

Newspaper in Education Presents

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# Kidz

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What is a school within a school?

## Manatee County Academies

By Leslie Rowe

The Manatee County School District through the Adult, Career, and Technical Education department offers many vocational and technical programs. The difference between these programs and a career academy is that for academy programs, the career-related instruction *must be integrated* with the academic courses in a team-teaching approach. For example, a math teacher in the Agriscience Academy might provide real-world math problems relating to the expenditures, income, and profits related to raising livestock. Or, the Early Education Academy English teacher may assign a book about child abuse; while the biology teacher assigns the task of developing a classroom curriculum about the human body to be taught to young preschoolers. This team approach develops a family-like culture within the larger high school, and offers students real-world learning opportunities that directly relate to future careers.

Manatee County offers the following academies:

- The Business Academy at Bayshore High School
- The Medical Arts & Sciences Academy at Manatee High School
- The Agriscience Academy at Palmetto High School
- The Early Education Academy at Palmetto High School

Programs wishing to earn academy status underwent an evaluation process this year provided by an outside team of evaluators. Only programs earning Level 1-3 academy status can use the Manatee County Academies terminology.

Using the school choice program, Manatee County students can apply to any of the academies. Students or parents desiring more information about the academies may contact Doug Wagner, Director of the Adult, Career & Technical Education department of the Manatee School District at (941) 708-8770 x2227.

## Bayshore Business Academy

By Leslie Rowe

For Manatee's future business leaders, the Bayshore Business Academy is the hot place to be. Students learn critical business skills such as web design, entrepreneurship, and even aspects of business law. They're networking with business professionals and area colleges, and—with iBook laptops in hand—getting a great technological start on their future.

That's right! Each Academy student receives a laptop, thanks to the *EDGE Initiative*, an innovative program that provides students and teachers with their own laptops for use at school and home. Students use laptops for assignments and research. For example, one Academy student chose to complete a community service project by volunteering with Meals on Wheels. As part of the assignment, the student created a digital iMovie and shared his experiences with classmates.

Business Academy students have many extra opportunities to develop skills and learn about business careers. Students can participate in Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), an organization focusing on business leadership training. Academy students recently studied the stock market with a unique interdisciplinary approach. In English class, students researched stock ownership and read articles on successful businesses. In social studies/economics, students learned about the history of Wall Street. Students were then given "\$100,000" to invest and then tracked portfolio performance. In math, students created spreadsheets and charted daily performance, then calculated and graphed profit/loss/expenditures. Meanwhile, a stock broker visited the Academy to shed real-world light on their experiences.

According to business teacher Bonnie Condor, Academy members recently studied the dynamic *Fish! Philosophy*—a business culture model made famous by Seattle's legendary Pike Place Fish, an "otherwise ordinary fish market that's extraordinarily successful." The Fish! Philosophy teaches students to enjoy work and make it fun while giving their all to the task. With all the hallmarks of a winning program, the Bayshore Business Academy is on its way to becoming extraordinarily successful as well.

## Career Academies—A School Within A School

A career academy is a school-within-a-school that provides a college-preparatory curriculum with a career-related theme. One good reason why growing numbers of states, districts, and schools have decided to start career academies is that they have been found to be effective in improving students' performance. First, academies are **small learning communities**. An academy comprises a cluster of students who have the same teachers and who share several classes each year. A group of teachers from academic and technical disciplines are scheduled to have academy students in their classes, meet with each other on a regular basis, and share in decision-making related to curriculum content and instruction.

Second, academies combine a **college-preparatory curriculum with a career theme**. Academic courses that meet high school graduation and college entrance requirements are linked with technical courses that focus on the academy's field of work. Teachers have shared planning time to coordinate course content and instructional strategies. Employability skills may be taught in the vocational courses and in one or more academic courses. Work-based learning opportunities for students tie classroom activities to internships with local employer partners. College and career counseling informs students about options and planning for employment and further education, which may or may not be related to the academy career theme.

Third, academies embody **partnerships with employers**. An advisory group for the academy includes representatives from local employers, community, academy faculty, and the school district. Employer representatives give advice on curriculum, appear as guest speakers in classes, supervise student internships, provide financial or in-kind support, and some serve as mentors for individual students.

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## The Medical Arts & Science Academy

At Manatee High School

By Leslie Rowe

With today's shortages of trained health care professionals, Laura Sollenberger understands she's doing more than just teaching high school students. As lead teacher of Manatee High School's Medical Arts & Science Academy, Laura has the satisfaction of knowing she's contributing to the community by training future health care workers.

The Medical Academy prepares students for career choices in health care. Students explore areas such as medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacology, veterinary, emergency medical services/first responder programs, and other health care careers. They learn real-world information such as medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, first aid, CPR, and health science. In addition, academic teachers structure their curriculum and integrate their subjects so they directly relate to health care.

Beyond coursework, students try shadowing—spending a day on the job watching professionals at work. Health care professionals visit the classrooms and speak about current topics. Seniors may choose an internship where they spend part of the day on the job, training and volunteering with area hospitals, medical offices, veterinary offices, pharmacies, or nursing homes.

Many of Manatee's Academy students choose to participate in *Health Occupations Students of America* (HOSA), where they learn leadership skills and join in regional and state competitions. In April 30 students will travel to Orlando where they will compete for awards in events such as medical terminology, CPR and first aid, nursing assistance, and public speaking.

"Our students have a big advantage when it comes to finding jobs and attending career programs at MTI or MCC," said Ms. Sollenberger. "And for the many that go on to college, they're really prepared."

## The Agriscience Academy

At Palmetto High School

By Leslie Rowe

**Grand Champion**—that's what Palmetto's Agriscience Academy's Florida FFA chapter heifer won at the Florida State Fair. Raised on campus at the Academy's 15-acre land lab, the champion heifer represents a crowning victory for the new Academy and for lead teacher Carolyn Gilbert. "The fairs are our biggest event," said Ms. Gilbert. "65 members showed at the Manatee County Fair. And we took home lots of Grand Champs and blue ribbons." Back on campus, Academy students learn plant production in their own gardens. Each student may have a private plot, as well as a larger production area where food crops are produced and sold to teachers.

At the Agriscience Academy, academic and agriscience teachers plan together how to integrate their classes. In true Academy style, students' academic subjects are integrated with Agriscience. Math and Science classes worked to complete science projects for both the Manatee County Science Fair and the Agriscience Projects Fair. Science projects related directly to the Supervised Agriculture Experience that students completed in Agriscience classes. Science teachers taught land conservation and soil science, where students obtained hands-on experience outside the classroom. In English classes, students prepared buyers' letters, thank you letters, as well as practiced speeches for competition. They also wrote newspaper articles dealing with agricultural topics. In English and social studies combined, students are reading *The Jungle* and *A Land Remembered*. In math, students have filled out agriscience project record books and kept track of inventory and expenditures. Teachers have commented on students' many "aha!" experiences when they realize how their class instruction applies to real-world experiences.

Throughout their Academy experience, students learn about the many careers in Agriscience. The Agriscience Advisory Council, made up of area professionals, teachers, parents, and students, plays an active role in providing real-life input, feedback, and business relationships for Academy staff and participants. Students have visited Yoder's Nursery, the USF Meat Science Lab, Horticulture Career Day at the Orange County Convention Center, Hillsboro Community College's Ag Day, and the Sunbelt Expo in Multrie, GA—the largest agricultural trade show in the Southeast. In June, FFA students will attend and compete in leadership sessions at Orlando's State FFA Convention.

## The Early Education Academy

At Palmetto High School

By Leslie Rowe

As lead teacher of Palmetto High School's Early Education Academy, Peggy Coon spreads enthusiasm about the program. "We're building future teachers," she said. "And we need more good teachers. This is a good concept—it's really working well. It's like a family unit!"

The Early Education Academy prepares students for careers in teaching, daycare, and other areas involving interaction with children. Academy students not only receive training in early childhood education courses, their academic subjects are also tailored toward education and childhood development. Teachers in academic subjects such as math, science, and English meet with Early Education teachers to plan and integrate curriculum and lesson plans. With common planning times and the same group of students, teachers have a chance to share feedback on individual student progress.

The academy runs a preschool on campus, where high school students receive on-the-job training in curriculum and child development while caring for preschoolers attending the facility. English, math, and science subjects directly relate to the Early Education experience. For example, a science unit may teach about the human body, with an assignment to develop a preschool curriculum about the human body. English teachers assign reading assignments related to childhood development.

Academy students have the chance to participate in a national career and technical student organization known as *Family, Career and Community Leaders of America* (FCCLA). FCCLA members expand their leadership potential and compete against other students in regional and state competitions. Academy students also have the opportunity to earn several levels of State certification as childcare providers, preschool teachers, infant/toddler caregivers, and school-age providers. Students practice as teacher's aids and preschool teachers, while older students job shadow and intern at local elementary schools.

"Our certified Academy students can walk into any kind of program and be fully licensed and prepared to work," said Ms. Coon. She emphasized how the program dovetails into the MCC and MTI programs, and how her students can test out and become exempt from some of the required coursework in the Child Development Associate and Child Development Specialist programs at the community college level. Ms. Coon added, "Many students want to go beyond working in a daycare—they want to own one."

- Sugg Middle School
- Ballard Elementary Magnet
- Daughtrey Preparatory Magnet
- Harlee Middle Magnet
- Johnson Middle Magnet
- Lee Middle Magnet



- Haile Middle School
- Lincoln Middle Magnet
- Manatee Elementary Magnet
- Rowlett Elementary Magnet
- Tillman Elementary Magnet
- Wakeland Elementary Magnet

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