

Scholars Academy and AAST

Policy Reference: *Board Governance, OE-10 Instructional Program*

Background Information:

The following are the chief points of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting August 26, 2019. These points were reported to the Board in the Committee's report on during the Board meeting September 9, 2019.

- The committee reviewed the course offerings and the structures at the program schools to identify the impact of the increase in the number of STEM, AP, dual-enrollment, and career-and-technology courses offered at the base schools.
- Two program schools emerged for further review and discussion: Scholars Academy and AAST STEM.

Scholars Academy

The Scholars Academy was established in 2003 with 25 freshmen the first year. The total enrollment the fourth year was approximately 100 students. Over time, the number of freshmen entering each year increased to 50. The total enrollment currently is approximately 200 students each year.

When this program school was established, the number of AP and dual-enrollment courses offered in the base high schools was limited. However, since 2003, these course offerings at the base schools have greatly increased.

AAST STEM and Majors

AAST STEM was established in 2011 to provide students the opportunity to pursue their interest in STEM for grades 9-12. Career-and-technology courses for majors continued to be offered for juniors and seniors.

In 2011, students had few options for STEM courses at their base high schools. Over the last few years, however, some of the base high schools and middle schools began offering STEM courses.

The large number of applicants for the AAST STEM program each year (approximately 600) highlights the need to provide more options for numerous students to pursue their interest in STEM.

With the implementation of K-12 STEM district-wide this school year, students in all the base high schools, as well as all elementary and middle schools, will have the opportunity to take STEM courses. As the STEM course offerings increase at the base high schools, there will be a need for additional specialized STEM courses that cannot be offered at the base high schools because of enrollment numbers and cost for these courses at each school.

- Taking into consideration course offerings, use of resources, ways to provide more opportunities for students to reach their post-secondary goals, and the needs of the school system as a whole, the committee recommends consideration of the following:
 - Establishing Scholars Academy as a stand-alone school
 - 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

Recommendation:

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.

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 high schools.

The 2019 freshman class that entered AAST STEM will be last class to enter for a four-year program at this site. These students will continue, if they choose to do so, their course of study at AAST until they graduate.

Purpose: To provide more opportunities for students to reach their post-secondary goals

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Estimated Project Cost: NA

Recurring ____ Non-recurring ____