

Scholars Academy and AAST

Recommendation 1

Scholars Academy

- Beginning the 2020 school year, the Scholars Academy will be a stand-alone school.
- Scholars Academy students who wish to remain enrolled in their base schools will have the option to return to their base schools.

Establishing Scholars Academy as a stand-alone school

Advantages

- The school may be ranked as a school and may be publicly recognized for the students' accomplishments at the state and national levels.
- The school will have the opportunity to build a school community that strengthens relationships between teachers and students and fosters feelings of inclusion, caring, shared purpose, and collective investment.
- Routine and systematic program evaluations, including analysis of data, can be conducted to improve educational programs and services.
- State report card data can be used to reflect accurately the school's progress.
- The issues related to communication between the base high schools and the Scholars Academy will be eliminated.
- Guidance issues between base high schools and Scholars Academy will be eliminated.
- Based on the SC High School League rules, Scholars Academy students may participate in sports at the school in their attendance area.
- Students may also participate in honor societies, clubs, etc., at the base high school if their schools do not offer those clubs. (Participation will be dependent upon transportation and scheduling.)
- Students' eligibility for the Life Scholarship will not be affected.
- Students may have increased options for acceptance to Ivy-League colleges/universities as the school becomes recognized nationally for student achievement.
- Funding for the school will not be impacted unless student enrollment declines.

Disadvantages

- Currently, Scholars Academy students are ranked with their base high schools and may qualify as valedictorian or salutatorian at their respective base high schools. However, with Scholars Academy as a stand-alone school, the Scholars Academy students will not be ranked with base high school students. Consequently, the Scholars Academy will have only one valedictorian and one salutatorian from the Scholars Academy as do other stand-alone schools.
- Based on the State's Palmetto Fellows Scholarship requirements, fewer students may be eligible to be awarded the scholarship based on rank. More students may receive the Life Scholarship instead of the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.
- Scholars Academy student data will not be included with the base high school reports; therefore, there may be a negligible impact on student achievement measures in areas such as average SAT, ACT, AP and scores, as well state report card results.

Recommendation 2

AAST

- Beginning the 2020 school year, AAST will expand the opportunities in CTE and STEM majors program for juniors and seniors. Freshman and sophomore CTE- and STEM-related opportunities will be provided at the base schools.
- The 2019 freshman class that entered AAST STEM will be last class to enter for a four-year program at a single site. These students will continue, if they choose to do so, their course of study at AAST until they graduate.

Establishing AAST as a program school to offer career-and-technology courses and specialized STEM courses for only juniors and seniors, thus removing the freshmen-entry STEM program

Advantages

- The need for offering STEM courses has changed since AAST STEM was established. Students now have the option of taking STEM courses at their base high schools. Students may be able to take specialized STEM courses in the eleventh and twelfth grades that cannot be offered at the base schools.
- All students now have access to STEM at their base schools; therefore, space will be available for more rising eleventh-grade students to take specialized STEM courses at AAST.
- Currently, a limited number of slots are available for rising juniors from the base schools to enter AAST to take CTE major courses their junior and senior years. With the reconfiguration, there will be more slots available for these students.
- With an increase in classroom availability as a result of the reconfiguration, other CTE pathways, including specialized STEM courses, may be added based on student interest and/or industry need.
- Routine and systematic program evaluations, including analysis of data, will be conducted to improve educational programs and services.
- Students will continue to have the option to take AP and dual-enrollment courses.
- Based on the SC High School League rules, students may participate in sports at the school in their attendance area.
- Students may participate in honor societies, clubs, etc., at the base school if their schools do not offer those clubs. (Participation will be dependent upon transportation and scheduling.)
- Students will continue to have the opportunity to complete internships with businesses in the community.