



**REGIONAL
OPPORTUNITY
INITIATIVES**

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ROI AWARDS \$1.2 MILLION READY SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTATION GRANT TO MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

Ready Schools initiative helps align school districts to the education and workforce needs of regional employers and prepares students for high opportunity jobs and careers

Regional Opportunity Initiatives, Inc. (ROI) has awarded a \$1.2 million Ready Schools implementation grant to Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC), the largest school district in the 11-county Indiana Uplands region. MCCSC serves 20 percent of the region's students (pre-K through grade 12).

MCCSC will use its Ready Schools implementation funding to support a multi-year district-wide plan focused on college, career, and life readiness for all students. The grant will fund five distinct strategies: project-based learning, STEAM and hands-on learning, career awareness activities, entrepreneurship activities, and community and industry partnerships.

“We are very proud to award this grant and look forward to the opportunities it will make possible for the 11,000 students of MCCSC,” said ROI President and CEO Tina Peterson.

“Throughout the Ready Schools process, MCCSC has embraced the important role it must play in regional economic prosperity,” added Peterson. “MCCSC’s Ready Schools design team worked thoughtfully to engage business leaders, community stakeholders, parents, and students in meaningful dialogue. This engagement informed the MCCSC’s Ready Schools implementation plan, carefully developed to equip students from pre-K through graduation with the skills necessary to thrive in regionally relevant careers and 21st-century jobs. We feel confident that the plan MCCSC has developed will benefit both the local community and the Indiana Uplands region as well.”

MCCSC's implementation grant follows an 18-month development grant to support the ROI Ready Schools design-thinking process. The Ready Schools initiative is a framework to help school districts prepare students for success by aligning pre-K-12 curricular and programmatic offerings to educational and workforce needs within the Indiana Uplands, an 11-county region that encompasses Brown, Crawford, Daviess, Dubois, Greene, Lawrence, Martin, Monroe, Orange, Owen and Washington counties.

The goal of the Ready Schools initiative is to enable school districts to engage business leaders, educators, community stakeholders, parents, and students in defining what school success means and to develop a strategic plan to obtain that success. The result is a collaborative approach and a comprehensive planning process designed to support students in achieving academic and career goals aligned with the region's key industry sectors.

Additional features MCCSC's Ready Schools implementation plan include:

- **PBL Model Learning Lab:** A project-based learning (PBL) Model Learning Lab will be added at The Academy of Science and Entrepreneurship. At the Lab, educators across the district will have access to ongoing PBL professional development and support. A new Outreach and Innovation Coordinator (OIC) will help develop community partnerships for the benefit of student learning and coordinate a district-wide portal of model PBL units and other resources to support implementation.
- **STEM to THEM Mobile Lab:** MCCSC's mobile STEM lab will travel to all elementary schools and provide robotics and engineering STEM lessons with access to equipment.
- **Makerspaces and Digital Fabrication Labs:** To prepare students for the future, makerspaces and fabrication labs at each middle school will allow students to create, explore, problem-solve, and collaborate using equipment and technology aligned with curricula.
- **College and Career Centers:** New high School college and career centers will have dedicated programming and space to provide opportunities for students to explore post-secondary education and career opportunities.
- **Entrepreneurship Curricula and Partnerships:** MCCSC will feature leading entrepreneurship curricula to engage and empower students to develop their own entrepreneurship mindset and learn from hands-on experiences with community partners.
- **Restructuring of the Academy of Science and Entrepreneurship:** In addition to a new college and career center, a new makerspace, and entrepreneurship curricula, ASE will be restructured as an early college high school with defined career pathways in engineering, digital and media arts, entrepreneurship and business, computer science and life sciences.

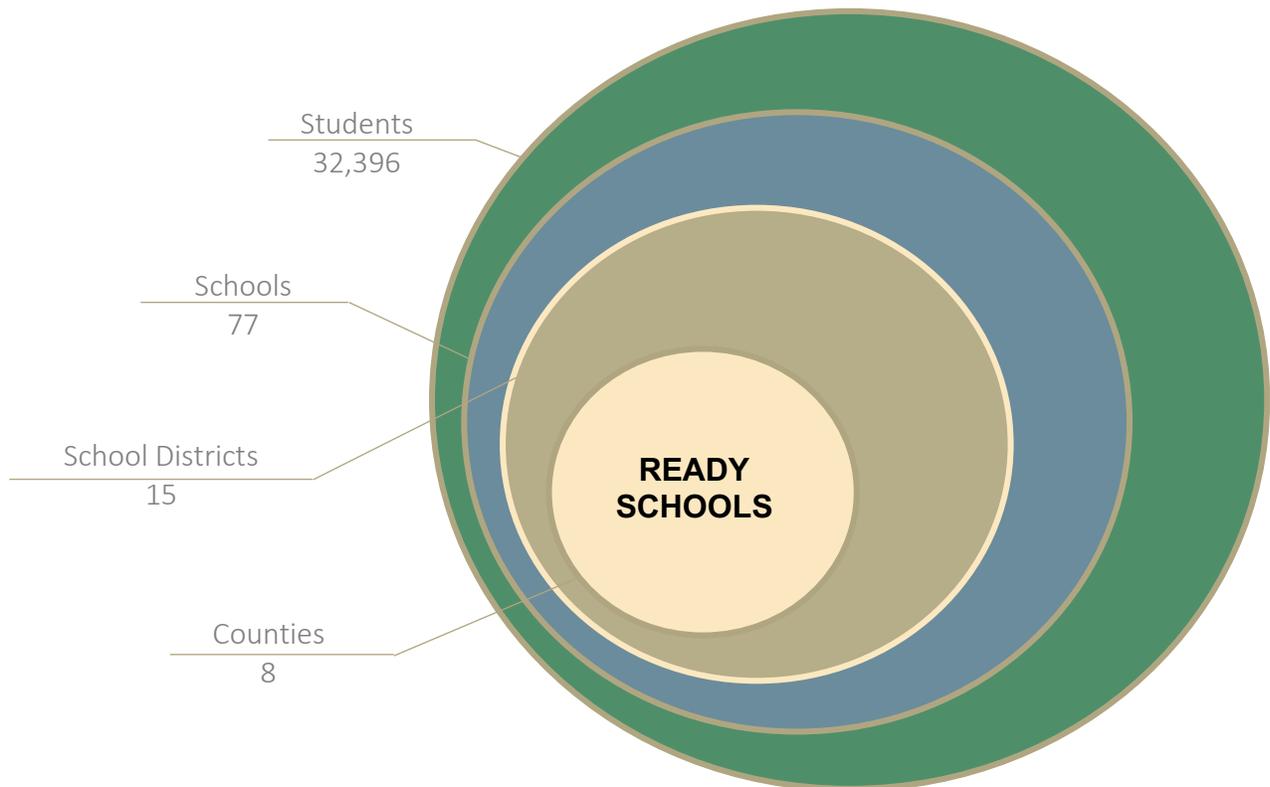
“There is tremendous opportunity to expand our curricular and programmatic offerings to meet the needs of our students and provide them greater access to explore post-secondary education and/or career options,” said MCCSC Superintendent Dr. Judith DeMuth. “To this end, MCCSC is deeply committed to expediting the development of innovative learning opportunities and

closing the gap in our offerings that prevent students from being ready to be successful in any path they choose upon graduation.”

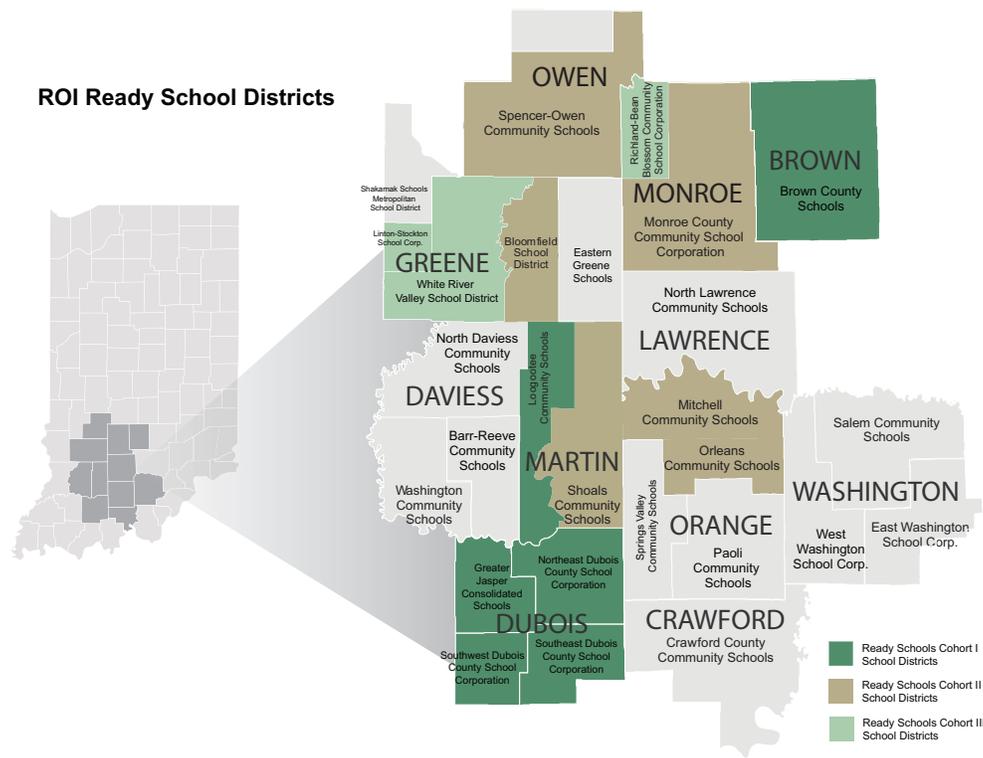
“We are extremely grateful to the ROI Board of Directors for their continued trust in our work and for this extraordinary grant that will further MCCSC’s bold efforts to provide authentic and relevant ways to ground teaching and learning in relevancy while addressing the needs of our students.”

Since 2017, ROI has awarded Ready Schools development and implementation grants to 15 school systems in the region.

“With the addition of MCCSC’s Ready Schools implementation grant, ROI’s signature education and workforce initiative will impact more than 32,000 K-12 students,” added Peterson. “We are proud of the dedicated work done by each of the 15 Ready School districts and the tremendous impact this work will have on preparing Indiana Upland students for success in school and in life.”



Since 2017, ROI has awarded Ready Schools grants to 15 school systems in the region.



Ready Schools Cohort 1

Brown County Schools

Dubois County Collaboration:
 Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools
 Northeast Dubois County School Corporation
 Southwest Dubois County School Corporation
 Southeast Dubois County School Corporation

Loogootee Community Schools

Ready Schools Cohort 2

Bloomfield School District

Monroe County Community School Corporation

Spencer-Owen Community Schools

Mitchell/Orleans/Shoals Collaboration:
 Mitchell Community Schools
 Orleans Community Schools
 Shoals Community School Corporation

Ready Schools Cohort 3

Richland-Bean Blossom Community School Corporation

Linton-Stockton School Corporation

White River Valley School District

More About ROI's Ready Schools Initiative

ROI's annual Occupational Needs Assessment highlights the education and workforce needs of the advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and national security and defense sectors in the counties of Indiana Uplands. The Assessment emphasizes that employers struggle to find talent for all levels of jobs, ranging from entry-level positions requiring only a high-school diploma to highly technical jobs requiring advanced degrees and training. Employers interviewed have also noted the significant role that the region's prekindergarten-12 districts play in addressing these workforce challenges.

The six core principles that guide cohort work through the Ready Schools process build upon the results of the Occupational Needs Assessment and include:

- Every student is engaged in a relevant path to success;
- Students graduate high school ready for post-secondary and career success;
- Meaningful and ongoing collaboration occurs among schools, industry, and community;
- Teaching and learning are grounded in relevancy;
- K-12 schools are aligned around a common vision of student success; and
- Schools embrace the significant role they play in achieving regional prosperity

For a complete description of activities at each Ready Schools phase, go to:
<https://regionalopportunityinc.org/details-of-the-ready-schools-initiative/>

About Regional Opportunity Initiatives, Inc.:

The mission of Regional Opportunity Initiatives (ROI) is to advance economic and community prosperity in the 11 counties of the Indiana Uplands (Brown, Crawford, Daviess, Dubois, Greene, Lawrence, Martin, Monroe, Orange, Owen and Washington counties). ROI is implementing education, workforce, and quality of place initiatives across the Uplands region.

More information can be found at www.regionalopportunityinc.org.

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