

FORD NGL ASSESSMENT REPORT

FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Executive Summary
4	Background
4	The City of Freeport
5	Freeport High School
6	The Local Economy & Key Industries
7	Promising Legislation Supporting Career and Technical Education
7	Ford Next Generation Learning
10	Freeport: Overall Observations and Recommendations
10	Career and Technical Education Offerings
11	District Leadership
12	Employer/Community Engagement
12	Equity
13	Industry Certifications
13	Postsecondary Alignment and Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment
14	Scheduling
15	School Climate and Culture
16	Student Career Development
16	Student Leadership & Engagement
17	Work-based Learning Experiences
18	Working Across Disciplines
19	Freeport's Future: Ford NGL's Preliminary Ideas and Recommendations
20	Option 1: Implementing a Freshman Academy at Freeport High School
21	Option 2: Creating 21st Century Pathways Aligned with the Local and Regional Workforce
32	Option 3: Implementing College and Career Academies
36	An Approach to Transformation
37	Next Steps
38	Conclusion
41	Appendix



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Freeport, IL, requested Ford Next Generation Learning's (NGL) support in assessing the potential for a community-connected approach to education transformation in their community. Ford NGL completed a comprehensive assessment of Freeport's high school and community, including teaching and learning practices, CTE offerings, community engagement, and regional workforce needs. This assessment included preliminary research; an onsite visit in December 2017 with district and community stakeholders conducted by Paula Barkley and Sue Hubbard; and virtual meetings with district leaders. This is a report of findings and recommendations for career pathway design, academy implementation, and community-connected transformation of education that will serve as the basis for any future work with Ford NGL and partner organizations.

Based on our research, observations, and analysis, we believe Freeport is at a unique juncture and on the verge of community-connected transformation of education. The local and regional workforce presents various high-wage, high-skill opportunities for students. Community leaders, educators (secondary and postsecondary), and employers in Freeport are interested in transformation and see this moment in time as the stars aligning for what they refer to as the "seismic change" the community needs. There is widespread desire to strategically align city and school efforts toward achieving community prosperity and significant interest in career academies. With this in mind, Ford NGL identified three key options for Freeport. They include establishing a:

- [Freshman Academy at Freeport High School \(FHS\).](#)
- [21st century pathways at FHS aligned with the local and regional workforce.](#)
- [Career academies at FHS.](#)

The first two options can be implemented either separately or together, while the third option incorporates the first two and rises to the next level of transformation. We believe that Freeport would benefit from a strategic, scaffolded approach to planning and implementation. Ford NGL will be happy to discuss providing support for transformation should Freeport decide to move forward with any of the recommended options.



BACKGROUND

THE CITY OF FREEPORT

Freeport, IL is located in northwest Illinois in Stephenson County. It is approximately 25 miles west of Rockford and 120 miles northwest of Chicago. Freeport is known as Pretzel City, USA and has an estimated population of close to 25,000 people. In 2017, Freeport's Mayor, Jodi Miller, and the City Council came together with community stakeholders and department leaders for a series of meetings and a day-long planning session. Together they created a vision for 2030 and a list of priorities for 2018-2020. According to the new City Manager, Freeport is looking for a way to enact a "seismic shift" that will take advantage of the city's potential and sustain prosperity for years to come.

2030 VISION STATEMENT

Freeport is a destination of choice. Our innovative city, entrepreneurial economy, and vibrant, safe neighborhoods support an abundance of education, cultural and outdoor experiences for residents and visitors. Our community is connected, accessible and welcoming.

2030 MISSION STATEMENT

The City of Freeport is an engaged partner that helps foster entrepreneurship and a vibrant city by providing efficient, modern services to our community and opportunities for growth for all.

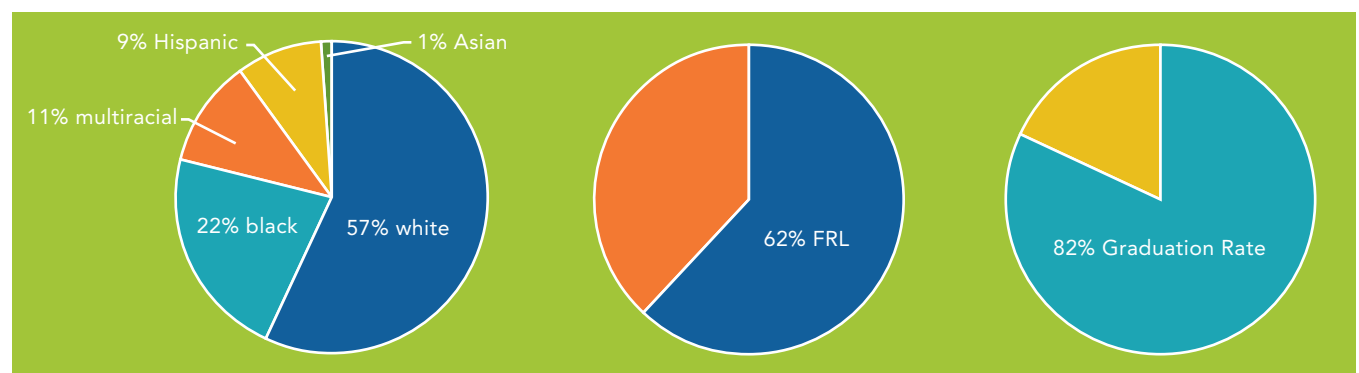
The City of Freeport 2030 priority areas include:

- Connected and accessible community (key ideas: partnerships; a voice for all; diverse groups working together to tackle challenges; and neighborhood engagement).
- Diverse and engaged citizens (key ideas: all are welcome and have access to opportunities to fulfill potential; and quality education).
- Premier education, arts, and culture (key ideas: quality educational opportunities for future leaders; and career training for all).
- Responsive, efficient government and public/private partnerships (key ideas: community empowerment; open channels of communication; public/private partnerships; and projects to enrich quality of life).
- Thriving entrepreneurial economy built on our makers heritage (key ideas: locally-focused economy; career opportunities; and encouraging entrepreneurship).

From our conversations, we learned that Freeport would like to revitalize their downtown area, including the “Maker’s Space,” green spaces, and biking trails. The city would like to attract manufacturing and business opportunities; build their reputation as a destination for arts and culture; positively impact economic development through tourism, community events, and downtown retail; and revitalize affordable housing in the area. Two areas of need that leaders emphasized to Ford NGL team members were developing a community voice and addressing local workforce needs by preparing people with 21st century workforce knowledge and technical skills.

FREEPORT HIGH SCHOOL

Freeport School District 145 has one high school, two middle schools, and six elementary schools, as well as one alternative high school and a transitional education facility. Freeport High School has approximately 1,100 students (57% white, 22% black, 11% multiracial, 9% Hispanic, and 1% Asian; 62% FRL) and an 82% graduation rate.





THE LOCAL ECONOMY & KEY INDUSTRIES

Stephenson County has a poverty rate of 21% and an unemployment rate of 4.7%. Agriculture is a strong contributor to the area's economy, with Stephenson County being the largest dairy-producing county in the state. There are several large manufacturing companies in Freeport, including Newell-Rubbermaid, Honeywell, and Titan Tire Company. Targeted industries in Stephenson County include: advanced manufacturing, healthcare products and services, agri-business, warehousing and logistics, and business and financial services. The most common industries in the area are healthcare and social assistance, manufacturing, retail trade, and education. Most jobs in the area are in administrative, sales, production, food service, and personal care services. Like in many areas, the highest paid jobs are in architecture and engineering, computer and mathematics, legal, health practitioners, and management. The highest paid industries overall are utilities, professional-scientific-tech services, finance and insurance, real estate, and education. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, close to 75% of those who work in Stephenson County also live within the county.

Freeport is located within the Rockford metropolitan statistical area (MSA), which has a poverty rate of 24.8%. Targeted areas in the MSA include advanced manufacturing (chemical manufacturing, industrial machines manufacturing, metals manufacturing, rail-related manufacturing), aerospace, automotive, customer service call center, food processing, healthcare, hydraulics, logistics and distribution, and alternative energy. The most common jobs within the MSA are in management, business, science, the arts, sales and office, and production and transportation. The highest paid jobs are among health practitioners, architecture and engineering, legal, and management. The most common industries within the MSA based on the number of employees are manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trades. The Rockford MSA boasts 4.2 times the national average employment in metals manufacturing and R&D. The MSA also boasts 3.4 times the national average employment in transportation equipment manufacturing and R&D, as well as 1.5 times the statewide average in engineer employment (50% higher than the US average).

PROMISING LEGISLATION SUPPORTING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (Public Act 99-0674) was signed into law in 2016 and supports four components:

1. Postsecondary & career expectations (PaCE) ([graphic](#))
2. College & career pathway endorsements
3. Transitional math courses
4. Competency-based learning systems

The PaCE framework concentrates on helping schools address career exploration and development; college exploration, preparation and selection; financial literacy; and accessing financial aid opportunities in an integrated way.¹ The legislation encourages employers to engage with schools to support the PaCE framework and provides resources to assist school leaders and employers in implementation. This legislative support and materials could prove incredibly helpful down the road for Freeport.

FORD NEXT GENERATION LEARNING

The following information provides context for Ford NGL's role in this process and sheds light on the framework that guided the team's analysis.

Ford NGL mobilizes educators, employers, and community leaders to prepare a new generation of young people who will graduate from high school ready for college, careers, lifelong learning, and leadership. Ford NGL students graduate prepared to compete successfully in the 21st century economy. The Ford NGL long-term outcomes inspire communities across the Ford NGL Network to embrace the Ford NGL Model for Community-connected Transformation of Education.



Young people prepared for college, careers, lifelong learning, and leadership



Community prosperity shared by all



Strengthened talent pipeline



Educational equity and justice for all



Capacity to contribute and go further

¹ <http://www.advanceillinois.org/pwr/>



The Ford NGL Framework is a blueprint that provides the foundation for a unique and comprehensive community initiative. The Framework brings together educators, employers, and community leaders to implement a proven model for transforming the secondary school experience so that students graduate with the skills to succeed at whatever comes next. These efforts ultimately improve the regional economic and workforce development systems. The Ford NGL Framework guides community work and includes tactics to create tangible systems, structures, and processes. The community then uses these resources to achieve community-connected transformation of secondary schools and a more focused alignment of community priorities and resources.

The Ford NGL Framework consists of a series of interwoven elements including the Ford NGL Three Strands; the Benefits they yield; and the Ford NGL Tactics for achieving those benefits. For each community, these elements come to life in a Ford NGL Community-connected Master Plan.



Career and interest-themed academies serve as the Ford NGL practice model for transforming the secondary school experience. As a strong advocate on behalf of academies, Ford NGL recognizes that most skilled employment now requires a foundation of academic, 21st century, and technical knowledge and skills. This knowledge and skill base must be mastered in high school and in postsecondary education. We believe that the most successful approach for high schools is one that infuses the high expectations and academic rigor of college preparatory academic programs with the real-world relevance and rigor of CTE. Such an integrated approach also promotes, supports, and accelerates a smooth transition to postsecondary education.

This approach can be carried out through academies. The academies may take several forms including multiple career academies and other themed programs within a large high school, a single-themed small or large high school, or an early-college high school. Early-college high schools typically blend high school with two years of college.



Regardless of their specific structure, all effective programs share the three following key characteristics.

- The career or thematic program of study selected by the student leverages an area of personal interest and integrates it with core academic knowledge. This integrated program of study is offered within a small learning community.
- The academies are not stand-alone “boutique” programs but are part of a district strategy to offer a portfolio of approaches (“multiple pathways”) so that every student has the opportunity to choose a program that fits a personal interest.
- The programs offer extensive real-world contact with adults currently working in the field or area of interest, and they enable students to earn dual enrollment and/or articulated college-level credits while still in high school.

The Ford NGL Community-connected Learning Continuum is an organizational tool for assessing academy readiness and for guiding implementation of Ford NGL tactics. To ensure successful implementation of the Ford NGL Framework, the district and community leaders must begin by taking a critical look at their current reality. Next, communities work together to put essential roles, structures, and processes in place to support future transformation and engage all stakeholder groups. At this point, the community comes together to create a Ford NGL Master Plan for transformation. This is accomplished through the first three phases of the Ford NGL Roadmap: Phase 1: *Explore*, Phase 2: *Envision*, and Phase 3: *Plan*. These foundational steps make it easier for communities to implement advanced tactics from the Continuum, such as project-based learning infused with systems and design thinking; interdisciplinary teaming and curriculum design; a variety of work-based learning experiences for students and teachers with local employers; challenge-based learning where students, teachers, and employers work together to address authentic, real-world problems; and student capstone and internship experiences.

With the Ford NGL Framework and experiences from the Ford NGL Network in mind, we considered the current reality of Freeport alongside community goals and identified strengths, areas of growth, and recommendations for the high school and community. The following observations and reflections take into account findings from our research and virtual meetings, as well as information gathered during the onsite visit in December 2017.



FREEPORT: OVERALL OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION OFFERINGS

OBSERVATIONS

The 2017-2018 course guide demonstrates that Freeport High School wants students to be proactive about their future careers. The course guide is aligned with 16 Career Clusters. It shows sample courses associated with each “Major Emphasis,” with job opportunities, and with local businesses in each emphasis area who are members of the Freeport Area Chamber of Commerce. In addition, FHS encourages all students to participate in at least one work-based learning opportunity for credit during their junior and/or senior year. These opportunities include job shadowing, mentoring/coaching, a summer work experience, or a volunteer work experience. These experiences are research-based. They show that staff members are interested in increasing career awareness for students; infusing career content into coursework; fostering the 21st century skills necessary in the workplace; and providing work-based learning experiences.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is offered through a consortium of six area schools called CareerTEC Schools. Freeport High School is one of these schools and offers around 50% of CTE courses within the consortium. Students have the opportunity also to take CTE courses at St. Johns United Church of Christ and at Highland Community College. CTE courses are available to all students who can accommodate them in their schedule, and about 30% of the students participate.

Through feedback gained on our visit from both administrators and students, we learned about some unfortunate realities. Many students, are reluctant to attend some classes through CareerTEC, because they do not want to leave the FHS campus. Students do not typically complete a sequenced pathway, and female students were underrepresented in typical male pathways like Auto and Construction. Although the courses appeared to teach relevant technical skills, there did not seem to be an emphasis on teaching professional and other work-readiness skills that are vitally important for the 21st century. Teachers covered the curriculum with some project-based learning (PBL) integrated into lessons. There is little departmental or school wide consistency, and integration of 21st century learning is often left to personal inclinations of teachers or limited to typical opportunities afforded in CTE courses.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- How much do the CTE teachers know in their content area? How current are they in a rapidly changing workplace? Are they still working part-time in CTE fields? Are they getting out into businesses through externships? CTE teachers need 21st century certifications and need to be current in their fields if they are going to prepare students for today's careers and those of the future.
- CTE through FHS and CareerTEC, including equipment, processes, and practices, should be aligned with local workforce needs.
- We recommend a strategic plan for 21st century pathway development at FHS aligned to workforce needs that could benefit students who choose not to go off-campus for CTE opportunities.

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

OBSERVATIONS

The district leadership team has been in place for three years, and the team feels empowered to enact change once they determine what they would like to do. We observed a high interest in transformation that will increase student engagement among district leaders and school staff members. Although district leaders communicate about instructional goals, there seems to be the lack of a shared vision for teaching and learning. One of the greatest challenges we observed was administrators incorporating staff in planning.

Administration at the high school level has been in place consistently for an average of 3-5 years, and all have previous teaching experience in the building. There appears to be strong consensus to do something different, which led to the decision to ask for Ford NGL's assessment and recommendations. The staff seems interested in being involved in the process of change and optimistic about the future for FHS. Several high school teachers were present at the business roundtable discussions.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Come together to discuss a shared vision for teaching and learning. What are your goals for students? For teachers? How might community members relate to this vision?



EMPLOYER/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OBSERVATIONS

Meaningful community engagement is emerging in Freeport as evidenced by a strong community strategic plan. However, there are no systems in place to help the school participate in addressing larger community needs, priorities, and goals. Employers reported a willingness to engage and were very enthusiastic, but at the school-level, very few teachers reported interacting with community members and employers. When there is interaction, we learned that the teacher is the main contact to engage businesses, and that they may not be prepared to work with business partners in meaningful ways. Employers indicated that they would like a more streamlined and intentional approach. We also did not observe any significant parent engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Establish a system for business engagement and interaction, whereby interested employers are connected with opportunities for engagement in the schools.
- Train teachers how to engage with business partners.
- Engage the business community in transformation planning and implementation. Employers are willing to participate.

EQUITY

OBSERVATIONS

We noticed a few barriers to equity in course access. First, in order to attend CareerTEC, students need at least a 2.0 GPA and 95% attendance. This is significant, especially for students who are disengaged because they do not see the relevance of their education. Students must also pass a placement exam to get into the community college in order to receive dual enrollment credit. This may limit students who do well in their CTE courses, but are not able to pass a test based on other subjects.

Our team also noticed that most ED students (Emotionally Disturbed students, who at FHS are in a self-contained setting) are African American males. One other barrier to equity that we observed was the entrance requirements and application for AVID. We understand the need to be selective with a program, but wonder whether the program might be very beneficial for students who do not have a good GPA, attendance records, or discipline. The good news is that FHS leaders are very aware that equity is an issue and see transformation as a vehicle for addressing these types of challenges. Also, research shows that career academies can make a significant positive impact on African American male students.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Are students provided with transportation to reach all CareerTEC courses?
- Is scheduling a barrier that could be addressed by holding more classes on campus or in sync with the campus offerings of the largest district in the CareerTEC consortium?
- Are there programmatic barriers above that could be lifted or adjusted?

INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS

OBSERVATIONS

Industry certifications are available for many students who attend CareerTEC. In addition, a key component of the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (Public Act 99-0674), which was signed into law in 2016, is College & Career Pathway Endorsements. These are already in the works for AFNR (agriculture, food, and natural resources); arts and communication; finance and business services, health and public services; health sciences and technology; information technology; manufacturing, engineering, technology, and trades; and multidisciplinary. On campus, career pathways are not formally developed, so students cannot earn career pathway endorsements while at FHS.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- How can Freeport leverage the endorsements offered through Public Act 99-0674? Are there any that are already in place?
- Once CTE pathways are aligned to workforce needs, business partners can help determine which certifications they respect. Will they hire graduates who attain those certifications? Of the CTE pathways currently in place, are they all respected and necessary within the industry?

POSTSECONDARY ALIGNMENT AND DUAL CREDIT/DUAL ENROLLMENT

OBSERVATIONS

We noticed a lot of postsecondary alignment and opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit. Students are able to earn an associate's degree by the time they graduate; the College Now Program allows students to enter college early; many CTE courses are linked to dual credit and dual enrollment at Highland Community College; and there are dual enrollment options for AP courses. HCC also provides information through the College and Career advisor for FHS students. Unfortunately, class schedules often do not align well with earning early postsecondary credit. We



OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

learned that the students who can fit a college credit class into their schedules, particularly through multi-period CTE courses, have to strongly desire the CTE pathway. That is because they typically must give up an on campus elective option in order to fit sufficient travel time to the CTE course into their schedule. Overall, however, we were very impressed by the options, articulation, and alignment. As far as postsecondary aspirations go, we learned from a 2017 survey of CareerTEC students that 46% planned to go to two-year college, 13% to a trade school, 34% to a four-year school, and 7% planned to go into the military.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- How might Freeport encourage more students to pursue dual credit and dual enrollment opportunities?
- To promote equity, are there ways to lift or adjust some of the barriers for students participating in dual credit and dual enrollment?

SCHEDULING

OBSERVATIONS

At FHS, students take classes through a 7-period day (~51 minute periods). Students earn one credit per course each semester, for a total of 14 possible credits by the end of each year (56 total possible credits over four years). Some courses are one semester and others are year-long. For graduation, Freeport requires students to earn 45 credits, including 8 semesters of English, 6 semesters of math, 6 semesters of PE, 4 semesters of science, 4 semesters of social studies, 1 semester of careers, 1 semester of consumer economics, 1 semester of health, 2 semesters of either music, art, foreign language, or technical education, and 13 semesters of elective credits. Unfortunately, many students do not complete CTE sequenced pathways, because FHS is limited by the number of elective courses they can fit into their current master schedule.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- A strategic plan for content recovery and credit recovery would allow more students to access CTE, AVID, and Career Center opportunities.
- What changes could be made around scheduling that might help more students complete CTE pathways?
- What changes could be made around scheduling that might help more students have time to pursue dual enrollment and dual credit courses and opportunities?
- What other scheduling options are available and feasible in Freeport (ex. block)?



SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

OBSERVATIONS

At FHS, students are very respectful to adults, and students and teachers seem to have good relationships. However, we noted an overall lack of engagement as we observed approximately ten different classrooms. As reported by the administration, attendance and tardiness are big issues. We observed the same as evidenced by the number of students arriving late to class and in the halls after the bell. This demonstrates a lack of student engagement and interest. If remedied, it would result in improved student attendance and timeliness.

During classes, we noted students were often on their phones and teachers were sitting behind their desks showing PowerPoint visuals. From conversations and observations, we believe that teachers felt like they were doing their jobs, because they were “teaching.” A disconnect was noted, as both students and teachers seemed disengaged from the teaching and learning process.

Teachers seem to be caught in the middle of a transition from traditional teaching methods to 21st century teaching and learning. For the most part they are still seeing themselves as those who impart knowledge and not as the facilitators of learning. We did not observe strategic and intentional student support, except from the principal and administrators. Teachers seemed to find out about students’ lives and struggles only through IEP or other formal meetings, as there is no common teaming time for teachers to communicate.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Help teachers develop a growth mindset, and foster student ownership for their own learning.
- Connect with counselors to help support students. A small learning community model would help strengthen student support tactics.
- Work on rigor in the classroom and teaching engagement strategies.
- Once teaching and learning practices change, implement a mentoring program for new teachers to bring them up to speed.
- Consider scaffolding professional development opportunities initially rather than overwhelming teachers with larger initiatives all at once; provide a continuum of high impact, high success opportunities for education, training, and support that will transform the classroom (e.g., PBL Splash prior to Project-based Learning).



STUDENT CAREER DEVELOPMENT

OBSERVATIONS

FHS students have several opportunities for career development and engagement including a CTE showcase, AVID, the CareerTEC Center, the online Career Cruising platform, and classroom guest speakers. In 9th grade, FHS students are introduced to the 16 CTE pathways during Careers, a required course. The Careers course teaches students study/preparation tools for academics and provides them with insight into their strengths, interests, and abilities to help guide them to a career pathway. We also noted that students are given opportunities to explore CTE options before course registration.

We observed a strong relationship between AVID students and student career development. Although all FHS students have access to a College and Career Center, we observed that only informed students (like those in AVID) utilized it regularly. We also noticed a stronger direction towards college than career, overall. From a career planning perspective, it was observed that AVID students create and maintain a portfolio, while non-AVID students do not. Although CTE students have some career planning, it appears that the majority of AVID and CTE students do not have a career plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Develop a strategic, scaffolded plan for college and career exploration. Include consistent and planned accessibility for all students.
- Explore student impact and engagement opportunities with guest speakers in the classroom. In addition to providing real world engagement, guest speakers may become role models or potential mentors.
- Expand efforts to secure internship opportunities so that more students are able to benefit from real world mentors and experiences.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

OBSERVATIONS

We were very impressed with the student panel presentation which demonstrated a strong potential for developing student leaders, but it does not appear to be a consistent practice to have students engaged in decision-making. Throughout the school, we found evidence of student leadership, 21st century skills, and postsecondary preparedness but mostly among AVID and NJROTC students. Unfortunately, not all students have the leadership training provided by AVID and NJROTC. Although the district funded AVID program is strong, students often drop the course in later grades in favor of other electives. That means students are unable to take advantage of the full AVID experience



and its benefits. We found some students in CTE classes showing 21st century skills, but this was not evident in other core classrooms.

Finally, we observed “invisible students.” While most students at FHS do not openly act out, many of them are disengaged in their classes. They are not disruptive to other students or disrespectful to adults, but they are quietly off task. For example, they were often on their phones, and teachers did not seem to respond to that and other off-task behavior. Overall, we found that the school is responding better to higher performing students and to those with special needs than to those in the middle.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Develop a strategic plan for teaching professional skills to all students to inform and build leadership skills.
- Transform teaching and learning from “sit and get” to facilitated learning which will offer both leading and following opportunities.

WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

OBSERVATIONS

FHS students have opportunities to build social capital, establish relationships, and engage with community partners through internships, guest speakers, CareerTEC, and IncubatorEDU. For example, students in CAD (Computer Aided Drafting) go out on internships 2-3 times per year, and while on our visit we did observe students asking high-level questions to a business partner, guest speaker. As noted above, FHS encourages all students to participate in at least one work-based learning opportunity for credit. However, the relationship building opportunities between students and adults from the community are not necessarily aligned with the community needs and the local/regional workforce. There does not seem to be a system in place to ensure consistent experiences for all FHS students. Based on a 2017 survey of CareerTEC students, 93% had opportunities for job shadows, field trips to industry partners, and college visits. Only 17% had participated in an internship.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Create a plan for student career exploration and work-based learning experiences. What should all 9th graders experience? What about career and work-based learning experiences during each of the 10th, 11th and 12th grades? Such a plan could be based on materials associated with the PaCE framework.
- What are current work-based learning experiences like? What do students gain from them? What would you like for students to gain from different types of work-based learning experiences? What would the students like to gain and experience?



WORKING ACROSS DISCIPLINES

OBSERVATIONS

We noticed an interest in changing academic teaching and learning. This was evident in the integrated math course we observed. It is seen as an accomplishment within the context of district-wide continuous learning and improvement, but we did not observe evidence of collaboration across disciplines or application with real world contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Is there any low-hanging fruit? Specifically, are there things that can quickly be addressed (if only with one or two teachers) that will expand interdisciplinary work? It might be interesting and productive to start conversations about what is possible. We suggest training to help teachers learn together in interdisciplinary teams, but facilitating some initial conversations could be beneficial and gauge teacher interest, attitude, and willingness.



FREEPORT'S FUTURE: FORD NGL'S PRELIMINARY IDEAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary goal is to achieve educational transformation that engages all learners and provides multiple options for them after high school. With this in mind, we recommend that Freeport stakeholders consider the following options: Freshman Academy; 21st Century Pathways; and College and Career Academies. These options can be implemented separately, or, for maximum impact, can be phased in and strategically implemented. Key tactics and components of each option are organized by the Ford NGL Strands.

OPTION 1: IMPLEMENTING A FRESHMAN ACADEMY AT FREEPORT HIGH SCHOOL

A freshman academy is a small learning community for freshman. It is set up as a “school within a school” with its own principal or assistant principal, counselor, team of teachers, and cohort of students. Table 1 includes recommendations organized by the Ford NGL Three Strands. We believe that Freeport is well on its way to implementing a Freshman Academy, particularly with all 9th graders already taking the careers course. The careers course seems similar to what we typically see within the Ford NGL Network through Freshman Seminar, mentioned below. This strategy is one of the first tactics typically implemented in Ford NGL communities and is one where many see great initial results among students and teachers.

Table 1: Freshman Academy Recommendations by Ford NGL Strand

Strand One Transforming Teaching and Learning	Strand Two Transforming the Secondary School Experience	Strand Three Transforming Business and Civic Engagement
Freshman seminar course focuses on self exploration, college exploration, career exploration, and transition.	Cohort Scheduling for students and teachers	Career exploration fair
Teacher team provides integrated instruction that includes core content standards, professional skills, freshman seminar course, and real-world exploration.	Dedicated academy principal, counselor, and team of teachers	Professional skills fair
Focus is trained on making a smooth transition to high school.	Distributed leadership to include teacher team leaders	Classroom speakers and mentors
Teacher team provides interventions for content and credit recovery, as well as social emotional support.	Room proximity	Externships for teacher teams
Emphasis is on hands-on learning.	Academy identity Events	Participation in academy identity events



OPTION 2: CREATING 21ST CENTURY PATHWAYS ALIGNED WITH THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL WORKFORCE

A pathway is a sequenced program of study within a certain career cluster. Typically, it is made up of 3-4 related CTE courses. Often, there is an introductory course followed by two or three increasingly specialized courses. For many students, a pathway culminates in a capstone experience or project, such as an internship or other intensive work-based learning experience, as well as an industry certification and/or dual credit. Table 2 shows an analysis of the 16 career clusters. It details how the courses offered through Freeport HS and CareerTEC align with the clusters, as well as relevant local industry/workforce information gathered through our research.

Table 2: Local and Regional Workforce and CTE Courses Offered at Freeport HS & CareerTEC

Cluster	Course Offered Through Freeport HS	Courses Offered Through CareerTEC (Consortium of 6 area schools, offered primarily at Freeport, HCC, St Johns)	Local Industry/Workforce Information
<p>Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources</p>	<p>Crop Science (HCC DC option) Food and the Environment Food Science Fruit and Vegetable Production Veterinary & Animal Science</p>		<p>Agribusiness is a targeted industry in Stephenson County. Stephenson County is the largest dairy-producing county in Illinois. Food processing is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA.</p>
<p>Architecture & Construction</p>	<p>Cabinetmaking & Millwork I Cabinetmaking & Millwork II Cabinetmaking and Millwork III Construction Trades I Construction Trades II Intro to Design Drafting Design Drafting II Technological Design Engineering Design/Workplace Exp Industrial and Home Maintenance</p>	<p>Construction Trades I (HCC DC) Construction Trades II Industrial Technologies (HCC DC)</p>	<p>Advanced manufacturing is a targeted industry in Stephenson County. Production is a common job in Stephenson County. Production jobs require some of the most specialized skills in Stephenson County. Architecture and engineering jobs are among the highest paid in Stephenson County. Computer & mathematics jobs are among the highest paid in Stephenson County. Advanced manufacturing is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA (chemical, industrial machines, metals, rail-related). Hydraulics is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA.</p>

Cluster	Course Offered Through Freeport HS	Courses Offered Through CareerTEC (Consortium of 6 area schools, offered primarily at Freeport, HCC, St Johns)	Local Industry/Workforce Information
Arts, A/V Technology & Communications	FHS offers a variety of art classes (non-CTE)	Graphic Design I Graphic Design II	Business and financial services is a targeted industry in Stephenson County. Sales is a common job in Stephenson County. Administration is a common job in Stephenson County. Management jobs are among the highest paid in Stephenson County. Retail Trade is one of the most common industries in Stephenson County. Customer service call center is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA. Retail Trade is one of the most common industries in the Rockford MSA.
Business Management & Administration	Entrepreneurship Advanced Entrepreneurship Business Cooperative Education	Careers in Business (HCC DC)	Business and financial Services is a targeted industry in Stephenson County. Retail trade is one of the most common industries in Stephenson County. Retail trade is one of the most common industries in the Rockford MSA.
Education & Training	Child Development Future Teacher WBL (Future Ed?)	Early Childhood Ed I (HCC DC) Early Childhood Ed II (HCC DC)	Education is one of the most common industries in Stephenson County.
Finance	Accounting I Accounting II Consumer Economics (required)		Business and financial Services is a targeted industry in Stephenson County. Retail trade is one of the most common industries in Stephenson County. Retail trade is one of the most common industries in the Rockford MSA

Cluster	Course Offered Through Freeport HS	Courses Offered Through CareerTEC (Consortium of 6 area schools, offered primarily at Freeport, HCC, St Johns)	Local Industry/Workforce Information
Government & Public Administration			<p>Healthcare products and services is a targeted industry in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Personal care services is a common job in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Personal care services jobs require some of the most specialized skills in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Health practitioner jobs are among the highest paid in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Healthcare and social assistance is one of the most common industries in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Healthcare is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA.</p> <p>Healthcare and social assistance is a common industry within the Rockford MSA.</p>
Health Sciences		<p>Health Occupations Youth Apprenticeship I (HCC DC)</p> <p>Health Occupations Youth Apprenticeship II (HCC DC)</p>	
Hospitality and Tourism	<p>Culinary Occupations I (HCC DC)</p> <p>Culinary Occupations II (HCC DC)</p>		<p>Food service is a common job in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Retail trade is one of the most common industries in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Retail trade is one of the most common industries in the Rockford MSA.</p>

Cluster	Course Offered Through Freeport HS	Courses Offered Through CareerTEC (Consortium of 6 area schools, offered primarily at Freeport, HCC, St Johns)	Local Industry/Workforce Information
Human Services	Parenting	Cosmetology I (HCC DC) Cosmetology II (HCC DC)	<p>Personal care services is a common job in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Personal care services jobs require some of the most specialized skills in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Community and social services jobs require some of the most specialized skills in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Healthcare and social assistance is one of the most common industries in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Healthcare and social assistance is one of the most common industries in the Rockford MSA.</p>
Information Technology	<p>Computer Concepts and Applications I (HCC DC) Computer Concepts and Applications II (HCC DC)</p> <p>Information Processing</p>	<p>Computer Information Systems I (HCC DC) Computer Information Systems II (HCC DC)</p>	<p>Advanced manufacturing is a targeted industry in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Computer and mathematics jobs are among the highest paid in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Advanced manufacturing is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA (chemical, industrial machines, metals, rail-related).</p>

Cluster	Course Offered Through Freeport HS	Courses Offered Through CareerTEC (Consortium of 6 area schools, offered primarily at Freeport, HCC, St Johns)	Local Industry/Workforce Information
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security		Criminal Justice (HCC DC) Criminal Justice II (HCC DC)	Legal professions are among the highest paid in Stephenson County.
Manufacturing	Likely crossover with Architecture & Construction, particularly within pathways having to do with maintenance, installation and repair, manufacturing production process, and production.		<p>Freeport is home to several large manufacturing companies including Newell-Rubbermaid, Honeywell, and Titan Tire Company.</p> <p>Advanced manufacturing is a targeted industry in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Production is a common job in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Production jobs require some of the most specialized skills in Stephenson County.</p> <p>Manufacturing is one of the most common industries in Stephenson County.</p> <p>The Rockford MSA has 4.2 times the national average metals manufacturing and R&D employment.</p> <p>The Rockford MSA has 3.4 times the national average transportation equipment manufacturing & R&D employment.</p> <p>Advanced manufacturing is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA (chemical, industrial machines, metals, rail-related).</p> <p>Hydraulics is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA.</p> <p>Manufacturing is a common industry within the Rockford MSA.</p>

Cluster	Course Offered Through Freeport HS	Courses Offered Through CareerTEC (Consortium of 6 area schools, offered primarily at Freeport, HCC, St Johns)	Local Industry/Workforce Information
Marketing	Product and Entertainment Marketing		Retail trade is one of the most common industries in Stephenson County. Retail trade is one of the most common industries in the Rockford MSA.
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	Introduction to Technology and Engineering (Industrial)		Advanced manufacturing is a targeted industry in Stephenson County. Production is a common job in Stephenson County. Production jobs require some of the most specialized skills in Stephenson County. Architecture and engineering jobs are among the highest paid in Stephenson County. Computer and mathematics jobs are among the highest paid in Stephenson County. The Rockford MSA has 1.5 times the Illinois average in engineer employment. Advanced manufacturing is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA (chemical, industrial machines, metals, rail-related). Aerospace is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA. Alternative energy is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA. Hydraulics is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA.

Cluster	Course Offered Through Freeport HS	Courses Offered Through CareerTEC (Consortium of 6 area schools, offered primarily at Freeport, HCC, St Johns)	Local Industry/Workforce Information
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	<p>Intro to Automotive Technology & Maintenance Auto Technology II</p>	<p>Auto Body Repair I (HCC DC) Auto Body Repair II (HCC DC) Careers in Auto Technology & Service I Careers in Auto Technology & Service II (HCC DC) Auto Mechanics I (HCC DC) Auto Mechanics II (HCC DC)</p>	<p>Warehousing and logistics is a targeted industry in Stephenson County. Production is a common job in Stephenson County. Production jobs require some of the most specialized skills in Stephenson County. Advanced manufacturing is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA (chemical, industrial machines, metals, rail-related). Automotive is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA. Hydraulics is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA. Logistics and distribution is a targeted industry within the Rockford MSA.</p>

***BOLDED: in Fall 2017 Master Schedule provided by FHS.** This shows what is offered in the course guide versus what is scheduled. This is based on our best interpretation of materials provided to us and those obtained through research.

Many schools across the country have successful pathways that help all students gain valuable career experiences before graduation. These are implemented either within or outside the academy model. We recommend that Freeport analyze pathway options using information from workforce data (see Table 2 and appendix) as well as local employer input and student interest. Often, employers will have the best handle on what types of pathways will best fit the needs of the industry, as well as what types of certifications and credentials will be most valuable. However, if Freeport does not take student interest into account, the community will likely end up with empty pathways. We believe that CareerTEC offers wonderful options. The negative is that many students seem reluctant to access them, because they are off-campus. In fact many students cannot finish pathways they start due to master scheduling issues. Freeport needs to work on prioritizing and accommodation. It could be useful to begin with an analysis of the pathways offered at FHS, and then move on to the entire set of offerings through CareerTEC.

In terms of engaging employers with these pathways; ensuring that pathways lead to credentials; and creating competency-based curriculum materials; Freeport benefits from the PaCE Framework from the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (Public Act 99-0674) and the materials provided by the Northern Illinois Regional P-20 Network (see Appendix 2b). Table 3 includes recommendations organized by the Ford NGL Three Strands.

Some questions to consider are:

- How many students can be involved in FHS CTE classes?
- What pathways exist at FHS that do not require leaving campus?
- Are there elective teachers currently teaching something else who could teach a CTE class?
- Are there existing spaces or resources (e.g., computers, tech facilities) that are currently not in use or are being underutilized?
 - For example, we observed unused bays in welding and the need for more space for construction.
 - We noted a district discussion regarding the class levels in attendance at the building across the street and the possibility of increased staff and space sharing should the district choose to place 7th and 8th graders across the street from FHS.
 - We noted a willingness on the part of HCC to develop space and shared facility use partnerships.
- Are facilities and equipment up to date with current standards and practices?
 - We observed a beautiful, nearly 100-year-old building, with a lack of adequate or up-to-date CTE spaces.



- o We noted a lack of electrical outlets in all classroom spaces as the buildings were constructed prior to modern electrical practices.
 - o We noted a lack of large, multi-use spaces to allow for flexible use.
- Industry and employer needs.
 - o What are the target industries, and how do current course offerings align?
- Student Interest.
 - o What are students interested in taking? What does enrollment currently look like in each CTE course? Can exposure to local professionals from a 21st century workforce increase student interest in updated pathways aligned to the community needs?
- Staffing and/or financial realities.
 - o What subjects can staff members teach?
 - o What courses can be housed elsewhere (campus, industry, etc.), and what can be done to make those options more accessible and appealing to high school students?
 - o What is available through HCC that is not currently utilized by students?
 - o <https://highlandcc.edu/caffeine/uploads/files/catalog-18.pdf>
 - o Could CareerTEC work together on updating course offerings, or are there limitations on this partnership?
 - o Who controls Perkins funding and other funding sources for CTE? If funding is controlled by CareerTEC, how might this affect 21st century pathways?



Table 3: 21st Century Pathway Recommendations by Ford NGL Strand

Strand One Transforming Teaching and Learning	Strand Two Transforming the Secondary School Experience	Strand Three Transforming Business and Civic Engagement
Sequenced CTE Courses Hands-on learning	Facilities and equipment are aligned to workforce preparation.	Selected pathways are aligned to community workforce needs.
Ford NGL Community-connected Learning Continuum: Project based, Challenge-based learning and design thinking	Master schedule allows for ALL students to take CTE sequence.	Selected pathways lead to high skill, high-wage, and high- demand careers.
Students can participate in CTE dual credit/dual enrollment	Business and industry run advisory boards include CTE teachers.	Business and industry partners engage in scaffolded, experiential learning.
Students can earn industry certifications respected by business and industry partners	Articulation agreements are in place with post-secondary partners.	Business and industry partners engage in curriculum development.
	Post-secondary partners can engage in shared instruction and space.	Business and industry partners engage in mentoring and classroom experiences.

OPTION 3: IMPLEMENTING COLLEGE AND CAREER ACADEMIES

Career Academies have three key structural components: 1) the small learning community structure with a team of teachers and shared cohort of students; 2) integrated curriculum with a career or industry theme and various career pathways; 3) partnerships with employers, the community, and local colleges. In the Ford NGL Network, many communities implement “wall-to-wall” career academies, in which every student in a high school is enrolled in an academy. Wall-to-wall academies are typically implemented to ensure ALL students have access. Some communities choose to implement one or more “pocket” career academies within a comprehensive high school.

Based on enrollment at FHS (approximately 1,200 total students; 320 9th; 320 10th; 285 11th; 265 12th), we believe that FHS could implement a freshman academy and three upper level academies (10th-12th). Based on the teachers and course loads from the master schedule, we believe the composition in Table 4 is feasible and could provide a launch point for conversation. Our recommendations for career academy implementation are below in Table 5 and are organized by the Ford NGL Three Strands. We believe that Freeport is in a strong starting place for this type of transformation. There is a lot of work to be done but monumental benefits that can be realized.



Table 4: Potential Small Learning Community Model at Freeport HS

Beth Summers, Principal			
Freshman Academy	Academy A	Academy B	Academy C
Assistant Principal or Dean	Assistant Principal or Dean	Assistant Principal or Dean	Assistant Principal or Dean
Secretary	Secretary	Secretary	Secretary
Freshman	1-2 Pathways	1-2 Pathways	1-2 Pathways
1 CTE (Careers) 2-3 English 2-3 Math 1-2 Science 1-2 Social Studies 1-2 PE/Health/Driving 1 Foreign Language	2-3 CTE 2-3 English 2-3 Math 1-2 Science 1-2 Social Studies 1-2 PE/Health/Driving 1 Foreign Language	2-3 CTE 2-3 English 2-3 Math 1-2 Science 1-2 Social Studies 1-2 PE/Health/Driving 1 Foreign Language	2-3 CTE 2-3 English 2-3 Math 1-2 Science 1-2 Social Studies 1-2 PE/Health/Driving 1 Foreign Language
<p>It may be that the following courses are placed on a team depending on where MOST of their students are, but their classes really are not cohorted. These classes would be considered "global:"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Music 			



Some questions to consider are:

- Are there courses that typically are taken only by freshmen, or is course sequencing in this way something that could be implemented?
- Are there any courses you can identify that all students within an academy would take (other than a CTE pathway course)? This could be a good candidate for starting to cohort schedule within academies.
- We emphasize the phrase “reduce and prescribe.” It is really hard to schedule academies when there are multiple small classes that only happen once. Are you willing to cut down the number of elective choices? How might these decisions be made?
- Often academies find it more beneficial to do block scheduling. Given the benefits block scheduling can provide for your students, are you open to its consideration?
- We noticed “study hall” on the schedule. Is this an essential course, or could these teachers teach something else?
- Is there any flexibility in staffing?
- Is there any flexibility in responsibilities for deans and support staff?
- There are options to visit high schools working toward academy transformation near Freeport. Have any visits occurred?
- What is the plan for increased device availability for students? What about 1:1?
- Is there a learning management system (LMS) in place for students to interact digitally? (Many transformative schools have started to require students to take at least one course online prior to graduation.)
- Have there been discussions about transforming the typical discipline expectations to reflect business employee expectations to allow students to see the link between behavioral decisions and future employability?
- Are there any 21st century pathways that could be grouped together based on similar industries and/or skills?
- Is there receptivity to rethinking common planning strategy and allocation?
 - o One of the key tactics for a successful career academy is interdisciplinary planning. Is it possible to do this within the school day? Are there other creative options that would give teams time to plan together and conduct student interventions?
 - o We noticed that department chairs have an extra planning session. Is this something that could be expanded to allow time for teaming? What would be the implications for the master schedule?



Table 5: College and Career Academy Recommendations by Ford NGL Strand

Strand One Transforming Teaching and Learning	Strand Two Transforming the Secondary School Experience	Strand Three Transforming Business and Civic Engagement
Teacher team provides Integrated Instruction that includes core content standards, professional skills, CTE pathway, and real world connections.	Cohort scheduling for students and teachers	Selected pathways are aligned to community workforce needs.
Teacher team provides interventions for content and credit recovery, as well as social emotional support.	Dedicated academy principal, counselor, and team of teachers	Selected pathways are aligned to community workforce needs.
CTE Courses are sequenced.	Distributed leadership to include teacher team leaders	Selected pathways lead to high skill, high-wage, and high- demand careers.
In this strand, academies apply the Ford NGL Community-connected Learning Continuum using project-based and challenge-based learning and incorporating design thinking with cross curricular and real-world connections.	Facilities and equipment aligned to workforce preparation	Business and industry partners engage in mentoring and classroom experiences.
Students can participate in CTE dual credit/dual enrollment.	Room proximity	Business and industry partners engage in scaffolded experiential learning.
Students can earn industry certifications respected by business and industry partners.	Master schedule allows for ALL students to take CTE sequence	Business and industry partners engage in curriculum development.
	Business and industry run advisory boards including members from all academy pathways, core content and CTE teachers, parents, students	Business and industry partners provide externships for teacher teams.
	Articulation agreements with post-secondary partners	
	Academy identity events aligned with career pathways	
	Post-secondary partners can engage in shared instruction and space	

AN APPROACH TO TRANSFORMATION

If Freeport wants to move forward with these options, the community should consider a scaffolded and phased approach to educational transformation. The following schedule offers a starting place for a constructive conversation. In either case, we recommend implementing a freshman academy to provide a strong foundation for students from which to consider careers and pathways.

	21st Century Pathways	Academies with 21st Century Pathways
Year 1	Freshman Academy	Freshman Academy
Year 2	21st Century Pathways for Sophomores	Sophomores Scheduled into Academies and Pathways
Year 3	21st Century Pathways for Juniors	Juniors Scheduled into Academies and Pathways
Year 4	21st Century Pathways for Seniors	Seniors Scheduled into Academies and Pathways
Year 5	All Students Enrolled in Fully Functioning 21st Century Pathway	Fully Functioning Wall-to-wall Academies with 21st Century Pathways

This scaffolded approach allows time for strategic and tactical planning, getting business and industry input on pathway course development, and for professional development designed to educate, train, and support teachers through the transformation.



NEXT STEPS

Transformation does not just happen. It must be carefully planned and supported by the community and at the highest levels of the school district. It takes a village to plan and sustain systemic change. Students must be at the heart of the transformation, but educational change is only authentic for students if it aligns with the workforce needs of their community. Based on our research and observations, we believe Freeport is at a unique and promising juncture. Many community stakeholders acknowledge the need for transformation in education and want to be a partner in the work. There is a lot of interest in career academies. The post-secondary community is invested, the business community is invested, and the district is invested. Most importantly, the district realizes and is willing to embrace the importance of community support in raising outcomes for all students. We suggest that Freeport consider the following in order to capitalize on the desire for transformation at this moment in time.

A COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Typically, transformation requires having an engaged organization that has strong ties to employers and community organizations. Often, this is a chamber of commerce or workforce board. We did not identify a strong contender during this visit, but this is something that could be explored and developed if Freeport decides to pursue the Ford NGL Roadmap process.



THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee represents the voices of community stakeholder groups and helps shepherd the transformation. In Freeport, we believe that this group is emerging based on the work already done and the level of interest from a variety of stakeholders. We recommend that Freeport continue to develop this group. The following are observations from our visit that we find especially promising.

- The Mayor and City Manager are engaged and interested in transformation.
- Educational transformation aligns with the Freeport Strategic Plan.
- The Superintendent and the Curriculum Director are on board with transformation, particularly when it comes to investing in students and engaging them in 21st century learning.
- HCC recently received a regional grant to increase pipeline to careers. This provides a unique opportunity to align efforts and develop systems that support community growth. They are open to sharing/utilizing space at HCC for high school students and are working on a new student model in which students work 20 hours a week and then come to HCC.
- HCC is interested in housing pathways on their campus.
- Business and employer partners are interested in a more strategic approach.
- Some Freeport High School administrators and CTE teachers have traveled to Nashville to see their academy model at work. They have held meetings to involve other potential committee members.
- The principal and assistant principals are on board with education transformation.
- Teachers are on board with improving student engagement.
- There already seems to be a group of community members coming together who realize the importance of working with the school district to develop a qualified workforce to fill the needs of the local economy.

ROLES TO FACILITATE TRANSFORMATION

We typically recommend that a community identify people to fulfill two roles – one at the district level and one who can represent the larger community. These roles work together to coordinate the planning and implementation of transformation. In Freeport, Beth Summers seems to be playing this role for the district. It would be important to centralize the work with an invested administrator rather than someone who wears many other hats at the district level. In Freeport there are many business leaders who could potentially play this type of role for the larger community.



A STRATEGIC PLAN

No matter what Freeport ultimately decides to implement, the district and community need a strategic plan for high school transformation to advance the process. This strategic plan should be referenced in the district strategic plan, but should be a separate document to guide the secondary transformation process. Based on our experience, the strategic plan should be guided by a vision that links student outcomes and community prosperity; leverages stakeholder expertise; and includes a deliberate and scaffolded approach to implementation. It should align to Freeport's community strategic plan and goals, as well as other district and community plans. In addition, the strategic plan should include metrics for evaluation of progress. As it is implemented, there should be a system in place for reflecting on the plan and making any necessary adjustments and changes.

TIME, RESOURCES, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Transformation is a continuous journey and is not for the faint of heart. It also requires significant time and resources. There are professional development costs, equipment costs, and personnel costs. For communities that pursue the Ford NGL Roadmap process, there are coaching costs and an investment in network-wide opportunities for sharing best practices and learning. Planning appropriately is essential, so educators and community members receive the education, training, and support necessary to implement and sustain change. Without this type of scaffolded approach teachers can get overwhelmed; professional development can be poorly sequenced or made up of one-off trainings; and experiences will likely not support implementation with fidelity. As a starting place, we recommend training in teaming, so academic and CTE teachers can model 21st century skills. They can then begin to plan for strategic integration of standards across curriculum and with real world integration. If Freeport decides to contract with Ford NGL for next steps, we will offer a more specific professional development plan that is created to address Freeport's unique needs.



CONCLUSION

Freeport is at an exciting point in the city's history, and one that asks critical questions of its leadership regarding their vision for the community. We look forward to learning what path the community chooses for its future and in what ways Ford Next Generation Learning can help that future be bright. We are prepared to discuss support for education transformation and next action steps, should you decide to move forward with any of our recommendations. Thank you for the opportunity to get to know you and your community. We sincerely enjoyed the research, observation, and recommendation process. The Ford NGL team looks forward to working with you to help elevate your students and deliver sustainable, long term benefits to Freeport.



APPENDIX

In order to complete this assessment, we conducted a fair amount of research and asked for various documents from Freeport High School. In order to keep everything together we organized and compiled the links below. We believe that this information will be useful, particularly if Freeport pursues the Ford NGL Roadmap process.

1. Workforce and Labor

- a. [Commuting Patterns, ACS 5 - Year Estimates 2009-2013](#)
- b. [Stephenson County - Where Workers Work and Live](#)
- c. [Workforce Area 3 Occupational Employment Projections - Boone Stephenson Winnebago](#)
- d. [Workforce Area 3 Industry Employment Projections - Boone Stephenson Winnebago](#)
- e. [Northern Illinois Manufacturers Building Lifelong Employment Presentation](#)
- f. [Illinois High-Demand, High-Wage Occupations through 2024](#)
- g. [Talent Pipeline Management in NIMBLE Region](#)
- h. [Rockford MSA regional Pathways | Aligning With State Policy and Great Lakes Pathways](#)
- i. [IDES Career Information](#)

2. Career and Technical Education

- a. [Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations](#)
- b. [Opportunities for Employers to Support the PaCE Framework Implementation](#)
- c. [Career Clusters Pathways, Career Tech](#)

3. Freeport High School

- a. [2017-2018 FHS CTE Course Guide](#)
- b. [2017-2018 FHS Course Descriptions](#)
- c. [FHS 2015 CTE Report](#)
- d. [Freeport High School Information Summary Report](#)
- e. [Freeport High School Semester Teaching Schedule/Master Schedule](#)
- f. [Employer Roundtable Discussion | FNGL Visit](#)
- g. [FHS Organization Structure](#)
- h. [Sample Student Curriculum and Course Planning Guide](#)

4. Freeport City

- a. [Freeport City Strategic Plan](#)