

BEST PRACTICE: CLEARLY DEFINE WORK-BASED LEARNING

Establishing a sufficiently detailed definition of work-based learning (WBL) provides a foundation on which high-quality opportunities and policies ensuring quality and equity of access are built. Defining specific activities and experiences helps ensure that schools know what they can offer to students, and that students know what experiences are available to them. Multiple states offer strong examples of WBL definitions.

For example, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) has a clear [definition](#) of WBL as a “coordinated effort between school districts and employers in the Alaska workforce, and refers to learning that results from work experience. It is an opportunity for our high school youth to see firsthand some of the various work environments, to experience some of the job duties for a brief period while receiving classroom credit.”

Key components of Alaska’s definition of WBL are that it has a work experience component, that the work experience is connected to instruction in the classroom, and that it is a planned learning activity. Alaska’s [WBL guide](#) outlines a set of experiences that are considered WBL, including internships, apprenticeships, paid student-learners, school-based enterprises, etc.