Washington Office of Superintendent of PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Statewide CTE Task Force
December Meeting Notes

Attendee List

1	Krista Fox (OSPI)*	9	Tory Gering*	17	Taelar Shelton*
2	Kari Morgan (OSPI)*	10	Wes Allen*	18	Kimberly Hetrick
3	Heather Rees (OSPI)*	11	Nora Zollweg**	19	Morgan Irwin*
4	Ellie Palmer (OSPI)*	12	Marie Bruin*	20	Ingrid Stegemoeller
5	Michelle Spenser	13	Rachel Wabeke*	21	Erin Frasier*
6	Tom Walker*	14	Reuben Argel*	22	Katelyn Kean*
7	Tia Rivera	15	Wade Larson*		
8	Sarah Patterson*	16	Kristin Murphy*		

Indicates the member was in attendance
**Indicates the member's alternate was in attendance*

Opening & Overview

- A reference document was sent out for the group to refer back to that includes links, acronyms, a task outline, and definitions.
- Task A will be the main focus of today's meeting.

Anatomy of a Recommendation

- Tips and tricks on what makes a good recommendation and how to get to that recommendation were discussed with the group. This will help lead the work the group is jumping into today.
- A good recommendation:
  - Is clear– simple, straightforward, and easy to understand what it is asking.
  - Identifies the "who"– identify the intended audience of the recommendation.
  - Identifies the "what"– identify what needs to be done and addressed, including a targeted goal.
  - Is actionable– includes the scope of work for the committee.
- How to get to the recommendation:
  - Define the issue and challenge and describe what is not working and why.
  - Policy levers to address the issues include:
    - Advocacy/Education– would an increase in knowledge or awareness address this issue?
    - Law/Rule– is there a change to law that would address this issue?
    - Monitoring/Compliance– would an increased enforcement of current law/policy address this issue?
    - Capacity Building– would technical assistance or training to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) help address this issue?
    - Data Collection– is additional information needed to help address this issue?

- Partnership– would cross-sector collaboration help address this issue?
- Financial– would expanding programming and creating incentives address this issue?
- It was noted that this is not an exhaustive list, just a list of examples.
- Keep in mind potential unintended consequences. Example– there may be an idea for a solution that is change in law, but it may have complications such as strains on partnership, capacity needed, etc.

Task A

- Task A Overview:
  - The Task Force shall make recommendations for expanding and strengthening the accessibility, stability, and uniformity of secondary work-integrated learning opportunities.
  - This means that the Task Force should make recommendations for improving the accessibility, stability, and uniformity of all aspects of Career Connected Learning.
- Career Connected Learning:
  - Programs that provide experiences under the Work Based Learning (WBL) umbrella. This includes all of the things that students get to do to learn more about potential careers such as career exploration and awareness, career preparation, and career launch.
  - All recommendations should be connected to Career Connected Learning and evaluated for potential challenges, barriers, and solutions.
- Clarification was requested regarding the scope of accessibility, stability, and uniformity discussions. Specifically, it was asked whether the focus was limited to student-related issues or if it also encompassed challenges and barriers affecting programs and employers. It was confirmed that all challenges and barriers across stakeholders would be addressed, not exclusively those impacting students.

Accessibility

- The whole group was split out into smaller breakout groups to address the challenges, barriers, and solutions to accessibility in Career Connected Learning.
- This is what each group recommended:
  - Definitions of Accessibility–
    - Accessible programs promote diversity and improve awareness of opportunities within their field, have appropriate instructors, curriculum, and facilities to permit acceptance of students.
    - Programs provide opportunities to support students presenting different needs while working to support the workforce needs of the industry both in number and competent qualification while allowing the educational institution to obtain and retain appropriately qualified instructors and healthy programs.
    - Students require work-based learning opportunities in safe environments where students and staff can collaborate effectively to achieve realistic, attainable goals through structured programs and projects.
    - There is an emphasis on the need for a shared understanding that all students across Washington State should have equitable access to work-

based learning programs, regardless of their geographic location.
- o Challenges/Barriers to Accessibility–
  - Legislative and corporate restrictions that prohibit hands-on student experiences at work sites.
  - Knowledge gaps among employers regarding compliance requirements and best practices for hosting minors at work sites.
  - Insufficient communication and collaboration between education and industry partners.
  - Extended project timelines that create accessibility challenges for student participation.
  - Limited enrollment capacity in CTE programs, particularly for upper-level courses with high demand.
  - Difficulty recruiting qualified CTE instructors due to the specialized nature of the positions.
  - Employer concerns regarding age requirements and liability issues when hosting student workers.
  - Mutual lack of understanding between CTE instructors and employers on how to effectively engage with one another, resulting in misconceptions and miscommunication.
  - The need to ensure work-based learning opportunities align with the student's career goals and intended professions.
- o Solutions to those challenges–
  - Enhance state funding for career connected learning and Core Plus programs to support teacher professional development, training, and access to quality instructional materials.
  - Strengthen collaboration networks among teachers and educators to facilitate peer support and empowerment.
  - Address transportation barriers by improving student access to driver's education programs, public transportation, and other safe travel options to and from work sites.
  - Develop a unified program model with clearly defined core components, common outcomes, and shared terminology/definitions.
  - Establish written definitions and standards from a singular source.
  - Obtain written clarifications from employers regarding program expectations and requirements.
  - Expand access to free, job-relevant curriculum that is easily accessible and applicable to real-world employment scenarios.
  - Explore the creation of a structured CTE pipeline beginning in fifth grade and continuing through middle school to high school.
  - More solutions will be discussed at the January 2026 Task Force Meeting.

Stability
- The whole group was split out into smaller breakout groups to address the challenges, barriers, and solutions to stability in Career Connected Learning.
- This is what each group recommended:

- Definitions of Stability–
  - Consistent work-based learning offerings with clear definitions of what each experience includes, as well as well-defined alignment between opportunities and clarity regarding the career connected learning continuum.
  - Stable, ongoing funding structures rather than grant-dependent models along with adequate funding that accurately reflects program workload and operational demands.
  - Investment in career exposure beginning at early grade levels, before students develop preconceived notions about career paths with a focus on diversifying the workforce by exposing students to varied career options before progressing to training and apprenticeship stages.
  - Programs with multi-year and multi-decade sustainability that build positive reputations through student experiences and peer referrals.
  - Enhanced support for existing CTE programs to strengthen student pipelines in the workforce.
  - Systematic approach ensuring all available opportunities are equally accessible to students with intentional efforts to promote workforce diversity through equitable exposure to career pathways.
- Challenges/Barriers to Stability–
  - State budget cuts have reduced career connected learning and Core Plus program funding, threatening long-term program sustainability without reliable financial support.
  - Declining college enrollments are driving tuition increases, limiting options for students without access to CTE programs.
  - Heavy reliance on grant-based funding creates uncertainty; alternative funding streams, including industry partnerships, remain underdeveloped.
  - Lack of dedicated work-based learning coordinators at every high school to manage WBL, High School and Beyond Plans, and track teacher professional development.
  - Absence of standardized instructor capacity requirements results in variable student experience quality and learning outcomes.
  - Insufficient marketing and outreach to educate students and families about available career connected learning opportunities.
  - Lack of established standards and competencies aligned with projected 2030 industry workforce needs.
  - Inadequate funding prevents nonprofits from effectively supporting WBL programs.
  - Disparities between Skills Center and high school CTE program funding, compounded by difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified instructors.
  - Limited industry and state recognition of micro-credentials hinder lateral career moves and advancement opportunities.
  - Declining student enrollment creates budget deficits, which further reduce funding and program capacity in a reinforcing negative cycle.

- - - Insufficient dialogue around the value and earning potential of one- and two-year professional programs compared to traditional four-year degrees.
  - o Solutions to those challenges–
    - - Begin building tactile and foundational skills at the elementary level, with particular emphasis on fifth grade as a critical starting point.
    - - Designate primary employer points of contact for work-based learning experiences in each district.
    - - Strengthen development of core employability skills and fundamentals across both school-based programs and WBL experiences.
    - - Explore alternative funding sources beyond traditional CTE allocations to address current resource gaps.
    - - Consider public-private partnership models where businesses contribute financially to work-based learning programs.
    - - Encourage direct business sector investment in workforce development programs to ensure future talent availability and program sustainability.
    - - More solutions will be discussed at the January 2026 Task Force Meeting.

Uniformity

- • The whole group was split out into smaller breakout groups to address the challenges, barriers, and solutions to uniformity in Career Connected Learning.
- • This is what each group recommended:
  - o The group identified that a shared definition of uniformity is necessary before developing comprehensive recommendations. Initial recommendations were proposed, but further clarification is required. This topic will be revisited at the January 2026 Task Force Meeting.
  - o Definitions of Uniformity–
    - - Ensure all students regardless of location, employer, or program receive fair, equivalent, high-quality learning experiences tied to career skills. Standard skills should be the same, even if the specific experiences vary based on location.
    - - Uniformity may be an end-product expectation for the output in student/employee competence or qualification but cannot limit the process to get a student/employee to that point.
  - o Challenges/Barriers to Uniformity–
    - - Inequitable access to resources and opportunities across different regions of Washington.
    - - Lack of established uniform standards in industries for Career Connected Learning programs and credentialing.
    - - Wide variation in school size (100-2,500+ students), socioeconomic status, community density, and family educational backgrounds creates challenges for uniform implementation.
    - - Inconsistent terminology and credentialing requirements across employers create systemic obstacles to program alignment and workforce transitions.

- Solutions to those challenges–
  - Focus on standardizing program outcomes and measurable results rather than prescribing uniform implementation methods.
  - More solutions will be discussed at the January 2026 Task Force Meeting.

Action Items & Next Steps
- Additional thoughts on topics discussed may be added to the Padlet for ongoing collaboration.
- Meeting materials will be posted on the OSPI Website.