

FREQUENTLY  
ASKED  
QUESTIONS

# Career Academies

SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM



Ensuring that 100% of our graduates are college and workforce ready and competitive in the 21st Century.

## What is Secondary School Reform?

The purpose of the Secondary Reform Plan is to design, implement, track, and monitor curricular and instructional programs that move PGPCS substantially forward in graduating all students college and workforce ready. All children must be provided educational options that best meet their needs, so they can achieve their fullest potential and make their greatest contribution to society.

It's about getting kids interested in going to school. Students will stay in school if they are involved in a program that interests them and if they have meaningful relationships with their teachers. The Academy Model provides students with relevant coursework and a personalized experience.

## The Phase In of SSR's High School Career Academies

Changes to high school programming began in SY 2011-2012. It is expected full implementation will be completed in SY 2016-2017.

### Which schools get which programs?

The high school programs are being implemented using a phase-in approach. Each high school submitted a proposal for

the program(s) they would like to implement in their school. Schools are selected for programs based on the school's proposal, community interest, staff capacity, and building capacity.

**What are the admissions criteria?** - The admissions criteria for each program will be determined by Curriculum and Instruction. Most programs have open-enrollment.

### How and when will students select their academy?

- Until full implementation, students will be able to enroll in an Academy if it is offered at their boundary school. Students will sign up during registration and be admitted through a lottery process. Once all academies are implemented, 8th grade students will indicate their Academy preferences and be admitted through a lottery process.

## The Academies -

Please visit our website or call your boundary school to learn which Academies are currently available at your school.

*Architecture and Design*

*Business and Finance*

*Consumer Services,  
Hospitality and Tourism*

*Engineering and Science*

*Environmental Studies*

*Global Studies*

*Graphic Arts, Media, and  
Communication*

*Health and Bioscience*

*Homeland Security and  
Military Science*

*Information Technology*

*Law, Education, and Public  
Service*

*Performing Arts*

*Transportation Technologies*

## Clusters

**What is the high school cluster model?** - High schools will be divided into five clusters. This model enables student to have better access to high school programs. **Will programs be equitable in each cluster?** - The SSR plan is to have the same Academies available in each cluster. However, based upon community feedback, the program offerings in each cluster may not be identical in order to respond to community preference. It is anticipated that a few Academies will be offered in the Northern and Southern areas of the county, as opposed to each cluster due to the expense of operating a particular program.

Hands-on curriculum providing students with real-world work experiences.



## Logistics

**What will be the transportation policy for students participating in Career Academies?** - Currently, students can enroll in Academies at their assigned boundary school only. Upon full implementation, it is anticipated that students will be provided transportation to all programs located within their cluster.

**Can students transfer to different Academies?** - At present, a student will only be permitted to transfer between academies at their boundary school. All program transfers should be done in consultation with a professional school counselor who will advise the student as to whether or not she/he has sufficient time to complete a different academy.

**If a student transfers from one high school to another, and their current academy assignment is not available at their new school, will the student be allowed to transfer? Will the student be able to stay at their current high school in their current academy? Will transportation be provided?** - If a student transfers from one high school to another that does not have their academy, then the student would transfer to their new boundary school and enroll in whatever programs are available at that school. Transportation will not be provided to allow a student to remain at their original school. If a student is in good standing, current practice allows 12th graders to

finish at their prior school. However, transportation is a parental responsibility. If a student relocates in a grade other than 12th and wishes to remain in their Career Academy, SSR and the Office of Student Records and Transfers will evaluate the requests on a case-by-case basis.

## The Programs

**Will students complete a culminating project?** - Yes, high school students will be expected to complete a senior project and/or portfolio that reflects their work from grades 9-12.

**Will students earn college credit?** - Many of the programs are designed to provide students with the opportunity to earn college credits.

**How are students in need of special services being considered in Academies?** If a student has to take at least one Academy course during their 9th grade year, how will they be able to take this course? - Several of our 9th graders take double period courses for a variety of reasons. In these instances, we've recommended school staff evaluate which non-required 9th grade courses could be taken in a later year of high school. For example, while students often take Foundations of Technology, and Fine Arts in 9th grade, these courses could be taken in a later year. This course movement would allow students to fit the Academy course into their schedule.

## Curriculum

**Will the new programs be staffed with teachers with expertise in the program area?**

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction will identify the staff qualifications for each program course. Staff teaching the program courses will meet these qualifications.

**How does Common Core fit into the Academies?**

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for developing the Career Academy curriculum. Where appropriate, Common Core standards will be infused into the Academy curriculum.

**Will the Academy model limit the number of electives for students?**

The Academy model focuses the electives a student takes into a program of study. This allows students the opportunity to have real-world experiences based on their program, receive a certificate/license, and/or earn college credit.

## How are we paying for all of this?

The SSR Plan is structured with a phased-in approach over six years. The aspects of the plan that are of little or no cost were implemented first. The capital improvement costs for the Academies are now included in the District's 5-Year Capital Plan. Operating expenditures are paid from the General Fund.

For more information, please visit our website at:

<http://www1.pgcps.org/ssr>

or email us at:

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Transforming  
Secondary  
Education by

- ✓ Raising Expectations
- ✓ Expanding Opportunities
- ✓ Enhancing the School Experience