

Waterloo Community Schools--Career Interest Academies at a Glance



The Waterloo School Community commits to a comprehensive system of education and support to ensure that each and every student will graduate ready for: college, career, and citizenship as evidenced by continuing education, pursuing a career path and contributing to a community.

What are Waterloo Career Interest Academies?

1. Small Learning Communities

- Our academies range in size from 250-425
- Students and teachers will stay together over several years
- Academy math, English, social studies, and science teachers are in the same area of the building
- Students attend “Futures” once a week which is an advisory time with an emphasis on building positive relationships
- Collaboration time is provided for teachers to discuss student and academy issues.
- Each academy has its own counselor, facilitator and administrator



2. College-prep curriculum with a career theme

- We are preparing students for postsecondary education and careers
- Curriculum infused with career themes that match the careers in the academy
- Advanced placement, ELP, PSEO, concurrent classes continue and will expand
- Current work on the Program of Studies recommends electives that match the career interest area.
- Our work will continue over the next three years to ensure each courses’ rigor, infusion of 21st Century employability skills, career focus and instruction, and alignment to the Iowa Core Curriculum.
- Students can take a class even if it is in another academy to ensure meeting the needs of all students



3. Partnerships with employers, the community, and higher education

- Business partnerships are being established to provide guest speakers, field trips, job shadows, career related experiences and internships.
- An advisory committee for each career interest academy will bring together staff and business/ industry to examine curriculum and practices.
- Community service projects are being written into current courses as appropriate.
- Work is taking place to develop and articulate clear pathways with post secondary institutions that will allow students to pursue their career interest after high school. In some cases this will mean attending a two year, four year college or tech school.
- Work with Hawkeye Community College is expanding the number of concurrent classes being offered where students earn high school and college credit for taking college courses.
- Work is being done to establish Certifications for students who complete a sequence of courses/skills



Originally conceived forty years ago, career academies address academic rigor, relevance of instruction, and build relationships between students and adults.

Career Interest Academies positively affect: -grades - test scores - overall academic achievement- attendance rates - graduation rates - student engagement

Students in Waterloo study the national career clusters and begin to explore possible career interests in 8th and 9th grades. This is done during an 8th grade career unit that uses “IhaveaplanIowa” which is a web based curriculum and portfolio. Students chose an interest area and are assigned to an academy. As 9th graders the career clusters are further explored as each student further develops occupations of interest and non-interest. Students are able to change academies if their interests change.

Waterloo Career Interest Academies and Interest Areas

Arts, Communication, and Business Academy										
Interest Areas	Graphic Communication	Design	Performance Arts- Music Theatre Arts	Visual Arts	Oral & Written Communication	Computer Technology Web Technology	Marketing	Management & Finance		
Engineering, Technology and Manufacturing Academy										
Interest Areas	Electronics Technology	Engineering Technology	Math	Science	Architectural and Construction Technology	Manufacturing Technology	Automotive/ Power/ Transportation Technology	Horticulture (Agri-science, Natural Resources)	Animal Science	
Health Academy					Human Services Academy					
Interest Areas	Health Science			Human Services	Culinary Arts	Hospitality & Tourism	Education	Social Sciences	Public Safety	Military Science