

Q: What is CTAE?

A: Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education

Q: Are there any resources to help my student find a WBL placement in their selected CTAE pathways? Can you help them find a job?

A: Yes, there are several resources available to help your student find a WBL placement in their selected CTAE pathway. We maintain a list of current and past business partners, which has been shared directly with students enrolled in the WBL program. This list is a great starting point, but students are also encouraged to explore opportunities on their own or through family and community connections.

Throughout the year, we provide multiple opportunities to support student placement. Each February, we host an annual Career Fair focused on student employment, bringing together a variety of local employers. We also offer career-specific workshops during the school year to help students explore internship opportunities and prepare for the application process. In addition, I regularly share any job openings or internship opportunities that are sent to me directly by employers.

While I do not place students in jobs directly, I am here to support them every step of the way. I can assist with reviewing resumes, preparing for interviews, and offering guidance on how to connect with potential employers. A key part of the WBL experience is developing the skills needed to search for and secure a position that aligns with their career goals.

If your student needs help getting started or has questions about the process, I'm happy to meet with them.

Q: Are students still required to work during school holidays, breaks, or shortened weeks (such as Labor Day or MLK Day)?

A: Yes. Students are expected to adjust their work schedules to account for school holidays and breaks. Even when school is not in session, students are still responsible for meeting their weekly and monthly hour requirements. Planning ahead is key to staying on track.

Q: Is there a required total number of hours for the school year?

A: Yes. Students enrolled in one WBL course are expected to work 5 hours per week (20 hours per month), and those enrolled in two WBL courses are expected to work 10 hours per week (40 hours per month). These expectations apply from August through

May, as outlined in the course agreement. Students are expected to consistently meet these requirements each month.

Q: Can students complete all of their required hours early and be done with the course before May?

A: No. While students may exceed the minimum required hours in a given month, they are still required to remain actively employed and engaged in their placement from August through May. Early completion of hours does not exempt a student from continued participation unless prior approval is granted.

Q: What are the requirements for WBL placements in a student's specific CTAE pathway (for example, Architecture)?

A: For students in a CTAE pathway enrolled in the IB Career Programme (IBCP), WBL placements must align with their selected pathway or be related to careers built on the foundation of that pathway. For example, a student in the Architecture pathway may pursue placements in related fields such as construction, engineering, interior design, or other areas that support or complement architectural work. The goal is to ensure the experience is meaningful and supports the student's career interests and coursework.

Q: Is there a list of local employers who have employed students with an AV Tech & Film interest or other CTAE pathways?

A: Yes. We maintain a list of current and past business partners who have worked with students across a variety of CTAE pathways, including AV Tech & Film. This list is shared directly with students enrolled in the Work-Based Learning (WBL) program. While it is a helpful resource, students are expected to take the lead in reaching out to potential employers. Part of the WBL experience includes developing employability skills, and that starts with students contacting businesses directly, not parents.

Q: What should my student do if they haven't found a WBL position and have no leads by the July 30 deadline? Can the school help with placement?

A: While the school does not directly place students in jobs or internships, we provide resources and support to guide students through the process. If your student is struggling to find a placement, here are several recommended steps:

- **Search Online:** Use job boards and company websites to look for internships or entry-level positions related to their CTAE pathway.

- **Make Phone Calls and Visit in Person:** Calling or visiting local businesses in Decatur can help students make a strong impression. Many employers respond positively to students who show initiative.
- **Network:** Talk to friends in the WBL program and ask if their employers might be open to taking on another student.
- **Contact Your CTAE Teacher:** They may have industry contacts or advice related to the specific career pathway.
- **Check Shared Opportunities:** The WBL coordinator shares job leads when available, but placements are not guaranteed.

If no placement is secured by **July 30**, the student should schedule a meeting with the WBL coordinator to discuss options. Early communication is key, and we're here to help guide students through the process.

Q: My student is enrolled in the IB Career Program. If they are unable to find a WBL placement, can they complete additional coursework instead?

A: No, additional coursework cannot replace the required WBL placement for students in the IB Career Program. The WBL experience is a core component of the program and is essential to meeting the IB CP requirements.

If a student has not yet secured a placement, they should continue actively searching and use their WBL class period to pursue potential opportunities. Students will be provided with a journal to log their outreach efforts, which helps ensure that their time is being used productively.

The expectation remains that all IB CP students secure a placement aligned with their CTAE pathway. If your student is having difficulty, they should reach out for support as early as possible.

Q: Is the WBL release time scheduled as 1 hour every day, or in a larger block 1–2 days per week?

A: WBL is scheduled during 7th or 8th period, which runs for 90 minutes on odd/even days (Monday through Thursday) and 40 minutes on Fridays. This allows students a larger block of time to work at their placement.

Student schedules are created by the counseling department, and I do not have access to individual schedules. I am unable to confirm which period a student is assigned for WBL at this time.

Q: How can my student secure a WBL job if they don't know their school schedule yet to work around it?

A: WBL is always scheduled at the end of the school day. Students taking two WBL periods will be scheduled for both 7th and 8th periods, while students taking one WBL period will be scheduled for 8th period only. Students can use the current bell schedule, available on the school's website, as a reference to plan their work availability.

Q: Can my child perform WBL at a business that I own, as long as they are supervised by one of the other business owners?

A: Yes, as long as your student is not supervised by an immediate family member. WBL placements must be supervised by someone who is not related to the student to ensure an objective and professional work experience. This policy helps maintain the integrity of the program and meets state requirements.

Q: I requested to switch out of Work-Based Learning on my course request form last spring. Who do I speak with about that?

A: Schedule changes must be handled by your student's counselor. You will need to complete a schedule change request form when you return to school. I do not have access to student schedules and am not able to make any schedule adjustments. Please consult your counselor directly for support.

Q: Why hasn't the DHS WBL program established stronger partnerships with local businesses for IB Career Program (IBCP) students, especially in Architecture? It has been difficult to find placements for students who are under 18, not in college, or not pursuing an architectural degree.

A: The DHS WBL program has established working relationships with a variety of businesses in our community to support IBCP students, and many of our students are currently interning or working within the local area. However, it is important to understand that certain industries, particularly architecture, may have limitations that are outside of the school's control.

Many architecture firms set their own internship requirements, which can include being over 18, enrolled in college, or already holding a degree. Additionally, several firms in

Decatur are individually owned and may not be equipped to host high school students due to limitations like software licensing or liability concerns.

Despite these challenges, our Decatur Career Academy (DCA) programs are growing rapidly and producing talented students who are gaining attention. As the program continues to grow in both quality and visibility, we expect more local businesses will begin to open their doors to our students in the future. In the meantime, we encourage students to be open to placements in related fields such as construction, engineering, or interior design, which are all connected to the architecture pathway and offer valuable, career-relevant experience.

Q: When is the deadline to secure a WBL placement?

A: Students must have a qualifying placement secured by the first week of school. If a placement is not secured by that time, a meeting with the WBL coordinator is required to discuss next steps.

Q: Can students change WBL placements during the school year?

A: Yes, but changes must be approved by the WBL coordinator. Students must submit proper documentation, and the new placement must still align with their CTAE pathway if enrolled in the IB Career Programme. Students are expected to remain actively employed throughout the year.

Q: What happens if my student loses their job or internship during the school year?

A: If a student loses their placement, they must immediately notify the WBL coordinator. They are responsible for securing a new placement. Failure to do so in a timely manner may impact their grade and course credit.

Q: Can WBL hours be completed on weekends or outside of school hours?

A: Yes. Students can work during evenings, weekends, or other non-school hours as long as they are meeting the required number of hours per week or month.

The assigned WBL period during the school day should be used for working, commuting to work, or preparing for work-related responsibilities (such as professional development, job search efforts, or completing required logs). WBL is not a free period, early release, or study hall. Students are expected to be off campus and actively engaged in their placement or related activities during that time.

Q: Can students work for more than one employer to meet their hours?

A: Yes, but both employers must be approved, and the student must be able to meet the program's expectations at each site. All hours must be properly documented.

Q: Can students work remotely for their WBL placement?

A: Hybrid or remote placements may be approved on a case-by-case basis. There is a state-approved hybrid plan in place that allows students to work both in-person and remotely, as long as the experience meets program expectations. Students must have a clear plan for supervision, accountability, and regular communication with their employer. All remote or hybrid placements must be approved in advance by the WBL coordinator.

Q: Can my student use side jobs like babysitting, dog walking, or lawn care as their WBL placement?

A: No. Side jobs such as babysitting, dog walking, lawn care, or similar informal work do not meet the requirements for Work-Based Learning. WBL placements must be with a registered business or organization where students are supervised by a non-family member and can develop employability and career-related skills. The experience must also align with program expectations and be appropriately documented for credit.

Q: Do students need to be paid in their WBL placements?

A: For most students, WBL placements must be paid. However, there are exceptions based on the student's program track:

- **IB Career Programme (IBCP):** Placements may be paid or non-paid, but they must align with the student's CTAE pathway.
- **CTI (Career Technical Instruction):** Students may participate in unpaid placements that focus on life skills development.
- **YAP (Youth Apprenticeship Program):** Placements must be paid.
- **ESD (Independent track students):** Placements must be paid. In rare cases, a non-paid placement may be approved in advance if it clearly supports the student's long-term career goals. Independent students should have completed

at least one CTAE course prior to participating in WBL.

All placements, whether paid or unpaid, must meet the standards of the WBL program and be approved by the WBL coordinator.

Q: How are students graded in WBL?

A: Students are graded based on several key components that reflect both their workplace performance and program participation. These include:

- Completion of required work hours
- Uploading pay stubs or supervisor-verified hour logs
- Attendance at required monthly WBL meetings
- Participation in WIN workshops
- Journal entries for non-paid placements
- Employer evaluations
- Overall engagement and communication with the WBL coordinator

Consistently meeting these expectations is necessary in order to earn credit for the course. Failure to meet requirements may result in a lowered grade or removal from the program.