

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 30, 2025

CONTACT

Jenny Trick, Executive Director
Racine County Economic Development Corporation
Jtrick@rcedc.org

RCEDC Leadership Council Explores Career Connections and Opportunities for Young Talent in Racine County

Sturtevant, WI—At the October 14, 2025, [Racine County Economic Development Corporation \(RCEDC\)](#) Leadership Council meeting, local educators in a panel discussion highlighted how Racine County high schools are equipping students for future careers and fostering connections with area employers.

The panel featured **Amy Levonian** (Burlington High School), **Alexander DeBaker** (Racine Unified School District), **Tom Blair** (Union Grove High School), and **Nicole Werner** (Waterford High School). Each panelist highlighted programs that give students hands-on experience, explore career pathways, and strengthen community partnerships.

[Burlington High School](#) offers initiatives such as Annual Opportunity Day, Reality Days for juniors, youth apprenticeships, and dual credit programs. Amy Levonian highlighted the “*Be a Good Human*” soft skills campaign and business donations, including welding equipment from Lynch Company and a vehicle from Miller Motors. She further highlighted the outstanding recognition of the youth apprentices by Advocate Aurora.

[RUSD’s Academies of Racine Program](#), led by Alex DeBaker, helps students identify career pathways early. Students engage with local businesses, nonprofits, and advisory councils through site visits, youth apprenticeships, dual credits, and capstone projects. A partnership with Fischer USA led to a student-created product and an apprenticeship placement. Fischer USA’s managing director, Ryan Brath, recognizing the mutual benefit of providing relevant training to students, donates one of his senior staff members as an instructor to RUSD.

[Union Grove High School](#) highlighted two work-based learning options: a flexible work-study program that allows students to earn income while gaining life skills, and a structured state-certified youth apprenticeship program with dedicated training oversight. Students earn competitive wages while gaining valuable experience in local businesses.

[Waterford Union High School](#) offers dual enrollment courses with UW-Whitewater, UW-Oshkosh, and Gateway Technical College, including programs in art, education, and healthcare. Nicole Werner highlighted that the dual enrollment programs can save families up to a year of college tuition. She also spoke about the hands-on training provided to students who enroll in internships.

Panelists noted challenges such as limited funding, insurance restrictions for students in manufacturing settings, and the need for more business partners and qualified instructors. They encouraged employers to get involved through mock interviews, site visits, advisory councils, and apprenticeship opportunities.

Each school has a designated Career and Technical Education (CTE) contact to help coordinate engagement:

- **Burlington:** Ben Hendricks, CTE Coordinator
- **RUSD:** Academy Coaches serve as primary liaisons
- **Union Grove:** Travis Wetzel, CTE Coordinator
- **Waterford:** Amy Meyer, CTE Coordinator

All districts emphasized workforce readiness, including mandatory financial literacy training. Tools like the *My Life* app give students practical experience in budgeting and real-world life skills.

About RCEDC

The Racine County Economic Development Corporation is a private, non-profit organization providing Racine County businesses with technical and financial resources for nearly 40 years. The mission of RCEDC is to increase Racine County's property tax base and create employment opportunities in the County.

###