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Essex High School – Global Leadership Program

Grant Summary:

With the support of a Flexible Pathways Work-Based Learning grant Essex High School (EHS) is working to develop and implement a Global Leadership Program Internship Forum. This forum will build and expand a work-based learning providers network, increase networking opportunities for the inaugural Global Leadership Program cohort at EHS, and identify and establish internships geared to high school students.

Work to Date:

This past spring, EHS planned and held their first Global Leadership Internship Summit to engage community leaders and industry experts spanning business, government, media, arts, non-profit organizations, humanitarian organizations, and K-12 and higher education.

At the summit, the purpose of the new Global Leadership Program was shared, including the goal of creating flexible pathways to graduation for EHS students. According to Jill Prado, the Global Leadership Program Director, “We were specifically interested in exploring, expanding, and even reinventing the concept of the ‘high school’ internship. Our focus is on substantive, internationally-focused internships for our high school age group.”

Attending the forum were representatives from the Vermont Regional Office of the Peace Corps at the University of Vermont; the Consumer Assistance Program, Office of the Vermont Attorney General; Ben & Jerry’s; SSG Advisors; Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility; the Career Center at UVM; the Vermont Agency of Education; Saint Michael’s College; the Vermont House of Representatives; Burlington International Airport; the Office of International Education, University of Vermont; the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development; Vermont Public Radio; Essex Westford School District; and Essex High School. In addition, the Executive Directors of the Vermont Business Roundtable and the Vermont International Film Festival, along with the Vermont Comedy Club, offered to support the goal of expanding learning opportunities.

The attendees and industry experts were divided among three tables, with two Essex educators leading the table discussions on key points related to the concept of providing internships—work-based learning experiences—to high school students in tandem with their Global Leadership Program/Pathway. The team members tag-teamed with a series of questions and note-taking to be able to learn from our distinguished and knowledgeable guests.

Upon conclusion of the event, multiple attendees offered to help in the coming academic year. They offered to serve as Advisory Board members, internship providers, and speakers.

According to Prado, "We engaged the greater community, strengthened and solidified relationships, and generally achieved buy-in from multiple learning providers."





Questions for Team Facilitators

I. Full group discussion *(This will kick off the discussion - we'll do this as a whole group.)*

- Thinking back...When you headed off to college, is there anything you wish you had learned or known or done in high school? Or when you got your first job after college, is there anything you wish you had learned in college?
 - **Conversation jump-starters/examples:** Any life skill? Any insight that you wished you had been armed with? A technical skill? A soft skill? A gap in your content knowledge? An experience?

II. Table discussion *(This will begin the part of the conversation you'll facilitate. The big questions are listed. Follow-up questions are bulleted.)*

- In your experience, if and when you've worked with early career or pre-career employees, what are some of the qualities that you've noticed or been impressed by?
 - **Conversation jump-starters/examples:** What are some of the qualities that have been valuable to your organization? (Ex. technical skills, presentational skills, soft skills, etc.?)
- What are some of the challenges of working with interns or early career employees?
 - **Conversation jump-starters/examples:** Are there qualities that young people bring or don't bring to the job or the experience? What sort of difficulties have you experienced or noticed?

III. Table discussion.

- Let's imagine that you do have a student working with your team: What would or could a student learn in an organization like yours?
 - **Conversation jump-starters/examples:** What kind of skills could they learn? What kind of knowledge would they acquire? What might be their takeaways? For example, would they have a sense of the big picture of the organization? Would they have a sense of the function of a particular team?)

IV. Table discussion *(this is the biggest/most important thing we want to ask the attendees, so please leave time to discuss this further/encourage dialogue)*

- We often think in terms of a 'typical' or 'traditional' internship. We can probably imagine an experience for a college student (for example: 3 to 5 months, part or full time, a finite period of time).
 - Beyond the typical internship, what kind of experience possible for a pre-professional experience for a student? And what's feasible? And most importantly, what is still beneficial to your organization? Let's brainstorm some possibilities.
- Let's dig deeper:
 - Could it be short term? Could it be virtual? Could it be job shadowing? Or could it be project-based? How could the structure vary? How could the nature of the work vary? How could the goal vary?

- For example, if I had an intern for GLP, I might ask the student to serve as an ambassador for the school and Vermont tours that we do with our international exchange students. We visit Ben & Jerry's, American Flatbread, Burton. The student 'interns' would build skills in: public speaking, presentation of learning, translating, cross-cultural communication skills, social skills...

V. Full group - Takeaways from each table - Summary by Facilitator *(we will allot about 10 minutes for each question. I will let you know about five minutes before we come back together as a group. This last part (Section V) will be an opportunity to share some insights, interesting dialogue, and ideas or questions people want to follow-up on from our table discussions. As facilitators, you will give a brief, on the spot summary, but hopefully more conversation will ensue with the group from these summaries.)*

- Wrap-up
- Conclude