

HOUSE BILL NO. 295

INTRODUCED BY F. ANDERSON, D. BEDEY, R. FITZGERALD, J. FULLER, M. FUNK, F. GARNER,  
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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROMOTING WORK-BASED LEARNING IN MONTANA PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS; CREATING A TEMPORARY WORK-BASED LEARNING INNOVATION PROGRAM; PROVIDING  
AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE."

WHEREAS, Montana has a shortage of career and technical education teachers; and  
WHEREAS, Montana has a shortage of skilled workers overall; and  
WHEREAS, the percentage of young people working has declined in recent decades; and  
WHEREAS, a great amount of learning can take place outside classroom walls, and especially in work

settings; and

WHEREAS, students applying skills they have learned at school in a work setting reinforces the relevancy  
of those skills; and

WHEREAS, increased collaboration between school districts and employers creates a win-win situation,  
more effectively utilizes resources, and most importantly increases opportunities for students; and

WHEREAS, a small number of school districts successfully implementing high-quality work-based  
learning approaches offers the greatest likelihood of more school districts following their lead.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**NEW SECTION. Section 1. Work-based learning innovation program -- grants.** (1) The purpose  
of this section is to encourage school districts to collaborate with employers and workforce development entities  
to implement high-quality work-based learning.

(2) The superintendent of public instruction, in collaboration with workforce development entities, shall  
create a work-based learning innovation program to stimulate the development of work-based learning in  
Montana schools.

(3) The work-based learning innovation program must involve:

(a) conducting a statewide awareness campaign to promote understanding and interest in work-based



1 learning for teachers, administrators, parents, students, employers, and policymakers;

2 (b) providing information, guidance, and technical support to school districts and employers on  
3 implementing high-quality work-based learning;

4 (c) selecting a cohort of no more than 20 school districts that have demonstrated a commitment to  
5 implementing high-quality work-based learning in one or more schools to participate in the program. In selecting  
6 school districts, the superintendent shall strive to include districts of varying sizes and locations to serve as  
7 models for other districts in the future. The superintendent shall include, at a minimum, the following selection  
8 criteria:

9 (i) evidence that the district has begun collaboration with area employers and workforce development  
10 entities to identify:

11 (A) workforce sectors in the area that are experiencing a skilled workforce shortage; and

12 (B) opportunities for students to engage in work-based learning in the high-need sectors identified in  
13 subsection (3)(c)(i)(A); and

14 (ii) evidence of commitment by area employers to partner in providing work-based learning opportunities  
15 for students.

16 (d) convening representatives of the cohort described in subsection (3)(c) for:

17 (i) developing sequenced and actionable plans to implement or expand work-based learning;

18 (ii) identifying barriers and possible solutions in implementing work-based learning;

19 (iii) sharing insights and disseminating information; and

20 (iv) any other purpose considered necessary by the superintendent and members of the cohort;

21 (e) partnering with employers, workforce development entities, and other organizations in any manner  
22 that supports work-based learning, as determined by the superintendent and members of the cohort;

23 (f) providing financial support in the form of equitably distributed grants to districts to support district  
24 efforts to implement high-quality work-based learning; and

25 (g) using the knowledge gained from the experiences of the cohort to develop recommendations and  
26 guidance for other districts interested in innovating in a similar manner.

27 (4) On or before September 15, 2020, the superintendent shall report to the education interim committee  
28 on the progress made through the work-based learning innovation program and on any legislative changes that  
29 would benefit innovations related to work-based learning.

30 (5) The legislature acknowledges that innovation is often disruptive to existing systems and urges entities

1 whose current structures may impede work-based learning innovations in Montana's elementary and secondary  
2 schools to reexamine those structures and develop flexibilities so that school districts' ability to innovate is not  
3 impeded.

4 (6) For the purposes of this section, "work-based learning" means an approach to education that  
5 emphasizes providing students with real-life work experiences during the school year and over the summer in  
6 which students can apply academic and technical skills and develop their employability.

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8 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation.** There is appropriated \$500,000 from the general fund to  
9 the office of public instruction for the biennium beginning July 1, 2019, for the work-based learning innovation  
10 program established in [section 1].

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12 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an  
13 integral part of Title 20, chapter 7, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 7, apply to [section 1].

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15 **NEW SECTION. Section 4. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2019.

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17 **NEW SECTION. Section 5. Termination.** [This act] terminates June 30, 2021.

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