



A Commitment to Rockford's Children

Memorandum of Understanding with Alignment Rockford

Every resident of Rockford has a vital interest in the success of Rockford Public Schools, the organization most broadly and deeply responsible for educating Rockford's rising generation. A well-educated citizenry is central to our community's economic vitality and social well-being.

Better academic skills paired with higher graduation rates are urgently needed to prepare students for employment and success in higher education. These factors are essential not only for creating a highly skilled workforce, but for securing a competitive position in today's global economy. More students graduating from high school who are better prepared for employment will also provide greater hope and opportunity for the 34% of Rockford's children who live in poverty.

In 2009, a diverse group of Rockford's civic, business, religious and educational leaders evaluated how other communities across the country have applied best principles and practices to raise educational aspiration and student achievement. The focus of the research was not on programs, but for community-wide systems focused on strategic school support.

The turnaround of public schools requires a broad and far-reaching collaboration of educational, political, corporate, religious, civic, social, and grassroots organizations faithfully working together to accelerate academic achievement and to increase educational attainment. Consequently, a public-private partnership named Alignment Rockford has been formed to coordinate this new approach to actively support public school students and leadership in Rockford.

NOW, THEREFORE, as officials of Rockford Public Schools District 205, the City of Rockford, Winnebago County, Alignment Rockford, and as leaders of higher education, business, faith, social service, and other community organizations, we, the undersigned, reaffirm that Rockford's children represent our most precious and promising resource and we commit our finest effort on their behalf.

We agree to work diligently to align community resources in support of the Rockford Public School District 205 leadership and strategic plans. We believe this concerted effort will have a positive impact on public school achievement, the well-being of our children, and the economic and social advancement of our community.

As we collaborate in this endeavor, we agree that the following leadership values will form the foundation for operational relationships:

1. We work with a spirit of unity – We agree to offer one voice on topics related to the alignment effort and to resolve conflicting agendas in committee.
2. Our relationships are based on trust – We understand that predictability, clear communication, and mutual support precede success in every challenging community endeavor.
3. Our focus is on our children's needs – We seek collaborative, student-focused solutions to barriers which impair academic achievement.
4. We promote life-long learning – We know that raising educational aspirations and attainment will result in greater economic prosperity for all in our community.