



Franklin Regional School District

Franklin Regional School District's designation as an AASA Learning 2025 Lighthouse District reflects the impact of work that began in 2016-17. During that school year, educational and community stakeholders embarked on a journey to redesign the face of education within the district. Through a combination of community meetings, focus groups, and ongoing collaborative discourse, the district created its "Portrait of a Graduate 2025," reflecting a collective commitment to uphold the "Five C's" of critical thinking, citizenship, creativity, collaboration, and communication. As a result, the district has built and sustained a critical infrastructure to ensure that all graduates embark on their journey both career- and life-ready.

The district, which serves 3,285 students in a five-school configuration (including a high school selected as one of the "Best" in the 2022 U.S. News Rankings of Best High Schools), emphasizes the importance of career planning for all students related to labor market projections and workforce needs. Its strategic plan aligns with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Academic Standards for Career Education and Work, including Career Awareness and Preparation; Student Discovery of Self-Abilities, Interests, and Relationships; Career Acquisition, Retention, and Advancement; and Entrepreneurship. As a result of collaboration involving counseling, administrative, instructional, and stakeholder group input, the district has implemented a Future Ready Comprehensive Plan that emphasizes students' academic, career, and social-emotional development throughout their elementary to high school experience.

According to district leaders, Franklin Regional K-12 future Ready Learners are prepared through a variety of processes and focus areas, including: (1) FR-ever Skills: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and citizenship; (2) Multiple Career Pathways and Clusters: interest based, personalized, and aligned with professional organizations; (3) Rigorous Academic Offerings: 97 academic courses, PLTW/STEM-related experiences, 21 AP courses, 28 Honors courses, and two Career Technology Centers; (4) A Wide Range of Arts, Athletics, Clubs, and Organizations: including 298 athletic teams, 37 clubs and organizations, and 28 annual arts-related productions; and (5) Real-World Experiences: including interactions with career professionals, post-secondary school tours, job shadowing, internships, and externships.

As part of requirements aligned with the district's Portrait of an FR Graduate, all learners complete a Career Readiness Portfolio. Students demonstrate their experience and efforts in meeting all of the Pennsylvania Chapter 4 graduation requirements. Throughout each year of high school, they collect artifacts and develop documents that directly represent their efforts to foster future-readiness and potential career paths. Artifacts may include reflection statements, career interest assessments, research papers, resumes, and documentation verifying participation in career exploration opportunities. The district also supports and sponsors field trips, career speakers, college visits, and trade/technical experiences each year.

Specific programs available in support of the district's commitment to students' future-readiness include a wide range of both internships and externships. These typically offer two credits with 2 students in

their senior year spending half the day in classes and half at the internship. The district also has a robust College in High School Program to erase the financial burden of a college education—and the difficulties students often experience finishing a college program. Approximately 250 students per year earn college credit through partner institutions, including approval of highly qualified high school teachers to serve as adjunct faculty.

Learners may also take advantage of two career and technology centers, Northern Westmoreland and Forbes Road Career & Technology. Many programs offered are aligned with Pennsylvania SOAR (Students Occupationally and Academically Ready) requirements. Programs are designed to lead students into a career pathway that aligns secondary coursework to post-secondary programs to complete a degree or certificate. Students can earn industry credentials in 22 different areas ranging from Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics and Supply Chain Management to Welding.

A creative component of high school course design involves the integration of career clusters/pathways in alignment with the district's Career Clusters Framework. Comprised of 16 Career Clusters and related Career Pathways, the framework guides and informs students' work with their counselors to identify possible career clusters that interest them and select courses according to their future career goals. Each course in the high school Program of Studies has a symbol(s) beside it representing the Career Cluster that best matches the course.

The district's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) occurs across academic subjects with a specific focus on skills development in literacy and math in Grades K-8. Based upon identified foundational gaps, the diverse needs of each student are met in a highly systematic and supportive manner that emphasizes equity of access to services and resources. Growth in five key areas has resulted from this emphasis: (1) Personalized grouping, including Tier 2 and 3 co-teaching and enrichment; (2) Collaboration emphasized in Professional Learning Communities and regular MTSS meetings; (3) Tools and resources using an "MTSS Schoology" group approach as a hub for media albums, discussions, and surveys as well as a commitment to all professional development being research-based and goal-driven; and (4) Communication involving reports at the end of each week with teachers receiving a summary report specific to the intervention, strategies, activities, and next steps for their learners.

The district reinforces the principle of equity in all aspects of its curriculum, instruction, and operations. For example, the district's Transition & Work Exploration program is designed for students with disabilities (ages 14-21) and has grown exponentially over the past seven years. It has enabled recent graduates to gain employment at local businesses, including ongoing emphasis upon task-related and soft skills required for on-the-job success. Its Parents as Allies Program builds stronger engagement between families and schools. Similarly, the Westmoreland County Forum for Workforce Development includes Teacher in the Workplace workshops and on-site experiences. Additional equity-driven opportunities include Project Lead the Way (PLTW) and a Social Entrepreneurship high school course in which students share their newly acquired skills ("Glow") and areas in which they require growth and development ("Grow").

Finally, Franklin Regional makes extensive use of cross-institutional partnerships to ensure that students are future ready. These include a range of regional organizations and universities; national partners (including the Successful Practices Network); foundation partners, including the Grable Foundation; and a range of major business partners, including the Allegheny Health Network and U.S. Steel.