

Hitting All the Areas of High Quality CTE Pathways: The Career Academy Model



The _____
CAREER
Academy

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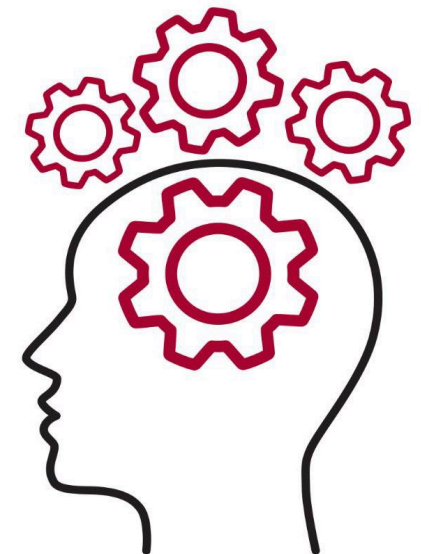
Academy School District 20, Colorado Springs, CO



What do you know about the Career Academy Model?

Today's Learning Outcomes

- What's so great about the career academy model?
- How do career academies deliver “high quality” Career and Technical Education?
- What are key features of career academies in all their varieties?
- My personal experiences with career academies.
- Things to consider and resources to pursue career academies.





12 Elements of High Quality CTE Programs

Which areas are the hardest to address effectively?

1. **Standards-aligned and Integrated Curriculum** (Aligned to state and industry standards)
2. **Sequence and Articulation** (progressively sequenced courses articulated with post-secondary and industry)
3. **Student Assessment** (performance and project-based assessments leading to industry-validated knowledge and skills)
4. **Prepared and Effective Program Staff** (properly credentialed with professional learning and collaboration toward relevant knowledge and skills)
5. **Engaging Instruction** (relevant contextualized engaging instructional practices)
6. **Access and Equity** (promoted and accessible to all...inclusive and diverse)
7. **Facilities, Equipment, Technology and Materials** (industry standard)
8. **Business and Community Partnerships** (advisories and industry involvement)
9. **Student Career Development** (employability skills, goals, and planning embedded)
10. **Career and Technical Student Organizations** (leadership and employability development and competitions)
11. **Work-based Learning** (continuum of WBL experiences)
12. **Data and Program Improvement** (relevancy, evolution, articulation, and reflection)

What is the Career Academy Model?

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Career academies are designed to prepare students for postsecondary education *and* careers. *They are “schools within schools” that link students with peers, teachers, and community partners in a structured environment that fosters academic success. The career academy concept has four key elements:*

- A small learning community (SLC)
- A college-prep sequential curriculum with a career theme (CTE)
- An advisory board that forges partnerships with employers, higher education institutions, and the broader community
- A sequenced, comprehensive work-based learning component

Combined academic and vocational curriculum

- Assignments bridge different classes (e.g., physics and engineering, or biology and health occupations, etc.)
- Graduates are prepared for both college and employment

Employer partners and work-based learning

- Student experience in workplaces connects theory and application
- Sequence starts with short visits, leading to internship
- Employers donate time and other resources

Each academy has a theme (e.g., health science, business, engineering, media arts, etc.)

- Students are NOT limited to remaining in that sector for college or future employment

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Traditional CTE Teaching versus Career Academy Teaching

Traditional CTE Teaching	Career Academy Teaching
<p>Work within a subject-specific department or as a singleton.</p>	<p>Work within both subject-specific and interdisciplinary professional communities.</p>
<p>Occasionally collaborate with colleagues who teach the same subject.</p>	<p>Work with an interdisciplinary team responsible for a cohort of students.</p>
<p>Design curriculum and assessments based on subject-specific content knowledge and skills.</p>	<p>Collaborate on integrated project-based curriculum and performance-based assessments that connect academics with practical applications in specific career field.</p>
<p>Hone craft individually or in collaboration with industry professionals and post-secondary partners.</p>	<p>Collaborate with industry professionals and post-secondary partners.</p>

The Theoretical Framework for Career Academies

“**Small Learning Communities (SLCs)**” —became a thing in the 1960s—About 150 to 300 students work with a team of 3 to 5 teachers for 2 to 4 years. Each year students take several classes together. Teachers and students become “like a family” creating personalized learning environments to better meet the needs of students.

SLC Structures:

- Theme-based SLCs, focus schools, or school-within-a-school
- “Houses” themed (or non-themed) or separated by grade level
- Magnet Schools (accelerated for gifted and talented, or a specialty core focus, math, science, creative arts, career theme or cluster)
- Charter Schools (can take any form, really)
- Academies (subgroup of students organized around a particular theme— Freshman Academies, **Career Academies**, etc.)

The Theoretical Framework for Career Academies

SLC Strategies:

- Freshman transition activities and groupings
- Multiyear groups or looping of students with teacher
- Alternative scheduling (block scheduling, variations of scheduling on specific days, etc.)
- Adult advocate systems (caring adult connections “solid object”)
- Teacher advisory systems
- Academic teaming (organizing teachers across departments or disciplines)

Solid Research Evidence on SLC's

*...[R]esearch has consistently shown that when a school is too big, serious problems often arise. Smaller schools tend to have lower dropout rates, better attendance, fewer incidents of violence, and more student participation in extracurricular activities. Discipline problems can be more serious when students see themselves as being relatively anonymous.... **As for academic achievement, the research suggests that at-risk students are at a particular disadvantage in overly large schools.***

*-American Federation of Teachers, **Improving Low-Performing High Schools: Ideas and Promising Programs for High Schools***



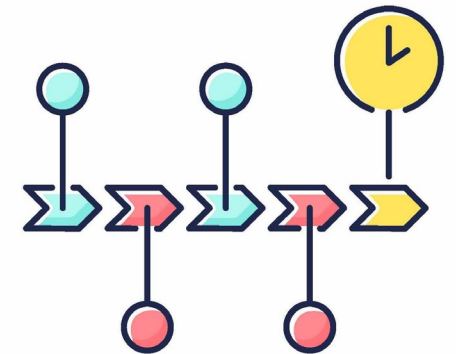
A Brief Historical Journey of Career Academies

Career Academies

- 1969: first Philadelphia academy
- 1981: replication in California
- 1982: replication in New York City, leading to the **National Academy Foundation (NAF)**
- 1985: California begins funding **Partnership Academies (CPAs)**
 - 1998: CDE and UC Berkley create **College & Career Alliance and Support Network (CCASN)**
 - 2009: James Irvine Foundation & ConnectEd started “multiple pathways” initiative, renamed **Linked Learning Alliance (LL)**
- 1996: **National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC)**-Standards of Practice
- Early 2000’s **Ford Next Generation Learning (Ford NGL)**
- 2015: **Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS)** Network

A Brief Historical Journey of Career Academies

- Since 1980s, vocational education (VE) has evolved to career and technical education (CTE).
- VE was defined as preparation for occupations not requiring a bachelor's degree, but now CTE is part of preparation for postsecondary education.
- 1990 Perkins Act: “integrate” VE and academics.
- 2006 Perkins Act changed name and definition (VE to CTE).
- Career academies have provided a successful model for how to combine college and career preparation and does align with the 12 HQ CTE program areas.



Solid Research Evidence on the Career Academy Model

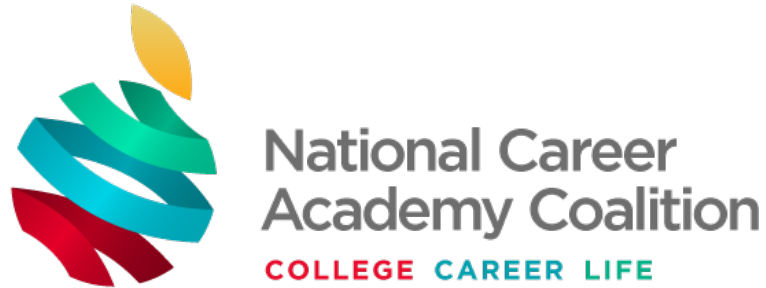
- Studies have followed students through high school, comparing academy students with similar students at the same school:
 - Academy students show significant improvement in attendance, grades, credits earned, and are more likely to stay in high school
 - Academy students have better postsecondary outcomes
- Random-assignment study found positive effects on earnings 8 years after high school, with no reduction in postsecondary educational attainment (11% more, 17% for males)

The Different Career Academy Models



**What experiences have you had with the
Career Academy Model?**

A Review of Different Career Academy Models



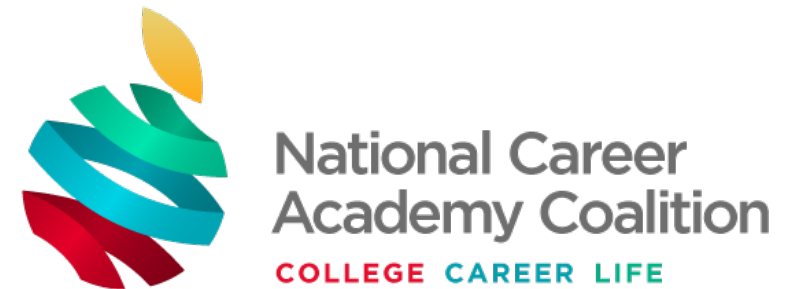
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National Career Academy Coalition Model

- Organization which created the Career Academy National Standards of Practice (NSOP) (created 2004 and revised 2013, 2021) through a collaborative process.*
- NCAC rubric to evaluate career academy structure:
 - NSOP 1. Mission and Goals
 - NSOP 2. Academy Design
 - NSOP 3. Host Community and High School
 - NSOP 4. Faculty and Staff
 - NSOP 5. Professional Development and Continuous Learning
 - NSOP 6. Governance and Leadership
 - NSOP 7. Teaching and Learning
 - NSOP 8. Employer, Postsecondary Education, and Community Involvement
 - NSOP 9. Student Assessment
 - NSOP 10. Sustainability



*ACTE, CCASN, ConnectEd, NAF, FordNGL, etc.

National Academy Foundation (NAF) Model



- Utilizes the same model as the NCAC.
- **NAFTrack Certification**—designed by education and business leaders, is an employability credential that serves as NAF’s seal of college and and career readiness. NAF assesses student performance through the completion of **(1) career-focused courses (2 years min.), (2) internship assessments,** and **(3) high school graduation.**
- NAFTrack Certification is under some revision to create greater flexibility which was initiated due to COVID’s impact on education.
- NAF offers curriculum for POS in several clusters—3rd-Party Curriculum must meet NAF curricular and performance-based assessment standards.

Ford Next Generation Learning (NGL) Model



- Ford NGL is carried out through the career academy model with three key characteristics:
 - The career or thematic program of study selected by the student leverages an **area of personal interest and integrates it with core academic knowledge**. This integrated program of study is offered within a small learning community.
 - The academies are not stand-alone “boutique” programs but are part of a district strategy to offer a **portfolio of approaches (“multiple pathways”)** so that every student has the opportunity to choose a program that fits a personal interest.
 - The programs offer **extensive real-world contact with adults** currently working in the field or area of interest, and they enable students to earn dual enrollment and/or articulated college-level credits while still in high school.

Ford Next Generation Learning (NGL) Model



- **Ford NGL community-connected Master Plan:**
 - Ford NGL Framework consists of **Three Strands** which are three distinct but interconnected strategies, which enable whole communities to design, implement, and sustain a long-term community-connected plan for transforming education— **Transforming (1) teaching and learning, (2) secondary school experience, and (3) business and civic engagement.**
 - Each strand has a set of key Benefits that communities can achieve by implementing the **Tactics** aligned with the **Strands**.
 - The **Tactics** are specific initiatives that communities in the Ford NGL network employ to achieve the Strand Benefits.

ALIGNMENT NASHVILLE

The Nashville Hub, a program of Alignment Nashville, provides events, coaching, and support to communities that are working to transform the K-12 experience to prepare all students for college, career, and life.

Through these efforts, Nashville Hub is able to provide financial support, supplemental resources, and ongoing professional development at no cost to Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools and the Academies of Nashville.



FORD
NEXT GENERATION
LEARNING 

Community Connected Learning

Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) Network Model

- Moving from “farms to factories” model to “education to employment” (e2e)—Pro-BL and experiential learning around a career focus.
- Integration of high school, college, and career.
- CAPS Core Values:
 - **Profession-Based Learning (Pro-BL)**—Project-based learning through collaborations with business and community partners.
 - **Professional Skills Development**—infused in curriculum.
 - **Self-Discovery and Exploration**—students are able to explore and experience potential professions.
 - **Entrepreneurial Mindset**—Curriculum designed around creative thinking and problem solving.
 - **Responsiveness**—Aligned with high-skill, high-demand careers through ongoing innovation.



capsnetwork
collaborate · innovate · educate

CA Partnership Academy Model



- 3-Year-grades 10-12—school-within-a-school, courses are restricted to academy students only.
- Voluntary student selection that identifies interested 9th graders—60-70 (2 sections) at least half must meet “at-risk” criteria.
- 11th grade academy students are matched with industry mentors “career-related and/or caring adult.”
- 11st grade year prepare and apply for internships.
- Academy teachers have common planning periods.
- 10-11th grade academy students are cohorted in at least three academic courses and one CTE course—12th grade may vary.
- Block schedule when possible.
- Industry partnerships/advisory/WBL along continuum throughout.
- State grant funded with 100% match required—performance based.

Linked Learning Alliance Model



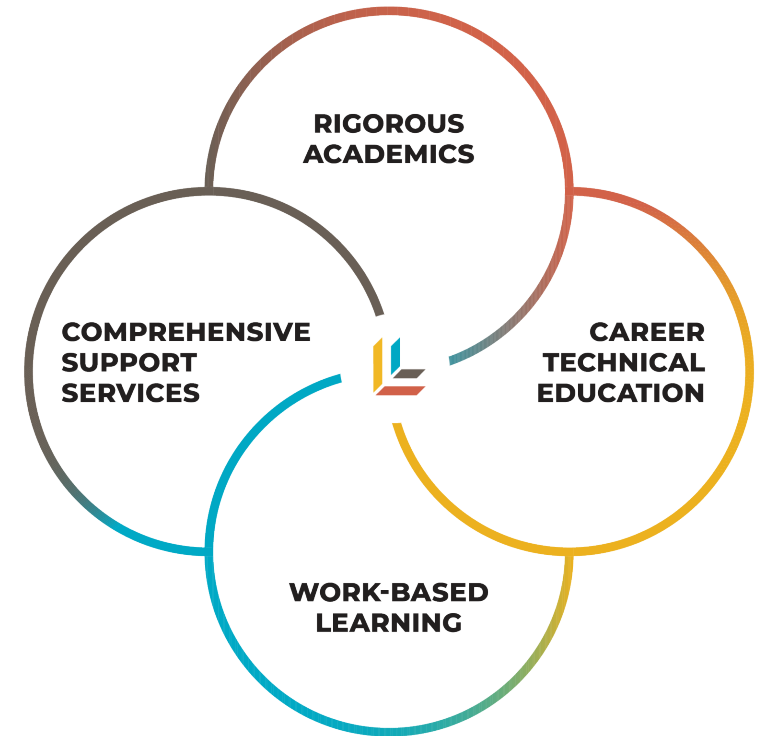
Schools and academies adopt Linked Learning in ways that fit their local contexts. What they share in common is the integration of four key components:

Rigorous academics, aligned to admissions requirements for state colleges and universities.

Career technical education, delivering concrete knowledge and skills through a carefully structured sequence of courses.

Work-based learning, providing students with exposure to real-world workplaces through job shadowing, apprenticeships, internships, and more.

Comprehensive support services, including counseling and supplemental instruction in reading, writing, and math to address the individual needs.

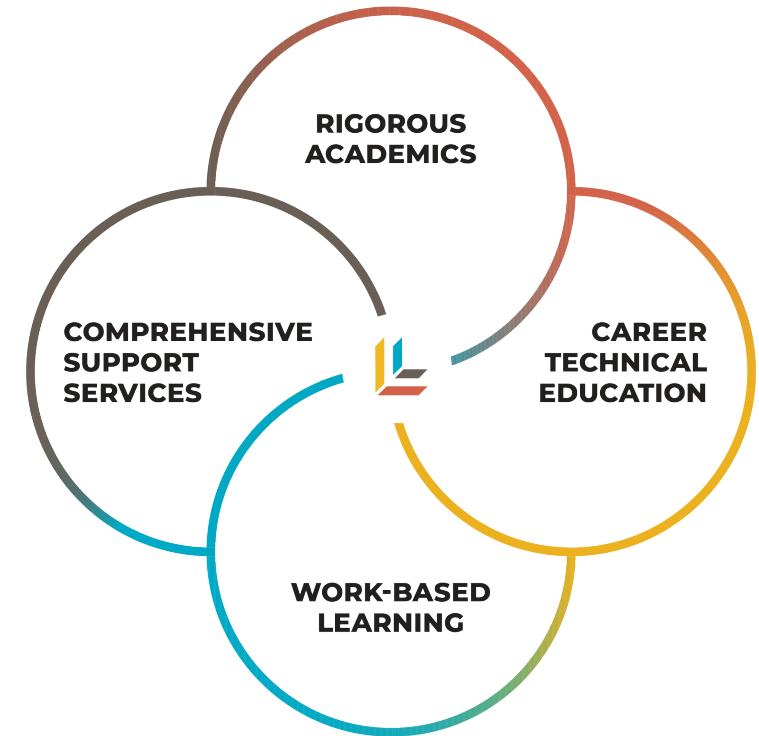


Linked Learning Alliance Model



To Earn Gold Certification:

- Cohort structure: 50% of schedule or min. of two academic courses and one CTE/career-themed course.
- Core content are cross-subject and industry-infused curriculum.
- 12th grade culminating project (internship project, capstone project, defense of learning, certification exam or portfolio).
- Early college credit opportunities.
- Industry partnerships and WBL along continuum.
- College and career prep and support, SEL, individual student supports (team monitors and supports students).



My Experience with Linked Learning Alliance

Visalia Unified School District

Mt. Whitney HS 1,685 Students	Redwood HS 2,519 Students	El Diamante HS 2,103 Students	Golden West HS 1,953 Students
Health Science Academy	Architecture, Construction, and Engineering (ACE) Academy	Sports Therapy, Rehabilitation, Orthopedics, and Neuromuscular Gains (STRONG) Academy	Business and Finance Academy* *Is also a CPA.
Computer Science Academy	Law and Justice Academy	Cinema & Television Arts Academy	First Responders Academy

Note:

- Visalia Technical Early College (VTEC) HS: Early college agriculture-based
- 35 CTE pathways throughout district in addition to LL academies
- Open enrollment/recruitment for incoming 9th graders (our version of school choice for LL only)
- 70-75 students per academy cohort.
- Each HS had designated administrator and counselor (work-load not exclusive to academy).
- Each academy had a lead teacher (stipend and extra prep period).
- Academy teachers had common prep (as much as possible).
- District has two WBL coordinators to facilitate advisories and WBL experiences for academies.

My Experience with Linked Learning Alliance

(Master Schedule Examples)

Business and Finance Academy	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
High School Career-Themed (CTE) Courses	Integrated Business	Business Technology	Accounting (BUS 185 Ethics in Business from COS)	Virtual Enterprise (double blocked)
“Linked” Cohorted Courses	English 1 Integrated Math 1	English 2 Integrated Math 2 Biology World History	American Lit Integrated Math 3 Chemistry US History	CSU ERWC (English)

Notes:

- This was also a CA Partnership Academy
- College Course integrated into academy
- Business industry certifications for students



My Experience with Linked Learning Alliance

(Master Schedule Examples)

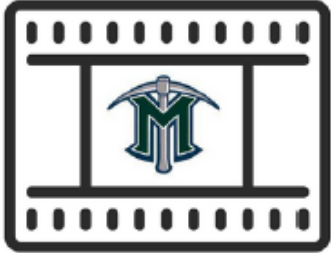
Cinema & Television Arts Academy	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
High School Career-Themed (CTE) Courses	Intro to Video	Media Arts 1	Advanced Filmmaking (FCC GRC 27 Digital Video Prod.)	Advanced Cinematic Arts
“Linked” Cohorted Courses	English 1H	English 2H	American Lit <i>Advanced Media Broadcasting</i> <i>Film Studies</i> <i>(English Elective)</i>	CSU ERWC (English) <i>Film Studies</i> <i>(English Elective)</i> <i>Media Arts 2</i>

Notes:

- College Course integrated into academy
- Industry certifications for students (Avid Media Composer and Adobe Creative Cloud Suite)



My Experience with Linked Learning Alliance



<https://www.stanwinstonschool.com/blog/inside-incursion-sci-fi-short-student-film-el-diamante-high-school-media-arts-behind-the-scenes>



https://youtu.be/J8_F-qEwKOM

- Slick Rock Student Film Festival Best of Show
- National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, National Student Production Awards (NSPA) Emmys
 - Fiction-Long Form
 - Audio/Sound
 - Photographer

- Do you have district and site leadership support and buy-in— from School Board/Superintendent, site Principal, and relevant teachers?
- Does it meet regional industry needs and do you have access to potential industry partnerships?
- Play to your strength's—current teacher backgrounds, hobbies, and passions. Your career academy will only ever be as good as your teachers in it (they must own it).
- Figure out what structure will work for you and your district/school—there is not one correct way. Start small.
- Don't expect all to fall into place the first year—it's a four year plus process and requires shifts in thinking and culture.
- Understanding of master scheduling.

Important Things to Consider in Starting a Career Academy



Presentation and resources for all models discussed are available in the link on the handout or this shared Google drive:

<http://bit.ly/3k23yEx>



Thank you!

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The CAREER *Academy*

