



# OAKMONT

## EDUCATION

OAKMONT EDUCATION PULSE: NAVIGATING EXCELLENCE IN CREDIT RECOVERY & ADVANCEMENT

### Oakmont Education Expands to Cincinnati with Rookwood High School



## Rookwood High School

Oakmont Education is proud to announce its first school in the Cincinnati area: **Rookwood High School**. Opening fall of 2025, this tuition-free charter high school will serve students aged 15–21, blending academic achievement with career-focused training. For the first time, Oakmont's innovative education model will be available to students in Cincinnati and surrounding communities.



#### A Name Rooted in Cincinnati's History

The name "Rookwood" carries a deep connection to Cincinnati's rich artistic and industrial heritage. Inspired by the city's world-renowned Rookwood Pottery, which represents craftsmanship, innovation, and a commitment to excellence, Rookwood High School embodies these same values. Just as the pottery is known for transforming raw materials into enduring works of art, the school seeks to transform students' potential into meaningful accomplishments.

#### A New Path for Cincinnati Students

At Rookwood High School, students can earn a nationally accredited diploma and pursue industry-recognized credentials in fields like construction, healthcare, and business. With small class sizes, personalized academic coaching, and flexible schedules, the school provides a supportive environment where students can recover credits, graduate early, and build bright futures.

#### Career Tech Education Changes Lives

Dr. Jerry Farley, Oakmont's Vice President of Career Technical Education, says: "Career Tech education opens doors. Our students graduate with credentials valued by employers, enabling them to secure sustainable jobs. Plus, we remain engaged with graduates for a year to support their ongoing success."

#### A Fresh Opportunity for Cincinnati's Youth

Rookwood High School represents Oakmont Education's commitment to expanding access to quality learning. President Dimitrios Kriaras notes, "We're thrilled to bring our proven model to Cincinnati, helping students achieve their diplomas and earn credentials that pave the way to fulfilling careers."

**CHECK OUT OAKMONT EDUCATION'S BANNER JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS INSIDE!**

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Great Oaks High School & Career Center, has been selected as a recipient of a \$1.5 million Department of Labor YouthBuild Grant. This transformative investment will provide life-changing educational and workforce development opportunities for opportunity youth in Des Moines, Iowa.

The YouthBuild program targets students aged 17-21 who have left high school, offering a powerful combination of education, job training, and leadership development. At Great Oaks, students can earn their high school diplomas while preparing for careers in high-demand fields like construction and healthcare.

Construction pathway participants will gain hands-on experience by partnering with Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity to build affordable housing. Meanwhile, students will develop leadership skills and prepare for postsecondary opportunities such as college, apprenticeships, or employment.

YouthBuild at Great Oaks goes beyond academics, addressing challenges students face with services such as transportation assistance, childcare support, healthcare referrals, and essential work attire. Graduates will also benefit from a 12-month follow-up program to ensure a smooth transition into their careers or further education.

Launching February 1, 2025, this initiative is a partnership with Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates (IJAG) and Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC). Together, Coalition YouthBuild aims to equip students with skills and confidence for brighter futures.

"With this grant, we can change lives and strengthen communities," said Dr. Jerry Farley, Oakmont's Vice President of Career Technical Education.

Great Oaks joins Oakmont Education's successful YouthBuild network, with proven programs in Dayton, Columbus, and Akron, Ohio.



**Michael McShane** Contributor ⓘ  
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Jan 15, 2025, 06:23am EST



Our network serving over 5,000 students across 18 campuses in Ohio and Iowa, has been spotlighted in Forbes for its groundbreaking approach to workforce development. The article, *"How One School Reweaves Social Fabric to Advance Workforce Development"* by Michael McShane, highlights the leadership of Cris Gulacy-Worrel and Dr. Jerry Farley and their focus on addressing the deeper needs of students often labeled "over age and under-credited."

The Forbes piece emphasizes Oakmont's unique four-pillar model, starting with healing and hope. Recognizing that many students arrive at Oakmont carrying significant trauma, the organization prioritizes stabilizing their lives, enabling them to shift from survival mode to learning mode. Oakmont then instills hope, showing students that a brighter future is achievable through perseverance and effort.

Unlike traditional dropout recovery programs, Oakmont integrates these pillars with a robust framework of career-focused education, ensuring that students not only gain academic credentials but also develop resilience and long-term life skills.

This recognition underscores Oakmont Education's role as a national leader in re-imagining education for underserved populations, providing a model for how schools can create meaningful change and equip students for successful futures.

Read the full article here:  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/mikemcshane/2025/01/15/how-one-school-reweaves-social-fabric-to-advance-workforce-development/>

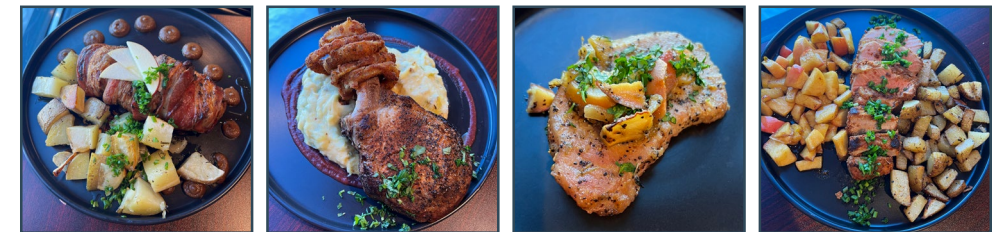
February 2025

We are proud to announce the Iowa State Board of Education's approval of two new Oakmont Education charter schools under the Great Oaks High School and Career Center banner, marking a significant step forward in its mission to provide transformative education.

Set to open by fall 2026, one new Great Oaks High School and Career Center will serve students in Davenport, and the other will be located in southern Des Moines. These schools will focus on dropout recovery, small class sizes, personalized learning, and career technical education (CTE), while integrating work-based learning opportunities and comprehensive support services to meet the unique needs of their students.

The Davenport location is projected to enroll 138 students in its first year, growing to serve 325 students by year five. Meanwhile, the southern Des Moines campus will extend Oakmont's existing reach in the city, building on the success of its flagship Great Oaks school, which opened in 2024.

Both schools aim to address critical educational gaps, with Davenport alone having seen approximately 1,470 high school dropouts since 2019. Oakmont plans to partner with organizations like the Boys and Girls Club, United Way, and River Bend Food Bank to ensure students receive the support they need to succeed.



Marshall High School recently hosted district officials from Middletown City and Monroe Local School Districts at its Middletown Campus to explore ways to collaborate more effectively and expand opportunities for students. Both districts expressed interest in providing additional pathways for their students to earn high school diplomas while gaining career technical industry credentials.

During the visit, the officials toured classrooms and career tech programs, including skilled trades, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, business, and entrepreneurship. They were particularly impressed with Marshall's Culinary program, where students prepared and presented a pork dish of their own creation. The culinary excellence left a lasting impression, as one official remarked, "The creativity and skill these students demonstrated was truly remarkable."

The meeting also focused on streamlining the referral process to better serve students who could benefit from Marshall's flexible scheduling and individualized learning approach. Both districts share Marshall's mission of preparing students for future success.

School Director Chuck Hall emphasized, “The key to fostering strong relationships is helping everyone understand we’re all on the same team, working toward the same goal: giving students the best opportunities possible.”

Plans are underway to create a partnership video for counselors to share with students and families, highlighting the benefits of enrolling at Marshall. Together, these partnerships promise a brighter future for local students.



In her 2025 Condition of the State Address, Governor Kim Reynolds celebrated Iowa's progress in education, workforce development, and innovation, spotlighting a Great Oaks High School and Career Center student whose journey exemplifies the power of education to transform lives.

Governor Reynolds emphasized Iowa's investment in educational choice and career-readiness programs, noting their role in unlocking potential for students of all backgrounds. Among the inspiring stories she shared was that of a Great Oaks student who discovered a passion for construction through the school's specialized career pathway programs.

"This program isn't just helping me finish school," the student shared, "it's helping me build my future." Their testimony highlights the importance of work-based learning and the unique opportunities available at schools like Great Oaks, which are redefining traditional education.

Governor Reynolds' recognition underscores the vital role of career technical education in equipping young people with the skills to succeed. The student's story is a testament to Oakmont Education's mission of providing students with innovative learning environments tailored to real-world success.

As we look to 2025 and beyond, stories like this reaffirm our commitment to empowering every student to thrive academically, professionally, and personally.



## Old Brook High School Parma Campus Partners with Grocery Outlet to Support Students in Need

Old Brook High School Parma Campus is proud to announce its new partnership with Grocery Outlet Bargain Market in Parma, aimed at providing essential support to students in need. Through this partnership, Grocery Outlet will supply food and groceries to help students and their families facing food insecurity.

On January 23rd, Grocery Outlet's owners Sydney Busa and Tate Halsey further demonstrated their commitment to the school community by presenting Old Brook High School Parma Campus with a \$1,000 donation at their Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Students from the school's career tech programs were present and accepted the check on behalf of the school. The generous contribution will support programs that directly benefit students and enhance their educational experience.

"We are grateful for this partnership with Grocery Outlet," said Megan Foster, the school's director. "Their generosity and commitment to supporting students in our community make a meaningful difference in their lives."

Grocery Outlet is a unique concept that combines affordability with community impact. As a retailer offering brand-name products at significant savings, it is owned and operated by individuals from the communities it serves, ensuring a personalized connection with local needs.

This collaboration reflects the shared mission of fostering student success and ensuring that every learner has the resources they need to thrive. Together, Old Brook and Grocery Outlet are building a stronger community.



## Network wide praise from local partners



We are very proud of a network-wide campaign featuring partner testimonial videos launched at the beginning of the year. Local school administrators, community organizations, and businesses volunteered to share their experiences working with our schools and highlight how our collaboration helps achieve mutually beneficial goals for students and the community.

Each school's video is available on the Partner tab of their website, and a highlight reel featuring school administrators can be found on [Oakmont's YouTube channel](#).

Our dropout recovery model stands apart by fostering deep community engagement, and these videos showcase the transformative power of these partnerships.

## Frederick Douglass High School Euclid Campus Partners with Habitat for Humanity

Frederick Douglass High School Euclid Campus is thrilled to announce its partnership with Habitat for Humanity on a meaningful construction project in Cuyahoga County. Together, they are rehabilitating a vacant home in Euclid, transforming it into a like-new residence for a future low-income first-time homeowner. This collaborative effort highlights the school's commitment to community service while providing students with invaluable real-world experience.

"It's a great opportunity to pair with a community partner that does a lot of good in the city," said Scott Caldwell, Director of Frederick Douglass High School Euclid Campus. "We want to support and give back to our community as much as we can. The students learn valuable lessons in giving back to someone who is less fortunate. Habitat for Humanity has given us that opportunity to make a difference in families' lives. Our students will remember this experience forever."

Guided by Construction Teacher Matt Dings, nine students in the construction education program have been working tirelessly—despite the cold—to meet the June 2025 completion goal. "The past two weeks spent on-site with Habitat have truly been an eye-opening experience," Dings shared. "It's been incredible to watch the students come together as a team, each one contributing to the project while gaining valuable hands-on experience."

This project not only equips students with practical skills but also instills camaraderie and a sense of purpose through community service. Frederick Douglass High School Euclid Campus is proud to foster this spirit of giving back and looks forward to the transformative impact this partnership will have on the community.

