Professional Learning Experience
Fact Sheet (Updated 7-22-13)

Purpose:
The purpose of the professional learning experience (PLE) is to connect technical skill development in a course sequence to authentic industry-related experiences across all fields and pathways to build career readiness.

Mission:
The mission of the professional learning experience (PLE) is to enhance the opportunity for authentic skill development, attainment of a certificate, license or degree and student success in the 21st century workforce.

Benefits of Student Participation:
Students who take part in a PLE while in high school:
- Make connections between real world experiences and the classroom;
- Begin to look at education with a greater sense of purpose;
- Understand how academic knowledge links with technical training;
- Interact with adult role models to develop positive relationships and career connections;
- Experience an introduction to all aspects of the industry;
- Develop new skills and experiences beneficial to their career futures;
- Enhance self-esteem as they demonstrate skills and earn recognition;
- Expand understanding of career and work options available and need for post-secondary training;
- Experience a range of opportunities that may not be traditional for their gender, race or ethnicity.

Experience-based Learning Connection:
Experience-based learning is participatory and authentic in nature in which a skill or knowledge is practiced in a teacher directed setting. The professional learning experience is an experience-based learning example directly linked with work-related experiences.

What is a Quality Professional Learning Experience?
Quality professional learning experiences:
- Enhances the development of a broad range of transferrable skills;
- Builds knowledge of career systems through the introduction of all aspects of a selected industry;
- Includes the on-going attention of a school coordinator and work site adult mentor;
- Illustrates the importance of being an employee that has strong academic and technical knowledge and skills;
- Engages students to want to complete their education and obtain post-secondary training to be employable in their area of choice.

Professional Learning Experience Situations:
A PLE can take place in a variety of situations:

**Work-based learning**—Activities that take place at a workplace, which are pre-determined to expose the student learner to a range of occupations within that pathway where a wage is earned. Examples include internships, health-related clinicals and Supervised Agricultural Experiences.

**Community-based learning**—Activities that provide a service that is linked to the skills necessary to meet a human/community need. These can involve working closely with service providers and are traditionally a voluntary position with no wage earned. Examples include project-based service learning and community-based experiences in human services professions.

**School-based learning**—Activities which are created within the school building, but follow industry procedures and processes. These are useful when other options are not available and/or the school has a need that the student learner’s technical skills could be utilized to address. Examples include Supervised Entrepreneurial Experiences and Live Work.

The Role of Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO):
Students can expand 21st century skills within a Career and Technical Student Organization. CTSO involvement is encouraged due to the activities, leadership, competitions and authentic experiences available for skill application within the classroom and community.

Professional Learning Experience Toolkit:
A guidance document has been developed to assist in the development of a quality professional learning experience in local schools. This document is called a “toolkit” because it includes both written direction and explanation along with sample forms, rubrics and evaluation tools. Contact: Gayla Randel, grandel@ksde.org or 785-296-4912 with questions.