

Keynote
Work-Based Learning Policy Academy – Cross-State Meeting
Remarks for David Etwiler, CEO, Siemens Foundation
Elevating the Message of Work-Based Learning
March 16, 2016

My thanks to Martin and our partners at NGA for inviting me to speak today and for organizing this great event. I'd also like to thank the Utah state team and Governor Herbert for hosting us for this conference.

It's wonderful to be in Salt Lake City! Governor Herbert continues to be a tremendous chair of the National Governors Association. Although he will pass the baton this summer, his leadership will have a lasting impact.

I'd also like to add my thanks to each of you for being here and for contributing your time and expertise to this important project. Your commitment to your states and to the next generation of American workers is inspiring and essential. We at the Siemens Foundation couldn't be more excited to partner with you.

Six short months ago, I sat in a room of experts on workforce development, career and technical education, postsecondary education, business needs and public policy to discuss the most important criteria for NGA to consider when selecting states to participate in this work. And, here we are, with outstanding leaders from six states committed to expanding opportunity for young adults and employers back home through work-based learning. Your work together over the next few days marks a milestone – a milestone for your individual projects and for our work as a foundation.

For the Siemens Foundation, today is important because we are close to marking an anniversary. In May 2015, our board of directors approved not only our new workforce development direction and program – the STEM Middle-Skill Initiative – they also approved our partnership with the National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices and this project.

When we talked with our board about the importance of work-based learning in providing economic and educational opportunity to America's young people, they got it. As business leaders at Siemens, they understand the value of work-based learning first hand. From apprenticeships to community college partnerships, Siemens invests in strategies that address its talent needs and strengthen the talent pipeline for others in the sector—and in its communities.

As a German company, Siemens' roots run deep in apprenticeships. In Germany, Siemens has 10,000 people participating in its apprenticeship program each year. And, it's reflected in the company's leadership. Anne Cooney, President of Process Industries and Drives, began her career as a machinist apprentice in a four-year program. Foundation board member, Klaus Stegemann, began his career as a Siemens apprentice and is now the Chief Financial Officer for Siemens U.S.A. – not a bad career path in my opinion.

And, it was those experiences, the particular assets Siemens can bring to the table, and our awareness of the challenges many young adults face in the classroom and the workplace, that led us to add this new initiative to our foundation's work.

The gap between where too many young adults find themselves today and the opportunities possible with STEM middle-skill jobs is simply too wide for us to accept. And, it's an area where we think the Siemens Foundation can make a difference. So, here we are.

But, when it comes to work-based learning in this country, there is something many of my colleagues at Siemens companies simply don't understand – why don't more young people pursue it? Why don't more schools offer it? And, why don't more employers participate in it? Those are hard questions to grapple with for my German colleagues who perceive work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships, as a normal, even prestigious, part of the educational experience, particularly during the transition from school to work.

They're hard questions to answer. Especially when we know high-quality work-based learning provides the closest connection between a student and a real work experience. It helps students gain an appreciation for the workplace and develop critical employability skills and critical thinking. It builds the increasingly important network between potential employees and employers. And, it contributes to a student's academics by reinforcing what's learned in the classroom and providing a context to apply those lessons.

But far too often, work-based learning gets isolated to career and technical education only, if it happens at all. Or to an apprenticeship, which is terrific but limited in terms of availability.

So we decided to work with NGA to find out how we could scale effective models at the state level. To see how those models can be integrated into a state's education and training system to provide work-based learning opportunities to more students. And to see how we can change the trend from the exception to the rule.

These are challenges you've chosen to address with us.

And, we've already identified promising practices among this cohort:

- **Indiana** will identify appropriate work-based learning opportunities by grade and age, and integrate those experiences with academic progress and education outcomes. They will leverage its Indiana Network of Knowledge to collect data on work-based learning experiences. The data will determine the number of youth ages 16-29, the number of employers, and the number of educators that participate in work-based learning programs.
- **Iowa** will develop a multi-media messaging campaign to increase awareness of work-based learning throughout the state. They will also rebrand the concept of "middle skills" through this academy. We know the Iowa STEM Council recently undertook important work to rebrand STEM in Iowa, and we look forward to incorporating lessons learned from that effort to rebranding middle skills.
- **Montana** will coordinate the work-based learning project with its P-20 Task Force and its State Workforce Investment Board, leveraging existing strong partnerships in the state to bring work-based learning programs to scale.
- **New Hampshire** will conduct an inventory of existing high-quality work-based learning programs in the state and employer engagement in, and demand for, work-based learning, and identify policy barriers to expanding participation. They've also set a goal

that every young person ages 16-29 has access to work-based learning opportunities by 2020.

- **Utah** will create employer “Advisory Committees” to connect youth to STEM and other promising middle-skill career pathways. The Committees will identify ways to improve partnerships with education systems and influence classroom activities and lessons.

And last, but not least,

- **Washington** will develop a centralized web-based clearinghouse to match businesses that offer a work-based learning opportunity with students seeking those opportunities.

During your time here over the next few days, as you learn from each other, I would ask that you also grapple with the following questions:

- How will we attract more young people and employers to participate in these opportunities, and what are the barriers for each group in your state? What are the right messages for both groups?
- How will we sustain the necessary partnerships between educators, employers, and intermediaries to make work-based learning part of the fabric of your education systems?
- What must we change at the state and federal level to support our vision of expanded, high-quality work-based learning experiences?

If we can get the answers to these questions right, the potential is limitless. For young adults, these experiences are life changing. They could be a part of career pathways in STEM industries with ladders to economic and educational growth. For employers, these experiences can lead to an expanded pool of highly skilled workers ready to fill the jobs that will make their businesses grow. And, for states, having more young adults and more employers actively engaged in meaningful work-based learning means more young workers staying home, becoming the next generation of workers to contribute to their communities and local economies.

We’re excited to learn from you. Thank you again for your invaluable contribution.

In the end, this work is about making a difference in the lives of young adults across this country—those who are just beginning to discover the power they hold for themselves, their families, their communities and for this country. With your dedication to make work-based learning part of your training system’s DNA, and our partners at NGA, we know it’s achievable.

Thanks for your time. I hope the next few days are productive for each of your projects and for this group as team.