

Training Tomorrow's Workforce Today

Statistics show that the high school diploma is the highest degree earned by more than 70% of students ten years after high school graduation. So the pressure is on for students to be as prepared as possible for life after graduation. How do we do it? How do we make the most of high school education so students are equipped to enter the world of work or continue on to college or technical school? We do it through the implementation of *Smaller Learning Communities (SLC's)*.

Manatee County is at the forefront of transforming conventional high school education into comprehensive, career-based programs that are often identified as *SLC Centers* or *Career Academies*. These centers and academies adhere to strict guidelines developed by the National Career Academy Coalition (NCAC). Compliance to NCAC guidelines is essential to obtaining Academy status, and curriculum must be rigorous, relevant, and oriented to career preparation. Within SLC's/career academies, major areas of interest are strongly tied to programs designed to train tomorrow's workforce through career connections. Program electives align with chosen career pathways and career exploration. Participants are strongly encouraged to earn industry certifications, and students gain out-of-classroom experiences through partnerships with local businesses, industries, and community leaders. Students can also earn college credits and gain new skills through on-the-job training (OJT).

These career-based majors, electives, certifications, and experiences form the cornerstone of SLC's and career academies. But what about engaging students who are unsure of where their future lies? Where is their buy in? Why should they get involved in an SLC or academy?

By their very nature, SLCs and academies help create a more cohesive, familial type of environment. Students and teachers share common interests, and students' goals are supported by building relationships and mentoring. Students gain out-of-classroom experiences through job shadowing and internship opportunities. Teachers are better able to identify those students who may need more support and guidance. Through SLC's and career academies, high school education can combine academics with career pathways to equip students with the skills needed to be successful.

In Manatee County, the net has been cast wide to ensure that our high school graduates are prepared to transition to the world of work, college, or technical programs. Contact your high school's Academic Advisor to learn more about SLC's/career academies and how they can benefit your student.

Manatee County's High School Academic Advisors



Bayshore High School
Contact Laura Roberts
941-751-7004, ext. 2210



Lakewood Ranch High School
Contact Vito Bavaro
941-727-6100, ext. 2199



Braden River High School
Contact Kelli Kennedy
941-751-8230, ext. 2283



Manatee High School
Contact Patti Hartman
941-714-7300, ext. 2206



Central High School
Contact Kathleen Zimmer
(Assistant Principal)
941-751-7900, ext. 2142



Southeast High School
Contact Brandy Braver
941-741-3366, ext. 2027



Palmetto High School
Contact Lynda Elkin
941-723-4848, ext. 2026

PARENT CORNER

- Discussion starter: Does your child participate in a smaller learning community or career academy at their high school? To find out more about smaller learning communities and academies in Manatee County, visit www.ManateeACT.com and click *Academies*.
- Ask your high school student if they are aware of the industry certifications that they can earn in their career education classes. For example, students in Computing for College and Careers classes may be eligible to earn Microsoft Office certifications. To find out more about industry certifications, visit www.ManateeACT.com, click *Documents*, and then click *Industry Certification Information*.
- "Participation in SLCs/career academies affords students the opportunity to experience the relevance between their academics and chosen career paths through 'real-world' integrated curriculum." Angie Grasberger, SLC Project Manager, Adult, Career & Technical Education.

FCAT reading comprehension QUESTION

★ According to the article, what four career-based elements help form the cornerstone of smaller learning communities and academies?

Answer: career-based majors, electives, certifications, and experiences.

What's on the WEB?

www.ManateeACT.com
www.ManateeSchools.net
www.NCACinc.com



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



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