



## Communicating With Parents

*What do parents want to know about NAF academies?*

### General Questions

*Q: What is NAF?*

- A. NAF is a national network of career-themed academies typically located within public high schools. They are designed as small learning communities within these schools, which helps to facilitate a personalized environment. NAF academies offer high school students a unique opportunity to explore potential careers. Students get to meet business professionals and participate in activities that reflect the business world and enhance the academy's traditional and career-focused curriculum. Through this experience, NAF academy graduates are better prepared for college, career, and future success.

*Q: What does it mean to be part of a NAF academy?*

- A. When a student joins a NAF academy, they become part of a network of nearly 90,000 students across the country taking part in an educational experience designed with future workforce needs in mind. NAF students have the opportunity to learn about possible career paths available to them and begin to build the skills needed to succeed while still in high school. NAF academies operate as small learning communities, which allows for more personalization and advisory board members are dedicated to supporting the academy and organizing activities to prepare students for college and career. NAF students also have a network of students and alumni available to them.

*Q: What makes NAF different than programs my local high school offers?*

- A. The NAF educational design fits within your school's traditional educational experience. It's not just one experience or one course. Students in NAF academies participate in career-focused courses and work-based learning activities that reflect the business world throughout their high school years, with schoolwork and activities becoming increasingly more focused and practical as students approach graduation. Through this continuous learning process, students are inspired to attend college with a career path in mind and have a better idea of how their educational experience will prepare them for their future careers.

*Q: How can I get involved in supporting my child's NAF academy?*

- A. All NAF academies have advisory boards made up of local business people and community members. Joining the advisory board would allow you to play an active role in shaping your child's educational experience. Advisory board members advise the curriculum, projects, fundraising efforts, and organize work-based learning activities for students.

## **Curriculum Questions**

*Q: How is the theme selected?*

- A. NAF's themes are focused on viable industries in which job growth projections are high. Academies select their theme based on the needs, support, and opportunities in their local community.

*Q: What kind of coursework is taught in NAF academies?*

- A. The NAF curricula is created in partnership with industry professionals and designed around projects that help students make connections across subject areas, acquire valuable workplace skills, and view their education as a step toward long-term career options. Projects have real-world application as they are resemble work environment projects.

*Q: Does participating in the NAF academy interfere with regular academic requirements?*

- A. No, typically NAF courses take the place of elective courses. NAF promotes cross-curricular integration, so NAF courses actually enrich regular requirements with real-world application.

*Q: Is NAF an extracurricular activity?*

- A. NAF is not an extracurricular activity. NAF is embedded into your child's daily school routine. Your child will continue to take traditional courses alongside NAF's career-focused elective courses. Your child will participate in work-based learning activities both inside and outside of the classroom during the school day.

*Q: Can my child still participate in extracurricular activities and sports?*

- A. Yes, NAF does not interfere with extracurricular activities and sports.

*Q: Will my child still have time to participate in extracurricular activities or will the time requirements/rigor of the NAF academy prohibit my child from doing so?*

- A. Every child is different. It is up to the parent to help their child prioritize and manage their time should they feel like they are taking on too much.

*Q: Does NAF force a student to choose a career or college major before graduating?*

- A. No. NAF helps guide students to make informed decisions about their future career and college studies. Oftentimes students even learn what they don't want to do. The NAF experience can provide a student with the needed inspiration and it can help a student eliminate options that he or she is not interested in.

*Q: Will work-based learning activities take away from my child's academic experience?*

- A. No. Work-based learning activities actually enrich a child's academic experience. Most activities happen during the school day and provide students with a realistic application of lessons learned through their coursework.

## **Logistics Questions**

*Q: What does it cost to join a NAF academy?*

- A. There is no cost to join a NAF academy. NAF is included as an option in your school/district. The school/district pays a nominal membership fee to NAF.

*Q: How does my child get enrolled in the academy?*

- A. If your child is interested in joining a NAF academy, contact your school. The enrollment process is different at every school. It is likely that a career and technical education director or a guidance counselor can help you enroll.

*Q: Are there special requirements for joining the academy?*

- A. There are no special requirements for joining a NAF academy other than having an interest to do so. NAF promotes open enrollment for its academies.

*Q: NAF is not at the schools in my area, how can I change that?*

- A. If there aren't any NAF academies in your district, contact your district and encourage them to consider applying. If you have a contact with your district that you think would be open to learning about NAF and you'd like a representative from NAF to speak to them, contact us through [naf.org/contact](http://naf.org/contact).

## **Outcomes and Benefits Questions**

*Q: What opportunities are available to students in a NAF academy?*

- A. Through NAF, students are eligible for scholarships and become part of a network of nearly 90,000 students across the country experiencing that same relevant and engaging educational experience that they are receiving. In addition, NAF students who graduate with NAFTrack Certification benefit from NAFTrack Certified Hiring, a promise from some of the nation's top companies to give special consideration to NAFTrack Certified applicants for job opportunities.

*Q: What's the benefit of being in a NAF academy? What do NAF academy students get that non-NAF students don't get?*

- A. Through NAF, students have many unique opportunities beyond what a typical high school student may have. Students participate in a series of work-based learning activities that give them access to expertise from business professionals, exposure to work environments, and opportunities to hone their professional skills. NAF students also participate in paid internships that help build their resume, provide opportunities for networking, and build their future ready skills. In the classroom, students participate in career-focused courses and complete projects that are relative to the working world. In addition, NAF students who graduate with NAFTrack Certification benefit from NAFTrack

Certified Hiring, a promise from some of the nation's top companies to give special consideration to NAFTrack Certified applicants for job opportunities.

*Q: Is there evidence that participating in a NAF academy has positive results for students?*

- A. Yes. The national senior graduation rate is 98%, with 92% college-bound. We can provide countless individual stories of success.

*Q: How will participating in a NAF academy prepare my child for success in a career?*

- A. NAF academies expose children to career options while they are still in high school through career-focused curriculum, work-based learning activities, and connections with business professionals. Students learn about career pathways through activities like career fairs, mock interviews, and job shadows and begin to prepare for careers by building the skills needed to succeed. They also gain knowledge in what higher educational opportunities would align with their career goals.

*Q: Will being in a NAF academy help my child get into college?*

- A. Yes. From being able to list specific career courses that may align with college majors, to including work-based learning experiences and internships, to earning college credits while still in high school, your child's resume and college applications will stand out from the rest.

*Q: In addition to getting into college, also having the support system to help my child figure out how to apply, what to write for essays, etc.*

- A. NAF is all about college, career, and future readiness, no matter the path your child chooses. Many NAF academies provide assistance with college applications, the FAFSA, and choosing the right college. NAF students participate in college level work, and many NAF academies have relationships with higher education institutions that help to facilitate college tours.

*Q: Will being in a NAF academy help my child get scholarships?*

- A. Being in a NAF academy may help your child obtain scholarships. NAF offers several scholarships to NAF seniors each year, and many scholarship opportunities aligned with NAF's career themes exist. NAF students have stronger resumes rich with career focused courses and work-based learning experiences that stand out when they apply for scholarships.

*Q: What are the long-term benefits for my child?*

- B. NAF alumni often earn more in their careers and have better ties to their communities than their peers. In addition, NAF students who graduate with NAFTrack Certification benefit from NAFTrack Certified Hiring, a promise from some of the nation's top companies to give special consideration to NAFTrack Certified applicants for job opportunities.