

# career

 pathways

News for Immediate Release

## **Naperville's KidsMatter Launches *Career Pathways Program***

January 7, 2020, Naperville, IL - [KidsMatter](#), a Naperville Non-Profit organization dedicated to helping empower kids to realize their purpose, know their value and find their pathway, is thrilled to announce the launch of the [Career Pathways Program](#) (view video [here](#)). The Career Pathways Program is designed to provide career exposure to high school juniors and seniors through partnerships with local businesses and corporations who support workplace learning experiences. For its pilot year, Kidsmatter partnered with [DealerInspire](#), who will be mentoring students from Naperville Districts 203 and 204. DealerInspire will be providing the students the lens they need to understand what careers in five different career clusters look like - including hands-on experience. Students will see day-to-day responsibilities in the following departments: Accounting, Development, Content Development, Customer Service, and Performance Management Analytics. KidsMatter CEO Kamala Martinez, who is looking forward to uniting the school and business communities, states, "Today, young people need both cross-cutting skills and specialized knowledge to thrive in our rapidly changing 21st century economy. Business and industry leaders require fresh talent to innovate and grow. KidsMatter developed the Career Pathways Program to bring the schools, youth and the business community together."

The Career Pathways Program will also help schools fulfill state-mandated workplace exposure, outlined in the [Postsecondary Workforce Readiness Act](#) (or PWR-Act). Signed into law in 2016, the act was put in place to ensure students achieve college and career readiness. Preparing kids to attend college and obtain meaningful employment is currently a priority in Illinois education, as so many students have been graduating unprepared.

The PWR-Act allows for school districts to award specific diploma endorsements in seven career cluster areas, five of which are offered by Career Pathways. Jill Hlavacek, the Director of Innovation & Learning for Naperville Community Unit School District 203 states, "We are designing educational pathways around these career areas for students. These experiences include career-specific coursework and curriculum while embedding workplace learning experiences & early college credit in each pathway."



While Career Pathways will be inimitable for students, the program will also benefit participating businesses and corporations on several levels including opportunities for talent acquisition, exposure to a younger audience, and valuable experiences for their employees, who will be serving as teachers and mentors. Hlavacek emphasizes, “We are lucky to have so many community partnerships who support this work and look forward to building more opportunities for our students to learn and develop college & career readiness skills.”

The Career Pathways Program kick-off event will be held on **January 28, 2020 from 10:00am - 11:30am** at Dealer Inspire (1864 High Grove Ln #124, Naperville, IL 60540) along with a presentation from KidsMatter CEO & Executive Director Kamala L. Martinez. Students, Mayor Steve Chirico, DealerInspire CEO Joe Chura and City Officials will be in attendance providing photo and interview opportunities for Press.

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