**College and Career Academies**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

***Is this another fad?***

Fad: An intense and shortly lived enthusiasm for something without basis in the object’s quality.

If our students were experiencing great success, then we would be wise to stay with what is working. Unfortunately, there is more than a little room for improvement, which leads us to implementing new plans and programs. That said, the concept of college and career academies is not new, nor is it without basis. College and career academies have been successfully implemented in numerous states and there is extensive research on the benefits to students. For more information on research, refer to [www.casn.berkeley.edu](http://www.casn.berkeley.edu)

***How will student be placed in Academies? We know they often choose electives on which lunch they will have or what their friends are taking.***

We are currently exploring the use of a variety of data points. Students have taken several reliable interest inventories by the end of 9th grade including the EXPLORE in 8th grade and the AzCIS in 9th grade. Tenth graders also take PLAN which has an extensive career interest inventory. All of these suggest a student’s interest in a broad variety of careers, characterized through the Holland system as Realistic (Doers), Investigative (Thinkers), Artistic (Creators), Social (Helpers), Enterprising (Persuaders), and Conventional (Organizers). These interest inventories must be balanced with the students’ current stated interest and with input from the parent. That said, it needs to be more complex that simply choosing an elective. Finally, since college and career academies have existed for many years, there are many models available for our review to find a way that will help students make choices.

***What happens to courses like band and Spanish that don’t fall neatly into academies?***

Some courses are considered global offerings and will serve students from all academies. That said, there may be some opportunity to tailor some of the course content to an academy. One example would be a Spanish class that emphasizes the language needed to operate in the world of medicine.

***What about AP classes?***

It depends. In discussion with AP teachers, some felt that their classes would be able to complement a college and career focus and should be offered within each academy. Other classes will fall into the category of global offerings as explained above.

***What if a student wants to attend an academy that is offered at the other high school?***

We do need to accommodate students in many ways. For example, both schools will offer a business strand. The one at Sunnyside focuses on sales and marketing and business management, while at DV it has a focus on tourism and culinary arts. At either school, students whose career interests fall into the realm of conventional or enterprising (Holland Interest Inventory) would probably be comfortable with the relevance in either program.

In addition, we will continue to accommodate the student who enrolls at one school but wants to take a class at the other school. It is possible that a student could be primarily enrolled at Sunnyside but travel to Desert View to take Technical Theater for example. And, we will need to look at open enrollment practices to accommodate a student who wants to be fully enrolled in one academy.

***Who chose which academies will be offered at each school?***

The current draft of college and career academies is based on two main factors: economic needs of the community and existing programs. That said, student interest has always played a role in which programs were created. By offering different academies at each school, we can achieve a greater variety of opportunities for students in the community. In addition, we would not have to duplicate equipment at both schools in programs such as automotive and culinary arts. The recommendation not to duplicate programs is consistent with what is already being done at our two high schools.

***How can a 15 year old determine what he wants to do with the rest of his life?***

We know that people today change careers an average of seven times and that the number continues to grow. Many 15 year olds are not able to accurately state what they want to do; however, almost all of them can eliminate things they know they don’t want to do. With that, most students will have an affinity to one of the academies over the others. As guidance counselors have always met with students on course selection, their role in individual planning will shift from choosing electives to choosing academies. In addition, we will need to develop a process for students who ask to change academies.

The worst case scenario is that a student chooses an academy and determines that is not the career field they want to enter. It might still be of benefit to students to have discovered that prior to graduation, as opposed to learning that after they had already been taking post secondary classes to pursue that area.