



THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK OPPORTUNITIES ACT OF 1994

The Purpose of the Act

The US Departments of Education and Labor developed the School-to-Work initiative to address a growing national concern about the gap between the skills and education required to be competitive in the global economy and the knowledge, skills and abilities of students exiting the U.S. educational system. The initiative created a framework for the development of School-to-Work systems in the states that called for the integration of school-based learning with the real-world context of work. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 was passed by Congress in May of 1994, providing seven years of implementation grants to states through the National School-to-Work Office.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (*Public Law 103–239*) states that School-to-Work systems must incorporate three basic components:

Work-Based Learning (*Title 1, Section 103*) that includes:

- Paid work experience;
- Workplace mentoring;
- Instruction in general workplace competencies; and
- A planned sequence of job training including pre-employment and employment skills to be mastered at progressively higher levels, relevant to a student's career major and leading to the award of a skill certificate.

School-Based Learning (*Title 1, Section 102*) that includes:

- Career awareness, career exploration and counseling (beginning at the earliest possible age, minimally the 7th grade) to help interested students identify and select or reconsider their interests, goals and career majors including non-traditional options for their gender, race or ethnicity;
- Initial selection by interested students of a career major no later than the 11th grade;
- A program of study designed to meet the same challenging academic standards developed by the state for all students including, where applicable, standards established under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and to meet the requirements necessary for a student to earn a skill certificate;
- A curriculum integrating academic and vocational (applied) learning;
- Regularly scheduled evaluations to identify academic strengths and weaknesses, academic progress, workplace knowledge, students' goals and the need for additional learning opportunities to master core academic and vocational skills; and
- Facilitation of high school students' entry into post-secondary education or training.

Connecting Activities (*Title 1, Section 104*) that include:

- Matching students with employers' work-based learning opportunities;
- Serving as a liaison between the employer, school, teacher, parent and student, and if appropriate, other community partners;
- Providing technical assistance and services to employers (including small and medium-sized) and others in designing work-based learning components, counseling and case management services and in training teachers, workplace mentors and counselors;

This factsheet is part of the Work-Based Learning Toolkit and is intended to provide an overview of relevant quality, safety and legal issues relating to work-based learning placements at the time of publication.

It is not intended to provide comprehensive information nor to serve as a substitute for appropriate legal advice.

To access the complete toolkit, visit www.stc-clearinghouse.com or www.nwwo.org



- Providing assistance to students who are transitioning into finding an appropriate job, continuing their education or entering into an additional training program;
- Providing assistance to schools and employers to integrate school-based and work-based learning, and to integrate academic and occupational learning;
- Collecting and analyzing information regarding post-participation outcomes of students who participate in the School-to-Work system continuum, which may include information about gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, limited English proficiency and disability; and
- Linking youth development activities under the School-to-Work system with employer and industry strategies for upgrading the skills of their workers.

Displacement Policies under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 set forth the following seven standards to protect the rights of employees and employers (*Title VI, Section 601 (1)(2)(3)*):

1. No student displaces any currently employed worker.
2. No program impairs existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements. Any program inconsistent with the terms of a collective bargaining agreement cannot be undertaken without the written concurrence of the labor organization and employer concerned.
3. No student is employed or fills a job:
 - (a) When any other individual is on temporary layoff with the clear possibility of recall from the same or any substantially equivalent job with the participating employer; or
 - (b) When the employer has terminated the employment of any regular employee or otherwise reduced its workforce with the intention of using a student to fill such a vacancy.
4. The students are provided with adequate and safe equipment and safe and healthful workplaces in conformity with all safety and health requirements of federal, state and local laws.
5. All federal or state laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age or disability are enforced.
6. The funds awarded under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act are not expended for wages of students or workplace mentors.
7. The students are afforded adequate supervision by skilled adult workers.

Regulatory Authority

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act is jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education.

For more information:

Download or view the School-to-Work Opportunities Act click on "Important Documents."

<http://www.stc.ca.gov>