



## **I-BEST @ WORK**

MAY 29, 2019

*"We have a passion for taking care of our team members besides giving them a job and paying them a wage. Our instructors are great. They have a wealth of knowledge and are very patient. You have to take care of those that are taking care of you. That's what this program represents."*

*David Tobias, human resources manager, Tyson Fresh Meats, Wallula, Wash.<sup>1</sup>*

### **New Opportunities**

More than ever, Washington state needs people with education beyond high school. In fact, by 2025, nearly 70 percent of job openings in our state will require some level of education past a high school degree.<sup>2</sup> But, an estimated 685,000 Washingtonians don't have the basic skills they need to meet the workforce demand.<sup>3</sup>

To help the state's economy continue to grow, Washington's community and technical colleges developed I-BEST — Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training — to quickly teach students literacy, work and college readiness skills so they can move into school or living wage jobs faster. I-BEST @ Work brings this model to the workplace to help fill skills gaps between what employees can do and what their employers need.

Employees, employers and the state's economy benefit from I-BEST @ Work. Employees gain basic skills that help them in the workplace and in their daily lives, helping them as they support themselves and their families.

### **Grant-Funded Support**

An 18-month Walmart grant, awarded in February 2019, totaling nearly \$477,000 will fund at least four I-BEST @ Work sites across Washington state. The grant supports a full-time statewide coordinator, navigators for each site, training for the instructors and navigators, and individualized program planning.

I-BEST @ Work can work for any employer. The Walmart grant-funded program focuses on service industries like retail, hospitality, food service and tourism.

### **How the I-BEST @ Work Program Works**

I-BEST @ Work uses a nationally recognized team-teaching approach to teach employees basic skills and workplace expertise at no cost to the student. Begun in 2012, using funding from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the program has already worked with several employers across Washington state to train employees in life and workplace skills.

First, an employer partners with a community or technical college or a basic skills provider approved by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Next, the employer and provider work together to develop curriculum tailored to the employers' needs. Once the plan is in place, a basic skills instructor works to develop students' reading, writing, numeracy, English language, employability, and technology skills while the employer's trainer or manager teaches workplace skills like safety, processes and management.

In addition to the instruction, a Walmart grant-funded I-BEST @ Work navigator works with students through the duration of the program connecting them with academic and community services. That extra support helps students stay in and complete the program.

1

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

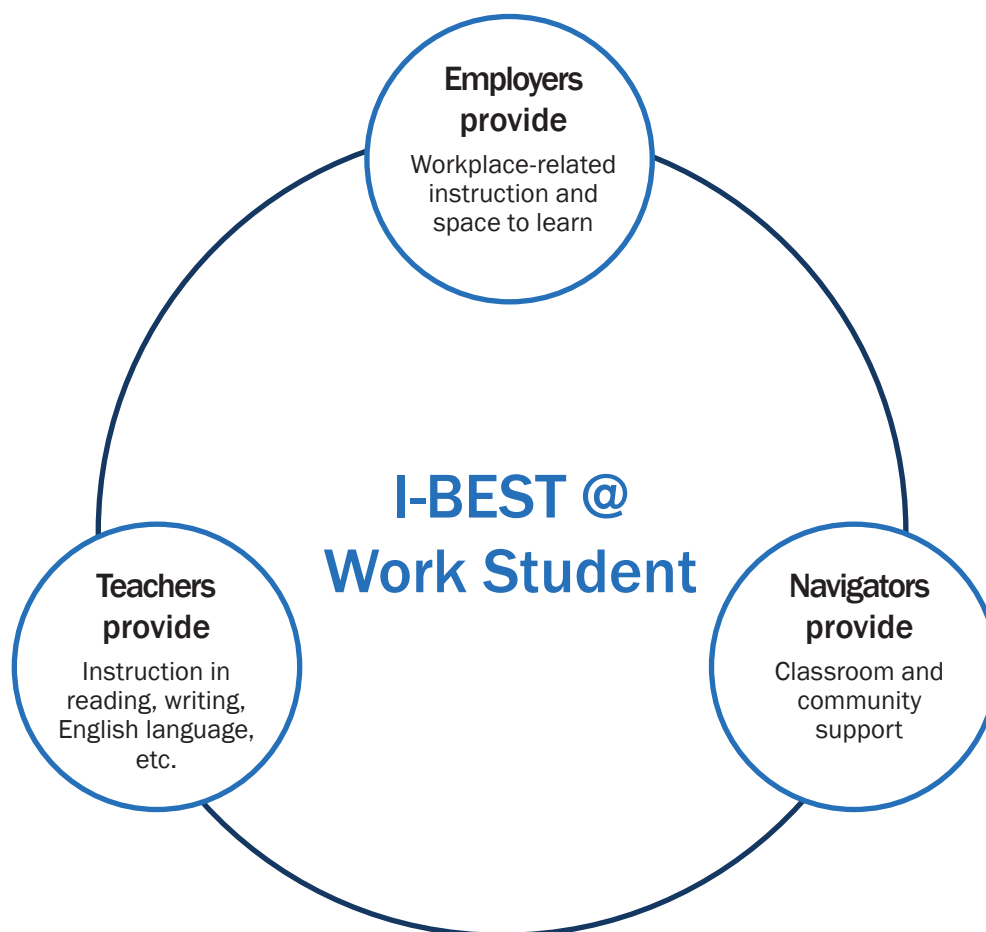
**Nicole Hopkins**  
I-BEST @ Work Program Administrator  
p: 360-704-3989  
e: nhopkins@sbctc.edu

## Proven Instruction

I-BEST @ Work is based on the award winning I-BEST team-teaching model. Named a 2011 Bright Idea by the John F. Kennedy School of Government, I-BEST was designated by the US Department of Education as one of the most significant national innovations.<sup>3</sup>

The I-BEST model uses two teachers: one provides basic skills in reading, math and English language, while the other trains students for jobs. Students learn what they need to be successful in the career field of their choice.

## I-BEST @ Work Means Comprehensive Instruction



Sources:

1. Bennett, A. (2018, June 24). When school goes off-campus. Walla Walla Union-Bulletin. Retrieved May 10, 2019, from [https://www.union-bulletin.com/news/education/walla\\_walla\\_community\\_college/when-school-goes-off-campus/article\\_44413a94-7655-11e8-8c0d-037afd6b9f4e.html](https://www.union-bulletin.com/news/education/walla_walla_community_college/when-school-goes-off-campus/article_44413a94-7655-11e8-8c0d-037afd6b9f4e.html)
2. A Skilled and Educated Workforce 2017 update by the Washington Student Achievement Council, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.
3. Martha J. Kanter, then US Undersecretary of Education, opinion editorial, "American Higher Education: 'First in the World'" featured in May-June 2011 Change magazine.