

Curriculum

Purpose/Goal:

To provide ninth grade students with skills necessary for success in core academic areas.

- ♦ Summer bridge program offering students with deficiencies in reading, writing and math.
- ♦ Curriculum with rigor and relevance.
- ♦ Structured and on-going reading and writing across the curriculum.
- ♦ Curriculum integration.
- ♦ Employment of multiple reading strategies and interventions (RTI).
- ♦ Frequent reading fluency probes.
- ♦ NWEA testing.
- ♦ Multiple MCAII reading test preparation activities.
- ♦ High expectations in literacy.
- ♦ Prepare all students for success at a two or four-year post-secondary program.

Seminar

Purpose/Goal:

To provide academy students with intensive support to help them be successful students.

- ♦ Organizational skills.
- ♦ Life skills.
- ♦ Study techniques.
- ♦ Opportunity for re-teaching core curriculum.
- ♦ Individual students meet with academy teaching team, who join forces to present unified front.
- ♦ High importance placed on assignment completion.

Interdisciplinary Teams

Purpose/Goal:

To create an avenue for the consistent exchange of information about students, data, curriculum, achievements and interventions.

- ♦ English, Social Studies, Science and special education teacher on each team
- ♦ Special education teacher co-teaches English in each academy.
- ♦ Teachers hold weekly planning/intervention meetings with administration and counselors.
- ♦ Data-driven decision making.
- ♦ Common literacy strategies.
- ♦ Participate in an academy professional learning community (PLC).
- ♦ Engage in professional development.
- ♦ Consistency of expectations and consequences among academy staff (academic and behavioral).
- ♦ Continuous improvement that is measured.
- ♦ Paraprofessionals lend support in Social Studies and Science classrooms.

Critical Components

Purpose/Goal:

To create a positive 9th grade academy culture.

- ♦ Relationship building and personalization.
- ♦ Parents as partners (contract).
- ♦ Behavior intervention program.
- ♦ Academic intervention pyramid.
- ♦ Academy watch list.
- ♦ Academy awards.

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OWATONNA High School

2007-2008



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Ninth Grade Academy
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What research tells us . . .

- ♦ More students fail 9th grade than any other year (Kerr, 2002).
- ♦ 30-40% of 9th graders are not successful in the U.S. (Fields, 2005).
- ♦ Of every three students who enter high school, one will drop out (Border, 2006).
- ♦ When high schools made special provisions to “receive” their ninth graders, significantly fewer students were retained in their freshman year/courses (Kerr, 2002).
- ♦ Successful schools have learned that distinctive and extraordinary initiatives are necessary during the ninth grade year (Fields, 2005).
- ♦ Ninth grade academy program’s affect on high school dropout rates:
 - With program 8% dropout rate
 - Without program 24% dropout rate

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Owatonna High School at a glance

- ♦ During the 2006-2007 school year:
 - 32% of ninth graders failed a class.
 - 424 referrals for ninth grade truancy.
 - 638 total absences in ninth grade.
 - 38 referrals for ninth grade discipline.
- ♦ OHS Demographics and trends:
 - 31% free and reduced lunch in 2007 (20% in 2000)
 - 15.9% minority students in 2007 (9.20% in 2000)
 - 22.4% average ACT score in 2007 (21.8% in 2000)

Ninth Grade Academy MISSION

To increase freshmen academic achievement and attendance rate, while reducing discipline referrals and dropout rate.

MISSION STATEMENT

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Structure

Purpose/Goal:

To provide a small learning community for a selected group of ninth grade students to bridge the transition from junior high school to senior high school.

- ♦ Approximately 132 students enrolled in an AM or PM academy.
- ♦ Students spend two blocks out of four in the academy.
- ♦ English, Social Studies, Science, and Seminar.
- ♦ Flexible Scheduling.
- ♦ Students follow a common set of classmates through their academy schedules.
- ♦ Lockers and classrooms are in close proximity.
- ♦ Safe and orderly environment.
- ♦ Small class size (approximately 22).

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