



NAVIANCE
BY HOBSONS



Case Study

Township High School District 214



IL

Cook County, IL

Township High School District 214 is the largest high school district in Illinois.



12,000

Student population

The district serves grades 9-12, with a diverse student population.



2009

Naviance client

D214 implemented Naviance in 2009.

"Our students are not completing the Career Cluster Finder and enrolling in pathways courses because we are telling them 'you should do it'. They complete these activities in the context of achieving their goals."

Dr. Lazaro Lopez,

Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning at D214

Aligning curriculum to career pathways for successful transitions

The Challenge

Township High School District 214 (D214) is on the forefront of the effort to ensure students are truly career-ready. As part of their mission to help all students reach their full potential as citizens who can meet the challenges of a changing society, the district helps students connect their high school experience to their career path after graduation.

According to Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, half of all young adults are failing to successfully launch their careers*. Labor force participation for adults ages 20-24 is now 71%, its lowest level since 1972. Districts and schools are adapting to help ensure students are equipped for careers after high school. Many are beginning career pathway initiatives that provide students practical skills and a pathway to pursue after high school or postsecondary education.

Career Knowledge is one of the six key competencies identified in the research-backed [College, Career and Life Readiness Framework](#).

The Approach

D214 integrates career knowledge and preparation directly into the school curriculum through career pathways. The district's academic handbook is structured around the 16 nationally recognized career clusters and 44 career specific pathways. "We offer a sequence of courses that lead directly beyond high school, provide students with opportunities to engage in workplace learning, and enable them to earn early college credit in each pathway," said Dr. Lazaro Lopez, Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning at D214.

As part of this integration, students can take a medical chemistry course which includes learning in a hospital every week or even earn a certified nursing assistant credential. "One of our biggest successes has been that we've been able to align the student experience to their personal interests through a career framework," said Dr. Lopez. "By having students identify and make that choice early, we can then personalize the school experience around their interest."

The D214 career pathway model is for every student in the district. "We do not ask students to make a career decision at age 14; we ask them to begin thinking about it," said Dr. Lopez. Students are given the opportunity to try various courses and switch their pathway their pathway throughout high school.

* Failure to Launch: Structural Shift and the New Lost Generation, 2013. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/failure-to-launch/>

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Results

Since integrating career pathways into the everyday academic lives of students, D214 has seen impressive results in support of their goals.

- 95% of the Class of 2018 identified a career cluster of interest prior to graduation
- 32% of students participated in a workplace learning experience, up from 0% in 2014
- Tripled Dual Credit: 40% of the Class of 2018 earned dual credit in a career pathway course, up from 12% in 2013

"A teacher might notice that a student is doing exceptionally in their science class, but that their career cluster is in a completely different field. This opens up an opportunity for the teacher, not just the counselor or career advisor, to have a conversation with that student around their pathway."

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Associate Superintendent for Teaching and Learning at D214

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"Career At-Risk" Students

The process of identifying a student's career pathway begins freshman year. Incoming freshmen are asked to complete the Career Cluster Finder in Naviance and discuss their results with a counselor. If a student has not yet identified a career cluster with their counselor by their junior year, they are considered "career at-risk" and are then provided additional support from a career advisor.

In addition to working with students to complete the Career Cluster Finder within Naviance, D214 hosts multiple career nights each fall to help students narrow down their interests. Each event, such as the Arts, Communications and Human Services night, is focused on a general career pathway. With all students in the district invited to attend, an average of 700 attendees participate in each event. The night includes breakout sessions on specific careers within the pathway. Students have the opportunity to hear from representatives from a postsecondary partner related to the pathway as well as older students currently taking classes in the respective pathway.

By setting a standard for career exploration, Dr. Lopez feels that students are more receptive and more motivated to discover their interests and career pathway. "Our students are not completing the Career Cluster Finder and enrolling in pathways courses simply because we are telling them 'this is good for you and you should do it'. They complete these activities in the context of achieving their goals."

Teacher Involvement

D214 has found creative ways to integrate career interests into the classroom experience. By connecting Naviance to the district's student information system, students' identified career clusters are now included on each teacher's class roster. "A teacher might notice that a student is doing exceptionally in their science class, but that their career cluster is in a completely different field. This opens up an opportunity for the teacher, not just the counselor or career advisor, to have a conversation with that student around their pathway," said Dr. Matt Liberatore, Director of Professional Learning and Student Services at D214.

The Results

Since integrating career pathways into the everyday academic lives of students, D214 has seen impressive results in support of their goals. Prior to graduation, 95% of the class of 2018 identified a career cluster of interest. Additionally, 32% of students participated in a workplace learning experience, up from 0% in 2014. Finally, the district more than tripled the number of students who earned dual credit in a career pathway course from 12% in 2013 to 40% for the class of 2018. Through these efforts, D214 leadership has positioned students for success beyond their K-12 education.

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