

LEANDER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



BUSINESS PARTNER HANDBOOK

It is the policy of Leander ISD not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in its career & technology education programs, services, or activities. Leander ISD will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

Es norma de Leander ISD de no discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo o impedimento, en sus programas, servicios o actividades vocacionales. Leander ISD tomará las medidas necesarias para asegurar que la falta de habilidad en el uso de la lengua inglés no sea un obstaculo para la admisiónparticipación en todos los programas educativos y vocacionales.

What is COOL Week?

Career Opportunities On Location (COOL) Week is a unique Leander ISD program that offers seniors an opportunity to go on-site at a local business to learn about a career field of their choice for an entire week.

GOALS:

1. Students understand that what they are learning in school is used in the work place.
2. Students apply skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving and communication throughout the week's activities.
3. Students learn how specific occupations are performed and become aware of the aptitudes, education, and training required to be successful in those occupations.
4. Students make better-informed career decisions based on actual work experience.

ON LOCATION:

Students in the 12th grade spend a full week on location. Students are assigned to business sites in teams of two to three. They are given the opportunity to individually fill out an application and are given a practice interview by business or agency personnel. If time allows, a critique of the application and interview procedure is done.

Students are then given an orientation to the work place and are presented with a project/problem to work on for the week. Once given the project/problem, the teams are assigned to departments or individuals to job shadow, to learn about that department's part in solving the problem, and to develop possible solutions to the problem. As much as possible, students are given hands-on experience to enhance learning. The more realistic the project/problem, the more productive the experience is for the business and meaningful to the student.

On Friday, students are given the opportunity to prepare their project/problem solution proposals and to present their ideas to employees of the business. Students are given journals to log daily activities, take notes, and to reflect on their experience.

First Day Activities

The first day involves a number of important activities and sets the tone for the week. The following are the essential components:

1. Make the students feel welcome. Recognize that it is intimidating for students to enter your building for the first time. All personnel who will interact with the students should be well informed about COOL Week and their degree of participation. It is especially important for the first person with whom the students have contact welcome them. Often this is a receptionist or administrative assistant. Some companies have made simple welcome signs that were posted at the entrance of the building.
2. Ask each student to complete an employment application for a mock position within the business. Review the completed application as well as the student's résumé.
3. Interview each student for this mock position and critique the interview.
4. Give the students an orientation to your business or organization.
5. Present the students with the project or business problem that they are to work on for the week.
6. Outline the week's activities and the goals and expectations of the business or organization.

Depending upon the scope and time required for orientation, some businesses and organizations will have students involved in job shadowing the first day while others may not have time to start until Tuesday.

Related Activities

During the week there may be opportunities to involve students in activities related to the project/problem or to let them learn more about your organization and its operation. These activities give variety to the experience and complement job shadowing. The following are examples of related activities:

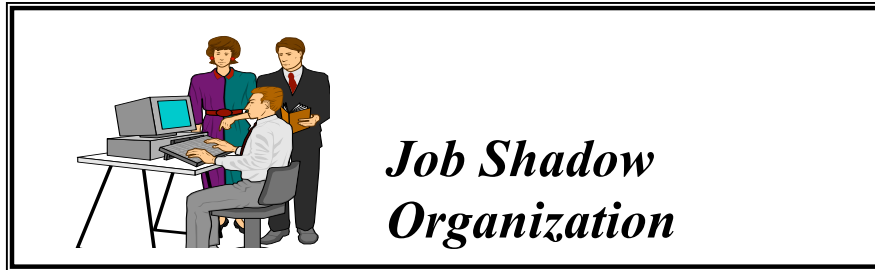
1. Trips to facilities off primary site location.
2. Attendance at meetings.
3. Films or videos.
4. Tours of related facilities (distribution center for retail site).
5. Presentation by personnel not directly involved in shadowing.

Program Planning

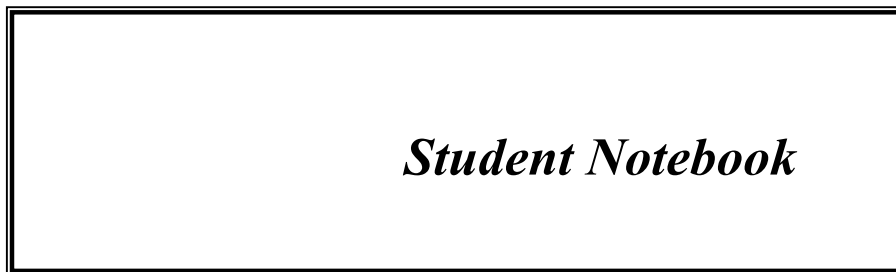
One person within each business or organization needs to be responsible for overall on-site coordination of Career Opportunities on Location (COOL) Week. This person is called the **On-Site Project Coordinator**. This person serves as the primary contact person for the high school.

The **On-Site Project Coordinator** is responsible for planning the week, including developing the project/problem that will be assigned to the students, and communicating information to the high school as requested. The **On-Site Project Coordinator** utilizes available personnel, facilities, and activities to meet the goals of Career Opportunities on Location.

Depending upon the size of the business/organization site, there may be additional personnel involved with students on a daily basis called **On-Site Student Supervisors**. These people have direct contact with students through job shadowing, project supervision, or other activities throughout the week.



Job shadow is the heart of Career Opportunities on Location. It is through shadowing individuals, or groups of employees, that students get a first hand view of how the activities of your business or organization are carried out. Most of you are experienced in setting up shadowing for students. The difference with Career Opportunities on Location is the length of time. The importance of the three-day shadow is to allow students more than an isolated view of operations of your organization and to provide them with enough information to complete the project or solve the problem presented to them.



Students will be given notebooks which will give them information about Career Opportunities on Location and their specific site, provide them with daily focus questions, and give them note taking and organization pages for their project/problem research and presentation. Another component of the notebook, which is a requirement for students, is the SCANS activity.

SCANS (Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) defines a set of competencies and basic skills that are necessary for an effective work force in the 21st Century. During Career Opportunities on Location, we ask that students identify one of those skills or competencies each day and briefly explain how they saw it applied at their work site. On-site Student Supervisors may be asked to help identify competencies or skills for students.

On-Site Student Supervisors may check notebooks on an optional basis. This may give an indication of student perception and progress throughout the week.

Developing the Project or Problem

The focus of the students' activities for the week, and the component which makes Career Opportunities on Location such a valuable learning experience, is completing a project or developing possible solutions to a problem for the business or organization. This allows students to use critical thinking, teamwork, communication, and problem solving skills.

The key to developing a good project/problem for the students is to make it real. Projects that involve actual productivity for the host business or organization are encouraged as they lend reality and a sense of accomplishment for students. Think of something you've put on the back burner for lack of resources. That would probably make a good project/problem. It should be challenging, without being too technical. Students love hands-on activities. You should provide enough activities and information relating to the project/problem during the week. The following are examples of projects that students worked on in past years.

IBM

- Evaluated existing software and its documentation; suggest improvements.

Leander Police Department

- Drafted and distributed community survey to gather opinions from neighborhoods on possible improvements for law enforcement. Data gathered was then analyzed and used to make departmental decisions on how to implement improvements.

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

- Scheduled installation of Windows 2000 Professional as the operating system on all desktop and laptop PCs at TASB.

EXCEL FITNESS LTD.

- Improved orientation for new employees.

DELL

- Gave input on development of a high school summer internship program, including marketing plan.

Support Provided by the School

PRIOR TO COOL WEEK

LISD Campus Transition Coordinator, is responsible for coordinating COOL Week. Your TC is available to conference with you by phone, or in person, as you work through the planning stages. In addition, you'll find the following resources available at the prospective high school's web site <http://www.leanderisd.org>

- a one-page summary of COOL Week and a PowerPoint presentation to share with colleagues,
- the pages of this document,
- Job Site Information Sheet,
- COOL Week timeline from the business perspective,
- summary of SCANS skills, and
- a list of past COOL Week business partners.

Students participating in COOL Week are prepared for their experience in several ways:

- Students prepare a résumé in their English class;
- Effective interviewing skills are taught, and students practice those skills in mock interviews;
- Students participate in a business problem solving simulation where process improvement tools are introduced;
- Components of a quality business presentation are reviewed with the students.
- Last, but not least, business partner expectations and instructions are given to the students.

DURING COOL WEEK

Each day a parent volunteer will call each business partner to check participants' attendance and see that the project is going as planned. If the business partner has any questions or needs assistance from the school, the parent will refer the call to your campus Transition Coordinator.

Transition Coordinators and several campus teachers, who have led student preparation activities for COOL Week, will be available to assist with any problems that may occur during the week through personal site visits and phone conferences. In addition, site visits are made on a random basis throughout the week. We have found that these visits provide our teachers insight into the business world, reassurance to our students, and validation to our business partners, as to the incredible value of this program.



Student Presentation

The final activity of Career Opportunities on Location is the student panel presentation of the project or solution to the problem. The preparation for this activity and the actual presentation challenges our students to apply skills they have learned in school in relationship with the practical experience they have had at your organization. Friday morning should be reserved for preparation time for students. They should have a room or space to work and access to available technology and materials to help them make their presentation. If possible, we would like to have help from your personnel who have experience in making presentations to assist student preparation.

The time allowed for the presentation will vary depending on the number of students at your site. Each student should make a three to four minute presentation. Businesses and agencies with large numbers of students will have to limit presentation time while small groups will be able to expand the time if necessary. Business or organization personnel should allow time for questions.

The On-Site Project Coordinator, On-Site Student Supervisors and any other interested personnel should attend the presentation. Transition Coordinators, LISD administrators, and a group of high school teachers will attend as many presentations as possible.

Students should ask the On-Site Project Coordinator to complete a presentation evaluation form, which is found in their COOL Week notebook. The form should be kept in the notebook and should be shared with students after the presentation. Students will turn their notebooks in upon return to their high school.