



Smaller Learning Communities Spotlight on Success

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The Spotlight Shines On...



Middle School Career Academies



EdVantage
 Inspiring Our Students to Learn, Dream and Achieve.

Strategic Objective #1:
 Continually demonstrate enthusiasm for the self-directed pursuit of knowledge.

Gaining High-Tech, High-Wage Skills: Middle School Career Academies

Children grow up. Once they do, they will want and need what every citizen wants and needs: meaningful work and the ability to earn a living to support self and family.

Our job as educators is to equip children to be successful adults. In this climate, three words describe a fundamental truth surrounding the future of our children: *skills pay bills*.

Career education, wrapped skillfully and artfully around fundamental core academics, provides the skills that pay the bills.

This issue of the Spotlight on Success features the Manatee County Adult, Career, and Technical Education (ACT) Department's efforts to shore up foundational career and academic skills through our newest career academies. For the first time, we're proud to introduce two new middle school career academies: the Haile Middle School **Career and Technical Academy (CAT)** and the Harlee Middle School **Communications Technology and Leadership Academy**.

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Background: Legislation Supports Academies

The 2011 Florida Legislature made several important statutory changes regarding Career and Technical Education (CTE), affecting career academies, industry certifications, and funding. Specifically, House Bill 1255, Section 22 (1009.4935, F.S.) requires that each school district board in collaboration with regional workforce boards, economic development agencies, and postsecondary institutions include plans—as part of their five-year strategic plan—to implement a career and professional academy in at least one middle school in the district. The legislation stipulates that:

- Middle school academy students must be able to transition to a high school academy currently operating in the district. *(Our new academies feed into our high schools.)*
- Academy completers must have the opportunity to earn an industry certification and high school credit, and participate in career planning, job shadowing, and business leadership development activities. *(Yes! We're on it!)*
- Academies must provide instruction in courses leading to careers in occupations designated as high-skill, high-wage, and high demand. *(Our high tech academies meet the bill.)*
- Courses must integrate content from core subject areas, particularly intensive reading and math. *(Absolutely!)*

In addition, Senate Bill 2120 stipulates that middle school academy students earning industry certifications qualify for funding (via "full-time equivalent" or FTE membership).

The bottom line: State leaders recognize the value of

career and technical education and the critical need for our students to gain the skills...that will pay the bills.

Manatee County's Middle School Academies

Technology is a trend that never goes out of style, so it made sense that technology-rich career academies would be the first middle school academies in the District. Haile and Harlee Middle Schools, with incredible efforts and support from ACT Department administration, school administration, and technology education teachers, rose to the challenge to create these contemporary academies. Staff from both schools worked hard this past year meeting with their feeder high schools to learn what it would take to make for a seamless transition for eighth grade students, meeting with feeder elementary schools to more fully understand the curriculum being offered at that level, modifying curriculum, and submitting their plans for school board approval in the form of the Student Progression Plan.

To get the word out about the new academies, the leaders have conducted open houses for incoming sixth graders, developed videos to be shared at their feeder elementary schools, and developed websites full of information to be shared about this awesome opportunity. Looking ahead to their first year, teachers are working on integrated lesson plans to incorporate core academics with career-based learning, planning local industry tours, and planning to incorporate industry certification testing for their students.

The schools will work hand-in-hand with the district in registering their academy and gathering the required data. Each academy will follow the steps which have been outlined in the *Standards and Guidelines for Middle School Career Academy Development and Implementation in the School District of Manatee County*. Both schools will undergo an evaluation through a process called the Standards of Practice (SOP) which is outlined in this document.



Haile Middle School: Career and Technical Academy (CAT)

In Haile Middle School's new Career and Technical (CAT) Academy, teachers Pamela Platt and Justin Erickson, along with principal Janet Kerley, have developed two unique strands of study. These two strands function like sub-academies within the CAT Academy and include the **Engineering Academy**, led by Erickson, and the **Multimedia Academy**, led by Platt.

Both strands of the CAT Academy will feed directly into high school career academies, including Lakewood Ranch High School's *Business, Marketing and Technology Academy* and

(L-R) Technology education teacher Justin Erickson, Haile principal Janet Kerley, and technology education teacher Pamela Platt.



Braden River High School's *Engineering, Design and Leadership Academy* and the *Arts and Communications Academy*.

"This is the first year that we've started the academies and we know that we have a lot of students who excel in technology," shares Kerley, a longtime supporter of technical education. "We're excited that our students will be able to achieve dual enrolled high school credit, and the two teachers have built quite a program. It's very difficult to get into the program because of the number of student requests. We're looking forward to the kids' success this year as they tackle the certification exams."

<http://hailetsa.manateeschools.net/CAT-ACADEMY-WEBSITE/index.html>

CAT Academy: Engineering

The CAT Academy's Engineering Technology program ensures that students become technologically literate and work-ready through industry-themed learning and career-related skills. Students completing the academy from sixth through eighth grades will take these courses: Innovation Technology I, Innovation Technology II, and Engineering Technology I, which includes a dual enrollment component earning a high school credit in engineering. Successful completers will earn an industry certification as a Certified Solidworks Associate (CSWA).

"My goal is that we do something new every year in here," says instructor Justin Erickson. "I'm pursuing my masters in Career and Technical Education and doing research on career academies, so I know we are teaching to the level of high school. I've even been told we are teaching to the college



Eighth grade student Rhiannon Jacobson collaborates with a classmate on a 3D design using SolidWorks.

level and above.”

In these classes, students gain excitement and focus through hands-on projects in robotics, laser engraving, 3D CAD design, and CNC manufacturing. They’ll focus on careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and manufacturing. Through Haile’s record-breaking Technology Student Association (TSA) chapter, students compete and learn with some of the sharpest students in the nation.

Thirteen-year-old Rhiannon thinks more girls should join the program. “They’d see that it’s pretty fun,” she explains. “I’d tell them what kind of activities we do and how much fun it is. We build stuff on SolidWorks, print it out on the 3-D printer, draw things on Corel Draw, and print it on the laser engraver and the CNC mill. I want to be an architect when I’m older. I think this class will help a lot. We learn to follow instructions and do dimensions. It’s fun!”

Alex, age 13, agrees. “You can pretty much design anything you want using SolidWorks and the different tools Mr. E shows us. It’s a great class!”

Mr. Erickson recalls one of the defining moments that inspired him to create a career program with such a big impact on a student’s future. “It was at the end of last year, when that first group passed the SolidWorks certification exam, he says. “When you see a kid jump out of a seat, excited that he passed a test, that shows you that you’re not testing a kid just to see results. They understand what they are earning, the weight that it holds. One of the dads was even in here at the end of the certification exam. When his son passed the test, there were big hugs, tears even. It was a special moment.”

CAT Academy: Multimedia

The CAT Academy’s Multimedia program equips students with certifiable skills in the industry-leading Adobe suite of creative products. Students tackle web design using DreamWeaver, photo editing in Photoshop, animation and game design techniques through Flash, and video production using Premier Pro. As they progress through the academy, they’ll build on their skills with increasingly more complex projects.

Sixth grade students start their academy career path in



Multimedia students work on website portfolios during the first week of school. Immediate engagement sets in.

Graphic Design Introduction, where they will create a website and begin assembling their portfolio. Throughout their academy experience, they’ll add multimedia projects to this portfolio. As students progress, they’ll take Graphic Design I and II, gaining the opportunity to earn industry certifications in one or all four of the Adobe products.

Instructor Pamela Platt knows exactly what these students need to succeed in college and the workforce. “I came from industry,” she explained. “I worked in the engineering field and also in multimedia, graphics design, and animation. When I came to education, I saw there is a real need for students to come out of high school prepared to work. It helps when they go on to college, too. I’ve had former high school students come back and tell me, ‘I’m getting paid to build my professor’s website!’”

The hands-on instruction in such relevant multimedia and design tools leaves kids energized, with clear goals and full-color results. “These kids want to get high school credit, and they like the idea that they will become certified in Adobe,” Platt says. “This curriculum is based on high school levels. I’m starting this program with high expectations.”

Harlee Middle School: Communication Technology and Leadership Academy



Harlee Middle School’s new and innovative Communication Technology and Leadership Academy, led by technology education teacher Nathaniel Bostic and principal James Hird, will provide academy students with a foundation of knowledge and experiences that will help equip them for the future. Students will examine the effects of technology on their lives while exploring careers, earning high school credit, and earning a skill-building industry certification in Adobe Photoshop.

Middle school academy completers will feed into high school academies offering communications technology courses, including Southeast High School’s *Electronic Communication Center (ECC) Academy* and Bayshore High School’s *Arts and Communication Academy*.

Academy students will experience an introduction to the knowledge, human relations, and technological skills found in today’s demanding technical professions. “Not only will the students have the opportunity to receive an industry certification in an industry standard piece of software, but through our program they will learn the principals of design and how to

handle rigorous real-world design problems,” says Bostic. “In my program, I will help my students bridge the gap between graphic arts and technology.”

Eighth grade academy students will enroll in Communications Technology I and will earn one high school credit upon successful completion of the course and passing the end of course exam. In high school, these students who go on to complete Communications Technology II and III have the opportunity to become eligible to receive a Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship upon high school graduation, if they also meet grade point average and other requirements.

To introduce the academy to incoming students, the Harlee academy invited younger students to visit. “We have had multiple school visits from both Abel and Daughtry Elementary fifth graders where the students were able to come in and see our students working first hand and get an idea of what we have to offer,” shares Bostic.

Academy members gain positive leadership and career skills through membership in the Technology Student Association (TSA). Students may join this awesome organization and plan to compete at the district, state and national levels. The leadership skills learned and displayed through involvement within this academy will be those that will remain with the students for a lifetime.

Career Academy Goals:

- Provide academy students a rigorous and relevant curriculum leading to increased student achievement

- Provide eighth grade academy students the opportunity to obtain high school level credits in technology
- Provide an opportunity to earn industry certification
- Focus on career preparation through career exploration
- Raise student commitment to their academics
- Promote leadership through participation in TSA

“Being able to see this academy’s potential really excited me,” says Bostic. “If a student has an interest in preparing for a career as a graphic designer, web designer, video game designer, texture artist, visual effects artist, or compositor, Harlee is the place for them. Our students will be getting hands-on experience with industry standard equipment and software, and will have the chance to obtain an industry certification, all of which will help them be competitive in tomorrow’s workforce.”



(L-R) Harlee principal James Hird and technology education teacher Nathaniel Bostic.

Smaller Learning Communities
Spotlight on Success
 School District of Manatee County
Adult, Career, & Technical Education
 215 Manatee Avenue West
 Bradenton, FL 34205
 (941) 708-8770 x2227
 FAX 708-8686
www.ManateeSchools.net
www.ManateeACT.com

The Smaller Learning Communities programs are under the direction of the **Adult, Career and Technical Education (ACT) Department** of the School District of Manatee County.

Doug Wagner, Director—Adult, Career and Technical Education
 Angie Grasberger, SLC Project Manager and President, National Career Academy Coalition



Around the District

Watch for all of the publications keeping you informed about what’s happening around the District in the Adult, Career & Technical Education department.



Tech Times Career Pathways Take Stock Times Transition Times ACT Update Spotlight on Success Ma nateeACT.com