

2023

# Career and Technical Education

## Annual Student Highlight Report



[isbe.net/CTE](https://isbe.net/CTE)



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## Mission, Vision, and Goals

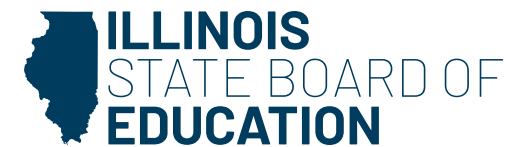
### *Illinois State Plan for CTE*

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) approved the Illinois State Plan for Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) on May 22, 2020. Fiscal year 2023 is the third year of the Illinois State Plan. FY 2024 will mark the final year for it.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) served as strategic planning partners to ensure that the Illinois State Plan for Perkins V aligned to the Illinois Workforce Development Strategic Plan. Furthermore, ISBE and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) plan to continue their joint efforts between the agencies and DCEO and IWIB. Representatives from both ISBE and ICCB sit on IWIB's board.



ILLINOIS  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
& ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



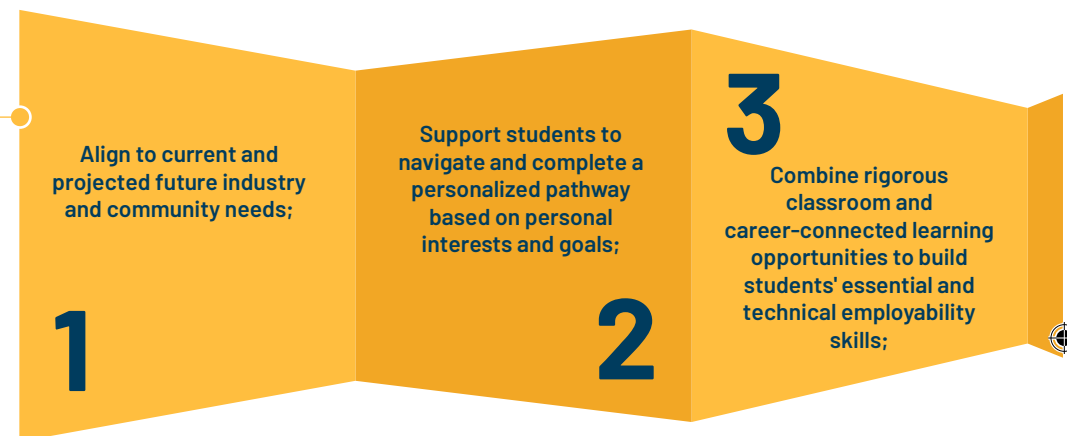
The vision, mission, and goals specific to Illinois' Perkins V State Plan are:

## VISION

Illinois will empower and support all students to achieve their life and career goals through an aligned, equitable, and high-quality career pathway system.

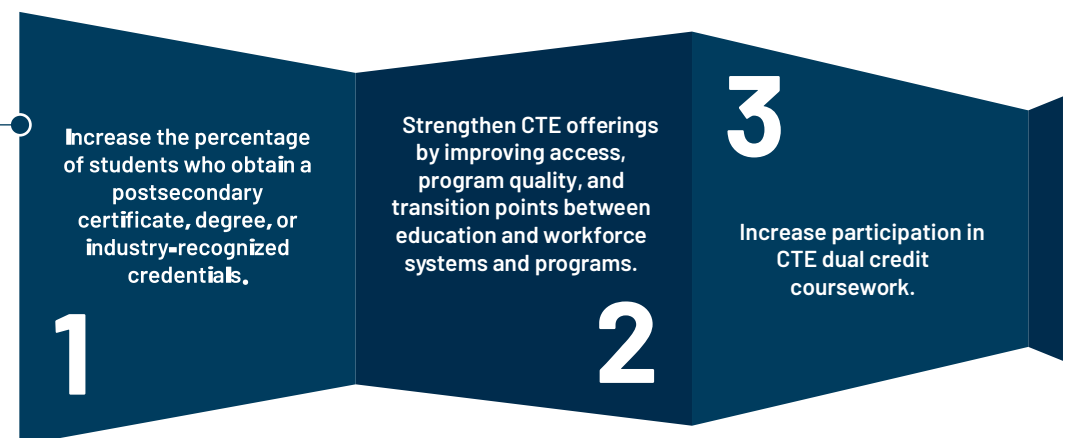
## MISSION

Illinois' Career and Technical Education system will promote success for students in their communities by fostering pathways that:



## GOALS

Illinois' Career and Technical Education system will promote success for students in their communities by fostering pathways that:

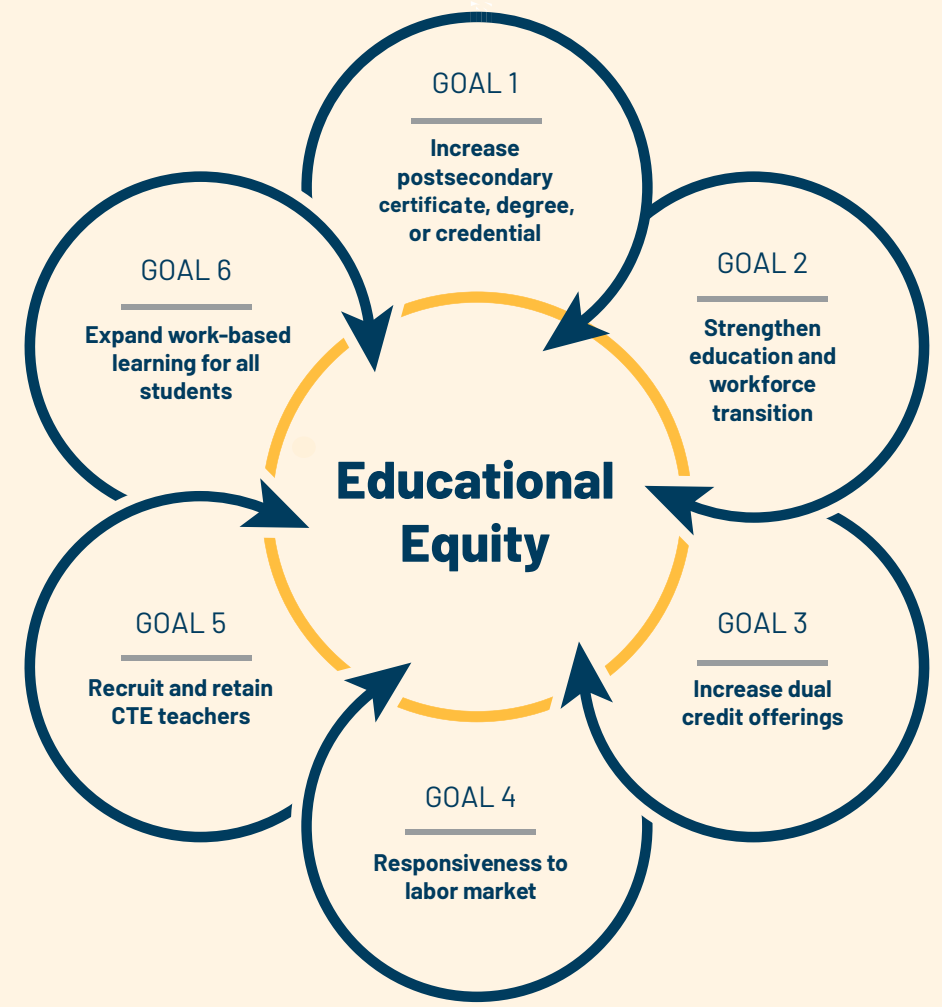




### Equity as a Foundational Tenet

There will be an effort to increase educational equity for members of special populations, as defined by Perkins V, and others who have been or are marginalized by education and workforce systems.

The figure below places educational equity as the foundation of Illinois CTE with the six state goals as actionable strategies to reach CTE program access for all secondary students.





## Career and Technical Education in Illinois

CTE programs in Illinois strengthen students' academic, technical, and employability skills; help them meet the Illinois Learning Standards; facilitate instruction that creates explicit connections between content and careers; and increase student engagement. Illinois districts leverage high-quality CTE programs to prepare students for college and career. The CTE delivery system in Illinois is a partnership that includes secondary schools, public community colleges, and business and industry, along with state and social service agencies, parents, and students. This collaboration was established to broaden career pathways for students in business and industry. ISBE oversees elementary (Grades K-8) and secondary (Grades 9-12) CTE exploration by providing state-level leadership and technical assistance.

CTE programs prepare students in Illinois for postsecondary education and careers in high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand occupations in seven endorsement areas that align with the 16 federal career clusters, plus the Illinois-specific cluster of Energy. Endorsement areas are Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR); Arts and Communication (A&C); Finance and Business Services (FBS); Health Sciences and Technology (HST); Human and Public Services (HPS); Information Technology (IT); and Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology and Trades (METT). Efforts to provide various CTE career pathways/programs of study, work-based learning opportunities, and Career and Technical Student Organizations strengthen students' technical and employability skills, help them meet the Illinois Learning Standards, facilitate instruction that creates explicit connections between content and careers, and increase

student engagement.

The secondary CTE delivery system in Illinois currently relies upon two levels of support: 1) the Illinois State Board of Education provides state-level leadership, technical assistance, and accountability to Education for Employment (EFE) CTE Systems, and 2) EFE CTE Systems provide planning and delivery resources to local districts and Area Career Centers (ACCs). There are 56 EFE systems in Illinois, including three systems organized by the state agencies that serve secondary students as part of their responsibilities – the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Office of Mental Health Services, and the IDHS Division of Rehabilitation Services.

ISBE provides a federal postsecondary allocation to the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) per the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V). Postsecondary CTE is coordinated at the state level by ICCB and at the local level by each community college district.

ICCB approves and monitors CTE programs and programs of study offered at Illinois community colleges and provides state-level leadership, coordination, and technical assistance to the community college system. The Illinois community college system, composed of 48 colleges in 39 locally controlled community college districts, is the third largest in the country. In addition, ICCB provides funding to the Illinois Department of Corrections to offer postsecondary CTE coursework in partnership with community colleges at Illinois correctional centers.





## 7 Endorsement Areas



**278,543** high school students enrolled in CTE courses in FY 2023  
**658** public high schools offered approved CTE programs\*  
**24** ACCs offered approved CTE programs\*  
**379** public high schools and **9** ACCs provided FBS programs  
**400** public high schools and **23** ACCs provided HST programs  
**517** public high schools and **23** ACCs provided HPS programs  
**466** public high schools and **14** ACCs provided IT programs  
**565** public high schools and **24** ACCs provided METT programs

ISBE chose two program quality performance indicators:

**1**

**The %** of CTE concentrators graduating from high school who attained postsecondary credits in relevant CTE programs and programs of study earned through a dual or concurrent enrollment program or another credit transfer agreement.

**2**

**The %** of CTE concentrators graduating from high school who participated in work-based learning. Table 1 lists the definition for each secondary core and quality performance indicators Illinois is accountable for in the Perkins V State Plan.

\*Approved CTE programs or programs of study met Illinois' definition of CTE Program of Study Size, Scope, and Quality.

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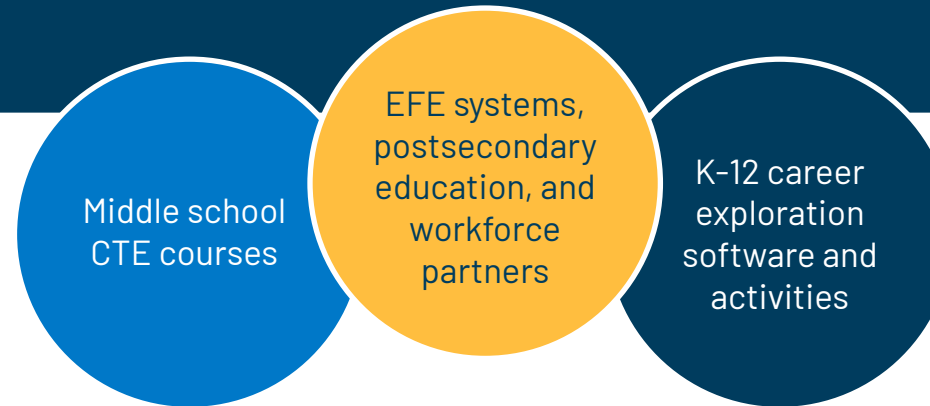


### FY 2021-24 Secondary Core Performance Indicators

<b>1S1</b> FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE	The percentage of CTE concentrators who graduate high school as measured by the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as defined in Section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] of 1965.
<b>1S2</b> EXTENDED (SIX-YEAR) GRADUATION RATE	The percentage of CTE concentrators who graduate high school as measured by the extended-year adjusted graduation rate as defined in Section 8101 (within six years of entering high school) of such Act.
<b>2S1</b> ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY IN READING LANGUAGE ARTS	CTE concentrator proficiency in the challenging state academic standards adopted by the state under Section 1111(b) (1) of the ESEA of 1965 as measured by the academic assessments in reading/language arts described in Section 1111(b)(2) of such Act.
<b>2S2</b> ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY IN MATHEMATICS	CTE concentrator proficiency in the challenging state academic standards adopted by the state under Section 1111(b) (1) of the ESEA of 1965 as measured by the academic assessments in mathematics described in Section 1111(b)(2) of such Act.
<b>2S3</b> ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY IN SCIENCE	CTE concentrator proficiency in the challenging state academic standards adopted by the state under Section 1111(b) (1) of the ESEA of 1965 as measured by the academic assessments in science described in Section 1111(b)(2) of such Act.
<b>3S1</b> POSTSECONDARY PLACEMENT	The percentage of CTE concentrators who, in the second quarter after exiting from secondary education, are in postsecondary education or advanced training, military service, or a service program that receives assistance under Title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 2504(a)) or are employed.
<b>4S1</b> NONTRADITIONAL PROGRAM ENROLLMENT	The percentage of CTE concentrators in CTE programs and programs of study that lead to fields in which their gender is underrepresented.
<b>5S2</b> PROGRAM QUALITY—ATTAINED POSTSECONDARY CREDITS	The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having attained postsecondary credits in the relevant career and technical education program or program of study earned through a dual or concurrent enrollment or another credit transfer agreement.
<b>5S3</b> PROGRAM QUALITY—WORK-BASED LEARNING	The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having participated in work-based learning.



All elementary districts in the **56** EFE systems were provided funding in 2023 to support career development and exploration opportunities to the **1,179,736** students in public elementary schools (Grades K-8). This funding supports a variety of opportunities, including:



The graduation rate for CTE students who have taken two or more upper-level CTE courses within a program of study is higher than the overall graduation rate in Illinois.

#### CTE CONCENTRATORS

**95.80%** four-year graduation rate

**95.60%** six-year graduation rate

#### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**87.60%** four-year graduation rate

**89.30%** six-year graduation rate

CTE funding comes from ED via Perkins V and from state appropriation.

**\$48,668,688** in federal Perkins V funding to support Illinois CTE

The state of Illinois Maintenance of Effort (MOE) target is **\$38,062,100** as the required match to federal Perkins V funding. The state appropriation level is **\$43,062,100**. The \$5 million difference is not in the MOE because the funds are distributed as a competitive grant.



## Federal and State Career and Technical Education Funding Sources

Career and Technical Education funding comes from ED via Perkins V and from state appropriations, which meet the maintenance of effort required to continue to receive the federal funds.

### Components of Federal and State Appropriations in FY 23

FEDERAL	\$ \$29,201,214 Appropriations	\$ \$1,460,060 Administration	\$ \$24,821,033 Distribution	\$ \$2,920,121 State Leadership/ Technical Assistance
STATE	\$ \$43,062,100 Appropriations	\$ \$0 Administration	\$ \$38,062,100 Distribution	\$ \$5,000,000 State Leadership/ Technical Assistance
ICCB FEDERAL	\$ \$19,467,474 Appropriations	\$ \$973,373 Administration	\$ \$16,547,354 Distribution	\$ \$1,946,747 State Leadership/ Technical Assistance
TOTAL	\$ \$91,730,788 Appropriations	\$ \$2,433,433 Administration	\$ \$79,430,487 Distribution	\$ \$9,866,868 State Leadership/ Technical Assistance

Illinois CTE programs prepare students for both postsecondary education/training and high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations. The following narrative outlines the performance indicators achieved for the state of Illinois and the positive impacts of CTE program completion on graduation rates. It also addresses student recruitment and retention into CTE programs through elementary and middle grade career exploration and development opportunities. All public districts with secondary CTE programs worked with their EFE systems in FY 2020 to develop a student recruitment and retention plan for FY 2021-24 that extends into middle school to address equity gaps (e.g., special populations and student subgroups).

Components of Federal and State Appropriations			
Performance Indicator	Target Performance (within 90%)	State of Illinois Performance (FY 2023)	Performance Indicator: Does not meet, Meets (within 90% of target), or Exceeds
<b>1S1</b> FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE	95.60%	95.80	Exceeds
<b>1S2</b> EXTENDED (SIX-YEAR) GRADUATION RATE	95.50%	95.60	Exceeds
<b>2S1</b> ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY IN READING LANGUAGE ARTS	29.42%	26.9	Meets
<b>2S2</b> ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY IN MATHEMATICS	28.49%	27.4	Meets
<b>2S3</b> ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY IN SCIENCE	40.40%	51.9	Exceeds
<b>3S1</b> POSTSECONDARY PLACEMENT	63.80%	57.5	Meets
<b>4S1</b> NONTRADITIONAL PROGRAM ENROLLMENT	31.00%	30.8	Meets
<b>5S2</b> PROGRAM QUALITY—ATTAINED POSTSECONDARY CREDITS	31.60%	38	Exceeds
<b>5S3</b> PROGRAM QUALITY—WORK-BASED LEARNING	5.50%	10.4	Exceeds

## Perkins V Secondary CTE Participation and Concentrators

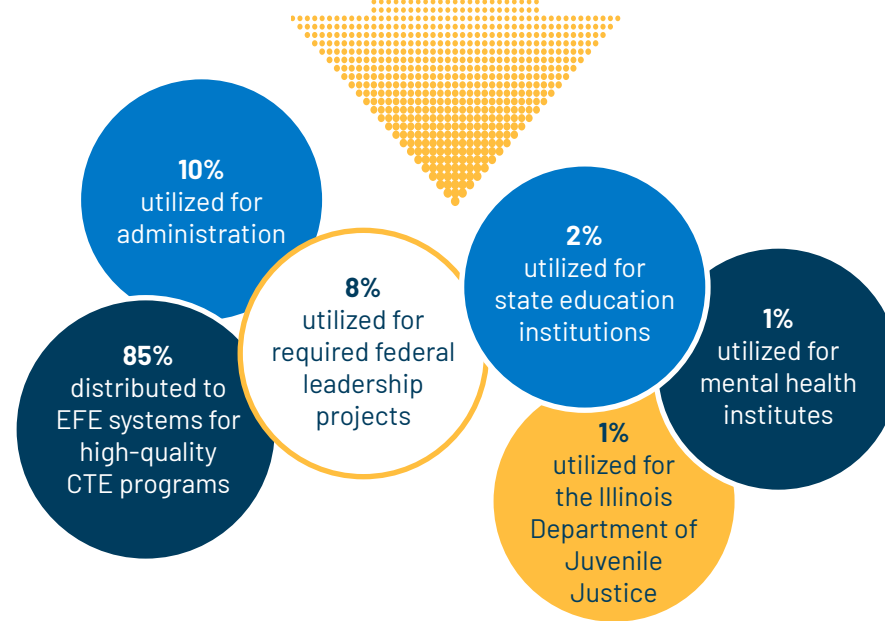
A secondary CTE concentrator is defined in Perkins V as a student served by an eligible recipient who completes at least two courses in a single CTE program or program of study. In contrast, a secondary CTE participant is defined as a student who completes not fewer than one course in a CTE program or program of study of an eligible recipient. The CTE courses must be assigned by an EFE system in the Illinois State Course System to qualify.

### Illinois Secondary CTE Participants

**595,319** 9-12 grade students → **278,543** CTE students (FY2023)  
**601,804** 9-12 grade students → **266,448** CTE students (FY2022)  
**604,208** 9-12 grade students → **228,797** CTE students (FY2021)  
**607,488** 9-12 grade students → **278,883** CTE students (FY2020)  
**611,732** 9-12 grade students → **295,270** CTE students (FY2019)  
**616,162** 9-12 grade students → **283,473** CTE students (FY2018)  
**617,485** 9-12 grade students → **277,461** CTE students (FY2017)

### Federal Perkins Career and Technical Education Grant

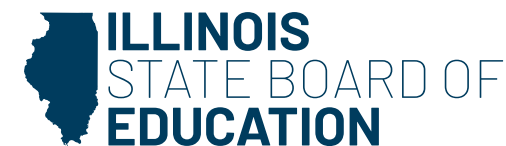
**\$29,201,214** administered from ISBE for Perkins postsecondary CTE programs  
**\$19,467,474** administered from ICCB for Perkins postsecondary CTE programs  
**\$48,668,688** administered from the state of Illinois for Perkins V to support both secondary and postsecondary CTE programs in FY 2023.  
**\$21,098,668** administered to ISBE for secondary federal Career and Technical Education







Illinois state CTE projects included administering the Gender Equity Advisory Committee, co-planning the Illinois Career Connections Conference for teachers and administrators, providing professional development for CTE educators, supporting 10 Career and Technical Student Organizations and their coordinating council, and funding the Regional Safe Schools Cooperative Education Program to provide cooperative education classroom and work experience to students at risk of dropping out of school. The Northern Illinois University Division of Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development also supported ISBE's efforts of CTE professional learning opportunities, including the annual one-day ISBE Career Connection: Building Community before the Illinois Association for Career and Technical Education Conference. The conference also was aimed at promoting effective CTE instructional practices and increasing equity by improving access for students to CTE classes and programs.





## Alignment of CTE to Other State Initiatives

There is an alignment between Illinois' CTE systems, the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act, and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Specific points of alignment between CTE programs of study, ESSA, and the PWR Act are outlined below.

## Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act

Per the PWR Act, ISBE has consulted with the Illinois Pathway Interagency Committee to establish seven endorsement areas. The 16 federal career clusters are organized in those areas. See Figure 3 for the crosswalk of endorsements. The PWR Act includes a voluntary process for school districts to award College and Career Pathway Endorsements (CCPE) to high school graduates.

Students earn endorsements by completing an individualized learning plan and a career-focused instructional sequence and participating in professional learning opportunities, which include career exploration activities, 60 hours of career development experiences, and two team-based challenges.

The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act includes a voluntary process for school districts to award College and Career Pathway Endorsements to high school graduates. Students earn endorsements by completing an individualized learning plan, a career-focused instructional sequence, and professional learning opportunities.

Illinois has developed the framework, shown in Figure 3, for CCPE. The following information outlines the school district requirements for submitting a CCPE plan to ISBE. The plan must include:

- **Employers:** Employers should be listed for any type of partnership, from something as small as job shadows and career explorations to high-level partnerships like internships and apprenticeships.
- **Postsecondary Institutions:** The career pathway plan must be partnered with or aligned to the postsecondary institutions in the endorsement area. This alignment allows students to continue their pathway in a seamless and deliberate manner toward a postsecondary credential. Credentials include college/university programs with bachelor's degrees, community college programs with associate degrees or certificates, and other formal apprenticeships or industry credential programs.
- **Labor Market Information**
- **Gateway Courses**
  - Gateway courses are the first non-remedial, college-level, or foundation math/English courses for a postsecondary education program. Gateway courses are for college credit and apply to the requirements of a degree.
- **Career Pathway Courses**
  - Career pathway courses are part of a career-focused instructional sequence that the school district requires or recommends for all students completing



### • **Related Electives**

- Courses not included in the career-focused instructional sequence of a pathway are suggested by the school district to complement the instruction within the sequence.

### • **Transitional Support**

- Transitional courses provide students with the knowledge and skills to be successful in college-level courses, specifically gateway courses, and reduce remediation rates.
- Passing these courses and associated exams guarantees students college-level math and English placement at any Illinois community college.

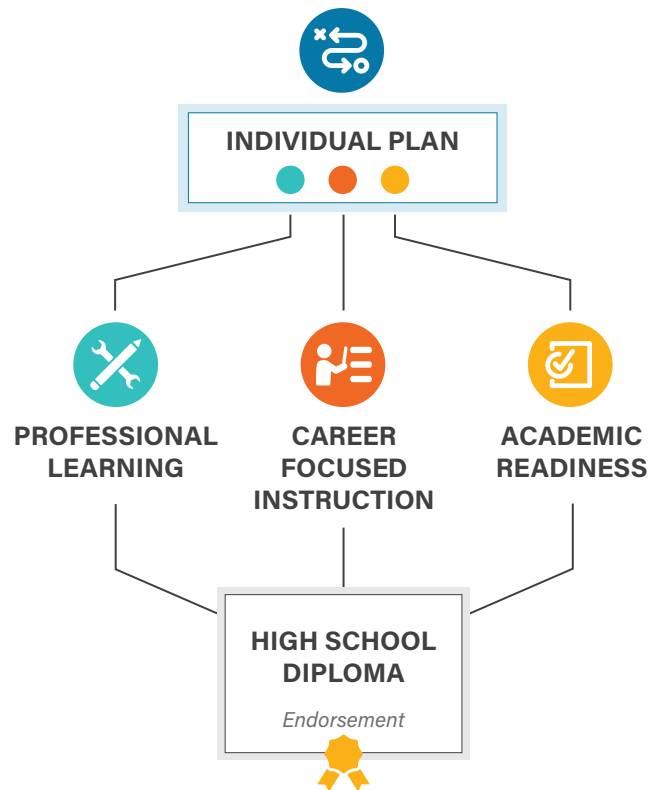
### • **Professional Learning Experience**

- At least two career exploration activities
- At least two team-based challenges
- At least 60 cumulative hours of career development experience





# College and Career Pathway Endorsement Framework



## INDIVIDUAL PLAN

Each student completing an endorsement must have an individualized plan, which includes college planning linked to early understanding of career goals, financial aid, resume, and personal statement.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Awareness, exploration, and preparation activities that provide opportunities for students to interact with adults in their workplace

9th1		0th1		1th1		2th
At least 2 career exploration activities or 1 intensive experience				60 cumulative hours of paid or credit supervised career development experience with a professional skills assessment		
At least 2 team-based challenges with adult mentoring						

↑  
Through these experiences, a student gains essential employability and technical competencies in their identified sector.  
↓

## CAREER-FOCUSED INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCE

Two years of secondary coursework, or equivalent competencies, that articulate to a postsecondary credential with labor market value. Must include at least 6 hours of early college credit.

9th1	0th1	1th1	2th
Orientation / Introduction			
		Skill Development	
		Capstone / Advanced Courses	

## ACADEMIC READINESS

Ready for non-remedial coursework in reading and math by high school graduation through criteria defined by district and local community college



Fiscal Year **2020**



### **First year**

of implementation  
for the College and  
Career Pathway  
Endorsements (CCPE)

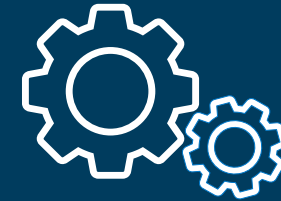
### **3 schools**

applied for CCPE  
North Chicago 187,  
Ridgewood High School  
District 234, and Township  
District 214



### **4 students**

received the Human  
and Public Services  
Education Pathway  
endorsement



### **5 students**

received the  
Manufacturing,  
Engineering, Technology,  
and Trades (METT)  
endorsement



Fiscal Year **2021**

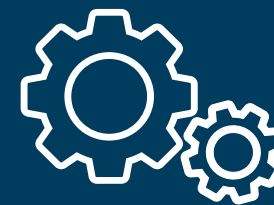
### **5 schools**

applied for CCPE  
Community United High  
School District 90, South  
High School and North High  
School, Morrison High School,  
Ridegwood Community High  
School, and Vienna High  
School



### **25 students**

received the Human  
and Public Services  
Education Pathway  
endorsement



### **5 students**

received the  
Manufacturing,  
Engineering, Technology,  
and Trades (METT)  
endorsement



### **Second year**

of implementation  
for the College and  
Career Pathway  
Endorsements (CCPE)



**17 students**

received the Health  
Sciences Technology  
endorsement





Fiscal Year **2022**

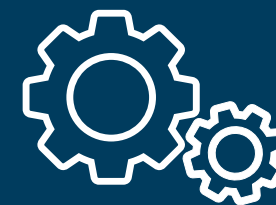
### **16 districts**

awarded endorsements  
to the Class of 2022  
graduates



### **224 students**

received the Human  
and Public Services  
Education Pathway  
endorsement



### **30 students**

received the  
Manufacturing,  
Engineering, Technology,  
and Trades (METT)  
endorsement

### **Third year**

of implementation  
for the College and  
Career Pathway  
Endorsements (CCPE)







**198 students**

received the Health  
Sciences Technology  
endorsement



**2 students**

received the  
Agriculture, Food, and  
Natural Resources  
endorsement

**14 students**

received the  
Information Technology  
endorsement



**128 students**

received the Finance  
and Business Services  
endorsement





Fiscal Year **2023**

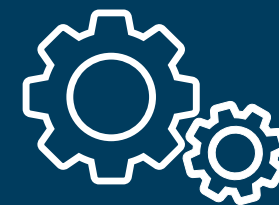
**1072 endorsements**

to the Class of 2023  
graduates



**399 students**

received the Human  
and Public Services  
Education Pathway  
endorsement



**84 students**

received the  
Manufacturing,  
Engineering, Technology,  
and Trades (METT)  
endorsement

**Fourth year**

of implementation  
for the College and  
Career Pathway  
Endorsements (CCPE)





**202 students**

received the Health  
Sciences Technology  
endorsement



**6 students**

received the  
Agriculture, Food, and  
Natural Resources  
endorsement

**61 students**

received the  
Information Technology  
endorsement



**206 students**

received the Finance  
and Business Services  
endorsement





### **11 students**

received the arts  
and communications  
endorsement

### **2 students**

received the  
multidisciplinary  
endorsement





### Earned College and Career Pathway Endorsements to Date

<b>FY 2023</b>	1072
<b>FY 2022</b>	596
<b>FY 2021</b>	47
<b>FY 2020</b>	9

### Every Student Succeeds Act

Illinois' ESSA accountability system includes a College and Career Readiness Indicator (CCRI) as one of multiple measures of how well a high school serves its students. Illinois has the goal of **90% or more of students graduating from high school ready for college and career by 2032**. There are a variety of data points within the CCRI that tie in with current CTE efforts:

- Completion of a CTE program of study qualifies a student as a CTE concentrator.
- Industry credential attainment shows a student's readiness to receive the license or be eligible for one pending the receipt of a high school diploma.
- A career development experience is a supervised work experience relating to an individual's career area of interest that:
  - Occurs in a workplace or under authentic working conditions;
  - Is co-developed by an education provider and at least one employer in the relevant field;
  - Provides compensation OR educational credit to the participant (or both);
  - Reinforces foundational professional skills, including, at a minimum, those outlined in the Essential Employability Skills Framework;
  - Includes a Professional Skills Assessment and is utilized as a participant feedback tool; and
  - Takes place for a minimum of 60 total cumulative hours.
- A team-based challenge is a problem-based learning group project related to an individual's career area of interest. The challenge involves a problem experienced by employers within that area, including adult mentoring with expertise in that area, and requires the individual to present the project's outcomes. These challenges can be achieved through a Career and Technical Student Organization or developed in partnership with employers.



## Police Training Academy Job Training Program

(105 ILCS 5/22-83) specifies:

(a) In a county of 175,000 or more inhabitants, any school district with a high school may establish one or more partnerships with a local police department, county sheriff, or police training academy to establish a job training program for high school students. The school district shall establish its partnership or partnerships on behalf of all the high schools in the district; no high school shall establish a partnership for this purpose separate from the school district's partnership under this Section. The jobs training program shall be open to all students, regardless of prior academic history. However, to encourage and maintain successful program participation and partnerships, the school districts and their partner agencies may impose specific program requirements. (b) The State Board of Education shall track participation and the success of students participating in the jobs training program established under this Section and annually publish a report on its website examining the program and its success.

There are 12 counties in Illinois that have 175,000 or more inhabitants: **Cook, DuPage, Lake, Will, Kane, McHenry, Winnebago, Madison, St. Clair, Champaign, Sangamon, and Peoria**. They each have a school district with a high school that may establish one or more partnerships with a local police department, county sheriff, or police training academy to initiate a job training program for high school students. There are two programs – one in Madison County and one in Cook County – that have a total of **176** students participating.

There is a partnership in Madison County between Collinsville and the Collinsville School District that offers criminal justice courses.

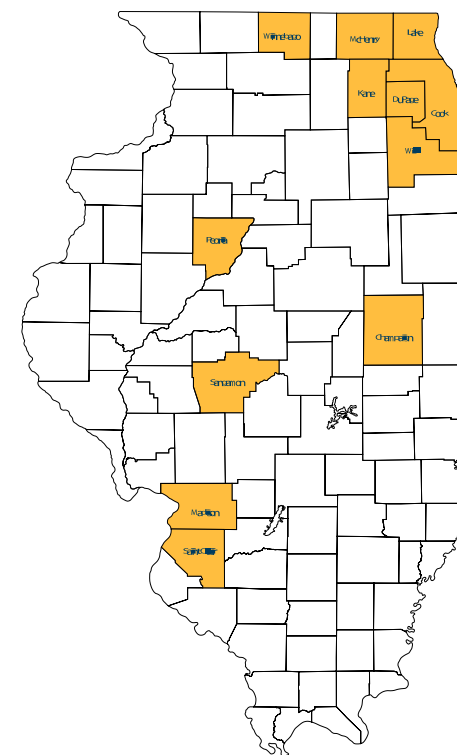
**53** students enrolled in Introduction to Criminal Justice

**32** students enrolled in Criminal Justice 1 courses

**7** students enrolled in Criminal Justice 2 courses

The mission of the Chicago Police and Firefighter Training Academy (CPFTA) is to promote the next generation of public servants by providing them with the education and experience they need to serve and protect the lives and property of the citizens and visitors to Chicago and Illinois.

CPFTA is a two-year program that recruits and trains up to 250 public and nonpublic junior and senior high school students each year. All Chicago high school sophomores who are city residents are encouraged to apply to the CPFTA program. It focuses on providing cadets with the skills and knowledge necessary to work in public safety fields. The curriculum emphasizes academics, physical fitness (the Power Test), leadership training, career exploration, and the basic



knowledge and skills necessary to become a police officer or firefighter/emergency medical technician (EMT). Instructors are professionals in the field and selected by the Chicago Police Department and the Chicago Fire Department to work with the program.

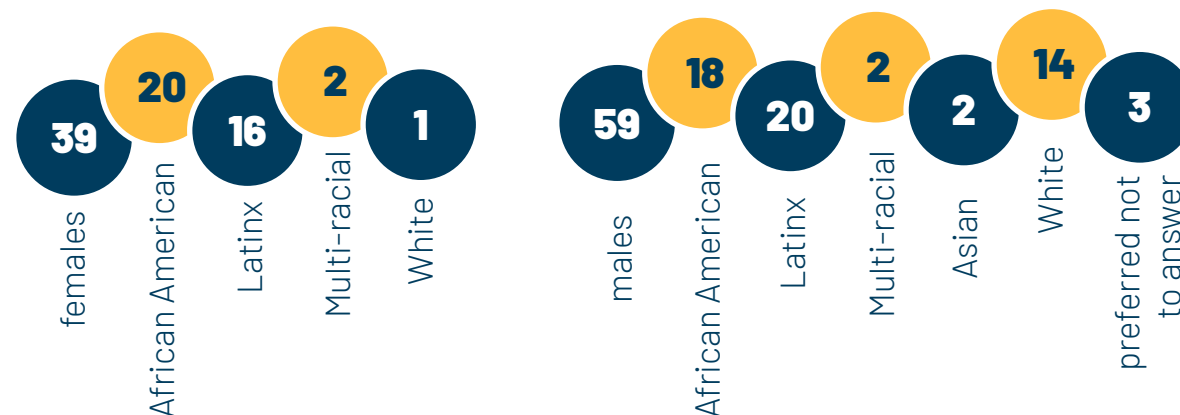
The program provides students with a wide variety of opportunities. Throughout the two-year program, CPFTA offers cadets the ability to earn public safety certifications, take part in a paid summer internship, and earn college credit through dual credit coursework in public safety-related fields of study. Certification can be obtained in cyber safety, CPR/first aid, community emergency response team training, unarmed security guard credentials (Permanent Employee Registration Card), and EMT. Cadets interested in dual enrollment opportunities with City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) can take part in added coursework in criminal justice, fire science, or EMT. CPFTA graduates can transition easily into any of the seven CCC to continue their studies. CCC offers students college degrees and certificates in criminal justice, fire science, EMT, and paramedic programs. Cadets from Chicago Public Schools who graduate with a GPA of 3.0 or higher are eligible to apply for a Star Scholarship for up to three years.

**253** applications to the CPFTA program

**152** extended offers

**141** accepted offers

Demographics of the 2023 graduating class:

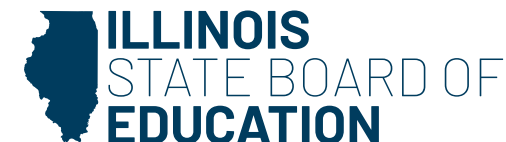




ISBE partnered with the Law and Public Safety Education Network (LAPSEN) in FY 2022. This partnership continued in FY 2023, with several school districts using professional development opportunities and curriculum resources for law and public safety programs. LAPSEN is the leading national organization supporting these efforts with a focus on the secondary school level. It supplies and shares career education programs, curriculum, certifications, and models that help connect secondary students to work and colleges that are cost-effective and can be used by secondary school instructors, their partners, and participating states. LAPSEN also works with others who are building a career pathway to law and public safety careers. Explorers and Public Safety Cadets, experiential learning programs, law and public safety agencies, professional groups, and many others partner with LAPSEN to prepare tomorrow's criminal justice and law enforcement professionals. Jim Kerry, the criminal justice instructor at Indian Valley Vocational Center, worked with LAPSEN to help implement a pipeline program in DuPage and Kane County. He will be presenting at the National LAPSE Conference in FY 2024.



**INDIAN VALLEY VOCATIONAL CENTER**







# Education for Employment Regional Highlights





## Chicago Public Schools

Model pathways are a strategically aligned approach to supply priority dual credit coursework and high-quality, work-based learning opportunities in key industry areas to better prepare students for postsecondary success. Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has worked with City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) to identify dual credit course sequences aligned to stackable CCC credentials in health sciences, IT, and advanced manufacturing, and

is developing a model pathway in construction. The district worked diligently during the reporting period to ensure that early college credit opportunities were offered to students in CTE.

**1,461** enrollments in CTE early college coursework across **13** pathways including:

- Accounting
- Agricultural Mechanics
- Agricultural Sciences
- Architecture
- Auto Body
- Auto Tech
- Broadcast
- Diesel
- Education
- Health Sciences
- IT
- Law and Public Safety
- Manufacturing

Chicago  
Public  
Schools



This demonstrated significant growth both in breadth of offerings and depth of coursework offered.

**13** students graduating with an architectural digital media basic certificate (nine credit hours)

**14** students graduating with 16 credits in auto tech, and the first full year of implementation of model pathways across CPS' three focus industry areas (health sciences, IT, and manufacturing)

District staff and administration will be working closely with implementing schools on a pilot program over this year to ensure that they get both programmatic and pedagogical support. Professional development will be designed in concert with CCC, and school-based staff will be given opportunities to share best practices with one another. Additionally, district staff will provide consistent check-ins with schools to ensure smooth implementation and inform schools about the various work-based learning (WBL) opportunities available to students. The district is committed to getting and using feedback from all stakeholders, particularly teachers and school administrators, to ensure that all students in a model pathway program have access to high-quality coursework and WBL experiences that propel them along their postsecondary plan. Chicago Public Schools looks to be a leader in the educational space by seeking to provide every one of its students with at least one work-based learning opportunity by the time they graduate. This monumental undertaking is led by the CTE team at CPS building on the institutional and practical knowledge of district and school-based staff. One critical part of this initiative – and essential to creating high-quality CTE programming – is the inclusion of internships as a way for students to connect the technical and employability skills learned in the classroom and lab spaces with real-world experience.



Intentional and strategic partnership building enabled CPS to secure nearly **600** job commitments for summer 2023 internships. Students were matched with employers, and **547** students participated in a 120-hour paid internship during the summer. The impact of these internships is still being realized as students digest their experiences, connect them with career goals, and ponder their future. "At first, I thought it was gonna [sic] be hard but my host helped me through it, and I realized the work was fun and easy to do. The most impactful part of the internship was exposing me to careers I might not have thought of in IT," said one student participant.

Learning goes beyond the student. Chapin Hall, an internship provider, shared, "Having the perspective of a young adult and the energy, questions, and level of interest was inspiring. Many enjoyed meeting [the intern] and interacting with them."

CPS plans to continue and expand internship opportunities in the future as the district helps build career pipelines directly to high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand jobs.



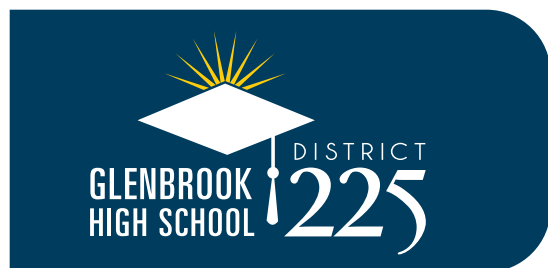
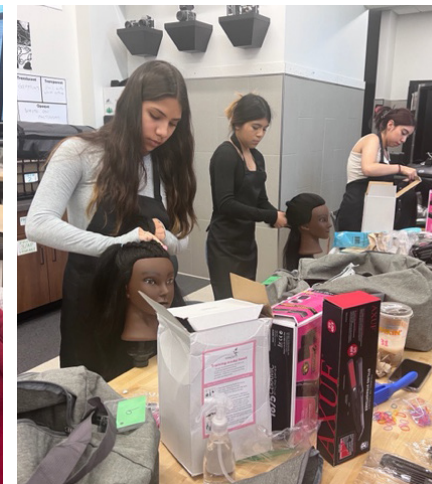
## North Suburban Educational Region for Vocational Education

An iKit Summer Internship Program was held in Evanston District 202. The iKIT interns worked for 10 weeks. They engaged in hands-on learning in construction/trades, health care, business, and graphic design pathways. This program supports graduating senior students with postsecondary career exploration opportunities and tools.

Employer partners hired multiple students for part-time and full-time positions upon their completion of the summer internship.

In Glenbrook D225, instructor Matt Sullivan directed Glenbrook North and South technology education teachers on how to get their mills to work more efficiently, spent time strengthening the curriculum to ensure better student support and progress checks, added training on Fusion CNC milling machines, and built an extensive library of tools to expand project offerings moving forward. Technology education teachers also spent time finding potential collaboration opportunities between both schools to support graduating senior students with postsecondary career exploration opportunities and tools.

Employer partners hired multiple students for part-time and full-time positions upon their completion of summer internships.





## Des Plaines Valley

Three programs at Riverside Brookfield High School came together to develop and construct a food truck. The food truck was designed and built by the drafting and construction students. The marketing/business students developed themes; they formed teams to pitch the ideas to the culinary students. The culinary students determined which group's proposal was selected. The marketing/business students began using social media to

advertise the project and the culinary students developed the menus. The effort resulted in a day that featured collaboration of selling tickets and serving dishes to students and staff at the high school. EFE 30 focused on developing and implementing College and Career Pathway Endorsements for the region. EFE 30 hosted a regional School College Alliance event that focused on dual credit to start the College and Career Pathway Endorsement (CCPE) mindset across the region. EFE 30 believes dual credit is the gateway to college and career pathways. Triton College has been a vital partner as EFE 30 enabled schools within the region to increase dual credit opportunities for their students. High schools were informed of all the benefits and best practices of dual credit. Dr. Jason Klein and Dr. Rodrigo Lopez were keynote speakers at the event, informing schools of CCPE requirements and the role of dual credit within the CCPEs.

The partnership built with Triton College continued to grow throughout the year. Collaborating with Triton College, EFE 30, helped promote two Regional Team-Based Challenges, including the education pathway and the automotive pathway. Triton has agreed to continue hosting at least two Team-Based Challenges annually. The collaboration has also helped grow dual credit opportunities for students at the high schools and sparked development of the Cohort Program will help increase College and Career Pathway Endorsements. The partnership of the high schools, Triton College, and EFE 30 enabled granting about 150 CCPEs in the school year 2022-23.



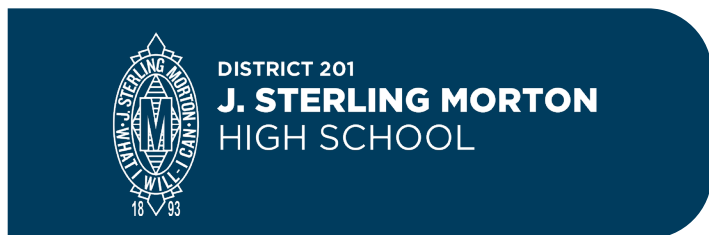
**Triton  
College**





## Morton Regional Delivery System

Students at District 201 utilize Naviance, a college and career readiness platform. Students use this software to help them select programs of interest. Many students expanded their academic skills by enrolling in culinary courses after taking the Naviance assessment. Culinary students helped to make over 4,000 tamales this year while celebrating the annual Posada.





## Moraine Area Career System

Kati Lascola, graduate of Alan B. Shepard High School '23, liked problem-solving and working with her hands. Her dad encouraged her to consider elevator maintenance because few women pursue that as a career and it is a high-paying job.

"I was always trying to think about what interested me. I've always liked building things," Lascola said. "The trades caught my eye because it's using your

hands and very high paying."

William Cosgrove, the program's coordinator, said "Its purpose is to help students gain experience through an internship. Students must take at least one core CTE class, which can include automotive, accounting and construction, to be in the program. Students then get 60 hours of internship experience in their field of study during senior year."

Lascola's CTE classes included electronics/robotics and production/construction. She worked with the school's Maintenance Department before she graduated in May.

"She wanted to go into elevators immediately. In the 20-plus years I've been teaching this, I've never had a kid — regardless of gender — say that they wanted to go into the elevator trades," Cosgrove said. "She follows the road less traveled, in the traditional sense."

Lascola said working with the Maintenance Department allowed her to learn about elevators and power generators, and help demolish and remodel a classroom, which included electrical work. Lascola said she enjoyed learning about power tools, air filters, and plumbing. The information and skills can be applied to any trade.

"The internship I received from Shepard was literally indispensable. I worked with power tools for the first time, asked tons of questions, and learned the inner workings of the machines that make our infrastructure function," Lascola wrote in a letter about the program.

Rodger Ford, director of building and grounds for High School District 218, said Lascola seemed to enjoy it when he gave her a tour of the school's elevator hydraulic pumps and safety controls. "She's fulfilling her dream," Ford said.

Lascola said her goal is to become a member of the elevator union within the next five to ten years because it's the highest-paying trade. After that, she said she'd like to build something that can fly.

If a young person's goal is to go to college, Lascola said one option could be learning a trade, working a few years to save up money, and then going to college. Lascola said she'd encourage young women consider their career paths to consider a trade because there is a high demand but low supply in skilled workers and the jobs pay well. "It's also empowering. If something breaks in the house, you're like, 'yeah, I can fix that,'" Lascola said.



**ALAN B. SHEPARD**  
HIGH SCHOOL



## Career Prep Network at Prairie State

Homewood-Flossmoor High School students met with Joliet Junior College's (JJC) culinary instructors and toured the JJC culinary facility. Two major highlights from the day were taking part in a blind taste experiment with Dr. Eric Bell and a hands-on lab activity with Chef Katey Sopko. This opportunity gave students the opportunity to see Joliet Junior College's campus and explore the various postsecondary pathways available to those interested in pursuing culinary studies.

Homewood-Flossmoor's Fashion Clothing Construction program is designed to take students on a comprehensive sewing journey from the fundamental techniques to advanced tailoring and construction skills. Throughout the course, students will not only develop their sewing abilities but also gain insight into potential career paths in the fashion and textile industry. The students learn about sustainability throughout the clothing creation process. They explore different textiles, create their own garments, design clothing lines, and master professional techniques. The fashion industry is constantly evolving, so students analyze the history of clothing and track current trends. Numerous students have actively taken part in the Fashion Clothing Construction program for four years, leading them to set up their own thriving clothing businesses. The end of year brought a state win to Homewood-Flossmoor by the SkillsUSA Automated Manufacturing Technology team after a competition in Peoria.







## Career Development System

Ten students from Thornton Fractional High School District 215 took part in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) summer Solar Training Program. They each moved on to the IBEW apprenticeship program. A carnival game design exercise in the engineering and design class was a collaborative effort by the students. Students reviewed and applied an engineering design process to collaboratively design a carnival game. As part

of the design process, students practice the art of brainstorming and begin to develop skills in graphically representing ideas through concept sketching. Students also have an opportunity to develop and test a solution and improve the design through iteration. In addition, students learn statistical techniques to evaluate design solutions and apply statistics to inform design decisions related to their game design.

In April, Bremen High School District 228 hosted its first Skills Showcase highlighting over 70 students from Bremen, Oak Forest, Hillcrest, and Tinley Park High Schools who are in Manufacturing, Engineering, Technology, and Trades (METT) career pathways.

The goal of the Skills Showcase was to create an opportunity for students to show their skills and potential for entry-level jobs in the manufacturing sector. Students demonstrated various skills, including flat, horizontal, and vertical welds; metal work; layout; blueprint reading; CAD design; 3-D printing; Vex robots; and projects that involved miter saw, table saw, drilling, assembly, and teamwork, for their resumes.



Company partners observed potential employee candidates during the live demonstration time. Students and industry partners had time during the meet-and-greet to discover more about each other and set up additional interviews. Several students received company offers because of the Skills Showcase. LB Steel, Chicago Magnesium Casting Co., Ability Engineering Technology Inc., Walco Tool & Engineering, Re-Mark Training, and South Suburban College were among the companies that participated.

Bremen High School District 228 prepares students for entry-level skilled positions in manufacturing through multiple courses in the METT pathways, including Welding, Material Processing, Project Lead the Way (engineering design), Applied Engineering, Building Trades, and Introduction to Manufacturing.





## Northwest Educational Council for Student Success

Manufacturing apprentice Emily Sohn from Hersey High School and staff and community partners presented at the Arlington Heights Economic Alliance meeting. They shared information on the Career Pathways and the Apprenticeship Program in High School District 214 and learned about ways to expand programs into Arlington Heights manufacturing industries. More than 300

districts and 214 students participated in summer internships, getting authentic work-based learning opportunities in their career pathway and earning academic credit at the same time. From fashion, to firefighting, to working with reptiles, students are following their passion. The first cohort started in the 2018-19 school year with just four apprentices. In SY 2022-23, the fifth cohort had 44 apprentices.

Jo Arroyo is among hundreds of students in Palatine-Schaumburg High School District 211's career pathway program, which gives high school students an inside look at being a teacher. She not only got a chance to lead class a few times, but a partnership between the district and Harper College also allowed her to earn dual credit with coursework that helped prepare her to pursue a degree in education.

"I'm not sure if the experience would be the same if they were just doing one or the other," said Angela Drenth, who heads District 211's Family and Consumer Sciences Department, adding that exposure to courses and hands-on classroom experience are both invaluable. "The whole thing together is what really makes it a great opportunity and such a

great experience for students. ... It's like a mini student-teaching experience."

Educator pathway programs, also known as "grow your own" programs, like the one in District 211 are becoming more common as school districts across the nation grapple with a teacher shortage. As of October, ISBE reported more than 3,500 unfilled teaching positions statewide. District 211, which has had an education pathways program in place for at least 20 years, has many program graduates who have returned to their alma maters as teachers.

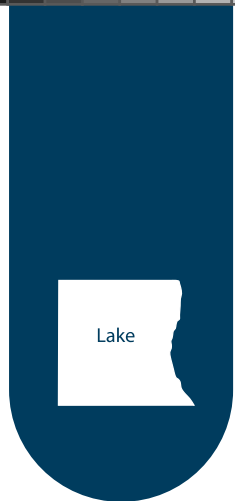
"I always knew I wanted to be a teacher," said Lauren Pieper, a 2008 Conant High School graduate who went through a pathways program and is now in her 11th year of teaching chemistry [the last eight at Conant]. "What was so special about the program was that I got to experience [what it was like to be a teacher] and see that it was something I wanted to do. I was confident going into college, knowing I was picking a job that I enjoy doing."





Palatine High School senior Ivan Monay said the hands-on experience — such as seeing preschoolers’ faces light up — has helped solidify his desire to teach.

“It’s cool to see that little smile after they learned something,” said Monay, who taught in a preschool class through the program. “That’s what makes me want to be a teacher.”



## Lake County Area Vocational System

Students at Waukegan High School will have a new course offering in the fall, potentially leading to a job paying more than \$50,000 a year before some of their classmates graduate from a four-year college. A program teaching Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) skills — giving students the ability to repair and maintain furnaces, air conditioners, refrigeration systems, and more — will be an available elective at the high school leading

to professional certifications that will make them employable upon completion of the course.

Michael Cicirale, the CTE coordinator for Waukegan Community Unit School District 60, said the average regional industry pay is between \$55,250 and \$78,020 with the proper certification, which the course offers along with graduation credit. “There are 20,000 new jobs expected in the next eight years or so,” Cicirale said of the hands-on program. “It is a growing industry.”

Cicirale helped tell District 60 Board of Education about the new program — part of the high school transformation plan — during a regularly scheduled meeting during FY 2023 at the Lincoln Center administration building in Waukegan, explaining development of career pathways.



“I think this is great,” board member Jeff McBride said. “It does not take a rocket scientist to do this. It’s just somebody being taught. It’s an occupation I think students need right now. It’s not a hard fix. You just need to know what you’re doing, and what you’re looking for.”

Jason Nault, the district’s associate superintendent for equity, innovation, and accountability, said the HVAC effort is designed to help teens learn job-ready career skills. “This is part of the high school transformation plan, looking at ways to expand dual credit opportunities for students and AP classes, and continue to develop career pathways,” Nault said. “This is the first pathway the team has taken on and embraced.”

Cicirale said the 2023-24 program is a pilot program that is envisioned as a two-year effort. Students starting the school year as sophomores or juniors can take the second year the following term, when more certificates will be available.

“Students can leave our program and immediately enter the workforce,” he said. Entrepreneurship components may also be added. Cicirale said students have the potential to start their own HVAC business. The potential of adding business courses to the program is a possibility. There are multiple career paths. “They could become building maintenance specialists, facility maintenance electricians, plumbers or solar panel installers,” he said.

Cicirale said the district is partnering with Johnson Controls to get the program started. The company will bring the current HVAC equipment to the Washington campus, where it will turn storage space into a lab.





## DuPage Area Occupational Education System

Addison Trail CTE teacher Keith Santini has tried to enhance the school's automotive program for nearly a decade, with a goal to earn accreditation by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) and the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). Addison Trail recently earned that status – becoming one of only two comprehensive high schools in the United States to earn accreditation at the Master level.

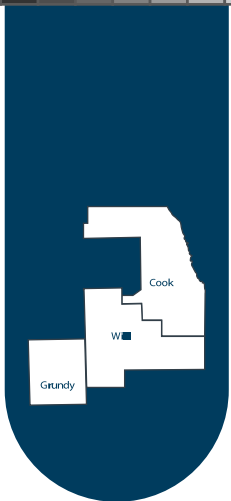
Nationally accepted standards of excellence in areas such as instruction, facilities, and equipment were used to evaluate Addison Trail. Santini said the certification process involved working with and being evaluated by local auto shops to figure out whether Addison Trail's automotive program is providing students with the skills to pursue a successful career in the automotive field after they graduate.

A two-day evaluation by NATEF and ASE analyzed all aspects of the school's automotive department. Addison Trail students had to demonstrate they could complete more than 400 tasks for the school to achieve Master-level status.

"This is great news for automotive-minded young people and their parents," said Donald Seyfer, former NATEF chairperson. "Because this program increases cooperation between local education and industry leaders, it gives added assurance that Addison Trail graduates will be employable entry-level technicians. As a result of the quality education provided by Addison Trail, the motoring public will benefit, as better repair technicians will join the workforce."

Santini said he's thrilled Addison Trail has earned this accreditation. "This certification is a huge asset to our community, to our school, and to our students," Santini said. "It was an involved process, and it means our program is meeting the highest industry standards to provide our students with a quality education that will prepare them to find employment after they graduate."





### Three Rivers EFE System

Mark Smith's direction enabled the Shiloh campus in Humeston to become one of the first high schools in the United States to install a full-sized Thermwood CNC router back in 2000. In 2016, Smith began building a computer-integrated manufacturing facility with another Thermwood CNC router at the center of Reed-Custer's industrial technology program. The purchase was a notable change for the program, which had suffered a plight shared

by similar programs across the nation. Over recent decades, Smith explains, the ties between industry and education had unraveled quite a bit, with many CTE classes taking on more of a recreational feel as a result. Adding the CNC router, which he describes as basically a robot, represented the first step in a recalibration of the program's focus and purpose. The learning environment naturally began to gravitate toward engineering software, such as AutoCAD, Mastercam, eCabinets, Microvellum, Cabinetvision, Carveco and more. More innovative equipment followed, including an automated edge bander, 3-D printers, a CNC laser, a computer lab, and devices to help move materials around. Collectively, the technologies would change not only the way his students built products, but what they crafted. Students from Smith's class work outside of school, and one is employed part time as a cabinetmaker.





Kane

## Northern Kane Co Reg Voc System

School District U-46 partners with the Alignment Collaborative for Education each year to put on an eighth grade Explore Event, giving students and families from around the district the chance to check out career opportunities with all the career clusters represented within the region. The district works with the village of Hoffman Estates to rent out the NOW Arena for the event, which this year included over 130 exhibitors representing over

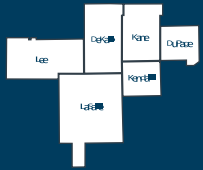
60 companies from around the area. On the eve of the event, School District U-46 welcomed over 300 families to hear a presentation on the new pathways model that the district will be moving to, along with the opportunity to visit the same high school. Teachers and community partners that their students visited the following day. On the day of the event, School District U-46 and the Alignment Collaborative welcomed over 2,700 eighth grade students into the event, hoping to start each of them along their career path. Students were surveyed on their potential future career prior to the event and then were chaperoned for the first 45 minutes, visiting roughly 25 companies within that career field. Students were then given the last 30 minutes of their visit to explore outside of their first choice.



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## Valley Educ for Employment System

Valley Education for Employment System (VALEES) member district high schools in the Indian Valley Vocational Center region coordinated the first Spark! Career Exploration Event for ninth graders. The new VALEES College and Career Pathway Endorsement coordinator, Josi Moran, led the planning and organization of the event, which was funded through an ISBE grant, and secured 43 business partners in the seven pathway

endorsement areas to speak directly to students about their future careers.

Nine schools attended, with 427 freshmen students. The Fox Valley Family YMCA generously donated the event space. The event aligned to the professional learning requirement in the CCPE framework for career exploration activities in the ninth and 10th grades and to the Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) Framework guidance that by the end of ninth grade students should know "one or two careers for further exploration."







## McHenry County Coop for Employment Education

Johnsburg High School's CTE program had multiple success stories in the 2022-23 school year.

Johnsburg CTE/SkillsUSA advisor Gus Schmid and Principal Kevin Shelton were awarded the Illinois Principals Association Building Bridges Award for connecting the CTE programs at JHS to local, state, and national organizations. Schmid, who also is the JHS community liaison, was named as

one of five finalists for SkillsUSA National Advisor of the Year after being named the Illinois SkillsUSA Advisor of the Year. SkillsUSA is a state and national organization devoted to training students for trades, technical, and skilled service careers. Schmid is the first advisor from Illinois to be considered for this title in 20 years.

Johnsburg student Nick Benck represented Illinois at the SkillsUSA National Competition and earned a gold medal in the Heavy Equipment Operator category. In the ever-evolving landscape of education, Alden-Hebron High School is adding a new agricultural education program and leadership development through FFA programs beginning this 2023-24 school year. The ag program at Alden-Hebron High School was designed to cater to students' diverse interests and aspirations. Whether they are interested in ag science, ag foods, or ag mechanics, this program provides a solid foundation for their chosen path. Students will gain hands-on experience in various agricultural activities, from learning skills in basic mechanics to tending to the school's future greenhouse.



**Johnsburg  
High School**





## Career Education Associates of North Central Illinois

The Career Education Association of North Central Illinois (CEANCI) holds a special event every October to recognize National Manufacturing Day. In 2022, about 200 students from nine area high schools split up and toured 15 Rockford regional manufacturing facilities. Each manufacturer hosted a tour group for the high school students. In addition to touring shop floors, students learned about the manufacturing process, had conversations with employees, and learned about various careers that exist in a manufacturing environment.

After the separate tours, all participating students were transported to the new Rock Valley College Advanced Technology Center in Belvidere to hear guest speaker Jeremy Bout of Edge Factor, a Canadian career education company whose mission is to inspire learners of all ages to explore, prepare and connect on their career journey. Jeremy, founder and president of Edge Factor, opened the eyes of students to the world of manufacturing as he shared stories of a passion ignited inside of

him and how it led him to where he is today! His energetic presentation kept students engaged and curious about how to pursue a future in manufacturing. Students also got a tour of the Advanced Technology Center and attended a mini expo onsite to learn about several of the manufacturers represented in the region.

In the fall of 2022, CEANCI collaborated with Rock Valley College to host a new kind of student competition for graphic design students – Design the Design! After compiling simple design needs (business cards, web graphics, flyers, etc.) from business partners, students from various schools were tasked with creating innovative designs for proper target audiences. The three-part process enabled students to interact with design professionals, who gave experienced feedback at every stage. During the finale at the community college, students explained their concept and their process, and answered live judges' questions. They were honored in distinctive design categories. Teachers, friends, and families of students were able to attend the final event. A turnout of 48 students gave the competition a shot – impressive since it was the first year for the event.



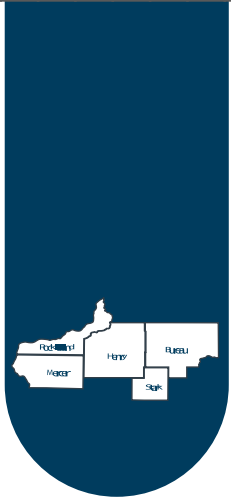


## Kishwaukee Education Consortium

The students studying metal inert gas welding completed projects in welding class. They were taught how to fabricate each part and to follow procedures accordingly. Students then had to piece all the parts together with tack welds and fully weld them out in a specific procedure to cover several types of required welds.

The main designs were the same, but the students had the chance to customize them in diverse ways with various handles, designs on the sides, etc. These projects were incredibly technical and fun for the students.





## Quad City Career and Technical Education Consortium

Quad City Career and Tech is immensely proud to highlight a terrific addition to one of its regional school districts. Sherrard High School unveiled a new high-tech greenhouse that will allow the school to expand its science curriculum and incorporate more in-depth studies of botany, agriculture, and environmental science. The project expanded the footprint of the 1994 structure by 1,000 feet and

added various upgrades — heated flooring, a weather station with an automated interior shade cloth, roof vent, and a high-intensity grow-light system. The Agriculture Department plans to use the technology for classes to explore hydroponic plant production, aquaculture, aquaponics, and focused research with agriculture industry professionals. Members of Sherrard FFA continue to do tremendous work for the community,

producing and delivering over 2.6 tons of produce from the school/FFA garden to area food pantries.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house for the \$625,000 project was held on March 28, 2023, to show off the new greenhouse facility. Pictured, left to right, in front are Hunter Cederstrom, Kylie Foster, Anna Taylor, ag instructor Bill Hammes, school board Vice President Kim DeBlock, school board member Sue Lyon, Sandra Avila, Lily Passno, Abby Weber; back row are Superintendent, Dr. Carl Johnson, school board member Dan Helm, and ag instructor John Rasty.







## Starved Rock for Voc Tech Ed

Agriculture programs across the nation can be nominated to apply for several awards from the National Association of Agricultural Educators. Each state agriculture teacher association selects one program in the state to advance to the regional level, which is then judged among the other states. Illinois resides in region 4, which consists of Missouri, Illinois,

Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. The Streator Ag Program was named the State Winner of the Outstanding Secondary Agricultural Program for Illinois in June and represented Illinois at the National Association of Agriculture Educators Conference in Phoenix, Arizona.





## Central Illinois Voc Ed Co-op

Central Illinois recently saw a thrilling learning experience that brought the community together, igniting the passions and ambitions of youth. GP CareerSpark, which unfolded with excitement, was nothing short of a transformative adventure in career exploration. Nearly 4,000 eighth grade students from 67 schools across the region embarked on their career exploration journey, which began in their classrooms with the JA

Inspire curriculum. After exploring how their skills and interests align with potential careers, students attended the in-person CareerSpark experience at the Peoria Civic Center. They didn't just learn about careers; they experienced them firsthand. Students tried their hands at naming foliage, experienced the intricacies of tools used to practice surgery techniques, and even felt the excitement and accomplishment of production assembly.

This incredible adventure was fueled by Junior Achievement's comprehensive JA Inspire curriculum, ensuring that students gained not just knowledge but real-world skills, preparing them for the future. Collaboration was key, with volunteers from over 100 local employers representing various industries to provide thrilling insights.

CareerSpark isn't a one-time event — it's an ongoing catalyst for change. It's about igniting curiosity, fostering dreams, and empowering central Illinois youth to reach for the stars. In addition to the eighth-grade experience, CareerSpark extends into Grades 9-12 via CareerSpark You're Hired. This next step in career planning introduces young people



to jobs, internships, and apprenticeships available right now in central Illinois through curriculum and a virtual hiring expo available 24/7.

The impact of CareerSpark on students' lives and the community is nothing short of awe-inspiring. The EFE 200 region is grateful for the dedication of volunteers and support from sponsors, including Caterpillar, the Office of the Illinois State Treasurer, Accenture, PNC, Union Pacific, Chase Bank, Commerce Bank, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Peoria County Regional Office of Education 48, RLI, and Tazewell County Regional Office of Education 53.







Stephenson

## Career & Tech Educ Consortium

Health Occupation II finished the last few days of term by revisiting anatomy and physiology topics, including how tendons work, the anatomy of cardiac tissues, lungs, kidneys, and reproductive organs.



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## West Central Regional System

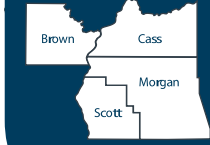
Western Community Unit School District 12 reestablished its agriculture program after at least a 10-year absence. "More than 10 years ago, the program went away because of budget cuts," Powell said. "We are finally back in a financial position to bring it back."

Agriculture is a big interest of many of the students and families in the community because of the district's location and the large agricultural community near the school, Powell said. A series of polls for students found that between 80 percent and 90 percent of students were interested in those classes, he said. "We have a lot of occupations in the area that deal with agriculture — banking, insurance, farming," Powell said. "We want to have an introduction to those fields for our students."

A substantial portion of the program will focus on high school grades, but Powell plans to implement some introductory classes for seventh and eighth grade students to gauge their interest before high school. "In addition to the agriculture program, the district would renew its FFA chapter," Powell said. "The goal for the program is to provide a good base for students planning to go into the agriculture field after graduating or before moving on to a college or trade school," Powell said. In the next year, the district will be able to focus on getting grants and funding for certain projects, such as a greenhouse.







## Two Rivers Career System

A Buick Encore was donated to the automotive program at Jacksonville High School by the Jacksonville Public Schools Foundation. Pictured are, from left, Jacksonville High School Assistant Principal Dan Scott, Jacksonville School District 117 Superintendent Steve Ptacek, automotive teacher Chad Suhre, Jacksonville Public Schools Foundation Executive Director Leslie DeFrates, foundation board President Bob Chipman, and United Chevrolet Buick GMC sales manager Donivyn Hawk.

A new partnership between Jacksonville High School and Lincoln Land Community College will give students a start in the automotive technology field. Jacksonville High School students have been able to take part in the automotive program partnership and earn college credits since last fall. JHS agreed to provide a vehicle that was five years old or newer for the class. The Jacksonville Public Schools Foundation stepped into providing the vehicle by working with United Chevrolet Buick GMC to buy a 2023 Buick Encore.





## Western Area Career Center

Carl Sandburg Community College engages potential college students through initiatives, such as its summer camp program. The two-day camp introduces children aged 9-12 to sustainable agriculture practices, purposes, and careers through collaboration with local farmers and community gardeners.

The college also partners with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) National Farmworkers Job Program and plans to submit its newly approved agriculture programs for approval through the local WIOA office.

Secondary students and adult learners are invited to open house events and informed of program via social media, the college website, and other mediums. The college also served as the host site for the 2022 Women Changing the Face of Agriculture Conference, which attracted 225 high school students from across the state for a day-long career exploration event.





## Two Rivers Career System

Knoxville Blue Bullets industrial technology students had a productive year. They completed four projects, including roofing and siding an announcer's booth at their baseball diamond, building two sheds, and completing a community service project. Under the guidance of the instructor, Dr. Todd Derham, the construction trades class consulted with local contractors for advice on the bigger projects. The manufacturing

class built and sold several items over the holidays, including noodle boards, deer planters, and a welcome plant hanger. The class then donated all proceeds (\$1,000) to a local charity! Dr. Derham utilizes Pathful Explore, an online career exploration tool, to guide his students on career outlook, job shadowing videos, and other post-secondary options that are available. The hands-on projects enable the students to develop basic tool skills, along with a better understanding of how the skills could be used in many manufacturing and construction trades. Students must show leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving skills emphasizing work ethic, promptness, and accountability throughout the projects. Several Blue Bullets have found postsecondary success, with two students completing lineman school, one working for Mid-Century Communications (a local communications cooperative), and several working for local contractors.



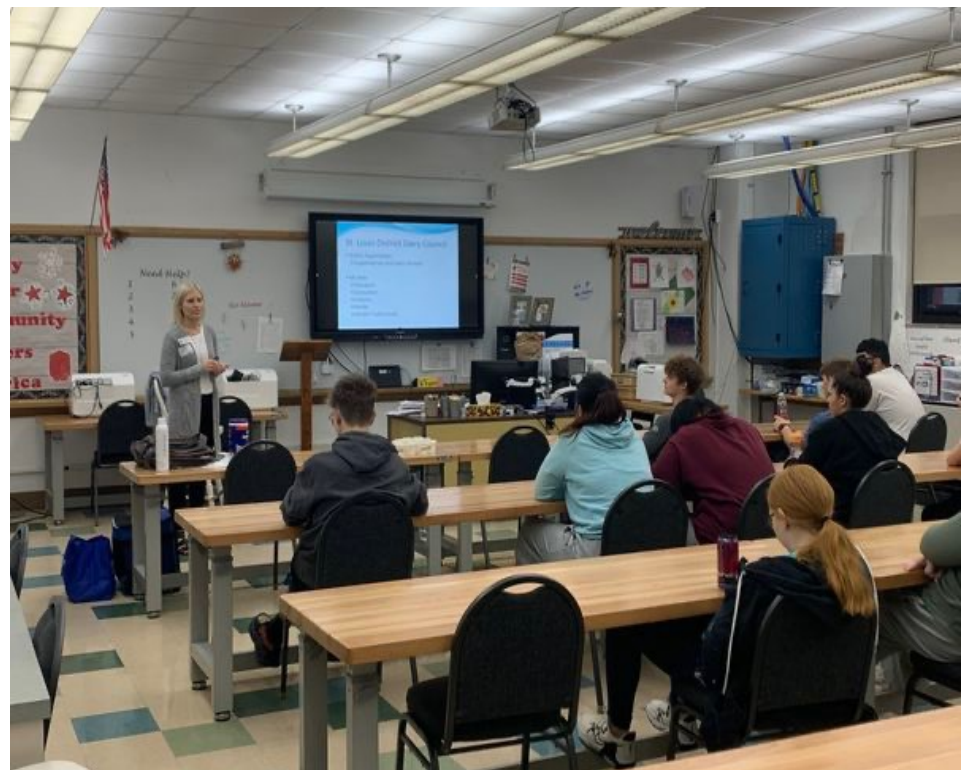




## Lincolnland Regional Delivery System

The St. Louis District Dairy Council recently visited a Lincoln High School culinary arts class. Students learned about yogurt, how to make it, diverse ways to use it, and the various kinds. Not only was the yogurt-making a highlight of the day, but students also learned about a variety of milk products that can be local sources in the Midwest. Further, students learned about various occupations in the

dairy industry.



LINCOLN COMMUNITY  
HIGH SCHOOL

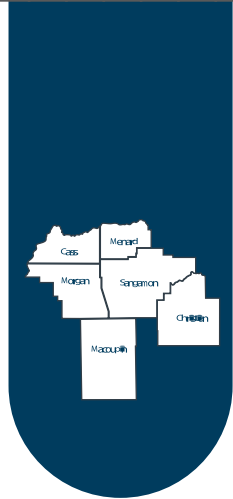


## Peoria Educational Region For Employment and Career Training

A work-based learning manufacturing program was started last year. Students apply and are interviewed by a potential employer. An employer makes the decision whether to accept the student after the interview. Once accepted, a student's counselor sets their senior schedule so the student can spend two hours per day at this unpaid internship. The internship experience is set up so the student intern

has one-third of the semester with office-type careers ranging from inventory management, to supply chain issues, and human resource concerns. The rest of the semester, the student intern experiences careers on the production floor. These range from assembly, welding, painting, and quality control. Students are evaluated by their supervisors twice per semester. This evaluation, along with weekly reporting on what they experienced, is how they earn a grade for this class. An EFE representative sits down with the business and the student intern before the Christmas holiday to see how the semester went. If the student is/was a good fit for the company – and the company has a two-hour position available for second semester – this unpaid internship could turn into a paid internship for second semester. If the student didn't fit well and/or the company didn't have a position available, the student returned to their school for the spring semester.

A couple of benefits business recognize in this style of program is that there is an end-game plan. Sometimes a business is reluctant to bring on a student intern because it is not sure how they might fit within an organization. Also, the business can introduce interns to office-type careers, which are sometimes overlooked in career exploration. This program was piloted last year and has shown growth this year. It is expected to continue to grow and prosper as businesses continue to look for and hire quality employees.



## Regional Office of Career and Technical Education

Technology Student Association (TSA) enhances personal development, leadership, and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), whereby members apply and integrate these concepts through extracurricular activities, competitions, and related programs. Glenwood High School students had the following school wins: first place in Invention and Innovation

at Illinois State University Tech Day; Zubair Saeed won first place in Marine Technology and second place in Structural Engineering, Truss at the TSA State competition; Wesley Bently won second place in Marine Technology and third place in Structural Engineering, Truss; and Preston Bently won first place in Marine Technology. The mission of SkillsUSA is to empower students to become skilled professionals, career-ready leaders, and responsible community members. Between 20 and 30 Capital Area Career Center (CACC) students take part in SkillsUSA's state qualifying events. Those that qualify can compete in the state championships. Eighteen CACC students qualified to compete at the state event held in Peoria. Several students medaled in various competitions. Noah Bliler, a junior from Taylorville High School, won second place in HVAC and first place in Sheet Metal, which qualified hi to compete in the National Skills Competition in Atlanta, Georgia.







## Tazewell County Area EFE Regional Delivery System

Check out the new robotics center near Tremont Grade School!

The 6,200-square-foot building, completed last year, holds banners that the Tremont High School robotics squad has accumulated over the years. They take their robotics seriously in Tremont. Team 2481 has qualified for the national finals every

year since 2013, said Ben Martin, one of the team's mentors who's been involved in the First Robotics program for 20 years, starting as a high school student in Indianapolis.

Martin, who is now a strategy manager for Caterpillar Inc., pointed to plaques on the wall that credit sponsors like the Caterpillar Foundation and Precision Planting and over 60 volunteers that made the building possible. The building holds something else — equipment such as a CNC router, computers, lathe, milling machines, drill press, and a variety of saws. There are also machines that the students built, each with a story to tell. Welcome to the world of First Robotics, a program conceived by Dean Kamen, inventor of the Segway human transporter who wanted to give math and science students a sport of their own.



Some 3,300 high school teams from 31 countries took part in a competition using industrial-size robots that students have built and operate. With the aid of dedicated mentors, the students do it all: programming, electrical work, construction, even public relations. Competitions at the local, regional, and national levels have teams battling head-to-head, with the teens winding up helping their opponents. The unique nature of the matches involves team partnerships that add another dimension to the competition, said Martin.

"We spend January and February building our robot to compete in several competitions," said Martin, estimating the Tremont team will number about 28 students.





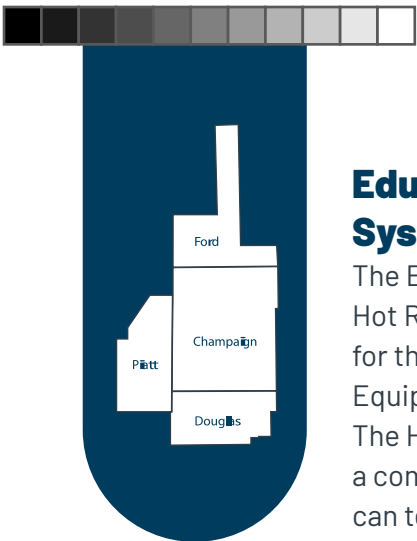
Andrew Kunz, a 16-year-old student at Morton High School and a member of the Tremont team, got his robotic indoctrination with the Lego League, a competition open to grade school students. "It's a lot of fun to build a robot, see it compete and learn from your mistakes," he said. Another Tremont team member, Luke Tucker, a 14-year-old homeschooler, sized up the program succinctly: "You learn practical skills for later in life in a fun environment."

The Tremont team involves students from throughout the area – East Peoria, Morton, Pekin and Mackinaw. "If a student wants to participate in robots, we're open to it," said Martin.

Tremont isn't the only robotic powerhouse in central Illinois. "Competition here is escalating," said Martin. Area teams with names like Robot Casserole and Icarus compete along with squads from Limestone, Washington and Metamora.

Matt Draear serves as coach of the Tremont team. Brian Stoecker, an engineering teacher at Metamora Township High School, coaches a team that's been competing for 12 years. Up to 47 students participated. "Usually, we have around 40 on the team," said Stoecker. "I think kids are starting to see the benefits of the program."





## Education for Employment System 330

The Early College and Career Academy (ECCA) Hot Rodders of Tomorrow engine team qualified for the national competition at the Specialty Equipment Market Association show in Las Vegas. The Hot Rodders of Tomorrow engine challenge is a competition to see how fast high school students can tear down and rebuild an engine. After being disassembled, the engine is rebuilt to factory

specifications, all while being timed by up to five judges. ECCA is a partnership between Education for EFE 330 and Parkland College that offers dual credit career pathway programs for high school juniors and seniors from area school districts. The ECCA engine team was started during the 2015-16 school year to provide an extracurricular activity for the participating ECCA students and build interest in the program.

“This is an awesome example of the opportunities available to area high school students, because of the Early College and Career Academy partnership with Parkland College. Competitions like these are an extension of the classroom and reinforce both the employability skills and the technical skills our students need to succeed in the workplace,” said EFE 330/ECCA Director Nick Elder.



## Livingston Area Education for Employment

The Livingston Area Education for Employment hosted its second annual signing day in May 2023. The goal of signing day is to recognize students who have plans to go directly to the work force after high school graduation. This time is used to invite students, businesses, and families to watch students commit to their future career. Twelve business partners

were welcomed to recognize 16 students who were hired for various positions in 2023. Most of these positions are full-time and include benefits. Some of these positions also include further education and/or training for the student paid for by the company. The intention is to grow this event each year to encourage interested students to go directly into the workforce after they graduate.







Vermilion

## Vermilion Vocational Education Delivery System

Vermilion Vocational Education Delivery System works with high schools in the Vermilion County area. College Express provides high school juniors and seniors with different classes that are career oriented. The students can attend classes at either Danville Area Community College (DACC) or the satellite DACC office in Hoopeson. The classes are funded by the high school and are at no cost to the

students. Students taking part in College Express can earn both high school and college credits. College Express has 24 instructors, who our students with 58 class opportunities. There are morning and afternoon sessions to accommodate the high schools throughout the county. College Express is currently serving 387 students this semester.

College Express courses are divided into either a one-year or two-year certification. The one-year certification is in the Certified Nursing Assistant program. The students complete not only the classroom part, but also must complete a clinical rotation. The courses covered under the two -year certification are Agriculture Education, Automotive Technology, Co-Op Work Experience, Computer Networking, Computer Programming, Computer Technical Graphics, Construction, Criminal Justice, Culinary Arts, Early Childhood Education, Health Professions, HVAC, Industrial Technology, and Welding. Students must complete both years of their chosen course of study to receive the certification.



**Danville Area  
Community College**

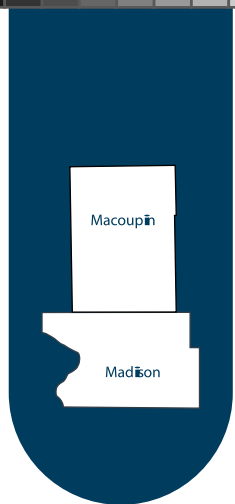




## Central Illinois Rural Region

The Carlinville High School welding program thanks Tim Millard and everyone at Cisco Steel for its continued support and recent donation of about 2,000 pounds of plate steel. This material will be used to teach a variety of welding operations and fabricate student projects. Cisco has supported the CHS welding program for almost 50 years.





## Madison County Career & Technical Education System

EFE 450 in Madison County facilitated Regional Advisory Committees in nine CTE areas for local high school CTE programs. The programs included Automotive, Business, Construction, Culinary, Engineering, Early Childhood Education, Graphic Design, Health Science, and Manufacturing. High school teachers, employers, and postsecondary entities in each of the nine areas were invited to

meet and tour local high school programs; discuss the needs of their specific industry; share trends and upcoming changes; and discuss collaboration opportunities, such as student tours and internships with local companies. The meetings allowed high school CTE teachers the opportunity to highlight their programs and receive direct feedback from local industry experts on the content taught in their classes. The work of the advisory committees has enabled the donation of materials to local programs; new work-based learning opportunities have been developed for local CTE programs.







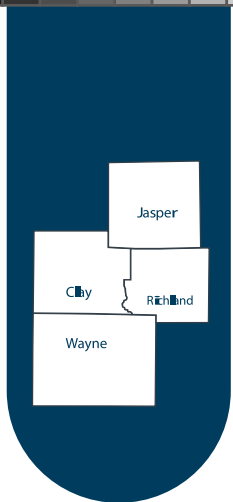
## Five County Regional Vocational System

Vienna High School (VHS) started an aviation pipeline program, which is being taught by VHS instructor Wade Stewart, in partnership with Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) School of Aviation. The partnership allows Vienna students to take courses aligned with the SIUC program. AVT112, which is aircraft electricity, and AVT111, which is materials processing, are

both taught in Vienna. An agreement between Vienna and SIUC allows students who successfully complete these courses while in high school to be eligible to take proficiency exams. This, in turn, allows them to earn SIUC credits and get a jump start on the completion of the aviation degree programs at the School of Aviation. There is a high demand for maintenance workers, pilots, and various other employees.

Vienna has also partnered with other area schools and agencies and participated in SIUC's Automotive and Aviation Day over the last few years. Each time the students are given the opportunity to connect to meaningful, high-wage, high-demand career opportunities, it is a win. SIUC's aviation program is outstanding and known around the world for its successful outcomes. Vienna School Superintendent Joshua Stafford said Viennastudents can take advantage of the accelerated course options and can participate in the SIU Automotive and Aviation Day each year.





## Clay/Jasper/Richland/North Wayne RDS

EFE 490 celebrates the entrepreneurship program, pairing each student with a mentor from the business world. Students get the opportunity to tour a plethora of businesses, listen to a wide array of successful business owners, and learn about the vast world of entrepreneurship. Students work together to develop a class business and an individual business. Students highlight their

business at the close of each year with a trade show to showcase their entrepreneurship skills. This class acquaints students with the knowledge and skills necessary to own and run their own business. An advisory board has been established to enable a bright and successful future.







## Marion/Clinton/Washington Career and Technical Education System

This year Okawville High School created a Collaboration Lab. The idea behind the lab was to bring different disciplines together to produce exemplary results. The lab includes two vinyl printers, multiple 3D printers, a green screen, a large format plotter, a sound booth, and a silk screen machine. The lab is used in several ways to bring groups of students together. The business and

technology class used the 3D printers to make bag tags and equipment tags for the sports teams. The business and technology students will design projects each quarter and use 3D printers to see the projects come to life. The Future Business Leaders of America group was asked to design and make vinyl Rocket logos of assorted colors to be adhered to the district buses so kindergarten students will know which bus to ride by the color of the Rocket. The sound booth is used for podcasts and audio recordings. The chorus recorded voice solos to listen to before contests. The district hopes to sell school spirit wear designed and manufactured by the students on the silk screen press. Kevin Kenow, the district's technology, business, and marketing teacher, is excited to see what uses the students will come up with for the lab.



**OKAWVILLE  
ROCKETS**







## Twin Rivers Career & Technical Education System

The technology lab at Robinson High School was opened in August of 1998 with 12 modules. It has since grown to 30 modules and four 3D printers. Robinson High School has a module for each area of technology-communications, manufacturing, transportation, and construction. The school has a true Introduction to Technology Program. RHS is such a program in the Midwest, with all the modules in one room and taught by one instructor.



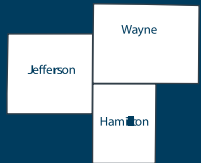
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## Rend Lake Area Regional Delivery System

Over 700 students attended a CTE event in September. Ironworkers, bricklayers, heavy equipment operators, painters, electricians, teamsters, laborers, pipefitters, and members of the boilermakers' union were all in attendance to give students a hands-on exhibition of their occupations and to tell them how they can apply after high school graduation.





## Williams County Career Technical Education System

The Construction Trades Program at Marion High School is described by the principal as "...an amazing program that incorporates many trades and cross-curricular instructors, including Introduction to Tech, Drafting, Welding, and, of course, Construction Trades. The students in skills and advanced courses of the program build a house from the ground up. The MHS "trades" house is seen

as very desirable in the local real estate market. Trades students learn from some of the best local community construction partners and businesses."

Williamson





# Area Career Center Highlights







## Bloomington Area Career Center

Kaitlyn Olson, a junior at Normal Community High School is a certified nurse assistant and medical terminology student at the Bloomington Area Career Center. She competed in the Summer SkillsUSA National Championship in Atlanta, Georgia. Kaitlyn earned first place in the Medical Terminology competition for the second consecutive year, making her the national champion. She is the only Bloomington Area Career Center student to place first at nationals in consecutive years and the only gold medalist from Illinois at the national level.



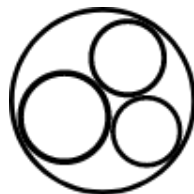
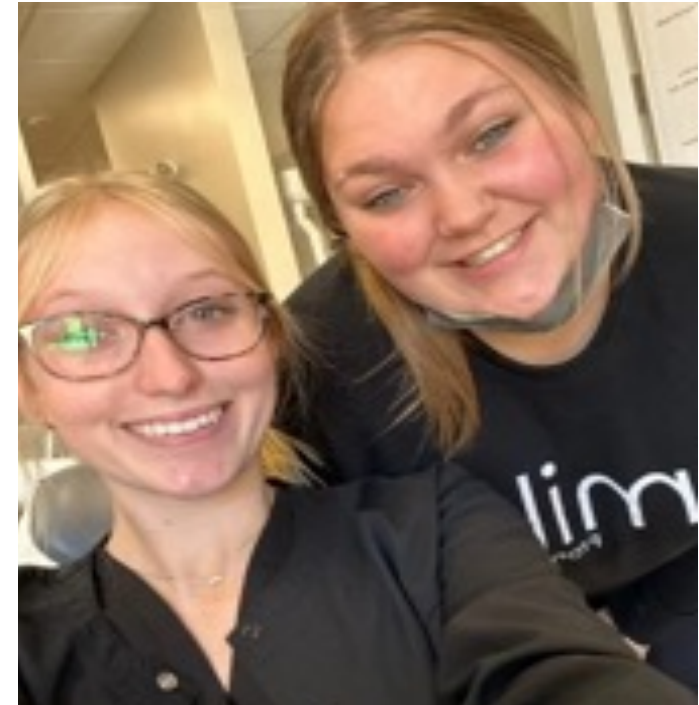


## Capital Area Career Center

Capital Area Career Center believes that CTE is the first step toward workforce readiness and believes all students should have the opportunity to explore their own paths under the guidance of experienced staff, business partners, and community organizations so they achieve their potential. It is important to show proper personal, interpersonal, and professional skills and engage students in skills-based, hands-on training using today's technology.

As such, elementary students are part of this plan. Last year, elementary school students were engaged in monthly career exploration with speakers. The Air National Guard presented at Ridgely Elementary about the many careers of the Air Guard and broke down barriers women face in these roles. High school students also continued with career exploration via hands-on clinical experiences.

Dental students worked on creating teeth impressions during their work-based learning experience at Renken Dentistry.



RENKEN  
DENTISTRY

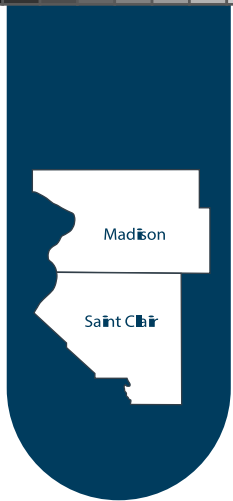




## Career Center of Southern IL

Cody Strong, who attends Red Bud High School, won the bronze medal at the SkillsUSA Nationals in Collision Repair Technology. He took first place in the Illinois competition, which launched him onto the national arena. Lucas Mund, the collision repair teacher, attended the competition with Strong in Atlanta, Georgia.





## Collinsville Area Career Center

The Collinsville Area Vocational Center is a two-year, public vocational training center for high school juniors and seniors. It is a cooperative program that is housed on the campus of Collinsville High School. Students are from Bethalto Civic Memorial High School, Dupu High School, East Alton-Wood River High School, Edwardsville High School, Highland High School, Lebanon High School, Mascoutah High School, and Triad High School. This last year,

students could experience teaching lessons in early childhood and practice handcuffing techniques in law enforcement class. These were just two of the work-based learning experiences offered by Collinsville Area Career Center. Students can receive hands-on technical skills training in Auto Body Repair, Automotive Repair, Building Trades, Clinical Health Occupations, Cosmetology, Criminal Justice, Cyber Security, Dental Assisting, Early Childhood Education, Electronics, Food Service, Precision Machining, and Welding.





Kane

## Fox Valley Career Center

The Fox Valley Career Center (FVCC) fire science program received a fire apparatus driving simulator in May 2023 from the city of Batavia Fire Department. FVCC fire science staff and students traveled to Batavia Station 1 to retrieve the multi-part system. Several days outside of regular class time were used to put the simulator back together. Since that time, many FVCC students have been engaged in troubleshooting the computer-

generated simulations to make the system functional.

The greatest amount of credit for task completion goes to an FVCC fire science student for his time, patience, tech knowledge, and passion to make this a working tool for the FVCC Fire Science program. FVCC Fire Science 2 students engage in the Illinois Office of the State Fire Marshal Fire Apparatus Engineer training to learn how to be qualified in 1002 Standards for fire apparatus driver/operator). As part of the certification requirements, students will be engaged in completing simulated emergency and non-emergency driving scenarios. The newly acquired driving simulator, which meets National Fire Protection Association Specializations, aligns standards with many of the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives.







Knox

## Galesburg Area Vocational Center

Fire science students have been able to use the Galesburg Fire Department's new training tower. This has allowed them to simulate interior firefighting, high-rise operations, and search-and-rescue procedures. Early childhood students have begun their observation and field experience hours at Bright Futures Pre-K Center. Additionally, students have started working on their Early Childhood Education (ECE) Level I credential and are

learning content to prepare them to be in an ECE classroom.

Automotive students had the opportunity to tour the service department and shop at Kunes Toyota in Galesburg. Students could participate in hands-on activities and look at the inner workings of the service department at Kunes. The goal is to get job shadowing and internship opportunities off the ground with Kunes so that students will be able to work side by side with industry professionals.

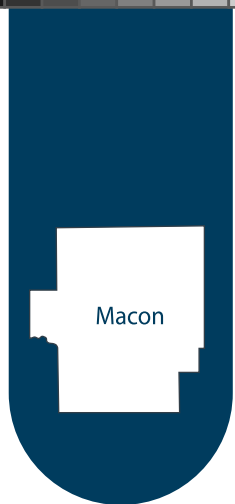
Culinary students have been learning about what is included in the hospitality industry. They learned how the food service industry started and then went to the kitchen, where they became familiar with the equipment and had their first cooking lab — baking cookies that turned out perfectly!

Law enforcement students have been learning about the basics of procedures for traffic stops. After some instruction in the classroom, they have been able to practice what they've learned by doing mock traffic stops.

Building trades students have completed safety testing and are working onsite replacing a deck. Students in this class also will have worked on obtaining their OSHA 10 credential. Additional projects for this program include assistance in installing the fit pit at Steele Elementary School, continuing to work on the new home built south of Knoxville, and working with Habitat for Humanity on projects around Knox County. Students are

learning nursing skills, such as hand washing and "donning and doffing" personal protective equipment. Students also became certified in Basic Life Support CPR. They learned theory and skills and started clinical rotations in October 2023.





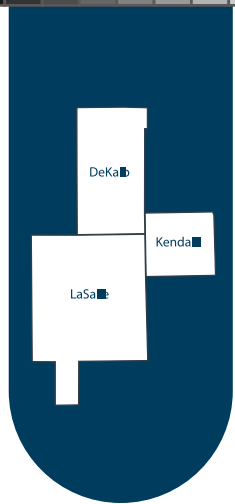
## Heartland Technical Academy

Heartland Technical Academy (HTA) is one of 24 Area Career Centers in Illinois. Junior and senior students from local high schools can take classes at HTA as part of their school day. Signing up for HTA classes is just like signing up for any other elective classes the school offers. HTA programs, which are held on the campus of Richland Community College, offer dual credit for students. In addition, students have access to RCC's tremendous facilities.

HTA students engage in hands-on opportunities that reflect the skills needed in the workforce. Programs also are aligned with industry and postsecondary credentials. Partnerships with RCC, local high schools, and industries are key factors in making HTA programs successful. Heartland Technical Academy students had the opportunity to job shadow in the criminal justice program in FY 2023. Students spent 21 days in the Criminal Justice II program under the guidance and leadership of Amy Cleary. Mrs. Cleary, the instructor in the criminal justice program, has prepared her students for this experience by using class time studies and learning about criminal justice workers. Criminal justice students have job shadowing opportunities for seven agencies — Macon County Court Security, Macon County Sheriff's Department, Macon County Jail, Macon County Probation, Macon County Circuit Clerk, Central Illinois Regional Dispatch Center, and Macon County Animal Control.







## Indian Valley Vocational Center

This mission of the Indian Valley Vocational Center (IVVC) is to provide students with the skills necessary for success in an evolving global marketplace. To accomplish this mission, IVVC provides opportunities for students to cultivate life and career skills in a real word environment through partnerships with business and industry. Many IVVC students had opportunities for work-based learning this past year. They have participated in

onsite visits, listened to industry speakers, completed job shadowing, conducted school-based enterprises, and fulfilled internships. These experiences, made possible by partnerships with local businesses, allow students to use what they have learned in the classroom within a real-work context.





## Jo Daviess Carroll CTE Academy

The Jo Daviess Carroll CTE Academy (formerly Jo Daviess Carroll Area Vocational Center) has proudly been delivering quality CTE to high school students and adult learners since 1972. The CTE Academy is a collaborative public education entity of six local districts: Galena, River Ridge, Scales Mound, Stockton, Warren, and West Carroll. The programs at the CTE Academy are open to any junior or senior from the participating school districts. There

are no prerequisites, but interested students must speak with their guidance counselor to sign up for a CTE class. CTE Academy classes count as dual credit with Highland Community College at no additional cost to the student. Student ambassadors are the faces and voices of the CTE Academy — they are living the CTE experience right now and can share information and experiences with prospective students who are considering enrolling in one of the amazing programs.

Jo Daviess





## Kankakee Area Career Center

The Kankakee Area Career Center (KACC) facility has 975 students its highest enrollment ever for the 2023-24 school year. That's an increase of more than 200 students from the roughly 750 enrolled for the past two years. KACC Executive Director Matt Kelley said enrollment hovered around 650 when he started at the facility about 14 years ago.

The KACC has been around since 1971. Students from 17 area high schools feed into the KACC, Kelley said. "They come from Crete-Monee, down to Gilman, over to the Indiana line and west of Herscher," he said. The region Kelley is responsible for includes three counties: Kankakee, Iroquois and Will. Currently, KACC is the third-largest career center in student population in the state, behind only Lake and DuPage Counties. It is one of about a dozen free-standing career centers in the state. The 17 high schools feeding into the KACC include 10 member school districts, which oversee its board and pay to maintain its building and grounds, as well as seven non-member districts. The districts all pay to enroll their students in the career center, with non-member districts paying a slightly higher rate.

Welding is currently one of the most popular programs at the career center, with 134 students involved. "We're very fortunate to have this type of programming here so that everyone can use it," Kelley said. "For example, like welding. Not every school, like Grant Park or St. Anne, has the space, the resources or even the students to do it."

That's where the concept of a regional career center was born from — combining resources so that students from every school could access things like automotive or carpentry classes. "This is where they get to kind of test drive a career," Kelley said.

Kankakee School District 111 is the largest school district in the area, so one might assume it would send the most students to the KACC. That is not the case, however. "It's kind of split across the board," Kelley said. Bradley-Bourbonnais Community High School District 307 has the largest high school in the KACC and is the largest contributor of students. "They all have equal access," Kelley said regarding all the region's high schools. For the 2023-24 school year, BBCHS had 239 students signed up. and Kankakee had 124 students signed up. The third and fourth highest contributors of students currently are Crete-Monee and Manteno school districts, with 91 and 84 students enrolled, respectively.

What is driving the enrollment increase? Kelley said young people are starting to catch on that CTE programs can decrease their time preparing to enter the workforce after high school. "I think they start to realize that time is money," he said. After 13 years of schooling, many realize upon high school graduation that more time in a classroom is not what they desire, he said. Rather, they are looking for other opportunities. "A lot of them get to this place and realize, 'Hey, I can step out, I can make some money, gain some experience, and then if I get hooked up with the right employer, they will either pay me to go to college or pay me to get into the trades,'" Kelley said.

The economy is another huge factor, he said. Plenty of industries are experiencing a shortage of workers, especially workers with sets of skills. "Employers are looking for young, motivated people, and I've got a whole building full," Kelley said. With a large population of older workers starting to retire, employers are realizing they need to get young people into their ranks, Kelley said. "I think all of that together is making a very happy marriage," he said.

Some of the most popular programs at the career center right now include cosmetology, welding, certified nursing assistant (CNA) and automotive technology. Data from spring 2023 shows there were 164 students enrolled in cosmetology, 134 students in welding, 119 students in the CNA program, and 103 in the automotive technology program.





"In our welding program, we're busting at the seams," Kelley said. Welding students can attain American Welding Society certifications and can earn \$20 to \$25 per hour right out of high school with two years of career center experience, he said. Within the past five years, the welding program has "exploded" in numbers, he said. "There's just so many opportunities out there for young people to get into the trades to make a really good living," he said.

While the CNA is now among the most popular programs, enrollment took a dip during the COVID-19 pandemic when people became wary of careers in health care, he said. The program is now on the upswing, as people are again finding that health care can be an advantageous career field. Nationally, the field of education is another area struggling for workers. The career center's early childhood education program has now become Foundations of Education, where the goal is to train up-and-coming teachers. About 54 were enrolled in that program as of March 2. "We are trying to offer programming that's not only going to help our region, but also provide opportunities for young people to figure out what they want to do once they graduate high school," Kelley said.

As the career center's enrollment pushes toward the 1,000 mark, Kelley said that is a number he would love to see one day. However, Kelley is also happy with how the numbers look right now. At capacity, the KACC would be able to accommodate about 1,400 students. That would mean every seat and time slot is filled every day. "That's a tall order," Kelley said. He noted that not every school can provide transportation to the career center. The numbers also depend on how many students are interested in CTE, something he said cannot be forced.

"I want them to want to be here and come and enjoy this, and you know, 99% of the time, that's the student that we get," Kelley said. Work-based learning internships have helped many students obtain employment. As an example, Taylor Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram has continued its partnership providing work-based learning opportunities. This past school year, the dealership was an internship site for KACC automotive technology students and helped support student scholarships through an

annual golf outing. KACC students now are employed with Taylor Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram.





DeKalb

## Kishwaukee Education Consortium Area Vocational Center

The U.S. Army sent a cyber warfare team to speak with the criminal justice students at the Kishwaukee Education Consortium (KEC) in April 2023. This demonstration was arranged by the local Army Recruiting Office. Staff Sergeant Goodman, an Army recruiter, also spoke with students about career opportunities in the Army. Members of the Army cyber warfare team spoke about their jobs,

which included offensive operations, defensive tactics, and potential vulnerabilities. The team also included a linguist who can translate foreign languages when they are encountered. Students were given the opportunity to look for and locate an individual's home address and phone online with assistance from the cyber warfare team, with only basic information provided about the subject. Students left with a better understanding of how to protect themselves online and what benefits and career options are available with the Army.







Lake

## Lake County Tech Campus

Jack Wilson, an automotive services teacher at Lake County Tech Campus, was named a Life Changer of the Year this past year in front of hundreds of students and their parents. “Oh, I had no idea,” Wilson said after the ceremony. “It wasn’t until they started talking about the Life Changer that I realized it.”

There were nearly 600 nominees among K-12 teachers and school employees nationwide. Wilson and 15 others were named Life Changers.

“[I am] grateful for the recognition and for all the people posting such nice things about me on Facebook since my nomination was announced,” he said.

“It’s really, really wonderful for a Tech Campus teacher to be recognized for such an award at the national level,” Lake County Tech Campus Principal Derrick Burress said to the crowd assembled at the Grayslake North High School Fieldhouse. *“It shows really clearly that the Tech Campus really is important and does make a difference every day.”*

Sherrod Clear of National Life Group, the life insurance company that sponsors the Life Changers of the Year, was on hand to present the certificate to Wilson. Clear said the award program will have granted over \$725,000 to teachers and schools by the end of this award cycle.

Laura Emmerling, the dean of Student Services at the Lake County Tech Campus, nominated Wilson for the award. “His leadership and commitment have served to create programs that drive success,” Emmerling said. “We’re lucky to have someone so enthusiastic about making a beneficial difference in the lives of its students.”

Wilson teaches students in the school’s workshop, which features much of the same technology used at auto repair and service shops and puts in extra work to create new opportunities for his students. Wilson, who is also president of the local teacher’s union, created an internship program that connects students with local companies. His Give Me Ten Internship Training Program has netted extended internships – and even some job offers – for students who have taken part, campus officials said. The Lake County Tech Campus is where juniors and seniors students from 22-member high schools throughout Lake and McHenry Counties go for career training classes. The campus offers 20 programs in various subjects, including criminal justice, cosmetology, and multimedia design.





## Lincolnland Technical Education Center

Logan

Deagan Eads, son of Keith and Brianna Eads, has been selected by Lincolnland Technical Education Center (LTEC) to be the 2023 recipient of the Ready for the Real-World Scholarship sponsored by the Rotary Club of Lincoln. Deagan has completed both LTEC curriculums in automotive technology and advance metal/welding in two years. He has demonstrated an excellent level of skill obtainment

and strong work ethic, which will make him a true resource. Deagan is hoping to join the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers Union and plans to attend Midwest Technical Institute. The \$1,000 scholarship will allow him to achieve his goals a little easier.





Livingston

## Livingston Area Career Center

The Construction Trades program at the Livingston Area Career Center (LACC) finished its home build project, which began at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, in May 2023. 23 students worked on the project over those two years. Students left the career center each school day to go work on the jobsite. They worked tirelessly in heat, rain, and snow. This home was the first home completed by the LACC Construction Trades program in 11 years. Students did everything from framing the home and putting up the siding, to laying the flooring, to putting in the cabinets and doors. The homeowner was able to move in during the summer of 2023.







Jefferson

## Mt. Vernon Area Vocational Center

Mount Vernon Area Vocation Center has seen an increase in non-traditional students enrolling in CTE programs. There has been a dramatic increase in female enrollment in automotive, manufacturing, welding, fire science, ag mechanics, and building trades in the past year.







## Quincy Area Vocational Center

Quincy Area Vocational Technical Center's Career Camp kicked off with morning and afternoon sessions focused on agriculture and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) for students going into sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. "I wanted something to do over the summer. This looked like something fun to do," Danilee said. "We're doing neat things that I hadn't done before."

Activities ranged from creating the tallest tower possible from spaghetti noodles and marshmallows, to building a small wind turbine to generate electricity, to using a virtual reality welder. Teacher Adam Weiman said the session helps build critical thinking skills in students along with an understanding of technology. "I want to try to expose them to different technologies we have now that they can use in agriculture and beyond," said Weiman, who teaches agriculture at Quincy Junior High School.

Camp activities for the week also focus on robotics and food. A subsequent session will target ag, robotics, food, and graphic arts. The hands-on activities are designed to help introduce students to different career areas and programs available at the vocational center before they start high school. Reno Venvertloh, an incoming QJHS seventh grader, liked last year's camp so much that he came back again this year. Flying the drone wasn't hard but was fun, and so was having it nearly land on his hand, he said. Another incoming QJHS seventh grader, Landon Nielsen, now wants his own drone. "It looks like something fun, and as a farmer, you'd be able to use it to go over crops and map out what you want to do," Landon said. "It was really fun. You got to learn how to start it, land it, rotate it."

The first day of camp inspired both Danilee and Landon to think more about ag as a potential career. "I think it would be something cool," he said. "Our family has a farm," she said. "I want to do it. It's really fun." Quincy Area Vocational Technical Center has been offering Career Exploration Days for middle school students as they start to make plans about their future high school career.





## United Township Area Career Center

More local businesses contacted the United Township Area Career Center during the 2022-23 school year about how to become a part of high school registered apprenticeship programs. The word is getting out and the buzz from the students is at an all-time high. Apprenticeship programs are continuing to grow and expand, with auto body, auto mechanic, and information technology being added this past year. Employment challenges emerge

each day, so career stability has become crucial now more than ever. This incredible growth has called upon career educators and employers to aid in strategic networking and authentic real-world challenges. It encourages students to plug into the professional world in a way that reflects their long-term aspirations, thus improving their employability skills. Students have stepped up and taken ownership of their future.



**AREA CAREER CENTER**



# Illinois Career and Technical Student Organizations Highlights





## Illinois BPA

As a co-curricular organization, Business Professionals of America can enhance student participation in professional, civic, service, and social endeavors. Members of BPA take part in these activities to carry out their goals of self-improvement, leadership development, professionalism, community service, career development, public relations, student cooperation, safety, and health.

Some of BPA's other major programs include the National Leadership Academy, National Officer elections and scholarships. The Torch Awards Program and BPA Cares Program recognize students and chapters, respectively, for their leadership and service to their chapter and community.







## Illinois DECA

Illinois DECA had over 3,300 members in 2022-23, an increase of over 10% from the previous year. It was recognized by the national organization for its growth. The state conference was attended by 1,200 members. Eighty-two percent of those competing at state events showed competency in events. Over 300 students advanced to the International Career Development Conference in Orlando, Florida.





## Illinois FBLA

The Illinois Future Business Leaders of America had an extremely successful and busy month in November. The Illinois Fall Retreat, Illinois FBLA's annual leadership development and networking conference, was held in Bloomington-Normal Nov. 5-6. Members heard from guest speaker Rhett Laubach, owner of Your Next Speaker LLC, in an engaging and informative environment with over 300 members in attendance. Many workshops were

conducted in competitive events and team building. There was even a parliamentary procedure workshop hosted by Illinois State President Yash Sharma and Illinois State Parliamentarian Jahnvi Kolli. Additional networking and team-building activities were held at other locations, such as the local favorite Bloomington Children's Discovery Museum. The following week, over 50 members from five chapters from across Illinois attended FBLA's National Fall Leadership Conference in Denver, Colorado. These chapters were from Warren Township High School, Champaign Central High School, Mount Vernon Township High School, Woodlawn High School, and Wauconda High School. This conference, which was held Nov. 10-12, welcomed over 1,400 members from 27 states across the country. The Illinois team was able to connect with the national officer team and participated in daylong educational and applied tracks to explore their leadership and business interests. Bryant Collier, a renowned leadership development trainer, accented the opening and closing sessions as a keynote speaker.





## Illinois FCCLA

The Illinois Association of FCCLA had a busy year. In April, nearly 1,000 members and guests attended the annual State Leadership Conference and Competitions. Over 500 students took part in more than 65 different career preparation and proficiency events. Five students from across the state were elected to serve as state officers for the 2023-24 school year. They are Tanner Bishop from Mount Pulaski High School, Michael Collman from Alton

High School, Serena Raimer from Chrisman High School, Kaylee Ruff from Shiloh High School, and Sarina Voegel from Sullivan High School.

Ninety-five members, advisers and guests from Illinois attended the National Leadership Conference in Denver, Colorado, July 2-6. Sixty-six members participated in Students Taking Action with Recognition (STAR) events, bringing home 12 gold, 47 silver, and 7 bronze medals. Illinois was proud to have 11 Top 10 Finalists among the winners, with Julie Horvath from West Aurora finishing second in the nation in Interior Design and Adelia Sandifer from Alton finishing first in the nation in the Public Policy Advocate event.

The Illinois FCCLA Summer Leadership Camp was held in Springfield on July 9-11. Keynote speakers included Jacob Meisner from Mahomet, and Jacqueline Meisner from Blue Ridge. Campers worked in teams to strengthen their leadership skills and share their ideas for membership recruitment, community service projects and competitive events. One of the highlights of the camp was the FCCLA Olympics. The Illinois FCCLA



state officers attended the Illinois Coordinating Council for Career and Technical Student Organizations Summer Seminar at the end of July. During the seminar, the officers gained valuable leadership skills along with touring the Governor's Mansion and holding a debate in the Senate Chambers of the Illinois State Capitol. An eventful school year is underway with six leadership conferences being held across the state in the fall and the annual State Leadership Conference and Competitions set for April 11-13, 2024. The theme for this year is FCCLA Thrill of a Lifetime.







## Illinois FFA

Illinois FFA is led by a team of five student officers often referred to as the “Major State Officers.” They work closely with a team of 25 section presidents, who are elected to serve their area of the state. This year’s “Majors” and section presidents are working toward the goal set by their state theme. The goal is for all Illinois FFA to be “United as One.” The “Majors” led members through a variety of leadership development opportunities this year, including the

annual chapter visits. This year’s chapter visits are expected to include more than 9,000 students from 340 schools while traveling more than 23,000 miles. Members experience phenomenal personal growth during chapter visits, as they are challenged during team-based workshops and group-led reflections and are tasked to set personal goals. In this year’s workshop, students are working to open a “lock box.” The clues to the locks are related to the three main categories of opportunities available to FFA members. These three categories are classroom, work-based learning, and FFA. The students are then asked to reflect on what is important to them by coming up with a “core value.” The students receive a card that they use to record their “core value” along with a few goals they must conclude the visit. Over 2,000 members will then have the chance to further their leadership development at a series of conferences

held at nine different Illinois colleges and universities. Illinois Central College, Southeastern Illinois College, Sauk Valley Community College, Lincoln Land Community College, and Rend Lake College will each host a newly developed leadership conference for middle school members. A conference center in Springfield along with Southern Illinois University – Carbondale, Western Illinois University, and Joliet Junior College will host a conference titled “Ground Zero” for 9th and 10th graders. Illinois State University will also host a conference titled “Becoming United in Leadership Development” (BUILD) for 11th and 12th graders.

This year’s 2023 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, was another highlight for Illinois FFA. Our state was well represented on the convention stage. Illinois had many awards and spotlights, including, but not limited to, winners of National Career Development Events, the National Agriscience Fair, National Proficiency Awards in various student-project areas, and by our student candidate, Adam Loker, in the National FFA Officer selection process. FFA members support strong connections to the agricultural industry. Illinois FFA officers have regular visits with major agricultural organizations like Illinois Farm Bureau, Compeer Financial, Farm Credit Illinois, and many of the Illinois Commodity organizations. FFA also hosts a variety of competitive, career-oriented career development events (CDEs). These events are hosted at all organizational levels, from intra-school to state and national competitions. Over the past school year, participation in these events rose by more than 20%, in large part due to the funding supplied to allow every student enrolled in agricultural education to join the FFA, removing the financial barrier for student engagement. Over 23 different state FFA events developing students’ potential for career success range from topics such as Agronomy and Livestock to Parliamentary Procedure and Agricultural Sales.







Looking to the future, Illinois FFA is making strides to adapt and overcome present challenges and goals. Chapter Representative Engagement Webinars continue to be a key method of engagement statewide. CREW meetings enable local chapter members to engage in the ongoing committee process, wherein student leaders assess current topics and questions facing the organization to make recommendations for change at the annual State Convention. The Illinois FFA Board of Directors also continues to operate an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force designed to continue developing and maintaining an inclusive community. This board is made up of students and guided by an adult board of teachers, staff, and collegiate representatives.





## Illinois HOSA

The year started with the Fall Leadership Conference held October 17, 2022, with 189 students and 34 advisors present. Students took part in leadership and team building exercises led by the state officer team and keynote speaker, Kelly Barnes. Advisors participated in a best practices workshop and in networking opportunities.

The State Leadership Conference was held March 1-3, 2023. There were 1,231 attendees. Matt Matkovich and Phil Januszewski from M & P Presentations delivered the keynote address on the first night. Students participated in 62 different competitive events and the top three finishers in each event qualified for the international competition. Schroeder's DJ services supplied the entertainment for the social event held at the end of the competitive events.

The International Leadership Conference was held at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center in Dallas, Texas. Illinois HOSA had 244 attendees in 90 events and 13 activities. Illinois HOSA had 33 top ten finishers, including five top three finishers. A full list of winners is below. State Officers Samaira Alur and Arushi Bhatia, and 2022-23 State Officer Theodore Retsinas served as voting delegates for Illinois. Advisors were offered CPDUs for aiding with events and/or attending workshops. The HOSA reference material, Biotechnology: A Laboratory Skills Course, was bought for each chapter. The final membership was 2,872 from 52 different chapters.





## Illinois SkillsUSA

SkillsUSA Illinois is focused on becoming the solution provider to our Business Partner Network and schools/ communities across the state. SkillsUSA Illinois continues to align program offerings to state models to show how programs meet and fulfill requirements. This report is outlined based on SkillsUSA program alignment to the Illinois State Board of Education's Continuum of Employer Engagement and Work-based Learning

Experiences. Through the success of Illinois' Elite Career Competitions, the SkillsUSA Illinois Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship, and our continuous work with agencies like the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), SkillsUSA Illinois has created opportunities for students across the state that are unparalleled to other experiences and are truly changing our business partners and their hiring challenges. All programming is routed in the SkillsUSA Framework. Developed based on the feedback of over 1,000 employers from across the nation, these are the top 17 essential skills industry has determined to be needed from a successful new hire. Each essential element has intentional standards and learning outcomes to which all programming is aligned. These are equivalent to classroom learning standards for SkillsUSA programming.

As a student-run organization, the state officer team is a critical part of SkillsUSA. The impact on the state is directly tied to the hard work and dedication of the state officer team which was represented by the following students:



- Ashley Booher, Fox Valley Career Center
- Alondra Diaz, Technology Center of DuPage
- Connor McCleverty, Peotone High School
- Trinity Muszynski, Lockport High School
- Brent Paller, Lockport High School
- Ola Stepien, Technology Center of DuPage

These incredible leaders promoted SkillsUSA to schools around the state, met with industry leaders to discuss why employer involvement is so critical to success, and met with elected leaders and government officials to discuss the need for contiguous investment in Career and Technical Education and SkillsUSA Illinois.





## Illinois Technology Student Organization (TSA)

The Illinois Technology Student Association was established in 1978 and is the oldest Career and Technical Student Organization in the United States. TSA's membership includes more than 250,000 middle and high school students across the United States. TSA is supported by educators, parents, and business leaders who believe in the need for a technologically literate society. Members learn

through exciting competitive events, leadership opportunities, and much more. A wide range of activities makes TSA a positive experience for every student. The IL-TSA competitive events are divided into two levels of competition, Level I for students in middle schools including grades 6-9, and Level II for students in grades 10-12. These levels allow for participation of members in competition with students nearly their own age and skill level.







## State-Recognized CTSOs

Science Olympiad and Educators Rising were identified as state-recognized CTSOs in FY 2020, which allows districts to use their state and federal CTE funds to support CTE student participation. ISBE worked with state student organizations in FY 2023 to provide leadership and team-based challenges related to the seven Illinois endorsement areas to expand opportunities for students in assigned CTE programs. Each organization can

offer student memberships, team-based challenges, and competitions in alignment with CTE programs.





## Illinois Science Olympiad

Illinois Science Olympiad (ISO) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of science education, increasing student interest in a variety of science disciplines, and providing recognition for outstanding achievement in science education of students, teachers, and community coaches. The Illinois Science Olympiad program supports Illinois school districts, teachers, and parent participants through classroom activities,

facilitating training workshops and encouraging intramural, district, regional, state, and national tournaments.

ISO tournaments are rigorous academic interscholastic competitions that consist of team events. Students on teams of 15 take part in 23 challenging and motivational events throughout the school year in preparation to display their knowledge and skills during competition. The events are designated by the National Science Olympiad committee and are balanced between those requiring content knowledge in various science specialties, scientific process skills, and the application of practiced knowledge and skills.

ISO has divided the state into 10 regional competition sites. Participating schools send team(s) of 15 students to a local tournament site to compete in all 23 events on a Saturday in March. Each event is evaluated according to the scoring criteria published in the National Rules Manual. The student event team earning the highest scores in each event receives a medal according to their overall rank. The individual event rankings of all events are then combined to determine the overall score for the entire team. A predetermined number of teams from each region advances to the State Tournament at the University of Illinois in April. The top two teams in both the middle school and high school divisions then represent Illinois at the National Tournament.





## Educators Rising

PDK International's Educators Rising program was developed by teachers for teachers, with the generous support of the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. It emphasizes fundamental professional practices that are critical for the next generation of aspiring teachers to develop and take their first steps on the path to realizing their full potential.

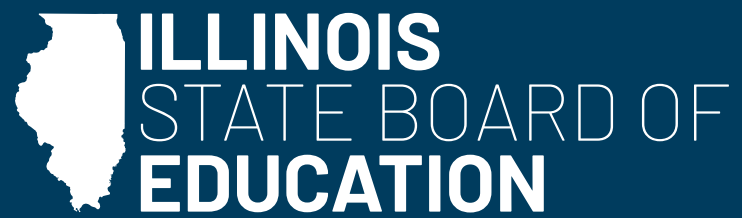
The program is a centerpiece of a “grow your own” teacher recruitment strategy. Educators Rising is a community-based initiative in which chapters at schools feed teacher preparation programs at institutes of higher education with the support of district leadership, State Departments of Education, and local philanthropists. These entities come together to provide pathways to grow and diversify the profession.

More than 52% of Educators Rising student members are students of color. This is the national average as ethnicity data is currently unavailable at the state-level Educators Rising Illinois Memberships. In 2022, there were about 25 chapters established in Illinois. In the 2022-23 school year, 104 schools had registered chapters and 48 of those chapters had students with registered memberships; 152 registered teacher leaders; 477 students who were registered Educators Rising members. Educators Rising Curriculum Access for Illinois in the 2022-23 school year showed 88 schools signed contracts for Educators Rising curriculum access to the curriculum.

In the spring of 2023, the second annual state conference with over 700 students registered and over 800 people in attendance provided students and educators with professional development sessions.

Educators Rising students also have access to a suite of activities throughout the year. They focus on a different discussion topic each month and provide guided discussion questions to help students explore some of the most pressing issues facing educators today. Additionally, there is a focus on a different standard each month, with standards-based activities provided by the national office to help provide students with a deeper understanding of the tools needed to be an excellent teacher.





[isbe.net/CTE](https://isbe.net/CTE)