



THE ACADEMIES
OF RACINE



2020-2021 Annual Report





Greetings Academies of Racine stakeholders,

My first year as the Chair of the AoR Steering Committee was challenging. One of the two pioneers who was the backbone of the development and implementation of the AoR, Dan Thielen, took a new job outside Racine Unified School District, and the other pioneer, Matt Montemurro, completed his term as the Chair of the Steering Committee. Then we all had to deal with a worldwide pandemic that shut down our schools, businesses and social lives.

However, I must give respect to the Racine Unified School District staff, especially Jody Boyer, who took over as the new Chief of Schools and the Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee. Our school district under the leadership of Dr. Eric Gallien had to completely change how they educate our children.

These challenges gave all of us the opportunity to slow down as a Steering Committee and reflect on what we’ve accomplished over the past five years and how we can better support RUSD. Our major accomplishments were:

- Development of Academies of Racine as a Ford Next Generation Learning community.
- Identification of intentional and relevant work-based learning experiences, along with community workforce needs.
- Establishment and maintenance of powerful partnerships with community partners.
- Focused college and/or career readiness through academic planning, early college credit and industry certification offerings, and real-world opportunities and applications.
- Growth of Youth Apprenticeship programming through a robust relationship with RAMAC and community partnerships.

Moving forward, I’m asking for a re-commitment from all Steering Committee members and stakeholders to provide the necessary guidance and resources to take the Academies to the next level. We are starting an official partnership with Carthage College to help with all incoming Freshmen and also implementing a middle school component, which is vital to students’ transition into high school.

I am excited about the future of the AoR, our Steering Committee and our children! And most of all I truly appreciate all of you. Your commitment to Racine County’s future workforce makes #RACINESTRONG!

I look forward to working with all of you this upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Ahmad K. Qawi
Chair, Academies of Racine Steering Committee

Racine Unified launched the Academies of Racine at Case, Horlick and Park High Schools in 2016 to better prepare students for college and the workforce. The Academies offer small learning communities or pathways that provide real-world experiences with local businesses and professionals. Each Pathway prepares students for specific career areas by connecting regular high school coursework to college and career opportunities after graduation. Students select a pathway their freshman year and study it for the next three years, earning college credits and nationally-recognized industry certifications along the way. Students enrolled in the Academies of Racine are also able to take rigorous Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, join a variety of clubs and activities depending on their talents and interests and participate in athletics.

Inside you will find:

A note from AoR Leaders.. 4

The Academy Experience 6

The Academies of Racine - Case 8
International Baccalaureate School
Student population: 1,705

The Academies of Racine - Horlick.....10
Offering AP Seminar and AP Research
Student population: 1,317

The Academies of Racine - Park..... 12
SME Education Foundation PRIME School
Student population: 1,089

Friends of Education.....14

A Note from Our Business Partners..... 15



Want to get involved? Contact us today!

*Job Site Tours • Guest Speakers • Job Shadowing • Pathway Mentors
Internships and Youth Apprenticeships*

If you would like to find out how your organization can get involved with the Academies of Racine, please contact one of our High School Academy Coaches.

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(262) 664-8762

Jennifer Sus
Horlick High School Academy Coach
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Kelli Steenrod
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A Note from Academies Leaders

To our RUSD stakeholders, partners and community,

It is an honor and pleasure to write to you on behalf of the Racine Unified School District. My name is Alex DeBaker. I am the Executive Director of Academies and Transformation and a proud graduate of J.I. Case High School. In fact, I started my career at Case as a manufacturing and engineering teacher in 2008 and have called RUSD home ever since. In 2019, I became the Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator, working with our high school students to experience and gain skills in a real work environment. Now, I am proud to serve our Academy high schools as the executive director focused on moving the Academies of Racine forward.



It has certainly been a wild year! As you know, in March 2020, our doors were forced closed and education as we knew it changed forever. But, together, our staff rose to the challenge and continued to provide our students with robust and engaging learning opportunities from home. The unexpected challenges of navigating another school year under the shadow of COVID-19 made teaching and learning difficult for everyone. But, with the help of our community and business partners and the grit of our staff, we have been able to hold true to the mission and vision of the Academies of Racine. Although still remote, this fall, we hosted our signature Academy events like the SEE Your Future Expo, Reality Check Day, the Academy Showcases, welcomed guest speakers and offered many other experiential learning

opportunities. Our students also battled the pandemic on the frontlines by working as youth apprentices at pharmacies, manufacturers and restaurants. This year, we celebrate **124 youth apprentices** between our three Academy high schools.

This summer we continue to develop new opportunities for our students and community as we work with local employers to offer externships for our teachers to spend time in local businesses. These offerings will help bridge what's happening in our classrooms to the real world and allow our community to see what the Academies of Racine are all about. We will also work from within to support our students' work experiences. RUSD plans to hire up to 12 youth apprentices and start a new Grow Your Own Education Internship for our Education Pathway in an effort to build a teacher talent pipeline.

We welcome the end of this trying year and look ahead to the success and continued celebration of our students' achievements in the years to come.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment. The next several pages are filled with success stories, highlights and future plans and goals. I hope you take a few minutes to read through them and celebrate all that we have accomplished and what's yet to come!

In partnership,



Alexander DeBaker
Executive Director of Academies & Transformation

Dear Academies of Racine community,

Wow - what a year it has been! My name is Daryl Burns, proud Deputy Chief of Schools for Racine Unified School District's high schools. I started at RUSD in July of 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Since that day I have jumped in and been hard at work! However, until now, I've not had the opportunity to formally introduce myself. It is my honor and privilege to share with you the successes and triumphs the Academies of Racine have celebrated over the last year, especially when the odds have seemed stacked against us.

For the last several months, I have watched our students and staff exercise perseverance and resilience, overcoming each challenge they've encountered. Together, we are truly transforming the educational experience of students in Racine by connecting our students with their community, developing home-grown talent, and reinventing what it means to be college, career and life ready.



I'm so very proud of the work our principals, teachers, staff and students have accomplished. In June, we celebrated 1,000 Academies of Racine graduates from Case, Horlick and Park High Schools. This Class of 2021 was our second class to graduate having participated fully in our Academy program. Together they earned **more than \$7,473,000 in scholarships** and benefited from hands-on, real-world learning experiences.

On behalf of the Academies of Racine team, I would like to thank our business partners for their continued support especially during this past year as we spent most of the school year learning remotely, finding new and interesting ways to engage and inspire our students. Through dedication and teamwork we not only adapted but



prevailed, constantly demonstrating flexibility, promoting innovation and giving our students the robust and creative learning environments they deserved.

We fully recognize that we couldn't have done it alone. Our community partners saw our need and stepped up in innumerable ways to make learning successful for our students. Some partners hired youth apprentices while others participated in virtual speaking opportunities or donated their time and talent to our SEE Your Future Expo. We are fortunate to be part of a community of people who understand the importance of cultivating student success. Your leadership is paramount and we sincerely appreciate your continued engagement and support.

In the upcoming year we are focused on moving the Academies of Racine from implementation to sustainability, continuing this important work to promote community growth and prosperity by preparing students for future work and citizenship.

I invite you to read on and share in the successes of the 2020-2021 school year. It will only get better from here!



Daryl D. Burns Sr.
Deputy Chief of High Schools

The Academy Experience



Grade 9: The Freshman Academy

- The Freshman Seminar course allows students to explore careers and other areas of interest while learning soft skills that are needed to be successful in the workforce.
- The See Your Future Expo gives students a chance to connect with local employers and businesses to explore career opportunities available to them after high school. In 2020, the expo went virtual and featured 62 career awareness videos and 28 panel discussions with 98 professionals from 36 organizations.
- Students tour college campuses and learn more about post-secondary opportunities in our community.
- Freshmen select an academy and pathway on Declaration Day.
- New in 2020-21, Freshman Seminar teachers at the Academies of Racine - Case had students complete a Career Pathway Assessment to see how their personalities and strengths aligned with their chosen pathways.
- Students begin attending guest speaker events which continue through each year of their Academy experience.



Grade 10: Expanding Exposure

- Students encouraged to join student organizations relevant to their pathways.
- Sophomores visit local businesses for realistic views of the world of work.



Grades 11 & 12: All About Opportunities

- Juniors further explore workplaces through job shadowing.
- Students can save money on tuition and get a jump start on a college education by earning college credit in high school.
- Students can earn industry certifications and credentials by taking classes and getting workplace experiences.
- The Workplace Learning Program offers students mentored, on-the-job training.
- Annual Opportunity Fairs hosted at each high school.





Homegrown and Healthy

Horticulture students at the Academies of Racine - Case are helping community members get their hands on healthier foods. It all started as a project to learn more about food deserts and where they exist in Racine. Teachers Rebecca Sorenson and Matt Mitnacht then had the students brainstorm how they could help address the issue. They decided to plant fresh vegetables and fruits at school and then bring the plants home to start their own gardens, add to a community garden or share with neighbors.

Students also built their own bee hives with construction teacher Ron Haisler, filled them with three pounds of Italian bees from Georgia and learned how to harvest their own honey. The goal is to expand the project next year with various community members.

Available Pathways

Academy of Computer Science, Education & Technical Services Pathways
Computer Science • Construction • Education
Manufacturing • Engineering

Academy of Health Sciences Pathways
Biomedical Sciences • Health Sciences

Academy of Business and Culinary Arts Pathways
Business • Accounting • Marketing • Culinary Arts



The Educational Experience

- Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) hosted three blood drives saving a potential 168 lives.
- A team of computer science, engineering and business students placed second in the inaugural Tech Prize contest.
- Case students volunteered 126 hours to the VITA tax program this year, bringing \$37,304 in refunds back to the Racine Community.

College Bound and Certified

She's a certified pharmacy technician, has trained first-year college interns at Good Value Pharmacy in Racine and she just graduated from the Academies of Racine - Case. Her name is Tijana Nedeljkovic and she is one of the Academies' youth apprentices.

"I would 100 percent recommend it," Nedeljkovic said of the youth apprenticeship program. "It's a grown-up job."

As a youth apprentice at Good Value Pharmacy, Nedeljkovic earned college credit, learned personal skills and received on-the-job training that put her far ahead of her peers.

"I would 100 percent recommend it," Nedeljkovic said of the youth apprenticeship program. "It's a grown-up job."

"The expectation is that they're able to process the prescriptions, help a patient out. I have the same expectations for them as I would the college students," said Brian Bock of Good Value Pharmacy. "They are doing the exact same thing. It's an awesome program. I came from a private school so I didn't have these opportunities."

Nedeljkovic says the biomedical classes she took at Case helped her on the job as much as the job is preparing her for her future.

"I learned to work a lot with people. I learned what I like and don't like in jobs," she said. "You learn so much about yourself, what you like in a work area and it just puts you one step closer to pursuing what career you think you want to do."

Nedeljkovic is heading to Carthage College where she plans to major in biology while continuing to work at Good Value Pharmacy. She is considering pharmacy school but also exploring other options.



Drone Program Ready for Launch

“The sky’s the limit.” It’s a cliché saying, but at the Academies of Racine - Horlick it’s completely true. The school announced in 2021 that the Academy of Health Sciences and Aviation would be adding a drone program. It’s all thanks to a grant from CNH Industrial.

The \$6,700 grant from the global industrial engineering company allowed aviation teachers James Bucholtz and Robbie Colum to buy a fleet of drones for students. A drone course will be available to aviation pathway students in the fall of 2021.

The course will introduce students to the various capabilities of drones and the careers associated with them, including delivery, rescue operations, agriculture, mapping, marketing, real estate and more. In addition, the class will help them get an FAA license to fly drones commercially, and ultimately, it will offer students more real-world experience that could help them fill in-demand jobs.



Available Pathways

**Academy of Education and
Technical Services Pathways**
Education • Construction • IT
Manufacturing • Engineering

**Academy of Health Sciences and
Aviation Pathways**
Health Services • Biomedical Sciences • Aviation

Academy of Business and Culinary Arts Pathways
Business • Accounting • Marketing • Culinary Arts



Crossing the Stage and Heading Straight for a Career

Each year at graduation time, families celebrate their kids heading off to college, joining the military or even taking a “gap year,” but it’s not quite as often that a graduate is celebrated for joining the workforce.

“I knew since I was younger that I always wanted to get into the trades,” said 17-year-old Joe Lynch. Now, he is. Just days before receiving his diploma, the 2021 Horlick High School graduate officially signed with Findorff Construction as an apprentice carpenter. His first job - the new RUSD Aquatic Center. In fact, he’s been on the job site for months.

“I already know the ropes,” Lynch said.

“I think he’s going to have a great career ahead of him,” said Mike Novak, project superintendent for Findorff.

Not only did Lynch land a job, he has no student loan debt and is already making a good wage. At his signing ceremony, Lynch’s dad joked it wouldn’t be long before his son would be making more than him. If you’re wondering how much, Novak said Lynch could easily pull in six figures.

The Academies of Racine are all about “My choice. My future.” and it appears Lynch will have a great one.

“We didn’t do anything like this when I was going to school,” Novak said. “I had no idea. I stumbled into the trades and it’s been a good career for me.”

Lynch is expecting the same. He said he already has a sense of pride driving by the aquatic center and telling friends he’s helping build it. And who knows what next? Findorff has high rises, hospitals and even schools in the works.



“We didn’t do anything like this when I was going to school,” Novak said.

The Educational Experience

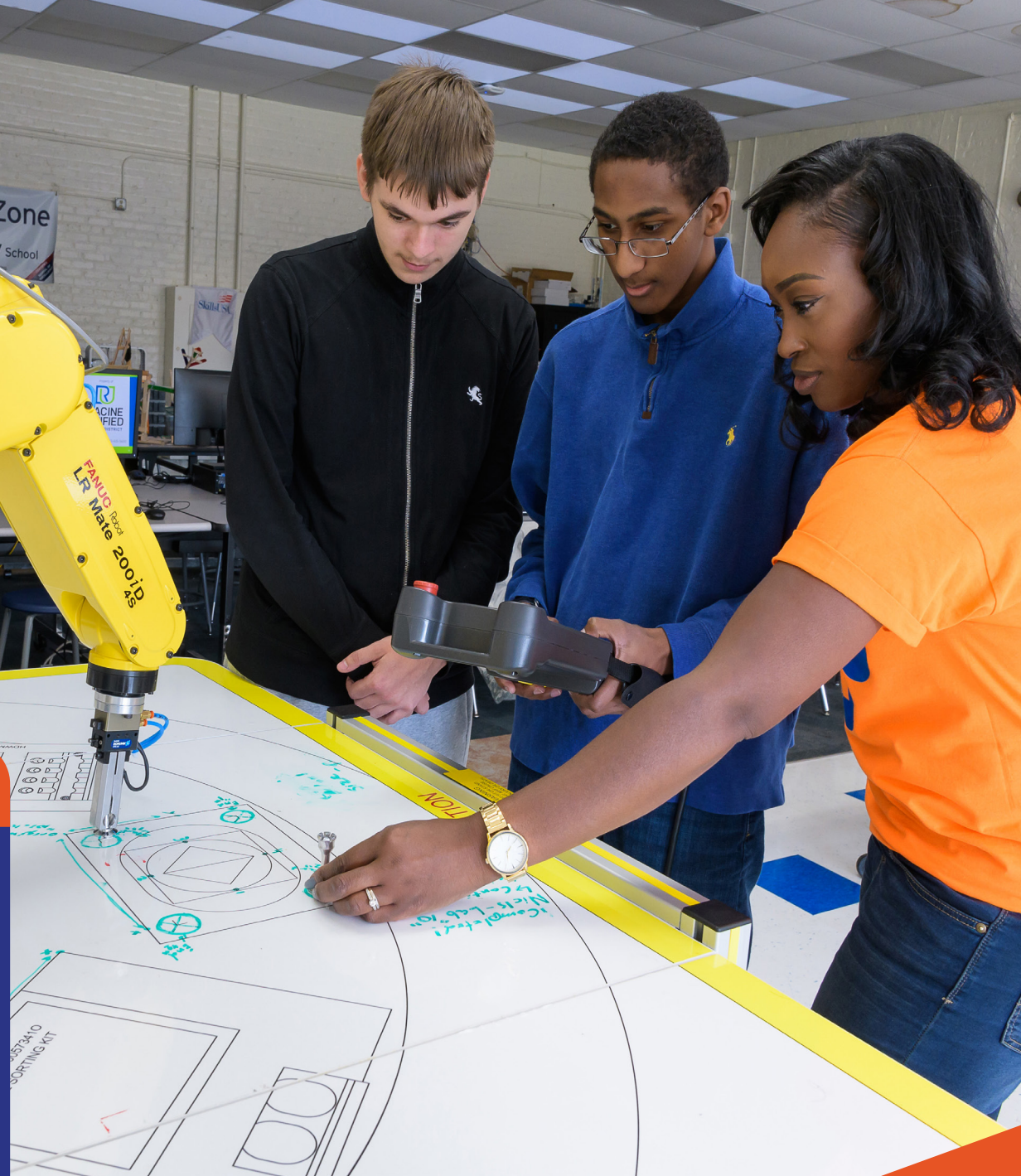
- Haribo of America representatives visited The Academies of Racine - Horlick. A partnership with them will enhance Horlick’s Manufacturing Pathway in the fall of 2022.
- Construction Pathway students had a chance to earn 10 OSHA certifications.
- More than 100 Business, Marketing and Accounting students took part in a 10-week Stock Market Game. The top five students earned more than \$4.5 million on paper.



Imagine, Invent, Inspire

In 2021, the Academies of Racine at Park High School placed a special emphasis on increasing the number of female students in its STEM pathways and Valerie Freeman is leading the way. Ms. Freeman is not only the instructor for the Robotics and Manufacturing pathways in the Academy of Leadership, Automotive and Technical Services, she's on the Board of Directors for SME Prime. SME Prime is a national organization focused on promoting manufacturing education in schools. Ms. Freeman is the first woman of color and teacher on SME Prime's Board of Directors.

This year Ms. Freeman also spoke at the Girls Empowered by Math and Science (GEMS) Conference at UW-Parkside, reaching more than 600 middle school girls about the opportunities that exist in STEM-related fields. Her current classrooms feature a robotic arm, robots in various sizes, a tabletop mechatronics system, an AC/DC electrical training system and other cutting-edge technologies.



Available Pathways

Academy of Leadership, Automotive and Technical Services Pathways
JROTC • Automotive • Construction
Manufacturing • Engineering

Academy of Health Sciences and Education Pathways
Health Services • Biomedical Sciences • Education

Academy of Business and Culinary Arts Pathways
Business • Accounting • Marketing • IT • Culinary Arts



Making the Connection: from Flow Technology to Aerospace Engineering

When Esther Lopez started her high school career at the Academies of Racine - Park, she knew two things. She was interested in technology and enjoyed creating things. So when it came time for her to declare an Academy and Pathway her freshman year, the choice was pretty simple.

"I decided to do the engineering pathway in the Academy of Leadership, Automotive and Technical Services," Lopez said.

This choice would eventually lead her to a youth apprenticeship at Badger Meter. The global manufacturing company focuses on flow measurement technology for water utilities, municipalities and others with career opportunities ranging from agriculture and engineering to IT and finance. Lopez found herself working as an electronic technician, often working in quality control. While this isn't where her true interest lies, she says she has benefited from the experience.

"I get to see other people work, and what I'm doing and how it benefits other people in other places. Maybe it isn't the path I'm going to take, but I get an idea of what it's like and it does genuinely interest me because now I know for sure what I want to do," she said.

Lopez says the experience has also opened her eyes to career opportunities in Racine she didn't know existed.

"The work environment is good," she said. "I could see myself working here sometime."

"These talent pipelining programs and youth outreach programs are so important to us," said Melissa Palmen, Talent Development Specialist for Badger Meter. "Hopefully they join our workforce and if not, we are still able to prepare them for it."



"These talent pipelining programs and youth outreach programs are so important to us," said Melissa Palmen, Talent Development Specialist for Badger Meter.

The Educational Experience

- Automotive students no longer need to work on scrap engines thanks to a donation of 18 brand new engines from Briggs & Stratton.
- Biomedical Pathway students and the city of Racine worked together to grow and distribute produce in an effort to address food deserts in the city.
- Teacher in training! Mrs. Maguita Stroud is taking two classes at Gateway Technical College to further her knowledge of health care so she can share it with other RUSD health services teachers and students.

Connecting the Community to Classrooms

This year RUSD presented two Encore! Friend of Education Awards to community members and organizations who devote their time and talent to helping our students succeed. Their work is as admirable as their generosity is inspiring.

Kim Leslie and Ascension



Ascension has been an amazing partner with the Academies of Racine, offering engaging, hands-on learning opportunities for RUSD Health Services students and Kim Leslie is often the woman making those moments possible. As the community outreach and benefits coordinator for Ascension she has committed her time and talent to our students over the past five years to give them a taste of the possibilities that lie ahead in a healthcare-related field.

“Everything is ‘Grey’s Anatomy’ or ‘ER’ on TV,” said Leslie. “We are able to show students different exposure to healthcare careers and that there’s so much more than just doctors and nurses and there are so many different entry levels.”

Kim has helped arrange career fairs and tours for students at Ascension, a free health care clinic for the community where students were able to lend a helping hand and even hired students as Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) through the Health Youth Apprenticeship Program, but she says it’s only the beginning. She hopes to expand the youth apprenticeship program to occupational and physical therapy, provide additional job shadowing and more.

“I wish I had this when I was a kid! I probably wouldn’t have spent so much money on college,” Leslie said. “I think it’s a big thing to let the students see what we do have here in Racine, to know there are jobs, careers and organizations like Ascension that you can support a family on.”

Dean Popek, Racine Metal Fab



Dean Popek has had an instrumental role on the Academies of Racine Steering Committee and has been crucial to the Academies’ success. As CFO of Racine Metal Fab, he’s encouraged the company’s employees to donate their time and talent to RUSD youth, to learn about the Academies and even welcomes students in as youth apprentices.

“You’ve got to reach out to the students, you’ve got to reach out to that generation because they’re our future, our future workforce, the future of this company,” Popek said. “For the last 20 years or so manufacturing has been considered kind of a dirty, not great place to work. We’re trying to show them that yeah, there’s some of that here, but there are also great careers you can have that pay well plus all the benefits.”

When Racine Metal Fab brings students in as youth apprentices, they are exposed to all aspects of the company from engineering to shipping and receiving to office work.

“We get an opportunity to show the students and larger community what our company is about and maybe help with recruiting,” Popek said. “This is not a hugely time consuming thing and it’s not a huge cost and it really is an opportunity to give back.”



A Note from Our Community Partners



Gateway Technical College is proud to be the Convening Organization for the Academies of Racine and the first postsecondary institution in the Ford Next Generation Learning network to serve in this role since 2019. Serving in this role leverages the community’s resource investment for both RUSD and Gateway. Gateway’s close connection to local businesses benefits the Academies by expanding their pool of workplace sites willing to provide job-shadowing, internships, co-ops and other work-based learning opportunities. Recruiting tomorrow’s workforce talent starts in the Academies and Gateway will help more employers become involved by partnering for a better future. Additionally, with more than 70 career pathways that align with jobs and careers within our community, Gateway is in the perfect position to support the Academies of Racine with articulated college credit and related career planning. High school students earn Gateway college credit for classes taken through their chosen Academy. Complementing this is a school-supervised, work-based learning experience. By preparing students through both academic and related work-based learning they are building the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for career success.

The dual credit partnership between Gateway and RUSD saves both time and money for students as they accelerate their educational career. This past year, even with the impact of COVID-19 on remote learning, students and their parents saved more than \$328,000 in tuition costs. With those COVID-19 challenges that no one could anticipate, the determination and hard work of 525 Racine Academy students led to them earning more than 1,600 credits.

The Academy alignment shortens the time it takes for students to earn their college degree, reduces the cost of college and provides real-world experience with local employers, addressing the talent skills gap impacting our regional workforce. “Our RUSD academy partnership is transforming the way we are building a seamless educational experience for students at all levels,” stated Bryan Albrecht, president and CEO of Gateway Technical College. “From Kids Labs in elementary grades to earning college credit while in high school, students at all levels are benefiting from the Ford NGL Academy Model”.

To learn more about our role as convening organization, contact Sarah Schade (Kapellusch) at (262) 977-7977 or shades@gtc.edu.



Higher Expectations for Racine County is continuing to serve in their role as the Academies of Racine Collective Impact Partner. They are, among other things, working closely with the Academies in supporting both Racine Unified Schools and Labor Market data trends, advocating for the Academies model at local, state, and national levels, leveraging partnerships to address community-based issues, creating post-secondary alignment opportunities and providing other community assistance with a variety of stakeholders.

Higher Expectations strives to build rich connections within our community. We look forward to the continued collaborative gains that this partnership will have for our young people and the Academies of Racine!

To learn more about Higher Expectations for Racine County, contact Career Pathways Manager, Kristin Jenders at kristin.jenders@career2cradle.org.



Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce, RAMAC, is Racine’s Business Champion serving as a voice representing the common interests of every type of business organization in Racine – small and large, industrial and retail, for profit and nonprofit. In support of its broad and diverse membership base, RAMAC offers a variety of pro-business and pro-community programs and initiatives. These programs aim to improve the business climate and vitality of the greater Racine area. One such program is RAMAC’s continued support of the Academies of Racine.

Since the inception of the Academies of Racine, RAMAC has worked closely with RUSD to help align student learning pathways to high-demand careers. It has facilitated tours within our high schools, helping area businesses to witness first-hand the accomplishments of the Academies and learn how the business can benefit by their involvement. Activities often include classroom visits, guest speaking, and field trips to the business. RAMAC has also made teacher externships available to enable classroom teachers to spend time in businesses to better tailor their instruction in support of Academies’ goals.

RAMAC also serves as a fiscal agent for the Youth Apprenticeship Program, working closely with RUSD and the business community to create workplace learning opportunities. These opportunities are valuable to the students as they provide real-life experiences to help inform decisions about their post-graduation life. College or trade school? This career or not? Youth Apprenticeships help graduates make those decisions. RAMAC is also an active member of the Academies of Racine Steering Committee, which primarily advocates for these transformational opportunities for students. The committee makes decisions, advises and provides strategic oversight to mobilize the business community behind the Academies and helps cultivate deep community-wide ownership.

The link between business and education is a critical component of the success of both and thus the community as a whole. As the business community’s champion, RAMAC is a valuable partner in the success of Youth Apprenticeship and in the Academies of Racine.



**RACINE
UNIFIED**
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative Service Campus

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My Choice. My Future.

393 Total
Volunteers
Representing

183 Local
Organizations



124 Youth
Apprentices
Working at
94 Employers



Seniors earned
\$7,473,000
in scholarships



187
Employer and
Civic Partners



730 students
earned a total of
2,186 College Credits
for a savings
based on
enrollment of
\$367,372