



## The Academies of Racine Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is an Academy?

In fall 2016, each RUSD high school will be transformed into career academies. The Academies of Racine will provide students the advanced skills they need to be successful, productive citizens in college, career and life. Each RUSD high school will be transformed into career academies.

Academies are small learning communities that provide real-world experiences with local businesses and professionals, linking schoolwork and the workplace. Regular coursework, including math, language arts, science and history, is presented within the context of the Academy's focus.

The Academies of Racine are designed to ensure students are prepared for college and the workforce. In creating engaging, hands-on, relevant learning opportunities, developing small learning communities and connecting with local businesses, post-secondary institutions and organizations, Academies ensure students graduate with a plan for a successful future.

### 2. What is a Pathway?

Students will chart their unique "Pathway" during eighth and ninth grades, exploring career choices. A Pathway is a sequence of courses within a chosen Academy designed to help students prepare for a specific career area while meeting the mandatory requirements for high school graduation.

### 3. What Academies are offered at Case, Horlick and Park?

Academy	Pathway	Pathway	Pathway	Pathway
Academy of Business, Marketing and IT	Business	Marketing	IT	
Academy of Arts, Science and Health/Public Services	Culinary Arts	Health Services	Humanities	Fine Arts
Academy of Engineering, Manufacturing and Transportation	Automotive (Park High School only*)	Construction	Engineering	Manufacturing

**4. How does it work?**

Career exploration begins in middle school and then continues into a student's freshman year. Freshmen will have the opportunity to explore further before selecting an Academy and Pathway to pursue during their high school career. Each high school will have the same Academies but might differ in the Pathways. Students will have opportunities to earn college credits, experience apprenticeships and earn certifications in a particular field of study.

**5. What do Academies offer?**

- Smaller, personalized learning environments
- 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
- Preparation for college or career

**6. What is a block schedule?**

As we transform our high schools into successful Academies, we are revising our daily bell schedule to allow more time for students for hands-on, project-based learning opportunities. Block scheduling will provide longer class periods giving students time to dig in to great hands-on projects that will help them see the value of what they're learning in the real world.

**7. Does a block schedule mean students will have fewer opportunities to take electives?**

No. In fact, the block schedule will allow for **more** opportunities to choose electives (because students will have 8 classes instead of 7) like music, art, world language, AP, IB etc., and give students more opportunities to earn college credits.

**8. If you want to go to a school that is not in your boundary school, what transportation options are there?**

The RUSD transportation policy determines this. In most cases, a parent/guardian would be required to provide transportation. Please contact the Welcome Center with specific questions at 262-631-7194.

**9. I am on track to go to college. Why do I need career-focused learning opportunities?**

The Academy model is designed to prepare all students for a successful future - whether that includes post-secondary education or a direct path to a career. Students who want to go to college, will have opportunities to take advanced coursework, earn college credit and explore careers. When it's time to head to college, these opportunities and experiences will ensure our students are successful.

**10. Which high schools will offer the Academies of Racine?**

The Academies of Racine will be offered at Park, Horlick and Case.

**11. How do I get more information about the Academies?**

The District and the high schools will provide communications, information and opportunities to engage with us about the Academies over the coming months. Please watch for more information on our website [www.rusd.org](http://www.rusd.org).

**12. Can a student change Academies at any time?**

Students will be exposed to a great deal of information through the experiential learning model so that they are prepared to make an informed decision on their Academy. If a student wants to change Academies, the request will be considered on a case by case basis. Many Pathways will require some sort of certification or industry standard for completion so students will need to have enough time in their high school Academy to complete these requirements.

**13. What is experiential learning?**

The experiential learning model is a yearly focus of preparation for students as they navigate their high school career. Starting freshmen year, students will attend a career expo in which they are exposed to all different kinds of employers that will allow them to engage in meaningful conversations about the kind of education and experiences they will need for that profession.

During sophomore year, students will attend coordinated learning experiences to area employers for which they have an interest in a particular profession. Students will also have an opportunity to visit a post-secondary college or university. During their junior year, students will get involved in dual credit options, job shadowing and courses that lead towards certification.

In their senior year, students will continue in dual credit options and courses that lead towards certification as well as getting involved in internships and working on capstone projects.

**14. How will the Academies impact Fine Arts students?**

The Fine Arts pathway is a part of the Academies of Racine where students will be able to experience all of the benefits of that Pathway. Additionally, all students, regardless of Academy, will have the opportunity to take Fine Arts electives.

**15. Will seniors still be allowed to have half days?**

Yes. Seniors will still be able to have early release days if they meet requirements that are currently in place.

**16. Are lunches going to be shorter?**

Lunch will be 45 minutes.

**17. How will jazz band be able to practice during lunch with block scheduling?**

Block scheduling will create an opportunity for Jazz Band to become its own class because students will have eight periods and a lunch.

**18. Will homework load be increased?**

No. Block scheduling will provide students four classes in one day instead of the current seven classes per day, which means students will have two days to complete homework for each class.

**19. What will keep a student in class for 90 minutes? What will keep them from skipping class?**

When students are engaged and take ownership of their education, they want to attend classes. Block scheduling and hands-on, relevant learning opportunities have shown to keep students engaged and interested in their education.

**20. What about Youth Options? How will this be impacted?**

Youth Options will still be available to students as it is now.

**21. How will classes be structured?**

Semester-long courses will continue to be one semester and year-long classes will continue to be year-long.

**22. Will bilingual education change?**

Bilingual education will still be available and supported through the Academies and Pathways.

*\*Case and Horlick students interested in the Automotive Pathway should speak with their counselor.*