

# Preparing future leaders in medical careers

Aspiring doctors and health care professionals can get an early start in their training, thanks to a new high school elective that explores medical careers and allows students to graduate with industry credentials and certifications. Through hands-on, work-based, experiential learning in clinical settings, students learn a wide variety of skills to prepare them for future health-related occupations.

This pilot program has 28 high schoolers from across the district who receive collaborative instruction from Tanya Regmont, the RCS school nurse, Erin Slomka, Rochester High School science



teacher, and health care professionals in the field.

“Students taking this class are building skills to identify, evaluate, prevent and treat diseases,” Regmont said. “No matter what they specialize in later, they will have a robust foundation in anatomy, pathophysiology, medical terminology, emergency response, basic first aid, workplace safety, legal and ethical considerations and cultural competence-- which are essential across all medical fields.”

Students work in classrooms and labs to master vital sign assessment, infection control and basic patient support to earn clinical medical assistant (CCMA) credentials from the National Healthcareer Association. In addition, they observe and learn

in clinical rotations with local health partners nine hours per week over four weeks. Clinical placements may include urgent care centers, hospitals, physician offices, rehabilitation centers and senior care facilities. RCS is grateful for the business partners who help train our students for potential careers in our own community.

This group of high-achieving students has expressed interest in a variety of careers including physician assistants, radiologists, respiratory care therapists, health fitness specialists, geneticists, pediatricians, cardiologists, pharmacists, nurses and more.

“Choosing a career can be daunting,” said Slomka, a high school biology teacher. “This early introduction to health care specialties really helps students create a well-informed educational path that suits their own interests, abilities and aspirations.”

“Medical professionals are in high demand,” said Regmont. “Whether they choose a clinical career path by providing direct patient care, or choose a non-clinical, behind-the-scenes career path, RCS graduates can expect to be knowledgeable, experienced and well-equipped as the health care leaders of the future.”



**The medical careers elective combines classroom work and clinical rotations so students can gain experience and earn clinical medical assistant credentials while they are in high school.**

## RCS graduates with CTE training are in high demand

Career readiness initiatives prepare Rochester Community Schools students for professional pathways that align with their individual skills, interests, values and aspirations. For some, that means a traditional college degree after high school graduation. For others, the career journey may look different, with training in the military, trades or other industries where experience and knowledge is gained in different ways.



**Woodworking students handcraft award-winning designs for practical use.**

Beginning in elementary school, students use Xello, a comprehensive career and education planning tool, to regularly evaluate their interests, strengths and potential career matches. Through middle school and high school, RCS provides a wide array of career exposures so young adults can choose electives and extracurricular activities that align with their career goals.

RCS proudly offers 12 rigorous, focused, state-approved career and technical education (CTE) programs that provide work-based learning experiences, technical skills and the opportunity to earn industry certifications and credentials as an

extension of the high school curriculum. Program specialties include: business administration, management and operations; finance; marketing; computer science; digital multimedia; engineering technology; drafting and design technology; mechatronics; mechanical drafting; woodworking; health science; and educational careers.

“CTE training prepares graduates for immediate entry into high-wage, high-demand careers,” said Karen Malsbury, director of career readiness, CTE and career-focused education (CFE). According to the U.S. Department of Labor, for example, professionals in accounting make an average of \$80,000 per year; \$107,000 in engineering; and \$102,000 in computer programming.

“A postsecondary degree is valuable for many individuals, but the college-for-all model isn’t realistic in this dynamic and diverse job market,” Malsbury said. “CTE training is an effective pathway to stackable credentials, good paying jobs, on-the-job training, future opportunities and rewarding careers.”

Oakland Schools Technical Campuses, known as OSTC, provide additional opportunities for students in CTE-focused programs at various Oakland County locations. These programs are offered during the school day, in coordination with RCS class schedules.

Additionally, career technical student organizations allow high schoolers to learn, grow and excel beyond the classroom. Members compete in local and national competitions through the Michigan

Industrial & Technology Education Society (MITES), Business Professionals of America, FIRST Robotics, HOSA Future Health Professionals, Educators Rising and more. RCS students collect numerous awards each year, including recognition for virtual enterprise business plans, handcrafted wood items, robotics engineering, health care expertise and more.

Business students involved with DECA are currently filming video segments about companies trying to improve customer service by meeting increasing customer demands. These videos will undergo a competitive screening process to compete at the local, state and national level.

“As we learn about the principles of business management, we are also practicing marketing and video production skills to compete with other business students,” the Stoney Creek High School seniors said. “It’s real-world learning with real-world applications. It’s very exciting as we think about the next steps in our education and careers! We feel well-informed and well-prepared.”



**High school students use their business knowledge and marketing skills to film a video segment for a national DECA competition.**