

Wyoming School-University Partnership

Wyoming Transition Programs Case Study Goshen County School District #1 Torrington, Lingle, Ft. Laramie, Wyoming Internship and Co-Op Programs

Program Inception, Goals, and Description

The district-wide program in Goshen County School District #1 known as the Internship Program had its beginnings over 50 years ago. In this program, juniors and seniors are placed in a professional setting matched with their interest during the school day; they can enroll for 1 or 2 semesters. Students receive 3 hours of college credit based on a minimum of 90 hours of experience. The Internship program also includes 4 weeks of classroom instruction, in which students develop employability materials such as cover letters, resumes, references, business cards, and thank you letters. In addition, students set goals and engage with community members in mock interviews to improve their speaking skills. Time and activities in the professional setting are tracked using the Home Base app, and the instructor for the Internship program visits students, checks in with supervisors, and supports the evaluation process.

The Co-Op program, another long-standing GCSD#1 program, was initially designed to support students who had a need for employment to help with family living expenses and were struggling to keep up with the academic demands of school as a result. Students enrolled in Co-Op are employed in a professional environment, where they receive valuable experience and are paid for their hours. Recently, the Co-Op program was made available without regard to financial need and is available to sophomore through senior students. Among the different high schools in GCSD#1, the programs change to meet the needs of those contexts and the students enrolled. Students find employment before they apply for the Co-Op program; once employment is secured, they work with the instructor and their employer to set learning goals, and the instructor secures evaluations from the employer. Student time in the program is tracked through pay stubs. Students also do ten hours of training with the district instructor, in topics such as understanding the pay stub, soft skills, and other topics.

Stakeholder Perspectives

In conversation with the program coordinator and an administrator from the district, it became clear that both the long-standing nature of the programs included in this case study and the district coordinator's organization and personalization efforts are valued strongly within the community. The structure of the programs, including communication of clear expectations, how evaluation is conducted, and agreements among all parties, is supported by documentation.

One school administrator noted the importance of providing students in Goshen County with an understanding of potential career opportunities that may have previously been unknown to them, which is realized through both programs. Meeting the needs of students across the separate high schools can be a challenge, due to scheduling conflicts as well as distance. In cooperation with the High Altitudes Pathway (HAP) program through UW, one high school has leveled support for students to move into college/career by articulation specific goals within grade levels. In addition, all of the high schools can access and use [XELLO](#), a college and career readiness software designed for students and educators.

A student currently enrolled in the internship program was placed in a feed store/feed lot for two blocks a day because of interest in the agriculture industry. A graduate from 2023, currently a student at LCCC pursuing a goal of working as an ultrasound technologist, was able to shadow a sonographer for a semester at the local hospital and made good connections there, particularly in the process of applying for the program she is seeking to join. Another 2023 graduate was placed for two semesters of internship in a law enforcement setting and enjoyed the flexibility to determine how hour requirements were met. In addition, this student was able to obtain a Crime Information Center certification.

Two community members, both of whom had hosted students for multiple years, mentioned that liability issues limited what students were able to do in their placements. However, both had been involved in mock interviews, resume development, and cover letter building and were quite positive about the opportunity to engage with students and develop a pipeline for potential employees.

Data

Promising Practices

Our interviews showed the following as potential practices that are promising in the Internship and Co-Op programs:

- Long-standing nature of the program;
- Use of the digital app to track time in the placement setting;
- Close communication among program coordinator and community members;
- Individualized placements and experiences within those placements;
- Focus on students learning independence; and
- Potential for creation of a pipeline for employee recruitment.