

Conclusion

Career academies will continue to be a “viable” source for students to develop the skills needed to be qualified for tomorrow’s high skilled, high waged jobs (Kemple, 2004). The evaluation of the engineering academy revealed that students enrolled in the academy do have a career focus and understand the importance of focusing on obtaining skills at a young age for career readiness. This study also revealed that there is much room for improvement within the academy. Aligning the academy standards and best practices with the National Career Academy Coalition Standards is vital to the success of the program. To reach exemplary status academies need to score in the achievement range of 45-50 on the assessment described in Figure 3. The general assessment is an indicator which follows the National standards of practice for career academies.

Academy Department of Education Annual Self-Assessment

Meeting career academy standards for the state of Florida is an obligation of the school and district, each academy will undergo a self assessment review annually. Figure 3 is an example of the Middle School Academy Annual Self-Assessment. The Haile Engineering Academy scored 43 out of 50. This review positions the academy at “Meets Requirements” status. The Assessment is a review of the ten standards of practice developed by the district and aligned with the national career academy coalition. The assessment revealed some key areas for further development to be focused. Discussion and data analysis of Standard 4 exposed that the faculty and staff did not have enough awareness regarding the academy and the value added to the school. Standard 8 was the lowest rating as there is no evidence of an advisory committee to drive the focus of the program to meet community needs. Post review recommendations were to establish an advisory board consisting of teachers, community members, parents, and students. This committee leadership will ensure that the academy is preparing students to meet the demands of the local workforce.

Middle School Academy

Annual Self-Assessment

Ensuring that an academy remains high quality requires engaging in a regular, well-defined, objective self-examination. Improvement elements include the examination of an academy's mission, design and implementation, planned refinements, timetables, and measurable outcomes.

Standards of Practice

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|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| I. Define Mission & Goals | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| II. Academy Structure | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| III. Host District and Middle School | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| IV. Faculty and Staff | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| V. Professional Development | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| VI. Governance and Leadership | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| VII. Curriculum and Instruction | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| VIII. Employer, Higher Education and Community Involvement | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| IX. Student Assessment | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| X. Cycle of Improvement | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

TOTAL POINTS EARNED: _____

0=No evidence presented

2=Partial evidence presented

3=Adequate evidence presented

4=Exceeds requirements of evidence

5=Evidence presented is exemplary

Maximum Points Potential = 50

45-50 = Exemplary status

40-44 = Meets requirements

35-39 = Meets minimum but requires action plan

34-0 = Does not meet minimum requirements

Please review pages 15-24 within the, *Standards and Guidelines For Middle School Career Academy Development and Implementation in the School District of Manatee County*, to review an explanation and coordinating numeric indicator which describes the level of evidence presented for a particular standard. Each POS will be assessed with a numeric indicator which best describes the level of evidence presented for a particular standard. Each POS will be assessed. An individual school will be given until the end of the first year to rectify any deficiency. All academies must earn 40-44 points to continue the next school year.

School Name _____

Academy Name _____

Based upon results from the teacher survey, student survey, annual self assessment and pre-exam test there is an immediate need for improvement regarding current status of the engineering academy at Haile Middle School. 100% of the teachers surveyed feel middle school academy programs will promote the success of high school academies. Indicators from survey results of students did reveal that 87.5% do plan on enrolling in 4 years of engineering at the high school level, with 45.8% planning to choose engineering as a career. Pre-test results showed most students are not prepared to attempt industry certification during the first semester of their 8th grade year. Data suggest a conclusion can be drawn and the academy is successfully providing students with career focused learning, and encouraging the pursuit of careers in engineering. Based on results students understand the value of career focused learning in the academy environment.

Immediate action required from outcomes of the district evaluation involves the implementation of a proficient advisory committee which will create a stronger connection between school, community and the k-12 engineering structure. The selected committee could develop an action plan for learning to begin when students enter in kindergarten, and end with the knowledge and skills that will be needed at graduation to support the local workforce. This action plan will have to consider the impact of adopting National Common Core Standards by all districts.

In the spring students will be given the SolidWorks industry certification exam and also be surveyed on the following a) what high school they will attend, b) will they choose engineering as an elective, c) will they enroll in an engineering academy if the option is available, and d) what are the students plans after high school. The final results will establish if students are continuing learning in engineering careers after middle school. If the study was prolonged to 3-5 years, students could be surveyed after completing college or a technical school to see if they enter into a high skilled engineering career that their middle school academy had an impact on. A review will be conducted to see if the addition of the advisory committee added value to the further success of the academy.