

Coventry Middle School Students Get the "College Experience" (Patch.com)

Visits to URI allow students to think about the future.

By [Lauren Costa](#) | [Email the author](#) | April 7, 2011



The 407 eighth graders from Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School have recently been given the opportunity to see what it is like to go to college. Each eighth grade team took a trip to the University of Rhode Island's Kingston Campus in March and April where they were given guided tours of the campus led by current students. They were able to view the campus and buildings, check out a dorm room and eat lunch in the dining halls.

"The majority of our kids have never even seen a college let alone been on the campus," said eighth grade guidance counselor Lori LeBrun. "The trips get them thinking about career development and what they would like to do in the future."

The administrators at the middle school along with the Department of Higher Education have been joining forces to host assemblies for the students as well as Pathways programs for sixth and seventh graders that allow them to set short and long-term goals for themselves as well as take part in community service opportunities. Some teams have also taken part in career fairs and the Exchange City program in which students have the chance to run a business.

All middle school students also have a state-mandated individualized learning plan that is created on the [Way To Go RI website](#).

When asked if she thought the URI trips made a difference to some students without a clear idea of what they wanted to do in the future, LeBrun said they "absolutely do."

"Some students that might be struggling a bit in school have come up to me afterwards and said 'I'd really like to go here.' That is when we help them think about what they need to do to get there," said LeBrun.

"It opens up a variety of conversations that we can have as guidance counselors, teachers and administrators, especially with those students that are struggling. It has really been a great experience and the kids really enjoyed it."

The administrators at ASFMS would like to make this an annual event if the University can continue to accommodate them.

"URI was really great with the whole process," LeBrun said. "We are already attempting to schedule this again for next year."