

BUILDING SKILLS, BUILDING FUTURES: INTRODUCING THE ACADEMIES OF ANCHORAGE

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In the 2024-2025 school year, the Anchorage School District will launch the Academies of Anchorage. This wall-to-wall transformative opportunity is designed to include all students, aiming to reshape high school education and prepare the workforce of tomorrow. In the current job market, 70% of jobs require some form of technical training, marking a 50% increase over the past 40 years. The Academies of Anchorage aims to update high school education to meet the changing economy. Students will gain transferable skills, earn college credit or high-quality industry certifications, and graduate high school one step ahead.

Incoming ninth graders will take an elective called Freshman Academy Career Exploration, which is dedicated to learning more about their preferences and interests, exploring a diverse range of job sectors and eventually deciding what career pathway to enter for the remainder of their high school education. These Career Academies will offer coursework and career pathways related to one broad sector. Here students will continue their general education and career exploration through the lens of their chosen pathway and academy. The Academies of Anchorage will offer a variety of paths, including trades such as carpentry, construction electricity, welding, and automotive and aviation maintenance. Other sectors, ranging as wide as law, education, business, health science, art and design, and information technology, may also be represented. Offerings will vary from school to school based on student interest and workforce demand.

Throughout the academy experience, partnerships with local businesses and training programs will help students make key connections with potential employers. This approach aims to cultivate a sense of belonging and purpose, encouraging students to envision their futures and ultimately increase the local talent pipeline. This vision aligns with the Anchorage School District's broader aspirations to increase career readiness and higher education preparation, ensuring students are not just ready for the world but eager to contribute meaningfully to their community.

Keeping youth in Alaska starts with keeping them in school. Reports from a similar academy program in Akron, Ohio, indicate increased academic excellence and school attendance after the implementation of the program. By expanding the goals of secondary

education beyond solely college preparedness, the Academies of Anchorage offer more opportunities to more students. Those interested in the trades will have the chance to get hands-on experience and prepare for an apprenticeship after graduation. Students unsure of what the job market holds for them will have gained lifelong skills and the chance to learn more about potential careers. Students focused on higher education will still receive the same high-quality college preparedness curriculum with additional connections to potential careers after earning a college degree.

By bridging the gap between students and local industries, the program aims to build a skilled workforce tailored to the specific needs and opportunities in Anchorage. This transformation represents a strategic investment in the city's future, designed to retain young talent and attract businesses and families by making ASD a school district of choice. Emphasizing collaboration and practical experience, the Academies of Anchorage model seeks to increase economic competitiveness and foster a stronger community identity, ensuring that education plays a central role in the city's development and success.

Interested in supporting the Academies of Anchorage? Business owners and industry leaders have an opportunity to invest in their community and get involved. Opportunities range from career fairs and guest speaking to internships and job shadowing. To learn more about the work and the process of determining the academies that will operate across the district, please visit the Anchorage School District's website at www.asdk12.org/ccl.
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