



PRESS RELEASE  
**For Immediate Release**

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**A Solution for High School Counselors:**

**College and Career Readiness Platform Offers Cost-Free Pilot Program**

GradRock®, a robust, self-guided platform that provides high school students with a depth of materials to prepare them for life after graduation, launched on August 20, 2024, offering a no-cost pilot program this fall for interested schools.

MaST Charter Schools in Northeast Philadelphia are the first to pilot the program this fall with approximately 1500 total students. “The resources are great. GradRock [is] a platform that students can explore on their own to gain knowledge about topics that most other college/career platforms don’t explain,” Emily McCaw, 9th Grade Counselor, MaST III Community Charter School, said.

Educators created the GradRock platform as a solution for counselors with growing student ratios, increased responsibilities, and challenges meeting state requirements. “Meaningful content development was mission-critical as were age-appropriate engaging graphics,” GradRock Co-Founder and College Admissions Consultant, Sandy Thornton, explained. “GradRock picks up where other programs like Naviance and Smart Futures leave off.”

GradRock is ADA-compliant, includes voiceover options, and offers counselors and teachers student progress dashboards. Content includes but is not limited to admission checklists, financial aid calculators, military career information, cover letter and resume writing guidance, college bond ratings, and digital tracking with links and resources for parents, too.

“One of the primary differences between GradRock and other readiness programs is the unique admissions knowledge we share,” Thornton offered. “In the case of the Naviance platform for one, content is built on aggregate data, omitting holistic admissions criteria such as special populations, student character, and other measures weighted equally among some college admissions boards.”

“GradRock’s content addresses items important to the whole student, scenarios for highlighting strengths, and guidance on developing more targeted college lists. As a result, college acceptance rates increase,” Thornton confirmed. As a college admissions consultant with a 100% acceptance rate among her clients, she understands better than most what admissions decision-makers look for.

Ongoing updates to GradRock resources ensure the latest information is available to students, and by extension, to their parents. Some of these include Common App, SATs, scholarship lists, FASFA information, and other, ever-changing requirements for college admissions.

“With over 25 years of experience teaching high school students, along with the increasing counselor responsibilities in the post-pandemic environment, it became clear that a platform like GradRock was essential for filling the gaps,” Co-Founder, Career Research & Post Secondary Education Teacher/Administrator, Lisa Turner, Ed.D., clarified. “We worked to create a solution for students while allowing counselors to focus their one-on-one time more effectively.”

GradRock includes useful resources on pursuing popular vocational careers and has been product-tested by high school counselors and teachers from the greater Philadelphia area, as well as high school students from Central PA. Alaya Booker, Transition Coordinator and Life Skills Teacher at Northeast High School in Philadelphia observed, “This program is also a great resource for parents.”

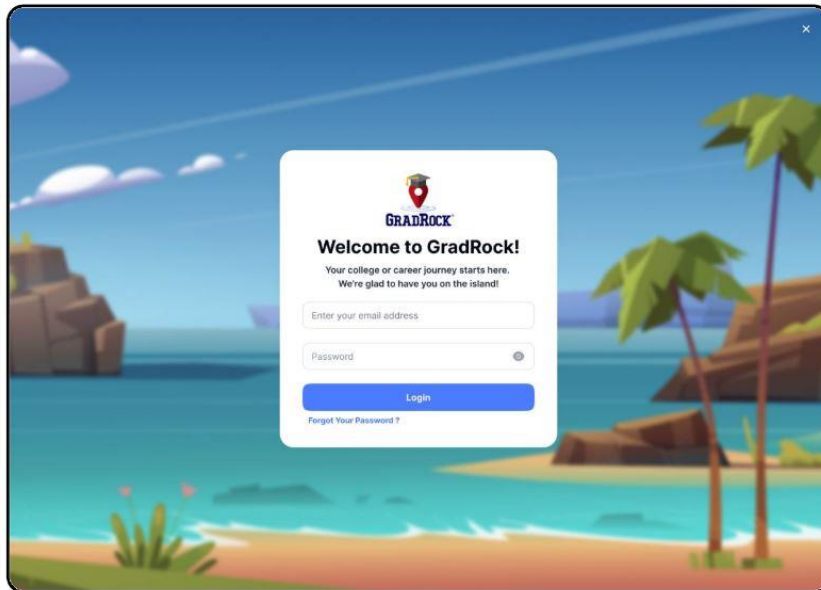
Platform co-founders are availing the program as a pilot to the first few schools or districts that respond, at no cost for one semester. Their objective is to get GradRock into the hands of those who need it most while developing proof of performance data. “I don’t know of another program as comprehensive as this one,” Turner added.

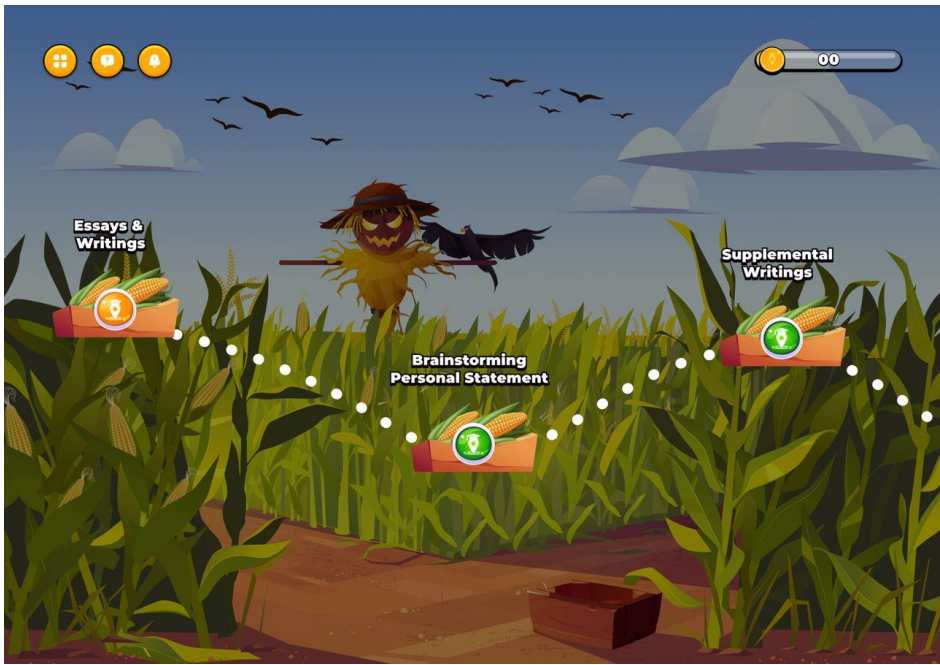
For more information about GradRock, visit the website at [www.GradRock.org](http://www.GradRock.org). Interested school staff can also contact Natalie Pantaleo, GradRock Marketing & Sales Director, to schedule a demo or to learn more about piloting the program at 445-201-1465 or [natalie@gradrock.org](mailto:natalie@gradrock.org).

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**Caption:** School counselors from the Greater Philadelphia area dig into GradRock’s comprehensive material during product trials.





**Caption:** GradRock was designed based on teen-favored cartoon and video graphics. Login credentialing has been simplified to make administration easier for school staff.