

2017

Excellence in Action Award

Millard West High School

Millard Public Schools Education Career Academy  
Education & Training Career Cluster

OVERVIEW

The Millard Public Schools Education Career Academy in Omaha, Nebraska provides a unique opportunity for high school students to explore the field of education and prepare for college. During their junior and senior years, Academy students complete a sequence of rigorous academic courses and an internship to earn 80 credits toward high school graduation. At the same time, Academy students are also earning 30 college credits at Metropolitan Community College and University of Nebraska-Omaha.

The program meets the needs of PreK-12 public education by providing a learning environment aligned with the training needed to become a certified teacher, while simultaneously giving students the opportunity to earn extensive college credits in high school. In addition to reduced-rate tuition and scholarships provided by the Millard Public Schools Foundation, students may complete their education early and enter the workforce earlier, saving them time and money.

Student Demographics (24 students)	Percentage
Male	8%
Female	92%
Low-Income	5%
Minority	13%

EXTENSIVE WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the duration of the program, students participate in a progression of work-based learning opportunities to put what they're learning into practice and build connections with educators in their communities.

During their junior year, students enter the workplace for part of the school day one day a week for two, nine-week placements. The first placement pairs Academy students with a student in a special needs classroom. While Academy students do not have access to Individualized Education Plan (IEPs), the special education teacher gives them all the goals they are working toward with these students. On the last day of this placement, Academy students present a specialized academic and social lesson plan they've designed for their partnered student.

The second nine-week classroom placement is facilitated through partnerships with five elementary and three middle schools.

These placements offer a variety of real-world experiences – ranging from Montessori classrooms to IB classrooms, schools with high proportions of English language learners to schools with high proportions of low-income students. These experiences include observation and shadowing, as well as mentoring and tutoring a general education student. This array of site placements allows students to see what age group and setting they are most suited to teach, and plan their postsecondary education and career pathway accordingly.

For the last nine weeks of their senior year, students are placed for four half days per week in a classroom for an education practicum totaling 108 contact hours. This experience includes collaborating with teachers and parents, lesson design and delivery, and reflection activities throughout. Graduates of the program are armed with a portfolio of lesson plans they've designed and implemented and educator feedback, giving them a tremendous leg up in postsecondary and beyond.

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### RICH AND RELEVANT COURSE SEQUENCE

Using National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) course standards, the Academy teaches both foundational and more technical skills, such as lesson design and assessment, which they will use in their career. Through dual enrollment, students may take a range of courses from AP Psychology to Child Development and a child development Pre-practicum.

The Academy has made a point of responding to local PreK-12 school districts with areas of critical teaching shortages that need to recruit qualified candidates with specific endorsements. For example, the Academy added the Introduction to Communication Disorder course because districts needed additional Speech Language Pathologists to meet demand.

### STUDENT ORGANIZATION OFFERS LEADERSHIP SKILLS

The Academy offers students the ability to take part of Educators Rising at the state and national levels. Through this Career Technical Student Organization, students advocate for educational opportunities, organize service learning projects and compete in state and national competitions. Participants have been recognized as part of the Educators Rising Moment, Creative Lecture, TED Talk and more. Additionally, the 2016-17 state president of Educators Rising is from the Academy.

### REINFORCING CHOSEN CAREER PATHS

Alums of the program graduate with the advantage of definitively knowing that they want to pursue a career in education. "It's confirmed my belief I always wanted to be an educator," said 2015 graduate Danielle Dyer. "It opened me up to so many fields in education. I got to experience so many different things, so many different kids."

The district is already reaping the benefits of preparing future educators as well – several schools have hired teachers who were Academy students and have graduated from college, building a pipeline of talented and skilled employees. This program is proving to be a very effective part of the district's "grow your own" strategy.

"In helping students understand what education means as a vocation, the Education Academy is growing the profession. Its thoughtfulness in planning and implementation, as well as student outcomes, make this an outstanding program."

– Connie Eichhorn, Director of Secondary Partnerships, Metropolitan Community College

## Success by the Numbers



100%

Participated in Work-Based Learning



100%

Graduated High School



100%

Earned Postsecondary Credit



96%

Enrolled in Postsecondary Education

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