

P-TECH Coordinator Tip Sheet

Workplace Challenge Success Factors

A tip sheet for P-TECH coordinators or intermediary partners responsible for implementing and supporting Workplace Challenges.

When developing and implementing Workplace Challenges at your P-TECH school, keep the following success factors in mind.

Before the Challenge

- Develop an Effective Employer Engagement Strategy
 - ✓ Define the ROI for employers.
 - ✓ Use the Employer Fact Sheet to explain the challenge to prospective employers.
- Develop a Project Plan for the Workplace Challenge
 - ✓ Design and develop the challenge with the employer, making sure that the challenge is one the students can potentially address and teachers can support.
 - ✓ Encourage the Workplace Challenge host to develop a real-world problem or issue—one that the industry is facing today. Make it real.
 - ✓ Ensure that the challenge and its solution are tied in some way to the curriculum, and that appropriate resources are in place to support the challenge.
 - ✓ Identify a process to recruit interested and qualified students. Create small teams of four to six students to work together on addressing the challenge.
 - ✓ Develop a timeline for the challenge. Include when and where the challenge will be issued, time set aside in the regular school schedule for students to address the challenge, scheduled “touch” points with the challenge host, and when, where and with whom the solution presentation will take place.
 - ✓ Define desired project outcomes.
- Apply the Work-Based Learning Essential Elements
 - ✓ Address the elements in the design of your Workplace Challenge.
 - ✓ Check in with the elements periodically to ensure that all ten are being addressed in implementation of the challenge.
- Address Logistics
 - ✓ If the challenge involves visiting the workplace, distribute and collect appropriate permission forms.
 - ✓ Schedule the opportunity for the challenge host to issue/explain the challenge, ideally at the worksite.
 - ✓ Address any additional logistical issues such as transportation, safety gear or access to equipment and tools.
 - ✓ Identify who will serve as the point of contact at the school and with the challenge host.
 - ✓ Coordinate, facilitate and implement orientation activities for students and challenge host(s).
 - ✓ Determine the workplace challenge host’s preferred form and frequency of contact.
 - ✓ Identify the level of engagement the challenge host would prefer during the challenge.
 - ✓ Define an ongoing communication strategy and feedback protocols for the experience.

- Develop Learning Objectives
 - ✓ Meet with students and teachers to help develop specific learning objectives.
 - ✓ Share the expected outcomes with the challenge host.
 - ✓ Consider identifying the three primary outcomes of the challenge.
- Support Student Learning
 - ✓ Schedule regular time for the students to work on the challenge.
 - ✓ Provide orientation and professional development for teachers.
 - ✓ Organize and make available the resources needed to support students as they address the challenge.

During the Challenge

- Observe and meet with students as they address the challenge and monitor their progress.
- Coordinate faculty involvement with the challenge.
 - ✓ Identify and support roles for teaching and guidance faculty.
- Provide ongoing support and Workplace Challenge hosts.
 - ✓ Update and adapt the Workplace Challenge Employer Tip Sheet and share/review with the challenge host.
 - ✓ Provide a single point of contact for the challenge.
- Help challenge hosts understand and support the P-TECH WBL approach
 - ✓ Share the P-TECH Professional Skills Fact Sheet with the Workplace Challenge hosts.
 - ✓ Share the classroom focus and how the challenge supports key concepts being taught.
- Maintain ongoing communication with and/or provide periodic reports to the employer. It is important that requests for clarification or additional information be coordinated through a single point of contact at the school and at the workplace.
- Help ensure that challenge activities are authentic and engaging, and provide opportunities to learn about a range of topics related to the industry.
- Provide opportunities for students to reflect on the challenge while it is in process.
- Support the challenge host in preparing to receive the presentation on the solution(s) to the challenge.

After the Challenge

- Generate publicity about the challenge.
 - ✓ Issue a press release about the challenge and send to local newspapers and tv stations.
- Have students write thank-you letters to the challenge hosts.
- Reflect on the experience.
 - ✓ Conduct an assessment of student learning outcomes. Have students reflect on what they've learned, and identify what more they would like to learn about.
 - ✓ Provide classroom experiences that help students make the connection between this Workplace Challenge and their next steps.
 - ✓ Set a time to meet with the challenge host to debrief the experience and identify improvements going forward.
- Document student learning and record the experience.
- Identify a next step with the employer.
- Archive information and materials related to the challenge for future use (and to be shared with other P-TECH schools).