

# Benson High School Taskforce Recommendations

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Submitted by: The Benson Taskforce Members  
Facilitated and co-authored by: the Partnerships for Innovation

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*The Partnerships for Innovation (PFI) is a collaboration of Nebraska secondary and postsecondary partners focused on building a better statewide system of Career and Technical Education (CTE) to improve student learning and better meet economic development priorities. PFI will do this by introducing innovation in delivery systems in CTE to include Career Academies, professional development and programs of study with coordinated curriculum between secondary and postsecondary education providers.*

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## *Executive Summary*

The Benson High School Taskforce (Taskforce) comprised of alumni, community members, business leaders, faculty, staff and external stakeholders, make the following recommendations to the Omaha Public Schools Superintendent and School Board to be implemented in the 2015-18 school years.

*Robust Marketing and Communications Plan:* In order for Benson student enrollment to grow parents, students and the overall community need to be made aware of the positive culture and opportunities available to students who choose Benson High School.

*Commitment for Success:* It is requested that the District commit to the Benson Career Academy Action Plan for a minimum of six (6) consecutive years, to allow Benson to demonstrate success. This support may take form in the following ways:

- Allow smaller student to teacher ratio while the programs are under-development and in the infancy stages; (OPS Strategic Plan 2.2, 3.1, 3.4)
- Provide and support creativity and flexibility in course delivery to incubate innovation, (OPS Strategic Plan 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6,3.1, 3.2, 3.4)
- Work to secure and target funding for the support of the Benson High School Career Academy programs, (OPS Strategic Plan 4.1, 4.3, 6.1, 6.2)
- Ensure Benson has proprietary fidelity to implement a Health Professions; Construction & Design, and Business & Entrepreneurship Career Academies for a minimum of 6 years; (OPS Strategic Plan 4.2)
- Recognize student enrollment may fluctuate during the building of the career academies, and
- Support creativity and flexibility of the internal high school structure, staffing practices, and personnel

*Personalized Learning Plans:* Building on the curriculum in the GPS freshman level careers course, the school will require each student to develop and maintain an individualized Personal Learning Plans (PLP).

*Ongoing Professional Development:* No curricular change is possible without intentional, rigorous and ongoing professional development for faculty.

*Wall-to-Wall Career Academy Structure and Themes:* Business & Entrepreneurship, Health Professions and Construction & Design. Each Academy program will:

- Provide “Career Ladders”; opportunities for students to directly enter employment, continue postsecondary training or both
- Integrate college preparatory curriculum to include, Honors and Advanced Placement coursework
- Offer dual Credit and/or industry recognized credential  
Include project-based learning; to include a senior interdisciplinary capstone project
- Provide work-based learning opportunities
- Infuse the Nebraska Career Ready Standards of Practice
- Maintain a high-functioning Advisory Committee, made of more than 51% business and industry
- Actively engage parents, students and the community in the learning activities and opportunities within the school.

## Taskforce Membership

The Benson High School Taskforce convened on October 10, 2014 and met every other week for eight weeks. The Taskforce evaluated historical district student attendance area practices, student enrollment and demographic data, current course and program offerings, and national career education best practices. The group then crafted the essential components for Benson High School to become a national model school, providing excellent education opportunities for all students. The materials the taskforce utilized can be found on the Partnerships for Innovation <sup>1</sup>website.

### Taskforce members

<b>Active Members</b>	<b>Role</b>
Dr. Marty Ramm	Alumni
Carol Russell	Alumni
Woody Bradford	Alumni
Cam Lollar	Alumni
Mark Pflug	Benson Business Owner
Shelley Kiel	Benson Community Member
Greg Schlegel	Benson Curriculum Specialist
Matt Wichman	Benson Magnet Facilitator
Anita Harkins	Benson Principal
Angela Johaneck	Benson Teacher
Joe DiCostanzo	Benson Teacher
Cassandra Distefano	Benson Teacher
Kevin Miller	CHI
Willie Barney	Empowerment Network
Chris Humphries	First National Bank
Wendy Boyer	Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce/PK Foundation
Alan Hale	IBEW Representative
Jim Grotrian	Metropolitan Community College
Heidi Kaschke	Nebraska Medicine (UNMC)
Ken Spellman	OPS District Office
Jan Christensen	OPS District Office
Casey Hughes	OPS District Office
Nealy Grandgenett	University of Nebraska @ Omaha
<b>Invited Members</b>	
Calvin Sisson	Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation ( <i>board meeting conflicts</i> )
Hal Daub	Alumni ( <i>NU Regents meeting conflicts</i> )
Yolanda Williams	Board of Education

The Taskforce recognized that some of the factors determining student school choice are out of the hands of the high school and are district decisions, policies and procedures. The Taskforce discussed the challenges that these have on student enrollment and school choice such as (1) student transportation options and student

<sup>1</sup> [www.partnershipsforinnovation.org/align/bhs](http://www.partnershipsforinnovation.org/align/bhs)

attendance area, (2) how athletics play a role in school selection and (3) district-wide middle school career awareness/exploration/planning.

### *Historical Context: Transportation and Student Assignment Plans*

Great appreciation is given to Casey Hughes of the OPS District Research Office; his historical summary of Benson High Schools' transportation and student attendance area assignment plans provided the Taskforce with greater understanding.

#### **School Boundary**

Prior to 1964, the Benson high school attendance area grew west as the district and city expanded. At one point in the 1960s, the Benson attendance boundary extended all the way to what is now 156<sup>th</sup> street. In 1964, students west of about 96<sup>th</sup> street and south of Fort street were assigned to a yet to be built Burke High that would open in 1967. Benson still maintained some portions of the western part of the school district until Northwest High opened in the 1971-72 moving Benson's western boundary to 72<sup>nd</sup> St. The boundary for Benson stayed the same over the next 40 years with the exception of adding portions of Kennedy Elementary in the early 1990s. Most of Harrison, half of Western Hills and Wakonda and all of the Walnut Hill, King Elementary (Clifton Hill), Benson West, Fontenelle, and Mount View elementary schools have always been in the Benson boundary dating back at least to the 1950s.

#### **Benson Enrollment History and Trends**

Prior to the Desegregation plan instituted in 1976-77, there was little movement between high schools. What movement that did occur was the result of special needs transfers or choice to Tech high school that was open, to some extent, to every student in the district. In 1970, Benson had 2,249 students and was 97% white. By the implementation of the desegregation plan in 1976-77 it was just under 75% white and had a population 1,352. The desegregation plan attempted to achieve racial balance at all high school through voluntary transfers. Black students in the Benson area were allowed to make application to Bryan, Burke, Northwest, and South. White students in the Bryan, Burke, Northwest, and South areas were allowed to make choice to Benson, Central, North or Tech. No Students in the Benson area were allowed to apply at Central. Black enrollment was not to exceed 25% at Benson in an attempt to stabilize the racial makeup of the School. The years that followed the desegregation plan saw a decline in the black enrollment at Benson but an even steeper decline in white enrollment at the school. By 1986-87, the school was 67% white and had an enrollment of only 884 students in grades 10-12, its lowest enrollment in at least the last 50 years.

There are four major reasons for these demographic changes seen at Benson between 1970 and 1987. First, the end of the Baby Boom generation was causing declines in enrollment across the school district and the country in general. The district lost about 24% of high school student over this period while Benson declined by 61%. Second, boundary changes to Benson in the 1963 and 1971 moved the suburbanizing portion of Omaha and the school district to two newly built high schools, Burke and Northwest. Third, "White Flight" the result of many factors, pushed white families from core urban areas like Benson resulting in a decline in the white population. Finally, the desegregation plan that attempted to control the racial makeup of the Benson capped black enrollment but apparently failed to stem the flow of white students from the school.

In 1987-88, the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students from Monroe were transitioned to Benson as a part of the district wide movement of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to High Schools. At this point, Black students in the Benson Home Attendance Area (HAA) could still apply to attend Bryan, Burke, and South and were now allowed to choose Central after 9<sup>th</sup> grade because Central did not have 9<sup>th</sup> grade. White non-black students in the Benson HAA could only apply to North and Central. Only non-black students were allowed to choose Benson from the all of the other high school attendance areas except for Central. Enrollment steadily increased for 15 years growing from 1,116 in 87-88 to 1,517 in 2001-02. A report from 1992 suggests that about 68% of all Benson HAA students attended Benson. In

1999-2000, about 57% of all Benson HAA students attended Benson. In 2000-01, the district instituted a Student Assignment Plan (SAP) in high schools to replace the voluntary desegregation plan in place since the 1976-77 school year. In general, this plan allowed Benson students to choose any high school but only receive transportation to South, Northwest, Burke and Bryan depending on what elementary attendance area the student resided in. By the 2002-03 school year, only about 50% of all Benson HAA students stayed at their home school and about 951 students were making choice to another high school. Students were generally choosing schools where they received transportation like North (22%) and Northwest (23%) but also Central (38%), where transportation was not provided.

By 2009-10, the option out trend, in terms of total students leaving Benson, had remained relatively stable but in conjunction with population declines in the HAA in general. In 09-10, only 39% of Benson's students stayed home but a similar number of students (1,010) chose other district high schools. Again, students were generally choosing schools where they received transportation like North (25%) and Northwest (14%) but also Central (38%), where transportation was not provided. In 2010-11, the district made changes to the student assignment plan to align to the new Learning Community. This new plan provided more transportation at the high school level essentially transporting every student making school choice unless they were a full pay lunch student applying to attend Burke, Bryan, or Northwest. In 2013-14, only about 35% of Benson's students stayed home but surprisingly almost the same number of students (1,007) chose other district high schools. The schools these students are choosing are slightly more diverse with Burke and South getting more students than in the past. However, Central (33%) and North (25%) still have the bulk of the outflow of students. This student loss is in conjunction with a declining HAA population that as of now sits at 1,548 students attending regular OPS high schools.

The Taskforce discussed the role athletics play in some students' decision to attend a high school. The group members talked at length about the impact career awareness in the middle grades has on a student's choice to attend one high school over another. The Taskforce recommended that the district invest more time in career planning in the middle grades to better prepare students for high school program and learning opportunities.

During the time together, the Taskforce evaluated national best practice career education models and unanimously agreed to support the implementation of an instructional design known as Career Academies.

### *Career Academies*

The Community College Research Center<sup>2</sup> has found that students who earn nine or more college semester credit hours while in high school, known as dual credit or dual enrollment, are more likely to have a higher high school graduation rate, higher grade point average than their non-dual credit peers, and more likely to matriculate to a postsecondary institution. The data also shows that dual credit students are more likely to return for their sophomore year of college, which other studies indicate is a strong predictor for program completion. The study states that the kind of coursework, academic or career education in nature is not the determining factor, rather the number of credit hours is of greatest importance because students have a measure of success knowing they can accomplish college-level coursework.

According to *Education Weekly*, of every 100 students who begin the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 68 graduate high school in 4 years; 40 of them go on to start college; 27 of them make it to their sophomore year in college; and only 18 of

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<sup>2</sup> The Postsecondary Achievement of Participants in Dual Enrollment: An analysis of student outcomes in Two States. [Melinda Mechur Karp](http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/dual-enrollment-student-outcomes.html), Juan Carlos Calcagno, Katherine L. Hughes, Dong Wook Jeong & [Thomas Bailey](#) October 2008. <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/dual-enrollment-student-outcomes.html>

the 100 will actually graduate from college within 6 years. To truly measure success, it is more important to focus on the postsecondary completion rate than to look at the college going rate.

Career Education can be used as an education reform effort. Some of the data that supports this is reflected at the national, state and local level.

Career Academies are a vehicle of career education delivery which combine a sequence of career education courses taught in context with academic course(s) and provided meaningful work-based learning experiences. According to research conducted by MDRC in 2006, young men in the Career Academies group, through a combination of increased wages, hours worked, and employment stability, earned over \$10,000 (18 percent) more than those in the non-Academy control group during the four-year period following their scheduled graduation from high school. For the group as a whole, these employment impacts did not come at the expense of enrollment in postsecondary education<sup>3</sup>.

The National Academy Foundation<sup>4</sup> (NAF) attributes their success, in part to the exceptionally strong partnerships they have with local business communities. In 2011, 97% of NAF seniors graduated from high school, compared to a 50% graduation rate among non-academy participants in cities where most NAF academies are located. 52% of NAF graduates each bachelor's degree in 4 years, compared to 32% nationally and Career academy graduates earned \$16,704 more over the eight years following high school than non-academy students who were also studied.

A study of Bay Area, California Career Academies by Maxwell & Rubin found in 2000 that those students enrolled in academies had the following success compared with non-academy students in the same schools:

- GPA nearly 0.5 of a grade higher
- Drop-out rate 50% lower
- 15.9% more go to four year colleges
- Test scores 30 - 40% higher
- 8.2% more continue to two and four year colleges

Nashville Public Schools performed a comparative study of student demographics in 2005, when the district first implemented Career Academy Programs, and 2013. The average daily attendance rate in 2005 was 75% compared to 92% in 2013. The districts graduation rate was 58% compared to 78% in 2013. Some of the most compelling data comes from the Nashville Juvenile Justice system; as the average age of young people involved with the criminal courts, such as gang involvement, was 16 years of age in 2005 and in 2013 was 22 years of age.

Nebraska data is just as promising. The Nebraska Department of Education: Career Education Office<sup>5</sup>, collected and analyzed high school senior career education data during the 2010-2011 school year. Those students who take one career education course are identified as *participants*. Those who take a sequence of three or more career education courses within a career field or cluster are identified as *concentrators*. In the 2010-2011 school year 34% of Nebraska public high school seniors were identified as *concentrators*. In that

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<sup>3</sup> Meeting Five Critical Challenges of High School Reform: Lessons from research on three reform models. Janet Quint, May 2006. [http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full\\_440.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_440.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> From the statistics and research page of the NAF website, <http://naf.org/statistics-and-research>

<sup>5</sup> [www.education.ne.gov/nce/DRAW/index.html](http://www.education.ne.gov/nce/DRAW/index.html)

same year, Nebraska schools reported an 82% high school graduation rate. The concentrator group of students had a 99% graduation rate. Of the general senior student population, 26% of seniors took an Advanced Placement (AP) or Honors course, where as 33% of the career education concentrator seniors took one or more AP or Honors course(s). Lastly, Nebraska students who did not participate in any career education course had a 2.9% dropout rate, where as those who took just one career education course had a 0.4% dropout rate.

Omaha Public Schools reported in the 2012-13 Nebraska State of the Schools Report<sup>6</sup> the 4-year senior student graduation rate was 75.48% with an increase to 80.7% in 2013-14. Of those seniors who were career education concentrators, they had a 99.05% graduation rate.

Systems are already in place to collect similar data to demonstrate impact for Benson's proposed Career Academy Programs. Benson High School will use the current school improvement plan as data points for student success measures.

National Career Academy Consultant, Susan Katzman, evaluated the Benson Taskforce Plan for Career Academy implementation and has outlined her findings here:

The Benson Taskforce Plan fully embraces and supports the OPS Strategic Plan. The Guiding Principles and Objectives are part of what Benson and its broader community consider as critical elements of the Plan. Listed below are the ways in which the Benson Career Academies support the Omaha Strategic Plan.

*Principle 1: Safe, Healthy and Engaged Students*

Career academies do not exist in isolation and are a partnership between the school and the community. Advisory boards (in the career and college theme) help bridge the relationship between the school environment and the community and get the corporate and broader community involved in the school in ways that are long lasting and substantial. Academies operate in a smaller learning community, family atmosphere that is nurturing and engaging and are designed to ensure that there is a student voice in how academies function. Students engaged in their own learning become active participants in their own educational success. Data from states like California and Florida show that students engaged in career academies have higher high school graduation rates.

*Principle 2: High Expectations, Rigorous Curriculum and Effective Instruction*

Career academies operate based on the ten National Standards of Practice (NSOP). Benson will follow those Standards as well as the Nebraska Rule 47 for career academies. The NSOP stress a rigorous, sequential and differentiated curriculum that prepares students for both college and a career provides best instructional practices used locally and nationally and includes interventions for students at strategic points where assistance is needed academically. The ninth NSOP highlights the importance of student data—gathering it and analyzing it—to better address the needs of the students, their academic growth and success. In California in 2011, 57% of academy graduates were reported to have met the stringent University of California system entrance requirements as compared with 36% statewide.

*Principle 3: Committed, Diverse and Effective Teachers, Administrators and Staff*

Career academies are only as effective as the instructional staff working with the students. The Benson Plan is predicated on the belief that the current Benson staff and others who might be added in the career and college focus areas are highly effective, professional and care about their students. Effective teachers will be supported by professional development in: the content areas, team building, project based learning, student intervention strategies and exposure to the career academy theme in the onsite corporate work environment.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.education.ne.gov/documents/SOSR.html> (most recent year of compiled data)

*Principle 4: Equitable and Efficient Systems and Resources*

Career academies draw upon the expertise and the sharing of resources (human, financial and technical) from their advisory boards. The three career academies of Benson will have additional assistance from their advisory boards and from their school partners to add to what the OPS provides. Additionally, while the central office is providing outstanding customer service, Benson, in turn, will be fostering the same atmosphere with its parents, students and community partners. The career academy philosophy and openness ensures this.

*Principle 5: Engaged and Empowered Parents and Families*

Career academies nationally have been proven to foster a higher degree of trust among the student, his/her parents and the community. Additionally, a national study by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation showed that long after high school, young people were more likely to be engaged in nurturing, family-like relationships similar to what they had learned in a career academy environment. There are contracts for student learning and engagement that will require both student and parent signatures and there are several opportunities during the high school years for parent involvement in ceremonies, awards days, capstone project presentations and others events.

*Principle 6: Involved and Supportive Community Partners*

Career academy advisory boards play a critical role in the design, implementation and sustainability of an academy. Both the governance/leadership and the student experiential components emanate from this body that represents a wide cross-section of supporters in the academy college and career theme. In Nashville, TN, for example, advisory boards generated over \$2.2M worth of both in-kind donations and volunteer hours in 21 career academies in 2013.

*Principle 7: Accessible, Transparent and Two-Way Communication*

Career academies are a natural vehicle for the school district and Benson to communicate with the broader community. The structure of academies requires that everyone communicates the successes and the needs that an academy and its students and staff may have. Because each academy has a career and college theme, advisory board members are intricately linked to the students who may be their future employees. To that end, it is in everyone's best interests to ensure that the academy delivers the best possible education.

## *Career Themes*

The Benson Taskforce identified three Career Academy themes: Business & Entrepreneurship, Health Professions, and Construction & Design. As freshman, each student will be in a cohort or small learning community. The freshman class will be divided into two cohorts, known as the Green and White Freshman Academies, to represent the school colors. As sophomores, students will have the option to enroll in one of the three academy programs. Because all the students will be involved in an academy, this is known as a Wall-to-Wall Career Academy High School – the first and only in Omaha Public Schools.

The Academy programs have been structured to meet the National Career Academy Coalition Standards<sup>7</sup> of Practice and the Nebraska Department of Education's Rule 47<sup>8</sup> which provides guidelines to a Nebraska recognized Career Academies.

Each of the career academy programs will introduce students to "Career Ladders"; opportunity for students to enter employment directly after high school, continue their postsecondary training (at a community college and/or university) or do both – work and continue with school. All students will have access to a college

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ncacinc.com/nsop>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.education.ne.gov/Legal/webrulespdf/CLEANRule47\\_2013.pdf](http://www.education.ne.gov/Legal/webrulespdf/CLEANRule47_2013.pdf)

preparatory curriculum. Instruction will be tailored to the individual student and s/he will have access to Honors and Advanced Placement® coursework in each of the three academy programs.

### *Dual Credit and/or Industry Recognized Credential*

Each Career Academy will have an opportunity for students to earn an industry recognized credential and/or dual credit (high school and college credit) with partnering postsecondary institutions such as Metropolitan Community College, University of Nebraska at Omaha and/or Bellevue University. The charge the Taskforce has challenged Benson with will need to be considered by the District and High School Administration when identifying faculty to teach at the school. Specific professional development to the Academy program may need to be tailored for each teacher. Not only will the teacher be required to meet the expectations of Nebraska Department of Education Teaching Certification; they may also be required hold a professional degree or industry credential; as determined by the career courses and program of study.

The High School will provide all students access to rigorous coursework that will prepare them for college admittance to a Nebraska postsecondary institution without the need for remediation.

The taskforce recommends that Benson administration and faculty, with the support of the District and Administration, within the next 5 years work to provide Benson students the opportunity to earn an Associate's Degree concurrent with a high school diploma; as has already been modeled by Papillion-LaVista and Millard Public Schools. Extensive planning and curriculum alignment will be required to meet this challenge.

### *Work-based Learning*

100% of Benson High School students will have at least one work-based learning opportunity that includes but may not be limited to: paid or unpaid internships, job shadowing experiences, industry tours, business mentors, summer employment, etc.) Many of the strategies gleaned for the Academies at Benson came from CAPS. OPS visited CAPS programs from which Benson will implement Best Practices for work based learning. One specific example is bringing partners and businesses to Benson rather than expending large amounts of dollars on transportation to external sites.

Employers seek out employees who can show up to work on time, learn and relearn, do the job they were hired to do and have a willingness to work collaboratively. In some circles, these are called employability skills. In Nebraska, these are referred to as Career Ready Standards of Practice<sup>9</sup>. The Taskforce recommends that Benson High School full heartedly adopt the Nebraska Career Ready Standards of Practice as they are applicable to courses and learning environments. By adopting these Standards, Benson High School graduates will be better prepared for the workplace, whether that while in school, after graduation or after postsecondary training completion.

Students who learn in project-based learning classrooms score higher on standardized tests than students who are taught by traditional instruction. The reason for this is students are able to transfer knowledge from one experience to another, not just memorizing material for retention. An example of exemplary project-based learning can be found in a partnership between Texas Instruments (TI) and a classroom. Students were tasked by TI to reduce the vacuum noise used in the manufacturing plant because it did not meet OSHA standards.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.education.ne.gov/nce/Toolkit.html>

Students learned how sound transfers and the ear receives it, decibel levels, OSHA requirements, and materials processing. After testing various devices the students presented their solutions to TI and the company implemented the most cost saving solution. The company benefitted from the additional thinking power (students) and the students benefitted by having a real-life project to work on which integrated academic standards. The Benson Taskforce recommends integrating Project-based learning into each Academy program, so that students will have the opportunity to identify a problem and find the solution. Similarly to the work that is done in businesses every day.

Every senior will be required to complete an Academy Capstone project; which should be cross-curricular; and when possible include an international component.

The Academy Programs will provide student leadership opportunities through career student organizations, athletics, club activities and community-based organizations.

### *Career Academy Advisory Councils*

Each Career Academy program must have a high-functioning Advisory Committee. According to NDE Rule 47, should be made of more than 51% business and industry within the career area. It is strongly recommended that current and former students serve on the Advisory Council. While an Academy will not be co-branded with a business or industry, it is recommended that projects that benefit a company or the community be co-branded with sponsoring businesses.

Benson High School administration and faculty will actively engage parents, students and the community in the learning activities and opportunities within the school.

All academy programs will align English/Language Arts and Social Studies courses throughout the program of study throughout all grade levels.

### *Business & Entrepreneurship Career Academy*

The University of Nebraska and Gallup<sup>10</sup> found that more 55% percent of young people, ages 18 to 29 want to start their own business and that 5% had already started their own business. *“To gain a further perspective on how important age is for starting a business, small business owners in Nebraska were asked about the age when they first thought about starting or owning their own business. What should not be surprising is that these first thoughts of entrepreneurship came to many at a relatively young age. Almost two-thirds (64%) first thought about starting a business when they were under 30 years of age.”* The following companies were started by high school or college student entrepreneurs: Microsoft, Hewlett Packard, Facebook, Nike, Pizza Hut, myyearbook.com, Fed Ex, workinmyroom.com, Hudl, and Popsey Cakes.

The Taskforce suggests Benson High School be the first OPS high school to adopt the nationally recognized **High School of Business**<sup>11</sup> curriculum. Below is the course sequence and opportunities for students who choose the Business & Entrepreneurship Academy.

#### **State Model Program of Study:**

[http://cestandards.education.ne.gov/Program\\_FileLink\\_Multi.aspx?Sub=Mk&Pg=B](http://cestandards.education.ne.gov/Program_FileLink_Multi.aspx?Sub=Mk&Pg=B)

<sup>10</sup> Entrepreneurship in Nebraska: Conditions, Attitudes and Actions. Eric C Thompson and William Walstad. Gallup Press 2008.

<sup>11</sup> [www.mbaresearch.org/index.php/program-development/program-designs/hsb](http://www.mbaresearch.org/index.php/program-development/program-designs/hsb)

Student Career Organization: FBLA or DECA

	1st Semester	2nd Semester
Grade 9	GPS: Career Exploration Course	Leadership and Wealth Management
Grade 10	Principles of Business*	Business Economics
Grade 11	Principles of Marketing*	Principles of Finance*
Grade 12	Principles of Management*	Business Strategies

**Dual Credit Opportunities:** Bellevue University currently offers 9 Semester hours of articulated credit with Plattsmouth High School’s High School of Business. The same partnership will be negotiated to other High School of Business providers. While faculty credentials and curriculum alignment need to be reviewed, the following courses could possibly be offered for dual credit with Metropolitan Community College (MCC):

1. Principles of Business = BSAD 1000 Introduction to Business
2. Principles of Marketing = BSAD 1010 Principles of Marketing
3. Principles of Management = BSAD 2100 Principles of Management
4. Principles of Finance = FINA 1200 Wealth-Building Fundamentals and Personal Finance

**Work-based Learning Opportunities:** Students will have an opportunity to participate in work-based learning opportunities through the Benson high school store, the Mastercraft Scooters Coffee Shop and local business partnerships within the Benson business district.

*Health Professions Career Academy*

When most people consider careers in the health sciences, doctors and nurses are the top of the list. However, there are many allied health careers that offer livable-sustainable wages and are going unfilled; local employers are desperately looking for health care technicians and health informatics professionals. The Health Professions Career Academy provides students with foundation coursework then offers the student three options (Figure 1). One option is the Nebraska Medicine Health Alliance. Another is the coursework currently available at the Career Center for C.N.A. and EMT certification. The third option will be available at Benson High School and is a survey of allied health careers. Students may have the option to earn up to 22.5 quarter credit hours (5 courses) through Metropolitan Community College which could be applied to the Health Professionals<sup>12</sup> or Health Informatics<sup>13</sup> programs of study.

**State Model Program of Study:**

[http://cestandards.education.ne.gov/Program FileLink Multi.aspx?Sub=He&Pg=HS](http://cestandards.education.ne.gov/Program_FileLink_Multi.aspx?Sub=He&Pg=HS)

Career Student Organization: SkillsUSA or HOSA

	1st Semester	2nd Semester
Grade 9	GPS: Career Exploration Course	Introduction to Health Sciences
Grade 10	Medical Terminology*	Anatomy & Physiology*
Grade 11	Clinical Nutrition*	Disease Processes*
Grade 12	Introduction to Medical Law and Ethics*	Exercise Science (Therapeutic Services: includes

<sup>12</sup> <http://mccneb.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2014-2015/Course-Catalog/Programs-of-Study/Health-and-Public-Services/Health>

<sup>13</sup> <http://mccneb.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2014-2015/Course-Catalog/Programs-of-Study/Information-Technology-and-E-Learning/Health-Technology/Health-Information-Management-Systems>

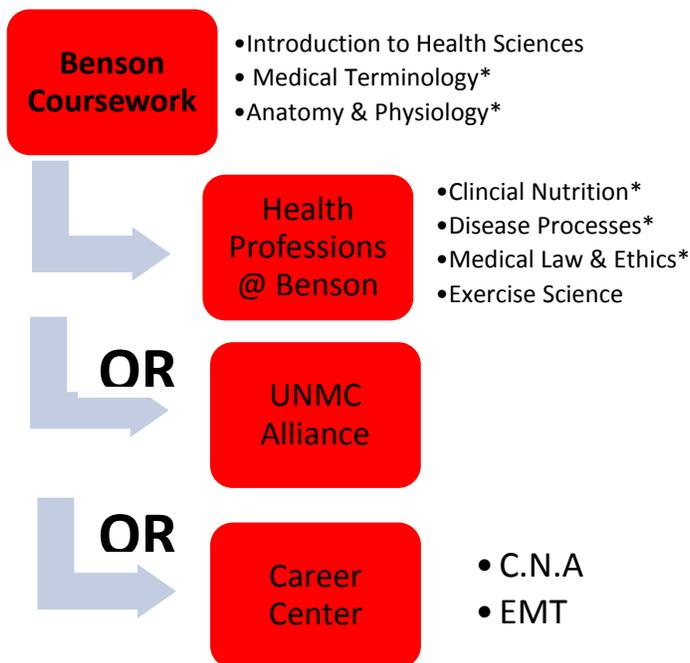
**Dual Credit Opportunities:** While faculty credentials and curriculum alignment need to be reviewed, the following courses could possibly be offered for dual credit with Metropolitan Community College (MCC):

1. Medical Terminology = HIMS 1120 Medical Terminology I
2. Anatomy & Physiology = BIOS 1310 Survey of Human Anatomy and Physiology (not transferable to university)
3. Clinical Nutrition = HLTH 1050 Nutrition in the Life Cycle
4. Disease Processes = HIMS 1180 Disease Processes
5. Introduction to Medical Law and Ethics = HIMS 1150 Introduction to Medical Law and Ethics

*(Note: not all courses will transfer to a 4 year institution as credit within a program, but these courses will meet AS degree requirements for MCC, students will need to do their due diligence to confirm their postsecondary institution will accept the MCC credit)*

For those students who can, will be encouraged to take Medical Biology in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, allowing them to take Anatomy & Physiology in the sophomore year. Students who do not take Physical Science in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade will take Anatomy & Physiology in the junior year.

**Figure 1: Health Professions course sequence options**



**Work-based Learning Opportunities:** Students will have an opportunity to participate in some work-based learning opportunities through the Nebraska Medical Center, Catholic Health Initiatives: Immanuel Hospital (formerly Alegent: Immanuel), local veterinarian offices, and other Benson-based health care providers.

### *Construction & Design Career Academy*

Building on the existing strong courses available to students in the BEST (Benson Electrical Student Training) program, the Construction & Design Academy marries the built environment with the artistic design. This

Academy will be the first in the state to provide The CAD Academy, a sequence of courses which will prepare individuals for careers not limited to, architecture, design, construction, manufacturing, engineering, fashion design and product development. The Construction & Design Academy provides students with four pathway options (Figure 2).

**State Model Program of Study:**

[http://cestandards.education.ne.gov/Program\\_FileLink\\_Multi.aspx?Sub=Cm&Pg=A](http://cestandards.education.ne.gov/Program_FileLink_Multi.aspx?Sub=Cm&Pg=A)

Student Organization: SkillsUSA

	1st Semester	2nd Semester
Grade 9	GPS: Career Exploration Course	Leadership & Career Readiness
Grade 10	Introduction to the Built Environment (Research Seminar)	Introduction to Digital Design
Grade 11	Intermediate Digital Design	Advanced Digital Design
Grade 12	Internship	Capstone: Industrial Technology Enrichment, Independent Design

*\*Possible Dual credit opportunities with Metro CC*

[http://www.thecadacademy.com/v5\\_3.asp](http://www.thecadacademy.com/v5_3.asp) - The CAD Academy

**Dual Credit Opportunities:** While faculty credentials and curriculum alignment need to go under review, the following courses *could* possibly be offered for dual credit with Metropolitan Community College (MCC):

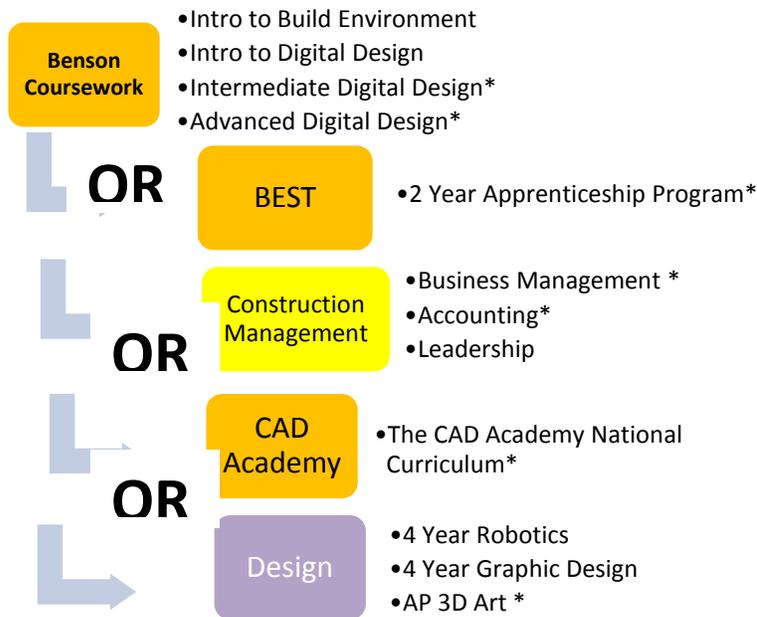
1. Intermediate Digital Design =
2. Advanced Digital Design
3. Business Management = MCC BSAD 2100 Principles of Management
4. Accounting = MCC ACCT 1100 Accounting I
5. CAD
6. Electrical

Currently available for dual credit through University of Nebraska at Omaha:

7. AP 3D Art

*(Note: not all courses will transfer to a 4 year institution but will meet AS degree requirements for MCC, students will need to do their due diligence to confirm their postsecondary institution will accept the MCC credit)*

Figure 2: Construction & Design course sequence



*The colors of the Academy Programs align with the Nebraska Career Field Model poster colors: Red – Health Sciences, Orange – Skilled & Technical Sciences, and Purple – Arts, A/V and Communications.*

### *Marketing and Communications*

The taskforce recognizes the safe, warm and family atmosphere of Benson High School; however, according to the 2013 Gallup Perceptions Survey<sup>14</sup>, the community at large does not. In order for Benson student enrollment to grow parents, students and the overall community need to be made aware of the positive culture and opportunities available to students who choose Benson High School. (OPS Strategic Plan 6.1, 6.2)

The school needs an intentional and professional marketing/communications plan that provides students and faculty the opportunity to work collaboratively with the marketing/communications company. To pair the employees of the marketing firm with the students in DECA and marketing courses will provide them with project based learning opportunities- providing real-work learning experiences. Internships, whether paid or unpaid, could be made available to students.

### *Commitment for Success*

It is requested that the District commit to the Benson Career Academy Action Plan for a minimum of six (6) consecutive years, to allow Benson to demonstrate success. This support may take form in the following ways:

- Allow smaller student to teacher ratio while the programs are under-development and in the infancy stages; (OPS Strategic Plan 2.2, 3.1, 3.4)
- Provide and support creativity and flexibility in course delivery to incubate innovation, (OPS Strategic Plan 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6,3.1, 3.2, 3.4)
- Work to secure and target funding for the support of the Benson High School Career Academy programs, (OPS Strategic Plan 4.1, 4.3, 6.1, 6.2)

<sup>14</sup> Available upon request from the Omaha Public Schools Foundation

- Ensure Benson has proprietary fidelity to implement a Health Professions; Construction & Design, and Business & Entrepreneurship Career Academies for a minimum of 6 years; (OPS Strategic Plan 4.2)
- Recognize student enrollment may fluctuate during the building of the career academies, and
- Support creativity and flexibility of the internal high school structure, staffing practices, and personnel.

### *Personal Learning Plans*

Personal Learning Plans (PLP) provide students a guide for the sequence of courses to be taken and when, similar to the courses in a college major. Personal Learning Plans include academic and elective courses, co-curricular activities and work-based learning opportunities that relate to a career field or cluster. The PLP can assist students, parents, teachers and guidance counselors with providing justification as to the courses a student is taking. It also provides the student and opportunity to take control of her learning, recognizing the work that is required, but also how academics apply to future career goals.

Building on the curriculum in the GPS freshman level careers course, the school will require each student to develop and maintain an individualized Personal Learning Plans (PLP). The PLP, which is a feature within the Naviance Counseling System, will be used to assist students with future course selection (based on career interest assessments, personal experiences, and current and former work-place learning experiences) and postsecondary training options. The PLP will be visited by the student, parent/guardian, teacher and assigned counselor on an annual if not bi-annual (twice a year) basis. (OPS Strategic Plan goals 1.1, 2.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 7.1)

### *Professional Development*

No curricular change is possible without intentional, rigorous and ongoing professional development for faculty. The District and School will need to invest significantly in ongoing training pertaining to, but not limited to: ‘flipped classroom’, project based learning, obtaining professional/terminal degrees, integration of technology and ‘bring your own device’, teacher externships in businesses, teambuilding among Academy Teachers, etc. (OPS Strategic Plan 1.1, 2.2, 2.2, 3.1,3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.3, 6.1, 6.2)

### *Budget*

Through an informal survey, the Partnerships for Innovation, has determined that it does cost more to educate students in a Career Academy environment, than those by traditional instruction. It costs about \$1200 - \$1500 extra to educate a student in a Career Academy system rather than traditional instruction; however the short and long term investment does pay off for the student, district and taxpayer as previously outlined.

Below is an anticipated budget for complete implementation of Career Academies, which will expand to include implementation years (2015 – 2018).

#### **General Career Academy Costs**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Capital Bond Funds</b>	<b>Funds Needed</b>
Leadership Team: Scheduling and Program Management	National Facilitator @ \$10,000 14 Staff		\$40,000 2015/16-2016/17
Leadership Team Development: Career	Visit Nashville Public Schools		\$60,000 Spring 2015 & Fall 2015

academy Program Development and support			Perkins funded
Refurbishment and remodel Career academy Plan Areas/classrooms/labs		The Bond	
Academy Uniforms	Branded Industry Recognized Shirts for each Academy student & 17.50/ 1100 students 2 shirts each		\$38,500 (sponsorship from Advisory Board members)
Staff Academy Uniforms	120 staff shirts 2 shirts each		\$4,200(sponsorship from Advisory Board members)
Academy Advisory Board Meeting Expenses	Breakfast or Lunch items for business partner meetings @\$12/each and recognition items		\$15,000
External Evaluator	To collect and evaluate student success		
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$55,000</b>

#### Budget: Business & Entrepreneurship

Item	Description	Capital Bond Funds	Funds Needed
<b>Professional Development \$34,960.00</b>			
High School of Business	4 Teachers		\$2,000.00 per year ongoing
Academy Thematic & Team Planning	20 hours for 4 teachers @ \$34.50		\$2,760.00 *Perkins funds
Teacher Externships (teachers job shadow in a business + curriculum enhancement)	12 teachers @ \$500/week for 2 weeks		\$24,000 (Chamber and Metro Partnership can pay for this)
<b>Equipment</b>			
Computer Labs	2 Computer Labs @\$30K		\$60,000.00 *Perkins funds already pd.
Visible School Store and Learning Lab		The Bond	
Point of Sale Equipment (inventory equipment)			\$4,750.00
Upfront Merchandise			\$24,000.00

to supply store			
<b>Student Transportation</b>			
Student Work-based Learning Opportunities	Transportation to Mastercraft Building, First National, and other business partners (approx. 300 students, one experience a week for 36 weeks)		\$20,000.00
FTE	1 @ \$62,500.00		\$62,500.00
<b>Total</b>			\$117,250.00

**Budget: Health Professions**

Item	Description	Capital Bond Funds	Funds Needed
<b>Professional Development</b>			
Continuing Education in Health Science Areas	6 Teachers		\$30,000.00
Curriculum Writing	20 hours for 9 teachers @ \$34.50		\$6,210 .00
Teacher Externships (teachers job shadow in a business + curriculum enhancement)	12 teachers @ \$500/week for 2 weeks		\$24,000 (Chamber and Metro Partnership can pay for this)
<b>Equipment</b>			
Experiential Learning Labs	3 @ \$100,000		\$300,000
Resources (disposables i.e. gloves, non-reusable items)			\$100,000
<b>Student Transportation</b>			
Student Work-based Learning Opportunities	Transportation to Nebraska Medicine, CHI (Immanuel) and other business partners (approx. 500 students, one experience a week for 36 weeks)		\$60,000
FTE	2 @ \$62,500.00		\$62,500.00*
<b>Total</b>			\$558,710.00

**Budget: Construction & Design**

Item	Description	Capital Bond Funds	Funds Needed
<b>Professional Development</b>			
CAD Academy (national curriculum)	4 Teachers		\$20,000
Curriculum Writing	20 hours for 9 teachers @ \$34.50		\$6,210.00
Teacher Externships	12 teachers @ \$500/week for 2 weeks		\$24,000.00 (Chamber

(teachers job shadow in a business + curriculum enhancement)			and Metro Partnership can pay for this)
<b>Equipment</b>			
Robotics			\$10,000.00
BEST (Benson Electrical System Technology)	Dependent upon CTE Curriculum Audit		
<b>Student Transportation</b>			
Student Work-based Learning Opportunities	Transportation to IBEW, Millard Lumber, UNO, MCC, and other business partners (approx. 300 students, one experience a week for 36 weeks)		\$40,000.00
FTE	Maintain staffing at current level		
Total			\$76,210.00

**Grand Total: Additional Needed Funds to implement Three Academy Programs: \$807,170.00**

### *Next Steps*

The Benson Taskforce and High School Administration, with approval from the District will move forward with the following next steps:

#### 2014-15 School Year

- High School Administration present to Executive Council and School Board for approval and support
- Seek federal and private funds to support academy programming
- Presentation to building staff on Academy Plan
- High School Administration present to Benson Taskforce as a follow up
- All freshman identify one of three academy programs for 2016-17 school year

#### 2015-16 School Year

- Internal leadership structure shift and school staff reassigned to align with Career Academy Program implementation model (designed after Nashville Career Academy programs)
- Professional development for Career Academy staff and faculty
- Implement nationally recognized High School of Business curriculum

#### 2016-17 School Year

- Reconfigure and remodel Career Academy plan, classroom, and lab spaces
- Implement new scheduling to support Career Academy work-based learning opportunities
- Professional development: National training, teacher externships and instructional strategies

#### 2017-18 School Year

- Wall-to-Wall Career academy programs fully implemented

## *Conclusion*

The Benson community has undergone a transformation and revitalization over the past 10 years. The Benson Taskforce is excited about the future of Benson High School and makes the previously outlined recommendations for approval by the Omaha School District Administration and School Board to mirror the same rejuvenation in one of the most established and endearing high schools in the state. With a commitment from the District, Benson will undoubtedly provide students with rigorous, real-life learning opportunities to prepare them for the next stage in life – whatever path they choose to take, because “There’s no place like Benson”.