

Innovative Career Opportunities Now (ICON) is the Cumberland County Schools' Career and Technical Education Work-based learning (WBL) program platform. Work-based learning is an educational approach utilizing the workplace to provide students with the competencies and skills that allow them to connect school experiences to real-life work activities through career exploration, exposure to the real workplace, and achievement of work readiness skills.

Benefits of Work-based Learning

- * Explore possible careers, enhance skill development, and apply academic proficiencies
- * Develop employability skills including positive work habits and attitudes
- * Make connections among school, post-secondary opportunities, and employers.
- * Improve job prospects after graduation
- * Learn from skilled professionals

Work-based Learning Programs

Based on occupational goals, students can be placed in one or more of the following programs:

CAREER SHADOWING (un-paid):

Career Shadowing involves pairing mentors with students to share aspects related to a career. It is a one day exposure to the “real world” of work. Students spend 3-4 hours, typically from 9 am-12 noon, with an individual in their career field of interest. They shadow to see what those individuals really do for a living. Depending on the shadowing site, the opportunity may be one-on-one with a mentor or it may be a group visit.

INTERNSHIP (paid or un-paid):

Internships are short-term employment opportunities that are directly related to a student's pathway. Students use an internship to determine if they have an interest in a particular career, to create a network of contact and to gain valuable work experience.

STUDENTS @ WORK WEEK:

Students@Work is a job-shadowing, job-mentoring initiative sponsored by the North Carolina Business Committee for Education in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The goal of Students@Work is to expose middle school students to career pathway options. Students should be able to see the relevance of the classroom and how it relates to potential, future careers. This event is recognized in Cumberland County Schools CTE throughout the month of March through field trips and guest speakers.

For more information about ICON or WBL, contact your high school CTE Facilitator. If you are a business interested in participating in ICON, please contact Nore Brantley, HSTW Partnership Coordinator at norebrantley@ccs.k12.nc.us.