Indian Hill</a>	-Works particularly well for medical professions	-Immersive Experience -Low commitment for employer -Great exploratory option	-Little opportunity to do meaningful work FOR the employer

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Opportunity for just about any career field</li> <li>-No school scheduling issues</li> </ul>	
2-4 week Summer Internship	Summer	<a href="#">University School of Milwaukee, Indian Hill</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students can apply for these positions</li> <li>-Option to add a Job Skills course or workshop series</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ability to see many facets of the workplace, as students are not limited to 1 hour time blocks</li> <li>- More flexible timing</li> <li>-No school scheduling issues</li> <li>-Lends itself well to intra-district internships and experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-More limited ability to reflect/present to others.</li> <li>-Curricular integration limited or dependent on the student/ employer</li> </ul>
Internship as an independent course (year-long or semester)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Semester- or year-long</li> <li>-Early Release or Late start</li> </ul>	(Wyoming has done this in the past)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students take advantage of Early Release or Late Start</li> <li>-Students paid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Consistency with students and employers</li> <li>-Wide exposure to daily life in the field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Impacts on schedule</li> <li>-Students in athletics have difficulty attending internships and then returning for sports</li> </ul>
Entrepreneurship/ innovation course/track with whole-class or individual field studies	-Semester or year-long course	Madeira	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Business/ Entrepreneurship focus</li> <li>-Field trips happen as a class and directly relate to the project that the class has chosen to pursue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Opportunity for real-world application and/or observation relevant to the course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Success largely dependent on the teacher</li> <li>-Would need to build from ground zero</li> <li>-Experiences/observations dependent on the class</li> </ul>
Internship/ Career Experience as integral and/or required	Year-Long Program	<a href="#">DePaul Cristo Rey</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students are paid, and their earnings are used towards their tuition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Becomes a trademark of the district</li> <li>-Allows students to fully explore</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Would require an overhaul of scheduling (Block scheduling? 4-day in-class)</li> </ul>

				a career path before finishing high school and deciding what comes next	work and 1 day work experience?) -Personnel- if teachers are asked to do this on top of their regular course loads, there is high likelihood of burnout
Capstone Project	Year-Long Program/ Course	<a href="#">Hawaii Preparatory Academy</a>	-One teacher oversees this elective course and helps students make connections with relevant businesses/fields -Students study one subject/problem in depth and connect with field leaders as part of their research -Students present to a panel as their final summative assessment/project -Experience is not so much career- oriented as it is curricular, although there will likely be overlaps	-Highly individualized , based on interest of each student -Students	-Highly individualized, so depending on interest would require hiring full-time coordinator

(Note: [Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy](#) offers a entrepreneurship/sustainability certificate, incorporating multiple models listed above, including year-long courses related to entrepreneurship and a capstone project.)

**Obstacles:**

Of course, no one model listed above will perfectly align with another district’s mission, demographics, and circumstances; it is imperative to consider Wyoming’s particularities in building its own Student Internship/Career Partnership program. Our team identified obstacles in four major categories:

- *Scheduling*

- Wyoming's graduation requirements, which supersede state requirements, are rigorous. Where does this class (likely an elective) "fit"?
- If the high school decides to implement this course during the first or last bell, would seniors forfeit their Early Release/Late Arrival privilege? Does this require that all core classes take place between bells 2-6? How limiting would this be for wider scheduling?
- *Accountability*
  - In order to ensure that the experience is meaningful, accountability measures would need to be in place. How can students demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have gained throughout the experience? Are students paid for their work? How are they graded? Who ensures that students get the necessary work permits?
- *Personnel*
  - Much of the success of such a program would hinge upon a dedicated staff/faculty member committed to the program's success. In order for this experience to be meaningful for students and partners alike, this person would be responsible for creating/maintaining business partnerships, holding students accountable for their work and progress, preparing students for success in their positions, and advocating/recruiting for the program. The school must be prepared to communicate value to this position through compensation and support. What would this position look like, considering that some of the work, coordination and accountability could take place over the summer, depending on the model Wyoming adopts?
- *Identifying the ideal candidates for this experience*
  - In a district where over 90% of students attend college, who does this program target as its main beneficiaries? Is it the high-achievers who are building their resumes for colleges and internships, and are exploring various career paths? Would this program be better suited for students who have chosen to stay in Wyoming but who are more interested in technical college or apprenticeships? Who would benefit most?
    - \*One extra consideration in this category is the issue of transportation. How do students get to/from their internships? Is the program limited to those who can drive? Who would that disqualify? How can we make this experience maximally accessible?

### **Who (Partnerships):**

There are several populations of students who could benefit from a program like this. High achieving students, students who require higher levels of support, and students who might traditionally attend Scarlet Oaks. Determining which population of students will impact which model of program WCS would implement and how many students could participate in the program.

In order to run a successful program, a dedicated personnel resource would need to be available to coordinate student/employer placements as well as maintain accountability and the academic rigor needed to earn credit for this course.

WCS would need to partner with various employers and external parties to ensure students have various opportunities available. The Business Advisory Committee, a consortium of schools and industry leaders, is a great resource that is trying to improve the high school-to-workforce pipeline for several industries (medical, manufacturing, construction, etc.). There are also several programs already in place at local higher education institutions or through the state: CIQS (Careers Involving Quantitative Skills) Day, Girls Who Code, and the High Tech Internship program.

Another opportunity for partnerships would be with local organizations that cater to specific professional lines of work, such as the National Society of Professional Engineers chapters, the Ohio Society of CPAs, and others, to determine if they have any programming that could be utilized.

### **Findings**

Starting an Internship/Career Partnership program from ground zero is a massive undertaking, requiring the establishment of accountability structures for students, the building and maintenance of business partnerships, and ongoing reflection practices for each individual student involved. Schools and districts who run similar successful programs have a dedicated staff member who oversees the program as their main responsibility.

Every school that runs an internship program has a different purpose, based on their specific mission, values, and demographics. Before a district/school dives into the logistics of such a program (scheduling, who would run it, what type of model to adopt), it must first answer the questions of “Who” (which students this program would target) and “Why” (what is the value-add *for those students*).

Once the “Who” and the “Why” have been established, the “How” now has a framework in which to work. Schedule, model, personnel, partnerships, and accountability all center around the goals of the program and the students it serves. This is not to say that multiple groups can’t be served by running multiple distinct programs, but each program must lead with its own purpose.

**WHY:** Internship programs promote collaboration, innovation, and real-world application by forging partnerships with businesses, providing students with hands-on experiences, building character, and contributing to the holistic development of well-rounded individuals. These programs also address the College, Career, Workforce, and Military Readiness (CCWM) report card component.

**HOW:** There are countless models to look to and a wide range of experience types. Some would be minimally disruptive, and some would require an overhaul of the high school’s bell schedule. Determining which student population would be targeted would impact these decisions, or some of these models might dictate which student population might be better equipped for certain models.

**WHO:** There are many local businesses and organizations that WCS could partner with to assist with the execution of this type of program. Depending on the student population targeted by the program, these partners and organizations might shift or change. A dedicated personnel

resource will be necessary for this program to succeed in order to have accountability, and to ensure the academic goals are being met.

## **Recommendations and Conclusions**

### Identify Target Student Population and Goals

- Implement applicable scheduling structures and designate one or more internship coordinators among staff to guide students through the process, ensuring a seamless integration of internships with academic goals.

### Resource Mobilization and Program Promotion

- Allocate a resource who can devote an appropriate amount of time to develop a marketing plan to promote the program, and actively seek external funding sources or partnerships to enhance internship opportunities, aligning with the district's mission and values.

### Strategic Community Engagement

- Establish a dedicated team to facilitate collaboration with local businesses, nonprofit organizations such as the Business Advisory Council, and community leaders, hosting informational events to promote the internship program.