

Carl Wunsche Sr. High School

Legal Studies

Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security Career Cluster

Overview

The Legal Studies program of study at Carl Wunsche Sr. High School (CWHS) in Spring, Texas began in 2006 and has expanded dramatically over the last 10 years to prepare students for careers in high-demand jobs available in the community. With an emphasis on exposing students to a variety of career opportunities, integrated coursework and work-based learning, the program of study sets high academic and technical requirements of each career pathway within the Career Cluster. Freshman and sophomore students begin the program of study with prerequisite coursework and career exploration opportunities that enable them to make an informed selection from the three specializations available to juniors and seniors, one of which is law enforcement. Once the pathway is chosen, students move through a coherent sequence of courses, have the opportunity to attain certifications, while developing vital 21st century skills through regular work-based learning opportunities.

Students (169)	Percentage
Male	33%
Female	67%
Low-income	65%
Minority	93%

Alignment with Industry Aims to Fill Skills Gap



In 2006, the law enforcement courses were restructured – with input from a focus group of teachers, local law enforcement agencies, and postsecondary partners – into a coherent sequence of academic and technical courses, with all students participating in work-based learning, field experiences, an internship, and a pathway-based project each year.

This overhaul of the curriculum was conducted to address the shortage of skilled employees entering law enforcement, mirroring the national trend in this sector. Based on a projected shortage predicted by the regional economic development council, staff developed a program of study that prepares students for careers that are in extremely high demand right in their own community. For example, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is currently operating at a correctional officer deficit of approximately 40 percent. To combat this, CWHS and TDCJ are working together to certify law enforcement students as correctional officers providing students an entry-point to a law enforcement career, while also allowing students to work part-time while enrolled in college.

In addition to certification support, CWHS industry partners provide students with experiences they are sure to face in the law enforcement field. The Harris County Sheriff Department encourages

students to join ride-alongs and police training, and provides access to deputy sheriffs for projects, career advice and mentorship. The Houston Police Department trains students on topics including narcotics investigative techniques and procedures, and assists in students' capstone projects, a requirement for graduation. These partnerships offer authentic exposure to a variety of occupations available in the career field, and access to a support system beyond the classroom, which helps students leave high school with a focused, realistic plan. The agencies that have partnered with CHWS program are eager to work with graduates and help them get established in the industry. Just last year, TDCJ hired 15 graduating seniors as correctional officers.

"The leadership skills and professionalism that each cadet has exhibited has made a positive impact on the overall success of bridging the gap between the police department, schools district and the community we serve. I give my highest recommendation as I have no doubt that the cadets of this program will succeed and become valuable assets to any of their future law enforcement endeavors." – Victor L. Mitchell, Chief of Police, Spring Independent School District Police Department

Pathways to the Future

Strong business partners are only one way that CWHS prepares students for career success. In addition to the certification being developed with TDCJ, CWHS offers **six certifications** aligned with industry expectations including FEMA: Community Preparedness Certification and Business Active Shooter Certification. While certifications allow students to graduate and immediately enter the workforce, the CWHS offers students a view into the postsecondary opportunities available by partnering with two police academies that train students and provide insight into what they can expect upon completion of high school. The school also partners with Sam Houston State University Department of Criminal Justice, one of the top law enforcement schools in the nation, to provide a site visit.

Success by the Numbers

With a strong support system in the classroom and beyond and growing need for law enforcement professionals, CWHS has delivered a program of study that sets students up for success in postsecondary education and beyond.



64%

Earned Industry-recognized Credential



100%

Participated in Work-based Learning



100%

Graduated High School



100%

Enrolled in Postsecondary Education and/or entered the workforce or military

Data based on 2014-2015 school year