

Increasing Access to WBL for Typically Underrepresented Students



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**What do we know already
about Students with
Disabilities (SWDs)?**



Roughly what percentage of students in the United States are served by an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
serves about 7.3 million students or about 13% of the
school population
(US Department of Education, 2020)

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) database, retrieved October 21, 2021, from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/state-level-data-files/index.html#bcc>. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table [204.30](#).



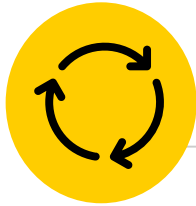
What percentage of students with disabilities (SWDs) drop out of high school?



As of 2019, 36% of students with learning or physical disabilities dropped out of high school.

SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics, Students with Disabilities, retrieved October 24, 2021, from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cgg>

Benefits of Work -Based Learning for SWDs



- SWDs who participate in WBL are more likely to graduate and obtain employment.
- WBL participation has been found to correlate with higher attendance rates and lower dropout rates.
- WBL participants with disabilities have an increased motivation to work, increased knowledge of the workplace, a better grasp on individual strengths and weaknesses, and have had the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with workplace mentors.



Sources: Burgstahler, S. (2001). Work-Based Learning and students with disabilities: One step toward high-skill, high-pay careers. *American Rehabilitation*, 26(1/2), 2. Retrieved from www.search.ebscohost.com.

Dougherty, S. (2016). Career and technical education in high school: Does it improve outcomes? Retrieved from Thomas Fordham Institute website: <https://edexcellence.net/publications/career-and-technical-education-in-high-school-does-it-improve-student-outcomes>

Dougherty, S. M., Grindal, T., & Hehir, T. (2018). The impact of career and technical education on students with disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 29(2), 108–118. doi: 10.1177/1044207318771673



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A collaborative effort between the Cobb County School District CTE (CTAE) division and Special Student Services division to provide WBL opportunities to SWDs who may otherwise be overlooked



Barriers to Inclusion



- Rigorous program criteria that SWDs often do not meet
- Lack of necessary resources and staff to meet the needs of SWDs
- Inadequate CTE teacher training in specialized instruction
- Transportation challenges
- Issues of confidentiality and disclosure



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- Students in the Corporate Classroom program start as interns for the school district and receive job coaching support as part of IEP services
- Data collected twice per week on work-related behaviors/soft skills
- Corporate Classroom staff collaborate with adult agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation or Workforce Development
- Based on data and anecdotal evidence, interns are moved into community WBL placements with lowered support



**Corporate Classroom student
interning in the district's Records
Room**

SWDs served through WBL



Students on a traditional path toward graduation

- Attend during their senior year
- Participate in WBL for half of their school day
- Participate in Work-Based Learning courses tied to their CTAE courses
- May participate until earning their diploma
- Must provide transportation

Students on an alternative track or modified curriculum

- Attend after their senior year
- Participate in the program for a full day, but are enrolled in WBL for 12 blocks of their school day
- Participate in WBL courses tied to Georgia's Workforce Ready course
- May participate until the day before their 22nd birthday
- Transportation is provided



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**Corporate Classroom
student interning in the
district's Fleet Maintenance
Department**

Internship and paid sites within the school district:

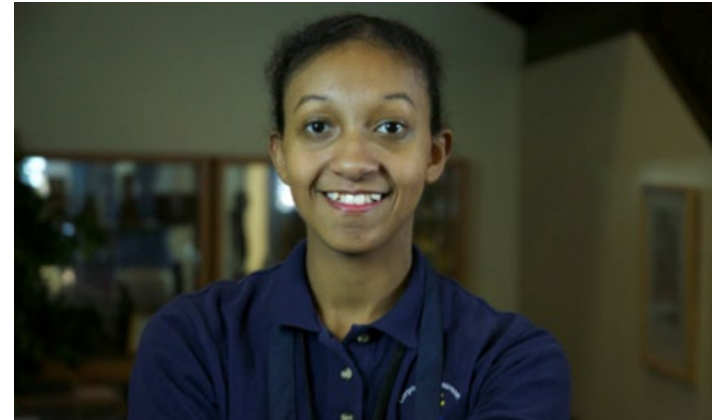
- Financial Services
- Human Resources
- Central Office Building
- Fleet Maintenance
- Transportation
- Warehouse
- Individual Elementary Schools and After School Programs

School Based Enterprises:

- Central Office Coffee Shop (Corporate Grind)
- T-shirt making operation (One Team Custom Design)s

Curriculum & Instruction

- Vocational Skills
 - DECA School-Based Enterprise Certification
 - Georgia DOL Georgia BEST program (Business Employability Skills Training)
 - Workforce Ready (course through Georgia DOE)
- Community Skills
 - Community Based Instruction
 - Travel training on public transit
 - Driver's permit training
- Life Skills
 - Financial literacy (Budgeting, simulated checking & savings accounts, simulated bills, etc.)
 - Social and emotional learning
 - Recreation & leisure skills





Thanks!

Any questions ?



You can find me at

- katherine.stewart@cobbk12.org
- <https://www.cobbk12.org/page/38587/special-education-transition-services>