

# **"Galaxy" as a Network of Innovators Summary + Reflection**

2020-2021

## **What we did:**

Brainstorming in the summer of 2020 and officially starting in December of 2020, ROCKiT began work in a priority area called "the Galaxy." Before completely defining the area, the team quickly launched into the first OuttaThisWorld (OTW) Campaign. Throughout the rest of the school year, ROCKiT participated in Galaxy related movement in the following ways:

1. Prototyped/Tested Tactics: Platforms for connecting and sharing with our network of innovators
  - a. OuttaThisWorld: ROCKin Ideas Campaign
    - i. Rapid collection and sharing of ideas people within MMSD were trying in order to increase student engagement or staff morale
  - b. How Might We... Ideate Together?
    - i. Collected responses from people in MMSD around ROCKiT determined HMW statements with the plan to provide an asynchronous professional learning opportunity for people to ideate and prepare to try ideas.
  - c. OuttaThisWorld: Back to the Future Campaign
    - i. Rapid collection and sharing of ideas that people had tried and were learning from that could inspire our future
  - d. The Lodestar
    - i. Newsletter prototype for sharing information, resources and events with our network of innovators
  - e. Race and Equity Showcase
    - i. Collaborative effort with the Office of Equity, Partnerships and Engagement to elevate and share anti-racist teaching ideas and practices from OTW submissions and
  - f. Student Services Showcase
    - i. Sharing of work from MMSD staff working with ROCKiT that supports student engagement
  - g. Staff Lounge
    - i. A virtual space for staff members to connect, share ideas, and inspire one another
2. Maintained the Galaxy as a priority area
3. Reflection and work toward definition of the "Galaxy"
4. Collected data around engagers and shared ideas
5. Research and Innovation Team Organizational Network Analysis (RnI ONA)
  - a. Compilation of relational connections between ROCKiT/RPEO members and schools or central office departments to guide our future work as an RnI team

## **Ideas shared for tactics with "completed" BML cycles:**

1. OuttaThisWorld Campaigns
  - a. 2 cycles completed
  - b. 48 ideas were shared and elevated via social media and our website
2. Race and Equity Showcase
  - a. 3 ideas were shared and elevated on MMSD TV to the Madison Community
3. Student Services Showcase
  - a. 3 ideas shared and elevated to the central office Student Services team
4. Staff Lounge
  - a. 1 idea was shared within the zoom

## Reflection on the Galaxy and Network of Innovators Definition:

While the Galaxy did not feel directly connected to the Network of Innovators, it should have been. ROCKiT agrees that the network of innovators is the group of early adopters to an innovative mindset. ROCKiT hopes to mobilize around the people that make up this network to grow, celebrate and share ideas related to innovation. Ultimately, this network of innovators should champion the innovator's mindset and spread ROCKiT's idea of innovation. While the Galaxy does not yet represent this group in the eyes of ROCKiT and our participants, that was how the term was used throughout the year 2020-2021.

## Summary of Team Reflections:

### The Galaxy This Year:

- Allowed great opportunities to connect even with the limited capabilities of a virtual year
- Innovation work within the Galaxy has become a greater priority area for ROCKiT
- Shared how innovation is used in big and small ways within various classrooms and departments
- Spaces were offered for people to share and be inspired by people who have excitement for innovation
- Ideas were elevated and shared so they didn't just sit in a vacuum
- ROCKiT connected with others not because of already being in our network, but to help with reach (prioritizing expansion over depth)

### Accomplishments:

- Highlighted people and work that doesn't normally get notice and elevated it across the district
- Offered a place where everyone had the opportunity to be celebrated (non competitive)
- People were able to share about themselves or colleagues
- Heightened the profile of ROCKiT
- Helped boost staff morale
- Gathered critical information about what is happening at our schools and district needs
- Recognition that our relationships and connections are a part of the network of innovators
- Gave a critical eye to the levers we use to influence and spread innovation
- Helped ROCKiT think critically about offerings and what innovation work/ROCKiT can do
- Tested how to reach people we don't typically reach
- Shared that innovation happens outside of ROCKiT

### Challenges:

- Timing of launches and late mobilizing in December of the year
- Harnessing more support from leadership (including principals) and communications
- Often feels like a transactional exchange with staff/network
- Still needs more definition- What is the core and function?
- Determining how and when to talk about this was a challenge
- Did ROCKiT and should ROCKiT maintain the network with ongoing and follow-up communication (newsletter?)
- Needed to follow-through on more ways to celebrate and share practice
- Connection to PD opportunities to bring people in AND increase innovation skills/push their thinking (HMW tactic)
- Could have leaned into creative confidence more- much more to consider here
- Opportunity to collaborate with community organizations to provide resources, learning and training to people within the network

#### Relationship of Tactics within the Galaxy:

- Can help identify people in other parts of the district who are doing similar work to connect with and learn from
- Tactics target slightly different ways to share with different groups
- Finds, celebrates and shares ideas within the network/Galaxy
- Tactics bring people in, but how do you create and maintain the community? Newsletter?
- Tactics were stand-alone ways to interact with people in the network
- Tactics are not "a group of people excited about innovation"/our network
- To connect to various groups within the Galaxy, we may need to think about some that have a wide reach and shallow depth and others with a small reach and more depth

#### Future Existence:

- Continue campaigns, but less often (2 per year)
- Find ways to highlight and connect with the growing network
- Make it so the network is not always transactional
- Find ways to connect the RnI team to the network in supportive ways
- Engage certain groups with similar interests in different ways so practice can be shared
- Determine who we want to be a part of our network and who we hope to impact
- Systemize what it means to leverage our networks and coordinate internally
- Use the network as a way to get people excited about ROCKiT not just people
- Elevate the spaces for staff to design and share ideas in affirming ways and not just problem solving
- Continue to build the trust and knowledge base within the network

#### **Suggested Next Steps:**

1. Plan to launch 2 idea campaigns next year (1 per semester)
  - a. The "success" of the first 2 connected with the necessary consistency to get submissions suggests attempting to plan and launch 2 campaigns with more space in between during the next year would be a good step
  - b. Possible collaboration with other departments
2. Plan to launch an RnI newsletter
  - a. In an attempt to find a consistent way to engage with the network in a non-transactional fashion, a newsletter seems to be a great proposal and brought up by 4/5 people during reflections
  - b. The newsletter could support follow-up and follow-through, be another platform for sharing ideas, share about upcoming opportunities and events, provide access to resources and professional learning, help remind the network about the community
3. Collaborate with 2 departments (Equity/C&I/Teaching and Learning,?) on a spring showcase
  - a. The interest, feedback and success of the Race and Equity showcase along with the other showcases that happened throughout this past year suggests intentional planning to develop this across multiple departments to leverage ideas would be a good step