

Quality Work-Based Learning Toolkit

Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools



*How-To Guide for
Workplace Tours*

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DEVELOPING WORKPLACE TOURS



Introduction

This *How-to Guide for Workplace Tours* is a step-by-step guide to developing workplace tours for groups of students that interest and benefit students, workplace partners and teachers. It is part of The *Quality Work-Based Learning Toolkit*, which provides teachers with everything they need to create quality, safe and legal work-based learning experiences for students.

The following toolkit sections supplement this guide:

- ✓ *Creating Quality Work-Based Learning* is an introduction to the principles of *Quality Work-Based Learning* and lays the foundation for developing any work-based learning experience. *The Seven Simple Guidelines* presented focus on the "must-haves" for quality experiences.
- ✓ The *How-to Guides for Job Shadows, Internships and Service Learning* are step-by-step guides to developing quality work-based learning experiences that work for the student, the workplace partner and the teacher.
- ✓ *Building the Classroom Connection* presents strategies for connecting workplace experiences to classroom lessons and activities.
- ✓ The *Teacher Guide for the Work-Based Learning Plan* provides instructions for teachers on how to assist students and workplace partners with writing learning objectives and evaluating student performance. The *Workplace Partner and Student Guides to the Work-Based Learning Plan* detail the learning objective development process.
- ✓ The *Tools* section of this toolkit contains supportive materials including forms, sample classroom assignments and items to assist workplace partners.
- ✓ The collection of *Factsheets* provides overviews of work-based learning structures and programs, laws and regulations, and partners, detailing important information about each topic.
- ✓ The *Quality Work-Based Learning Resource List* points to additional materials and organizations that support Quality Work-Based Learning programs.

Workplace Tours Overview

A workplace tour is a career awareness activity in which students visit a workplace, learn about the business, meet employees, ask questions and observe work in progress. It is conducted at a workplace for small groups of students and should involve preparation in the classroom, including research by the student. All workplace tours should include structured activity before, during and after the experience. These activities help ensure that all involved parties have meaningful, productive experiences that result in enriched student learning. Proper planning and preparation, attention to legal and safety details, maximization of learning potential and communication and support for the student and workplace host will help ensure success.

TEACHER CHECKLIST FOR WORKPLACE TOUR DEVELOPMENT

Use this checklist as a quick reference to ensure you have completed all the steps defined in this How-to Guide.

Before the Workplace Tour

- Review the *Workplace Tour* factsheet.
- Assess how a workplace tour can support your teaching and curriculum goals.
- Select appropriate businesses for tours.
- Confirm logistics.
- Collect signed *Work-Based Learning Permission* forms.
- Prepare students to maximize their learning.

During the Workplace Tour

- Ensure that students receive instruction in workplace safety.
- Arrange for students to experience the tour in small groups.
- Expose students to all aspects of the industry.
- Arrange for students to speak to employees with different levels of responsibility.
- Collect signed *Work-Based Learning Permission* forms.
- Prepare students to maximize their learning.

After the Workplace Tour

- Provide individual and group reflection exercises.
- Help students make the connection between academics and the workplace.
- Have students write thank you-letters to workplace host.
- Support students in determining the next step in learning about careers.
- Utilize employer and student feedback to inform continuous improvement.

Before the Workplace Tour

Review the *Workplace Tour Factsheet*.

The *Workplace Tour* factsheet is a quick reference guide that outlines the work-based learning experience.

Assess how a workplace tour can support your teaching and curriculum goals.

Workplace tours can provide the context for your curriculum that will help students understand the application of academic concepts to a workplace situation. Workplace tours provide exposure to careers and jobs and help students build occupational knowledge.

Select appropriate businesses for tours.

Workplace tours are ideal opportunities to connect academic learning to the world of work. The Business/Education Coalition (BEC) at the Kansas City, Kansas Area Chamber of Commerce annually publishes a guidebook of businesses that host tours for school groups. This guidebook provides contact information, descriptions of the kinds of tours each business hosts and scheduling information. The *BEC* factsheet provides more information about the Business/Education Coalition. Information on accessing any of their services can be found on the coalition web site at www.kckchamber.com/bec.

Phone: (913) 371-3070, fax: (913) 371-3732, e-mail: bec@kckchamber.com.

PathFinder is another resource for finding workplace tours. To review PathFinder options, go to www.be2.org and click on "PathFinder", then enter "PathFinder", then "Community Participants". Select "Work Place Tours" under "Types of Opportunities" and indicate "Career Cluster" and "Grade Levels" for students, then you may search and view opportunities. Look for the "AAA Locator" if you are having problems finding the opportunities you want.

In order to be able to make a request online, you'll have to be registered with PathFinder. Once you have logged into PathFinder, click on "Sign Me Up" and follow the directions. You will then be given your password, and within twenty-four hours your account will be activated. The PathFinder factsheet lists contact information and other ways to use the service.

Confirm logistics.

Ensure transportation arrangements are made for students and staff. District policies about automobile and bus transportation and other options are outlined in the *Transportation for Work-Based Learning* factsheet. Check with the contact person at the workplace to ensure logistical details are arranged.

Locate the proper building entry and make sure that staff at the school site have a phone number at the workplace where the group can be reached in an emergency. Confirm dress requirements for the tour and ensure that any special accommodations needed for students and staff are arranged in advance. Confirm how many students and staff will be attending and share the information with the workplace host.

Collect signed *Work-Based Learning Permission forms*.

Written permission is required for all workplace tours.

Prepare students to maximize learning.

Helping students develop a context for the workplace tour maximizes their learning once they are at the workplace. There are several ways to do this.

- Discuss expectations for the experience and what the students may learn beforehand.
- Discuss behavioral expectations that will allow students to make the most out of the activity.
- Discuss what students know about the company and how the industry impacts them.
- Support students in research of the company and the industry so that they can ask meaningful questions during the workplace tour.
- Have students prepare questions and individual learning objectives that they would like to accomplish during the workplace tour.

Also, introduce frameworks and materials that will help students organize what they learn at the workplace. These frameworks include the SCANS¹ skills and All Aspects of an Industry.



Tools

- All Aspects of an Industry
- SCANS Skills Assessment
- SCANS Skills Assessment Class Activity
- Student Job Shadow Expectations Sheet
- Work-Based Learning Permission Form
- Workplace Safety Curricula



Factsheets

- Business/Education Coalition (BEC)
- Business/Education Expectations (BE²)
- Transportation for Work-Based Learning
- PathFinder
- Workplace Tour

¹ SCANS 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 workplace.

During the Workplace Tour

Ensure that students receive instruction in workplace safety.

Safety is a critical concern when bringing students to the workplace. Have the workplace host include a safety talk in his or her opening remarks. Students should be provided with appropriate safety gear and equipment for the workplace tour. When you provide safety instruction prior to the visit, you can instruct students to look for potential hazards during the tour. In addition to being a crucial safety measure, this instruction can raise students' awareness about safety in other environments. A classroom discussion after the tour is an important part of this process.

Arrange for students to experience the tour in small groups.

When possible, arrange for students to tour in smaller groups (three to six students). This allows students to become comfortable with their guide and maximizes the likelihood that they will ask questions and engage in dialogue. A rotating agenda for the day with different groups participating in several kinds of activities and interacting with different employees is ideal.

Expose students to all aspects of the industry.

All Aspects of an Industry provides a handy framework for a workplace tour. In addition to helping workplace hosts think about how to design a wide range of exposures for students, an All Aspects of an Industry structure for the tour provides students who may not be interested in a career in this particular field to learn about roles and issues that are common to all industries. A workplace tour can be structured so that students spend some time in each department or unit of the workplace learning about the issues that are important to them. The *All Aspects of an Industry Investigative Interview* can be used as part of a workplace tour.

Arrange for students to speak to employees with different levels of responsibility.

Whether a student has aspirations to earn a college degree, pursue an industry certificate or get technical training, the workplace tour can provide them with exposure to people with various levels of responsibility and education. Whenever possible, ensure that students have an opportunity to see the wide variety of career opportunities at the workplace.



Tools

- All Aspects of an Industry
- All Aspects Investigative Interview
- B-Safe Safety Checklist
- Informational Interview



Factsheets

- Addressing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- Laws Pertaining to the Employment of Students
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration

After the Workplace Tour

Provide individual and group reflection exercises.

Reflection promotes self-awareness and personal assessment and helps students to internalize the learning that has happened during the tour. When you provide for adequate reflection, you ensure that students have the opportunity to examine the experience so that they can form understanding of the workplace and extend that understanding to other situations. Reflection helps students to "own" the knowledge they have acquired. *Building the Classroom Connection* provides more information about reflection and several ideas on how to structure activities in the classroom.

Help students make the connection between academics and the workplace.

It is important that students have the opportunity to make the connection between their studies and the workplace tour. You can have students work individually or in groups to develop a matrix that shows the connection between the classes they are enrolled in and skills required at the workplace.

Write a thank you letter to the workplace host.

Thank-you letters from students let your workplace partners know that you value their participation in the learning process. Classroom reflection activities work well as a lead-in to writing thank-you notes to the workplace host. Corresponding with workplace partners provides important literacy practice for students and promotes workplace partner participation in the future.

Support students in determining their next step in learning about careers.

Workplace tours provide students an opportunity to discover the elements of building a career. After a workplace tour and reflection activities, students can articulate the next level of questions that this visit has inspired, identify other workplaces they would like to visit and make the educational plans they need to move toward the career of their choice.

Utilize employer and student feedback to inform continuous improvement process.

Students and workplace tour hosts can provide feedback on the experience that will help you support the activity more effectively in the future. Use feedback to refine your program, communication plan or support activities.

Workplace tours can be low stress and high impact when structured carefully to support student learning, workplace partner participation and your own curriculum goals for your class. Following the *Seven Simple Guidelines* outlined in the *Creating Quality Work-Based Learning* section in this toolkit and the checklist outlined in this *How-to Guide for Workplace Tours* will ensure success for all.



Tools

- Work-Based Learning Program Evaluation

WORKPLACE TOUR MATRIX

This matrix outlines the steps teachers, students and workplace partners should take to ensure a successful experience.

	TEACHERS	STUDENTS	WORKPLACE PARTNERS
Before the Workplace Tour	<p>Review the <i>Workplace Tour Factsheet</i>.</p> <p>Assess how a workplace tour can support your teaching and curriculum goals.</p> <p>Select appropriate businesses for tours.</p> <p>Confirm logistics.</p> <p>Collect signed <i>Work-Based Learning Permission</i> forms.</p> <p>Prepare students to maximize learning.</p>	<p>Research the company or organization that you will visit.</p> <p>Turn in signed <i>Work-Based Learning Permission</i> forms.</p> <p>Find out how to dress and act appropriately at this particular workplace.</p> <p>Develop questions about the work, career opportunities, and connections to academics at this workplace.</p>	<p>Register on Pathfinder and with the Business/Education Coalition to promote tours at your workplace.</p> <p>Let the teacher know who the main contact is, emergency phone numbers at the workplace, and the best place for parking and building entry.</p> <p>Plan to arrange the tour around all aspects of the industry.</p> <p>Determine a structure for the tour that will allow students to be in small groups.</p> <p>Consider how students can speak to employees with different levels of responsibility.</p>
During the Workplace Tour	<p>Arrange for students to experience the tour in small groups.</p> <p>Ensure that students receive instruction in workplace safety.</p> <p>Expose students to all aspects of the industry.</p> <p>Arrange for students to speak to employees with different levels of responsibility.</p>	<p>Pay close attention to safety issues at the workplace.</p> <p>Think about what else you need to know to determine if careers in this industry are for you.</p>	<p>Provide safety orientation to tour group.</p>
After the Workplace Tour	<p>Provide individual and group reflection exercises.</p> <p>Help students make the connection between academics and the industry.</p> <p>Have students write a thank-you letter to workplace host.</p> <p>Support students in determining their next step in learning about careers.</p> <p>Utilize employer and student feedback to inform continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Participate in classroom activities that will help you think about the value of the workplace tour.</p> <p>Compose a specific and professional thank-you note for the workplace host.</p> <p>Complete a <i>Work-Based Learning Program Evaluation</i>.</p>	<p>Complete and return the <i>Work-Based Learning Program Evaluation</i>.</p>