

2016 Annual Report

Governance

Alignment Team Reports

Sponsors/Partners/Recognition

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Bridget French, Executive Director

Katy Haun, Community Engagement Coordinator

Zalihta Pegeese, Team Coordinator

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Executive Director's Report

What a year! As I walked around the Academy Expo in September, I observed so many meaningful exchanges between 9th grade students on the precipice of the future and dedicated community members who are paving the way for them to succeed.

That's what we're all about—success. We plan for it, we build on it, and we are grateful that so many people believe in it enough to support our efforts. Thank you!

In 2016, we deepened our roots in ways that support future success. We focused our efforts on sustainability and increasing community engagement. The strides we made in 2016 will make us stronger and more effective far into the future.

In the interest of sustainability, we diversified our revenue stream with new grant funds from The Joyce Foundation, the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois and Lumina Foundation. We are grateful for the confidence these organizations show in our work.



We added more in-house muscle to accelerate progress. Zalihta Pegeese has joined us full time as Alignment Rockford Team Coordinator, and we have a new intern, Madeline Lindquist, who works part time.

To strengthen our work with the Academies, we provided additional support to the College & Career Readiness Councils and Academy Support Teams. We also did a serious assessment of the community's early childhood resources to figure out what's working and where the opportunities lie for meaningful improvements.

Looking ahead, it's going to be another busy year. As we welcome new board members, volunteers and council members, we realize that communication is more important than ever. We will form a marketing and communications team that represents our community partners to help solidify our brand and create cohesive messaging, both internal and external.

Our newly formed Resource Development Team will explore ways to ensure our continued financial sustainability.

We will continue improving the Academies and intensify our focus on early childhood to ensure all children have access to the social service supports and resources needed to succeed in school.

I want to thank our partners at RPS 205 and in the community for your hard work and creativity as you design, implement and evaluate solutions. You demonstrate daily how deeply you care about our children and our community. Thank you.

BRIDGET FRENCH

Executive Director

AlignmentRockford

Supporting our public schools

"I believe Alignment Rockford has been a key component in reversing the downward trajectory our public schools have been on in recent decades. Alignment Rockford teams respond to the needs of the district, research best practices, design specific solutions and then, implement them. These solutions have been and will continue to be successful and sustainable. The benefits to students, area businesses and the community overall are incalculable."

JEFFREY J. HULTMAN,
President & CEO, Illinois Bank & Trust
2016 Chair of Operating Board for Alignment Rockford

"If we step back and look at our entire community, we would be hard pressed to find a better example of an organization that has brought together such a diverse group of community leaders and stakeholders to identify a community concern, to address that concern, and to make positive changes. In the case of Alignment Rockford, those changes are directly impacting the quality of the education lives of our young people."

BILL GORSKI, MD
President and CEO, SwedishAmerican, A Division of UW Health
Alignment Rockford Governing Board of Directors

"Alignment Rockford's commitment to help provide sustainable solutions for problems that affect not only the schools but the entire community has been a fine example of how much better we are when we stop pointing fingers at each other and start working together to solve problems."

STEPHEN E. SCHMELING
President, Schmeling Construction Co.



Letters

Alignment Rockford is a young, maturing organization but one that is designed for success. As we apply our processes and tools daily, we learn more about ourselves, the things we do well and the things we need to do better. We are gaining structure and discipline at every level.



We are building on best practices from across the country to serve as the community's collective impact backbone for Rockford Public Schools.

I'm grateful to the Rev. K. Edward Copeland, who led us as Chairman for our first seven years. He deftly built community engagement across our diverse city and won the support of the district, whose strategic plan defines our work. Ed leaves big, charismatic, passionate, experienced shoes to fill. While I inherit the goodwill he created, I will depend on the continued leadership of our board members, volunteers and excellent staff to remain effective.

I come from a technical background as an engineer at UTC Aerospace Systems. I retired in June 2016 and plan to dedicate my time to Alignment Rockford. My goals: To sustain community engagement focused on improving student outcomes. To invite new participants and seek new solutions. To make systematic changes that are effective and sustainable. To ensure Rockford Public Schools are the first choice for families in our region.

Thank you sincerely for your support in achieving our mission.

BOB GUIRL
Chairman, Alignment Rockford Governing Board



Alignment Rockford's support continues to grow, and we're making significant improvements in Rockford Public Schools. That's no coincidence. Alignment Rockford is helping RPS 205 realize its vision to be the first choice for all families.

Thanks to support from Alignment Rockford, we're a Ford Next Generation Model Community. We're seeking accreditation from the National Career Academy Coalition. With the help of a \$400,000 Joyce Foundation grant, we'll ensure our high schools are linked to postsecondary education and training.

We're focused on retaining Rockford's talent by investing in current and future RPS 205 teachers through a partnership with Rockford University. We're also launching a law enforcement pathway with the City of Rockford and Rockford Police and Fire departments to grow our own talent. We hope these opportunities expand to retain Rockford's best and brightest for our local workforce.

Your support also contributes to community buy-in. More than 72 percent of people asked in the Rockford Chamber of Commerce Public Education Survey believe we are headed in the right direction. People are also giving their time and talent to the district. We realized \$1.6 million in value from volunteer hours last year.

These accomplishments require community involvement. I invite you to continue your commitment to be part of the organization that drives them to succeed. That's what it's all about.

DR. EHREN JARRETT
Superintendent, Rockford Public Schools

About Alignment Rockford

The turnaround of public schools requires a broad and far-reaching collaboration of educational, political, corporate, religious, civic, social and grassroots organizations. Alignment Rockford is a public-private partnership designed to coordinate this effort.

We align community resources with the district's strategic plan to meet the needs of our children and our community. Hundreds of community leaders and volunteers work side by side with Rockford Public Schools' administrators and staff to create, implement and evaluate solutions that help students succeed in school and in life. We replicate solutions that work so that more children can benefit.

Together, we're doing school differently and achieving better results.

Founded in 2009, Alignment Rockford is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that follows the "collective impact" model to improve public school outcomes. High-quality schools provide students with the opportunities they deserve and develop a workforce that meets the community's future needs.

About Alignment USA

Alignment Rockford's success traces to practices developed to transform public schools in Nashville, TN, where the Alignment initiative was launched in 2002. Based on Nashville's success, the intentional, outcome-driven Alignment process has been replicated in 16 communities in eight states across the country.

Alignment USA is the national network of these communities. Alignment communities commit to the organization's proven principles, structure, process and technology to develop programs that improve educational outcomes and achieve stated goals.

Rockford follows the Alignment process, which ensures that the five Alignment Teams (A-Teams) make progress toward systemic change. Staff members guide the A-Teams through each phase of the work.

1. The A-Team creates a **tactical plan** to address a community issue, aligning participants around common goals.
2. The community responds to "Invitations to ParticipateTM." **Community engagement** allows existing resources to be aligned with needs.
3. The A-Team provides oversight of **pilot programs** and evaluates measurable outcomes.
4. The A-Team gathers data on the need to **scale up** the program for greater impact at multiple locations.
5. If the effort has achieved the desired impact, it is **institutionalized**, either in the community or the school district.

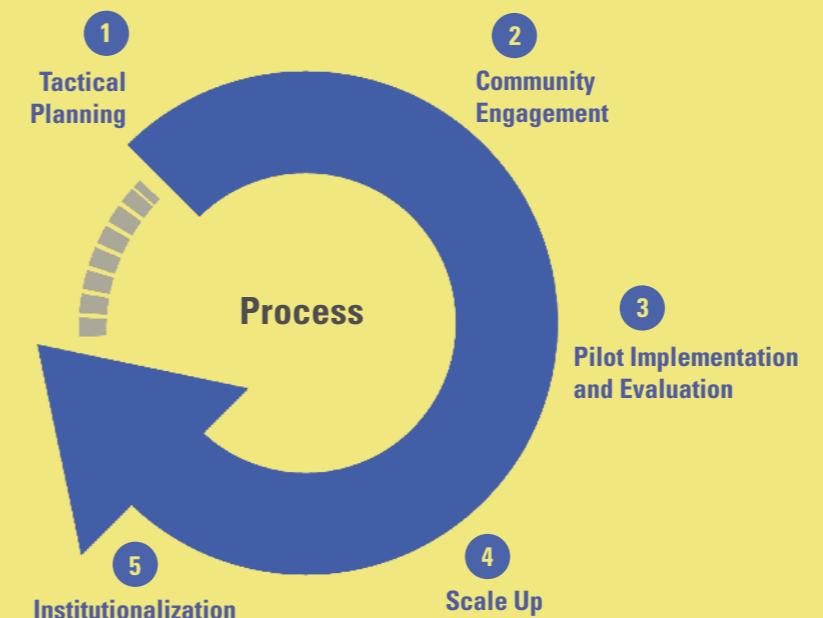


Mission

The mission of Alignment Rockford is 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.

Goals

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





2017 Operating Board

2017 Governing Board of Directors

The Governing Board of Directors represents the highest-level stakeholders—the businesses, non-profit organizations and governmental entities that make up the economic and social lifeblood of the community.

Ex Officio Directors

Nathan Bryant, President, Rockford Area Economic Development Council

Rev. K. Edward Copeland, IMMEDIATE PAST GB CHAIR, Pastor, New Zion Baptist Church

Jim Corbett, OPERATING BOARD CHAIR, Senior Vice President, Alpine Bank

Bridget French, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Alignment Rockford

Einar Forsman, President and CEO, Rockford Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Eric Fulcomer, President, Rockford University

Dr. William Corski, President and CEO, SwedishAmerican, A Division of UW Health

Frank Haney, Chairman, Winnebago County Board

Jeff Hultman, IMMEDIATE PAST OB CHAIR, President and CEO, Illinois Bank & Trust

Dr. Ehren Jarrett, Superintendent, Rockford Public Schools

Dr. Doug Jensen, President, Rock Valley College

Tom McNamara, Mayor, City of Rockford

David Schertz, President and CEO, OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center

Ken Scrivano, President, Rockford Public Schools 205 Board of Education

Dr. Alex Stagnaro-Green, Dean, University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford

Community Directors

John R. Anderson, SECRETARY, President, Anderson Enterprises

Mike Broski, President, Entré Computer Solutions

Tim Dimke, Executive Director, Rockford Park District

Bob Guirl, CHAIR, Consultant, Process & Strategy Professional Services

Amanda Hamaker, County Administrator, Winnebago County

Hon. Janet Holmgren, Judge, Winnebago County 17th Judicial Circuit Court

Tom Kress, President, Rockford Market, Associated Bank

Paul Logli, President and CEO, United Way of Rock River Valley

Monica Primm, Owner, Consultant, H.R. Solution Services

Luz Ramirez, Vice President, YWCA La Voz Latina

Dave Smith, General Manager, 23 WIFR

Andrea Ward, TREASURER, Regional President, BMO Harris Bank

Sarah B. Wolf, VICE CHAIR, Executive Director, Discovery Center Museum

The Operating Board is composed of action-oriented community leaders who meet monthly to review and approve A-Team solutions to be piloted in the schools. The teams are:

- **HEALTHY STARTS**
- **PATHWAYS**
- **CAREER AWARENESS**
- **ACADEMY EXPO**
- **COLLEGE READINESS**

Each team's chair and co-chair serve on the Operating Board along with a diverse group of community leaders who are committed to Alignment Rockford's mission. The Operating Board ensures that all programs align with the strategic plan of RPS 205 and the overall community vision and have measurable outcomes.

These monthly sessions enhance communication between teams to strengthen outcomes through coordination and mutual support.

Jim Corbett, OPERATING BOARD CHAIR, Vice President, Human Resources, Alpine Bank

Bridget French, OPERATING BOARD VICE CHAIR, Executive Director, Alignment Rockford

Melvin Allen, Executive Director of Student Recruitment, Rock Valley College

Chris Anderson, COLLEGE READINESS TEAM CO-CHAIR, Architectural Designer, Larson & Darby

Laurie Anderson, Deputy Director of Recreation, Rockford Park District

Derek Bergsten, Fire Chief, Rockford Fire Department

Darcy Bucholz, Executive Director, Northern Illinois Workforce Alliance

Nik Butenhoff, ACADEMY EXPO TEAM CHAIR, Director of Career & Technical Education, Rockford Public Schools

Cina Caronna, Dean of Community Outreach & CTE, Rock Valley College

Jake Castanza, Executive Director, Project First Rate

Dr. Rena Cotsones, Assistant Vice President, Regional Engagement, Northern Illinois University

Doug Curry, President, Stenstrom Excavation and Blacktop Group

Michael Dalke, Deputy Chief, Rockford Police Department

Heidi Dettman, CAREER AWARENESS TEAM CHAIR, Executive Director of Curriculum, Rockford Public Schools

Earl Dotson, Jr., Chief Communications Officer, Rockford Public Schools

Tabatha Endres-Cruz, Executive Director, Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful

Rebecca Epperson, HEALTHY STARTS TEAM CO-CHAIR, President/CEO, Chartwell Agency

Bob Guirl, PATHWAYS TEAM CO-CHAIR, Consultant, Process & Strategy Professional Services

Dr. Heidi Deininger, PATHWAYS TEAM CHAIR, Executive Director of College & Career Readiness, Rockford Public Schools

John Johnson, Juvenile Justice Coordinator, Winnebago County 17th Judicial Circuit Court

Dr. Kelly Monson, Executive Director of Strategic Alignment, Rockford Public Schools

Josh Morgan, News Director, 13 WREX

Donnette Nailor, CAREER AWARENESS TEAM CO-CHAIR, Regional Office of Education

Kim Nelson, HEALTHY STARTS TEAM CHAIR, Executive Director of Early Childhood Education, Rockford Public Schools

Kate Rich, Human Resources Manager, Crusader Community Health

Geoff Roemeran, Vice President, Community Markets, Associated Bank

Jimmy Rozinsky, Vice President, Spectrum Insurance Agency

Richard Schroeder, Chief Academic Officer, Rockford Public Schools

Linda Sandquist, Vice President, United Way of Rock River Valley

David Sidney, Project Director, Transform Rockford

Sergio Velarde, Director of Human Services, Rockford Housing Authority

Earl Wilsey, ACADEMY EXPO TEAM CO-CHAIR, Vice President, Schmeling Construction Co.

Dr. Travis Woulfe, COLLEGE READINESS TEAM CHAIR, Executive Director of Improvement & Innovation, Rockford Public Schools



Healthy Starts Team

The vision of the Healthy Starts Team is for all families with children ages 0-5 to have the resources they need to ensure their children excel in school.

TEAM MEMBERS

Kristian Boyle
YWCA Northwestern Illinois

Julie Chandler
Rockford Public Schools

Amy Jo Clemens
Northern Illinois University

Rebecca Epperson
Chartwell Agency (Co-Chair)

Rachel Feigel
YWCA Northwestern Illinois

Teresa Fillers
Rockford Public Schools

Omer Francis
Spirit of Truth Church

Cheri Fuller
Rockford Public Schools

Sherry Guarino
Retired Teacher

Bob Guirl
Alignment Rockford Chairman

Jessica Hendon
Alpine Bank

Kristine Homb
City of Rockford Head Start

Kathleen Kurtz
Easter Seals Children's Development Center

Joanne Lewis
City of Rockford Head Start

Jenifer Licon
Crusader Community Health

Lynn Liston
Child and Family Connections

Kim Nelson
Rockford Public Schools (Chair)

Bruce Parks
Youth Services Network

Ryan Reinecke
Harlem Public Schools

Jodi Robeson
Barnes & Noble

Anita Rumage
Circles of Learning

Sarah Wolf
Discovery Center Museum

SUCCESS: 2016

- The team formed subgroups to research ways to ensure: 1. All children are healthy (physical, social and emotional); 2. All children have experiences that engage cognitive development and social emotional growth.
- The team conducted research and an environmental scan of the region, revealing significant gaps in services for families with children 0-3 years.

NEXT: 2017

- The team established a priority for identifying families in need of early childhood services and communicating information to them about available resources.
- The team will continue its partnership with Transform Rockford's Education Spoke team, which also has identified Early Childhood as one of its priorities.
- Healthy Starts subgroups will create tactical plans to identify families in need of services and identify and address barriers to access.



Pathways Team

The vision of the Pathways Team is to increase student engagement, preparation and placement in postsecondary training and employment or education.

TEAM MEMBERS

Karen Brown
OSF St. Anthony Medical Center

Nik Butenhoff
Rockford Public Schools

Gina Caronna
Rock Valley College

Jake Castanza
Project First Rate

Dr. Heidi Deininger
Rockford Public Schools (Chair)

Dr. Lori Fanello
Regional Office of Education

Bob Guirl
Alignment Rockford Chairman (Co-Chair)

Judy Gustafson
Rockford Public Schools

June Hazzard
Woodward

Jason Johnson
Torch Barbershop

Torch Leadership
Torch Leadership

Pamela Lopez-Fettes
Northern Illinois

Workforce Alliance
Chet Parker

Rockford Park District
Jennifer Stitt

RAMP
Chris Weber

Morgan Stanley Smith Barney

SUCCESS: 2016

- The team piloted a junior job shadow experience at UTC Aerospace Systems for students selected from all high schools.

- The team developed a partnership pledge between businesses/organizations and Alignment Rockford to enable seamless community engagement for school activities.

- The team began research and planning for career awareness among K-8 students to introduce them to the Academy structure.

- The team explored community partnerships to provide career readiness experiences for students in their chosen pathway and to improve the talent pipeline to meet workforce needs in the community.

NEXT: 2017

- Based on success of the 2016 junior job shadow pilot, the team will create a plan to scale up the program to serve more students.

- The team will explore community partnerships to enhance the Academy pathways and build experiences K-12, as well as increase opportunities for postsecondary credit/industry certifications.





Career Awareness Team

The vision of the Career Awareness Team is to collaborate with the community to create a K-12 system that increases students' knowledge of careers available to them.

TEAM MEMBERS

Heidi Berardi

Rock Valley Federal Credit Union

David Byrnes

Midway Village Museum

Jake Castanza

Project First Rate

Heidi Dettman

Rockford Public Schools (Chair)

Keith Hoerth

SwedishAmerican, A Division of UW Health

Michele Johnson

RAMP

Jessica Koltz

Rasmussen College

RJ Kuligowski

Rockford Public Schools

Pamela Lopez-Fettes

Northern Illinois

Workforce Alliance

Gina Meeks

Rockford Area Economic Development Council

Donnette Nailor

Regional Office of Education (Co-Chair)

Kari Neri

Rockford Public Schools

Ann Petta

Northern Illinois University

Mike Rathbun

Discovery Center Museum

Melissa Ridgeway

Rockford Career College

Andrew Reynolds

Thinknut

Ann Stites

Rockford Career College



Academy Expo Team

The vision of the Academy Expo Team is to engage the community in designing a quality career exploration event for freshman students.

TEAM MEMBERS

Bif Buchan

YMCA of Rock River Valley

Nik Butenhoff

Rockford Public Schools (Chair)

Earl Wilsey

Schmeling Construction Company (Co-Chair)

Jeff Fahrenwald

Rockford University

Amy Heilman

Rock Valley College

Stacy Mullins

Rockford Chamber of Commerce

William Rose

Rockford Public Schools

Marsha Sisney

Rockford Public Schools

John Strandin

Northern Illinois Workforce Alliance

Emily Tropp

Rockford Public Schools

"I thought I had an idea of what I wanted to do, but the presenters showed many variations of the different things I was interested in. I liked realizing how many different aspects there are to one field."

"I loved that I could ask questions about the career path I was interested in, and they could answer based on their experiences."

"I liked being able to look into other careers that I never thought would interest me. It changed my mind about a lot of decisions."

—Quotes from RPS 205 students



College Readiness Team

The vision of the College Readiness Team is an engaged school and community culture where all students expect to pursue higher education or professional training beyond high school graduation.

TEAM MEMBERS

Jeremy Aldrich

Rockford Public Schools

Chris Anderson

Larson & Darby Group (Co-Chair)

André Anthony

YMCA of Rock River Valley

Phil Davidson

Mid-West Family Broadcasting

Cassie Hartje

Rockford University

Jeff Hohn

Rock Valley College

Becky Lambert

Rockford Park District

Chris Magee

Rockford Public Schools

Jon Mladic

Rasmussen College

Stephen Nelson

Larson & Darby Group

Zoe Norwood

Rockford Public Library

Dan Pickerill

UTC Aerospace Systems

Cheryl Rinker

Rock Valley College

David Schneider

Rock Valley College

Dr. Travis Woulfe

Rockford Public Schools (Chair)



"I have a better understanding with my tutor because he has easier ways of helping me do my math."

"I can do all my work because I feel safe with my tutor."

—Quotes from RPS 205 students



SUCCESS: 2016

- More than 40 students participated in the first year of the Kennedy Middle School Math Tutor Program. The team trained and supported more than 20 community volunteer tutors to work with students in the pilot program and tracked their progress. Almost 92 percent of students who received tutoring reported a better understanding of math because of the program. The relationships between tutor and students also proved to be of great value.
- The team began the solution-design process again by researching college visits for middle school students and exploring new ways to promote college readiness among middle schoolers.
- Along with the school district, the team has researched possible implementation of the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) model.

NEXT: 2017

- The team will continue to explore AVID implementation in the school district and how the team could support the process.
- The team will continue progress toward a program to offer college/university tours for a significant number of middle and high school students.



High School Academies

Alignment Rockford worked with Alignment Nashville, Ford Next Generation Learning, and Rockford Public Schools to develop the Academies framework. This new way of doing high school is grounded in deep community engagement with the public schools, aligning community resources with school needs.

THE WAY WE DO HIGH SCHOOL

Key elements of the College & Career Academies:

- All RPS 205 freshman attend the Academy Expo career exploration event (see pg. 11).
- Teachers visit and connect with supportive businesses.
- Community members serve with Academy staff on Academy Support Teams (ASTs) and work in schools to support project-based learning.
- Community members and school leaders serve on College & Career Readiness Councils (CCRCs) to guide ASTs.
- Students visit area businesses for various learning opportunities.
- Teachers receive support for professional development.



Auburn High School is unique in that it has two additional College & Career Academies: Gifted and CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts). Students test into or audition for these Academies in the 9th or 10th grade.



Sponsors

The work of Alignment Rockford is made possible by these visionary funders who believe that, by pulling together, we can make Rockford a first-choice public school system. Thanks to you, and to the hundreds of volunteers who work alongside staff and students in our schools, we're on our way. Thank you!



Corporate Gifts

\$25,000+
Rockford Public Schools
Winnebago County

\$10,000
BMO Harris Bank
OSF Healthcare System

\$5,000
Alpine Bank
Associated Bank
Bergstrom, Inc.
Illinois Bank & Trust
SwedishAmerican, A Division of UW Health

\$2,500
Holmstrom & Kennedy
Northern IL Building Contractors Association
Rockford Area Realtors
Savant Capital Management

\$1,000-\$1,500
Crusader Community Health
Rockford Housing Authority
Rockford Park District

\$500
Rockford Process Control

Up to \$499
New Zion Missionary Baptist Church
Rockford University
Union Savings Bank

Individual Gifts

\$500-\$750

Richard Engen
Mr. & Mrs. William H. Snively

Up to \$499

Kimberly Callan
John Guse
Robert Reitsch
Joan Sage
Michael Simmons

Grants/Foundations

Joyce Foundation
Lumina Foundation
Community Foundation of Northern IL
Anderson Family Foundation
Mastroianni Family Trust
Ford Next Generation Learning

Board Gifts

\$2,000

David Schertz

\$1,000

Dr. Bill & Susan Gorski
Bob & Marion Guirl

\$500

Dr. Alex Stagnaro-Green
Joan Sage

Up to \$499-

Rev. K. Edward Copeland
Tabatha Endres-Cruz
Einar Forshan
Dr. Eric Fulcomer
Amanda Hamaker
Judge Janet Holmgren
Paul & Jodean Logli
Michael Nicholas
Luz Ramirez
Kenneth Scrivano
David Smith
Andrea L. Ward

Grants

Joyce Foundation Grant Shines National Spotlight on Rockford

The Chicago-based Joyce Foundation has awarded RPS 205 and Alignment Rockford a \$400,000 grant to support expanding college and career pathways initiatives that prepare students for success in postsecondary education and training. Grant funds will be received over two years and jointly administered by the school district and Alignment Rockford.

Rockford was one of four Midwest communities selected for the new Great Lakes College and Career Pathways Partnership. The other partners are Madison, WI, Columbus, OH, and two districts in Chicago's northwest suburbs. The communities were selected because of their demonstrated support of college and career readiness from kindergarten through 12th grades and because of engaged local employers.

Education leaders from the selected communities will receive hands-on assistance from the Joyce Foundation and national educational policy organizations as they strengthen their college and career pathways.

In Rockford, the grant also will be used to expand and improve work-based learning opportunities for students.

The Joyce Foundation works with grantee partners to research, develop and advance policy solutions that have national impact. The award comes on the heels of Rockford being recognized in 2015 as a Ford Next Generation Learning Model community for its adoption of the academy model in the public high schools.

Community Foundation of Northern Illinois Supports Expo Event

Alignment Rockford is grateful to the Barber-Colman Management Fund of the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois for a \$54,000 grant to support the annual Academy Expo for high school freshmen. The grant will be awarded over three years.

All ninth grade students from RPS 205 attend the Academy Expo, a career exploration event that was founded in 2012. In September, 2,100 students attended the Expo and had the opportunity to experience demonstrations of 130 careers. The event has remarkable community support; 110 local companies and 700 volunteers participated.

The Expo educates students about the careers available to them and helps them select the high school academy that most closely fits their interests, skills and career goals. RPS 205 students enroll in the academies as sophomores.

The Joyce Foundation



Recognition

Alignment Rockford named finalist for 2016 Excelsior Award

Alignment Rockford was among five non-profit community organizations named as finalists for the coveted Rockford Register Star Excelsior Award. The newspaper annually presents The Excelsior to an agency or institution that has a positive effect on life in the Rock River Valley.

Jeff Hultman, president and CEO of Illinois Bank & Trust and immediate past Operating Board Chair for Alignment Rockford, submitted the nomination. He wrote, in part: "In seven years, due to the efforts of Alignment Rockford, hundreds of community volunteers working alongside school district leaders and staff have brought about systematic change in Rockford's public schools. Each year, more volunteers step up to join Alignment Rockford teams, sharing their enthusiasm and professional expertise with staff and students in the district and 'owning' their role as agents of change—for the good of the children and community alike."



Alignment Rockford staff Zalihta Pegeese, Bridget French, and Katy Haun celebrate the Excelsior nomination at the Rockford Register Star's annual event in December 2016.

Academy Awards Banquet honors 2016 MVPs

The fourth Annual Academy Awards were held May 19, 2016, at Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club to recognize faculty, staff and community members who significantly contributed to the success of the College & Career Academies of Rockford. Recipients of the 2016 awards and categories in which they were honored:

Community Organization of the Year

UTC Aerospace Systems

Community Member of the Year

Jacob Bradt of Rockford Buzz

Academy Staff Member of the Year

Ernie Fuhr (formerly) of Roosevelt Alternative High School

Project of the Year

Mock Crime Scene at Guilford High School, a project led by Steve Mrizek, teacher of criminal law/political science, and the Rockford Police Department



Alignment Rockford

Supporting our public schools

Alignment Rockford

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