

Academies of Louisville Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The Basics:

- 15 JCPS high schools are Academy of Louisville schools (Atherton, Ballard, Doss, Eastern, Fairdale, Iroquois, Jeffersontown, Moore, Pleasure Ridge Park, Seneca, Shawnee, Southern, Valley, and Waggener)
- 17,600 students are enrolled in these schools
- 175+ companies have signed on to serve as business partners

What are the Academies of Louisville?

The Academies of Louisville prepare, inspire and empower students by offering meaningful and relevant learning experiences through career pathways connected to core academic subjects. Students will have a head start on life because their Academy experience includes career exploration field trips, job shadows, internships/co-ops, and solving real-world challenges through project-based learning. The Academies of Louisville are built on the framework developed by Ford Next Generation Learning (NGL).

What do Academies offer students? What will students gain from their experience?

The Academies of Louisville are designed to engage students during their high school years through unique learning opportunities. Students will graduate with an understanding of what it truly means to work in an industry and professional setting. They will learn about the educational requirements for positions in that industry as they develop a plan for after high school that will help them achieve their goals.

Academies offer students:

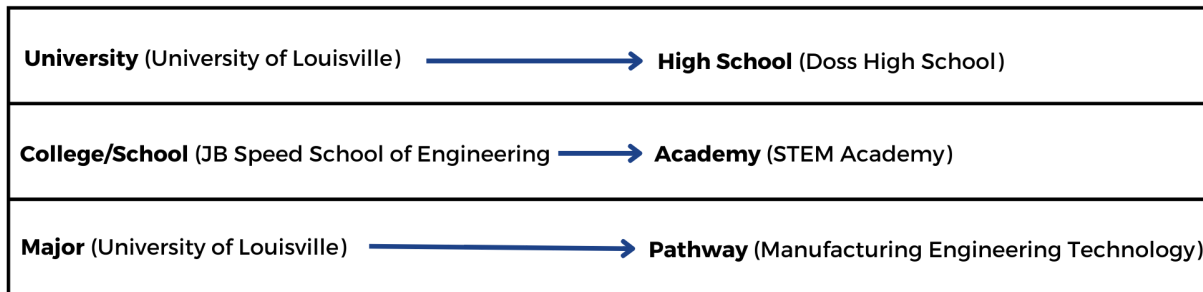
- Small, personalized learning environments (“school-within-a-school”)
- Partnerships with businesses that provide real-world, authentic learning opportunities
- Focus on 21st-century skills students need to succeed in college and life
- A culture of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity
- Rigorous interdisciplinary curriculum

After 4 years in an Academy, students will graduate with:

- Direct career and industry exposure
- Industry and college field trips
- Job shadowing experience
- Junior and senior year internships through SummerWorks
- Ability to earn college credits and industry credentials
- Ability to earn work experience through co-ops or apprenticeships
- Networking opportunities with local industry professionals
- Backpack of Success Skills and a postsecondary transition plan

What is a career pathway? How is it different from an Academy?

A career pathway is a sequence of courses designed to help students prepare for a specific career area. For example, if a student chooses the Pre-Law Pathway, they would take the following courses in this order: Introduction to Law, Criminal Law and Procedures, Civil Law and Procedures, and Advanced Legal Practice. Each Academy includes 3-5 related career pathways. A high school career pathway can be likened to a college major and an Academy to a school/college within a university.



What changes about the student’s school experience? Do they still get to take core content? Are they isolated from the other pathways?

In addition to math, English, science, and social studies, all students in grades 10-12 will choose a career pathway course. Each school within the Academies of Louisville has built a broad list of career pathways, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to engage in a pathway that meets their unique interests. Students are grouped according to similar interests into an Academy of 300-500 students, creating a “school-within-a-school”. Students are encouraged to take traditional electives such as band, art, foreign language, and health as well. These are called Global classes and students from all Academies can elect them. Advanced Placement classes are also offered as Global classes.

How are students assigned to Academies and career pathways?

During their freshman year, all Academies of Louisville students take a Freshman Seminar course. In this course, students identify their interests and abilities, take a career exploration field trip to a local business and college, and explore the career pathways offered at their school. During the early spring of their freshman year, students indicate their preferred career pathway. Each school has a unique process for assigning students to Academies that takes into account student interest, the capacity of programs, and diversity.

Can students switch Academies throughout the course of their high school education?

Academies are not designed to limit a student’s options – only to broaden them. Students are encouraged to stay in their pathway for grades 10-12; however, opportunities to change are provided. Investing time in exploring a career beyond the surface level provides the opportunity to affirm or dispel what they want to focus on after high school. Having a well-thought-out post-secondary plan will save them time, effort, and money once they leave high school.

Do the Academies of Louisville provide anything for the student headed to college?

YES! Regardless of whether students are headed to a 4-year or 2-year college, apprenticeship, military, or straight into a career, the Academies of Louisville provide rich learning opportunities for students to explore their interests before investing significant time and money in a college education. The academies afford students opportunities to build important success skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and communication. Many of our Academy students graduate with college credits, industry certifications, and internship experiences.

Why are our high schools moving into this model?

For years, students have asked the question “Why am I learning this?” The Academy model answers that question by connecting education today to the needs and expectations of our world tomorrow. By connecting high schools to business and community partners, the Academy model aligns education and workforce development needs to better prepare students for postsecondary and career success. Beyond graduating ready to compete in an ever-changing 21st-century economy, Academy students develop the essential skills they need to succeed throughout college, careers, and life.

What outcomes have been reported?

In other communities that have implemented the Ford NGL framework, results have included increased graduation rates, increased college & career readiness rates, decreased disciplinary infractions, and increased attendance rates. JCPS anticipates we will begin to see similar results in the coming year as schools fully implement the model.

How do companies benefit from the partnership?

Early connection to your future workforce, an opportunity for your employees to give back, and recognition for your company as an Academy Partner by JCPS, GLI, and KentuckianaWorks are just a few of the ways companies who participate benefit. Below are testimonies from business leaders that value their partnership with the Academies of Louisville.

“This opportunity provided to us by JCPS has enabled Class Act to fulfill its mission of bringing financial literacy into the classrooms. In addition, it has enabled us to create a flow of potential employees into our business as these students that go through the program are already trained and ready to work here. We have hired several great employees that are graduates of the program which was another one of our objectives. JCPS allowing outside businesses into their schools is providing real-life working experiences for these students and is changing the direction for many in the program. I’m proud to be a part of the Academies of Louisville!” Tom Anonson, Class Act Federal Credit Union

“If Louisville area businesses want JCPS to better prepare students for real-world opportunities, then more businesses need to be involved in our local schools. The Academies of Louisville program provides an ideal opportunity and ready resources to connect businesses with students who have shown an interest in studying a particular type of career path. Even a handful of hours per year invested in JCPS students can make a powerful, positive difference in the futures of high school students.” Carol Timmons, New West Agency

Can you describe a typical business partnership?

Each partnership is structured based on the capacity and interests of the partner and needs of students. In most partnerships, representatives from the partner are in the school or hosting students at their place of business 4-5 times per school year. All partners appoint a representative to serve on the Academy Advisory Board which meets 2-3 times per year for 90 minutes. Partnerships are unique to each company and we encourage you to discuss your creative ideas with your Academy Coach.

Who do the partners work with once they are signed on?

Each high school has an Academy Coach that serves as the primary point of contact for all partners. The Academy Coach will help plan and facilitate all interactions between partners and school staff and students. They will work with you to determine the best opportunities for your company to get engaged and create meaningful learning experiences.

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