

Work-based Learning in South Dakota

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is work-based learning (WBL)?

Work-based Learning is an opportunity for students to learn about the world of work while still in school. Federal legislation known as the Carl Perkins Act further defines WBL as *“sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.”*

What does work-based learning look like in South Dakota?

South Dakota recognizes three stages of work-based learning: Exploration, Engagement, and Experiences.



Can students earn high school credit for participating in work-based learning experiences?

The South Dakota Department of Education offers five high school [Capstone Courses](#) that allow students to participate in a work-based learning experience. These courses include:

- Senior Experience (80019)
- Entrepreneurship Experience (80026)
- Service Learning (22104)
- Youth Internship (80018)
- Youth Apprenticeship (80020)

What are the differences between each of the Capstone work-based learning (WBL) courses available for high school credit?

Each of the five Capstone courses are intended to provide students with uniquely different ways to participate in a work-based learning (WBL) experience. A detailed comparison is available [DOE's Capstone Experiences](#) page.

How much time is required for a student to earn credit for a work-based learning (WBL) Capstone Experience?

Determination for assigning credit should follow the guidance in [Administrative Rule 24:43:01:01](#) which states that: *“a unit of credit may be granted verifying competency of content through an end-of course-exam, alternative assessments demonstrating content knowledge, or 146 hours of class time. Fractional units of credit may be granted based upon proportionate time spent in class”.*

All Capstone Experience courses includes several components outlined in the state-approved course standards. These required components include hands-on experiences with a worksite mentor, the completion of a personal learning plan, and a professional portfolio. Additional activities may also be completed by students enrolled in a Capstone WBL course to receive high school credit for their experience.

Youth Apprenticeship and Youth Internship are very similar. How are these experiences different?

The Youth Apprenticeship Capstone and the Youth Internship Capstone courses are both work-based learning experiences available to students for high school credit in South Dakota and both are valuable opportunities for students to engage in career-connected learning. A full comparison between these two experiences is available on [Page 5 of the Youth Apprenticeship Capstone Framework](#).

Are schools required to offer work-based learning experiences to students?

Schools are required to offer at least one of the five available Capstone Courses to high school students before they graduate. Details on these graduation requirements are included in [Administrative Rule 24:43:11:07](#) and can also be found in the DOE Graduation Handbook.

Are work-based learning (WBL) opportunities important to offer to students?

Yes! Work-based learning is a key component to high quality career and technical education programs, and these courses allow students the opportunity to being to explore and understand the world of work and how this relates to what they are learning in schools. These career-connected learning opportunities provide students the chance to more fully engage in their education, start building plans for their future, and connect with their communities.

Are there prerequisites students should take prior to participating in a work-based learning (WBL) experience?

To help students explore careers and develop foundational employability skills, it is recommended (though not required) that students participate in a variety of career-connected opportunities throughout their elementary, middle, and high school year, including [Foundational CTE Courses](#) prior to participating in a Capstone WBL Experience. More details and resources for providing these opportunities to students are available at <https://careerready.sd.gov/>.

Is work-based learning (WBL) included on the South Dakota Public Report Card for schools?

Yes. The South Dakota Public Report Card includes each district’s percentage of students who participated in at least two career and technical education (CTE) courses from the same cluster who also participated in one of the five available Capstone Courses prior to graduation.

Work-based learning experiences also build toward the Advanced Career Graduation Endorsement, which is one of the calculations for the college and career readiness indicator on the SD Public Report Card.

Is there a minimum age requirement for students to participate in a work-based learning (WBL) experience?

There may be certain age requirements imposed by local businesses, youth employment laws, and even district policy pertaining to allowing students to participate in work-based learning opportunities. For these reasons, the DOE does not recommend students participate in the Capstone WBL courses prior to their junior year. Other career exploration and engagement activities may be available for students prior to this.

Can a student's current part-time job be used as a placement for a Youth Internship Capstone Experience?

In most cases, the answer is no, a part-time job isn't an appropriate placement for a school sponsored work-based learning placement. Here is some general guidance that details why:

- Typical "jobs" available to a high school student are not considered appropriate for internships as they are not exposing the student to new experiences that support future career and educational goals.
- Internships are considered temporary experiences that allow students to learn about a career or career options in a specific industry or field. To become employed in this career field, the student will typically be required to obtain additional training, experience, certificates/credentials, or postsecondary training or education.
- Internship experiences should include "sustained interactions with industry or community partners". Is the student assigned a mentor(s) to oversee all aspects of their experience and training plan? This is not a "boss", but rather an individual or multiple individuals the student is allotted time with during their experience to regularly meet with and discuss their learning and ask questions. This mentor is required to submit updates to the school, meet with a Capstone Coordinator at the schools, and help provide career guidance to the student.
- Internships require a detailed training plan that includes what the student will be learning about the career field and how this learning aligns to course standards, the student's personal learning plan, and their postsecondary plans. The training plan should include who is supervising the learning experience, and specific hours/times the student will be at the approved training, and what internship requirements will be completed at the school or separate from the field experience.
- Internships must be aligned to curriculum/coursework and the Department of Education approved Capstone Experience standards.
- While job/work experience is still valuable, most part-time jobs a high school student can apply for and be hired to do while still in school simply don't align to the guidelines for **school sponsored** work-based learning programs. If a school chooses to allow students to leave campus for a part-time job, this is a local decision, but schools should NOT be offering Youth Internship Capstone course credit for this.

How can Capstone work-based learning (WBL) courses be offered for synchronized credit?

The South Dakota Department of Education does not require or approve synchronized courses. Local school districts determine if they would like to offer synchronized courses with a Capstone WBL course. Credit is awarded at the local level.

Synchronized courses allow a district to let students take two courses at the same time so long as each course's independent criteria is met. The intent of this option is to allow schools a flexible option to provide valuable career-connected learning experiences in partnership with local business, industry, and community leaders. Here are several examples of how this may look:

- **Example 1:** A student takes English IV with teacher A and at the same time fulfills their Capstone Experience: Senior Experience requirements reporting to teacher B. Content standards are met for both courses. The student may earn credit for both English IV and a Capstone WBL course.

- **Example 2:** A student takes an Entrepreneurial Skills course with teacher C and at the same time fulfills their Capstone Experience: Entrepreneurship Experience requirements reporting to teacher B. Content standards are met for both courses. The student may earn credit for both Entrepreneurial Skills and a Capstone WBL course.
- **Example 3:** A student takes Independent Supervised Agricultural Experience with teacher A and works with teacher A to fulfill the requirements of the Capstone Experience: Youth Internship course. Content standards are met for both courses. The student may earn credit for both Supervised Agricultural Experience and a Capstone WBL course.
- **Example 4:** A student takes Gateway to Certified Nursing with teacher A and works with the school's Capstone Coordinator and a Department of Labor representative to complete the requirements for the Capstone Experience: Youth Apprenticeship course. Content standards are met for both courses. The student may earn credit for both Gateway to Certified Nursing and a Capstone WBL course.
- **Example 5:** A student takes SD Educators for Tomorrow with teacher A and works with the school's Capstone Coordinator to complete the requirements for the Capstone Experience: Service Learning course. Content standards are met for both courses. The student may earn credit for both SD Educators for tomorrow and a Capstone WBL course.

What does the South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) mean by 'synchronized course'?

A synchronized course means a participant may take another course occurring simultaneously as another course provided all course standards or competencies are met for both courses.

How is a synchronized course credit recorded?

- The teacher(s) of record verifies coursework before and throughout the course; all teachers of record are involved in planning and continuous monitoring.
- Both courses need to be listed in infinite campus or other management system.
- Capstone WBL course codes Youth Internship (80018), Senior Experience (80019), Entrepreneurship Experience (80026), Service Learning (22104), and Youth Apprenticeship (80020).
- Credit is awarded at the local level and transcribed for course requirements that are met.

Where can I go to learn more about work-based learning for South Dakota students?

[Career Ready SD](#) is South Dakota's "one-stop-shop" for work-based learning, with information, resources, learning modules, activities and more. This site was designed to help educators, students, and business partners learn, explore, and create lasting WBL partnerships within their communities.

For more information or additional questions, contact [Kristin Larson](#).