

Building and Sustaining Strong Employer Partnerships

Getting into the Employer Mindset

Questions to Think About:

- What's important to employers when they are thinking about their partnership with schools to form innovation career pathways?
- What are an employer's biggest reasons for participating in an innovation career pathway?

Employer Quotes:

- “One of our big challenges as a company is to find employees that want to stay in the Worcester area and that really want to make Worcester home. We tend to be a training ground for people who want to move to Cambridge eventually. So it became a mutually beneficial partnership for us to help invest in the talent of Worcester and maybe people who want to stay within the Worcester community.”
- “We want the students to get a very good general feel of what it's like to work in a healthcare facility, especially in nursing homes, but also get exposed to different career opportunities within the nursing homes and the different roles that those positions have. So they spend two to four weeks shadowing CNAs, a couple of weeks shadowing nurses, and all of our departments. But they always have one kind of base department that they can fall back on where they have the supervision and support that they need.”
- “Getting those employees who are gonna be the supervisors involved up front at the interview level and having them be part of the interview for the students to help pick, you know, which student is going to have a positive relationship with them, has enabled the best relationships and the most successful partnerships so far.”



Bellingham High School New Innovation Pathway designee

Bellingham High School

- 2 Innovation Career Pathways
 - Healthcare & Social Assistance
 - Manufacturing
- Internship Coordinator Role
 - Seek out employer partners
 - Internships
 - Career speakers/panelists
 - Working with students on soft skills (resumes/interviews/professional communication)
 - Programs for career certifications (e.g. OSHA, personal care assistance)
 - Career Fair
 - Dual enrollment/MOU's
 - "Other programs"- trades/certificate programs/etc.
 - Job board

Healthcare and Social Assistance Industry Partners

Salmon Health & Retirement

- Family run business
- They came to us because they really need workers and wanted to post a job on the job board for dining room servers
- Talked to them about healthcare pathway
- Have worked with students before through co-op program with local vocational tech school
- Agreed that they will train and certify a cohort of students as Personal Care Attendants
- Would start as an internship and move to part-time work, so need to vet students to make sure they are committed
- They also might help a student who is interested in Human Resource administration

YMCA

- Some students already worked there part time
- Came to career fair
- They will train and certify students in Active threat, CPR/First Aid, and Child Abuse Prevention
- Potential pathways: Early Childhood, Chronic Disease Programs, Personal Trainer
- Open to taking interns

Manufacturing Industry Partners

- Antron Engineering
 - Small family company
 - Came to career fair
 - Offered a student tour
 - Offered to host a career panel for pathway students with two young employees
 - One is a current college student who works there during the summer and breaks
 - Another didn't go to college, and started as a machinist right out of high school and is working through a career path
 - Will take one to two interns
- Thermofisher Scientific
 - Global company
 - Connected through a friend at the company
 - Had initial discussion
 - Interested in a pilot internship program

I need a business partner- now what?

- Do your research:
 - Have an idea what the company is all about before you approach them
- Know your “Ask”:
 - Start off with some suggestions of how to partner
 - Student tour
 - Career Panel
 - Judge/give feedback on a student project
 - Submit a project for class (and have professionals give feedback)
 - Participate in mock interviews
 - Work based learning/internship
- Start small
 - Smaller companies have less “layers”
 - Often easier to get approval
 - Larger companies have corporate policies and procedures- often need to get approval from another entity (which may be overseas)
 - Focus on one or two partners per Pathway (or perhaps one partner can offer assistance for multiple Pathways)

I need a business partner- now what? cont.

- Use MassHire
 - Many partnerships with IP schools
 - Can help find business connections
- Think Outside of the Box
 - Use your networks
 - LinkedIn
 - Parents
 - Community (i.e. District Business Office- IT internships)
 - Personal connections
 - Go Virtual
 - Partner with other schools
- Say Thank You
 - Important student lesson! Have them reach out with a professional email or letter
- Communicate Your Partnership Activities
 - Social Media
 - School Committee
 - Local Paper

Uxbridge High School

Uxbridge Adaptive Considerations

- How did we strategize with Central Office and the School Committee?
- How did we leverage this with School Improvement Plan goals?
- Who are industry or higher education partners who can support real-world application? What is their impact on curriculum, instruction, or assessment design? How did we engage them?
- In terms of business partnerships: who, when, where, and how?
 - Consider difference between school schedules and business operation schedules

Operational Costs

- Teacher Salaries
- Equipment: servicing and upkeep
- Training - in concert with business partners?
 - For example, finding time for teachers to learn how to use equipment
- Travel and professional development

Variables

- Who are the local business partners?
 - For us, we have a list of about 40 places.
 - Dean of Students' involvement in supervising internships
- How can I become more fluent with labor market data?
 - DOL statistics on where jobs are going and what jobs are growing
 - Connection to coursework being offered
- What are their needs?
- How do schools work to marry the two?

Innovation Pathway Partners

- Information Science:
 - Uxbridge Cable
 - Local Dojo
- Manufacturing
 - Lampin
 - Precision Engineering
 - Lenze Corporation
 - Kennedy Excavation
 - J. Bomba
- Business
 - Milford Cabinet
 - Koopman
 - Lampin
 - Precision

Business Partner Curricular Considerations

Adjusting what the school teaches to suit outside needs

- **Compromise:** changing practices/nexus between skills and content
 - Understand and respect the compromise: there may be an impact to what educators cover in class based on the skills and content required by the workplace
- **Soft Skill Integration:** Assessment practices and universal design
- **Core Content:** Getting traditional subject teacher buy-in

Your best friend is the site visit!

- Bring educators to the job sites, and bring the job site to the educators!
- Manufacturing is not what a lot of people think it is
- How can industry partners support the educational process?
- What capital can they offer?
 - Do not ask for money; ask for feedback, knowledge, support

Steps to be Taken

- Invite industry partners into the building
 - Have them observe classes
 - Ask for feedback
 - Feed them!
- Determine a way for business partners to provide concrete feedback to student projects or to share insight on skill development
- Do not limit business partners to the technical areas
- Partner with other schools
- Chamber of Commerce
- Parent Groups and community
- LinkedIn and Community Connections
- Consider virtual projects: the 40-hour vs. 1-semester rule
- Ask employers, “what’s tenth on your list” - is it something students can do as a project?

Foundational Skills for All Careers

- What skills do we want our employees to have moving forward?
- Where are our strengths and opportunities for growth - or even to avoid?
- Work Ethic and Professionalism: “conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence” (DOL)
- Attendance Punctuality: Showing up in a timely manner prepared for work; providing sufficient notice if unable to report for work
- Workplace Appearance: dressing appropriately for position and duties, as well as practicing personal hygiene appropriate for position and duties
- Accepting criticism: accepting direction feedback with a positive attitude both through verbal and non verbal communication (body language)
- Motivation and taking initiative: participate fully on task or project from initiation to completion, initiating supervisor for next task upon successful completion of first one
- Understanding workplace culture, policy and safety: demonstrating the understanding of workplace culture and policy, complying with health and safety rules for workplace, respecting confidentiality and exhibiting understanding of workplace ethic

Communication & Interpersonal Skills

- Speaking: speak clearly and use appropriate language in the workplace and environment
- Listening: listen attentively, make eye contact appropriately for workplace culture and confirm understanding
- Interacting with co-workers: relate positively with co-workers, work productively with individuals and teams, respect racial and diversity

Specific Workplace Career Skills

- Interns will choose from a list of specific workplace skills that are relevant to their work experience
- You may include a broad higher order 21st century skill, occupation-specific skills, and skills related to career exploration and learning
- Students will SELECT 7 from the list or add additional skills
- For each of the skills they select, they will briefly describe related job tasks and performance goal

*(Note) These skills along with their foundational skills will be used in the performance evaluation

Examples of Workplace Skills

- Collecting and organizing information
- Computer Technology
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Customer Service
- Data Analysis
- Equipment Operations
- Interaction with Customers or Clients
- Leadership
- Mathematics
- Problem Solving
- Project Management
- Reading
- Research Analysis
- Teaching and Instruction
- Time Management
- Writing



Worcester Innovation Pathways Program

Introduction

- Any successful program has to have a relationship with local employers. The employers should be involved in both the curriculum development and the experiences the students are having so they can see the real world connection between what they're learning in the classroom and what they get to practice in the workforce and in the community

Worcester Program: Complete, Rigorous, and in Alignment with ICP Requirements

- Pathways Offered:
 - Allied Health
 - Civil Engineering / Construction
 - Biotechnology
 - Computer Science / Information Technology
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Business, Finance & Marketing
- Career and academic planning
 - Two semester long classes at comprehensive high schools
 - Classes in line with MyCAP framework - provides support in developing a college and career plan, industry connections, and key employability skills
- Technical classes
 - Two technical classes in chosen pathway (draw from CVTE curriculum and IRC where possible)
 - Technical classes run during Q2 and Q3, over two years at Worcester Technical HS
 - Students receive WPS credit on transcript
- Work-based Learning/Capstone
 - Complete 100-hour paid work-based learning during spring/summer months OR capstone class
 - Students receive WPS credit on transcript
- College classes
 - Complete in 2 college level classes (e.g. AP or dual enrollment courses)

Technical Classes and IRCs

Each pathway offers specific technical classes, to ensure students can graduate with industry recognized credentials (IRC)

Pathway	Technical Courses	Industry Credentials
Allied Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to health careers ● CNA and health care skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Certified Nursing Assistant ● CPR/First Aid/AED ● OSHA
Civil Engineering/Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to civil engineering ● Construction techniques and specifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre-Apprenticeship Training ● OSHA
Information Technology/ Computer Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information Technology: IT Essentials, Website Development ● Computer Science: Computer science principles, Website development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CompTIA A+ (Information Technology only) ● OSHA
Advanced Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to Advanced Manufacturing ● Machine operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NC3, MACWIC and NIMS ● OSHA
Business and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to Business and Finance ● Marketing I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marketing certification (e.g. Hootsuite) ● OSHA
Biotechnology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foundations of Modern Biotechnology ● Applications of Modern Biotechnology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OSHA

How to Meet Employers

- Meetings/Networking
 - Chamber of Commerce meetings, roundtables, committees, networking events
- Marketing/Common Mission
 - MassHire, and Chamber of Commerce distribution lists
 - Develop marketing material with what you're seeking
 - CBOs and other groups with overlapping missions – Who are the players in your community?
 - MasTech, MassMEP, Remake 4.0, UMASSmed Pipeline Collaborative, STEM Networks, PGTI, Worcester Community Connections, NExT/CAPS Network meetings, Partner with Community Colleges to share overlapping initiatives, event planning, resources and partners.

Requires time and schedule flexibility for a designated program person to pursue!

Building Employer Relationships and Partnership Opportunities: Critical to Pathway Success

- To help build IPP partnerships we work with employers to:
 - Connect company missions such as equal opportunity initiatives to find areas of interest and overlap with IPP students (e.g., focus on career interest, gender, age, ethnicity, economic status)
 - Leverage grants to support work-based learning opportunities (e.g., YouthWorks, Connecting Activities)
- We provide a variety of different ways for employer partners to engage with IPP students:
 - E.g., Field trips, guest speakers, advisors/mentors, capstone projects, job shadowing, work-based learning opportunities
- Promising partners also receive regular communication from us, to help build and grow the relationship
- Post work-based learning and other engagement opportunities, student experience is tracked and feedback gathered, to better evaluate areas for future support

Industry Partner: Notre Dame Healthcare

- Private nonprofit healthcare with 370 employees
- Model held by Sisters of Notre Dame to give back to the community as much as possible so pathways made sense
- Operate a large nursing home with a small skilled rehab department, assisted living facility, hospice program (both facility based and in the community), and palliative care program
- Also have pediatric palliative care in MA
- Connected to Worcester schools during presentation to city about the pathways program

Industry Partner: AbbVie

- Biotech company with 40,000 employees in over 70 countries
- Worcester site has around 700 employees and has research and commercial production all under one roof, so opportunity to see a drug from initial states of research all the way through commercial production
- Therapeutic focus areas in immunology, oncology, neuroscience, virology, and eyecare
- Vision to make a remarkable impact on patients lives and create a more vibrant community
- Connected with Worcester schools at job fair at Worcester Tech
- Mutually beneficial partnership to help invest in the talent in Worcester and hopefully people will want to stay in the Worcester community

Student Projects and Skills: AbbVie

- Problem solving by looking at a different procedure for doing something (like using a different chemical or method)
- Creating a template for new equipment requests by interviewing people and getting background information
- Research project around how to better categorize or organize lab equipment
- Building skills in Word, Excel, and other computer programs
- Building communication skills by working with a variety of people

Student Projects and Skills: Notre Dame Healthcare

- Embed students in one main department
 - Usually the dietary department because it touches on all the wings and interacts with all other departments
- Aim for students to get a general feel for what it's like to work in a healthcare facility and get exposed to different career opportunities within nursing homes and the roles of these positions
- Shadowing CNAs, nurses, and all other departments, but have one base department they fall back on

Lessons Learned from Partnership with Schools: Notre Dame Healthcare

- Need compassionate caregivers
- Students coming out of the pathways program are incredibly well prepared and well supported
- If students are struggling at work, there is support at the school to give them additional resources to help them be successful
- Huge shortage of aides and nurses, so partnering with schools and developing market and career opportunities benefits the industry as a whole
- Having a good supervisor matched with the students

Lessons Learned from Partnership with Schools: AbbVie

- Tap into employees who are passionate about education to get them involved in mentoring, supervising, or hosting STEM days, etc.
- Supervisors develop a project that they are going to work with a student on and mentor that student
- Have potential supervisors involved in the interviews to help pick which students is going to have a positive relationship with them - leads to the best relationships and most successful partnerships
- Find a way to meet the needs of as many students as possible, especially around transportation
- Keep the lines of communication open and try to meet the students where they're at (i.e. realistic expectations)

Advice from Students: How to Get Students Engaged

- Make them do more practical stuff, soft skills
- Students want to learn and also have a good experience
- Be flexible to student schedules
- Make sure they understand there is more to it than just what is done in class or seen in videos, so they are better prepared for the field

Sample Customizable Memorandum of Understanding

Parties and Purpose

Memorandum of Understanding Between _____ and _____

This Memorandum of Understanding ("Agreement") is made between _____ ("Industry Partner") with a place of business at _____, _____ Regional Workforce Development Board ("MassHire"), located at _____, and _____ ("School/District"), located at _____, referred to herein, individually, as a "Party" and, collectively, as the "Parties."

Parties and Purpose

The Parties are entering into a partnership to support the creation of Innovation Career Pathway(s) at _____ (School). Innovation Career Pathways are designed by schools to create strong partnerships with employers in order to expose students to career options and help them develop knowledge and skills related to their chosen field of study before they graduate high school.

The _____ will be the lead partner in the development of the pathway(s), collaborating with leadership on an authentic academic and skill-based curriculum as well as work-based learning curriculum, which will include opportunities for an internship of at least 100 hours for every eligible student enrolled in a pathway program.

An Innovation Career Pathway program can only be effective and sustainable if supported by a fully integrated partnership between the school, industry partner(s), and the regional workforce development board.

Overall Scope of Work

The partnership will commence its work together in the _____ school year. The Parties agree to the following responsibilities:

[Scope of work should include:

- *Allocation of responsibility for all elements of the program*
- *Methods by which each party will participate in ongoing planning and development*
- *Plans for sharing data between the parties*
- *Affirmation of the partners commitment to provide equitable access to opportunities for all students, including those who may need additional supports to be successful*
- *Any other aspect of the partnership not previously addressed*

(these are examples only and are not exhaustive)]

All Parties:

- Support program goals [list goals here]
- Commitment to ensuring equitable access for underserved populations

Specific Scope of Work

MassHire: [add other responsibilities specific to your pathway program]

- Act as the chief advisor for the pathways program collaborating with the _____ (role at the school), to find ways to generate new and strengthen existing internship opportunities. Knowledge of and communication with regional businesses in this career area will help to increase place-based career immersion experiences during the student's senior internship
- Serve as a member of the advisory committee to provide guidance on curriculum, program improvement, and [list other responsibilities]
- Provide data and feedback about workforce development, employment trends, and what industry-relevant skills employers are searching for to help strengthen our pathway curriculum
- Support career awareness and exploration activities such as: job show days, career fairs, guest speakers or career panels
- Provide leads of potential professionals from relevant industries to assist with the design of curriculum and assessment

Industry Partner(s): [add other responsibilities specific to your pathway program]

- Serve as a member of the advisory committee to provide guidance on curriculum, program improvement, and [list other responsibilities]
- Provide ongoing consultation for the pathway team to help inform program development, provide industry-related feedback from the lens of an employer and practitioner (including confirming that curriculum, assessments, and IRCs are relevant to the industry sector and align with skill development needed for success), and help keep the district apprised of any new technologies or considerations relevant to post-secondary employability
- Commitment to ensuring that students in the pathway are afforded the various experiences and opportunities that will help them prepare for work-based learning opportunities while onsite and in their post-secondary lives
- Provide internships opportunities for all eligible pathway students, including providing mentors to support student success

School/District: [add other responsibilities specific to your pathway program]

- Commit to a minimum of a ___ year pathways program that provides career exploration, relevant and rigorous curriculum, a culminating place-based work immersion (internship) experience and secondary guidance counseling to prepare students for post-secondary success
- Oversee the advisory committee
- Provide enrollment data (FERPA-compliant with redacted student identifiers) to advisory committee as a metric for setting goals, determining how to grow the program, and ensuring equitable access
- Structure a culminating pathways event for seniors who have met the requirements of the Innovation Career Pathway (e.g. student showcase) and honor industry and internship partners at this event
- Present program findings and celebrate successes with the advisory committee, school committee, and other relevant venues

Confidential Information and Regulation

[add your city/town's typical policy and procedure here - the below is a sample]

The staff/workers who are directly assigned to carry out the terms of this Agreement are designated "authorized school personnel" who shall have access to the records of students to whom they are providing services, where such access is required in the performance of their official duties. Such agency is limited exclusively to the staff/workers' connection or involvement with this particular agreement and shall not extend to projects or other agreements. The services provided under this Agreement are an extension of school-based services which provide supports that are not currently provided by the District. As such, the consent of the eligible student or parent shall not be necessary for the purposes of this Agreement.

Any records of any student that the Industry Partner and/or MassHire is given access to shall be confidential, and shall comply with all applicable regulations. Industry Partner and/or MassHire agrees to secure, when and where applicable, from the students and, if under the age of majority, his or her parents/guardians, the requisite consents for release of confidential information, including without limitation, hospital records, medical records and/or student records. Industry Partner and/or MassHire agree not to use the name, likeness or appearance of any student, or any photograph, video, sound or image of any student in any or written materials or literature, such as brochures and media and public releases, without the prior written permission of the student, and if a minor, his or her parent/guardian. Industry Partner and/or MassHire shall destroy or cause to be destroyed the personally identifiable student data it collects or receives pursuant to this Agreement upon completion or closure of its duties under this Agreement, whichever last occurs.

All parties agree to seek written approval for any publications including, without limitation, special reports or other articles, studies and/or research (collectively referred to as "Reports"), related to or arising out of this Agreement, prior to any publication, release or dissemination. If any Party does not agree to the publication, release, or dissemination of the Reports, whether in whole or in part, then the Reports shall not be published, distributed, released, disseminated, or otherwise released to the public.

All Parties and their employees, shall at all times remain compliant with applicable rules and regulations, as well as applicable local, state and federal laws, and any applicable regulations and policies established by governmental agencies and accrediting bodies having jurisdiction, as then in effect, that may in any manner affect the work, rights, or obligations specified under this Agreement. [add reference to specific laws and regulations, if applicable - for example CORI checks]

Terms of Agreement

This Agreement shall take effect upon execution, and remain in effect through _____.

This Agreement will automatically terminate at the end of the Term defined above. This Agreement may be otherwise terminated without cause by either party upon ___ days written notice, or may be terminated by either party for a material breach of a term of this Agreement upon ___ days written notice, or immediately, if continued performance poses a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of any participating children, families, or employees of either party.

All Parties shall set forth their best efforts to meet the timetable and responsibilities set forth under the terms of this Agreement. If, despite their best efforts, any Party is unable to perform the responsibilities as defined in this Agreement, the Parties shall work together to come to a mutually agreeable resolution.

This Agreement supersedes any prior agreements or understandings between the parties hereto. This Agreement may be amended, modified, or supplemented only by a signed, written agreement signed by all parties.

Indemnification

[add your city/town's typical policy and procedure here - the below is a sample]

Unless otherwise exempted by law, Industry Partner and MassHire shall indemnify and hold harmless the City of _____ and its Departments, agents, officers, and employees against any and all claims, liabilities, and costs for personal injury or property damages, patent or copyright infringement, or other damages that the City may sustain which arise out of or in connection with Industry Partner's or MassHire's performance of this Agreement, including but not limited to the negligent, reckless, or intentional conduct of Industry Partner and/or MassHire, its agents, officers, employees or subcontractors. Industry Partner and/or MassHire shall at no time be considered an agent or representative of the City.

Non-Discrimination Statement

[add your city/town's typical policy and procedure here - the below is a sample]

No Parties will discriminate against any person on the basis of sex, age, race, religious creed, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity or disability.

Notices and Signatures

All notices regarding this Agreement shall be given in writing by _____ [form of notification, e.g. mail, email, etc.] to the persons at the addresses set forth at the beginning of this Agreement. The Parties shall rely upon the addresses set forth above unless notified in writing of a change.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto execute this Agreement through their duly authorized representatives.

[signature lines here]

Resources

Recommended Resources

External links that may be applicable to your schools and community:

- [Industry Partner Involvement](#)