



**REGIONAL
OPPORTUNITY
INITIATIVES**

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ROI AWARDS \$750,000 IN READY SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS TO LINTON-STOCKTON, RICHLAND-BEAN BLOSSOM, AND WHITE RIVER VALLEY SCHOOLS

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) is pleased to announce that Linton-Stockton School Corporation, Richland-Bean Blossom Community School Corporation, and White River Valley School District have each been awarded a \$250,000 Ready Schools implementation grant.

All three school districts will use Ready Schools implementation funding to support multi-year district-wide strategic plans with prekindergarten-12 initiatives focused on project-based learning, STEM curricula, career awareness activities, and skill development to prepare students for post-secondary education and regionally-relevant employment.

These three school districts will use a portion of their grant funding to implement pathways for students in computer science, biomedical science, and engineering along with educator development programs. Project Lead The Way curricula, makerspaces, digital fabrication labs, and student-run enterprises will also be incorporated to provide students at all grade levels with enhanced hands-on learning experiences.

"Over this past year, Linton-Stockton, Richland-Bean Blossom, and White River Valley have done incredible work to engage their communities and collaborate with their stakeholders in the Ready Schools process," said ROI President and CEO Tina Peterson. "These school districts have fully embraced their roles in the economic success of their communities and the Indiana Uplands region. We are proud to award these implementation grants."

With the addition of these three Ready Schools implementation grants, 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 opportunities this work will have on preparing Indiana Upland students for success in school and in life."

Linton-Stockton, Richland-Bean Blossom, and White River Valley implementation grants follow a 10-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.

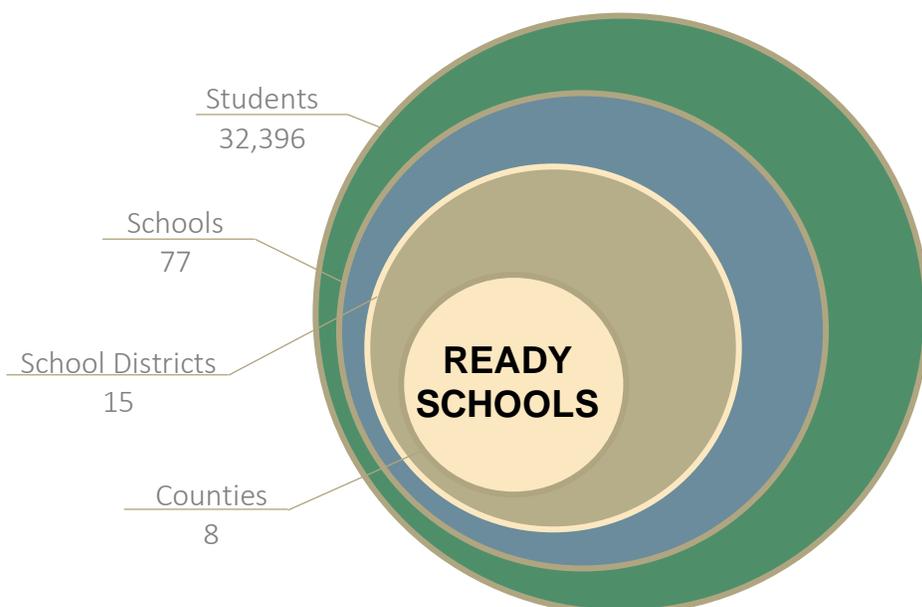
The goal of the Ready Schools initiative is to enable school districts to engage business leaders, educators, community stakeholders, parents, and students in meaningful dialogue about what school success means and to develop a strategic plan to obtain that success. The result is a collaborative approach and a comprehensive planning process designed to support students in achieving academic and career goals aligned with the region's key industry sectors: advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and national security and defense. For a complete description of activities at each Ready Schools phase, go to: <https://regionalopportunityinc.org/details-of-the-ready-schools-initiative/>

Each of these three school districts will also use a portion of their grant funding to implement programs and initiatives uniquely identified as part of the Ready Schools process to successfully meet the needs of their students and communities.

Linton-Stockton School Corporation

Linton-Stockton will add a Career Coach to work directly with students in college and career planning, oversee career awareness activities, connect students to work-based learning opportunities, and develop positive relationships with community and employer partners.

The Career Coach will be housed in what will soon be a new Connection Center at Linton-Stockton High School. In this re-imagined learning environment, students will receive college and career preparation. This new space will also feature a presentation stage for students, designated programming for career-related programming such as guest speakers, collaboration stations for class projects and research, and opportunities to connect with current and future resources.



Since 2017, ROI has awarded Ready Schools grants to 15 school systems in the region. For a map and list of all 15 ROI Ready School Districts, go to page 5 of this document.

In addition to the high school Connection Center, Linton-Stockton will add a digital fabrication lab in the middle school and a flex-lab makerspace at the elementary. Renovation in these spaces will provide resources for hands-on learning, creative design, and project-based learning.

"Listening to our community throughout the Ready Schools planning process was extremely valuable," said Linton-Stockton Superintendent Dr. Kathy Goad. "This is the community's grant as much as it is the school's. Knowing their voice was heard will give us confidence as we move forward with implementation. Our developed strategies will guide our direction as we play our role in preparing students, at all grade levels, to enhance the regional workforce."

"Linton-Stockton is pleased to accept this generous grant, which represents the collective work of our staff, students, and community," added Goad. "We could not have realized our dreams and goals for the education of our students without this support."

Richland-Bean Blossom Community School Corporation

Richland-Bean Blossom will be launching two digital fabrication labs, one at Edgewood Junior High School and one in the new Innovative Learning Center that will be constructed as an addition to Edgewood High School. These labs, along with elementary school makerspace labs, will also be outfitted with video production equipment to allow students to express their learning in hands-on, relevant ways. The Innovative Learning Center will house a digital fabrication lab and serve as a hub for collaboration between students, teachers, and the community.

RBB will be adding a Ready Schools Coordinator to facilitate the launch of the Innovative Learning Center and digital fabrication labs as well as a new K-12 career awareness continuum. The coordinator will work with local and regional partners to expand upon existing partnerships to provide all RBB students with experiences such as career awareness field trips, job shadows, and work-based learning opportunities that will prepare students for their future.

"As superintendent of Richland-Bean Blossom Community School Corporation, I was overjoyed when I received the news that Regional Opportunity Initiatives (ROI) awarded RBBCSC with a Ready Schools Implementation Grant," said Superintendent Dr. Jerry Sanders. "Over the last year, ROI provided RBBCSC with an opportunity to go through a design-thinking process that led our stakeholders to look deep inside who we are and how we engage with our community. We refined what experiences we want for students and designed a Ready Schools Implementation Plan to pursue our goals. These experiences, supported by ROI's grant award to RBBCSC, will impact our students, school corporation, and community in many positive ways for years to come."

"Because of this work and the support of ROI, Edgewood graduates will gain relevant skills and experiences throughout their education from kindergarten through high school that ensures they are not only employable when they graduate, but are empowered to positively impact their community," added Sanders. "We are confident that through our Ready Schools Implementation Plan, our graduates will be equipped for success and that we're effectively supporting the development and retention of the talent our region needs for a prosperous workforce."

White River Valley School District

White River Valley will be launching Wolverine Enterprises, consisting of seven different student-led businesses that will be embedded in existing coursework and pathways. Each Wolverine Enterprise will have one or more employer partners, and there will be a focus on student entrepreneurship. WRV will also be adding a K-8 STEM coach trained to teach the Project Lead the Way classes. WRV has also worked diligently throughout the planning year to develop new partnerships with higher-education partners to increase students' dual credit opportunities.

“We at White River Valley School District are humbled that we have been given an opportunity by ROI to implement programs that we think will help our students achieve increased post-graduate success,” said Superintendent Dr. Bob Hacker. “In turn, this will help our community and the Indiana Uplands region to keep our local talent prepared and ready to contribute to our economic growth and entrepreneurial opportunities. We look forward to continuing to build strong area businesses and community partnerships to help our students gain experiences that will help prepare them for regionally relevant post-secondary opportunities.”

“There’s been a great deal of work by many in this process, and we are happy that our students, staff, and community will gain outstanding educational opportunities,” added Hacker. “Thank you to our Design Team, our Education and Workforce Advisory Team, and our Board of Education for helping us build a unique and visionary approach to public education. Thank you to ROI for developing the Ready Schools program and for believing in WRV's Ready Schools plan.”

About ROI’s Ready Schools Initiative

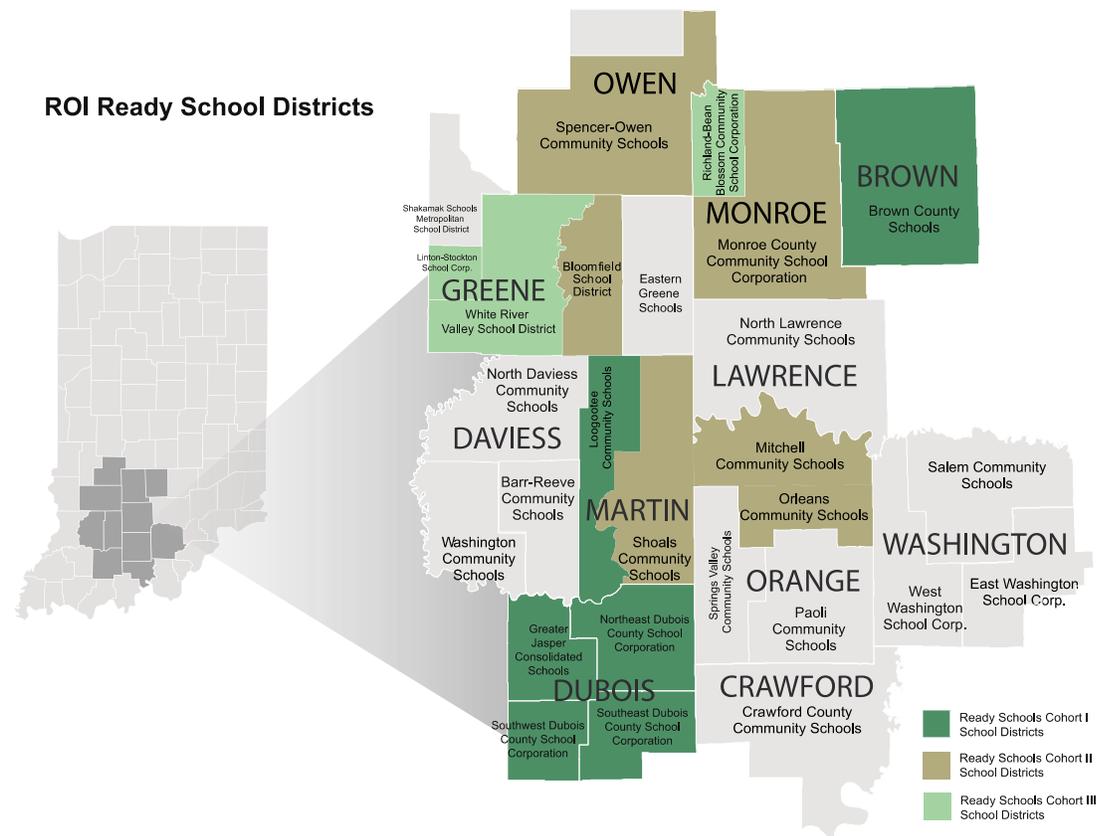
ROI’s annual Occupational Needs Assessment highlights the education and workforce needs of the advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and national security and defense sectors in the counties of Indiana Uplands. The Assessment emphasizes that employers struggle to find talent for all levels of jobs, 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 goal of the Ready Schools is to enable school districts to engage business leaders, community stakeholders, parents, and students in meaningful dialogue about 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: advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and national security and defense.

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

Since 2017, ROI has awarded Ready Schools development grants to 15 school systems in the region. Each district that has completed a Ready Schools development grant is eligible to apply for implementation funding. To date, ROI has awarded implementation grant funding to 14 Indiana Uplands school districts. An announcement about a 15th district is forthcoming.



ROI Ready Schools Districts

Ready Schools Cohort 1
Brown County Schools
<i>Dubois County Collaboration:</i> Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools Northeast Dubois County School Corporation Southwest Dubois County School Corporation Southeast Dubois County School Corporation
Logoootee Community Schools
Ready Schools Cohort 2
Bloomfield School District
Monroe County Community School Corporation
Spencer-Owen Community Schools
<i>Mitchell/Orleans/Shoals Collaboration:</i> 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

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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