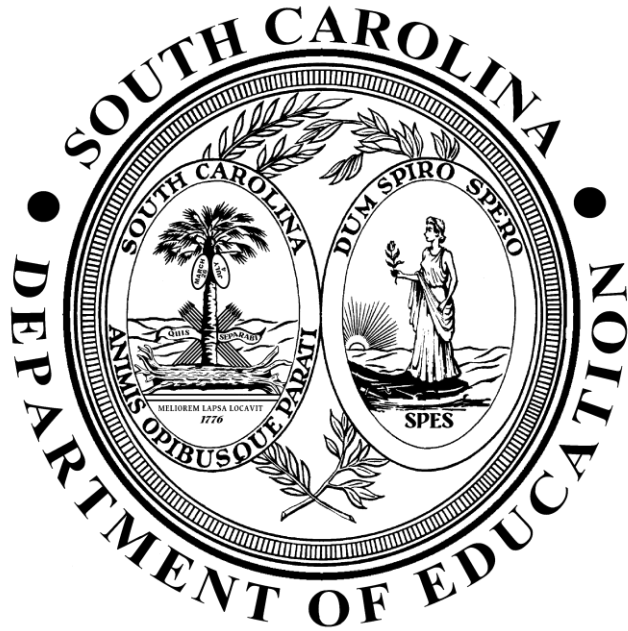


STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



## SC Work-Based Learning Annual Report

Pursuant to Proviso 1A.5 (SDE-EIA: Work-Based Learning)

February 1, 2024

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## Introduction

The long-term mission of the Work-Based Learning Program, as supported through the Work-Based Learning Proviso (1A.5. SDE-EIA: Work-Based Learning), is to enhance school-based and work-based learning educational opportunities for students.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) Work-Based Learning Program accomplishes this mission with activity in three areas:

1. Regional professional development and work of Regional Career Specialists (RCS) that align with and connect to classroom learning;
2. Technical support and professional development for district staff supporting activities required under the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA); and
3. Provision of activity-specific implementation for shadowing, mentoring, internships, apprenticeships, cooperative education, school-based enterprise, service learning, and structured field studies to district-level and school-level staff as well as instructors and students.

## Authorizing Legislation

The Work-Based Learning Program originated under the Education Improvement Act of 1984. Other laws, provisos, and regulations that govern the implementation of this program include the following:

Code of Laws:

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-59-60(1), -140, -200 (Supp. 2011)

Proviso:

1A.5 (SDE-EIA: Work-Based Learning)

Regulation:

24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. § 43-225 (Repealed)

The proviso requires the SCDE to report each February on related accomplishments:

**1A.5. (SDE-EIA: Work-Based Learning)** Of the funds appropriated in Part IA, Section 1, VIII.A.1. for the Work-Based Learning Program,<sup>1</sup> \$75,000 shall be used by the State Department of Education to provide for regional professional development in contextual methodology techniques and integration of curriculum, and professional development in career guidance for teachers and school counselors and training mentors. Pilot-site delivery of contextual methodology training in mathematics will be supported by technology and hands-on lab activities. In addition, \$500,000 shall be allocated for Regional Career Specialists. Each Regional Career Specialist shall (1) be housed within

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<sup>1</sup> There is no line item in the budget for the Work-Based Learning Program. A former line for “Tech-Prep,” and others, were rolled up into the line for “Career & Technology Education” in the 2017-18 Appropriations Act.

the regional centers/WIA geographic areas, (2) provide career development activities throughout all schools within the region, (3) be under the program supervision of the Office of Career and Technology Education, State Department of Education, and (4) adhere to an accountability and evaluation plan created by the Office of Career and Technology Education, State Department of Education. **The Office of Career and Technology Education, State Department of Education, shall provide a report, in February of the current fiscal year to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee on accomplishments of the Regional Career Specialists.** Of the funds appropriated in the prior fiscal year, unexpended funds may be carried forward to the current fiscal year and expended for the same purposes.

## **History and Evolution of the Program**

The funding and authority for the Work-Based Learning Program has shifted over the years. It originated as a federally funded program that supported technical preparation consortia and alliances. In June 2007, federal funds for Tech Prep-School-To-Work Alliance Partnerships ceased. Beginning July 1, 2008, under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV), the Title I South Carolina Education and Business Alliance partnerships (SCEBA partnerships) began technical support for career guidance personnel, school-level career specialists, and other support staff via activities and professional development. On July 31, 2018, the President signed the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act into law. This bill reauthorizes Perkins IV and is referred to as Perkins V. As part of this technical support, state-supported regional career specialists began to work closely with SCEBA partnerships to collect and report Work-Based Learning Program data. This data is managed through PowerSchool and collected on a yearly basis. These positions have evolved to Regional Career Specialists, who are housed with a variety of fiscal agents since the majority of SCEBA consortiums have dissolved. The Regional Career Specialists are separate from the Regional Workforce Advisors under the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce, and the school-level career specialists mandated and funded by the EEDA.

The amount of funding for the Regional Career Specialists has been at \$575,000 since before 1995–96. The SCDE is requesting \$1,250,000 to relocate the 12 regional career specialist positions from various assigned service regions to the SCDE due to accountability, deliverables, and support disparities caused by diverse fiscal agents. By centralizing these roles, SCDE aims to standardize coordination and enhance support quality for the state’s workforce needs in each assigned service region. Additionally, SCDE requests these roles’ salary is in line with a (CB05) Education Associate- Pay Band 07. These specialists are currently spread across the state’s WIOA areas and salary, and job function vary widely.

The following report reviews school year 2022–23 accomplishments in professional development, work-based learning data, district needs related to work-based learning, and the SCDE’s program goals for this school year, 2023–24.

## **Professional Development**

In adherence to Proviso 1A.5, this report provides a description of, and the data related to, the work and accomplishments of RCS team during the 2022–23 school year. Each provide school districts in their assigned geographic areas with professional development, career guidance initiatives, and work-based learning activities while supporting educators, school counselors, school-level career specialists, business partners, students, and parents. The RCS role is separate from the Regional Workforce Advisor (RWA) role working under the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce. Each role provides support to the education sector, but they are completely different layers as outlined in the EEDA.

The method of accountability for the RCS role is a document called the Direct Service Accountability Report which is submitted to the SCDE Office of Career and Technical Education/Student Transition Services (OCTE/STS) on a bi-monthly basis. It documents all direct service to students, educators, parents, and business partners, including workshops, career guidance, and career development initiatives; implementation and support of work-based learning within each region; and professional development delivered personally by each RCS to educators and parents. The primary focus of this reporting system is the individual’s direct service and not organizational or planning meetings that support the RCS work. This ensures accountability and higher quality programming while aligning all RCSs’ direct service activities to state goals. Each RCS must attend a series of four annual accountability strategic planning sessions facilitated by the work-based learning education associate from the SCDE OCTE/STS. Each RCS must also attend, contribute to the planning of, and/or deliver professional development at the annual South Carolina Education and Business Summit.

During the 2022–23 school year, RCSs worked to enhance the level of career guidance and placement, workforce development, postsecondary transition, and delivery of career development services throughout South Carolina. Contextual methodology professional development and training was offered in all regions through courses and workshops in the twelve regions identified in the EEDA. Training in the Catawba Region, the one region yet to employ a RCS, was provided by Waccamaw Region’s RCS to ensure services were still provided unique to the RCS role. Some RCSs used funds provided to contract with business/industry expert instructors to deliver the professional development/training while other RCSs delivered the courses/workshops themselves. RCSs collaborated to ensure consistent delivery of content, whether the format was a course or workshop series, and to provide instruction that benefited English, math, science, and career and technical education (CTE) instructors. Principals were required to sign assurance forms indicating that all appropriate faculty received contextual methodology training, and RCSs worked with their assigned districts to provide the necessary training based on requirements in the EEDA, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-59-200. According to the Direct Service Accountability Reports submitted to the OCTE/STS from July 2022 through June 2023, RCSs conducted over 200 workshops pertaining to contextual methodology for over 3,000 educators.

RCSs offered several additional training and workshops, including Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) national certification training courses, during the 2022–23 academic year. This national certification course curriculum was developed by the National Career Development Association. Now in its twenty third year, the RCS GCDF course delivery has resulted in South Carolina’s having one of the highest numbers of GCDFs certified in the nation. The SCEBA partnerships and RCSs offer these courses to support school career guidance staff and faculty in addressing the EEDA-required emphasis on national career clusters. Over 80 educators received GCDF training through direct instruction under the RCSs during the 2022–23 school year.

The work-based learning education associate in the OCTE/STS provides professional development for, oversight of, and coordination of statewide work-based learning implementation of the RCS team. During the past 18 years, RCSs have supported training necessary to effectively implement the state’s career development programs by supporting statewide Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs), work-based learning, business/industry connections, and college- and career-readiness. RCSs continue to support the needs of GCDF-trained educators as they offer activities and provide materials used by career guidance staff in conducting their day-to-day activities. RCSs conduct workshops for GCDFs to enable them to accumulate the seventy-five hours needed every five years for recertification. Over 16,000 school counselors, career specialists, and administrators received training through courses and workshops delivered by RCSs during the 2022–23 school year.

During 2022–23, RCSs also worked to enhance student career guidance and placement, individual academic and career planning, work-based learning experiences, college and career readiness, data collection and reporting, career and technical education support, and delivery of career development and contextual methodology training. RCSs are nationally certified Global Career Development Facilitator Instructors (GCDFI), and they use this credential to improve the quality and quantity of school counselor and teacher training in career development. The GCDF curriculum has enhanced the educators’ expertise in student-career decision making in middle and high schools.

Examples of further accomplishments that RCSs have made in South Carolina during the 2022–23 school year include the following:

- RCSs coordinated and implemented business/industry structured field studies and career readiness workshops with both face-to face and virtual formats for over 70,000 students with the involvement of over 5,000 business and industry representatives;
- RCSs have teamed to deliver regional training on understanding, designing, and implementing career clusters, career decision-making, and career majors. This training equips school district teams to understand labor market data and partner with local businesses to improve workforce development for their respective regions’ business communities while enhancing students’ college and career readiness in South Carolina;
- Through the coordination of RCSs, K–12 educators have attended regional professional development. These offerings have covered, but were not limited to, topics such as the

selection, administration, and interpretation of career assessments, such as SCOIS and ASVAB; parental involvement in academic and career planning; the IGP required for each South Carolina student; job search and employability skills; partnerships on military career pathways with all military branches; partnerships with post-secondary institutions; South Carolina career pathways; career clusters; employability skills for the workplace; usage of career information; locating labor market data and projections, career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation; integrating career concepts into classroom teaching; understanding the career ready accountability system; and

- RCSs have provided a critical linkage to fill the gap between businesses and K–12 schools to facilitate partnerships to support work-based learning experiences. Some of their work has resulted in business community involvement in structured field studies for students, apprenticeships, mentoring, shadowing, internships, career fairs, industry field studies for educators, parents, and school counseling personnel, classroom business/industry speakers, business/industry career cluster panels, business expos/showcases, and numerous other career development activities featuring South Carolina employers.

Other specific service-related support provided by RCSs includes:

- Working with local chambers of commerce and workforce alliances to support workforce development for educators and students in South Carolina;
- Developing and serving on career and technical education, career guidance, and local career cluster advisory councils;
- Coordinating student career development activities through statewide job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, and state-approved work-based learning activities;
- Providing professional development and training to all regional schools, career centers, and school districts for career ready accountability qualifiers;
- Conducting program-specific structured field studies for South Carolina educators and students connecting each to business/industry demand;
- Supporting and conducting career fairs and speakers bureaus engaging business/industry participation;
- Assisting as regional coordinators with the South Carolina Work-Based Learning Student of the Year, South Carolina CTE Career Specialist of the Year, and South Carolina CTE School Counselor of the Year;
- Identifying the annual career and technical education student recipients for the SC Technology Champions designation and scholarships;
- Organizing college- and career-readiness business showcases for K–12 students providing instruction on industry-based certifications and soft skills development; and
- Providing assistance to each regional high school’s College Application Month to assist students and parents with understanding the application process for college admissions and financial aid.

## **Work-Based Learning Experiences Data**

All of South Carolina's public schools have implemented the South Carolina Comprehensive School Counseling and Career Guidance Model. All South Carolina students have access to career awareness and exploration activities. Work-based learning is a vital component of the SC Comprehensive Career Guidance Model to ensure students have the educational experiences needed to become life-long learners. Thus, the more meaningful, long-term placements, such as internships and apprenticeships, now serve as a career ready qualifier on the state's accountability system to ensure SC students are prepared for workforce skills and demands.

Collection of work-based learning data began during the 2008–09 academic year. Fifteen years of work-based learning data are currently available via electronic collections. During this fifteen-year period, however, South Carolina public schools transitioned its student information systems from the use of the Student Administrative Student Information (SASI) to PowerSchool, creating a change in the process/procedure for collecting data. The OCTE/STS believes this transition led to a significant drop in the number of work-based learning experiences reported by districts from the 2012–13 to the 2013–14 school year.

To combat this decline, beginning in 2014–15, RCSs provided technical assistance to those districts and schools that did not report work-based learning data in the new PowerSchool system. Additionally, RCSs, under the direction of the SCDE work-based learning education associate, conducted regional workshops to provide professional development to sites on methodology to ensure accurate data reporting through PowerSchool. The OCTE/STS has made a conscious effort to improve district data reporting around work-based learning by providing training which encourages school districts to be diligent in entering work-based learning experiences in PowerSchool. As personnel changes have occurred in schools, the OCTE/STS has continued to monitor the input of data by schools and supported them with professional development, technical assistance, and providing pertinent information for accurate reporting.

However, beginning in 2018–19 there was an overall decrease in work-based learning experiences. The OCTE/STS accounts this drop in numbers reported to several factors school districts were facing with work-based learning implementation. Scheduling matrices within school districts continue to present barriers to students' participation in long-term work-based learning experiences due to the time limitations in classroom schedules and the amount of time business/industry requires for daily instruction. Other scheduling conflicts arise within district boundaries when career centers and feeder high schools operate on different bell schedules. In addition, transportation costs absorbed by schools are becoming expensive forcing a large majority to require students to provide their own transportation to the worksite for their school sponsored work-based learning placement. This coupled with the ongoing bus driver shortage impacts students participating in long term work-based learning experiences, such as an apprenticeships or internships. Last, a large majority of school administrators, school counselors and career specialists are absorbing the role of the work-based learning coordinator in addition to their primary role serving students with academic, career, social, and emotional support.



In addition to the issues discussed above, in the spring of 2020, the nation and schools across the state were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The transition into virtual learning and other related adjustments led to a continued decrease in the work-based learning experiences. In response to the pandemic restrictions, there was a concerted focus on improving and increasing the opportunities for virtual and additional opportunities to include the creation of the [SC Career Guidance/Work-Based Learning Virtual Toolkit](#). The OCTE/STS also provided specific guidance and innovative strategies to assist districts with WBL through the annual publication of the [SC Work-Based Learning Implementation Guide](#). Additionally, the OCTE/STS worked closely with business and industry to help students across the state have access to Work-Based Learning opportunities by assisting districts with a [Business and Industry Toolkit](#) and the creation of a [Business and Industry](#) engagement page on the SCDE Website. All these innovative efforts have continued and challenged a new normalcy with business/industry placements.

Table 1  
*Number of Work-Based Learning Experiences by Type and School Year between 2016–17 and 2022–23, All Grades, K-12*

Type of Experience	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019–20	2018–19	2017–18	2016–17
CTE Internship Credit Bearing Course	30	164	172	227	97	N/A	N/A
Cooperative Education	1,167	1,864	896	1,570	3,033	2,878	1,630
Internship	5,551	4,089	2,128	3,540	4,276	4,539	3,651
Mentoring	1,589	1,353	1,240	1,667	2,246	2,318	1,923
Registered Apprenticeship	72	47	33	40	57	95	69
School-Based Enterprise	4,158	4,136	3,037	2,869	4,110	4,653	4,592
Service Learning	9,011	6,288	5,440	7,972	11,835	15,630	11,091
Shadowing: On-Site	25,168	13,090	1,396	23,767	33,398	30,216	32,442
Shadowing: Virtual	23,203	30,166	27,045	15,800	22,766	25,158	34,442
Structured Field Study	52,517	23,198	18,506	25,432	36,023	36,620	29,340
Youth Apprenticeship	73	51	34	53	96	361	156
Total Experiences	122,984	84,446	59,927	82,937	117,840	122,468	119,336

### Work-Based Learning Needs

It is important to note that work-based learning data provided in this report includes all students, K–12, not just high school students or high school students who enroll and complete CTE programs. It is exciting to report an over 45% increase in one year of all WBL placements for our SC students. With 2020-21 WBL experiences dramatically affected by barriers with school suspensions, remote learning, and the affect from business/industry limitations due to non-participation with continued COVID-19 mitigation strategies, the significant percentage increase from 2021-22 to 2022-23 confirms business/industry engagement and movement towards pre-pandemic data numbers. In addition, most SC districts lack full-time employees who can solely commit to work-based learning facilitation and implementation, which factors in barriers districts

face for effective WBL placements. For some school districts, full-time, active certified teachers and/or administrators take on the additional responsibility of the work-based learning coordinator role. All roles are vital to meet the needs of students and prepare each for the twenty-first century workforce and the global economy. The OCTE/STS supports this recognition of great need and recommends that, whenever possible, each district invest by committing a full-time position to facilitate and implement an effective, meaningful work-based learning program serving all K–12 students. This is especially important as our state continues to include work-based learning in the state’s report card accountability system. Furthermore, committed resources are needed to implement and track endorsements supporting South Carolina Diploma Pathways. In particular, the career seal of distinction continues to focus on the work-based learning experiences as a component of completion.

### **Program Goals 2023–24**

Work-based learning opportunities, whether in person or virtual, in combination with identified career and technical education curricula will support strong secondary and postsecondary education opportunities, preparing students for high skill, and high wage careers in the 21st century. Students completing a strong academic and technical program will be well prepared to enter full-time employment with industry credentials and/or pursue postsecondary education options. The goals for the Regional Career Specialist team and the Work-Based Learning Program for 2023–24 is:

- Continue to expand work-based learning educational partnerships with business/industry stakeholders for secondary-level students with ongoing collaboration around identified state sector strategies and industry workforce demand while offering face-to-face and/or virtual formats;
- Ensure accurate and complete district-level data are collected and reported for all state-approved work-based learning activities via the PowerSchool student information system to support the accountability career ready qualifier;
- Provide educators, students, and parents with career-cluster-specific activities with job shadowing, structured field studies, mentoring, internships, apprenticeships, cooperative education, school-based enterprise, and service learning;
- Support the career guidance and school counseling components of the EEDA and the SC Comprehensive School Counseling and Career Guidance Model;
- Continue contextual methodology training to administrators and educators, especially in the core academic areas of math, science, and computer science; and
- Provide professional development for career and technical education personnel and career guidance personnel at the 2024 South Carolina Education and Business Summit.

### **Contact Information**

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