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A plan for every future.™**

American Student Assistance Announces High School Work-based Learning Digital Guide Designed to Improve Career Readiness Outcomes for Youth

BOSTON – May 10, 2022 – American Student Assistance® (ASA), a national nonprofit changing the way middle and high schoolers learn about careers and navigate education-to-career opportunities, announced the launch of the comprehensive guide, [*High School Work-based Learning: Best Practices Designed to Improve Career Readiness Outcomes for Today's Youth*](#). The guide compiles key benefits of work-based learning for young people and employers and includes nine best practices and associated success stories. Featuring state leaders from across the country – including Pennsylvania, Washington, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, and New Mexico – who are pioneering new strategies in youth work-based learning, this informative resource provides state education leaders, educators, employers, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders with the information and insight they need to expand program access and enhance program quality in their own regions.

A recent study by ASA found that while 79% of high school students would be interested in a work-based learning experience, only 34% were aware of any opportunities for students their age – and just 2% of students had completed an internship during high school. This new resource is designed to take a deeper dive on the 2021 report by ASA, Bellwether Education Partners' [*Working to Learn and Learning to Work: A State-by-State Analysis of High School Work-based Learning Policies*](#), which revealed that states have taken a wide range of approaches to implementing work-based learning for high school-aged youth.

“Research suggests that opening work-based learning to younger students brings tremendous benefit not only to the students, but also to employers, communities, and society at large,” said ASA CEO Jean Eddy. “Working together with stakeholders across the ecosystem, our goal is to increase the number of states committed to ensuring all youth younger than 18 have equitable access to robust, high-quality work-based learning programs, with policies in place to support program funding, infrastructure, quality, and accountability.”

Work-based learning benefits young students and employers in a number of ways, including enabling the ability to connect classroom learning to the real world; giving students the chance to earn industry

credentials before graduation; allowing students to build social capital; and cultivating a pipeline of talent with new perspectives.

The nine best practices for ensuring effective high school work-based learning programs, based on success stories featuring state leaders from across the country, include the following:

- Ensure Broad Eligibility and Widespread Equitable Access – Deep Dive: New Mexico
- Support Access to Work-based Learning for Underserved Students – Deep Dive: Rhode Island
- Address Common Barriers to Work-based Learning – Deep Dive: South Carolina
- Provide Financial Incentives to Encourage Employer Participation – Deep Dive: Delaware
- Dedicate Federal and State Funding to Work-based Learning – Deep Dive: Massachusetts
- Strengthen Statewide Work-based Learning Infrastructure and Communications – Deep Dive: North Carolina
- Set Clear Quality and Accountability Expectations – Deep Dive: Pennsylvania
- Use Data to Drive Equity and Quality – Deep Dive: Tennessee
- Applying Multiple Best Practices in Work-based Learning – Deep Dive: Washington

About American Student Assistance® (ASA)

American Student Assistance® (ASA) is a national nonprofit committed to helping students know themselves, know their options, and make informed decisions to achieve their education and career goals. ASA believes all students should have equitable access to career readiness learning, starting in middle school, so they can develop a plan for their future. ASA fulfills its mission by providing digital-first programming, resources, and experiences, including [Futurescape™](#), directly to millions of students, in addition to support for educators and intermediaries. To learn more about ASA, visit www.asa.org/about-us.