



# ICEA

## Innovation Award Submission

OneZone Education Connections



# Program Overview



Education Connections is a groundbreaking initiative initiated collaboratively by Hamilton Southeastern and Hamilton Heights School corporations. At its core, this project is driven by the shared vision of fostering educational transformation and enhancing workforce readiness in the 21st century. Partnering with the Ford Next Generation Learning (Ford NGL) Program, our endeavor seeks to align educational practices with the evolving demands of the global economy.

**Mission:** The Ford NGL Program champions the critical role of K–12 education in cultivating a competitive workforce. Its mission underscores the necessity of establishing a robust educational foundation to prepare individuals for the challenges and opportunities of the modern world. Education Connections embraces this mission wholeheartedly, striving to empower students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences essential for success in the dynamic landscape of the 21st century.

# Key Partners



Hamilton Southeastern School District is a top rated, public school district located in FISHERS, IN. It has 21,603 students in grades PK, K-12 with a student-teacher ratio of 19 to 1.



Hamilton Heights School Corporation is a public school district located in ARCADIA, IN. It has 2,302 students in grades PK, K-12 with a student-teacher ratio of 17 to 1.



The Hamilton County Economic Development Corporation (dba Invest Hamilton County) is an economic development organization focused on talent attraction, retention, development, and quality of life initiatives throughout Hamilton County, Indiana. Our office works with diverse and dynamic stakeholders from throughout the community to help local residents, businesses, and communities address barriers to economic vitality.

# Special Project



One of the goals of the Ford NGL program is to have a 1 page document explaining the portrait of a graduate. The school in partnership with the chamber felt that we could bring in middle school students and learn marketing concepts, basic Canva concepts, and create the piece WITH STUDENTS instead of hiring a company to do it.

The students came to our office for 3 hours and we worked on colors, themes, fonts, flow of design, and more. At the end this is the final product. THIS is the purpose of this Ford NGL program. To give students REAL WORLD experiences and to engage them in concepts and ideas to challenge them.



# Objectives



## Objectives:

**Transformative Education:** Education Connections endeavors to transform secondary schools within our communities by implementing the proven model advocated by Ford NGL. This model emphasizes collaboration among educators, employers, and community leaders to create an environment conducive to holistic student development.

**Enhanced Workforce Development:** By aligning educational initiatives with workforce demands, Education Connections aims to bolster the regional workforce development system. Through innovative programs and partnerships, we seek to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills needed to thrive in diverse professional settings.

**Community Engagement:** As the lead convener of both Hamilton Southeastern and Hamilton Heights School corporations, Education Connections plays a pivotal role in fostering meaningful connections between the business community and educational institutions. Through initiatives such as capstone projects, job shadowing, internships, and in-class experiences, we facilitate valuable interactions that enrich the learning journey of K–12 students and cultivate a deeper understanding of industry realities.

# Key Initiatives



## Key Initiatives:

**Capstone Projects:** Students engage in hands-on projects that integrate classroom learning with practical application, allowing them to demonstrate mastery of key concepts and skills.

**Job Shadowing:** Through shadowing experiences, students gain firsthand insight into various professions, enabling them to make informed career decisions and understand the day-to-day operations of different industries.

**Internship Programs:** Education Connections facilitates internships that provide students with immersive learning opportunities within professional settings, allowing them to develop relevant skills and build valuable networks.

**In-Class Experiences:** By inviting industry experts into the classroom, Education Connections enriches the learning environment and exposes students to diverse perspectives and career pathways.

# Final Thoughts



In conclusion, Education Connections stands as a beacon of collaborative effort, uniting educators, employers, and community leaders in a shared mission to redefine the landscape of education and workforce development. By integrating innovative initiatives such as capstone projects, job shadowing, internships, and in-class experiences, we are not only preparing students for the challenges of the 21st-century workforce but also fostering a culture of lifelong learning and adaptability.

Through these endeavors, we are not just shaping the future workforce, but also cultivating a generation of individuals equipped with the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed to thrive in an ever-evolving global economy. Together, we are building stronger communities and paving the way for a brighter future for generations to come.