

Self-Assessment Guide

for College & Career Academies



College & Career Alliance and Support Network

High school: Make it fair, make it real.

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Self-Assessment Guide for College & Career Academies

Introduction and Purpose

Educators commit to working with College & Career Academies because, when implemented well, the highly effective practices in this model have been proven to significantly improve student success in school, both in terms of academics and in the realm of social-emotional learning. Regular review of the set of practices incorporated into the College & Career Academy model is an essential part of the work of teacher teams and informs action planning and program development.

The primary purpose of this *Self Assessment Guide* is to identify the Academy's relative strengths and weaknesses to initiate a process of reflection and improvement. This process is best done by individual team members and then shared with the entire team, so teachers, administrators, and partners can explore options and define paths toward improvement with each contributor's unique perspective included. Scores that are different can lead to deep conversations about how these different paths towards improvement can be explored and implemented.

The three sections in this *Self Assessment Guide*—Small Learning Communities, Curriculum and Instruction, and Partnerships with Employers, Community, and Higher Education—are from the California Education Code that governs California Partnership Academies.

To calculate a score, check the circle corresponding to the point value for each indicator and add the points. The top score possible is 100. Suppose the Academy is not yet fully implemented. In that case, some of the items will be inapplicable (e.g., post-secondary plan, mentor/internship/community service programs), the scoring can be adjusted accordingly, and action plans can be developed strategically.

College & Career Academy Self-Assessment Guide

There are a total of 25 items in the three sections: "Small Learning Community Structures," "Curriculum and Instruction," and "Partnerships with Employers and Higher Education". Checks can be entered in one of four "level of implementation" circles for each indicator on a continuum from 1= no implementation to 4 = full implementation. Scores should be determined using the criteria in the scoring guide. For example, if none of the requirements listed in the scoring guide have been met, circle 1 should be checked. If all the criteria listed have been met, circle 4 should be checked. A perfect score is 100.

Choices should be based on the knowledge of the Academy teachers and their sense of how fully achieved each aspect of the program is, given what is possible at the high school and how serious any issues are. For example, if there are only 90 students in the Academy across three grade levels, but this is as large as is realistically possible in the high school, this can be considered a 3 or 4. Conversely, if there is an advisory program for 300 students but poorly run, this might receive a 1 or 2.

When completed, this assessment can be used to identify strengths and areas for growth within the Academy and facilitate a discussion among team members to address challenges and fill in knowledge gaps about the program, the requirements, and the structure and design of the Academy.

Part 1: Small Learning Community Structures

Defined mission and goals—

- The Academy has a written definition of its mission and goals available to the administrators, teachers, students, parents, advisory board, and others involved
- These include expected student outcomes, a focus on increasing student achievement, raising student aspirations and motivation, and developing post-secondary plans for education and future careers

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Student recruitment & selection—

- Recruitment events are held no later than the semester before potential students can join the Academy
- At least 50% of students accepted meet the Ed. Code criteria for being deemed "at-risk" students
- Students enter voluntarily based on their interest in the program and obtain parent/guardian approval

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Cohort scheduling—

- Academy students have at least three academic courses in grades 10 & 11 and at least one academic course in grade 12 (in addition to their CTE course)
- Courses contribute to an understanding of the occupational field of the Academy
- Classes in the academy program are limited to academy students only
- Teachers work as a team in planning, teaching, and troubleshooting academy issues

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Grade levels/courses—

- Academies have one Career-Technical or career-themed academic class each year
- A written course sequence across grade levels exists
- Academy students have the same options for non-Academy courses as others at the high school, including access to advanced coursework
- Academy programs are 9th-12th or 10th-12th grades depending on funding source
- Teacher looping where possible

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
 O O O O

Notes: _____

Teacher selection, roles—

- Teachers choose to participate in the Academy
- One teacher (sometimes two) agrees to take the lead, serving as the Academy Coordinator(s): e.g., interacting with administrators and board members, managing the budget, helping to coordinate teacher professional development, and helping to coordinate employer, higher education, and parental involvement
- The Academy team guides teacher replacements
- Most Academy teachers' classes are taught in the program
- The teacher team meets regularly as part of their required common planning period to collaborate on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student support

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Administrative support—

- The district Board of Education is aware of the Academy and its mission and goals and is on public record supporting the program
- The Superintendent publicly endorses the Academy and offers active support
- The high school principal/administrators are knowledgeable of all required Ed. Code components that dictate operational procedures of the program are public advocates of the program
- District and site staff involved in funding, staffing, and support, including release time for the lead teacher to coordinate the program and teacher team collaboration time
- This support results in adequate funding, facilities, equipment, and learning materials

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Counselor and Administration scheduling support—

- All high school counselors can explain cohort scheduling and understand its importance
- Master scheduling is a cooperative effort involving administration, counselors, and Academy teachers
- The master schedule indicates which classes are in the Academy
- All Academy classes include 100% of academy students
- The Academy has a designated counselor when possible

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Governance and leadership—

- The Academy has an Advisory Board with members from the district and high school administration, program teaching staff, and those involved from outside the high school (e.g., supporting employers/industry partners, institutions of higher education)
- The board may also include community representatives, academy parents/guardians, and students
- The board holds meetings at least quarterly, with defined agendas and outcomes, and helps to define policies
- Students have input into these policies

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

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Parent or guardian involvement—

- Parents or guardians learn about the Academy before their students are accepted into the program and approve the student's application and enrollment
- Parents or guardians are involved in appropriate activities (e.g., Advisory Board, instructional support/volunteer aides, field trips, recognition events)
- They meet with the Academy team when needed to resolve issues their student may be experiencing

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Enrichment and personalization—

- The Academy maintains limited size, teacher teamwork, and a supportive atmosphere
- There are no more than 150 students enrolled per grade level
- Where possible, academy classrooms are near each other in the building
- Teacher and peer tutoring are available for students
- Student achievement is recognized publicly at least quarterly through an Academic Rewards celebration
- At least one Academy social event is held per semester
- At least one Academy recognition ceremony is held each school year

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

A cycle of improvement—

- The Academy team regularly assess the Academy's functioning, studying its strengths and areas for improvement
- This assessment involves gathering feedback from key stakeholders, including students
- These reviews lead to plans to address any challenges or issues
- Such plans include timelines and benchmarks for improvement and refer to the Academy's underlying mission and goals

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Part 1 Score: _____ (max—44)

Part 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Standards, assessment—

- The academic curriculum is framed around state and national standards
- Curriculum and instructional materials in career-related classes are based at least partially on an industry source
- 21st-century skills are incorporated and assessed; assessments are multiple and reflect current practices in the career field

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4

Notes: _____

Academic courses—

- Coursework reaches high levels of English, math, science, and social studies
- Graduates are qualified to attend four-year colleges
- Flexibility is provided for students with special needs (e.g., English language learners, special education students)

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4

Notes: _____

Career-technical courses—

- A CTE or career-themed academic course sequence across the years of the Academy exists
- Local employers/industry partners from the career field help to guide the curriculum in these courses
- Students demonstrate knowledge of a vertical range of careers and related educational requirements in the career field
- Where possible, the sequence of CTE courses enables interested students to obtain certification recognized by employers

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4

Notes: _____

Faculty and Staff—

- Teachers are credentialed in their field, volunteer in the Academy, are committed to its mission and goals, and are willing to work in a team and share the extra responsibilities
- These include organizing and attending Advisory Board meetings, helping with student recruitment, organizing parent contacts, participating in parent meetings, and providing student counseling

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4

Notes: _____

Outcome-based curriculum integration—

- Students understand how their academic subjects relate to each other and apply them in the real world
- Students engage in cross-curricular, integrated projects requiring the application of skills and concepts from several courses
- Projects include a senior and capstone project
- Projects are assessed at least in part by adults outside the high school
- Students understand the relationship between their academic subjects and career theme
- Projects are evaluated at least in part by employer/industry partners from the career field

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4

Notes: _____

Teacher coordination of curriculum—

- Academy teachers have regular meeting time, at least weekly
- Meetings occur during a common planning time
- Lead teachers/Program Coordinators have at least one additional release period
- Compensation is offered to other Academy teachers for additional responsibilities
- Teachers can identify at least one project per semester that addresses essential academy outcomes and requires students to integrate curriculum among academic subjects and the career field.
- Teachers incorporate performance assessment tasks for which they utilize common rubrics to assess, monitor, and support every student's progress toward mastery of college and career-ready learning outcomes
- Teachers are provided professional development support for these efforts

Self-Assessment Guide

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Professional development—

- Academy teachers are provided with training in SLC structures, working as a team, outcome-based curriculum development and curricular integration, student support, and cohort scheduling
- The Academy sends a team to the Educating For Careers Conference each year

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Post-secondary plan/links—

- Academy students learn about two- and four-year colleges, and college/career exploration, through speakers, visits, and informational meetings
- They have access to a career library and post-graduate counseling
- They develop a written post-secondary plan by the end of their junior year
- Students have the option of earning some college credit through articulation agreements and dual enrollment offerings

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Student assessment—

- Student data are collected to describe the student body (e.g., grade level, gender, race/ethnicity), as well as multiple outcome measures, including a variety of accepted indicators of performance such as attendance, retention, credits, grade point averages, state test scores, graduation rates, college-going rates
- This data is reported on the CAPAAR annual reporting system
- These measures are reported accurately and fairly and show whether and how much the Academy improves student performance
- Performance assessments utilize common rubrics to assess, monitor and support every student's progress toward mastery of college and career-ready pathway learning outcomes
- Measures include knowledge of the field's terminology, technical concepts and applying English, math, and other academic skills to authentic, real-world projects.
- Where appropriate, industry certification is incorporated

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Part 2 Score: _____ (max--36)

Part 3: Partnerships with Employers and Higher Education

Career field selection—

- The Academy career field is selected with input from local employers
- Several such employers support the Academy as Advisory Board members, speakers, field trip hosts, mentors, and internship providers
- The industry is growing and offers well-paying career options with upward mobility
- Related courses are available in local colleges

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Sophomore business speakers and field trips—

- At least two speakers per semester from the employer and higher education partners describe their courses, requirements, products, services, range of courses, and related training programs
- At least one student field trip per semester takes sophomores to places of employment in the academy career field and local college campuses
- Students have opportunities to job shadow
- These experiences are linked to the curriculum and classroom instruction

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Junior mentor program—

- Juniors have a volunteer employee or college representative who serves as a career-related mentor
- A process is in place that pairs students with well-matched mentors
- An Academy team member coordinates this program
- Mentors receive an orientation, training, and materials for this role
- A series of mentor/student experiences are planned throughout the year
- A process is in place to deal with problems
- Students and mentors complete written evaluations of the experience at the end of the year

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Junior/senior work-based learning program—

- The summer following the junior year or part-time the senior year, students have the option of an internship with a local employer or a community service position
- A process is in place to prepare and match students with appropriate assignments and guide the experience
- In the internship, students are exposed to a variety of positions in the company
- An Academy staff member coordinates this program, checks on students during the experience, and resolves issues
- Students and supervisors complete a written evaluation at the end of the program

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Dual Enrollment/Articulation Options—

- Links are established through dual-enrollment or articulation agreements between the academy and local colleges
- Community colleges allow juniors and seniors to take courses that build on their Academy course sequence and provide credit at both the high school and college levels
- College representatives provide advice for the Academy career-related course sequence to coordinate with their college program
- The college courses may be offered at either the high school or college and taught by teachers from either level
- The cost of these is borne at least in part by the college in exchange for increased enrollment
- Academy and college teachers work together in administering this program, with support from their respective administrations
- Counselors at both levels are informed of these options, and Academy students have the opportunity to enroll in them

Level of Implementation: 1 2 3 4
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Notes: _____

Part 3 Score: _____ (max--20)

Part 1 _____ **/44** **Part 2** _____ **/36** **Part 3** _____ **/20**

Total Academy Score: _____ **/100**

Guiding questions for post-assessment analysis:

Where did the team's answers match? Where did they differ?

What are the key takeaways?

What were some knowledge gaps shared by team members, and how can that information be better shared going forward?

Were there any "ah-ha" moments? If so, what were they, and how can the team build upon them?

Do all teachers understand the academy model and the reasoning behind existing structures?

If not, does the coordinator need to share information with the team?

After completing the self-assessment process, what collective goals does the team have as a team and as an Academy?

What changes need to be made immediately?

What changes or improvements can be phased in?

What other support or information is needed?

Useful Resources/Links

CCASN: <https://casn.berkeley.edu>

CDE: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/>

Ed Code:

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=54692.&nodeTreePath=2.3.5.3.1&lawCode=EDC