

Educational Design



The NAF educational design is a flexible structure that combines career-focused content in the classroom with real world application and exposure to the working world. The design includes four essential elements of practice: academy development & structure, curriculum & instruction, advisory board, and work-based learning.



Academy Development & Structure

NAF academies are designed as small learning communities that fit within current school structures. The small learning community design enables students to travel to their general and career courses together, building a strong bond while making connections between their courses. NAF promotes open enrollment for its academies in order to maximize every student's chance at a successful future. The flexible structure encourages teacher collaboration across subject areas and fosters personalization to meet student, school, and district goals.



Curriculum & Instruction

NAF academies implement a rigorous, career-focused curriculum that is designed around projects that resemble the structure of the workplace. NAF offers curriculum in growing industries and also approves programs of study that align with NAF's certification standards and federally-recognized career clusters, enabling local school districts to meet the needs of their community, as well as district and state requirements.



Advisory Board

Advisory boards provide an essential bridge between schools and the workplace. Through working with academy leaders and acting as NAF ambassadors in their networks, advisory board members use their industry expertise to ensure that academy students have a robust and enriching learning experience. Their dedication to maximizing work-based learning activities and industry-relevant curriculum is essential to preparing young people for college, career, and future success. In addition, they provide strategic planning, curriculum review, fundraising, and professional support for NAF academies and teachers.



Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning is an instructional strategy that connects what students are learning in the classroom with the world of work. NAF students complete an intentional sequence of activities that progresses from awareness, to exploration, and culminate in career preparation. The process is designed to expose students to a wide variety of careers, then connect them with industry experts and refine their areas of interests, and finally put their knowledge to the test through paid internships