

A Decade in the Making

The History Behind CAAT

2001

The Center for Labor & Community Research (CLCR) teamed up with the Chicago Federation of Labor to evaluate Cook County's workforce training and educational systems. They concluded that our schools and colleges were failing to meet the skilled labor needs of local manufacturers.

CLCR authored a follow-up study, which showed that significant investment and reform in our education and workforce systems were needed in order for the U.S. economy to remain globally competitive. The report also recommended the expansion and development of the high-tech, high value-added manufacturing sector.

2003

CLCR joined forces with the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development and the Illinois Manufacturers' Association to form the Chicago Manufacturing Renaissance Council (CMRC), a partnership of labor, business, government, education, and community leaders working to make Chicago the global leader in advanced, high-tech manufacturing.

The CMRC started Austin Polytechnical Academy, an engineering-focused public high school to train the next generation of leaders in modern manufacturing. Austin Polytech's innovative educational approach has attracted national attention.

Also in 2007, Mayor Daley initiated Chicago LEADS (Leading Economic Advancement, Development, and Sustainability).

2005

2007

CLCR established the Center for Polytechnical Education (CPE), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to developing and replicating the polytechnical model of education. CPE believes that our educational system should respond to employer needs while preparing graduates for rewarding, high-paying careers.

In its first year, CPE received a request from Chicago LEADS to design a new technology-focused high school.

CPE opens the Chicago Academy for Advanced Technology (CAAT), a joint effort of CPE, the Illinois Technology Foundation, and Chicago LEADS. With support from the ITF and the Mayor's Council of Technology Advisors, CAAT will open with nearly 100 industry partners in September 2009.

2008

2009

"Thanks to a partnership with a number of companies, a curriculum that prepares students for a career in engineering, and a requirement that students graduate with at least two industry certifications, Austin Polytech is bringing hope back to the community. That's the kind of model we'll replicate across the country when I'm president of the United States."

– U.S. President Barack Obama