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# Work-Based Learning Survey Report

E1MN, Student Employment Interagency Workgroup  
April 18, 2025

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March 2025

Dear E1MN Stakeholders,

It is with great pleasure that we provide you the attached Work-Based Learning Survey Report. This survey provides data that will inform our work at [E1MN](#), Minnesota's state agency partnership to advance [Employment First](#) outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities. This survey allows E1MN leaders to understand how school work-based learning programs operate, and what school districts and charter schools need to support students with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining paid CIE work experience.

One outcome of [Minnesota's Youth in Transition Framework](#) is that youth with disabilities "find competitive integrated work they enjoy." Research shows that early paid work experience is a primary predictor of post-school employment success for youth with disabilities<sup>1,2</sup>. The [Work-Based Learning section](#) of the framework emphasizes that we want all students to have a [full range of work-based learning experiences](#) throughout high school and transition programming for 18-22 year-olds, ultimately leading to competitive integrated work experience before graduation.

E1MN leaders at Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), and Department of Human Services (DHS) have a vision that:

**All students with disabilities have paid [competitive integrated employment](#) (CIE) work experience prior to earning their high school diploma.**

[School work-based learning programs](#) are a primary way for students to get this work experience, and E1MN agencies want to support all school districts and charter schools to have robust options available to all students with disabilities. E1MN partners are in the process of reviewing this report and will create and share a plan that addresses the needs schools have in offering comprehensive work-based learning programming for all students with disabilities.

Thank you for your partnership!

E1MN Student Employment Interagency Work Group

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<sup>1</sup> Mazzotti, Valerie L., Dawn A. Rowe, James Sinclair, Marcus Poppen, William E. Woods, and Mackenzie L. Shearer. "Predictors of Post-School Success." *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals* 39, no. 4 (May 29, 2015): 196–215.

<sup>2</sup> Wehman, Paul, Adam P. Sima, Jessica Ketchum, Michael D. West, Fong Chan, and Richard Luecking. "Predictors of Successful Transition from School to Employment for Youth with Disabilities." *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* 25, no. 2 (September 20, 2014): 323–34.

# Executive summary

Minnesota's E1MN interagency partnership works to advance Employment First outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities. E1MN partners wanted to understand the current landscape of work-based learning (WBL) opportunities for students with disabilities, and how best to support greater access to meaningful paid competitive integrated employment (CIE) work experiences. A statewide survey of school staff as well as staff from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)'s Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) helped to answer these questions. The survey explored the extent of current WBL offerings; it also asked about schools' strengths, challenges, and potential supports for providing paid CIE work experiences for students with disabilities.

Many respondents indicated that while schools may be aware of WBL opportunities and the importance of paid CIE, they often lack the resources to fully support students in accessing and maintaining those experiences. The survey also revealed both similarities and differences in how school staff and VRS/SSB staff perceive the strengths and challenges of WBL for students with disabilities.

When asked to rate the schools' strengths in providing WBL, the two groups showed similar priorities and agreement on the relative importance of various topics. Both school staff and VRS/SSB staff appreciated the value of paid CIE, schools' understanding of state WBL requirements, and schools' ensuring that students are aware of WBL opportunities. However, the two groups differed in how much they agreed about those strengths. Overall, VRS/SSB staff tended to have a more negative view than school staff, rating their strengths lower. A similar pattern emerged in responses related to challenges schools face in providing WBL, although the gaps between school staff and VRS/SSB staff ratings were generally smaller in this area. Both groups of respondents felt that access to funding, staff capacity, and difficulties supporting students with complex needs were challenges; again, VRS/SSB staff saw those as bigger challenges than school staff did. These differences suggest that while both groups agree broadly on what is needed to support paid CIE work experience, they perceive the conditions for supporting it differently.

Respondents indicated widespread interest in various training and technical assistance opportunities when questioned about their support needs. While everyone agreed that funding was a requirement, other responses lacked strong agreement, highlighting the diverse needs and priorities across the state. This implies that it will take a multifaceted approach to provide statewide support that accommodates local implementation needs.

E1MN is making these survey results available to help every partner who supports WBL consider their own strengths and opportunities to expand access for students with disabilities. E1MN partner agencies, school districts, employers, service providers, and others can use this report for reflection and self-assessment, asking:

- How do these findings compare to conditions in our own schools or communities?
- What might be the underlying causes of strengths, opportunities, or needs for support in our schools or communities?
- How can we build on strengths, address opportunities, or advocate for needed supports that will expand access to paid CIE for students with disabilities?

# Background

In October 2024, [E1MN](#) leaders from the Minnesota departments of Education (MDE), Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and Human Services (DHS) sent a [memo to all Minnesota school administrators](#), which provided a new statewide vision:

**All students with disabilities have paid [competitive integrated employment \(CIE\)](#) work experience prior to earning their high school diploma.**

E1MN's leaders recognized that school work-based learning (WBL) programming is a primary way for students with disabilities to get support in preparing for, obtaining, and maintaining paid CIE work experiences.

As a step toward this vision, E1MN leaders contracted with Management Analysis and Development (MAD) to conduct an online survey to assess the current state of school WBL programs in Minnesota, identify strengths, and explore challenges in delivering these supports.

## Survey approach

In collaboration with E1MN leaders, MAD developed and administered an online survey, distributed to 3,859 school administrators and staff, as well as staff from DEED's Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB). Invitees were also encouraged to share the survey link with colleagues whose perspectives E1MN might benefit from. The survey was open from October 25 to November 15, 2024. Non-responders received up to two reminder emails. At closing, a total of 885 professionals responded to the survey, including 694 from schools or school districts (78 percent of all respondents), and 191 (22 percent of all respondents) from VRS or SSB.

The survey consisted of two sets of questions – one for school administrators and staff, and another for VRS and SSB staff. Questions for both groups were organized into five main areas:

- Respondents' demographics
- Current WBL offerings
- Schools' strengths and successes in offering paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities
- Challenges faced by schools or districts in offering paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities
- Areas of support, training or technical assistance that schools would like to receive

An overview of all survey questions is available in *Appendix A: Survey instrument*.

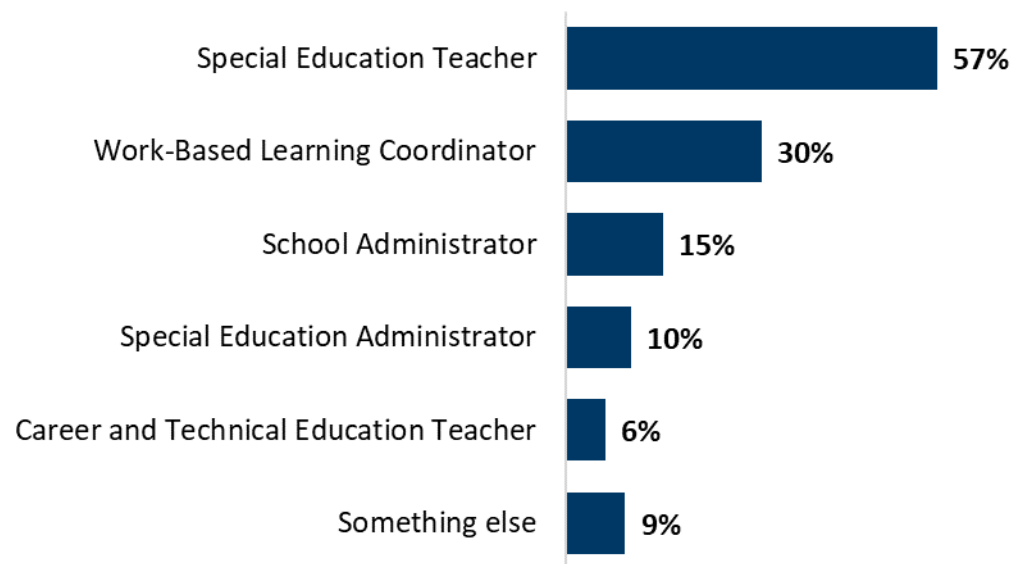
It is important to note that response counts varied for each question, and that respondents could choose multiple responses on several questions. Narrative summaries of data may also be different from charts due to rounding.

# Respondents' demographics

## Profiles

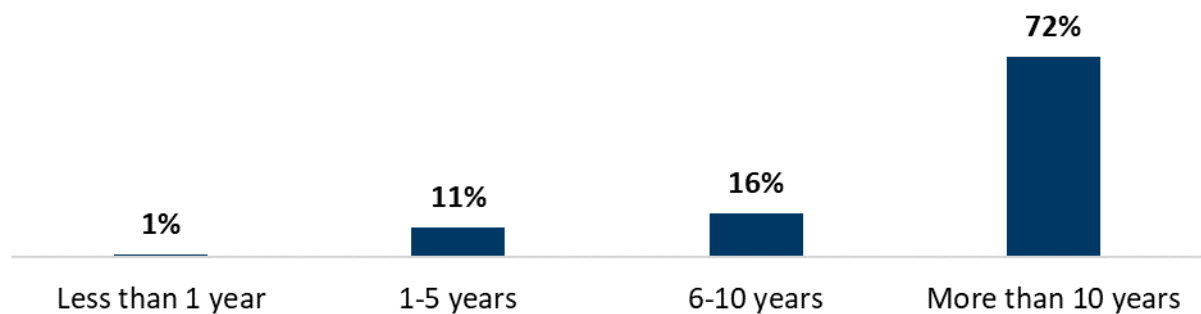
Among school staff respondents, 57 percent reported serving as special education teachers and 30 percent as WBL coordinators. Other roles mentioned included school administrators, special education administrators, career and technical education (CTE) teachers, or something else (Figure 1).

Figure 1. What role or roles do you play in your school or district? (n=694)

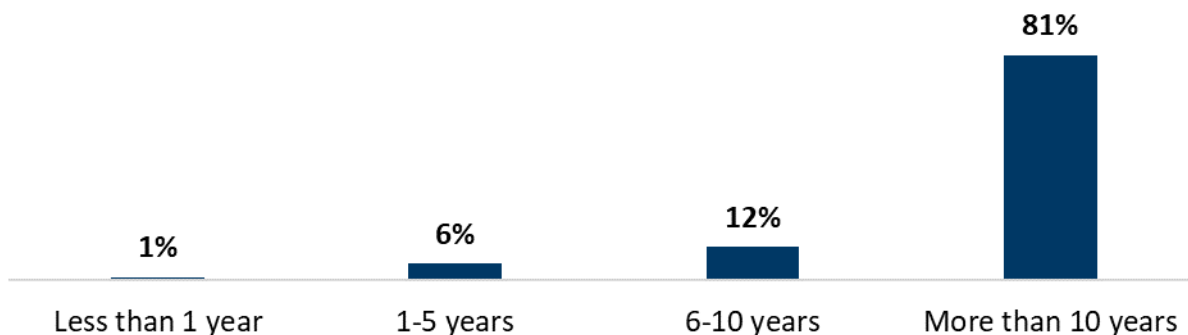


Respondents who work in schools reported extensive professional experience with students. A majority (72 percent) reported more than ten years of work with students or youth aged 14-22 (Figure 2), and 81 percent had more than ten years of experience working with students or youth with disabilities (Figure 3).

Figure 2. How many years have you worked with students or youth aged 14 through 22? (n=692)

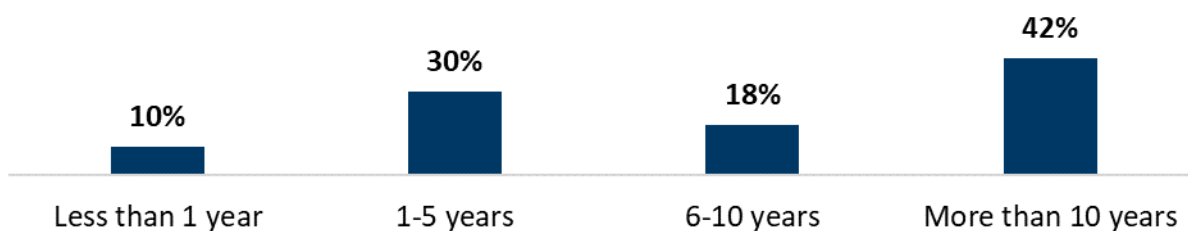


**Figure 3. How many years have you worked with students or youth with disabilities? (n=689)**



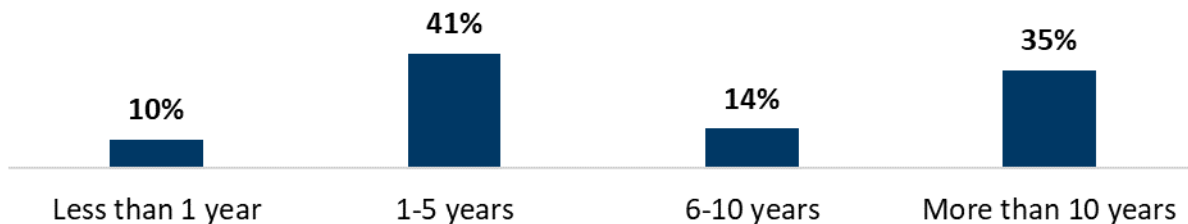
However, they reported shorter tenures with supporting students' work experience or CTE (Figure 4). Forty-two percent had more than ten years of this experience, while 30 percent reported one to five years, and another 18 percent reported six to ten years.

**Figure 4. How many years have you supported students' work experience or CTE? (n=689)**



While about one-third of VRS or SSB respondents reported working in their roles for more than ten years, 41 percent reported from one to five years of experience (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. How many years have you worked for VRS or SSB? (n=183)**



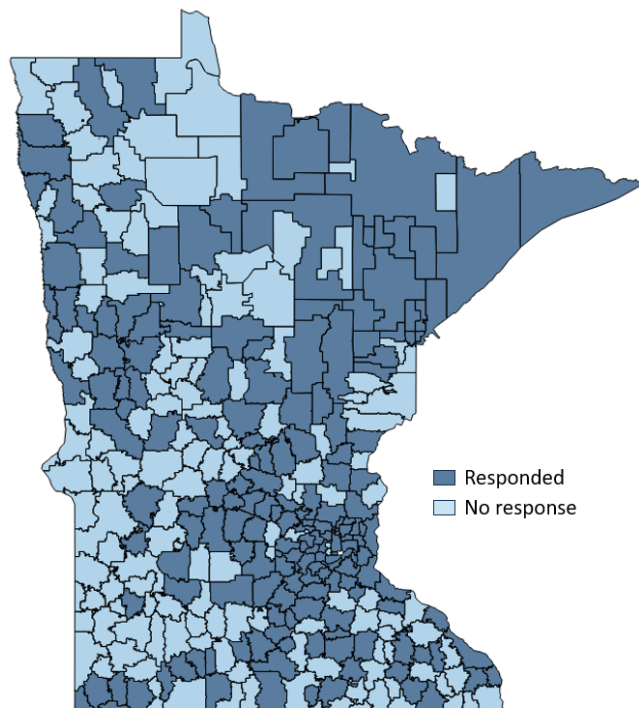


## Geographical distribution

Respondents to the survey are widely representative in terms of geography. Among school-based respondents, 89 percent indicated working in a single district. Overall, school-based respondents work in 228 public and charter school districts, representing approximately 41 percent of all school districts<sup>3</sup> (Figure 6). The remaining 11 percent reported working across multiple districts in 37 Minnesota counties. Overall, respondents work in 79 out of 87 Minnesota counties (Figure 7).

Similarly, individuals who work for VRS or SSB responded from 20 of the state's 21 local or regional teams, with a median of six school districts served per respondent.

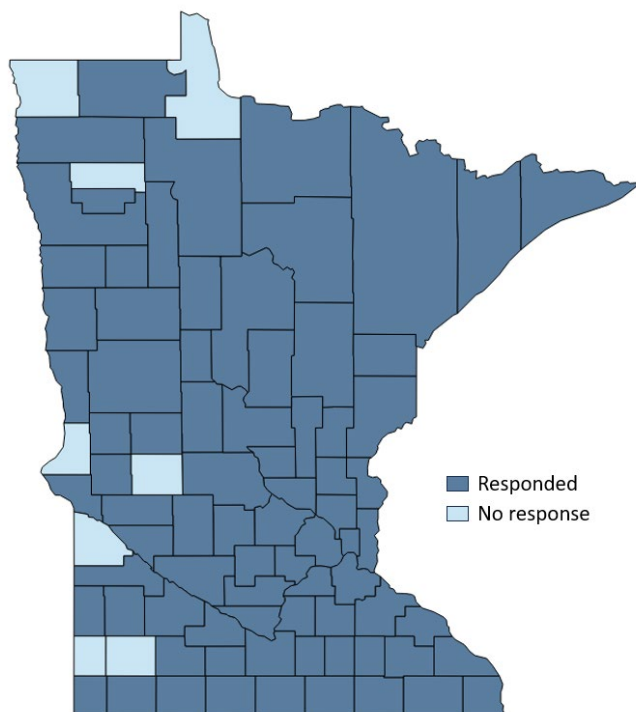
**Figure 6. Geographic distribution of school-based respondents by school district**



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<sup>3</sup> As of 2024, Minnesota has [562 school districts](#), encompassing public school districts, charter schools, special education or vocational cooperatives, intermediate school districts, and other educational entities.

**Figure 7. Geographic distribution of school-based respondents by county**



## Key findings

This section provides a summary of key findings from the survey, including:

- Comparisons of responses between school staff and VRS or SSB staff
- Comparisons of responses between school staff in different regions of the state

For comparison purpose, MAD has grouped all the school districts into four regions—Central, Twin Cities Metro, North, and South—based on the geographical locations of the [school consortia](#) to which they belong. Table 1 on the next page provides a list of these regions and their respective consortia.

Detailed data tables for all regional comparisons are available in *Appendix B: Data tables by region*.

**Table 1. List of regions and their corresponding consortia**

<b>Region</b>	<b>School consortia</b>
Central	Central Lakes, Great River, Lakes Country, Mid-Minnesota, Pine Technical, and Runestone
Twin Cities Metro	Dakota County, Hennepin West, Minneapolis, Northeast Metro, Oak Land, South Metro, Southwest Metro, and St. Paul
North	Lake Superior, North County Northwest, Pine to Prairie Northland, and True North Stars
South	Minnesota West, Riverland, Rochester ZED, South Central, and Southeast

## Work-based learning offerings

### Current WBL offerings

#### **A vast majority of schools served by respondents provide WBL programs.**

The survey asked respondents to confirm if the school districts or charter schools they work in offer a school WBL program. Among respondents who are school or district staff, 90 percent (206) of the school districts represented in the responses offer the program, compared to 95 percent among schools served by VRS/SSB staff.

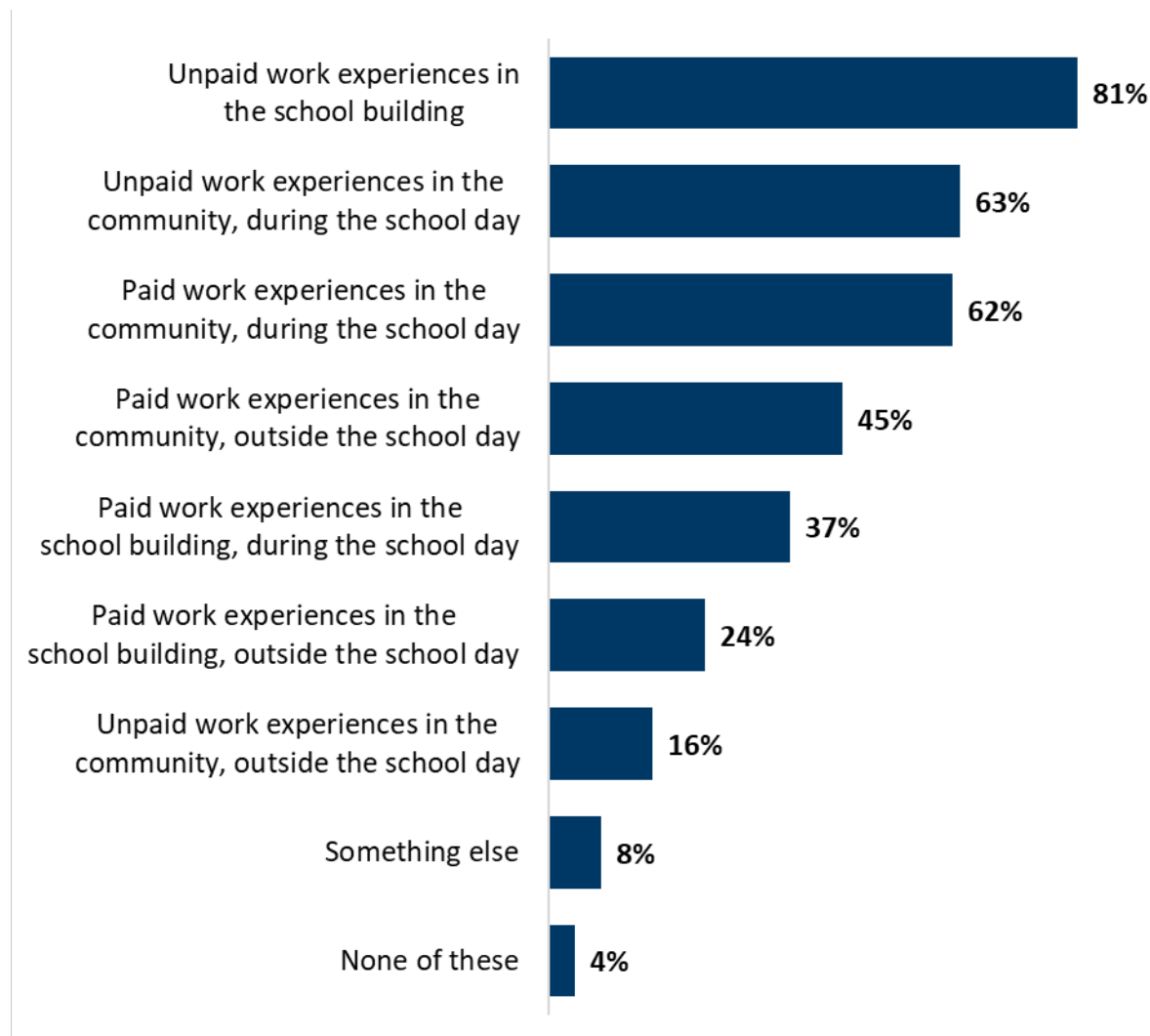
Among schools offering WBL programs, 86 percent support students with disabilities in obtaining paid CIE in the community, a percentage consistent across both respondent groups. For this question and others about current WBL offerings, responses were also similar across all the four regions of the state.

#### **Schools most commonly offer unpaid and paid work experiences in the school building and in the community during the school day.**

The survey asked respondents whose schools offer WBL to provide details about the types of offerings available to students with disabilities through their schools or districts. They could choose from a list of options, from which they could select more than one answer.

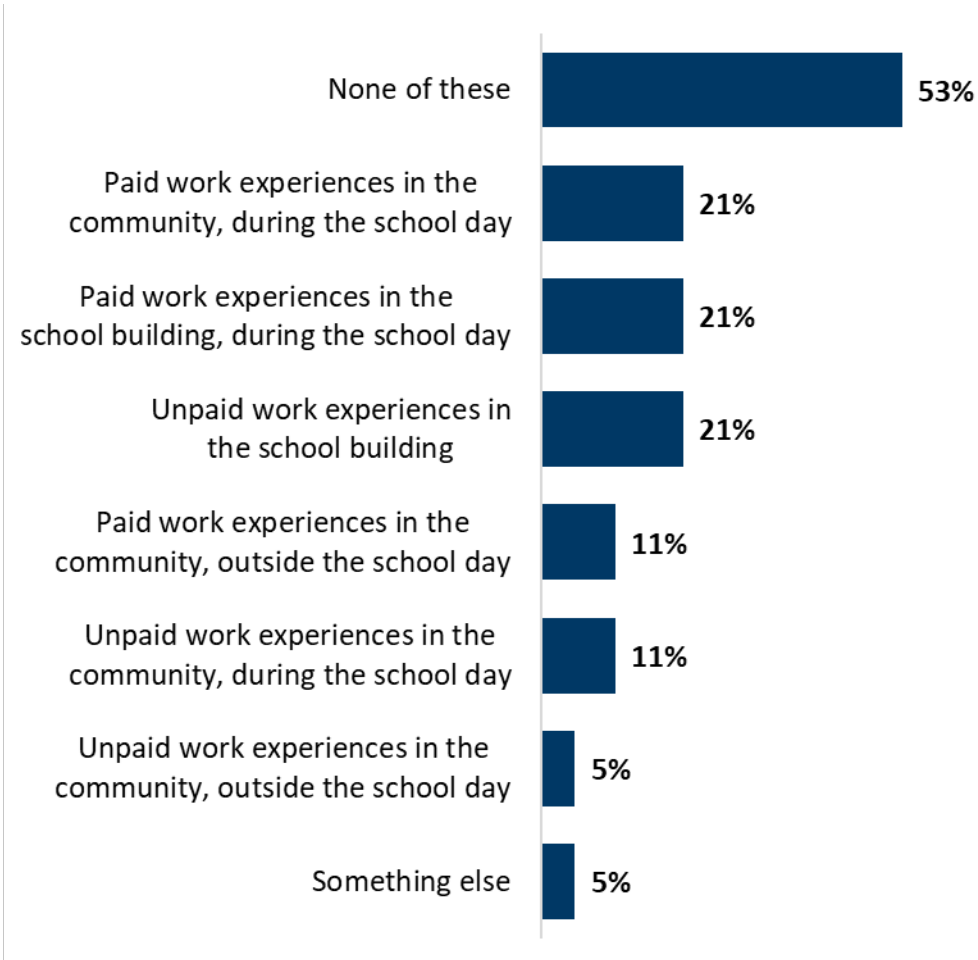
As shown in Figure 8, the most commonly reported offerings included unpaid work experiences in the school building (81 percent), unpaid work experiences in the community during the school day (63 percent), and paid work experiences in the community during the school day (62 percent). Less than half of the respondents said that their schools offer paid work experiences outside of the school day, either in the community (45 percent) or in the school building (37 percent). Approximately 25 percent said their schools offer paid work experiences in the school building outside of the school day.

**Figure 8. What WBL offerings are available to students with disabilities through your school(s) or district(s)? (n=629)**



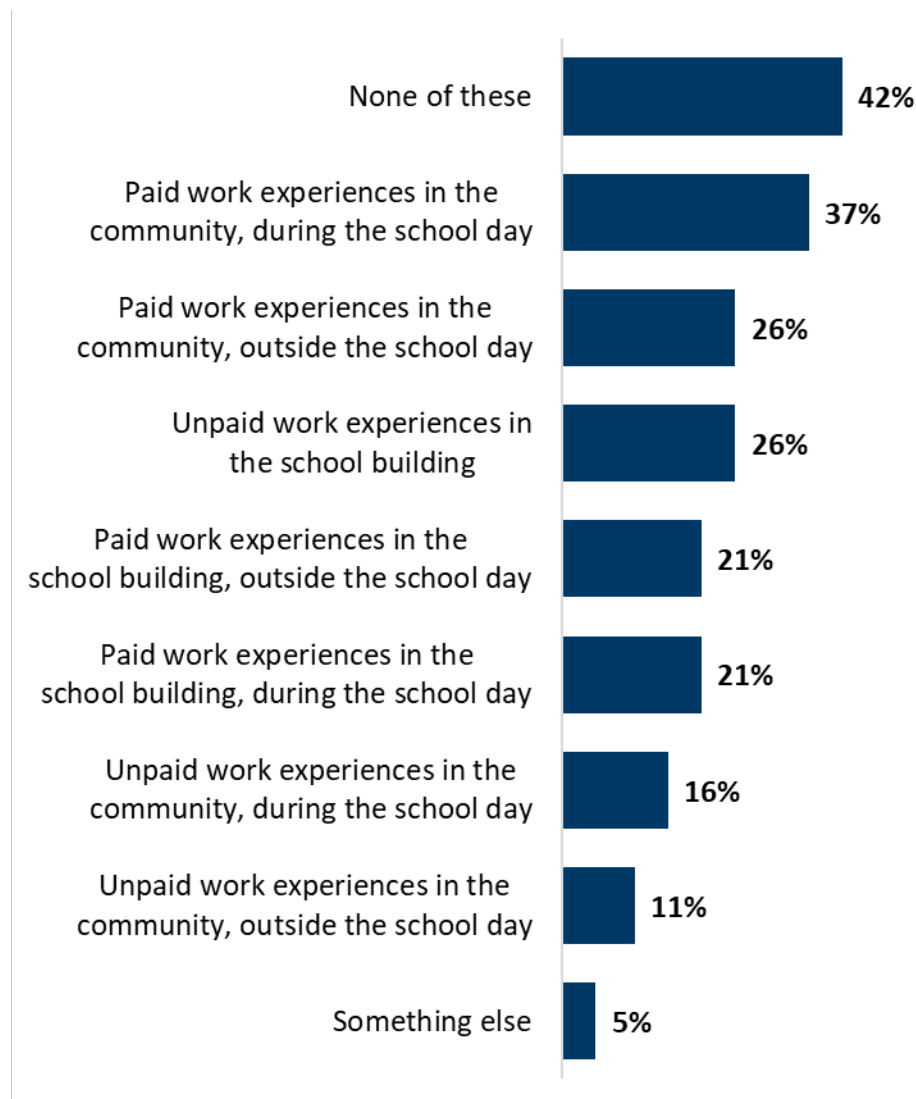
Respondents who selected “none of these” were asked whether their schools or districts had previously offered any of the options from the same list (Figure 9). Over half (53 percent) said their schools had offered none of them. Twenty-one percent said their schools had offered paid work experiences in the community during the school day, and unpaid work experiences in the school building.

**Figure 9. In the past, which of the following work experiences has your school(s) or district(s) offered? (n=25)**



The same group was also asked whether they expect their schools to offer anything from the same list of offerings in the next three years (Figure 10). Nearly half (42 percent) selected “none of these.” Thirty-seven percent anticipated their schools would offer paid work experiences in the community during the school day, while 26 percent said they expect their schools to provide either paid work experiences in the community outside the school day or unpaid work experiences in the school building.

**Figure 10. In the next three years, which of the following work experiences do you expect your district(s) or school(s) to offer? (n=25)**



## Willingness and ability to offer WBL programs during the school day

The survey asked respondents about their school's or district's willingness offer WBL programs during the school day. Nearly all respondents (96 percent) said their schools or districts would be willing to offer WBL programs during the school day for students with disabilities.

Respondents from schools or districts that do not yet offer WBL programs during the school day were asked about their capacity to implement them. Eighty-eight percent said that their schools or districts would be able to offer such programs. By region, respondents from districts in the Central region of the state expressed even greater confidence, with 95 percent saying their districts would be definitely or somewhat able to do so. However, only 35 percent of VRS and SSB staff respondents statewide believed the schools they serve would be able to offer a WBL program during the school day for students with disabilities.

## Strengths and successes

The survey asked both school staff and VRS/SSB staff parallel questions about the strengths and successes of their schools (or for VRS/SSB staff, the schools and districts they serve) in supporting WBL for students with disabilities. Respondents rated their level of agreement with statements in five areas, including:

- Awareness and understanding about WBL
- Experience with WBL
- Supporting WBL
- Resources for WBL
- Information and training about WBL

Both groups named similar top strengths for their schools or districts, though school staff consistently reported higher levels of agreement than VRS/SSB staff. The highest-rated strengths were:

- Schools where they work or serve have a good understanding of why paid CIE work experience is important for students with disabilities (92 percent of school staff; 82 percent of VRS/SSB staff).
- Schools where they work or serve have a good understanding of state WBL requirements and recommended practices (85 percent of school staff; 58 percent of VRS/SSB staff).
- Schools where they work or serve ensure all students with disabilities are aware of WBL opportunities offered through the school district (85 percent of school staff; 56 percent of VRS/SSB staff).

The following tables summarize the percentage of respondents who selected "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" for each statement. Since response counts varied across areas, each table notes the highest number of respondents for school staff and VRS/SSB staff within that section.

### Awareness and understanding about WBL

As shown in Table 2, a vast majority of school-based and VRS/SSB respondents agreed that their schools have a good understanding of why paid CIE experience is important (92 percent of school staff and 82 percent of VRS/SSB staff).

However, the level of agreement diverged on the other two statements in this section. While 85 percent of school staff agreed their schools have a good understanding of state WBL requirements and ensure all students are aware of WBL opportunities in their district, 58 percent and 56 percent of VRS/SSB staff, respectively, shared the same view.

When broken down by region, school staff's responses on awareness and understanding were generally consistent regardless of the regions they are from. However, those from districts in the North region of the state agreed somewhat less frequently (87 percent) that they understand the importance of paid CIE work experience, compared with 92 percent overall.

**Table 2. School strengths and successes: Awareness and understanding about WBL**

Topic	School staff (n=561)	VRS/SSB staff (n=138)
I/we have a good understanding of why paid CIE work experience is important for students with disabilities.	92%	82%
I/we have a good understanding of state WBL requirements and recommended practices.	85%	58%
I/we ensure all students with disabilities are aware of WBL opportunities offered through the school district.	85%	56%

## Experience with WBL

As shown in Table 3, school-based respondents (72 percent) were more likely than VRS/SSB staff (41 percent) to agree that schools are aware of employment service providers that could support students in a WBL program. A similar gap appeared in perceptions of employer relationships, with 72 percent of school staff agreeing that their schools have connections with employers offering individualized paid CIE work sites, compared to 56 percent of VRS/SSB staff who agreed with that statement.

The two groups were more aligned on other statements. Both school staff and VRS/SSB staff expressed the same level of agreement that employers in their communities regularly provide paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities (54 percent each). Likewise, comparable percentages agreed that educators gain skills and knowledge to support paid CIE work experiences through preservice preparation (52 percent of school staff; 50 percent of VRS/SSB staff) and ongoing professional development (46 percent of school staff; 50 percent of VRS/SSB staff).

In general, school staff respondents from different regions rated their agreement similarly for questions about their experience with WBL. Those from districts in the Central region of the state agreed somewhat less frequently (46 percent) that employers in their community regularly provide paid CIE experiences, compared with 54 percent overall.



**Table 3. School strengths and successes: Experience with WBL**

Topic	School staff (n=527)	VRS/SSB staff (n=128)
The schools in my community are aware of the employment service providers that could serve students in a school WBL program.	72%	41%
The schools in my community have relationships with employers who can offer individualized paid CIE work sites for students with disabilities.	72%	56%
Employers in my community regularly provide paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities.	54%	54%
Educators in my community get skills and knowledge about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities as part of preservice preparation.	52%	50%
Educators in my community get skills and knowledge about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities as part of ongoing professional development.	46%	50%

## Supporting WBL<sup>4</sup>

As shown in Table 4, a vast majority of school staff agreed that they or their schools are able to work with students' academic schedules to ensure participation in work experience. However, agreement was notably lower on other aspects of supporting WBL. Just over half (53 percent) agreed that their schools have good access to resources like placement, transportation, and job coaching to support paid CIE work experiences. Less than half (47 percent) agreed that they or their schools can serve all students with disabilities interested in paid CIE work, regardless of their support needs. Forty-six percent felt that parents, caregivers, and families in their communities have a good understanding of how paid CIE work experience could benefit students with disabilities.

School staff respondents from districts in the North region of the state agreed somewhat more strongly with all four statements when compared with the overall ratings across the state:

- They can work with students' academic schedules (93 percent, compared with 85 percent overall).

<sup>4</sup> Due to a survey error, responses for this section were only collected from school staff.

- Their schools have good access to support resources such as placement, transportation, or job coaching (66 percent, compared with 53 percent overall).
- They are able to serve all interested students with paid CIE work experience regardless of the complexity of their support needs (63 percent, compared with 47 percent overall).
- Parents and caregivers understand how paid CIE work experience could work for students (62 percent, compared with 46 percent overall).

**Table 4. School strengths and successes: Supporting WBL**

Topic	School staff (n=550)
I/we are able to work with students' academic schedules to ensure they can participate in work experience.	85%
The schools in my community have good access to the resources that support student paid CIE work experience (such as placement, transportation, or job coaching).	53%
I/we are able to serve all the students with disabilities who are interested in paid CIE work experience, regardless of how complex their needs for support may be.	47%
Parents, caregivers, and families in my community have a good understanding of how paid CIE work experience could work for their students with disabilities.	46%

## Resources for WBL

School staff and VRS/SSB staff differed notably in their level of agreement on their schools' capacity to support paid CIE work experiences for students with disabilities (Table 5). While 68 percent of school staff agreed they or their schools had the expertise to support these experiences, 42 percent of VRS/SSB staff agreed.

The gap in levels of agreement widened regarding staff capacity. Over half (51 percent) of school staff agreed their schools had the staff necessary to help students obtain paid CIE work experience, compared to 13 percent of VRS/SSB staff who agreed with that statement. The difference persisted in perceptions of their schools' job coaching capacity and access to funding, with 38 percent of school staff agreeing their schools could provide job coaching for students who need it, compared to 10 percent of VRS/SSB staff who thought so. Likewise, 31 percent of school staff said their schools had access to funding for staffing or contracting with community providers to help students with disabilities get paid CIE or job coaching as needed, compared to 10 percent of VRS/SSB staff who agreed with that statement.

School staff respondents had similar levels of agreement by region about resources for WBL for some questions but differed in others. Those from districts in the North region of the state agreed somewhat more strongly with two statements:

- They have the experience to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities (74 percent, compared with 68 percent overall).
- They have the staff capacity to help students obtain paid CIE work experience (60 percent, compared with 51 percent overall).

**Table 5. School strengths and successes: Resources for WBL**

Topic	School staff (n=536)	VRS/SSB staff (n=128)
I/we have the expertise to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities.	68%	42%
I/we have the staff capacity to help students with disabilities obtain paid CIE work experience.	51%	13%
I/we have the staff capacity to provide job coaching in paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities that need it.	38%	10%
I/we have access to funding to provide staffing or contract with community providers to help students with disabilities get paid CIE or job coaching as needed.	31%	10%

## Information and training about WBL

Similar to the above section, school staff were generally more likely than VRS/SSB staff to agree with the statements in this section (Table 6). Just over half of school staff agreed that they or their schools had sufficient training on job placement and job coaching (54 percent) and Minnesota’s Youth in Transition Framework (52 percent). In contrast, 33 percent and 38 percent of VRS/SSB staff felt the schools they served had sufficient training in these areas, respectively.

The gap widened when it came to training on customized employment strategies for students with more complex support needs—46 percent of school staff agreed they had this training, while 13 percent of VRS/SSB staff agreed that staff at the school they served did.

Understanding how employment affects public benefits was the lowest-rated area for both groups. Forty-two percent of school staff felt they had adequate training in this area, compared to 16 percent of VRS/SSB staff who believed staff at the schools they served did.

By region, school staff respondents had similar levels of agreement for some questions about information and training for WBL but differed in others. Those from districts in the North region of the state agreed somewhat less that they have the information they need about Minnesota’s Youth in Transition Framework than their peers in other regions (43 percent, compared with 52 percent overall).

Meanwhile, those in the Central region agreed somewhat more strongly than their peers in other regions that they have the information they need about customized employment strategies (54 percent, compared with 46 percent overall) and about how employment affects students’ public benefits planning (50 percent, compared with 42 percent overall).

**Table 6. School strengths and successes: Information or training about WBL**

Topic	School staff (n=518)	VRS/SSB staff (n=127)
I/we have the information and training we need on job placement and job coaching for students with disabilities.	54%	33%
I/we have the information and training we need on Minnesota’s Youth in Transition Framework.	52%	38%
I/we have the information and training we need on customized employment strategies that help students with more complex support needs obtain and maintain paid CIE work experience.	46%	13%
I/we have the information and training we need on how employment impacts public benefits planning (i.e., Medical Assistance or SSI).	42%	16%

## Challenges, opportunities, and barriers

The survey asked both school staff and VRS/SSB staff about the challenges or barriers that schools face in supporting WBL. All respondents were asked to rate the extent to which their schools or districts (or for VRS and SSB staff, the schools and districts they serve) face challenges in any areas related to offering paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities. The survey covered the same topics for challenges as it did for strengths and successes.

The tables in this section summarize the percentage of respondents who reported facing “a lot” or “a moderate amount” of challenges in each area. While some respondents indicated that these issues were “a little” challenging, this analysis focuses on the biggest challenges. Excluding “a little” helps to emphasize the most pressing issues. Additionally, since response counts varied across areas, each table notes the highest number of respondents for school staff and VRS/SSB staff within that section.

Both groups identified similar top challenges, though a larger proportion of VRS/SSB staff consistently chose “a lot” or “a moderate amount” to most of the challenges, compared with school staff. The top challenges were:

- Access to funding that supports job coaching or paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities (76 percent of school staff; 84 percent of VRS/SSB staff)
- Staff capacity to provide job coaching or help students with disabilities obtain paid CIE work experience (73 percent of school staff; 89 percent of VRS/SSB staff)
- Students with disabilities who have complex support needs (70 percent of school staff; 85 percent of VRS/SSB staff)

## Awareness and understanding about WBL

The two statements about awareness and understanding of WBL in this section (Table 7) were the least likely to be rated as a challenge by both groups of respondents. However, nearly half (45 percent) of school staff did so, compared with 54 percent of VRS and SSB staff.

By region, school staff respondents from districts in the Central region of the state (60 percent) were somewhat more likely than their peers to say that understanding the requirements and practices for WBL programs is a challenge, compared with 45 percent overall.

**Table 7. Challenges: Awareness and understanding about WBL**

To what extent does your school(s) or district(s) face challenges in the following areas?	School staff (n= 561)	VRS/SSB staff (n= 120)
Understanding state WBL requirements and recommended practices	45%	54%
Understanding why paid CIE work experience is important for students with disabilities	44%	45%

## Experience with WBL

About half of both school staff and VRS/SSB staff rated teacher professional development, employer knowledge, and school relationships with employers or employment services providers as challenging (Table 8). Responses between the two groups were generally similar for these items. When asked about the training about supporting paid CIE work experience that new educators get in teacher preparation programs, 55 percent of school staff and 61 percent of VRS and SSB staff said it was challenge.

School staff respondents from districts in the Central region of the state were somewhat more likely than their peers to say that several areas of experience with WBL are a challenge, including:

- Teacher preparation for supporting paid CIE work experience (62 percent, compared with 55 percent overall)
- School relationships with employers who can offer paid CIE work experience (61 percent, compared with 53 percent overall)

- School awareness of employment service providers who can support WBL (59 percent, compared with 49 percent overall)

**Table 8. Challenges: Experience with WBL**

To what extent does your school(s) or district(s) face challenges in the following areas?	School staff (n= 527)	VRS/SSB staff (n= 112)
Employers' familiarity with providing paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities	55%	53%
The teacher preparation programs new educators get about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities	55%	61%
Skills and knowledge educators in my community receive to support paid CIE for students with disabilities as part of ongoing professional development	53%	57%
Schools' relationships with employers who can offer individualized paid CIE work sites for students with disabilities	54%	52%
Schools' awareness of employment service providers that could serve students in a school WBL program	49%	51%

## Supporting WBL

When rating potential challenges with supporting WBL, respondents offered differing ratings for different items, with VRS/SSB staff rating each item as a challenge more often than school staff did (Table 9).

More than two-thirds of school staff rated support for students with complex support needs and schools' access to resources as challenges. Even higher proportions of VRS and SSB staff did so (85 percent and 77 percent, respectively). Fewer respondents rated other areas of support as challenging: 50 percent of school staff and 61 percent of VRS and SSB staff said coordination of students' schedules was a challenge. Fifty-seven percent of school respondents and 60 percent of VRS and SSB staff said parents' and caregivers' understanding of CIE work experience was a challenge.

In general, school staff respondents in all regions rated different supports for WBL as similarly challenging. School staff respondents from districts in the Central region of the state were slightly more likely than their peers in other regions to say that coordinating work experience with students' academic schedules is a challenge (58 percent, compared with 50 percent overall).

**Table 9. Challenges: Supporting WBL**

<b>To what extent does your school(s) or district(s) face challenges in the following areas?</b>	<b>School staff (n= 550)</b>	<b>VRS/SSB staff (n= 125)</b>
Students with disabilities who have complex support needs	70%	85%
Schools' access to the resources that support students' paid CIE work experience (such as placement, transportation, or job coaching)	68%	77%
Parent, caregiver, and family's understanding of how paid CIE work experience could work for their students with disabilities	57%	60%
Coordinating work experience with students' academic schedules	50%	61%

## Resources for WBL

When asked about more tangible resources—staff capacity, funding, and expertise—a large majority of all respondents rated each one as challenges (Table 10). Nearly all VRS/SSB staff did so for school staff capacity (89 percent) and access to funding (84 percent), while about three out of four school staff agreed. Fewer rated school expertise in supporting CIE this way, with 61 percent of school staff and 71 percent of VRS and SSB staff saying it was a challenge.

By region, school staff respondents generally rated different supports for WBL as similarly challenging regardless of their geographic region. School staff respondents from districts in the North region of the state were slightly less likely to say that expertise to support paid CIE work experience is a challenge (54 percent, compared with 61 percent overall).

**Table 10. Challenges: Resources for WBL**

<b>To what extent does your school(s) or district(s) face challenges in the following areas?</b>	<b>School staff (n= 550)</b>	<b>VRS/SSB staff (n= 125)</b>
Access to funding that supports job coaching or paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities	76%	84%
Staff capacity to provide job coaching or help students with disabilities obtain paid CIE work experience	73%	89%
Expertise to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities	61%	71%

## Information and training for WBL

A majority of all respondents rated information and training related to various topics as challenges (Table 11). As with other topics, VRS and SSB staff were more likely to do so. About 60 percent of school staff said information and training related to public benefits planning, Minnesota's Youth in Transition Framework, and job placement

and coaching were challenges. Two-thirds said information and training on customized employment strategies was a challenge.

VRS and SSB staff were somewhat more likely than school staff to rate information and training on the Youth in Transition Framework, job placement and coaching, and customized employment as challenges. They were 10 percent more likely to rate information and training about public benefits planning as a challenge.

School staff respondents rated some areas of information and training for WBL as similarly challenging but differed in others. Those from districts in the South region of the state were less likely to report challenges with information about employment impacts public benefits planning (48 percent, compared with 60 percent overall). They were substantially less likely to report challenges with information on customized employment strategies (48 percent, compared with 67 percent overall).

**Table 11. Challenges: Information and training about WBL**

To what extent does your school(s) or district(s) face challenges in the following areas?	School staff (n= 536)	VRS/SSB staff (n= 108)
Information and training on customized employment strategies that help students with more complex support needs obtain and maintain paid CIE work experience	67%	72%
Information and training on how employment impacts public benefits planning	60%	70%
Information and training on Minnesota’s Youth in Transition Framework and Toolkit	60%	63%
Information and training on job placement and job coaching for students with disabilities	58%	67%

## Additional challenges

The survey also asked respondents to provide open-ended comments about any additional challenges or barriers (i.e., beyond those noted elsewhere) that schools face to offering paid CIE work experiences to students with disabilities. Of 933 total survey respondents, 305 school staff and 83 VRS/SSB staff responded to this question. They identified a wide range of different issues.

In general, the two groups of respondents made comments related to similar themes and did so at similar rates. VRS and SSB staff more commonly described the lack of school staff capacity to support CIE for students. While school staff were more likely to comment about funding or support concerns related to the [recent VRS announcement about payment for work experience during the school day](#).

School staff respondents said the lack of staff support for WBL was the most common additional barrier or challenge. Their comments referred to both the need for additional school staff to support students’ WBL and for job coaches in particular.



Other commonly noted barriers for school staff included:

- A lack of available employers willing to offer CIE work experiences to students, especially in smaller communities
- A lack of transportation options for students to access work sites (in urban, suburban, and rural locations)
- Concerns about lack of funding for WBL programs

About one in six school staff respondents also discussed the recent change to VRS support of student wages for work experience during the school day. As one respondent put it, schools face a challenge with “figuring out what to do when VR no longer funds outside job coaches and career planning for high school students.”

A majority of VRS/SSB respondents identified the lack of staff support for WBL as the most common additional barrier or challenge. Like school staff, their comments referred both to the need for additional school staff to support students’ WBL and for job coaches in particular.

The other barriers that VRS/SSB staff most commonly noted were also the same as those for school staff respondents:

- A lack of transportation options for students to access work sites (across urban, suburban, and rural locations)
- Concerns about lack of funding for WBL services
- A lack of available employers willing to offer CIE work experiences to students, especially in smaller communities

VRS and SSB staff respondents were less likely than school staff to comment about their own or other parties’ roles in supporting CIE work experience or the need for training among school staff. They were somewhat more likely to comment about a lack of knowledge or awareness about WBL among both students’ families and school staff.

## Helpful areas of support

All respondents were asked to rate the helpfulness of various supports that could help Minnesota school districts to offer paid, CIE work experience for students with disabilities (Table 12). Since response counts varied across areas, each table below notes the highest number of respondents for school staff and VRS/SSB staff within that section. The percent of respondents who said each of the supports would help “a lot” are summarized in the table below.

In general, school staff respondents said that potential supports for offering paid CIE work experience would be similarly helpful regardless of their geographic region. School staff respondents from districts in the South region of the state were somewhat less likely to say that school staff professional development (37 percent, compared with 50 percent overall) or information for employers (50 percent, compared with 61 percent overall) would be helpful.

**Table 12. Helpfulness of potential supports<sup>5</sup>**

Area of support	School staff (n= 509)	VRS/SSB staff (n= 120)
Increased funding for supporting student work experience	80%	76%
Information or training for employers	61%	58%
Greater emphasis on WBL programs in teacher preparation programs	56%	53%
In-depth technical assistance for employers	51%	50%
Information for students or families	51%	49%
Information or professional development for school or district staff	50%	56%
In-depth technical assistance for schools or districts	49%	52%

Large majorities of respondents said that increased funding would help a lot. Smaller proportions, but still a majority, of respondents also said that the other potential supports would help a lot. The supports with strongest positive responses (besides funding) were related to providing information or training about WBL to employers, school or district staff, and pre-service teachers.

## Helpful areas of training, professional development, and/or technical assistance

All respondents were asked to rate the helpfulness of various areas of training or technical assistance that could help Minnesota school districts to offer paid, CIE work experience for students with disabilities (Table 13). Different numbers of respondents rated each of the eight topics; roughly 500 school staff and 120 VRS/SSB staff did so. The percentages of respondents who said each of the training topics would help “a lot” are summarized in the table below.

In general, school staff respondents said that potential supports for offering paid CIE work experience would be similarly helpful regardless of their geographic region. School staff respondents from districts in the South region of the state were somewhat less likely to say that three of the nine training or technical assistance would be helpful:

- How to operate high quality WBL programs (44 percent, compared with 54 percent overall)
- How to contract with employment service providers (47 percent, compared with 54 percent overall)
- How to establish and maintain relationships with employers (30 percent, compared with 41 percent overall)

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<sup>5</sup> Percent of respondents who said each of the supports would help “a lot”.

**Table 13. Helpfulness of potential training or technical assistance<sup>6</sup>**

Area of training	School staff (n= 514)	VRS/SSB staff (n= 126)
How to utilize available funding streams to support WBL programming	68%	69%
Strategies for providing paid CIE work experience for students with more complex support needs	62%	68%
How to provide high quality job coaching services	57%	54%
How to support students with disabilities in obtaining paid CIE work experience	55%	55%
How to contract with service providers to assist students with obtaining a work experience or to provide job coaching supports	54%	67%
How to operate high quality WBL programs	54%	55%
Understanding what is and isn't considered competitive integrated employment	45%	38%
How to establish and maintain relationships with employers	41%	39%

A majority of respondents indicated that six of the eight topics would help a lot. Those with the strongest positive responses were related to funding streams, contracting with service providers, providing job coaching, and supporting students with complex needs.

## Discussion

The survey findings highlight notable differences in how school staff and VRS/SSB staff perceive the strengths and challenges of WBL for students with disabilities in the schools they work in or serve. While the two groups' responses showed similar priorities and relative importance of various topics—both rated the same items as schools' greatest successes—the strength of responses consistently differed between them. Overall, VRS/SSB staff tended to have a dimmer view than school staff, rating their strengths lower.

A similar pattern emerged in responses related to challenges, although the gaps between school staff and VRS/SSB staff were generally smaller in this area. These differences suggest that while both groups agree broadly on what is needed to support paid CIE work experience, they may perceive the conditions for supporting it differently. The differences between school and VRS/SSB staff are worth exploring further.

One area of strong agreement across both groups was awareness of the importance of paid competitive integrated employment (CIE) for students with disabilities. However, agreement was lower on other critical factors, such as funding, staffing capacity, and job coaching support. These gaps were reinforced in responses about challenges, as well as in open-ended feedback. Many respondents indicated that while schools may be

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<sup>6</sup> Percent of respondents who said each of the supports would help “a lot”.

aware of WBL opportunities, they often lack the resources to fully support students in accessing and maintaining paid work experiences.

The two groups expressed interest in different supports, training, or technical assistance related to WBL. For many of the suggested supports or training topics, the share of positive responses (i.e., that those items would be helpful to schools) were substantial but not unanimous, falling roughly around the 50-percent mark. Analysis of school staff results by region showed some differences but a similar pattern overall.

These findings indicate a high degree of variation around the state. With the exception of funding, where the need was widely recognized, most support areas received mixed responses, with 45 to 60 percent of respondents viewing them as helpful. Since respondent ratings did not point clearly to just a few areas of support, further actions may be needed in many areas. While districts may prioritize the various supports or areas of technical assistance differently, survey findings suggest that statewide support may need to encompass multiple strategies.

## Next steps

The survey findings underscore both the strengths and challenges of WBL for students with disabilities. While school staff and VRS/SSB staff share a common understanding of the importance of paid CIE, differences in their perceptions highlight areas where additional support is needed. Schools recognize the value of WBL but often struggle with resources, staffing capacity, and funding—barriers that must be addressed to expand opportunities for students.

MAD presented the findings and discussion above to the E1MN Student Employment Interagency Work Group. To strengthen WBL statewide, the work group suggest that E1MN leaders explore state, regional, and local actions in the following areas:

- 1) **Enhance funding support** – Schools need more sustainable funding streams to support paid CIE work experience opportunities. This would include resources for job coaching, transportation, and expanding WBL programming. Exploring current and new funding mechanisms could help to address this gap.
- 2) **Expand training and technical assistance** – Both school and VRS/SSB staff identified a need for more professional development. Training efforts should focus on customized employment strategies, job coaching, navigating funding, and contracting with service providers.
- 3) **Strengthen collaboration between schools, employers, community partners, and employment service providers** – Schools and VRS/SSB staff benefit from stronger partnerships with employers and employment service providers. Improving school awareness of available resources and helping build connections with community partners could improve access to individualized WBL opportunities.
- 4) **Address staffing capacity issues** – Schools need additional support in providing job coaching and WBL coordination. Strategies could include increasing staffing resources, offering professional development for educators, and working in partnerships with external providers.
- 5) **Address transportation barriers** – Reliable transportation remains a major barrier to students accessing paid CIE work experiences. Efforts should focus on identifying and expanding transportation options, including developing partnerships with local community organizations or businesses for shared

transportation, exploring flexible scheduling for work experiences closer to students' homes, and offering training programs to increase students' ability to navigate available travel options.

Every partner whose work supports paid CIE work experiences for students with disabilities can play an active role in addressing these considerations. As the survey results showed, unique conditions in individual schools, districts, or communities vary, but the bigger picture of valuing and wanting to support WBL opportunities is consistent around Minnesota. Understanding the unique causes and context behind each strength or challenge will be key to identifying effective strategies for action. State, regional, and local perspectives should inform how different root causes are identified and broader actions are implemented. For example, regional collaboration and targeted technical assistance could help school districts implement strategies that best fit their unique needs.

The next step will be for E1MN agencies, school districts, and other partners to explore root causes behind these survey results and develop potential action across the five identified areas, then assess the feasibility of specific ideas for improving them. E1MN partners will develop a plan for action at the state agency level, then share it broadly with all stakeholders. Other partners in this work can do the same, ensuring multiple complementary approaches to expanding access to meaningful paid CIE work experiences for students with disabilities.

# Appendix A: Survey instrument

## Work experience for students with disabilities: Survey of professionals

### About this survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey!

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Department of Human Services (DHS), and Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) are conducting a survey of school staff and other professionals who support students with disabilities in obtaining paid, competitive integrated employment (CIE) work experience through WBL experiences.

These state agencies are seeking your input to understand whether and how schools and communities around the state offer work experience to students with disabilities. They also want to gather your input about schools' and communities' strengths in offering WBL programs and any barriers or challenges schools and communities may face to doing so. Your perspective is important and will be used to help MDE, DHS, and DEED develop new resources to support student work experience around the state.

The survey is voluntary and will take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Your choice about whether to participate in this survey will not affect anything else about the state agencies' interactions with you, your employer, or the students you support. The only consequence of not participating is that the state does not benefit from your input.

### Data privacy

Management Analysis and Development (MAD), which is part of a separate state government agency, is conducting this survey. MAD provides neutral, third-party consultation to public sector organizations. Any private information you provide in this survey is protected under the Minnesota Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes §13.64. Your responses to open-ended questions (such as challenges) will be aggregated and summarized in a report. Any private information you include (such as names) in your open-ended questions will be removed from the responses and not included in any analysis or reporting.

### Need help?

If you have any questions or experience technical issues accessing the survey, please contact Mongkol Teng at [mongkol.teng@state.mn.us](mailto:mongkol.teng@state.mn.us). Please click "Next" to begin the survey.

## About respondents

1. First, we have a few questions about you. Are you employed by a school or school district?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, I work for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or State Services for the Blind (SSB)
- ☐ No, I work somewhere else

*Continue to Q2 if “Yes” is selected*

*Skip to Q27 if “No, I work for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or State Services for the Blind (SSB)” is selected*

*Skip to end of survey if “No, I work somewhere else” is selected*

2. What role or roles do you play in your school or district? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Work-Based Learning Coordinator
- ☐ Special Education Teacher
- ☐ Special Education Administrator (e.g., director, coordinator, supervisor, etc.)
- ☐ School Administrator (e.g., principal, dean of students, etc.)
- ☐ Career and Technical Education Teacher
- ☐ Something else (please describe:) \_\_\_\_\_

## For school/district professionals

3. How many years have you worked with students or youth aged 14-22?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

4. How many years have you worked with students or youth with disabilities?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

5. How many years have you supported students’ work experience or career/technical education?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

6. How many school districts or charter schools do you work in? Please enter a number only.

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7. What district do you work in?

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8. If you work in more than one district or county, which county does most of your work happen?

*Drop-down menu of Minnesota's 87 counties*

9. How many of the school districts or charter schools that you work in currently offer a school work-based learning program that serves students with disabilities? Please enter a number only.

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10. Competitive integrated employment (CIE) is defined as:

- *Full-time, part-time, or self-employment with and without supports*
- *In the competitive labor force*
- *On the payroll of a competitive business or industry*
- *Pays at least minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by workers without a disability.*

Do your school's program(s) support students with disabilities in obtaining paid CIE in the community?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

11. What work-based learning offerings are available to students with disabilities through your school(s) or district(s)? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Unpaid work experiences in the school building
- ☐ Unpaid work experiences in the community, during the school day
- ☐ Unpaid work experiences in the community, outside the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the school building, during the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the school building, outside the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the community, during the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the community, outside the school day
- ☐ None of these
- ☐ Something else (please describe:) \_\_\_\_\_

12. How willing is your school(s) or district(s) to offer school work-based learning programs during the school day for students with disabilities?

- ☐ Definitely willing
- ☐ Somewhat willing



- Not really willing
- Not willing at all
- I don't know
- My school is already doing this

13. If your school(s) or district(s) do not yet offer a school work-based learning program during the school day for students with disabilities, to what extent would they be able to do so?

- Highly able
- Somewhat able
- Not really able
- Not able at all
- I don't know
- My school is already doing this

*Display this question if "None of these" was selected in Q11:*

14. In the past, which of the following work experiences has your district(s) or school(s) offered? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Unpaid work experiences in the school building
- ☐ Unpaid work experiences in the community, during the school day
- ☐ Unpaid work experiences in the community, outside the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the school building, during the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the school building, outside the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the community, during the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the community, outside the school day
- ☐ None of these
- ☐ Something else (please describe:) \_\_\_\_\_

*Display this question if "None of these" was selected in Q11:*

15. In the next three years, which of the following work experiences do you expect your district(s) or school(s) to offer? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Unpaid work experiences in the school building
- ☐ Unpaid work experiences in the community, during the school day
- ☐ Unpaid work experiences in the community, outside the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the school building, during the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the school building, outside the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the community, during the school day
- ☐ Paid work experiences in the community, outside the school day
- ☐ None of these
- ☐ Something else (please describe:) \_\_\_\_\_

## Strengths and successes

The next set of questions is related to the strengths and successes of the school(s) or district(s) you work in offering paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities.

*All questions in this section use the following rating scale:*

- *Strongly agree*
- *Somewhat agree*
- *Somewhat disagree*
- *Strongly disagree*
- *I don't know*

16. Awareness and understanding about work-based learning. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- I/we have a good understanding of state work-based learning requirements and recommended practices.
- I/we have a good understanding of why paid CIE work experience is important for students with disabilities.
- I/we ensure all students with disabilities are aware of work-based learning opportunities offered through the school district.

17. Experience with work-based learning. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Educators in my community get skills and knowledge about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities as part of preservice preparation.
- Educators in my community get skills and knowledge about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities as part of ongoing professional development.
- Employers in my community regularly provide paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities.
- The schools in my community have relationships with employers who can offer individualized paid CIE work sites for students with disabilities.
- The schools in my community are aware of the employment service providers that could serve students in a school work-based learning program.

18. Supporting work-based learning. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- I/we are able to serve all the students with disabilities who are interested in paid CIE work experience, regardless of how complex their needs for support may be.
- I/we are able to work with students' academic schedules to ensure they can participate in work experience.
- The schools in my community have good access to the resources that support student paid CIE work experience (such as placement, transportation, or job coaching).
- Parents, caregivers, and families in my community have a good understanding of how paid CIE work experience could work for their students with disabilities.

19. Resources for work-based learning. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- I/we have the staff capacity to help students with disabilities obtain paid CIE work experience.
- I/we have the staff capacity to provide job coaching in paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities that need it.
- I/we have access to funding to provide staffing or contract with community providers to help students with disabilities get paid CIE or job coaching as needed.
- I/we have the expertise to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities.

20. Information and training about work-based learning. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- I/we have the information and training we need on how employment impacts public benefits planning (i.e., Medical Assistance or SSI).
- I/we have the information and training we need on Minnesota's Youth in Transition Framework.
- I/we have the information and training we need on job placement and job coaching for students with disabilities.
- I/we have the information and training we need on customized employment strategies that help students with more complex support needs obtain and maintain paid CIE work experience.

### Challenges and opportunities for student work experience

The next set of questions is related to challenges faced by your school(s) or district(s) in offering paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities.

*All questions in this section use the following rating scale:*

- *A lot*
- *A moderate amount*
- *A little*
- *Not at all*
- *Not sure*

21. Awareness and understanding about work-based learning. To what extent does your school(s) or district(s) face challenges in the following areas?

- Understanding state work-based learning requirements and recommended practices
- Understanding why paid CIE work experience is important for students with disabilities

22. Experience with work-based learning. To what extent does the school(s) or district(s) you work with face challenges in the following areas?

- The teacher preparation programs new educators get about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities
- Skills and knowledge educators in my community receive to support paid CIE for students with disabilities as part of ongoing professional development
- Employers' familiarity with providing paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities
- Schools' relationships with employers who can offer individualized paid CIE work sites for students with disabilities

- Schools' awareness of employment service providers that could serve students in a school work-based learning program

23. Supporting work-based learning. To what extent does your school(s) or district(s) face challenges in the following areas?

- Students with disabilities who have complex support needs
- Coordinating work experience with students' academic schedules
- Schools' access to the resources that support students' paid CIE work experience (such as placement, transportation, or job coaching)
- Parent, caregiver, and family's understanding of how paid CIE work experience could work for their students with disabilities

24. Resources for work-based learning. To what extent does your school(s) or district(s) face challenges in the following areas?

- Staff capacity to provide job coaching or help students with disabilities obtain paid CIE work experience
- Access to funding that supports job coaching or paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities
- Expertise to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities

25. Information and training about work-based learning. To what extent does your school(s) or district(s) face challenges in the following areas?

- Information and training on how employment impacts public benefits planning
- Information and training on Minnesota's Youth in Transition Framework and Toolkit
- Information and training on job placement and job coaching for students with disabilities
- Information and training on customized employment strategies that help students with more complex support needs obtain and maintain paid CIE work experience

26. What other challenges or barriers does your school(s) or district(s) face, if any, to offering paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities?

## For VRS/SSB professionals

27. Do you work for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or State Services for the Blind (SSB)?

- ☐ VRS
- ☐ SSB
- ☐ Neither of these

*Continue if "VRS" is selected*

*Skip to Q29 if "SSB" is selected*

*Skip to end of survey if "Neither of these" is selected*

28. What VRS team do you work on?

*Drop-down menu of 21 regional teams*

29. How many years have you worked for VRS or SSB?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

30. How many school districts or charter schools do you serve? Please enter a number only.

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31. How many of those school districts or charter schools currently offer a school work-based learning program that serves students with disabilities? Please enter a number only.

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32. Do those schools support students with disabilities in obtaining paid, competitive integrated employment (CIE) work experience in the community?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Some but not all
- ☐ I don't know

33. In the past year, how often have you supported students in obtaining paid work experience during the school day? (i.e. authorized "work experience services," "internship services," or "on-the-job evaluation (OJE)")

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Very often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

34. In the past year, how often have you supported students with work-based learning coaching during the school day? (i.e. authorized for "work-based learning coaching")

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Very often
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

35. To what extent do you think school(s) or district(s) you work with that do not yet offer a school work-based learning program during the school day for students with disabilities would be able to do so?

- ☐ Highly able
- ☐ Somewhat able
- ☐ Not really able
- ☐ Not able at all

- I don't know / not applicable

## Strengths and successes

The next set of questions is related to the strengths and successes of the school(s) or district(s) you serve in supporting paid CIE opportunities for students with disabilities.

*All questions in this section use the following rating scale:*

- *Strongly agree*
- *Somewhat agree*
- *Somewhat disagree*
- *Strongly disagree*
- *I don't know*

36. Awareness and understanding about work-based learning. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- The schools I serve have a good understanding of state work-based learning requirements and recommended practices.
- The schools I serve have a good understanding of why paid CIE work experience is important for students with disabilities.
- The schools I serve ensure all students with disabilities are aware of work-based learning opportunities offered through the school district.

37. Experience with work-based learning. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Educators at the schools I serve have gotten skills and knowledge about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities as part of preservice preparation.
- Educators in my community get skills and knowledge about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities as part of ongoing professional development.
- Employers in the communities around my schools regularly provide paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities.
- The schools I serve have relationships with employers who can offer individualized paid CIE work sites for students with disabilities.
- The schools I serve are aware of the employment service providers that could serve students in a school work-based learning program.

38. Resources for work-based learning. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- The schools I serve have the staff capacity to help students with disabilities obtain paid CIE work experience.
- The schools I serve have the staff capacity to provide job coaching in paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities that need it.
- The schools I serve have funding to provide staffing or contract with community providers to help students with disabilities get paid CIE or job coaching as needed.
- The schools I serve have the expertise to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities.

39. Information and training about work-based learning. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- The schools I serve have the information and training they need on how employment impacts public benefits planning (i.e., Medical Assistance or SSI).
- The schools I serve have the information and training they need on Minnesota's Youth in Transition Framework and Toolkit.
- The schools I serve have the information and training they need on job placement and job coaching for students with disabilities.
- The schools I serve have the information and training they need on customized employment strategies that help students with more complex support needs obtain and maintain paid CIE work experience.

### Challenges and opportunities for student work experience

The next set of questions is related to challenges faced by the schools or districts you serve in supporting paid CIE opportunities for students with disabilities.

*All questions in this section use the following rating scale:*

- *A lot*
- *A moderate amount*
- *A little*
- *Not at all*
- *Not sure*

40. Awareness and understanding about work-based learning. To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?

- Understanding state work-based learning requirements and recommended practices
- Understanding why paid CIE work experience is important for students with disabilities

41. Experience with work-based learning. To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?

- The teacher preparation programs new educators get about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities
- Skills and knowledge educators in my community receive to support paid CIE for students with disabilities as part of ongoing professional development
- Employers' familiarity with providing paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities
- Schools' relationships with employers who can offer individualized paid CIE work sites for students with disabilities
- Schools' awareness of employment service providers that could serve students in a school work-based learning program

42. Supporting work-based learning. To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?

- Students with disabilities who have complex support needs
- Coordinating work experience with students' academic schedules

- Schools' access to the resources that support students' paid CIE work experience (such as placement, transportation, or job coaching)
- Parent, caregiver, and family understanding of how paid CIE work experience could work for their students with disabilities

43. Resources for work-based learning. To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?

- Staff capacity to provide job coaching or help students with disabilities obtain paid CIE work experience
- Access to funding that supports job coaching or paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities
- Expertise to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities

44. Information and training about work-based learning. To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?

- Information and training on how employment impacts public benefits planning
- Information and training on Minnesota's Youth in Transition Framework
- Information and training on job placement and job coaching for students with disabilities
- Information and training on customized employment strategies that help students with more complex support needs obtain and maintain paid CIE work experience

45. What other challenges or barriers do the schools you serve face, if any, to offering work experience for students with disabilities?

## Support for student work experience

*Display these questions for all respondents. Both use the following rating scale:*

- *A lot*
- *A moderate amount*
- *A little*
- *Not at all*
- *Not sure*

46. To what extent would the following supports help more Minnesota schools or districts to offer paid, competitive integrated work experience for students with disabilities?

- Increased funding for supporting student work experience
- Information or professional development for school or district staff
- In-depth technical assistance for schools or districts
- Greater emphasis on work-based learning programs in teacher preparation programs
- Information or training for employers
- In-depth technical assistance for employers
- Information for students or families
- Other (Please specify:)



47. To what extent would the following areas of training, professional development, or technical assistance help Minnesota school districts to offer paid, competitive integrated work experience for students with disabilities?

- How to operate high quality work-based learning programs
- How to provide high quality job coaching services
- How to support students with disabilities in obtaining paid CIE work experience
- Strategies for providing paid CIE work experience for students with more complex support needs
- How to contract with service providers to assist students with obtaining a work experience or to provide job coaching supports
- How to establish and maintain relationships with employers
- Understanding what is and isn't considered competitive integrated employment
- How to utilize available funding streams to support work-based learning programming
- Something else (please describe:)

## Appendix B: Data tables by region

This section contains detailed data tables for responses by school-based respondents. For this report, MAD has grouped all the school districts into four regions—Central, Twin Cities Metro (TC Metro), North, and South—based on the geographical locations of the school consortia to which they belong. It is important to note that not all respondents provided their school district information or answered every question, resulting in a higher overall total than the combined total of all regional responses.

Table 14 below provides a list of these regions and their respective consortia.

It is important to note that not all respondents provided their school district information or answered every question, resulting in a higher overall total than the combined total of all regional responses.

**Table 14. List of regions and their corresponding consortia**

Region	School consortia
Central	Central Lakes, Great River, Lakes Country, Mid-Minnesota, Pine Technical, and Runestone
TC Metro	Dakota County, Hennepin West, Minneapolis, Northeast Metro, Oak Land, South Metro, Southwest Metro, and St. Paul
North	Lake Superior, North County Northwest, Pine to Prairie Northland, and True North Stars
South	Minnesota West, Riverland, Rochester ZED, South Central, and Southeast

## Work-based learning offerings

**Table 15. Percent of school districts or charter schools currently offering a school work-based learning program for students with disabilities**

Region	Number of school districts	Percent
Central	65	91%
TC Metro	66	94%
North	41	90%
South	59	87%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>91%</b>

**Table 16. Percent of all school districts or charter schools currently offering a school work-based learning program program(s) that support students with disabilities in obtaining paid CIE in the community**

Region	Number of school districts	Percent
Central	59	85%
TC Metro	62	88%
North	37	87%
South	51	82%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>86%</b>

**Table 17. How willing is your school(s) or district(s) to offer school work-based learning programs during the school day for students with disabilities?**

Region	Number of respondents	Percent <sup>7</sup>
Central	102	97%
TC Metro	184	97%
North	77	95%
South	94	95%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>96%</b>

**Table 18. If your school(s) or district(s) do not yet offer a school work-based learning program during the school day for students with disabilities, to what extent would they be able to do so?**

Region	Number of respondents	Percent <sup>8</sup>
Central	38	95%
TC Metro	56	89%
North	24	88%
South	31	81%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>88%</b>

<sup>7</sup> Combined percentages of school-based respondents who chose “definitely willing” and “somewhat willing”

<sup>8</sup> Combined percentages of school-based respondents who chose “definitely able” and “somewhat able”

## Schools' or districts' strengths and successes

The following tables summarize the percentage of school-based respondents who selected "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" for each statement.

**Table 19. Awareness and understanding about WBL**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Central (n=109)	TC Metro (n=226)	North (n=86)	South (n=105)	Overall (n=561)
I/we have a good understanding of why paid CIE work experience is important for students with disabilities.	92%	93%	87%	93%	92%
I/we have a good understanding of state work-based learning requirements and recommended practices.	87%	83%	86%	86%	85%
I/we ensure all students with disabilities are aware of work-based learning opportunities offered through the school district.	88%	83%	84%	88%	85%

**Table 20. Experience with WBL**

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Central (n=90)	TC Metro (n=179)	North (n=77)	South (n=90)	Overall (n=527)
The schools in my community are aware of the employment service providers that could serve students in a school work-based learning program.	73%	71%	75%	75%	73%
The schools in my community have relationships with employers who can offer individualized paid CIE work sites for students with disabilities.	73%	70%	76%	68%	71%
Employers in my community regularly provide paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities.	46%	56%	54%	55%	53%

<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b>	<b>Central (n=90)</b>	<b>TC Metro (n=179)</b>	<b>North (n=77)</b>	<b>South (n=90)</b>	<b>Overall (n=527)</b>
Educators in my community get skills and knowledge about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities as part of preservice preparation.	52%	51%	50%	56%	52%
Educators in my community get skills and knowledge about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities as part of ongoing professional development.	49%	43%	52%	46%	46%

**Table 21. Supporting WBL**

<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b>	<b>Central (n=113)</b>	<b>TC Metro (n=216)</b>	<b>North (n=88)</b>	<b>South (n=104)</b>	<b>Overall (n=550)</b>
I/we are able to work with students' academic schedules to ensure they can participate in work experience.	80%	84%	93%	85%	85%
The schools in my community have good access to the resources that support student paid CIE work experience (such as placement, transportation, or job coaching).	50%	54%	66%	46%	53%
I/we are able to serve all the students with disabilities who are interested in paid CIE work experience, regardless of how complex their needs for support may be.	47%	41%	63%	53%	48%
Parents, caregivers, and families in my community have a good understanding of how paid CIE work experience could work for their students with disabilities.	45%	41%	62%	46%	46%

**Table 22. Resources for WBL**

<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b>	<b>Central (n=112)</b>	<b>TC Metro (n=212)</b>	<b>North (n=87)</b>	<b>South (n=107)</b>	<b>Overall (n=536)</b>
I/we have the expertise to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities.	67%	65%	74%	59%	66%
I/we have the staff capacity to help students with disabilities obtain paid CIE work experience.	53%	46%	60%	52%	51%
I/we have the staff capacity to provide job coaching in paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities that need it.	44%	33%	42%	38%	38%
I/we have access to funding to provide staffing or contract with community providers to help students with disabilities get paid CIE or job coaching as needed.	34%	31%	35%	25%	31%

**Table 23. Information and training about WBL**

<b>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b>	<b>Central (n=106)</b>	<b>TC Metro (n=192)</b>	<b>North (n=82)</b>	<b>South (n=96)</b>	<b>Overall (n=518)</b>
I/we have the information and training we need on job placement and job coaching for students with disabilities.	60%	51%	54%	50%	53%
I/we have the information and training we need on Minnesota's Youth in Transition Framework.	56%	54%	43%	50%	52%
I/we have the information and training we need on customized employment strategies that help students with more complex support needs obtain and maintain paid CIE work experience.	54%	44%	46%	43%	46%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Central (n=106)	TC Metro (n=192)	North (n=82)	South (n=96)	Overall (n=518)
I/we have the information and training we need on how employment impacts public benefits planning (i.e., Medical Assistance or SSI).	50%	40%	40%	33%	41%

## Schools' or districts' challenges and opportunities

The following tables summarize the percentage of school-based respondents who selected "a lot" or "a moderate amount" for each statement.

**Table 24. Awareness and understanding about WBL**

To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?	Central (n=109)	TC Metro (n=226)	North (n=86)	South (n=105)	Overall (n=561)
Understanding state work-based learning requirements and recommended practices	60%	44%	38%	39%	45%
Understanding why paid CIE work experience is important for students with disabilities	50%	43%	43%	43%	44%

**Table 25. Experience with WBL**

To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?	Central (n=90)	TC Metro (n=179)	North (n=77)	South (n=90)	Overall (n=527)
Employers' familiarity with providing paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities	52%	58%	54%	53%	55%
The teacher preparation programs new educators get about how to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities	62%	54%	55%	50%	55%
Schools' relationships with employers who can offer individualized paid CIE work sites for students with disabilities	61%	54%	46%	51%	54%

<b>To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?</b>	<b>Central (n=90)</b>	<b>TC Metro (n=179)</b>	<b>North (n=77)</b>	<b>South (n=90)</b>	<b>Overall (n=527)</b>
Skills and knowledge educators in my community receive to support paid CIE for students with disabilities as part of ongoing professional development	60%	53%	55%	49%	53%
Schools' awareness of employment service providers that could serve students in a school work-based learning program	59%	47%	45%	46%	49%

**Table 26. Supporting WBL**

<b>To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?</b>	<b>Central (n=113)</b>	<b>TC Metro (n=216)</b>	<b>North (n=88)</b>	<b>South (n=104)</b>	<b>Overall (n=550)</b>
Students with disabilities who have complex support needs	75%	71%	67%	65%	70%
Schools' access to the resources that support students' paid CIE work experience (such as placement, transportation, or job coaching)	75%	69%	64%	66%	68%
Parent, caregiver, and family's understanding of how paid CIE work experience could work for their students with disabilities	58%	60%	55%	51%	57%
Coordinating work experience with students' academic schedules	58%	50%	47%	46%	50%



**Table 27. Resources for WBL**

<b>To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?</b>	<b>Central (n=112)</b>	<b>TC Metro (n=212)</b>	<b>North (n=87)</b>	<b>South (n=107)</b>	<b>Overall (n=550)</b>
Access to funding that supports job coaching or paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities	81%	77%	73%	70%	76%
Staff capacity to provide job coaching or help students with disabilities obtain paid CIE work experience	78%	74%	67%	71%	73%
Expertise to support paid CIE work experience for students with disabilities	66%	61%	54%	62%	61%

**Table 28. Information and training about WBL**

<b>To what extent do the schools or districts you serve face challenges in the following areas?</b>	<b>Central (n=106)</b>	<b>TC Metro (n=192)</b>	<b>North (n=82)</b>	<b>South (n=96)</b>	<b>Overall (n=536)</b>
Information and training on customized employment strategies that help students with more complex support needs obtain and maintain paid CIE work experience	70%	71%	65%	48%	67%
Information and training on how employment impacts public benefits planning	68%	63%	61%	48%	60%
Information and training on Minnesota's Youth in Transition Framework and Toolkit	69%	59%	65%	51%	60%
Information and training on job placement and job coaching for students with disabilities	65%	58%	55%	56%	58%

## Support for student work experience

The following tables summarize the percentage of school-based respondents who selected "a lot" for each area of support or training.

**Table 29. To what extent would the following supports help more Minnesota schools or districts to offer paid, competitive integrated work experience for students with disabilities?**

Area of support	Central (n=114)	TC Metro (n=208)	North (n=85)	South (n=98)	Overall (n=509)
Other	90%	92%	67%	78%	86%
Increased funding for supporting student work experience	80%	81%	78%	79%	80%
Information or training for employers	60%	66%	61%	50%	61%
Greater emphasis on work-based learning programs in teacher preparation programs	54%	54%	56%	60%	56%
Information for students or families	54%	52%	49%	47%	51%
Information or professional development for school or district staff	53%	55%	54%	37%	51%
In-depth technical assistance for employers	51%	52%	53%	42%	50%
In-depth technical assistance for schools or districts	49%	54%	50%	40%	49%

**Table 30. To what extent would the following areas of training, professional development, or technical assistance help Minnesota school districts to offer paid, competitive integrated work experience for students with disabilities?**

<b>Area of support</b>	<b>Central (n=114)</b>	<b>TC Metro (n=204)</b>	<b>North (n=83)</b>	<b>South (n=97)</b>	<b>Overall (n=514)</b>
How to utilize available funding streams to support work-based learning programming	69%	69%	65%	65%	68%
Strategies for providing paid CIE work experience for students with more complex support needs	63%	66%	66%	53%	62%
Something else	75%	65%	67%	25%	62%
How to provide high quality job coaching services	61%	54%	64%	54%	57%
How to support students with disabilities in obtaining paid CIE work experience	54%	58%	58%	48%	55%
How to contract with service providers to assist students with obtaining a work experience or to provide job coaching supports	55%	56%	60%	47%	54%
How to operate high quality work-based learning programs	60%	56%	52%	44%	54%
Understanding what is and isn't considered competitive integrated employment	46%	43%	52%	40%	45%
How to establish and maintain relationships with employers	41%	43%	50%	30%	41%