

# The Workplace Simulation Program:

*Work-Based Learning  
and Project-Based Learning  
all in one!*

# WBL = WSP

## WBL STANDARDS

- WBL is defined by activities and experiences when a student/worker goes to a workplace or works with an employer
- WBL benefits in-school youth, opportunity youth, adult jobseekers, or incumbent workers
- WBL is defined by activities and experiences when a student/worker does meaningful job tasks that (a) develop his or her skills, knowledge, and readiness for work and (b) support entry or advancement in a particular career field.
- WBL encompasses a wide array of learning experiences, from exposing high school students to careers through activities like job shadowing, to providing incumbent workers with specialized training.
- WBL extends into the workplace through on-the-job training, mentoring, and other supports in a continuum of lifelong learning and skill development.
- The goals of WBL include helping participants:
  - Be ready for work and careers
  - Enter and complete an education, training program, or career-related program of study
  - Earn an academic degree or industry-recognized credential attainment
  - Get a job or advance in a career
  - Attain self-sufficiency

## WSP STANDARDS

- ✓ Students in WSPs work side-by-side with the employer in their projects
- ✓ WSPs directly benefits the in-school youth participants, the employer, and the teachers involved
- ✓ Students in WSPs learn professional standards and employability skills through training and under the guidance and mentorship of STEM professionals
- ✓ WSPs create a unique learning experience through a realistic STEM project that unifies multiple class subjects and allows students to learn directly from STEM professionals
- ✓ Students in WSPs learn professional standards and employability skills through training and under the guidance and mentorship of STEM professionals, teachers, and IU P-16 employees
- ✓ The goals of WSPs match the goals of WBL by:
  - Teaching students about different STEM careers and employability skills
  - DEI and WSPs also provide guidance to students in choosing higher education or training programs
  - Teaching students that they are capable of anything they set their minds to

# PBL = WSP

## PBL STANDARDS

### Challenging Problem or Question:

Project is focused on a central problem on appropriate level of challenge. The driving question for the project is (a) open-ended (b) understandable and inspiring to students. (c) aligned with learning goals; to answer it, students will need to gain the intended knowledge, understanding, and skills

### Sustained Inquiry:

Inquiry is sustained over time and academically rigorous. Inquiry is driven by student-generated questions throughout the project.

### Authenticity

The project involves real-world tasks, tools, and quality standards, makes a real impact on the world, and/or speaks to students' personal concerns, interests, or identities.

### Student Voice and Choice

Students have opportunities to express voice and choice on important matters. Students also have opportunities to take significant responsibility and work as independently from the teacher as is appropriate, with guidance.

### Reflection

Students and teachers engage in thoughtful, comprehensive reflection both during the project and after its culmination

### Critique and Revision

Students are provided with regular, structured opportunities to give and receive feedback about the quality of their products and work-in-progress from peers, teachers, and if appropriate from others beyond the classroom. Students use feedback about their work to revise and improve it.

### Public Product

Student work is made public by presenting or offering it to people beyond the classroom. Students are asked to publicly explain the reasoning behind choices they made, the inquiry process, how they worked, what they learned, etc.

## WSP STANDARDS

The WSP is based on an authentic problem given to students by the employer partner. It is refined and phased at an appropriate level by our curriculum development partners, The Center for Research and Collaboration P-16 at IU. Our driving question is always open-ended, understandable, inspiring, and aligned with learning goals unique to each student's class

Students are encouraged to form their own hypotheses for a solution, then research, develop, and evaluate their potential solution, then move forward based on what they have discovered, even if that means scrapping their ideas and starting over.

DEI recreates an authentic workspace within the school (including bringing in authentic furniture, appliances, and tools), brings in real employees, and uses real problems or projects from the employer. Additionally, the employer remains involved throughout the entirety of the WSP.

Students work almost entirely independently of their teachers in the WSP and have given the freedom to make whatever choices they deem appropriate. Students are given a variety of resources and if they find a material or resource they would like to use, they are encouraged to bring it up to the Project Manager

While the students are meant to work on the WSP project as a part of their regular class activities, lab days provide a perfect opportunity for everyone to evaluate progress and process. The Project Manager encourages and facilitates these reflections.

On lab days, students receive feedback and guidance from the employee volunteers and the project manager. Students are given the opportunity and materials to revise based on that feedback.

Every WSP ends with a culminating event, where students invite family and friends, and DEI invites local media, politicians, and other prominent and interested parties, and the employee volunteers invite their interested peers. This culminating event is where students display and explain their projects and why they made the choices they made.