Northern Illinois Regional P-20 Network

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President, Northern Illinois University

Higher Education Commission on the Future of the Workforce  
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Regional Collaboration to Raise Educational Attainment

The Illinois P-20 Council’s goal is to increase the proportion of adults in Illinois with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025.

The Northern Illinois Regional P-20 Network, launched in June 2014, collaborates to increase college and career success for our students through regional action toward the 60/2025 goal.
The Northern Illinois Region
## Participating Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Colleges</th>
<th>School Districts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of DuPage</td>
<td>Naperville 203</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Lake County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elgin Community College</td>
<td>Elgin U-46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harper College</td>
<td>Arlington Heights HS 214</td>
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<td>Barrington HS 220</td>
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<td>Palatine HS 211</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illinois Valley Community College</td>
<td>Seneca Township HS 160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kishwaukee College</td>
<td>DeKalb 428</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rochelle HS 212</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sycamore 427</td>
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<tr>
<td>McHenry County College</td>
<td>Huntley 158</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock Valley College</td>
<td>Rockford 205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sauk Valley Community College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waubonsee Community College</td>
<td>Hinckley-Big Rock 429</td>
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## Education Agencies and Organizations

- IL Board of Higher Education
- IL Community College Board
- IL Dept. of Employment Security
- IL State Board of Education
- Advance Illinois
- Early Childhood Action
- IL Business Roundtable
- IL P-20 Council
- IL Workforce Investment Board
- Northern Illinois University
- Northwest Educational Council for Student Success
- University Center of Lake County
Process - What this Network is doing

- Two CEO meetings per year to monitor progress and give direction
- Four work group/think tanks with 65 participants from 20 institutions met a total of 62 times in 2014-2015 to implement ambitious agendas
- Leaders from NIU and community colleges co-chair each work group
- Research to drive decisions has been the first step for each group
- Backbone organization, NIU’s P-20 Center, coordinates all activities
- Communications centered at [www.niu.edu/p20network](http://www.niu.edu/p20network)
- Participant in White House Summit on College Access
- Funded by IBHE grant through 6/30/15
Northern Illinois Regional P-20 CEOs Monitor and Direct Four Work Groups

- Alignment of Standards and Expectations
- Articulation
- Student Support Services
- Adult Learners
Alignment of Standards Work Group

- **Goal:** 100% of students graduate from high school with 12-15 college credits and/or a professional certificate
- **Participation:** 19 representatives from 11 institutions
- **Progress on Objectives:**
  - Compiled baseline data on educational achievement across the region
    - 44% of residents in the region hold post-secondary degrees or certificates, but numbers range from 25% to 56% in the community college districts
  - Prepared workforce reports for college districts and the region
  - Proposed model to create developmental education courses aligned with state standards and post-secondary expectations in math and English language arts for delivery to high school seniors
Emerging and Fast-Growing Jobs Reports

Emerging, new, and fastest-growth sectors:

- **Advanced manufacturing** - production, production management, logistics
- **Green occupations** - energy efficiency, environmental promotion and advocacy, environmental regulation and enforcement, green construction, manufacturing of green technology, recycling and waste reduction, pollution reduction/removal/remediation, etc.
- **Biotechnology** - science occupations in pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing, scientific research and development services, and medical equipment and supplies manufacturing
- **STEM** - chemistry, computer science, engineering, environmental science, geosciences, life sciences, mathematics, and physics/astronomy
Emerging Jobs Reports (continued)

- Sources for metadata reports: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Information Network (O*Net), Burning Glass Technologies, etc.

- Contents of reports for 10 districts and the region
  - Job postings in each sector by top 50 employers
    - Green employers posted the most jobs, followed by biotech (mostly healthcare, many in pharmaceuticals)
  - Job postings by industry sub-sector
    - Green jobs dominated, followed by Biotech jobs; i.e., chemical manufacturing (4391 postings), professional, scientific and technical services (2618 postings)
Emerging Jobs Reports (continued)

- Contents of reports for 10 districts and the region
  - Job postings by occupation in each sector
    - Green occupations dominated, led by truck drives across all industries; STEM occupations were next, led by software applications developers and other computer science related occupations
  - Job postings by skill in each sector
    - Led by SQL and accounting in STEM skills, followed by repair, inspection, and math in the green industry; chemistry tops the biotech sector
  - Demand and educational requirements
Emerging Jobs Reports (continued)

- Intended to foster local discussions between educators and employers
  - Does this look accurate based on what you are seeing?
  - What certificates and degree programs should be developed to meet these needs?
- Winter meeting being planned for educators and employers to discuss implications of the reports and next steps
- Prepared for the Regional P-20 Network by NIU’s Center for Governmental Studies
- Reports are available at www.niu.edu/p20network/resources
Student Support Services Work Group

**Goal:** Coordinate student support systems across institutions to ease transitions and increase student success

**Participation:** 16 representatives from 10 institutions

**Progress on Objectives:**
- Surveyed existing services and identified gaps
- Developing recommendations for regional action to strengthen transition support and student success strategies
- Created a financial literacy website with hundreds of activities for families and students of all ages; launching September 9
- Conducted a regional peer mentoring conference in June and organized a network for 400 high-need students and 80 trained peer mentors
Articulation Work Group

- **Goal:** Create seamless transitions across the educational continuum
- **Participation:** 20 representatives from 11 institutions
- **Progress on Objectives:**
  - Prepared recommendations for expanding the current Illinois Articulation Initiative to include competency-driven articulation
  - Defined guided pathways to degree completion across all three levels (high school, community college, university) in three areas
  - Established 9 reverse transfer agreements; 2 in process; informal agreement with City Colleges; 8 more colleges interested
  - Increased faculty engagement with Illinois Learning Standards in workshops for 75 NIU faculty and 5 community college faculty
  - Planning PARCC workshops to follow release of PARCC results
Adult Learners Work Group

- **Goal:** Increase the proportion of adults in Illinois with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by 2025
- **Participation:** 8 representatives from 6 institutions
- **Progress on Objectives:**
  - White paper proposes an *Illinois Prior Learning Assessment Alliance* for adult learners returning to postsecondary studies
  - 2+2 Business Degree launched by NIU with 5 community colleges
  - Shared best practices for recruiting and retaining adult learners
  - Proposing regional collaborative strategies to increase enrollment of adult learners
Top Ten Barriers for Adult Learners

- Critical, required courses are only offered during the day.
- Courses are offered at inconvenient times or interfere with work schedule.
- Courses are offered only face-to-face.
- No allowances are made for prior learning.
- Adults would rather not mix with younger learners.
- Discomfort with technologies commonly used in education today.
- Cost of education
- Programs do not link to further education for advancement.
- Personal issues such as lack of self-confidence and of literacy
- Family issues such as childcare
Benefits of the Regional P-20 Network

- Building community
- Source of vision and innovation
- Comprehensive, collaborative approaches to shared problems
- Access to university research capacity - workforce reports, survey instruments on 10 topics, 2 policy papers, 3 lit reviews to identify best practices, reports on education attainment
- Study and action by teams of experts from school districts, community colleges, and NIU
- Sharing successful models and best practices
- Partnerships for grants
- Establishment of infrastructure for improving students’ readiness for college and careers
Challenges

- Delivering results without additional funding
- Ambitious agendas require dedicated support by a backbone organization
- Commitment of personnel by all partners
- Change fatigue
- Implementation of new courses and programs can take years
- Potential duplication with community college’s readiness alliances
- Making connections with multiple readiness initiatives at state and national levels
- Meeting the diverse needs of districts and colleges
- Geography – it’s a big region
“Every meeting I go to is full of bad news. What we are doing here is really positive. What a relief!”

-- A high school superintendent at a Northern Illinois Regional P-20 Network CEOs meeting
Questions?

Contacts for more information

- Regional P-20 Network: Marilyn Bellert (mbellert@niu.edu or 815.753.8051)

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