

PAVING PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREERS THROUGH DEEPER LEARNING

Immersive Deeper Learning experiences allow students to see how their classwork relates to real life.

When experiences inside and outside of the classroom bring together academics, career-based learning and workplace experiences, students get a chance to explore potential pathways in a variety of fields and industries. Deeper Learning opportunities that expose students to real world applications make lessons relevant and engaging. Given that the business community is the most credible voice on what students need to succeed in a changing 21st century world economy, business leaders in a number of states are illuminating career pathways for students that help them learn to problem-solve, uncover solutions and communicate effectively.

Connecting to Careers at All Ages—Arlington, TX. Recognizing that communication between business and all levels of education is needed to prepare students for success, the Arlington Chamber of Commerce has created partnerships that help students gain core knowledge and the 21st century skills that employers seek in new hires. [Champion Education](#) is a program that engages students in Deeper Learning by integrating the school district with the Community College and University, involving all aspects of the community and raising awareness about the challenges faced by public education. There are four components:

- **What's Your Big Idea—Grades 3-6:** Through a six-week reading and writing curriculum, students form and submit an idea for a new invention.
- **Partners in Education—Grades 7-8:** Volunteer mentors meet with students after school to discuss interests and career options.
- **Seamless Pathway—Grades 9-10:** Community college faculty mentor students and ensure they are prepared to enter the Dual Credit Program.
- **The Career Ladder—Grades 11-12:** The University of Texas at Arlington (UT) works directly with students to ensure they are on the path to be accepted into UT after graduation.

Career Matchmaking—Des Moines, IA. The Greater Des Moines Partnership supported the development of [Connect 2 Business \(C2B\)](#), a tool that allows students to explore their career interests through local businesses. Students take a C2B assessment, and businesses within 50 miles can then engage with them based on their selected interests. This engagement allows students to gain direct connections to potential job shadowing, internship and employment opportunities with 4,400 Greater Des Moines businesses. In addition, students can use the tool to create a plan of study for their high school years to help them lay the groundwork for a future career.

What can your Chamber do?

- Convene local businesses to determine what knowledge and skills are critical and where there are gaps.
- Work closely with school districts and educators to understand their curricula and how best to integrate real-world examples and opportunities.
- Develop programs and tools that make it easy for teachers to introduce interactive, technologically-enhanced lessons to their students.
- Make parallels between education and career as immersive as possible through workshops, competitions and on-site opportunities.

Recreating the Workplace for Students—New Jersey. Through AlmostRealProducts.com—a website created by the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Foundation—students can practice completing job applications and taking pre-employment tests and surveys. These practice assessments are virtually identical to those required by businesses—especially now that many are moving more and more of their hiring processes to online applications. Through using this product, high school students or adult learners and job seekers become familiar with employer expectations and get feedback about what they still need to learn for a range of jobs.

A Crash Course on High-Demand Industries—Spokane, WA.

To bridge the gap between what students are learning and what employers need—especially in industries such as manufacturing, aerospace, computer science and health care—the Greater Spokane Incorporated (GSI) Education & Workforce Department launched [Business AfterSchool](#). This series of weeklong industry workshops for students, educators, parents and community organizations provides on-site awareness of Spokane's high-demand industries. GSI organizes four Industry weeks per year: Engineering, Health Care, Manufacturing and Computer Science, and includes site tours, student projects and career information.

Charting a Course to Future Careers—Tulsa, OK.

Tulsa's [Partners In Education](#) program is a joint effort between the Tulsa Regional Chamber and Tulsa Public Schools. The program connects students and teachers with corporate, education, volunteer, government and civic leaders. One element of Partners In Education is [Oklahoma Scholars](#), an outreach program encouraging 8th graders to enroll in a rigorous high school curriculum to prepare for post-secondary education and training. Students pledge to take higher level math and science courses and are given Oklahoma Scholar awards during a ceremony their senior year. Always looking to improve engagement between the business community and schools, the program is transitioning to incorporate information on Tulsa's high-growth industry sectors under the new banner Career Pathway Navigator, which will more closely link educational attainment with workforce readiness.

Practical Tips for Engaging Students

- Design programs that clearly demonstrate why a certain lesson or skill is important to employers, so students are better able to make appropriate course selections and look for part-time jobs or internships.
- Collaborate with schools to track and measure results, to make the case for ongoing support.
- Create a visual backgrounder or infographic that clearly and concisely explains what a particular industry does and what types of jobs and skills are needed.
- Use social media channels (such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) to share relevant news and pictures that students will find interesting.

Deeper Learning uses interactive techniques such as project-based learning and real-world application to engage students in core academics and build the skills they need for success in college and career. Your Chamber can help students become the innovative, collaborative and flexible employees that employers are looking for by partnering with schools to provide Deeper Learning opportunities.

Visit www.ACCE.org/Divisions/DeeperLearning to learn more.