

## **MASTERY-BASED LEARNING WORK GROUP MEETING**

**June 24, 2021 Meeting Agenda**

**1:00-5:00 p.m.**

*Location: [Zoom meeting](#)*

### **Agenda:**

#### **1:00-1:15 Welcome and Workplan Review**

Alissa began the meeting with a native land acknowledgement. Members provided brief feedback on the work plan, particularly around finding additional ways to hear from families and community members. Alissa also shared an update on the Mastery-based Learning Collaborative:

- As mentioned previously, the Legislature has provided funding to the SBE to support the implementation of mastery-based learning in school district demonstration sites. This funding was a result of your recommendation to create a statewide support structure to implement MBL and our legislative champions. The SBE will be running a Request for Proposal process this fall, but SBE will be sharing an announcement about the Mastery-based Learning Collaborative with the field in the next few weeks. The project will establish a statewide infrastructure to provide needed professional development, policy, and communications support to enable districts/schools to implement MBL. Grant awardees will participate in the Collaborative to share effective practices for implementing MBL. The project will also document the key steps that states, districts, and schools must take to transition to MBL successfully to inform future policy development.
- Several work group members volunteered to be more involved with this work outside of work group meetings.

#### **1:15-1:30 Framing Presentation: Building Blocks to Educational & Economic Success**

Eleni Papadakis, Executive Director, Workforce Training and Education  
Coordinating Board

Eleni Papadakis gave a presentation to provide context about the credential transparency work happening in the state and "futureproofing" Washington's workforce (see separate PowerPoint).

#### **1:30-3:30 Listening Session with Business and Industry**

1:30-2:05 Small Group Discussion: Current & Near Future Needs of Industry  
2:05-2:35 Full Group Discussion  
2:35-3:05 Small Group Discussion: Future of Work for Washington Graduates  
3:05-3:30 Full Group Discussion

Small Group #1 Discussion on the Current Needs of Industry:

- How would a student demonstrate to you that they have the essential skills and competencies you are looking for in a worker?
  - Show up for work (good attendance in school can be a good indicator) making work a priority, focus on the job, attention to safety

- What does a grade mean anymore? For a CTE student, we want to see a competency list to see what they've been exposed to in their classes. Even though it's a snapshot in time, it's still helpful. This can be done through badging.
- Our world has gotten more complex—it's hard to help kids learn everything they learn in K-12 to be successful adults and successful in the workforce.
- They need cultural competency skills. For white candidates, do they understand their own privilege and how that shows up in interactions with coworkers?
- In apprenticeships, we look for troubleshooting and problem-solving capabilities/critical thinking. Soft skills are more important than the technical academic skills.
- How would a school assess (or validate to an employer) a student's ability to demonstrate essential skills and competencies?
  - Need communication between educators and the industry program for identifying student candidates. Then, need a feedback loop between the school and the internship/volunteership/job shadow.
  - Sports, JROTC, can show some of the qualities for skills needed; success in autoshop, woodshop, certificate or recognition from the school is good. Documentation from the class would be useful, particularly for students who can't access extracurricular opportunities.
  - Mock interviews with potential employers and sample questions (e.g. around prioritizing tasks). Norms for interviewing need to be culturally responsive and sensitive to disabilities.
  - Concerns with equity when it comes to assessment—opportunities that are external to the school day will present equity issues. Working as a team, and try to model the work environment, sticking with a task until it is finished; difficult lesson that requires practice.
- What is the school system providing well now in terms of essential skills that should continue?
  - One school I work with: all learning is applied based on career pathways. Learn math for specific careers, etc. This school is doing a great job teaching situational problem-solving.
- What skills do you feel the school system should be providing to graduates who are not work-ready now? What do you need to do to fully prepare a recent graduate for work?
  - Digital literacy, showing up on time, information literacy. Kids are literate at computer games, but not literate as using them as a tool.
  - Conflict communication—need to be able to talk about hard subjects.
  - Schools need to also communicate that a student's first job may not be the greatest experience—how to be successful day by day. Realistic expectations for work success, demonstrating growth takes time.
  - Apprentices must advocate for themselves, how to bring social capital to the job site and find mentors. Being able to ask for a raise, practice should start in kindergarten.
- How meaningful is it to you, as representatives of industry, that graduates have real paid work experience before coming to your workplace? If a student is unable to have this prior to graduation, what could be effective to meet the needs of what you are looking for in a new hire? (How meaningful is paid work experience in giving students that "step up?")
  - Being paid isn't essential for it to be good experience. Paid job does signal they can show up everyday outside of school, so that's nice to know (but not essential).
  - I'd rather have an applicant who is enthusiastic but doesn't know anything, than someone who knows something but isn't enthusiastic.
- List (free-form): What are the essential skills and competencies you want to see from a high school graduate?
  - Digital Literacy/information literacy
  - Conflict communication
  - Self-management/responsibility (readiness to take ownership of a task)/self-efficacy

- Resiliency/adaptability/ grit (plugs away at something, doesn't give up easily)
  - Systems thinking/critical thinking/problem-solving
  - Enthusiasm/Passion/Fearlessness
  - Community-mindedness/global citizen
  - Collaborative/work well in a team
  - Timeliness/Dependability
  - Culturally competent/Embraces Diversity
  - Creative thinking
- Full Group Discussion #1:
    - Not sure how a recent graduate could really show some of these more advanced, work-ready skills? More work-based learning experiences can help (though this can be an equity issue). It's challenging for schools to demonstrate these things.
      - Recent graduates need to have more realistic expectations of the first job and how to be successful—learning doesn't stop when you finish school at any level.
    - For employers, recent graduates are attractive when they've had project-based learning experience (shows team skills, etc.).
      - Need to continue providing more digital literacy, self-starter, and conflict management skills. True digital literacy/discernment is not just TikTok; coding should be an expectation—students should leave K-12 knowing how to do this.
      - Cultural history and recognition of what privileges students have in their own life.
      - Punctuality/timeliness. I can teach you anything else.
      - Not offering drivers education in school is a huge equity issue, it needs to be offered in school because it is a huge cost to families.
    - Needs to be a larger segment of history classes where students learn about labor movements and how they have the privileges they do today in the workplace.
    - What would we take away from schools to add in all these things?
      - Don't need to take anything away. Instead we just need more CTE or contextual classes. We have to break down silos of subject areas and have less division between academic subjects and applied subjects/knowledge—more project-based learning, etc.
    - How do schools assess/validate student learning to employers regarding their demonstration of essential skills?
      - A student's high school attendance record could help.
      - If we (potential employer) asks them for an example of how they solved a problem with a team, they should be able to answer. Schools should help students practice with interview questions. Demonstrate via a scenario...
      - I like the interdisciplinary model, but as an educator I also see integration of material as requiring more time. There's foundational knowledge to understand before doing the tasks that involve algebra, writing, communicating, etc.
      - Self-assessment is also useful – a student's own perception of what they are good at and why.
    - How do you work in partnership with schools? Employer/district cooperatives?
      - We provide tours for students of different careers (middle school and high school exploration days)—we showed them 17 different careers just in our company. The school district and Educational Service District both initiated these opportunities.
      - We do classroom presentations and place interns in companies.
      - One of our school districts is on the academy model so they have to be involved with employers. We also do classroom presentations, tours, and internships. As an employer, we initiated the opportunity just as much as the school district did.

- A challenge students face is that often the specific occupation and the industry are confused and many students don't recognize (or aren't taught) that every industry requires staff in a wide variety of occupations.
- What barriers are there to this in industry?
  - If we can move business away from using proxies, and instead using credentials that articulate skills and competencies, then this really helps.
  - Apprenticeship offers the training for students versus starting from square one when coming out of college. Apprenticeship may be a better option for a student's chosen industry than college (some businesses recognize apprenticeship is a better path.) Washington is leading the nation with apprenticeship.
- Once upon a time, formal education stopped much earlier than it does now. And at that point, the expectation was that employers would do the finishing work and teach the employees what they needed to know. We haven't figured out the balance for what do we want K-12 to provide for every student versus what should business be providing. We want every student to enter into the workforce, but with all the requirements for diploma (that are largely as a result of what a specific segment of the business community wanted—24 credits and high stakes testing), students may not be getting the opportunities that would prepare them. What are the responsibilities of business and industries and what are the responsibilities of schools?
  - I have a whole list of things that I expect of my company as far as contributing to the K-12 world.
  - In the construction industry, we underwrote the Core Plus curriculum and provided it as an freely available resource. It also shows what students would need in postsecondary.
  - Hard skills / core job competencies / technical skills remain the employer's responsibility to train. We would look for basic soft skills that make the graduate receptive to that training and mentally prepared for it.
  - Many businesses struggle with knowing how to get into the classroom or connect with students.
  - No way K-12 can advise on how to get into all the various labor sectors
  - Some of the best opportunities for better alignment is when employers provide professional development for teachers.
  - In our industry, the only requirement is that the individual is 18 years old then we require them take our training. Industry needs to be providing young people career pathways.

### Small Group Discussion #2: Future of Work for Washington Graduates

1. Thinking about today's math, language, science, and other education requirements, are these the right mix of skills and competencies for continued learning and adapting to the changing jobs and requirements of a future workplace? Are there specific skills or competencies that that students are not receiving that you would like to see more of in traditional education? (*Note: We are more interested here in learning about specific skills, such as creating a spreadsheet, than course titles, such as calculus.*)
  - a. Leadership—either in CTE or other settings.
  - b. Experiences like FFA and how to replicate this applied learning across the board. Practical application of skills—K-12 isn't good at this.
  - c. Standardized tests shape and narrow what teachers can do.
  - d. Maybe we need a P-14 system (CTE/PBL does this in some areas of the nation).
  - e. Future workforce will spend up to 50% of their time learning skills—students should know how to best do that for themselves.

2. Are there characteristics of a current or future worker that aren't currently associated with high school education that you think should be part of their education? (e.g. entrepreneurial skills, team-building, situational awareness, emotional intelligence)
  - a. Team-building and entrepreneurial skills. MBL provides an opportunity for students to explore these things.
  - b. Skill centers are successful because they use soft skills.
  - c. Confidence and self-efficacy.
  - d. Goal setting, and time management. And interacting with technology and the advantage it brings. K12 should spend more time on time management using technology.
  - e. How to work with people, how to deal with non-positive interactions, such as harassment.
  - f. Communications, all types—including talking on the phone (not just text and email).
  - g. How to communicate across cultures—including communication across ages. Speech class, drama class, speech communication
3. Do you see a difference in the preparation of schools for college preparation versus career preparation? Are there characteristics of each that might be of value to consider for the profile of a graduate?
  - a. There is still a lot of messaging at schools "go to college" "go to college". Would like to see more counselors seeing the options besides colleges and universities.
  - b. I did not know anything about apprenticeship and trades until after high school, students are not shown how valuable these paths are, and just as valuable as a university. So many educators went to universities and are enthusiastic about their students going to universities. CTE can be a good counter-balance to this.
4. How can the education sector better support historically marginalized populations in successfully accessing jobs in your industry?
  - a. Industry folks were very excited about the computer science bill passed by the legislature this year—that will help.
  - b. Changes need to happen in dominant culture vs. historically marginalized culture. This isn't all on schools, but they have to help.
  - c. Cannot beat the equity in the apprenticeship sector as far as making training available and covering the cost.
  - d. How do we make sure that people know the language/jargon we're using—first generation students don't know what FAFSA is. First generation kids have to figure out so much about college without much help.
  - e. I think kids need at least 2 more years to mature—that's why pre-apprenticeships are so helpful.
  - f. Exposure exposure exposure!
  - g. Drivers education in schools—otherwise they can't get to us for us to hire them.
  - h. To attract women to non-traditionally female occupations—have an opportunity for female cohorts.
  - i. HR departments definitely could make systemic change through hiring practices, requirements, interview questions and screening protocols.

#### Full Discussion #2 Notes:

- Appreciate the business folks on the call asking for more diverse and authentic assessments—and hope they will communicate that to other leaders in the business community as a way of supporting more than the traditional 4-year university track (since the large business associations are the ones over-emphasizing 4-year college). To get students more project-based learning, participate in the legislative conversation around the portfolio/performance exhibition pathway.

- As a student, I don't love PBL because the projects are not real. How do we connect it to real world applications and careers? I am excited to see how we can integrate real skills into high school learning. In my school, we have only done three hours for postsecondary planning, divorced from the rest of school. PBL has been scenarios, or image a situation, rather than actually solving a problem in the community. The project feels fake, and student procrastinate and don't take the project seriously. You get what you want faster by asking students what they need. The level of mentorship is different at work. The culture and space is very different between school and work. That's what I like about MBL—students help build the project based on their interests and solving real problems.
- As a CTE Director, I know that SBE has worked hard on pathways and there are changes coming to the HSBP to that will bring to light what you are talking about in my district. We're selecting a better tool to help with career research.
- The Work-Integrated Learning Advisory Committee (WILAC) wants to better integrate the skills of work into school. This is an excellent way to answer the students' question about why their classroom learning is relevant and useful.

### **3:30-3:45 Public Comment**

No public comment was provided at this meeting.

### **3:45-4:30 Community Engagement Opportunities**

Work group members engaged in planning about what community engagement they want to do to continue to get feedback from across our state communities to inform the Profile of a Graduate development. Beyond the focus groups being conducted by the Athena Group, work group members confirmed they do want Alissa to conduct four statewide public listening sessions and release a statewide survey once the listening sessions conclude.

- Work group members will plan to attend at least one listening session each.
- The September 8 retreat will be in person (with a hybrid option for those who indicated that they need it.)
- In addition to the public listening sessions, work group members agreed to do their own community outreach to get feedback from their networks as well. Alissa will provide a model presentation for this as well when she sends out the meeting notes.
- Work group members also brainstormed meetings for Alissa to attend to share about the Profile of a Graduate work. Members will make specific connections to the groups they have connections to:
  - Share with each ethnic commission and ask for connections to ethnic chambers of commerce, Tribal Leaders Congress on Education, Office of Education Ombuds, K-12 – Postsecondary Transition Workgroup, WSSDA Board of Directors, ALE Advisory Committee
  - Follow-up with EOGOAC after the Athena Group has done its work

### **4:30-4:55 Discussion: Debrief the Day**

Work group members discussed the following:

- We need to take a systems approach. I am concerned about how segmented our system is where we have divided up higher education, Career Connect Washington, WILAC, etc. How will communities understand mastery-based learning in the context of a segmented system? For instance, the High School and Beyond Plan needs to be better utilized to capture all of the student's exploration. Imagine a counselor or teacher being able to see what all a student has explored. With coronavirus, I have heard schools are doubling down on math and English Language Arts and our science coordinators told us that they aren't teaching science.

Assessments demanded by the federal government communicate that we don't trust schools and teachers, and there's not enough time to do the things we need to do with our kids.

- We need to work with the state Parent Teacher Association (WSPTA) because our parents don't understand what we're trying to do, they want math and English Language Arts. In Manson, we had an integrated learning program that was multiage. Parents who observed the environment loved it because then they could understand it. The MBL grant program will be key to this.
- We've lost what evidence of learning really means. Standardized tests give us a small amount of feedback, but we have to broaden assessments—and helping students understand that assessment means to show their learning. Parents like standardized tests too because they understand them. We have to bridge the gap with parents. In MBL, we have to the conversations for students to help them self-identify their learning and say here's how I know I mastered this...in teacher programs, we have to support our teacher candidates in this.
  - Teacher preparation programs are theoretically aligned with MBL, but faculty don't get to see their students in practicum in that different environment to see if they can apply MBL (and if the host school allows them to do that.)
- There's still an issue of cultural competency when we talk about soft skills—have to make sure we're doing this in a responsive way with our students of color. Often employers focus on incorporating women but not really people of color.
- We have to look at nuances in MBL with an equity lens. A soft skill in one culture may not be the case in another culture. Work ethic is defined so differently in different contexts. When one panelist said attendance records: my mother had cancer. My attendance record was horrible. Is that really evidence of the attributes they're looking for? So, what evidence really could be provided that is actually what they're looking for?
- What we've found in EOGAOC really shows that attendance goals are a misunderstanding of school administrators regarding cultural values. For instance, when an elder in a Native community passes on, that's a member of the family. There is an expectation that the entire clan mourns together for multiple days. I agree that employers are likely looking for dependability, versus attendance/showing up at 8:00 on the dot. For MBL, time becomes the variable. So why is it that schooling has to take place in 180 days vs 365 days?
- How do you get young people to visualize themselves in a technology-driven economy and see themselves as successful in that future?
- School districts can't spend money on professional development because it's too much. They need the tools to get there for MBL.
- We are dipping our toe in MBL—when we read Grading for Equity, teachers all thought they were ready to make the MBL move but they didn't think their colleagues were ready.

**4:55-5:00**

**Next Steps**

**5:00**

**Adjourn**