

Fairlead Academy



Know the learner and the learning,
expecting excellence in both.
Accept no excuses, educating ALL with
rigor, relevance, respect, and positive
relationships.

—SMCPS Mission Statement

WHAT IS A FAIRLEAD?

A “fairlead” is a nautical device used to guide a line, rope, or cable around an object or out of the way, thus enabling the sailor to pilot the craft. Fairlead Academy does much the same by taking struggling students and guiding them through any challenging years of high school – helping them avoid obstacles that they may have encountered in their home high school.

WHY DO SOME STUDENTS NEED FAIRLEAD ACADEMY?

Data shows that students who struggle and are retained for one year increase in likelihood of becoming dropouts by 40 to 50 percent. A second retention increases this risk by 90 percent (Darling-Hammond & Falk, 1997).

Being held back twice makes dropping out a virtual certainty. Retention disproportionately affects minority and economically disadvantaged students (Guide from the U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

There is a growing awareness among educators nationwide that ninth and tenth grade are make-or-break years. Collaboration between the Freshman Academy and Fairlead Academy is essential. This is why St. Mary’s County Public Schools (SMCPS) has created the guided pathway to high school success. Fairlead Academy integrates organization, instructional and interpersonal guidance into all courses required for a Maryland high school diploma.

WHAT WILL A FAIRLEAD STUDENT’S DAY LOOK LIKE?

Teaching will be differentiated to students’ particular areas of need and interest. Each student will be coached through the curriculum at their most appropriate pace. A typical 10th and 11th grade schedule would look like this:

SUBJECTS

45 Minutes Algebra 2 or Geometry
45 Minutes World Literature or American Literature
45 Minutes US Government or World History
45 Minutes Biology or Environmental Science



Tenth and eleventh grade students attend Fairlead Academy for 4-5 periods a day for their core academic subjects along with 2-3 classes at their home high school or the Forrest Center in order to fulfill graduation requirements. Students who are graduating are scheduled on a case-by-case basis to ensure that state graduation requirements are met. See the school Counselor for details regarding scheduling.

WHAT ARE THE KEY FEATURES OF FAIRLEAD ACADEMY?

Organization

A higher teacher to student ratio

Student participation in the decision-making process of the school

A climate supportive of and tailored to students' individual needs and abilities

Staff specifically trained to work with at-risk students and guide them to success.

Instruction

Cooperative learning and peer tutoring

Accelerated learning to gain grade-level skills equivalent to their peers'

Active interdisciplinary projects that link school work to life experiences

Differentiated instruction based on individual students' needs to allow students to succeed in a variety of ways

Emphasis on tying classroom learning to college & career goals

Interpersonal

Development of students' academic confidence and positive attitudes about school through Leadership Effort Accountability and Determination

Development of a sense of community and identity within Fairlead Academy

Enrollment of students with culturally and academically diverse backgrounds

Parent and community participation in the educational program

OTHER KEY BENEFITS OF THE FAIRLEAD ACADEMY

Targeted Field Trips

Students will travel on field trips as incentives for excellent attendance and dedicated learning.

These experiences will extend classroom instruction and expose students to the alternate employment opportunities and experiences beyond the traditional classroom.

Focus is placed on career and college readiness for every student.





WHAT CRITERIA DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY?

- Students will be referred into the program by administrators, counselors, teachers, and/or parent application
- Students should maintain good attendance
- Students who struggle with the academic process including grades, study skills organization, time management, and/or distractions
- Students with a recently documented history of discipline that is disruptive to the instructional process and/or violence may not be candidates for Fairlead Academy
- Fairlead Academy personnel will review applications and make final selections

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Students wishing to enroll in the program should complete an application and submit it to Fairlead Academy. Each application will be reviewed by an admissions team comprised of educators and administrators, who will determine admission to the program. Candidates will be evaluated based on their past academic performance, dedication to learning, and their desire to be successful in high school.

OUR PLEDGE TO THE FAIRLEAD STUDENT

To teach a child you must know a child. The Fairlead Academy staff will know their students well. This means that we teach the whole child by recognizing that many struggling students have distractors that must be addressed before academic pursuits can become their focus. Interpersonal components that develop students' academic confidence and self-esteem are included in the program. Here at Fairlead Academy focus is placed on every student making a personal connection between education and their future career or college goals.

Constant monitoring of student progress and an active coaching and mentoring model carries students through their first years of high school. Our goal is to have ALL students earn the necessary credits to graduate on time. This will set students on the road to career and college success.

*For more information,
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