

## Career Academies: Preparing New York State Students For Post-Secondary Education and Careers

**The Problem:** Too many high school students leave school unprepared for post-secondary education or the workforce, contributing to the “skills gap” reported by America’s businesses.

- 28 percent of New York State high school students fail to graduate on time.<sup>1</sup>
- Seven in 10 new jobs created in New York between 2008 and 2018 will require some type of formal education beyond high school.<sup>2</sup>
- Only 37 percent of New York public school students graduate “college and career ready.”<sup>3</sup>
- As of 2009, middle-skill jobs made up 46 percent of New York jobs, but only 39 percent of New York workers had the education and training appropriate for these positions.<sup>4</sup>
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) jobs will grow by 10 percent in New York between 2008 and 2018, and 93 percent of STEM jobs will require post-secondary education by 2018.<sup>5</sup>
- Fourteen of the 25 fastest growing occupations in New York require postsecondary education.<sup>6</sup>
- Over half of New York hospitals surveyed reported difficulty recruiting experienced nurses. A shortage of nurses with the right experience was cited as the primary reason for 41 percent of hospitals with recruiting problems.<sup>7</sup>



**The Career Academies Model:** Career Academies integrate career technical training with a rigorous academic curriculum, equipping students with important skills highly valued by employers.

- Also called “smaller learning communities,” an academy:
  - Is comprised of a group of students who take classes together for at least two years and are taught by the same group of teachers;
  - Provides a college preparatory curriculum based on a career theme that helps students see relationships and connections between academic subjects and their application in the real world; and
  - Develops partnerships with employers, the community, and colleges.

- Approximately 4,800 high schools nationwide report having at least one Career Academy, serving an estimated 1 million students, many of whom are at-risk students in large urban areas.
  - There are over 75 Career Academies in New York State according to the National Academies Foundation and the Career Academy Support Network.<sup>8</sup>
- By working in teams and through real work experience, students begin to understand the importance of professionalism, reliability, teamwork, and clear oral communications skills.<sup>9</sup>

## **P**roven and Promising Outcomes:

- A high-quality randomized control study showed that:
  - Career Academies students were twice as likely to be working in the computer, engineering or media technology sector eight years after graduation as students left out, thus helping to increase the supply of needed STEM workers.<sup>10</sup>
  - High-risk Career Academies students were 50 percent more likely to complete a core academic curriculum than similar students left out.<sup>11</sup> Completing a core curriculum may better prepare students for college or the workforce.
  - Academies produced a significant, sustained increase in former participants' earnings and overall months and hours of employment, without any decrease in educational outcomes, especially among young men and youth in the high-risk subgroup. Young people who went through Career Academies worked 12 percent more hours per week and earned 11 percent more than those who did not participate.<sup>12</sup>

**P**olicy Opportunities: With only approximately 5 percent of U.S. public high school students attending a Career Academy, the public and policy-makers must be made aware of their value as a key workforce development strategy.

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6 New York State Department of Labor. (2010) *A closer look at occupational projections, New York State, 2010*. Bureau of Labor Market Information, Division of Research and Statistics. Retrieved February 25, 2011 from <http://www.labor.state.ny.us/stats/PDFs/occupationalprojections.pdf>

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8 Career Academy Support Network. Directory, Academies nationwide. Retrieved April 17, 2012 from <http://casn.berkeley.edu/directories.php?us=1>; National Academies Foundation. Find a Local Academy. Retrieved April 17, 2012 from <http://x.naf.org/map/>

9 Brand, B. (November 2009). *High school career academies: A 40-year proven model for improving college and career readiness*. Commissioned by The National Career Academy Coalition. Retrieved November 29, 2011 from <http://www.aypf.org/documents/092409CareerAcademiesPolicyPaper.pdf>

10 Kemple, J. J., & Willner, C.J. (July 2008). *Technical resources for "Career Academies: Long-term impacts on labor market outcomes, educational attainment, and transitions to adulthood."* MDRC. Retrieved May 10, 2011 from <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/482/techresources.pdf>

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12 Kemple, J.J., & Willner, C.J. (2008). *Career Academies: Long-term impacts on labor market outcomes, educational attainment, and transitions to adulthood*. New York: MDRC.