



ALIGNMENT

ROCKFORD



THE BOOKENDS OF EDUCATION

Early learning to workforce development

2019–2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends,


When all Rockford students graduate from high school ready to enroll in post-secondary education or move directly into the job market, our entire region prospers. This translates to improved economic health and better quality of life for everyone.

At Alignment Rockford, we are committed to supporting Rockford Public Schools in designing and piloting programs that address the areas of greatest need for our children. Through strategic partnerships with local business and community leaders, we seek to remove barriers to learning and provide students with opportunities to develop the kinds of marketable skills that will set them on the path to success.

In 2019, we celebrated our 10-year anniversary! From early childhood learning initiatives to workforce development programs, our team has taken a deliberate approach during the past 10 years to invest in the bookends of education. And we are committed to continue our work to give the next generation a firm foundation upon which to build successful lives, and in turn, help to advance the economic and social well-being of our community.

With a spirit of a collaborative approach – and because of you – together we are making a positive impact in today's students.

Sincerely,



Anisha Grimmett
Executive Director,
Alignment Rockford



Bob Guirl
President,
Alignment Rockford
Board of Directors

SUPPORTING OUR YOUNGEST LEARNERS



Improving kindergarten readiness improves long-term outcomes for students, families, neighborhoods, and our entire region. **Ready to Learn**, our newest initiative, is focused on guiding and pushing transformative change to ensure these young learners are poised for academic success. A joint effort by Alignment Rockford, Transform Rockford, and RPS 205 – with the support of dozens of community organizations and private/parochial schools – the Ready to Learn team is dedicated to achieving the following goals:

- ASSESS AND IMPROVE KINDERGARTEN READINESS AT A NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL
- ENSURE ALL KIDS ARE READY TO LEARN WHEN THEY ENTER SCHOOL
- ALIGN RESOURCES TO IMPROVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES
- ENSURE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES
- EMPLOY DATA TO DRIVE COMMUNITY PLANNING

2019 Results

Erikson Institute The Ready to Learn team collaborated with Erikson Institute, the premier early childhood development organization committed to ensuring that all children have equitable opportunities to realize their potential, by utilizing its Early Development Instrument (EDI) to help guide conversations and push transformative change. The team used the EDI data as a baseline to identify strengths and needs across Rockford. The data came from an assessment of more than 2,000 public and private kindergarten students in Rockford.



BASED ON THE EDI DATA, THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF FOCUS WERE DETERMINED:

- Family-friendly neighborhoods
- Early childhood continuity
- Coaching & support for families and professionals
- Community connections
- Policy roundtable

EDI DATA COLLECTION, BY THE NUMBERS:



THE READY TO LEARN NETWORK INCLUDES MORE THAN 50 STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS AND 150 VOLUNTEERS



CONNECTING CURRICULUM TO CAREER

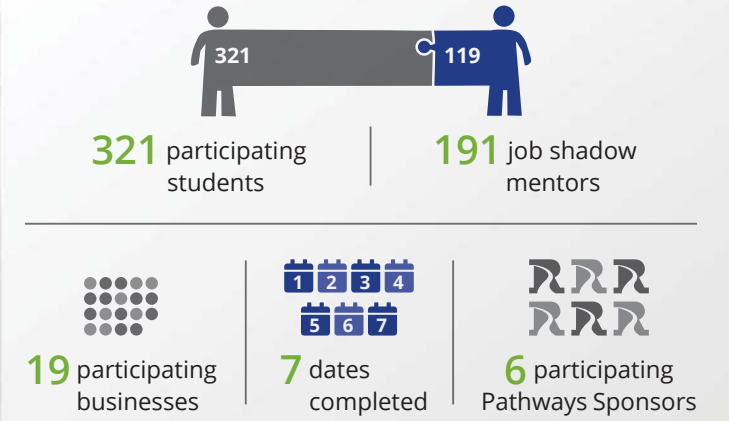
There's no better way to explore a potential career than to witness it firsthand. **Job shadows** provide an invaluable experience by helping students make the connection between school work and the world of work. Through job shadows, Alignment Rockford connects local employers to RPS 205 students to provide work-based learning opportunities, such as experiencing an average day on the job, interacting with key employees and working on mentor-supervised tasks. Whether physically on-the-job or virtually, job shadows help instill career aspirations and increase graduation rates.



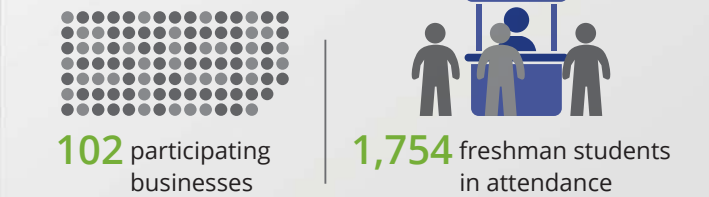
In their freshman year, RPS 205 high school students attend the **Academy Expo**. This interactive career exploration event gathers industry leaders in health, public safety, education, skilled trades, manufacturing, engineering, and more to showcase the many job and career options available to students in the Rockford region.

2019-2020 by the Numbers

JOB SHADOWS:



ACADEMY EXPO:



CHARTING A PATH TO SUCCESS

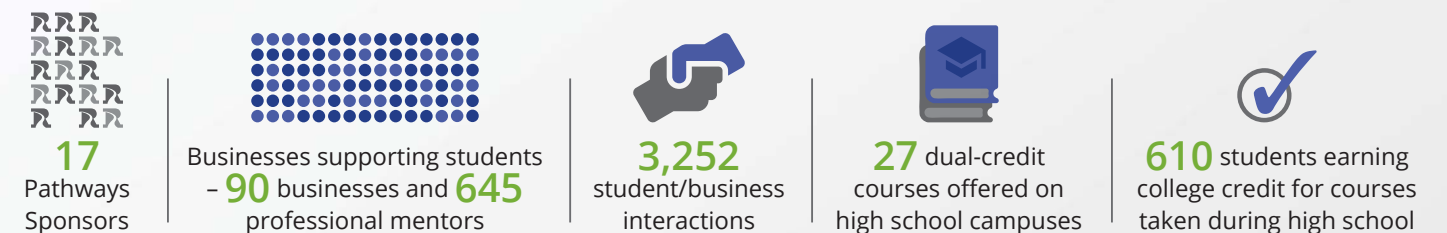
Over the past several years, we have established the **Academy Program** at all the RPS 205 high schools. Each Academy functions as a school within a school, allowing students to experience high school through the lens of a specific career path – business, production, health, or public service. Students enjoy smaller learning communities, interact with professionals in their field of interest and earn college-level credits and certifications while still in high school. Over the course of four years, they build the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed, engage directly with local employers, and form long-lasting relationships.

The Academy Program would not be possible without our amazing business partners, who provide RPS 205 students invaluable opportunities for learning outside the classroom. In 2019, we launched our **Pathways Sponsorship Program**, which allows businesses to partner with RPS 205 high schools and play a key role in developing the workforce of tomorrow. During the school year, these employers demonstrated their ability to quickly pivot to a virtual environment, which carried through to their commitment to our students.

Despite these challenging times, Pathways Sponsors continued to provide students with valuable opportunities to connect with employers virtually and engage in work-based learning (WBL), an essential component of a comprehensive education. Through virtual opportunities to engage in deep exploration, WBL prepares students for the world of work, regardless of what the future holds. Even in the face of a global pandemic, their commitment to RPS 205 students remained strong.



2019-2020 by the Numbers



MISSION

To align community resources in support of public school strategies to raise student achievement, improve the health and happiness of our children and advance the economic and social well-being of our community.

OUTCOMES

- Increase Kindergarten Readiness
- Increase High School Graduation Rates
- Increase College and Career Readiness
- Improve Community Prosperity

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR 2019 DONORS.

General Contributions

Mike Broski	Dr. Eric Fulcomer	Geoffrey Roemerman	Bergstrom Inc. Charitable Foundation
Becky Cook Kendall	Robert & Marion Guirl	Mr. & Mrs. William H. Snively	RPS 205 Board of Education
Pastor Kenneth Copeland	Thomas A. Kress		

Pathway Sponsors

Associated Bank (in-kind)	Northern Illinois Building Contractors Association	Rockford Bell Credit Union (in-kind)	Rockford University
City of Rockford	OSF Healthcare	Rockford Park District (in-kind)	Swedish American, A Division of UW Health
Collins Aerospace	PCI Pharma Services	Rock River Valley Tooling & Machining Association	Winnebago County
Goodwill of Northern Illinois (in-kind)	Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity (in-kind)		Woodward, Inc.
Midland States Bank			

Grants

Great Lakes College & Career Pathways Partnership Grant, funded by The Joyce Foundation
Community Foundation of Northern Illinois

In-Kind Supporter

Comcast



"SUPPORTING OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS"

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