

April 20, 2023



# Hands-On Work and Career Readiness Experiences Meeting PaCE Framework Objectives

*Empowering and Inspiring Students with Career Spark & JA Inspire*

**Mary Pille**, President  
**Angie Houck**, Program Director  
Junior Achievement of Central Illinois



# Session Outline

- Overview
- Background
- Objectives
- PaCE Framework Correlations
- Hands-on Activity Overviews
- Measurable Outcomes
- Best Practices & Lessons Learned
- Q & A



# Overview



- What is CareerSpark?
  - Free classroom and event-based learning experience to introduce 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to the working world and now high school students to jobs and internships
  - Virtual and/or in-person
  - CareerSpark-You're Hired! - high school virtual experience
- What is JA Inspire?
  - Learning experience designed to wrap around a career expo
  - Helps make a career expo more than a field trip – ensure students are prepared ahead of time and have action steps afterwards
  - Free career assessment for schools needing one that also complements Xello well



# Background



- Partner organization: Greater Peoria Economic Development Council
- First year of implementation: Fall 2017
  - **1,342** 8<sup>th</sup> grade Students & **16** Schools
- Fall 2022
  - **3,890** 8<sup>th</sup> grade Students & **64** Schools
- Transitioned to virtual learning experience Fall 2020
- Expansion to serve high school students & educators





# Objectives

- Help prepare 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students for successful futures
- Help educators meet PaCE Framework objectives for grades 8-12
- Help employers promote high growth, high demand careers in the region
- Obtain student impact-centered measurable outcomes to demonstrate program effectiveness
- Long term goal: potential longitudinal study



# PaCE Framework Correlations



**An Aggregated Correlation:  
JA Middle School  
Programs  
and  
Illinois PaCE Framework  
2020**

JA Economics for Success®	JA Global Marketplace®	JA It's My Business®	JA It's My Future®	JA Finance Park®	JA BizTown	JA Inspire	JA Career Exploration Fair	J JA Career Speaker Series	JA It's My Job (Soft Skills)
---------------------------	------------------------	----------------------	--------------------	------------------	------------	------------	----------------------------	----------------------------	------------------------------

CareerSpark  
aligns with PaCE  
Expectations:

- Career Exploration & Development
- Financial Literacy
- Post-Secondary Education Exploration, Preparation, and Selection

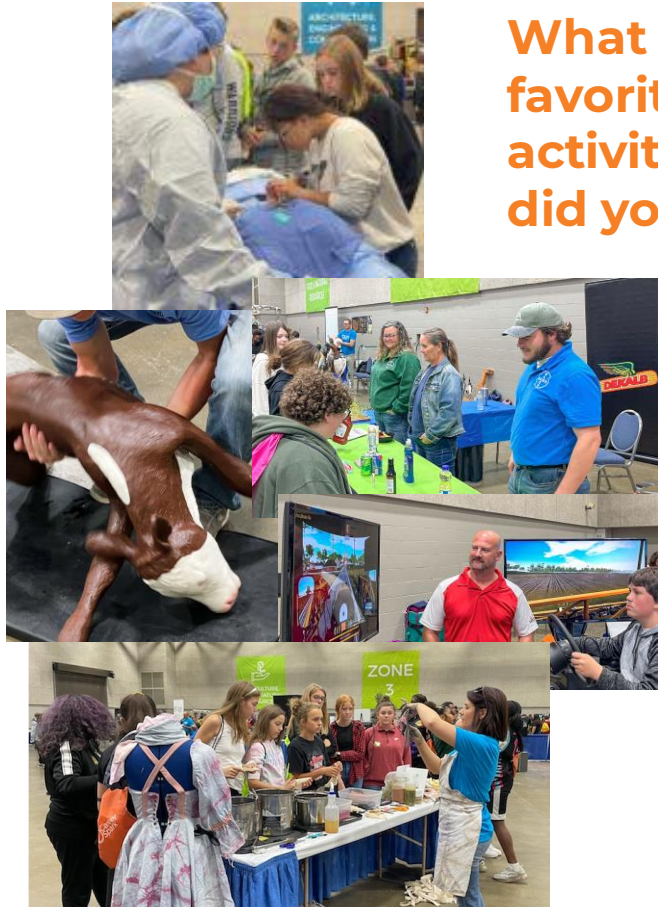
PaCE Career Expectations									
Career Exploration and Development									
Complete a career cluster survey	•			•	•		•		•
Attend a career exploration day				•	•	•	•		
Understand the concept of career clusters of interest	•			•	•	•	•		•
Identify and research potential careers of interest	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•
Speak with someone from a career of interest and ask questions.		•		•	•	•	•	•	•
Financial Aid and Literacy									
Participate in a financial literacy unit in a course or workshop	•				•	•			
Complete a financial aid assessment with a family member					•				
Discuss grants, scholarships, loans and work study options with a trusted adult				•					
Post-Secondary Education Exploration, Preparation, and Selection									
Complete a unit on education planning							•		
Understand relationship between community service/extracurricular activities and postsecondary (PS)/career goals							•		
Create a plan with potential classes you need and want to take in high school to prepare for college									
Attend a PS options workshop							•		
Meet with a counselor to discuss coursework and PS/career plans using the ISBE College and Career Readiness Indicators									
Begin determining eligibility for advanced placement (AP) courses									
Outline a plan for community service and extracurricular activities related to PS plans									



# Hands-On Activities: 8th Grade



What was your favorite CareerSpark activity, and what did you like about it?



22-23 8th Grade Student  
Post-Survey: n = 1,496



# Hands-On Activities: High School



**NEW! Live/on demand local career webinars in virtual auditorium**

	Special Topic Day: Postsecondary Readiness	Career Cluster Rotation	Career Cluster Rotation	Career Cluster Rotation	Career Cluster Rotation	Special Topic Day: Student Part Time Jobs
TIME	2/10/2023	2/24/2023	3/10/2023	3/24/2023	4/14/2023	4/28/2023
8:00 AM-8:30 AM	Entrepreneurship: <b>Nerevu Group, We Hear You, Myers Tinting, &amp; Faire Coffee</b>	Architecture, Engineering, Construction: <b>BLDD</b>	Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics: <b>Regal Industrial</b>	Healthcare and Human Services: <b>OSF</b>	Law, Government, Public Service: <b>Nicor Gas</b>	<b>Beachler's Vehicle Care &amp; Repair</b>
9:00 AM-9:30 AM	Trades: <b>West Central IL Building Trades</b>	Arts, Tech, Communication: <b>Black Dog Metal Arts</b>	Architecture, Engineering, Construction: <b>RiverCity Construction</b>	Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics: <b>Natural Fiber Welding</b>	Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics: <b>Morton Industries</b>	<b>Peoria Park District</b>
10:00 AM-10:30 AM	Military: <b>US Army &amp; US Air Force</b>	Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources: <b>Jake Wolf Fish Hatchery</b>	Arts, Tech, Communication: <b>Accenture</b>	Architecture, Engineering, Construction: <b>GIVSCO</b>	Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics: <b>Union Pacific</b>	<b>Tricocci University</b>
11:00 AM-11:30 AM	Customer Service/Retail: <b>Ace Hardware &amp; Costco</b>	Business and Finance: <b>RLI</b>	Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources: <b>Hungry World Farm</b>	Arts, Tech, Communication: <b>Illinois Mutual</b>	Architecture, Engineering, Construction: <b>Scott Lewis Homes</b>	<b>Peoria Production Solutions</b>
12:00 PM-12:30 PM	2 Year College Panel: <b>Illinois Central College</b>	Education and Training: <b>Regional Office of Education 48</b>	Business and Finance: <b>PNC</b>	Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources: <b>Bayer</b>	Arts, Tech, Communication: <b>Simantel</b>	<b>Uftring Auto Group TBD</b>
1:00 PM-1:30 PM	Job Applications & Interviewing: <b>Manpower and Bradley University</b>	Law, Government, Public Service: <b>City of Peoria Dept of Public Works</b>	Education and Training: <b>Oehlein School of Cosmetology</b>	Business and Finance: <b>CEFCU</b>	Agriculture, Food, Natural Resources: <b>Sorce Freshwater</b>	<b>Distillery Labs</b>
2:00 PM-2:30 PM	4 Year College Panel: <b>Bradley University, Eureka College, Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University</b>	Healthcare and Human Services: <b>Advanced Medical Transport</b>	Law, Government, Public Service: <b>Court Reporting (Steno School)</b>	Education and Training: <b>Illinois Wesleyan University</b>	Business and Finance: <b>Busey Bank</b>	<b>Carle Health</b>
3:00 PM-3:30 PM	FAFSA: <b>Illinois State Board of Education</b>	Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics: <b>Maui Jim</b>	Healthcare and Human Services: <b>HOI United Way &amp; Midwest Food Bank</b>	Law, Government, Public Service: <b>State of IL</b>	Education and Training: <b>State Farm</b>	<b>City of Bloomington</b>

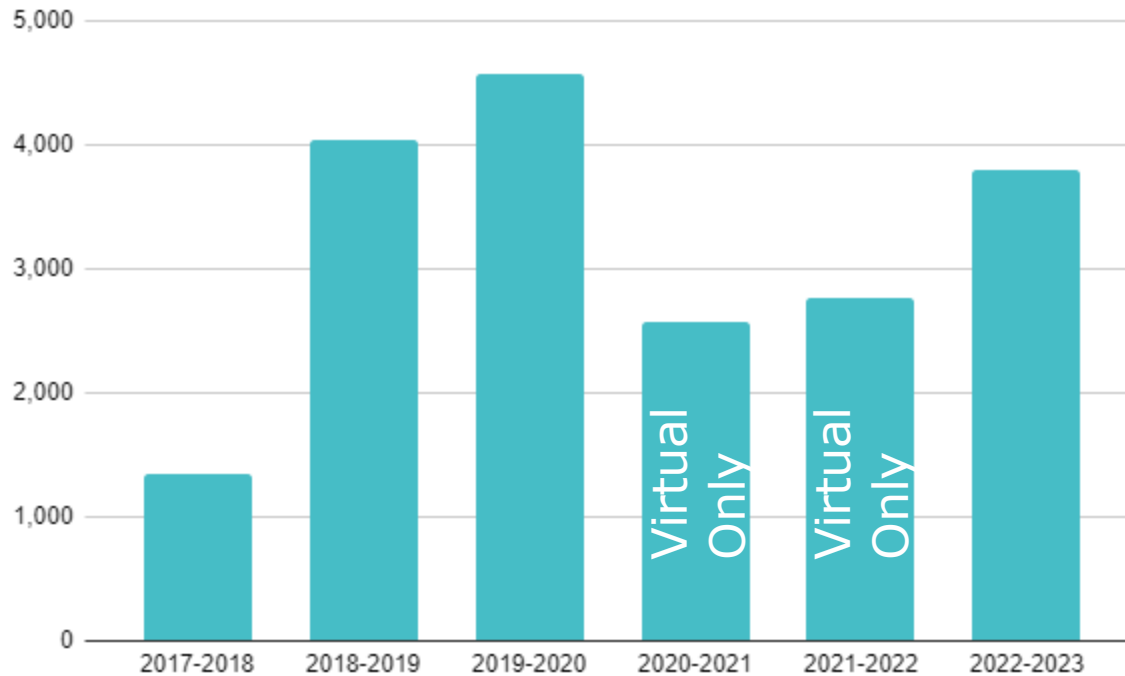




# Measurable Outcomes



## Annual 8th Grade Student Impact




High School  
Spring 2023  
Registered: 5,039  
17 High Schools  
31 Employers



# Measurable Outcomes




## 8th Grade Educator Survey Outcomes Fall 2022




**98%**  
of educators  
agreed the  
program  
increased student  
knowledge of  
career  
opportunities and  
pathways



"There was a lot of student  
engagement and I heard  
students talking about  
careers they were interested  
in after that morning!"



**91%**  
of educators agreed the  
program increased  
student understanding  
of skills and abilities  
they need to develop in  
order to reach their  
career goals



"I think this was the  
best year I've  
attended in regards to  
the quality of the  
activities and the level  
of interactivity the  
kids were able to  
experience."

*22-23 8th Grade Educator  
Post-Survey: n= 119*





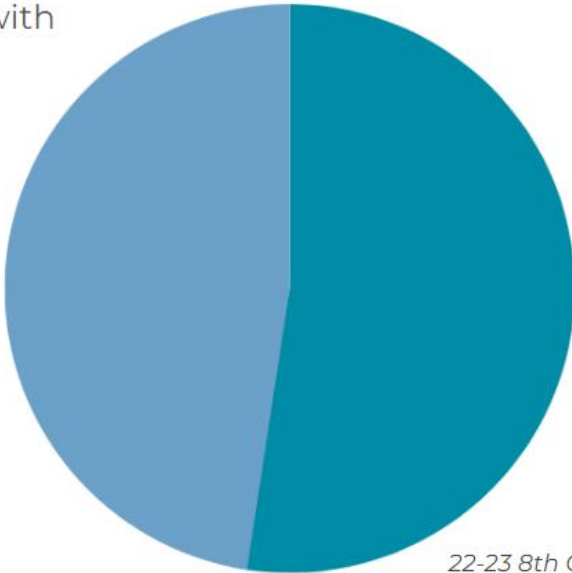
# Measurable Outcomes

## 8th grade Student Survey Outcomes Fall 2022

I am considering careers for my future that I hadn't thought of before because of my experience with CareerSpark.



NO  
48%



YES  
52%


22-23 8th Grade Student  
Post-Survey: n= 1,496




# Measurable Outcomes




## 8th Grade Student Survey Outcomes Fall 2022



“There are so many different jobs that I didn't even know about!”



**70%**  
After participating in CareerSpark/JA Inspire, I feel I am better prepared to make an informed decision about my high school plans.



“I learned that you should enjoy the job that you pick instead of making yourself like it.”



**74%**  
CareerSpark/JA Inspire made me realize the importance of staying in school.

22-23 8th Grade Student  
Post-Survey: n= 1,496



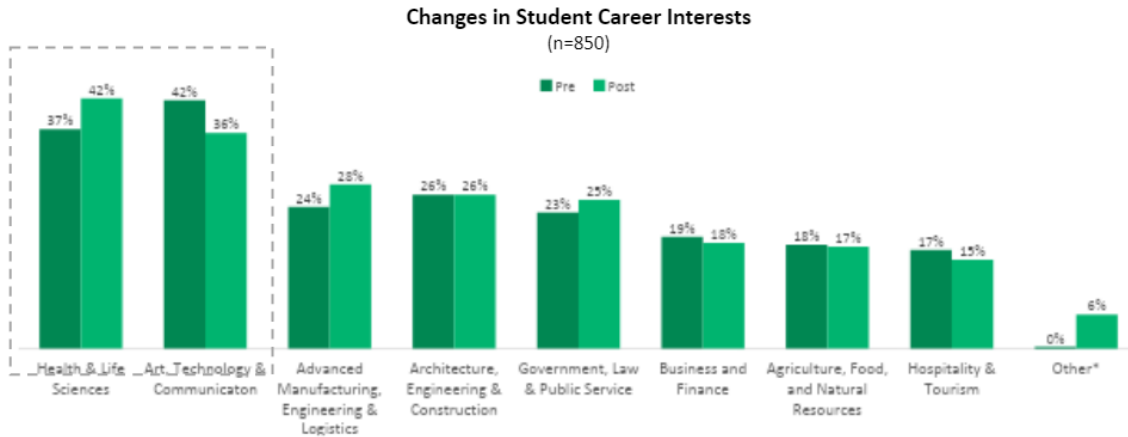


# Measurable Outcomes

CareerSpark/JA Inspire increased LMI-student interest in STEM careers and helped LMI students decide a career more than students in aggregate.

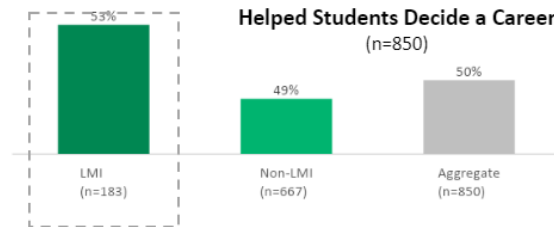


## Career Interests



1.06x

more Non-LMI students interested in STEM careers post-program



\*Pre-survey data had only 3 responses in the *Other* category.

Copyright © 2019 Junior Achievement Central Illinois

- Confidential -

Students from each segment saw value in the CareerSpark/JA Inspire program for making future decisions, but it made the biggest impact on individuals from LMI households.

Program Evaluation  
CareerSpark/JA Inspire  
April 2019

Independent evaluation conducted by:



# Best Practices & Lessons Learned



- Make friends with your Regional Office of Education (ROE)
- When planning virtual student participation, expect to have much lower student number than registered
- Don't underestimate the power of paper – sometimes 'old school' printed paper workbooks, worksheets are most effective & help reduce barriers of the digital divide
- For in person career expos – focus on experiential, hands-on activities – not tables w/ brochures
- Plan with DEI and Accessibility in mind – do a DEI and Accessibility check



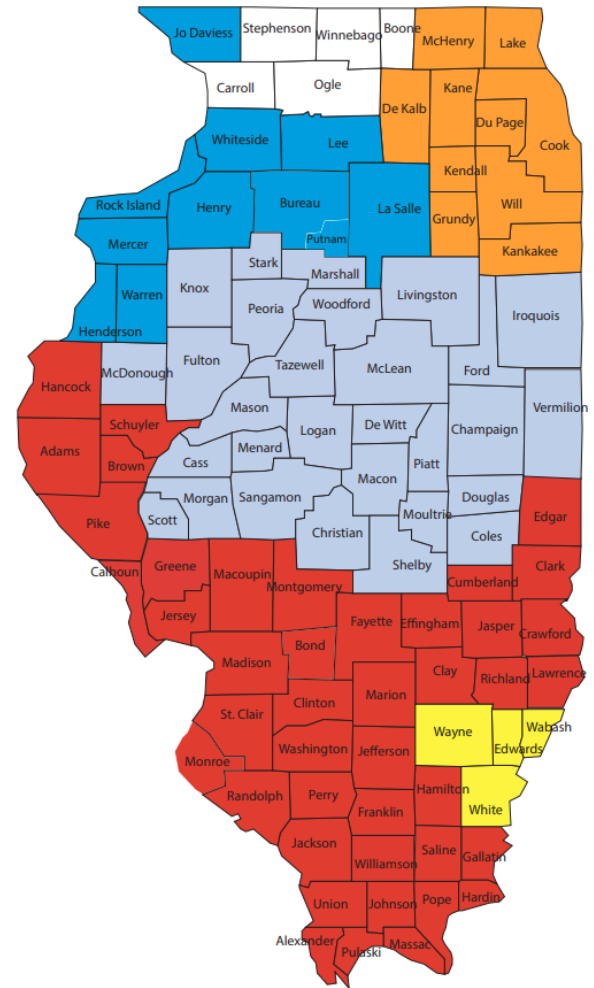
# Next Steps

- CareerSpark website:  
<https://gppathways.org/gp-careerspark/>
- Junior Achievement area offices in Illinois:  
<https://jausa.ja.org/about/locations>

Mary Pille, JA of Central IL President  
[mary.pille@ja.org](mailto:mary.pille@ja.org)

Angie Houck, JA of Central IL Program Director  
[angie.houck@ja.org](mailto:angie.houck@ja.org)

<https://centralillinois.ja.org/>





# Q & A







# Thank You!

