

# **This We Believe About the Relationship Between Business Education and Students' Transition to Work**

## **Policy Statement 63**

In the current high-performance, results-oriented workplace, everyone must be able to make decisions and learn independently. To succeed in this evolving and unpredictable environment, students need a variety of academic and technical skills as well as career preparation experiences. Employers provide input essential in identifying skills considered vital in the workplace. Educators and employers partner to develop the structures and support for students to acquire the skills needed for employment and continuing education.

Educators use transition-to-work strategies to engage all students in a rigorous and relevant curriculum, to provide them with life and career connections, and to have them explore ever-changing and challenging opportunities in the workplace. Students are motivated and learn best when they understand the relevance of their instruction.

### **Partnerships**

**We Believe That** through partnerships with business a bridge between education and workplace settings is created. The strength of this bridge is directly related to how well the partners communicate and coordinate their efforts. Partnerships with business are a natural and, in most cases, a required part of every business education program. When these relationships are established, business partners respect what business educators do, learn to rely on the quality of the programs, and have confidence that students are prepared for the workplace. This connection provides real-world experience and builds a clearer motivation for learning. As a result, the more students can relate what they are learning in school to what takes place outside of school, the more connected they become with their own individual school-to-career plans.

**We Believe That** every student needs a broad understanding of critical aspects of business. Through business partnerships and business education curricula, students:

- Gain knowledge that addresses history, organization, and systems of the work world.
- Gain experience in putting together a business plan and learn how to manage and conduct the day-to-day operations of a business.
- Think critically about the advantages and disadvantages of different types of organizational structures.
- Use financial analysis techniques to determine the profitability of a business enterprise.
- Develop human relations skills and have opportunities to work cooperatively as team members.

- Understand how local, state, national, and international issues affect businesses.
- Develop technological competence.

This knowledge is valuable across all career paths and essential for employment. Business education is the foundation for a broad understanding of these critical aspects of business.

### **Programs of Study**

**We Believe That** business education programs provide rich opportunities for real-world learning experiences for all students. These opportunities reinforce high academic standards while providing authentic contexts where students are able to apply what they have learned. School-based experiences include vocational student organizations, field trips, guest speakers, and in-school enterprises. Work-based experiences include internships, apprenticeships, cooperative work programs, paid work experiences, job shadowing, community service, and service learning. The unique ability to bridge the gap between theoretical classroom learning and actual workplace experiences is an essential component in students' making successful transitions to work and, ultimately, careers.

**We Believe That** business education provides a coherent plan to create a personalized learning environment. Through business education, students undertake an ambitious academic program made relevant by its connection to the community and the workplace. Critical to the success of a coherent plan is the inclusion of parents, counselors, and others significant to the student's support system. In the elementary and middle school years, business awareness and exploration activities are integrated into ongoing experiences to provide students initial connections to the world around them. In the high school years, core academic subjects and business education courses provide a broad career perspective. In the post-secondary years, students move from broad to specific career preparation. Business education courses are usually grouped into program sequences or career pathways that facilitate students' transition to work and additional education.

### **Essential Skills**

**We Believe That** business education is essential for the preparation of students as knowledge workers. Individuals must have the skills to gather, create, and analyze data to produce usable information. Today's businesses, therefore, expect employees to be able to make appropriate decisions

about lifelong learning needed in their chosen careers. Students can achieve technical competence, understand theory, apply academic skills in a meaningful way, and integrate career development into satisfying career choices when they participate in the business education program. The ability to bridge the gap between theoretical learning in the classroom and

actual practice in the work environment is the essential component in students' making a successful transition to work.

**Thus, We Believe That** business education programs enable students to develop skills essential for successful transition from school to work and, ultimately, careers.