



National Academy Foundation

EARN, ACHIEVE, SUCCEED.





**THINK KIDS SHOULD STAY IN SCHOOL?
MAKE IT WORTH THEIR WHILE.**

Give them a reason to show up, study, excel, and graduate.

Put opportunity in their path—exposure to careers, workplace experience, mentoring—and they will seek higher education and a professional career.

Make college an accessible goal. Invest in a high school student’s skills, knowledge of viable career paths, and access to a network of professional, educational, and emotional support.

Make college more financially realistic. Invest in a student’s earning potential now. Many NAF graduates need to support themselves while they pursue post-secondary education. Their career-focused courses and internships allow them to earn higher rates of pay as part-time, professional employees and to gain meaningful experience while still in school.

For 30 years, NAF has refined its educational model and brought about lasting reforms, improving the way public high school students learn, the way teachers teach, the way school districts operate, and the way businesses contribute to the future, professional workforce of this country.

Become an integral part of the nationwide movement to transform public education. Get involved in the National Academy Foundation.

500 ACADEMIES make up the National Academy Foundation.

NAF academies operate in more than **200 SCHOOL DISTRICTS**, including 21 of the 25 largest districts in the U.S.

NAF academies reach **50,000** of our nation’s young people each year.

NAF academies are located in **40** states, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

More than **4,000** professionals are involved with local academies through advisory boards, work-based learning experiences, and other volunteer opportunities.

In 2011, NAF analyzed data from 247,619 high school students. Of whom, 7,811 were enrolled in NAF academies. This sample showed that:

- NAF academies enroll a greater proportion of students eligible for free and reduced lunch than their respective districts (**59% vs. 53%**).
- NAF academies enroll a greater proportion of Black and Hispanic students than their respective districts (**83% vs. 78%**).
- Nearly half of the academy population (**49%**) consists of English language learners, compared to only a quarter (**26%**) of the students in their school districts.



NAF academies function as dynamic partnerships between schools, teachers, administrators, volunteers, and an active advisory board led by industry professionals.

In addition to core academic instruction in math, science, history, language, and arts, NAF students enroll in career- and industry-specific electives and take advantage of workplace experiences, including job shadowing and internships.

Each of the 500 academies within the National Academy Foundation reflects the strengths and interests of local industries, and draws on specific resources offered by the community. This allows NAF academies to offer distinct, relevant career-themed education that provides maximum benefit to students and business partners alike.

Schools cater to a mostly urban and minority student population who choose a NAF academy so they can:

- learn in small groups with others who are on a similar professional track;
- form collaborative and respectful relationships with their teachers;
- connect with a network of local businesses and employers;
- apply new skills and develop earning potential while still in high school.

In addition to serving those who are already positioned to do well academically, NAF academies prompt academic excellence and achievement among students dealing with a number of risk factors.

More than half of the students who attend a NAF academy qualify for free and reduced lunch. In areas where most NAF academies are located, only 50 percent of high school students graduate each year.

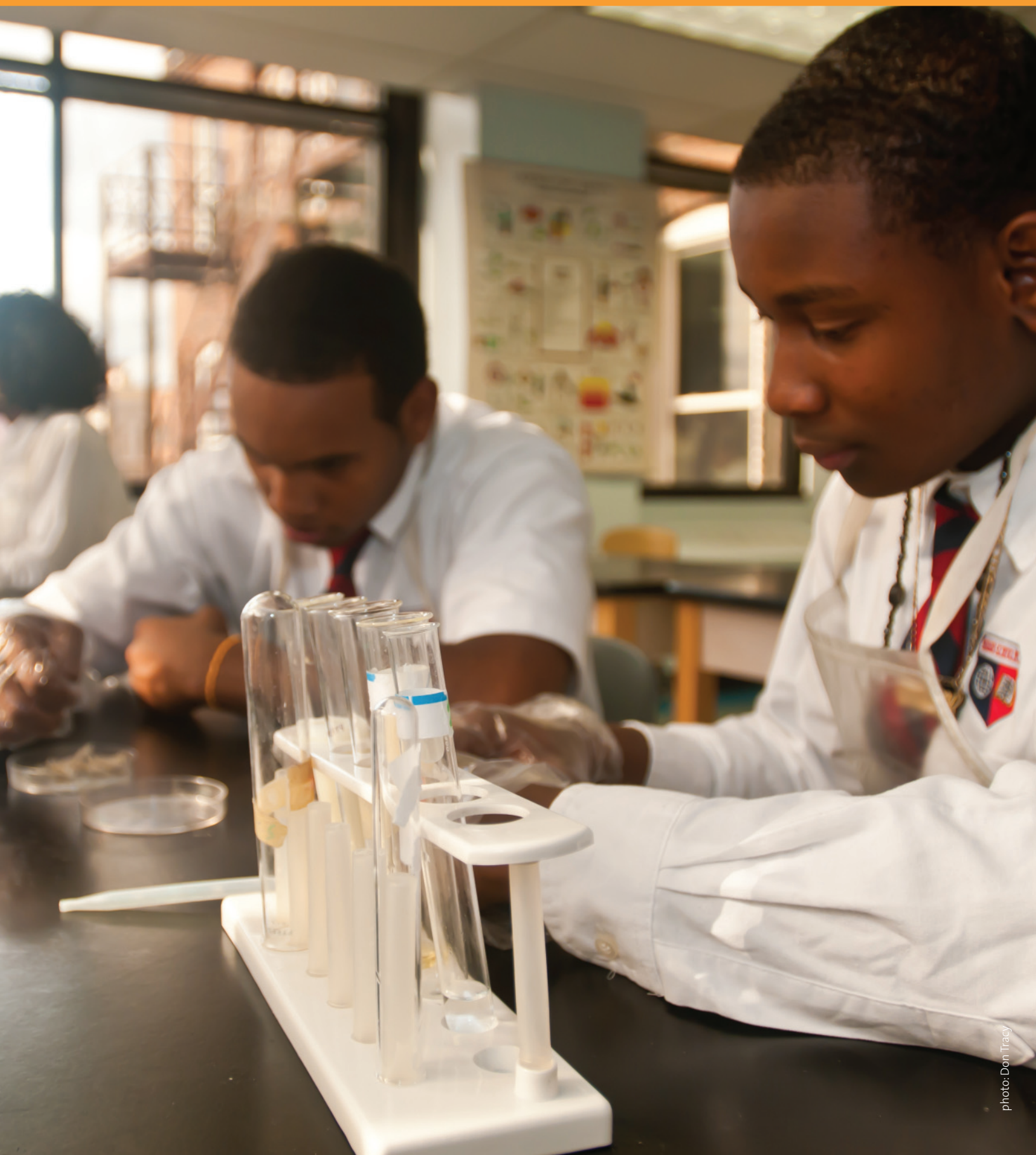
Yet, an average of 90 percent of NAF academy students graduate from high school each year, on time. Four out of five of these graduates go on to post-secondary education. And more than half are the first in their families to go to college.

Public high school students in mostly urban areas can choose to enroll in one of the 500 NAF academies nationwide. Students supplement their studies in math, science, literature, and history by choosing a NAF academy career-theme focus on **Finance, Information Technology, Hospitality & Tourism, Engineering,** and now **Health Sciences.**

Schools open a NAF academy by engaging in a comprehensive application process, followed by a full year of planning and preparation led by NAF. With the technical support, annually updated curriculum, and professional development they access year round through NAF, school administrators and teachers commit with confidence to deliver on NAF's promise to all of its students: *You will use what you learn here; your efforts are worthwhile; opportunity is all around you.*

Businesses offer steady and structured involvement to NAF academies as they educate and prepare young people for life. Job shadowing, in-class presentations, networking, internships, and leadership on a NAF academy advisory board bring professionals into contact with NAF academies and students, and allow these businesses to play a key role in their success.

What the National Academy Foundation Offers Academies



The National Academy Foundation sustains the growth, professional development, and exemplary practices that ensure exceptional outcomes and a well-defined structure at NAF academies. All those charged with sustaining a NAF academy can enhance their leadership skills and competency through NAF support.

New NAF academies engage in a year-long planning process that begins with assembling local stakeholders (district leaders, partners from business and civic sectors) and continues through implementation, launch, and sustainability.

Teachers and other stakeholders find extensive opportunities with NAF to hone skills and strengthen the overall structure of their NAF academy, using guided and independent practice.

NAF staff help academies cultivate local advisory boards to attract members who can ensure worthwhile, professional opportunities for students, including internships.

The business leaders who make up the advisory boards tap into NAF support as they fine-tune their roles as partners with teachers, offer their time as mentors and in-class presenters, welcome students into their corporate offices for job shadowing and internships, and contribute to curriculum design.

NAF develops assessments to measure students' skills and knowledge. NAF also formalizes arrangements to let students earn college credit and industry certifications for their work in the academy and as interns.

NAF fosters every school's ability to fully implement the **NAF Model**:

ACADEMY DEVELOPMENT & STRUCTURE—academies grow at a strong, sustainable pace; students contribute to the program's design and take all their courses together (core academics and industry electives); district, school, and academy directors take part in frequent professional development.

ADVISORY BOARD—local business, higher education, and community leaders collaborate with academy directors and teachers to provide current industry context, volunteer in classrooms, host job shadowing opportunities, secure internships, and raise funds.

CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION—NAF curriculum draws on current industry and educational expertise; advanced, progressive instruction embeds literacy and study skills within every course; projects foster the development of communication, problem solving, and team building skills; small learning communities allow for teacher collaboration across subject areas.

WORK-BASED LEARNING & INTERNSHIPS—NAF academies develop and sustain a program of compensated internships for all students; students also complete a series of work-based learning experiences (field trips, job shadowing); work experiences align with curricular goals as articulated for each career theme; students earn industry-validated credentials and are assessed for mastery of skills beneficial to a professional workplace environment.



“The NAF model, the framework, is invaluable. You can walk into a wall-to-wall NAF academy school or walk into [a school] that only has one [NAF academy], but you go across the academies and they're all built around the same infrastructure; a very powerful model to follow when we're reforming large high schools and trying to make high school life a little more meaningful for each student.”

— **DR. HELEN BLANCH**
Asst. Superintendent
School Choice, School Operations
Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Miami, FL



The NAF model is proven to increase overall earnings, career stability, and personal fulfillment among its graduates.

In this and many other regards, NAF has set a gold standard for reforming education in such a profound way that it simultaneously strengthens the social and economic fabric of our nation.

Young people thrive in high school and graduate. For students most at risk of dropping out, career academy participants show increased school retention through the 12th grade, improved attendance, and earned more credits.

Schools close the achievement gap. Subsequent to an ambitious restructuring and implementation of the NAF model in three urban Hartford, CT high schools, the schools have seen tremendous gains on the Connecticut Aptitude Performance Test for three consecutive years.

Concentrating on integrating core academics with career-themed courses and work-based learning, all five NAF academies in the Porterville Unified School District have made major gains on the California High School Exit Examination, significantly outperforming their non-academy peers.

Graduates of NAF academies complete college faster, earn more, and have stronger ties to their communities than their peers.

- Fifty-two percent of NAF graduates earn bachelor's degrees in four years, compared with 32% of college-goers nationally.
- Eighty-five percent of five- and ten-year alumni are working in professional fields.

An independent study by MDRC of career academies, NAF academies included, found that:

- Career academy graduates earned **11% more** in total earnings over the eight years following high school than their non-academy peers.
- Young men from career academies experienced increased earnings over eight years totaling **17% more** per year than their non-academy peers.
- An increased percentage of career academy graduates live independently with their children and spouse or partner. Young men, specifically, reported positive effects on marriage and parenting.

Businesses gain a pipeline to educated, experienced, and motivated candidates. NAF graduates bring a competitive edge to the job market, advancing into careers in banks, consulting and accounting firms, major hotels, travel service companies, information technology services, and along other professional paths—often while their non-academy peers struggle in low-wage jobs that have little to do with their career aspirations.



“What I learned in the academy made me want to always strive for more, to push myself beyond what the normal standards are and exceed farther than all expectations.”

— **MOHAMMED ALAM, '09**
Academy of Finance & Enterprise
Long Island City, NY



photo: Steven Bamberg

Sanford I. Weill, businessman and philanthropist, launched the first NAF academy in 1982 in Brooklyn. The NAF model, as he envisioned it, addressed the needs of students from large, crowded, urban high schools who aspired to college and careers, but were likely to meet barriers to their achievement.

Before establishing the first academy, Weill recruited inner city high school students to work in the financial services industry by offering finance education and on-the-job training. When the first group of trainees graduated from high school, Weill offered them full-time jobs in the back office of his company. Almost all of them refused.

The young trainees explained that the experience had altered their view of the future. While none had necessarily aspired to attend college before, all emerged from the training with ambitions to get the education required to work in the front office, earn the big salaries, and rise to the highest posts. They no longer wanted jobs; they wanted careers.

Weill observed that students' aspirations were transformed by the combined effect of relevant coursework, a specific career focus, workplace experience, and a professional mentoring relationship based on high expectations. Motivated by actual opportunity and hands-on exposure within a thriving industry, these students developed a much broader sense of what they could achieve and what they would achieve.

These are the principles that shaped the creation of the first academy and they remain the heart of NAF today.

Weill has dedicated himself to bringing this experience to as many young people as possible. Critical to what has now become the NAF model is the assurance that students, who would not otherwise be afforded such opportunities, get the access to professional mentoring, workplace experience, and a strong, well-connected community of support that they need to succeed.

For nearly 30 years, Weill has worked to sustain high-level engagement from corporate partners and to support NAF as it bridges connections with school districts, government agencies, and other key collaborators. He has consistently used his success in financial services to generate opportunities—not just in finance, but information technology, tourism, engineering, and now, health sciences—so that young people can get excited about learning and reap the rewards of their hard work.



“The Academy of Finance taught me that it was important to secure my personal success and it was throughout mentors’ donated time and efforts that I realized the importance of giving back.”

— **JACKIE SAAVEDRA, '09**
Bishop Ward High School
Academy of Finance
Kansas City, KS

MISSION

The National Academy Foundation is dedicated to preparing young people for college and career success using its proven educational model.

VISION

The National Academy Foundation envisions a world in which all young people have the skills, knowledge and experience needed to thrive.

ABOUT

The National Academy Foundation (NAF) is an acclaimed network of career-themed academies that opens doors for underserved high school students to viable careers. For nearly 30 years, NAF has refined a proven model that provides young people access to industry-specific curricula, work-based learning experiences, and relationships with business professionals.

NAF academies focus on one of five career themes: finance, hospitality & tourism, information technology, engineering, and health sciences.

Employees of more than 2,500 companies volunteer in classrooms, act as mentors, engage NAF students in paid internships, and serve on local advisory boards.



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