

ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

PREPARING STUDENTS TO BE COLLEGE,
CAREER AND LIFE READY

GREAT LAKES COLLEGE & CAREER PATHWAYS PARTNERSHIP

GRANT REPORT
2016-2020



WITH SUPPORT FROM:

Joyce Foundation, Connected,
Education Systems Center at NIU, and JFF

ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

DESTINATION | KNOWN

2010

ROCKFORD SCHOOL BOARD ADOPTS CAREER-PREP PROGRAM

Academy high school approved by a unanimous vote.

2014

WORK-BASED LEARNING CONTINUUM ESTABLISHED

Curriculum instituted for all four years of high school - beginning with exploration and culminating in a career-specific project.

2016

ALIGNMENT ROCKFORD FOUNDING

Launched by a collaboration of public, private, and grassroots entities to align resources and advance educational achievement and attainment.

2011

ACADEMY PROGRAM PILOT/SCALE-UP

Beginning with freshmen at one high school in 2012, the program grew to include all students at all area high schools by 2014.

2015

GREAT LAKES COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS PARTNERSHIP BEGINS



ACADEMIES AND PATHWAYS

Academies are offered in business, production, health, and public service. Pathways within the Academies are fine-tuned to include instruction into customized curriculum, on-the-job training, and mentoring.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ACADEMY COACH

Special needs students are provided with customized, equally advantageous work-based learning opportunities.

CAREER EXPO

Nearly 150 diverse industry professionals help students investigate potential careers, with displays, demonstrations, and discussions.

9TH GRADE SEMINAR

Students explore the attributes and options of each Academy, shadow older classmates, interact with community experts, and attend the Career Expo.

3-COURSE PATHWAY SEQUENCES

10TH GRADE - introductory course in the Pathway of interest

11TH GRADE - more in-depth articulated course eligible for college credit

12TH GRADE - advanced dual-credit courses earning high school and college credit/grade or industry certifications

PATHWAY SPONSORS

Regional businesses make year-long commitments to provide virtual and in-person interactions with students interested in their industry.

10TH GRADE CAREER SITE VISITS

Students tour and compare two different workplace environments.

11TH GRADE JOB SHADOWING

Regional businesses host students onsite for 4-hour visits to experience a typical workday in their chosen field and perform supervised tasks.

12TH GRADE DUAL-CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

Rock Valley College enhances its course offerings for more students to earn college credit on high school campuses at no cost.

BRINGING EDUCATION TO LIFE



In the classroom, outside the classroom, and as an enduring career, when children can see more clearly how education relates to the real world — their real world — they are far more likely to succeed in school and beyond. This can be accomplished by offering them the opportunity to experience

a career firsthand, then giving them the tools and support they need to pursue it.

Dedicated Rockford educational leaders sought to give this invaluable opportunity to all our students — ensuring equitable access and allowing students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for economic stability. With a 66% graduation rate, there would be a need for interventive efforts to help more students thrive. The ultimate goal is the development of an expanded learning model to better prepare our youth to be college, career, and life ready.

Once implemented, such a program would be transformative for the students, and in turn, our entire community. As graduates shape brighter futures, the benefits of enhanced prosperity and quality of life among all residents grow exponentially each year. This ambitious endeavor would require student access to area organizations for work-based learning, development of new school processes, highly engaged community partnerships — and funding.

INVESTING WITH LIMITLESS RETURNS

The vision for Rockford students reflected precisely the mission of the Great Lakes College & Career Pathways Partnership (GLCCPP). Funded by The Joyce Foundation, a national nonprofit, the GLCCPP designated four applicant communities to design and implement systems to equitably empower students for advancement into the workforce. In 2016, Rockford, Illinois; Madison, Wisconsin; Central Ohio/Greater Columbus, Ohio; and the Northwest Suburbs of Chicago, Illinois; were announced as grant recipients.

ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ALIGNMENT ROCKFORD, AND ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE, TOGETHER, WERE AWARDED \$500,000 OVER FIVE YEARS TO SCALE AND SUSTAIN THE CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE OPTIMAL STUDENT READINESS FOR EMPLOYMENT—PRINCIPALLY THROUGH THEIR SECONDARY AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Building on a concept already embraced by Rockford Public Schools, grant funding would, in part, support “Academies,” or schools within high schools, which offer training in a general career direction. Within each Academy, several more narrowly focused career “Pathways” offer students greater specialization.

ALL KEY STAKEHOLDERS GALVANIZED THEIR EFFORTS AND HIT THE GROUND RUNNING BY:



PROVIDING GREATER ACCESS:

At the core of the new initiative was building out existing pathways into true programs of study, to guide, educate, and foster students in their chosen career interest areas, while providing opportunities for businesses to develop their future workforce.



BUILDING BETTER PROCESSES:

All four traditional Rockford public high schools and one alternative learning high school established academic infrastructure to support Pathways for high-demand fields.



DEVELOPING STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS:

Alignment Rockford supplied the vital link between schools and community employers. Rock Valley College served as the post-secondary educational partner.

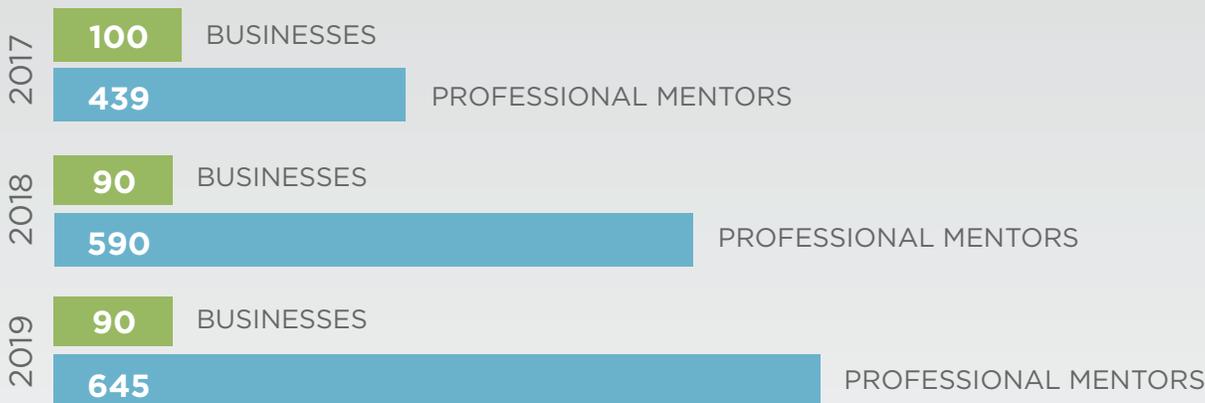
EXPLORE, THEN SOAR

The results speak volumes. Through the Great Lakes College & Career Pathways Partnership Grant, students gained access to industry expertise, career inspiration, and workforce preparation and businesses teamed up with enthused, well-equipped students.

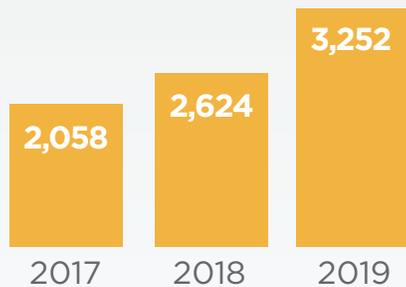
The GLCCPP journey has helped our community build a foundation to support meaningful and lasting improvement in advancing equity and economic mobility for generations to come.

PARTICIPATION NUMBERS:

BUSINESSES SUPPORTING STUDENTS

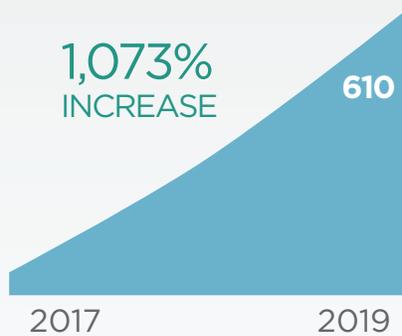


NUMBER OF STUDENT/ BUSINESS INTERACTIONS



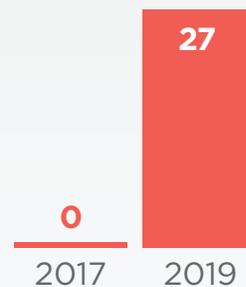
DUAL CREDIT COMPLETIONS

Students earning college credit for courses taken during high school



DUAL CREDIT COURSES

offered on high school campuses



5 INSTRUCTORS
IN PROGRAM
WITH RELATED
PROFESSIONAL
WORK EXPERIENCE

4 GRANT RECIPIENT SCHOOL
DISTRICTS FORMED A
COLLABORATIVE NETWORK
*sharing insight, successes, and challenges.
The ongoing exchange of ideas is a new
educational resource for each community.*

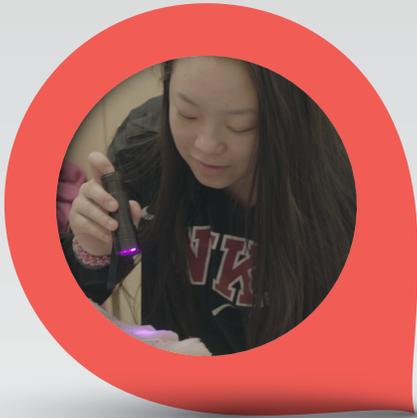
AREA BUSINESSES AND
ORGANIZATIONS FORGED
NEW ALLIANCES WITH
ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS



ROCKFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
AND ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE
STRENGTHENED THEIR
WORKING RELATIONSHIP

OPENING DOORS | ACCESS

The GLCCPP Grant makes it possible for regional employers to team up with motivated Rockford students. Students gain career insight, industry knowledge, mentoring, and work-based experiences. Employers gain the ability to help shape curriculum, develop a better-prepared workforce, and connect early with students whose career goals align with an organization's hiring needs.



PUBLIC SAFETY PATHWAY

The Public Safety Pathway is an ideal example of the unique access and insight students are afforded with work-based learning. Aspiring public servants can explore the responsibilities, beneficial qualities, and daily activities of various criminal justice roles.

Detective Jeff Barabasz is a 24-year veteran of the Rockford Police Department and a hands-on instructor in the Criminal Justice Pathway. Teaching the dual-credit course, Criminal Justice and Introduction to Crime Scene Investigation at Guilford High School, his curriculum incorporates fingerprinting, forensics, police reports, field trips, and visiting speakers like crime victims, psychologists, and investigators. Students who complete this class receive both high school and college credit, at no cost, and without leaving their high school campus.

SETTING INTO MOTION | PROCESSES

The grant aided schools' ability to develop new curriculum, make classroom updates, obtain new textbooks and instructional materials, and add administrative support. All efforts have yielded high returns. Roosevelt Principal, Morgan Gallagher, reports that the GLCCPP Grant resulted in remarkable outcomes, with nearly 100 students earning more than 200 college credits in the 2019-2020 school year alone. These are credits the students would not have been able to access without the programming the grant has provided.

“WE NOW HAVE MANY MORE GRADUATES THAT PLAN TO CONTINUE TO COLLEGE WHEN THEY OTHERWISE MAY NOT HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS AN ATTAINABLE OPTION.”

-Morgan Gallagher, Principal, Roosevelt Community Education Center



EXTENDING A HAND | PARTNERSHIPS

The GLCCPP Grant united Rockford Public Schools and Rock Valley College to build systems that overcome operational differences and maximize student learning potential.



“THE GRANT BROUGHT TWO ORGANIZATIONS WITH A SHARED VISION TO THE TABLE TO WORK TOGETHER ON SHAPING SOLUTIONS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE STUDENTS.”

-Reid Jutras, Director of Career and Technical Education, Rockford Public Schools

**GREAT LAKES COLLEGE & CAREER
PATHWAYS PROJECT**

THEORY OF ACTION

**WE ARE COMMITTED TO DISRUPTING
INEQUITIES BY THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:**

clearly defining our pathways, creating aligned curriculum in secondary and postsecondary course sequencing, and evaluating the quality of student learning in our pathways;

establishing and operationalizing the Profile of a Graduate and digital dashboard for progress monitoring; and

establishing and sustaining a well-defined work-based learning continuum and system.

Through this commitment, we will celebrate students' learning, close gaps in achievement, and provide a pathway for all students to succeed in college, career, and life.

For more information, visit alignmentrockford.com/greatlakesgrant.