

# AlignmentRockford

*A learning community*

The greatest challenges facing Rockford are related to **public education** and its impact on our community. Truancy rates must be lowered, and student achievement and graduation rates need to rise. High poverty levels have a damaging effect on learning and social development. Too many of our children are unprepared for a successful life in an increasingly competitive world.

Our social and economic vitality depends upon accelerated achievement in public education, but the turnaround of public schools cannot be accomplished by the school district and teachers alone. Indeed, this critical endeavor can only be achieved by a **broad and far-reaching collaboration** of education administrators and teaching professionals, and political, corporate, religious, civic, social and grassroots entities faithfully working together to advance academic achievement and further educational attainment.

In 2009 a diverse group of Rockford's civic, business, religious and educational leaders evaluated how other communities across the country have responded to similar trends, with the objective of adapting **best principles and practices** in Rockford to increase academic aspiration and achievement. Based on what they learned from effective community models, a collaborative framework known as **Alignment Rockford** was formed to improve public education.

## Leadership Values

As those involved with Alignment Rockford collaborate in this important community endeavor, the following leadership values 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 private.
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.

## Committee Work

The work of Alignment Rockford is organized and conducted by committees. These specialized teams are led by community members and District 205 management who bring a diversity of expertise and a passion for public education. The committees are overseen by the Alignment Rockford board, their effort is guided by objectives, and their results are systematically evaluated. The committee process includes five phases:

1. *Tactical Planning* – In response to an unmet student need, the committee conducts research and creates a detailed plan to implement a pilot project that includes measures of effectiveness.
2. *Community Engagement* – Through an invitation to participate, community organizations are asked to join in the implementation of pilot programs.
3. *Implementation and Evaluation* – Communications between pilot program agencies and the committee ensures implementation fidelity and accountability. Effectiveness is regularly evaluated.
4. *Scaling Up* – Based on early success, the pilot is extended beyond the original scope.
5. *Institutionalization* – Once measured to be effective on a large scale, the program becomes integrated within the District 205 structure.

## Vision

Alignment Rockford envisions all students graduating from high school with marketable employment skills or enrolling in post-secondary education. They are eager to live, work, learn, create, and play in the Rockford Region as contributing adults.

## Mission

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

## Strategies

- Engage the partners
- Build and support the network
- Manage communications
- Evaluate and report results