



RESOURCE

Workplace Partner Guide to Successful Internships

Introduction

Thank you for participating in the **(Name of School)** Public Schools' internship programs. Great opportunities for learning exist in your workplace. This guide will help you understand the details of working with our students. This *Workplace Partner Guide to Successful Internships* is one tool included in *The Quality Internship Toolkit*, which provides teachers with everything they need to create quality, safe and legal internship experiences for students. Other documents in the toolkit related to this topic include the internship fact sheet, which outlines the structure of internships generally, and more specific program fact sheets for each of the internship programs in the district.

Workplace Partner Checklist for Internship Development

This guide will provide you with supporting information about how to accomplish each of the following steps to developing internships. Use this checklist as a quick reference to ensure you have taken all the steps.

Before the Internship

- Register internship and employment opportunities on Connect 2 Business. Interview and select or hire student intern.
- Determine who will be working most closely with the student and the teacher. Inform other employees that a student intern will be at the workplace.
- Provide students an orientation to your workplace as you would any employee. Prepare students to be safety and health conscious.
- Meet with teacher for program orientation. S/he is there to assist you.
- Sign the *Internship Contract* and review the guide for the *Internship Plan*.
- Design activities to develop workplace (SCANS) competencies and to provide student exposure to all aspects of your industry.
- Review student's learning objectives. Incorporate learning opportunities from the job description into the *Internship Plan*.

During the Internship

- Participate in ongoing meetings with student and teacher.
- Provide support for student learning during the experience.
- Communicate student successes and opportunities at the workplace to the teacher.
- Meet with the teacher and student to complete final evaluation of the student. Make the connection to the student's next step.

After the Internship

- Complete the *Internship Program Evaluation* and send it to the school.



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Before the Internship

Successful internships involve several steps that workplace partners can take. The following suggestions and resources are provided to ensure that the experience is successful for you, the student and the teacher.

Register internship and employment opportunities on Connect 2 Business.

Employers can use **Connect 2 Business** to register opportunities for internships, employment and other career development activities. You can register your organization's opportunities with **Connect 2 Business** by going to **OKCareerGuide.org**.

Interview and select or hire student intern.

The student selection process is an important part of the work-based learning experience. Students can learn a great deal from both successful and unsuccessful interviews. Discuss the interview with the student, letting him or her know what worked about the interview and what he or she can improve.

Determine who will be the person working most closely with the student and the teacher. Inform other employees that a student intern will be at the workplace.

Internships are most successful when communication is clear and there is one point of contact at the workplace. The student's worksite supervisor will need to be available to speak with the teacher and make plans for site visits. Other employees at the workplace can be valuable supports to the student. It is important for them to know that the student is an intern and what kinds of goals the organization has for the intern and the program. Make sure that there is a back-up plan in place for situations like a worksite supervisor being transferred to another division or office.

Provide students an orientation to your workplace as you would any employee. Prepare students to be safety and health conscious.

The key to a successful internship is to develop clear expectations: identifying skills to be mastered and projects or tasks to be accomplished. Just like new employees, student interns benefit greatly from a thorough orientation of the workplace. Your student's teacher can provide you with an **Internship Orientation Checklist** that you may choose to use. The student's orientation should take place on the first day and be clear and specific. The more information you cover, the more successful the internship will be. Student orientation to health and safety issues at the workplace is a critical part of this activity. The teacher will also provide you with the **B-Safe Safety Checklist** to assist you with a thorough presentation. After a general orientation of the organization is completed, a more specific orientation to the position the student will hold should follow.

Meet with the teacher for a program orientation.

The coordinating teacher from the student's school will schedule a time to meet with you and the student at your workplace to provide you with an orientation to the internship program. The goal of this orientation is to establish expectations for the student, finalize learning objectives and review the performance evaluation. If you have previously hosted an intern, it will be up to you and the teacher to determine if a face-to-face meeting is necessary or if a phone orientation will suffice.



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Develop a documentation and communication plan.

Each student should have a **Internship Contract** on file, signed by you, the student, the teacher and a parent or guardian. This contract outlines the responsibilities and expectations of all parties during the experience.

The **Internship Plan and Evaluation** document is where the student's learning objectives will be recorded and evaluated. You will receive a copy of this to review with the student. Instructions for writing learning objectives and completing the evaluation are included in the **Workplace Partners Guide to the Internship Plan**. The student will be assisted by the teacher in developing his/her learning objectives; you will help with final review.

Your contact information as well as the teacher's and the student's will be listed on the **Internship Plan**. Communication is key to a successful experience for you and for the student. When you meet with the teacher, develop a plan for communication and a schedule so that everyone knows when and how meetings will be arranged to discuss the internship or project.

Design activities to expose students to all aspects of the industry and to build their SCANS skills.

All Aspects of an Industry is a framework to help prepare students for their roles in the workplace. For young people to be successful in today's world of work, they need to learn more than specific job skills; they need the big picture of any job, career or industry. This framework is an approach to work-based learning that emphasizes broad, transferable knowledge of the workplace rather than solely job-specific skills. When possible, provide student interns the opportunity to gain experience or exposure to each of these aspects.

All Aspects of an Industry identifies nine aspects that are common to any enterprise. Students should gain experience and understanding of the associated concepts and skills to be successful.

1. Planning—How an organization plans (including goals and objectives); the type of ownership (public or private) the relationship of the organization to economic, political and social contexts; assessment of needs.
2. Management—Structure and process for effectively accomplishing the goals and operations of the organization using facilities, staff, resources, equipment and materials.
3. Finance—Accounting and financial decision-making process, method of acquiring capital to operate, management of financial operations including payroll.
4. Technical and Production Skills —Basic skills in math, communications, computer, time management and thinking; specific skills for production; interpersonal skills within the organization.
5. Principles of Technology—Technological systems being used in the workplace and their contributions to the product or service of the organization.
6. Labor Issues—Rights of employees and related issues; wages, benefits and working conditions.
7. Community Issues—Impact of the company on the community, impact of the community on the organization.
8. Health, Safety and Environment—Practices and laws affecting the employee, the surrounding community and the environment
9. Personal Work Habits—Nontechnical skills and characteristics expected in the workplace.

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The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills was appointed by the U.S. secretary of labor to identify the skills young people need to succeed in the world of work, especially in a high-performance workplace. SCANS competencies and skills are both locally and nationally validated and identify skills that are transferable from job to job and occupation to occupation across industries. The commission identified three foundation skill areas and five workplace competencies that all workers need to be successful. These skills and competencies are evaluated on the *Internship Plan and Evaluation*.

SCANS Foundation Skills

Competent workers in a high-performance workplace need:

Basic Skills—The ability to demonstrate reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics, speaking and listening.

Thinking Skills—The ability to learn, reason, think creatively, make decisions and solve problems.

Personal Qualities—The ability to demonstrate individual responsibility, self-esteem and self-management, sociability and integrity.

Workplace Competencies

Effective workers can productively use the following:

Resources—They know how to allocate time, money, materials, space and staff.

Interpersonal Skills—They can work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate and work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Information—They know how to acquire and evaluate data; organize and maintain files; interpret and communicate; and use computers to process information.

Systems—They understand social, organizational and technological systems; they can monitor and correct performance; and they can design or improve systems.

Technology—They can select equipment and tools, apply technology to specific tasks and maintain and troubleshoot equipment.

When designing experiences for student interns, be mindful of the SCANS skills that students can develop as they complete tasks and projects.

Review student's learning objectives. Incorporate learning opportunities from the job description into the work-based learning plan.

During the internship, it is essential to have a clear, concise job description that outlines the tasks or projects that the student will be responsible for. A clear job description can be used as a tool to help develop the student's *Internship Plan* on which the intern's performance, skills and knowledge will be evaluated.

Internships are different from work experience in that they provide opportunities for students to learn and grow beyond the scope of the job description. *The Workplace Partner Guide to the Internship Plan* will help you to think about how to maximize student learning at your workplace.

Students will be working in the classroom to prepare themselves for optimal learning at the workplace.



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They will complete a self-assessment of their SCANS¹ skills and will develop questions to ask you about learning opportunities at the workplace. The students will participate in classroom activities designed to support their learning at the workplace throughout the course of the internship or project. After an initial meeting with you, students will begin to draft their learning objectives. Within the two weeks of the internship or project, you and the student should meet to discuss those objectives and refine them.

After you have had time to consider how students can be exposed to all aspects of the industry and develop SCANS skills, you will work with the student to refine the learning objectives that the student will pursue during the course of the internship.

During the Internship

Participate in ongoing meetings with the teacher and student.

All students enrolled in internships are supported by teachers from their schools. You and the student's teacher will arrange a plan for communication and set up dates for site visits and phone calls at the beginning of the internship or service learning experience.

The best possible meetings involve you, the student and the teacher. During these meetings you will discuss the student's progress toward accomplishing his/her learning objectives, and together you can develop new objectives as the student meets his or her initial ones. You can discuss the classroom support that would help the student perform better at the workplace and the teacher can let you know about related classroom lessons that are planned. These meetings are an opportunity for the student to work with both of you on any areas that need discussion. It is also a great time for both you and the teacher to let the student know how well they are doing and to encourage them to keep it up.

Provide support for student learning during the experience.

Effective training is an important part of an internship experience. Most people learn by doing, but each person learns differently. Keep in mind different approaches to teaching students new skills and tasks.

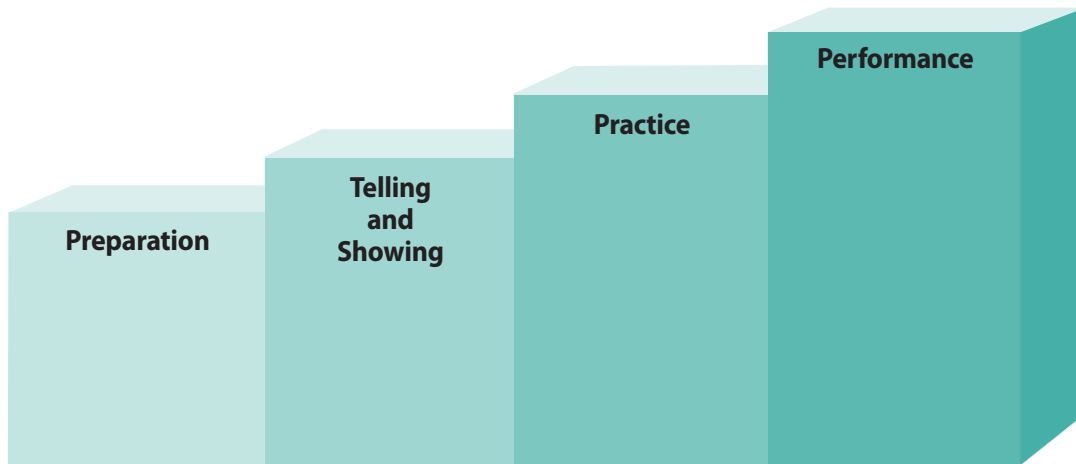
¹SCANS is an acronym for the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, which created The SCANS Report for America 2000, issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, April 1992. The report defines a set of skills and competencies necessary for success in the work-place.

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Supporting Interns' Growth¹

The following list outlines one method of supporting student interns' growth.



Preparation

- Develop a training plan listing the tasks and skills required for a job.
- Decide when and how training will be accomplished.
- Decide who will conduct the training.

Telling and Showing

- Describe what should be done.
- Demonstrate how to do the task.
- Ask questions.
- Check for understanding.

Practice

- Allow intern to do the task.
- Correct errors.
- Ask interns to describe what they are doing.

Performance

- Allow interns to work on their own.
- Designate someone to go to for help.
- Check frequently for progress.
- Ask questions.
- Provide feedback on performance.

¹Adapted from the Sonoma County School-to-Career Partnership, Work-Based Learning Toolkit



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Demonstrate how to perform assigned tasks for the student. Clarify the purpose of each task and its relation to the overall goals. Help the student understand how his or her work fits into the organization as a whole. As interns begin to perform tasks on their own, they will likely need some feedback but not necessarily direct intervention. As a worksite supervisor, at this point you become more of a coach who stands back and monitors the student's progress, suggesting alternatives when appropriate and encouraging the student to take on more responsibility. Through this diminishing support, or scaffolding, you encourage the student to ask more questions and take on more tasks.

As the intern becomes self-sufficient, refrain from giving feedback until the student completes a task. Ask the intern to assess his/her success. Building on the student's own evaluation, making additional comments as appropriate. You and the intern should meet regularly to discuss progress and set goals. These meetings help students understand that real-world work is evaluated against standards of quality and that setting goals is essential to workplace success and lifelong learning. The teacher will meet with you and the student several times during the semester to see the student's progress and assist with new objectives when the student masters his or her initial ones.

Communicate successes and opportunities at the workplace.

During ongoing meetings with the teacher you have the opportunity to share student successes with the teacher. Let the teacher know how the student is progressing on the learning objectives. If there are challenges or opportunities for further learning that could be supported in the classroom, let the teacher know. The teacher may be able to incorporate curriculum in the classroom that will better prepare the student for learning at the workplace.

Meet with teacher and student for final evaluation.

A final meeting with the student and teacher to review the experience provides an opportunity for learning-rich reflection, in which each person can benefit from hearing how the experience was for others. It will also be valuable to incorporate into the discussion the student's next step—asking students to reflect on how this experience has shaped their future goals and impacted their perspective.

After the Internship

Complete program evaluation and submit it.

The teacher will provide you with a copy of the **Internship Program Evaluation** so that you can provide feedback on the process and help the teacher and other school staff know how to modify the structure or timeline in the future.