



**I-WIN**

Illinois Work-Based Learning  
Innovation Network

# Expanding Health Sciences Pathways: Regional Models for High-Quality Work-Based Learning

March 25, 2026



**EdSystems**

EDUCATION SYSTEMS CENTER *at*  
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY



# Our Vision

*Clear, unambiguous paths to college and career opportunities that equip students for meaningful participation in the global economy.*

## Pillars of Work

- Policy: Shaping systems for equitable college and career access
- Practices: Improving learner experiences and outcomes
- Impact: Driving systemic change through data and networks

## Areas of Practice

- College and career pathways
- Career-connected and work-based learning
- Transitional instruction
- Early college coursework
- Flexible learning
- Longitudinal data
- Collective impact networks



# I-WIN

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Innovation Network

Explore the [I-WIN Resource Hub](#)  
and [subscribe to the newsletter](#)



Highlight and explore  
innovative models for  
work-based learning



Engage in conversations  
on creating sustainable,  
high-quality models  
that provide broader  
and more equitable  
access, focusing on  
building social capital  
for students furthest  
from opportunity



Build connections  
among communities to  
share best practices,  
learnings and resources



Identify needs for state  
policy changes or  
support systems

# Introduce yourself!

Please share in the chat your:

- Name
- Role
- Organization
- **Plus, any top-of-mind questions about work-based learning in health sciences and/or regional efforts in work-based learning**

## Today's discussion:

Chester Memorial Hospital's work-based learning opportunities

- **Mariah N. Bargman**  
Marketing and Community Relations Manager

Southwestern Illinois Community College's Health Sciences Day

- **Curt Schmittling**  
Dean of Health Sciences and Homeland Security



# Health Sciences Day and Other Recruitment Events

# Recruitment and Outreach Efforts

- All Instruction Divisions with Marketing, Recruitment & Retention hold bimonthly meetings to plan the next 12-18 months of recruiting events
- SWIC Marketing, Recruitment & Retention Departments send out weekly emails with events scheduled for the week and the campus tour schedule.
- Special events highlighting CTE programs are offered yearly such as Health Sciences Day.

# Health Sciences Day

- Offers a snapshot of what healthcare workers do on a daily basis through watching a video of a simulated car crash and then following the patients through a live demonstration as they arrive in a simulated ER/hospital setting




# Health Sciences Day

- Health Sciences Division partners together with the Marketing, Recruitment & Retention Departments to plan
- Third annual event to be held 3/27/2026

Just a reminder, Health Science Day at SWIC is coming up **next week**, and we'd love to invite you to explore what a future in healthcare could look like.

 **Friday, March 27, 2026**

 **9-11 a.m.**

 **SWIC Belleville Campus**



# Health Sciences Day

- Local High Schools sign up for the event through the Recruitment & Retention Department



## This Event Includes:

- Live Trauma Scenario
- Lab Explorations
- Local vendors discussing careers in various medical fields.

Register Today

# Health Sciences Day

Participating departments in the live action scenario include:

- Administration of Justice
- Fire Science
- Emergency Medical Services
- Nursing
- Practical Nursing
- Nurse Assistant
- Medical Lab Tech
- Phlebotomy
- Radiologic Tech
- Diagnostic Medical Sonography
- Respiratory Care
- Surgical Tech
- Pharmacy Tech

# Health Sciences Day

Participating departments with lab tours or informational tables:

- Physical Therapy Assistant
- Medical Assistant
- Community Health Worker
- Massage Therapy
- Health Information Technology

# Lessons Learned

- Communication is key
  - Planning meetings
  - Details matter
- Less is sometimes better
  - First year was very ambitious
  - Scaled down last year for a better event
- Be ready to adjust on the fly
  - Unannounced participants
  - Volunteers cancelled

# Communication Examples

## Early planning meeting agenda

### Health Sciences Day Planning Meeting Agenda

1. Overview of the Day:
  - a. March 27, 2026 9-12:30pm
  - b. 3 Components
    - i. Live Scenario in the gym
    - ii. Table Fair- located in the Gym and 1400 Hallway
    - iii. Program Lab Tour
2. Live Scenario
  - a. What programs will participate?
  - b. Any changes or suggestions for this year?
  - c. [Link](#) to the Live and Video Scenario document.
3. Table Fair
  - a. Create the link to encourage businesses/organizations to participate?
  - b. Here is the contact [list](#) from previous years.
  - c. What SWIC programs would like tables?
  - d. When should we begin sending invitations?
4. Group Tours
  - a. Tours rotated between labs, program table fair and business table fair
  - b. Preferably stay in MC
  - c. Time in labs (last year was 5-6 minutes, to visit 4 labs)
5. Marketing
  - d. Recruitment will submit a request for flyers, social media images, email headers, social media invitation and have them take photos throughout the event.
  - e. Recruiters will send invitation to high schools
6. Registration
  - f. Create a Form for registration link and QR codes

December 17, 2025

# Communication Examples

## Vendor communication example

Good Morning!

Thank you again for participating in our upcoming Health Sciences Day on March 27th. We truly appreciate your time and support in helping make this event a meaningful experience for our students.

Below are a few important details to help you prepare:

- Event Time: 9:00 AM – approximately 11:30 AM
- Arrival & Setup: Please plan to arrive and set up your table between 8:30 and 9:00 AM.

Upon arrival, please check in at the vendor table located just inside Entrance H. Our staff will be there to greet you and escort you to your assigned table area.

The event will begin with students in the gym participating in a live trauma scenario, which will conclude around 9:45 AM. Once completed, students will be released to explore the table fair and take campus tours.

- Table Location: Vendor tables will be located in the Main Complex building, 1400 hallway.

# Communication Examples

## Vendor communication example

- Power & Technology: We cannot guarantee access to power in this area. If you require power, please bring extension cords and ensure laptops or devices are fully charged in advance. Wi-Fi will be provided.

As a token of our appreciation, lunch will be provided in our cafeteria. Each attending vendor will receive a \$15 lunch voucher.

Attached, you will find a document outlining parking and preferred entrance information.

- Ambulances & Fire Trucks attending the event should plan to pull around to the opposite side of Entrance H, where students will meet you outside. Please check in at Entrance H before pulling around!

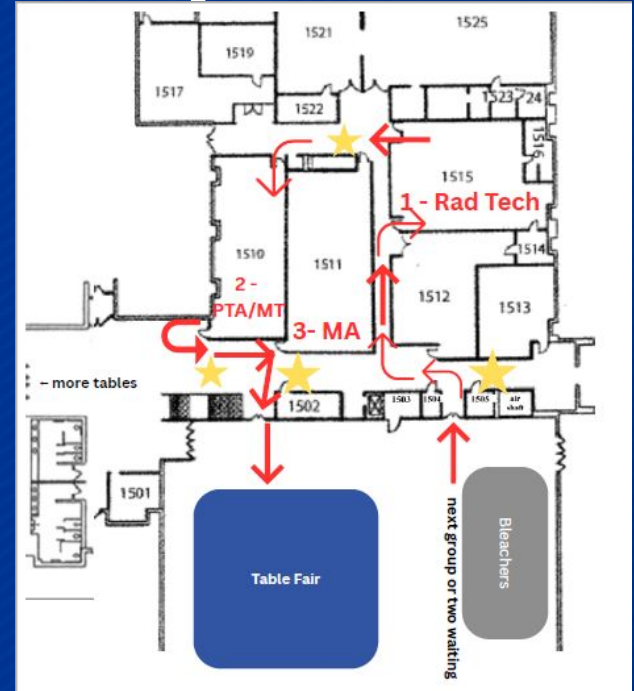
If you have any questions as we approach next week's event, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are grateful for your participation and look forward to welcoming you on campus.



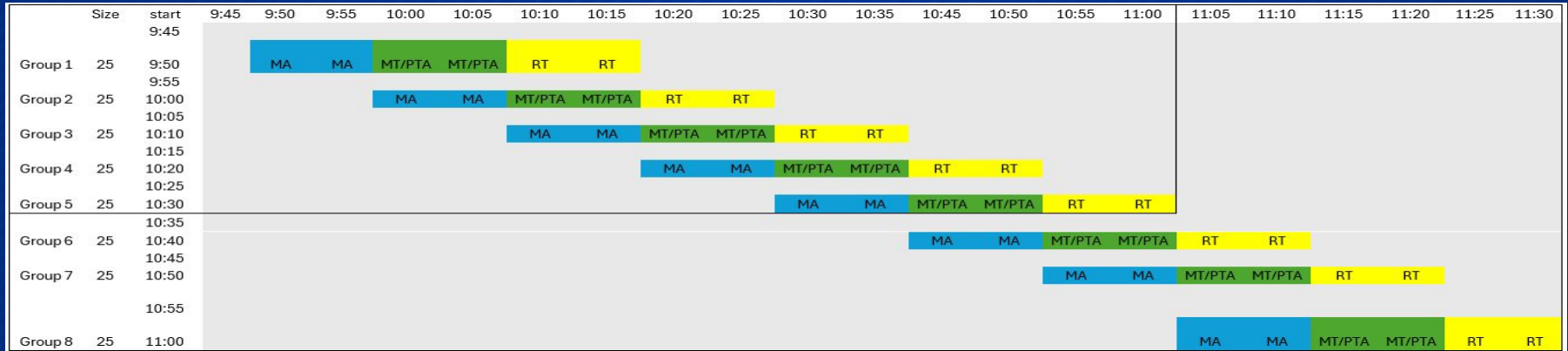
# Communication Examples

## Faculty communication example

Now that we have better numbers, I have revised the tour schedule. We can accommodate double the time in each program (more like 8-9 mins instead of 4), at a lower capacity. Keeping the group max. at 25 and starting every 10 minutes instead of 5 will allow a more in-depth and relaxed tour schedule for the coordinators and for us! I also pushed the first start time back to give us some breathing room after the scenario. If we start early, we just shift everything up.



# Communication Examples



# Other Recruitment and Outreach Events

- SWIC Health Sciences also does large scale on-campus tours for school groups as young as 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Recently had a group of 250 local 8<sup>th</sup> graders visit.
- During smaller campus tours, many Health Science Departments allow prospective students and their parents to view active skill lab sessions as available.

# Other Recruitment and Outreach Events

- In the past few years, we started encouraging all Health Science programs whether participating in on-campus tours or off-campus school visits to have an interactive element in order to keep student's attention. Each department has a simple interactive skill that they demonstrate and allow the students to perform.
- This change has dramatically increased not only student engagement during these events, but also faculty are more enthusiastic when interacting with prospective students.

# Questions?



# Strengthening Regional Work-Based Learning in Southern Illinois

# Project Overview: Co-Designing a Regional Pathway System

## Developing Regional Model Programs of Study

- Identify 3–5 priority industry sectors
- Identify priority early college credit coursework and credentials for regional scaling and articulation.
- Incorporate industry-specific competencies in the program of study course sequences
- Incorporate regional opportunities for meaningful work-based learning

## Defining and Scaling Work-Based Learning

- Inventory current offerings
- Align regional activities with the defined Illinois continuum.
- Map out the current state of processes for students
- Determine the ideal state to ensure experiences are meeting the needs of both students and partners

# Key Steps Taken to Build Inventory

## Labor Market Data Analysis

- Pathways team analyzed federal and state labor market data to identify high-skill, liveable wage occupations in key sectors

## Program Review for Credentials

- Existing degree and certificate programs were reviewed to find credentials with strong labor market value

## Defining Learning Continuum

- Organized by state definition of work-based learning continuum

## Employer Engagement

- Employer Roundtable was held to understand essential skills needed, and understanding hosting student experiences

# Mapping WBL: Healthcare

## Career Exploration

Cadaver lab (Marissa SD)

Career Exploration course (Red Bud 9th Grade, Sparta)

VR Experiences (Sparta SD)

Career Fair (CCSI, Chester HS)

Workforce Wednesday (Columbia HS)

Job Shadowing/Guest Speakers (Marissa SD)

Regional: Medical Explorers (Chester Hospital)

Regional: Job Shadowing/Site Visits (Columbia, Waterloo)

Regional: Sparta Hospital Day Program

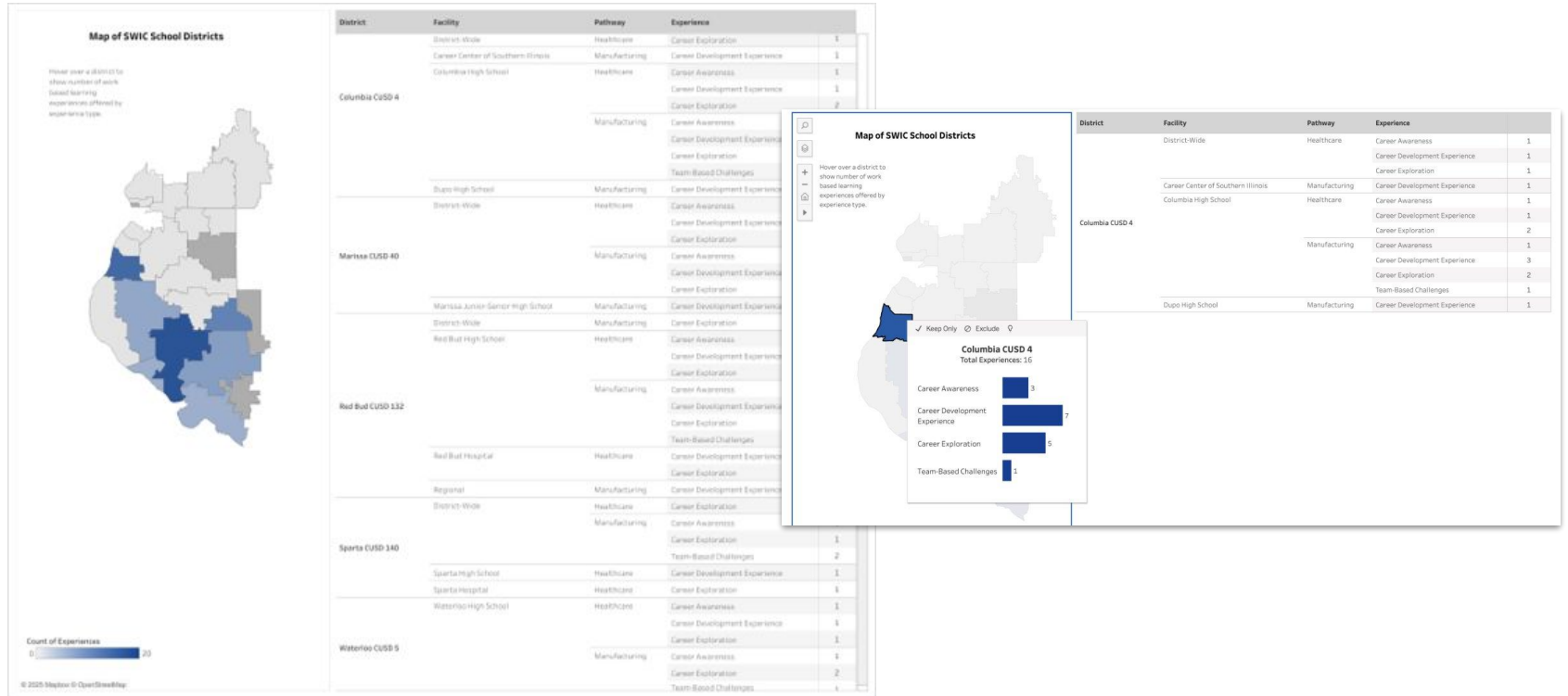
Regional: SWIC Health Sciences Day

# Healthcare: Career Exploration Narrative

## School Partner Offerings

- At **Chester High School**, students gain foundational knowledge through specialized courses such as Anatomy/Physiology and Advanced Biology, which introduce key concepts and skills relevant to medical careers. These classes not only build academic readiness but also spark interest in additional health professions.
- In **Coulterville School District and Marissa School District**, seniors participate in dedicated Career Exploration classes that allow them to investigate healthcare roles, understand credential requirements, and reflect on their personal interests.
- **Red Bud High School** offers a personal finance unit, a 9-week course taken by freshmen and juniors that connects financial literacy to career planning across all occupations, including healthcare. In addition, classroom guidance and individual counseling ensure students receive personalized support as they navigate career choices. These interactions support students' connection to their interests.
- **Waterloo High School and Marissa School District** utilize [Xello](#), a K-12 technology platform where students explore career options, set goals and plan educational pathways.
- **Columbia High School and Career Center of Southern Illinois** use [IL CIS360](#), an online system that offers career, education, and current labor market information in an easy-to-use tool, helping students to make informed decisions about healthcare careers.

# Report Heat Map Example



# Work-Based Learning Inventory Report Opportunities

## **School-based**

- Health Sciences team-based challenge
- Supporting employer understanding of return on investment
- Adapting flexibility in scheduling to fit student availability

## **Regional**

- Regional career awareness for Manufacturing
- Building industry partnerships

## **Cross-sector**

- Increasing recruitment for CTE educators
- Sharing and collecting workforce data
- Increase K-8 exposure to career pathways
- Provide more opportunities across the continuum

[Southwestern Illinois Work-Based Learning Inventory Report](#)

# What a Regional Report Could Unlock

Over time, a shared repository of opportunities could support:

- **A regional view** of work-based learning opportunities across districts, colleges, and employer partners
- **Filterable exploration** by industry pathway and stage of the WBL continuum
- **Visibility into gaps and overlaps:** what's abundant, what's missing
- **Shared learning and replication** across schools
- **Greater staff, student, employer awareness** of existing opportunities and pathways

# Coming Up with I-WIN...



## April 24: In-Person Opportunity

Join for an in-person opportunity at Wilco Area Career Center and Plainfield East High School to learn about how they are embedding work-based learning in their Early Childhood Education and Information Technology pathways

>> [Complete this form](#) to express interest in attending



## May 14: Roundtable

Join for a roundtable discussion on challenges and opportunities involved in marketing work-based learning programs.

>> [Register now](#)

# Quick Feedback

Please complete our exit slip to provide feedback on this session and input for future opportunities with I-WIN.

Thank you for your time and thoughts!





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**Thank you!**

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