

Introduction to Stefanie Merrell, K-12 Work-Based Learning Business Liaison:

Previously in long-term care for over 20 years, Stefanie utilizes her knowledge of individualized care and support along with managing a business to create a positive experience for businesses within her current role as the region's **K-12 Work-Based Learning Business Liaison**.

Stefanie's work is funded through a Larimer County Workforce Innovation Grant which was received by the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce. She works alongside Colorado Early College Fort Collins and Poudre, Thompson, and Estes Park School Districts.

Work-based learning (WBL) provides high school students the chance to participate in meaningful work as it relates to their anticipated career pathway so while individuals are still in high school they receive school credit and real world job experience. WBL Coordinators are teachers at the high schools who help students navigate their unique journey. Students are utilizing an electronic platform called Xello to research career pathways and ultimately, Xello connects high school students to WBL opportunities offered by businesses in the community.

Stefanie's position is unique because it sits on the business side of work-based learning. Her role is to connect to businesses who may benefit from the area's captured audience of work-ready students and to explain WBL benefits and outcomes. If it's a good fit, businesses are onboarded into the Xello platform so the business can post their jobs (paid part-time, internships, apprenticeships) to students. Additionally, Stefanie works with the high school WBL Coordinators on where student interests lie so she can reach out to businesses to help find opportunities for our students.

Contact Stefanie for more information on Xello or how your business can connect to our local K-12 students for work-based learning opportunities.



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