



WILLOUGHBY-EASTLAKE  
CITY SCHOOLS

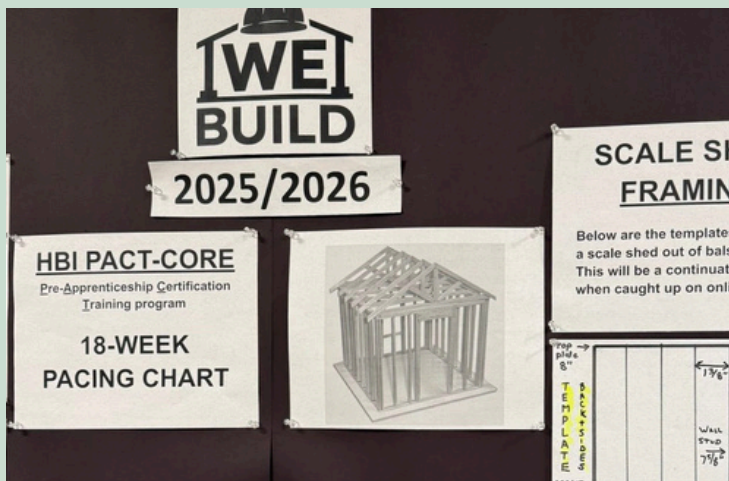
# Workforce Development: Career Connections, Capstones and CTE



## Tiered Approach to Career Readiness

Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools is transitioning from a consortium-based approach to a comprehensive career technical education (CTE) model, beginning in the 2026–2027 school year. This move allows the district to expand CTE access, retain local control, and directly serve students in grades 11–12 with high-quality, career-aligned programs delivered within district facilities.

The transition is in response to growing student demand. More than 60% of current sophomores have expressed interest in pursuing CTE pathways and reflects the district's long-term commitment to building a future-ready workforce pipeline in partnership with industries to meet Ohio's economic and labor market needs.



## Why is a Tiered Program Important?

- Expands local student access to in-demand career pathways
- Aligns education with Ohio's workforce needs
- Builds sustainable partnerships with industry and colleges
- Provides training on modern, professional-grade equipment



### Career Connections (Grades 7-8)

Early exposure and exploration across Ohio's 16 career fields



### Career Capstones (Grades 9-10)

Project-based learning aligned to career clusters, with student agency and real-world application, leveraging AI and hands on modules in our Immersion Hubs



### CTE Pathways (Grades 11-12)

In-depth training for careers, college, and/or apprenticeships in high-demand fields



## Workforce Development: Career Connections

### Career Connections: Grades 7-8

It is never too early for students to start imagining their futures. Career Connections gives middle school students the chance to explore career pathways in engaging, hands-on ways while developing the foundational skills they will carry into high school and beyond.

This course helps students see how classroom learning translates into marketable skills valued by today's workforce. Through interactive projects, career exploration modules, and connections with local businesses, students gain early exposure to career fields and the confidence to begin making informed decisions about their futures.

Teachers have the flexibility to tailor experiences to Ohio's in-demand jobs and align learning with local workforce priorities, ensuring students see the direct relevance of what they are learning.



### How Does it Benefit Students?

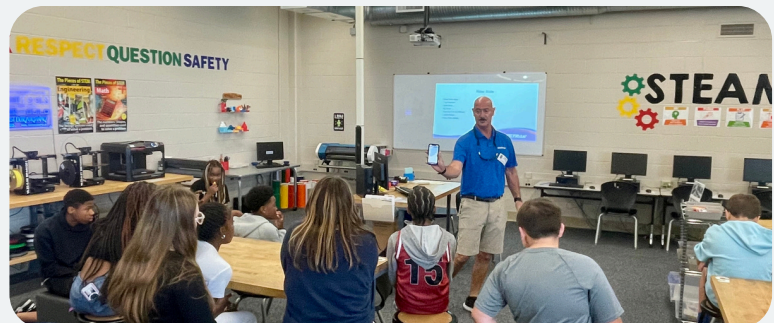
By participating in Career Connections, students:

- Explore Ohio's 16 career pathways in a low-risk, supportive setting.
- Build transferable skills identified in our Portrait of a Graduate, such as collaboration, problem-solving, and communication.
- Engage in authentic, career-related activities that spark curiosity and motivation.
- Begin developing a vision for their future pathway in high school and beyond.



*This course is offered at all four of our middle schools, giving every 7th and 8th grader the opportunity to take the first step toward a meaningful career journey.*

Middle School Principal





## Workforce Development: Career Capstones

### Career Capstones: Grades 9-10

Career exploration empowers every student to take ownership of their learning and build the skills to thrive in a changing world. No matter what a student's plans are after graduation, they all share one common goal: a meaningful career.

These self-directed courses combine project-based learning aligned to career pathways with real-world application. Students leverage AI tools and hands-on modules in our Immersion Hubs, gaining both technical skills and agency to design their own learning journey.

Students explore through hands-on, risk-free experiences, learn with purposeful connections to career pathways and demonstrate by applying skills through authentic projects that showcase growth and future goals. Students demonstrate at the end of Capstone their growth in the Portrait of a Graduate competencies.

Grounded in our Portrait of a Graduate competencies—communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, empathy, and resilience, Capstone Courses prepare students for career success and lifelong purpose.



### High School Capstone Courses



#### Skilled Trades Pathways:

Transportation Systems, Construction Technologies, Manufacturing, Law & Public Safety



#### Business & Finance Pathways:

Business & Administrative Services, Finance, Marketing, Hospitality & Tourism



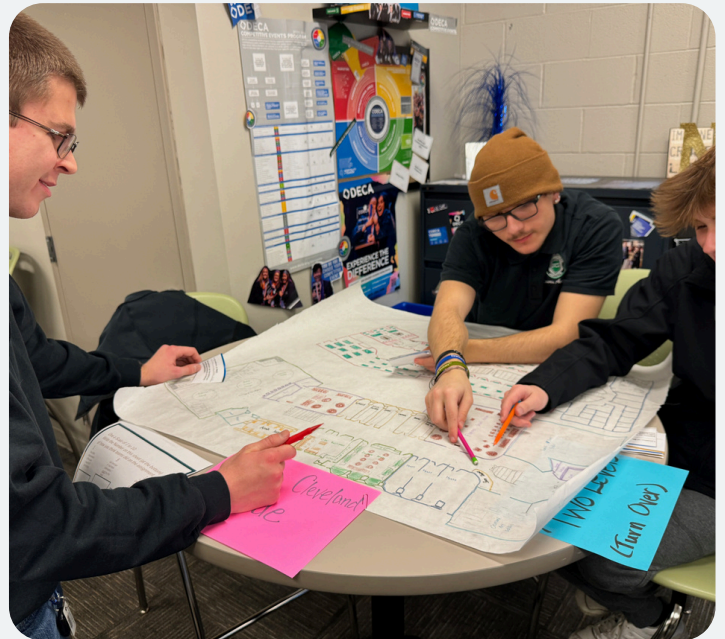
#### STEM & Technical Careers Pathways:

Agricultural & Environmental Systems, Engineering & Science Technology, Information Technology



#### Art, Health & Human Services Pathways:

Arts & Communication, Education & Training, Human Services, Health Science





## Workforce Development: Career Courses



### Career Courses: W-E Build

Launched in the 2025-2026 school year for 11th and 12th grade students in partnership with the Home Builders Institute (HBI) is the WE Build program. WE Build is a one year program offered at Eastlake North High School and Willoughby South High School. Students are exposed to all facets of the building industry. With strong industry partnerships and nationally recognized training, WE Build gives students a head start toward meaningful, in-demand careers.

#### **WE Build 1 – Foundations of Construction (1st Semester)**

Students gain essential knowledge and hands-on practice in basic safety, trade math, measurement, and the use of construction tools and materials. They also develop the professional skills, like teamwork and reliability, needed to succeed in today's workforce. Curriculum is delivered through the Home Builders Institute's Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate Training (PACT) program, giving students a nationally recognized credential.

#### **WE Build 2 – Advanced Skills and Internship (2nd Semester)**

Students build on their foundation with advanced training and the opportunity to gain real-world experience through an internship. To qualify, students must successfully complete WE Build 1 and meet program criteria. Internship participants provide their own transportation to job sites. This experience connects classroom learning to authentic work environments and helps students launch their future in the skilled trades.

### Career Courses: Cybersecurity

In partnership with Paradigm Cyber, students will prepare for one of the fastest-growing and most in-demand career fields. No prior experience in computer science or cybersecurity is required, just curiosity and a willingness to learn.

#### **Students will explore:**

- Cyber Ethics & Fundamentals of Computing
- Networking, Cryptography, Linux & System Administration
- Cybersecurity Threats & Risk Identification

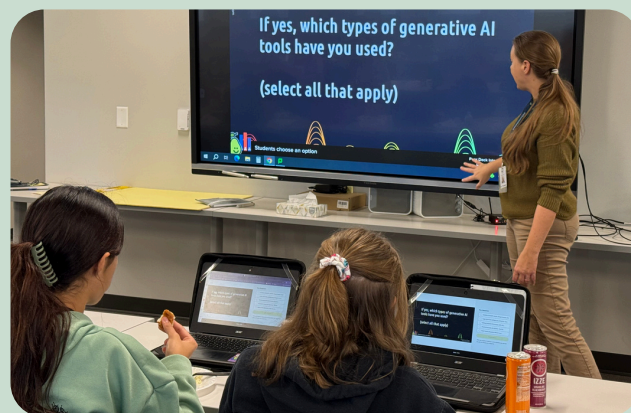
Learning is interactive and engaging, with students participating in simulations, real-world cybersecurity applications, and competitions that build both knowledge and confidence.

#### **Program Pathway**

- Cyber 1 (10th Grade): Introductory course now available
- Cyber 2 (11th Grade): Planned launch in 2026-2027
- Cyber 3 (12th Grade): Planned launch in 2027-2028

#### **Certifications & Credentials**

Students will have the opportunity to pursue industry-recognized certifications, opening doors to careers and college pathways. Cybersecurity gives students the skills to protect the future in a digital world.



### RESOURCES

