

A PARTNERSHIP IN THE MAKING

High schools and colleges recognize the importance of providing students with a seamless passage from one learning experience to the next. The P-TECH Rochester school links the Rochester City School District, Monroe Community College and 12 regional business partners, including the University of Rochester Medical Center, Harris Corporation, Xerox Corporation and EarthLink. These partners work together to ensure that students earn a high school diploma and a no-cost Associate in Applied Science degree that prepares them to fill high-demand jobs in the information technology field.

School: P-TECH Rochester

Partners: Rochester City School District, Monroe Community College, and 12 regional business partners

Launch: September 2014, one of 16 new schools opening in the fall of 2014 as part of the P-TECH 9-14 school rollout in New York State

Standout Fact: AAS degrees in Computer Systems Technology and Computer Information Systems

The partners need to work together to coordinate activities across a significant number of businesses. Two people have played a key role in developing a successful and effective partnership in Rochester. They are Anthony Smith, P-TECH Project Administrator for the Rochester City School District and William (Bill) Rotenberg, Director of P-TECH for Monroe Community College (MCC).

They have forged a dynamic working relationship that allows each of them to leverage his expertise to drive the school partnership, "We share an equal workload but bring our specific expertise to the table," says Rotenberg. He continues, noting that Smith is much more comfortable with technology than he is, although what unites them is a shared vision. "What we share is a passion for education and making a difference in Rochester children's lives."

Smith agrees, and points out that this shared vision drives their work. "We work collaboratively on a daily basis. Bill is a huge part of the success of our work," notes Smith, referring to Rotenberg. "Bill has 20 years of experience in education and a lot of that is in K-12 administration. Bill and MCC are taking charge of building the business support for our program."

How did the two develop their working relationship? A sense of humor and persistence helps. "The only two people we could get hold of from the beginning were each other!" Rotenberg says with a laugh.

Most importantly, they share a common appreciation of what partnership means. "This school is a hybrid between the district and MCC," says Smith. So he focused on finding common ground with Rotenberg. "This is a person I have to work with for seven years! So let's throw everything on the table, and hash it out. We have to feel free and open and ultimately make the best education decisions possible."

For Rotenberg, making the best education decision possible has meant a clear focus on the students, "I want the kids and the teachers to be the focus of the program. Rotenberg continues, referring to his work with Smith, "We work together for the betterment of our school."

In that spirit, Rotenberg and Smith connected early in the school development process and developed an implementation plan. They began meeting informally, interviewing one another and sharing their different skill sets, and deciding how they could support each other. Next, they began to map out the work that

needed to be accomplished. This included developing the Scope & Sequence and the Summer Bridge program, and laying out the internal processes that needed to take place to launch the P-TECH 9-14 school.

Throughout, their work has been supported by a larger Steering Committee made up of key leaders from both the district and MCC, who are tasked with providing guidance and advice and doing the strategic work necessary to ensure the school's success.

"We have an action plan and top priorities for each day, week and month," says Rotenberg. "We talk every couple of days to move forward. I joke that I talk to Anthony more than my wife!"

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For more information about the P-TECH 9-14 model, please visit ptech.org