



ILLINOIS EDUCATION AND CAREER  
**SUCCESS NETWORK**

# Transportation-Related Barriers Impacting Student Access to Work-Based Learning

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December 9, 2024

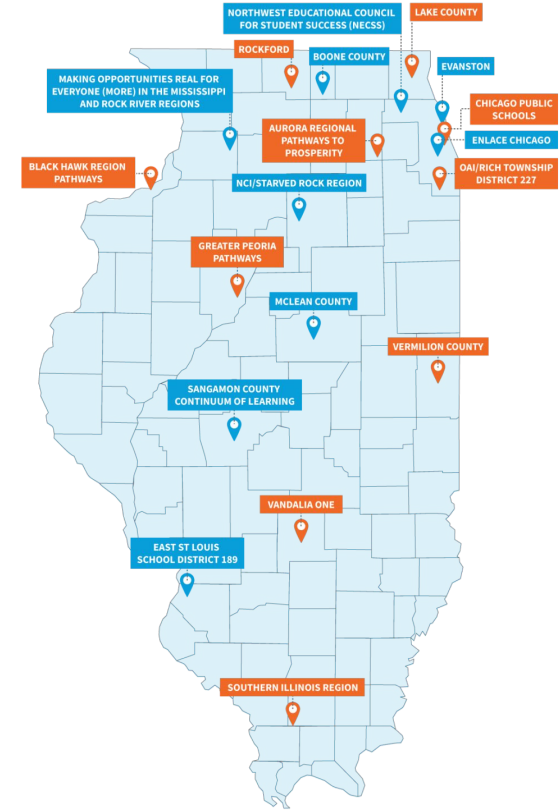
# Today's Topics

- Background on the Success Network & Policy Committee
- Purpose of the Transportation Workgroup
- Process
- Initial Findings
  - Local & District Challenges
  - Systemic Challenges
  - Equity Considerations
- Future plans

# Success Network Background



- Launched in 2013 by EdSystems, ISAC, and Advance Illinois to support regional initiatives advancing equitable postsecondary attainment.
- Leadership Community designation launched in 2015. Leadership Communities are:
  - A **partnership** involving workforce, education, municipal, and CBO leadership, **led by an intermediary**, in a **defined geographic region**.
  - Committed to a shared **plan** and strategies, and to capturing and using **data** for continuous improvement.





## Success Network Goal

To support communities to increase meaningful and equitable postsecondary attainment.

# The Success Network Policy Committee

## Why?

- Provide space for local practitioners and policy leaders to collaborate and learn from one another
- Elevate local practice to inform State policy
- Support local practitioners to take advantage of policy windows

## What?

- Learn about new and emerging education and career policy efforts
- Learn about promising local practices from Leadership Communities around Illinois
- Engage with data
- Identify and advance emerging policy priorities
- Identify opportunities to scale innovative policy in the field

# Transportation Work Group

## Purpose

- Explore transportation-related barriers to WBL
- Gather potential solutions and resources
- Engage students in this conversation
- Sharing findings, in two parts, with P-20 Council, IWIB Career Pathways for Target Populations Committee, ISBE, etc

## Scope

- Focus on supporting **in-school youth**
- Dive into **access obstacles**
- Explore **creative solutions**



# Process



## April 2023

- Launched the workgroup

## May- November 2023

- Met 5 times
- Held a broad discussion of barriers
- Began brainstorming potential solutions

## December 2023

- Release memo of initial findings

## January/ February 2024

- Conduct a student survey
- Wrap up conversations on potential solutions

## Spring 2024

- Release a second memo focused on solutions and resources

# Initial Findings

# Themes across challenges

## Local/District

- Availability of public transportation
- Lack of access to reliable private transportation

## Systemic

- Permissible vehicle types
- Driver credentialing requirements
- Funding

## Equity Considerations

- The role of compensation for WBL
- Ensuring the needs of all students are being met

# District and Local Challenges

## Public Transportation Access

- Availability varies based on region type
- Rural/Suburban areas may have little to no public transportation within a community
  - Thus reliant on private transportation
- Urban/Suburban areas that have public transportation may have limiting factors
  - Fares
  - Routes
  - Schedules
- For longer term WBL commitments cost and/or challenging logistics can become a too much of a burden

## Private Transportation

- Lack of access to a personal or family vehicle can dissuade participation entirely
- Cost v. benefit dilemma

# Systemic Challenges

## Vehicle Type Restrictions

- State law outlines which types of vehicles are able to be used to transport students across K-12
- Permissible vehicle types vary based on number of students and purpose (curricular v. non-curricular)
- Logistical challenges for smaller groups of students
  - Yellow bus not always practical
  - Permissible alternatives can be difficult to obtain

## Driver Credential Requirements

- Most vehicle options require at least a School Bus Permit
- Course availability for this permit can be limited
- In small/rural district this can fall on staff with other responsibilities creating undue burden

# Systemic Challenges

## Funding

- Identifying usable funds for WBL transportation can be a challenge
- CTE Perkins funds cannot be used for transportation related expenses
- Some attempt to use WIOA funding but process can be cumbersome and confusing



# Equity Considerations

## Compensation and Cost

- Fairness of asking students to supply their own transportation
- Lack of financial compensation for WBL impacts
  - Attitudes towards and decision to participate in WBL
  - Ability to cover transportation related costs
- Incorporating steps to minimize the cost burden essential in development of solutions

## Diverse Needs

- WBL should continue to be tailored to meet a student's individual needs
- Creative WBL offerings (school-based enterprises or virtual WBL) should be seen as part of a broad range of options
- This is a complex challenge that requires a complex solution

**How can we engage employers in this conversation?**

**What challenges do you see as similar for out of school youth and adults? What is different?**

**Any innovative collaboration with local in-school youth?**



# What's next?

*Future plans for the workgroup*

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# Exploring Solutions


## Lingering questions

- What role can employers play in potential solutions?
- What models are there of ways funding can be creatively utilized?
- Are there systematic ways to increase the number of drivers with the required credentials?

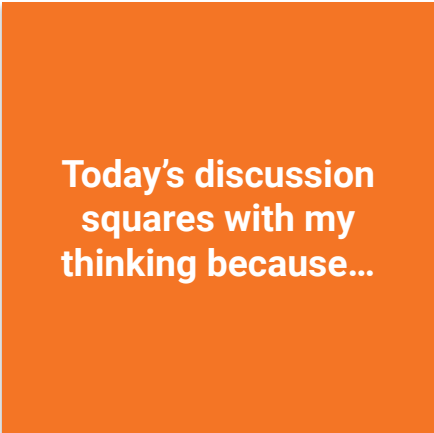


What other questions should we be asking?

# Closing Reflections



Something still  
circling in my  
head is...



Today's discussion  
squares with my  
thinking because...



One  
important  
point from  
today is...



# *Awareness to* **Action**

*Promoting Equity in Education and Careers*

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**Thank You!**

