

Academy Application Guide

2010-2011



The National Academy Foundation (NAF) has been working with high schools in the development of career-themed academies for more than 25 years. The mission of NAF is to prepare young people for college and career success using its proven educational model. Career academies increase the engagement of high school students and provide a vehicle by which stakeholders beyond the walls of the school contribute to the educational experiences of youth.

The NAF academy development process is a collaborative effort of schools, business and community partners that empowers all youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to access a world of opportunities. Business and community partnerships provide a vital connection between classroom learning and real-world applications, bringing business people into the classroom and students into the workplace. A core element of the NAF model is students' participation in paid internships where they learn valuable skills and build lifelong relationships with colleagues and mentors.

The information in this guide is intended to assist interested school-district administrators and community partners in deciding whether a NAF academy is an appropriate fit for their community, and to guide them in preparing the required written proposal for the establishment of a local Academy of Engineering, Finance, Hospitality & Tourism, or Information Technology.

Note: There is a separate RFP process for the Academy of Engineering, as this academy is supported through a partnership with Project Lead the Way, National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, and NAF.

Organization of This Guide

This guide is designed to provide school and district teams with a set of steps to facilitate the decision-making process in order to answer (1) whether to pursue reform at this time, (2) whether the career academy approach is the most appropriate to pursue, and (3) whether to work with NAF in this effort.

To assist in this process, this guide includes the following sections:

Stage 1: Studying and Orientation leads planning teams through the early process of deciding whether to pursue reform and whether the NAF approach is appropriate. This section includes background information and research findings on career academies and on NAF.

Stage 2: Relationship and Trust Building provides tools to lead teams through the all-important process of team building, and provides a list of key stakeholders who must be involved for career academy planning to be successful. This section also provides guidelines for how to move forward with the creation of a NAF-supported career academy.

Stage 3: Staging and Goal Clarification describes the Year of Planning (YOP)[™] proposal, which needs to be submitted to NAF in order for teams to be selected for the Year of Planning[™]. This section also provides an overview of NAF curriculum.

Stage 4: Commitment and Design provides teams with the necessary financial, emotional and systems processes and tools to commit to the career academy approach. It also provides templates, best practices, skills and support to move into the YOP implementation phase.

Overview of Next Steps: Provides a summary of the NAF YOP process and a brief description of the responsibilities and benefits related to full career academy membership. In working with this guide, some teams may decide that the time is not yet right to reform their schools. Others may decide that, while reform is necessary and timely, non-NAF approaches are a better fit. For those who do decide to seek a partnership with NAF, this guide will help in developing a proposal to participate in the 2011-2012 NAF YOP cohort in order to launch a career academy in Fall 2012.

All Year of Planning[™] Proposals and Academy of Engineering RFPs are due no later than January 7, 2011.

Stage I: Studying and Orientation

General Overview

During this stage, groups conduct preliminary research and decide whether to create a new career academy. At the end of this stage, teams need to come to a consensus about whether to pursue reform and/or career academy implementation at this time, and whether to do so in partnership with NAF.

For teams that intend to go forward with developing a NAF-affiliated career academy, completion of this stage is evidenced by the development of a local concept paper among relevant stakeholders, expressing a shared commitment to reform, and the intent to develop a YOP proposal for NAF.

What is a Career Academy?

Career academies focus on preparing students for post-secondary education while providing them with the skills and experience necessary to attain entry-level jobs. Students in a career academy take a mixture of career and academic classes, typically in an industry theme. These courses are linked to academic and industry standards and encourage high achievement.

Career and academic courses meet many entrance requirements for four-year colleges and universities, and through national and local articulation agreements and dual enrollment, graduates are often able to earn advanced standing for their career academy coursework. The career classes develop knowledge in a given field. They are designed to expose students to the full range of careers in that field, and to show students how their subjects relate to each other and the career field.

Special projects require students to bring together academic skills across their subjects and apply these to work settings outside the school. Many career academies develop relationships with local higher education institutions toward the development of college opportunities for students. High school students may take a college course during their senior year at a post-secondary institution, or at the high school with a teacher accredited by the university. Academy students typically have more exposure to college and career counseling, forming a post-graduate plan, which may include college, a mixture of work and college, or full-time work.

What is the NAF Process?

The NAF career academy process features all of the essential components of career academies as defined by the *Career Academy National Standards of Practice*, with several distinguishing features, including support for:

1. **Integrated Teaching & Learning**—NAF provides career-themed curriculum that is designed, reviewed, and updated regularly by a team of educators and industry experts. NAF's curriculum addresses academic standards and is organized around project-based learning relevant to student interests and aspirations.
2. **Advisory Board Development**—NAF career academies engage members of the local community to form Advisory Boards, which commit community resources and establish partnerships for the career academy. Advisory Boards organize and build community capacity to support the career academy's work, hold school and district leaders accountable for communicating data on youth outcomes, and communicate data on community needs and concerns to career academy leaders.
3. **Paid Student Internships**—NAF internships provide the context in which a student's classroom learning is applied. It is an extension of career academy classroom instruction and curriculum, further developed and challenged in a business environment. Internships are supervised by business leaders in a real-world setting, resulting in a broad, relevant, enriching educational experience for the student. To ensure that all students' paid internships live up to expectations, career academy stakeholders must actively support all phases of the internship experience, from preparation and planning through post-internship follow-up as defined by NAF's Gold Standards for High School Internships.
4. A **Professional Learning Plan** for member career academies in the NAF network ensures that all stakeholders have regular opportunities to share and enhance their career academy-related skills and competencies through NAF conferences, technical assistance materials, and other local activities.

What are the Academy Development Process and the Year of Planning™?

The Academy Development Model (See Appendix I) is designed to provide an overview of NAF's process, from the time that local stakeholders begin to think about implementing a career academy, through planning, implementation, launch, and sustainability. The model also provides Academy Design Teams with an outline of what to do at each stage.

The stages of the Academy Development Model relate to successive phases of the career academy planning, development, and growth process.

Stages 1–3 represent the planning process prior to submitting a proposal for teams considering whether to pursue a career academy affiliated with NAF. This is fully described in this guide.

Stage 4 represents the commitment phase, when NAF and local partners mutually agree to enter into a Year of Planning™. This culminates in a signed Year of Planning™ Agreement between the district and NAF.

Stage 5 represents the Year of Planning™. NAF's YOP Guidebook helps guide Academy Design Teams through the process of developing their career academy by identifying the decisions and outcomes they need to address during the year. Academy Design Teams, working within their own YOP small-learning community, provide evidence and documentation of these decisions and outcomes through the creation of YOP Portfolios.

Stages 6–7 represent the continued process of development and growth for career academies that have graduated from the Year of Planning™ and launched their career academies. During these stages, Academy Design Teams continue to work with NAF through regional meetings, national conferences, and ongoing technical assistance.

The Academy Development Model (See Appendix I) depicts a dynamic process. Once schools have completed the Year of Planning™, they may find themselves going back and forth among stages and having to address questions shown in earlier phases of development. This is a normal process and may come to pass when there are leadership and/or staffing changes in an academy or school.

Planning Actions to Consider

Step 1: Assess the school and district needs and whether they are ready for reform.

Step 2: Decide whether a career academy is an appropriate vehicle for reform.

Step 3: Decide whether NAF is an appropriate partner to pursue.

Team members articulate their commitment to moving forward through the creation of a Local Concept Paper.

Questions to Consider

- What is school reform?
- What is a career academy?
- Are there district reform efforts/policies currently in place to support school reform?
- Can our school benefit from a career academy? If so, how?
- What technical-assistance provider/process would best suit the needs of the school? Of the students?
- What types of outcomes are we expecting to see in our students?
- What stakeholders should be involved in the planning process?
- Which business and community partners would be approachable?
- What are the responsibilities of Academy Design Team members?
- What is the time commitment expected of Academy Design Team members?

Resources at www.naf.org

- Background and information on career academies
- Career academy partnership information
- Career academy research findings
- Overviews of leading reform principles and organizations
- Background and information on NAF
- NAF Academy Development Model
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- Advisory Board Development Storymap

General Overview

During this stage, individuals or groups gather support from stakeholders, build relationships, and form an Academy Design Team. Completion of this stage is evidenced by a decision on whether to continue to pursue a partnership with NAF in developing a career academy. For teams that decide to go forward with NAF, this stage culminates with the submission of a Letter of Intent to NAF, in which the Academy Design Team expresses its intent to send a Year of Planning™ proposal to NAF for consideration to become a member of the next Year of Planning™ learning cohort.

Planning Actions to Consider

Step 1: Conduct an inventory of the Academy Design Team:

- (a) which stakeholder groups are represented and
- (b) who do we need?

Successful academy planning must be undertaken by a group of stakeholders from a number of constituencies. Necessary team members must include:

District Administration—At least one key member of the district staff must be part of the design team and process. Without district participation, the team will not be empowered to consider a number of decisions in such areas as budgeting, scheduling, and staffing.

School Administration—The Principal is the key decision maker in the school, and his/her participation on the design team is critical. Because the Principal may not be able to make all meetings, at least one Assistant Principal should participate as well.

Teachers from at Least Two Academic Disciplines—It is important to have collaboration across traditional academic departments to allow for the development of interdisciplinary instructional strategies and to enhance student learning. Ideally the team should be comprised of teachers representing a wide spectrum of subject areas, but at a minimum, two academic disciplines should be represented. At least one member of the design team should represent the local teacher's union and there should be a representative of the guidance department.

Students and/or Alumni—Current and former students are perhaps the most aware of the needs of the school and what initiatives will attract their peers. Including student representatives on the design team ensures the ultimate end-result: confident, successful students—the primary focus throughout the planning process.

Business and Community Partners—Successful career academies benefit from a range of partners from the community, including small and large businesses, post-secondary institutions, chambers of commerce or workforce-development organizations, not-for-profits, and community-based organizations. Consideration should be given to business and community partners that have a track record of supporting the school and are proven advocates for education.

Other individuals who can lend their interest or expertise to the Academy Design Team include state educational officials, parents, and non-pedagogical school staff.

Stage 2: Relationship And Trust Building

Step 2: Recruit new Academy Design Team members, as needed, and conduct team-building activities. In many cases, the idea of implementing a career academy starts with one or two individuals, who then seek participation from others. The process of recruiting new team members involves sharing the purpose or vision, allowing prospective members to sit in on early meetings, and the delegation of roles and responsibilities.

Over time, as the team comes together, it is essential that members gain a sense of mutual trust and reliability. Team members need to know that they can count on each other, and that the team operates in an atmosphere of openness, in which all contributions are valued, creative ideas are encouraged, and judgment is suspended.

Step 3: Reach consensus on whether to continue pursuing partnership with NAF and, if appropriate, submit a Letter of Intent. (Guidelines for the Letter of Intent can be found at www.naf.org.)

Resources Available at www.naf.org

- Academy Design Team Checklist
- Letter of Intent Guidelines
- Contact Information Form

Questions to Consider

- Do we have sufficient stakeholder representation on our Academy Design Team?
- Do our team members share a mutual sense of commitment to the planning effort and to the roles and contributions of the others?
- Are team members' relationships characterized by honesty and forthrightness? Can issues and challenges, as well as successes, be dealt with openly?
- Can team members rely on each other and honor the specific commitments they have made?
- Have team members reached consensus to further pursue the development of a career academy within their school/district and submit a Letter of Intent to NAF?
- Has the team reached a consensus not to continue pursuing partnership with NAF?

Stage 3: Staging and Goal Clarification

General Overview

During this stage, the Academy Design Team lays the foundation for the new career academy by creating a clear vision and focus. Completion of this stage is evidenced by a decision on whether to continue in the process and submit a proposal to NAF for developing a career academy. For teams that decide to go forward with NAF, completion of this stage is evidenced by the submission of a complete Year of Planning™ Proposal for NAF.

Planning Actions to Consider

Step 1: Finalize the selection of a career academy theme.

NAF supports four career academy themes: **Engineering, Finance, Hospitality & Tourism, and Information Technology,**

Schools with career academies in these career areas have access to NAF's industry-validated curriculum, and receive staff development from industry experts and experienced educators. Academy teachers as well as local business and community partners contribute to NAF's development and revision of existing curriculum. NAF also supports career academies in these themes by helping provide connections with national and local companies in these fields. A program considering starting a career academy may not know which theme to implement.

The Year of Planning™ program is the ideal course for schools to take in order to receive technical assistance in developing consensus among all career academy partners, including students, as to which theme to implement. Those schools that eventually choose themes supported by NAF will become NAF Member programs upon successful completion of the Year of Planning™ program.

Step 2: Review curriculum guidelines.

Academy Curriculum Guidelines for all themes can be found at www.naf.org.

Step 3: Prepare to develop and complete the Year of Planning proposal.

Questions to Consider

- Are there specific, agreed-upon, written goals on what the team seeks to achieve in its planning?
- Have team members openly discussed their assumptions and expectations of the process and its outcomes?
- Are team members able to share and clearly articulate the career academy vision?
- If the team has decided to submit a Year of Planning™ proposal to NAF, are the goals, assumptions, and vision clearly understood by all?

Stage 4: Commitment and Design

General Overview

Having moved through the previous stages, it is now time for the Academy Design Team to decide whether it wishes to apply for participation in NAF's Year of Planning™. If the team decides to do so, it needs to submit a proposal that follows the guidelines below and answers the questions outlined.

Commitment

Before finalizing their decision, the Design Team must also consider the level of commitment that will be expected to participate in the YOP. One important consideration will be the cost of participation. The following costs should be anticipated:

- **YOP™ Service Fee - \$6,000 (required)**
- **Cost for a team of at least two to attend two Institutes for Staff Development** (one in 2011 and a second in 2012). Costs for attendance will include registration fees, travel-related costs, ground transportation, lodging, and meals. You may pay your own expenses to each Institute or elect to take advantage of a prepayment option.

Prepayment for a team of two (2) is available through an advance payment of \$6,000 (in addition to the \$6,000 Service Fee), and includes registration for two, ½ a hotel room for four nights for each, and round-trip airfare but does not include ground transportation and meals.

Prepayment for a team of four (4) is available through an advance payment of \$13,800 (in addition to the \$6,000 Service Fee), and covers the same items listed under the prepayment for two.

*Additional costs may be incurred for sending team members to the NAF Leadership Summit (usually held in conjunction with the NAF Summer Institute for Staff Development in July). This conference is **OPTIONAL** for YOPs.

Another important consideration will be the commitment to implement the NAF model and use the NAF curriculum.

Performance Measurement and Evaluation

Data collection, review and follow-up actions are essential to NAF academy model implementation. NAF has developed a partnership with ConnectEDU to ensure that the data needed to track program quality and student success are collected and reported on to Academies routine basis. Our partnership with ConnectEDU will enable NAF to follow students into college to track their higher education experience.

Since NAF and our partner organizations require that various data are collected throughout the year to track and report program quality and student academic standing, we have determined that our partnership with ConnectEDU will enable data collection throughout the year without contacting the academy for each request. The data results will be reported to the academy for the purpose of making program improvements and assessing fidelity to the academy model as well as comparing the academy to others in the cohort.

A sample of student level data NAF collects is as follows:

- demographics including gender, race/ethnicity,
- at-risk factors including FRL, overage and under credited, 8th grade data
- test scores for Algebra and ELA, and PLTW courses
- retention rates of students within the academy
- credit accumulation at each grade level
- SAT/ACT scores

- Graduation rates of the academy by cohort.
- College application and college acceptance
- NAF will administer a perception survey to students
- 1. NAF will be collecting alumni data and your academy will be expected to provide information about academy graduates. ConnectEDU has an alumni tracking system that can support this requirement.
- 2. NAF and our partner organizations reserve the right to share FERPA compliant data with funders, corporate partners, and other school communities.

Planning Actions to Consider

Step 1: Develop and complete the Year of Planning™ Proposal.

Before beginning the proposal-development process, make sure that you have sent NAF your Letter of Intent to apply for consideration as a Year of Planning™ site.

Step 2: Year of Planning™ Proposal requirements.

A completed Year of Planning™ Proposal must include all of the following elements:

Year of Planning Application guidelines

Title page

- Name of school and district where the career academy will be implemented (the same information as provided in the Letter of Intent)
- Name of Academy Director
- Primary phone number and email address for Academy Director
- List of any weekday dates between February 10 and March 31 that are not available for a NAF team visit to your school should we need to do so.

1. **Background information on the school and district (up to 3 pages). (20 points)**
At the minimum, this should include:
 - Demographic statistics and overview of the **community**
 - Profile of the **district** (population, ethnic representation, academic performance, graduation rate, dropout rate)
 - Profile of the **school** (population, ethnic representation, academic performance, graduation rate, dropout rate)
2. **Why Pursue an Academy? (10 points)**
 - Response builds a compelling case for addressing student achievement through full-scale school redesign using the NAF model
 - Response links this initiative to several of the following issues: rigor, relevance, relationships, contextual learning, college and career readiness
3. **Who is On the Planning Team? (15 points)**
 - Team includes all core members, plus District Administration, School Administration, Instructors, Business Partners, Community Partners, Parents/Students/Alumni
 - Names, roles, and expectations are provided and offer insight into the functionality of the group
4. **What is the Vision For the Academy? (30 points)**
 - Response explicitly shows how the program’s vision aligns closely with NAF’s model and core principles and beliefs
 - Response convincingly shows how this work will align with and assist with broader school initiatives
 - Response provides a thoughtful, detailed plan that is likely to result in an equitable student population
5. **How Committed to and Ready For Planning Is the Team? (20 points)**
 - Commitment and readiness are ensured by pieces that are already in place including all of the following:
 - *Resources, funding, agreements in place*
 - *Specific roles assigned*
 - *Planning Time Available*
 - *Experience learned from previous efforts*
 - *Other evidence*
6. **Letters of Support (5 points)**
 - Proposal contains 4 or more letters of support
 - Letters indicate a strong willingness to support program and participate in planning activities

In addition to answering the specific requests outlined in the Year of Planning™ proposal guidelines, teams should consider what assistance they will need. This section should outline your requests for technical assistance.

Schools should be honest in their assessment of need and specific in their requests for assistance. Although many teams bring a rich background of experience to the table, it is expected that technical assistance will be required to develop a successful career academy. Some areas to consider are staff development, internships, forming partnerships, and curriculum development and integration.

Overview of Next Steps

Year of Planning™ Site Selection

All Year of Planning™ proposals will be rigorously scrutinized by NAF and its external consultants. There will be at least two readers for each proposal, and when the two readers cannot come to a consensus, a third reader will be added. All teams submitting proposals will be notified of NAF's decision in early February 2011.

Conditional Approval

Those proposals that are approved will be granted conditional acceptance to the NAF Network. Although this is the first step in acceptance to the NAF Network, it is conditional and may be dependent upon fulfilling the following requirements before the Annual Institute for Staff Development in July 2011:

- **Schedule a Site Visit**—If necessary, your Regional Director will contact you to schedule a NAF conference call, webinar, or school site and Readiness Assessment visit with your entire Academy Design Team (director, principal, teachers, district staff, business partners) and to orient you to the upcoming Year of Planning™ and finalize commitment to the YOP process. You must provide NAF with a list of unavailable dates for a conference call or readiness assessment visit.
- **YOP Services Agreement & Payment**—The YOP Services Agreement defines the sponsorship levels and fee structure, expectations, and benefits of the YOP process. Your team must decide which level of sponsorship will meet your needs throughout the YOP process. This agreement and an invoice will be sent under separate cover. ***Upon payment of the YOP fee, additional materials will be released to the school, including curriculum access.***
- **Attend the 2010 Institute for Staff Development** (San Francisco, CA)—Each Year of Planning™ site **MUST** be represented with at least two attendees. We strongly encourage entire team attendance (director, teachers, principal, district staff and business partners). Registration information will be forwarded under separate cover and can also be found on the NAF web site at www.naf.org.

Each school accepted as a YOP site will receive a YOP Guidebook, which provides detailed outlines of YOP startup activities, as well as a set of deliverables and accompanying tools and strategies for Academy Design Teams. Technical assistance, through NAF professional-development conferences, web conferences, and ongoing consultation with NAF Regional Directors, will help Academy Design Teams with this process.

Upon acceptance as YOP sites, schools will be entitled to technical assistance, staff-development activities, NAF-specific tools and resources, and use of NAF's curriculum and other benefits associated with network membership.

Upon successful completion of the Year of Planning program, the school's academy will be granted full membership status and be fully prepared to launch and operate itself successfully.

The Academy Development process is a synergistic effort. Each school and district not only works with NAF to develop its yearlong plan, but also collaborates with other schools in the NAF Network to share their experiences and support each other. Schools establish lasting relationships during the startup year that will benefit their career academies in the years ahead.

More Information

Any questions about this process should be directed to:
The National Academy Foundation/Attn: Academy Proposal
National Academy Foundation
218 West 40th Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10018
proposal@naf.org
(212) 635-2400

Calendar for the Approval & Commitment Process

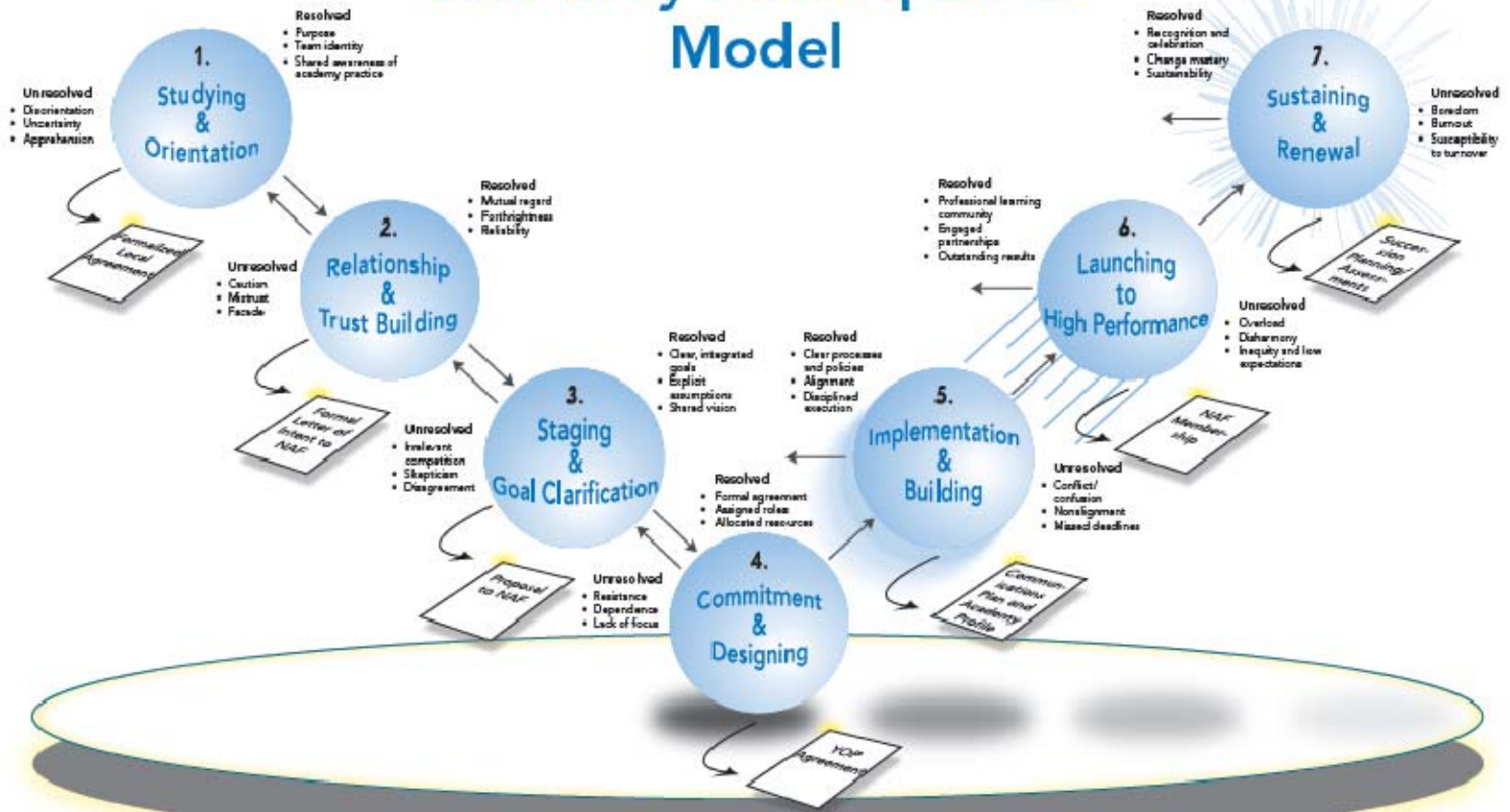
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|-----------------------------|---|
| December 10, 2010 | <input type="checkbox"/> Letters of Intent due |
| January 7, 2011 | <input type="checkbox"/> Deadline for submitting Year of Planning™ proposal, Letters of Support, and potential site visitation dates |
| February, 2011 | <input type="checkbox"/> NAF selection committee screens proposals; YOP sites conditionally approved and conference calls, webinars, or visitations scheduled |
| February-March, 2011 | <input type="checkbox"/> Conference calls/webinars held or YOP sites visited to confirm understanding, commitment, and capacity, and conduct orientation to NAF YOP Process |
| April 1, 2011 | <input type="checkbox"/> Deadline for schools to send acceptance letter and pre-payment option form |
| May 15, 2011 | <input type="checkbox"/> Deadline for accepted YOP sites to complete, sign, and return the Year of Planning™ Service Agreement |
| June 1, 2011 | <input type="checkbox"/> YOP Service Fee due to NAF

<input type="checkbox"/> Directors complete input of all Academy Design Team members into NAF Data Center

NAF definition of Academy Design Team: Interdisciplinary team of teachers; guidance counselors, administrators, business partners, community partners, parents, and students |
| June 15, 2011 | <input type="checkbox"/> Deadline for YOP teams to complete registration for NAF's Annual Institute for Staff Development and YOP Summer Work Session or make substitutions or cancellations (a cancellation fee per registration will apply). |

APPENDIX I

Academy Development Model



1. Studying and Orientation
Initial phase where individuals or groups decide to create a new Academy and conduct preliminary research.

2. Relationship and Trust Building
Individuals or groups gather support, build relationships, and form a planning team.

3. Staging and Goal Clarification
The planning team lays the foundation for the new Academy by creating a clear vision and focus.

4. Commitment and Designing
The planning team commits to partnership with NAF, and conducts an initial needs analysis to gauge readiness for planning.

5. Implementation and Building
During the Year of Planning, the Academy planning team articulates the Academy's policies, structures, partnership priorities, and instructional strategies, and builds operational infrastructure populated with staff and students.

6. Launching to High Performance
The Academy opens and begins to develop student, staff, and partner culture.

7. Sustaining and Renewal
The Academy is supported to continuously improve and help students succeed.

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