

# SCALING IMPACT

## TAKING CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

*DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
DALLAS, TEXAS*



BE FUTURE  
READY



NAF is solving some of the biggest challenges in education and the economy by transforming the high school experience, igniting students' passion for learning, and engaging companies and community leaders in shaping the future workforce. NAF makes critical connections between the corporate and education worlds to develop a highly skilled and diverse workforce pipeline.

NAF's design provides students with a career-focused educational experience both inside and outside the classroom. By engaging students in career-focused curriculum and experiences, they are able to see the connection between the classroom and the working world. They are able to see the potential for their futures, and businesses can benefit from a prepared workforce who possess the skills they need to contribute and help businesses thrive.

Business involvement in the high school learning experience is critical to student success. Dollars alone are not enough. Business professionals have important knowledge that they can share with the next generation — knowledge that is often absent from traditional learning experiences. Companies have a vested interest in ensuring that their future employees have the skills they need to succeed.

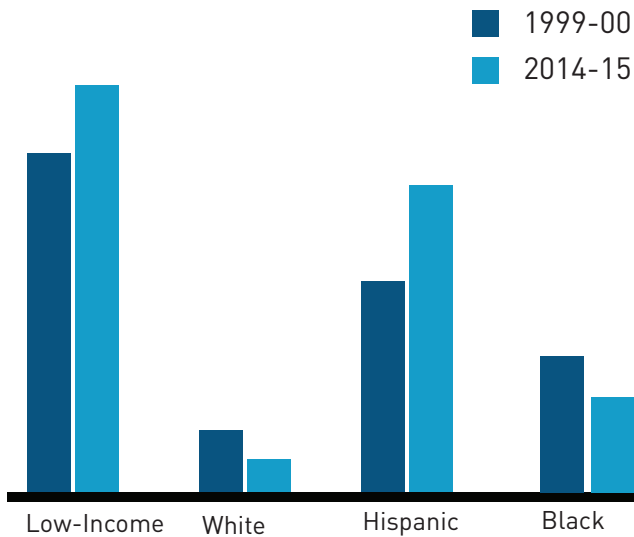
NAF's work-based learning continuum offers many ways for businesses to get involved, from simple activities such as guest speaking and career day involvement, to more in depth opportunities like hosting a job shadow, sitting on an academy advisory board, or conducting a mock interview. Through those experiences, students are prepared for the culminating experience of a paid internship. Students that graduate with a paid internship are a step ahead of the competition, giving them an advantage in the college application process and future careers.

NAF strives to ensure that all students who graduate from a NAF academy complete a paid internship — one that meets NAF's standards of providing value to the employer. Companies that engage with NAF academies and provide a full continuum of work-based learning experiences help NAF achieve this goal while receiving a high return on investment through an extremely qualified and diverse future workforce.

This case study provides tangible examples for companies to model when looking to get involved with local NAF academies. The study focuses primarily on building an internship program that is beneficial to the student and the employer — from creating meaningful projects and work plans to developing hiring procedures, establishing a work schedule, supervision, and performance review. This case study focuses on NAF's work with Dallas Independent School District and major corporations including Capital One, HPE, and AT&T. Representatives from these companies share the challenges that they overcame, as well as the positive outcomes of their engagement.

It is imperative that all companies take part in shaping the future workforce by looking for opportunities with local high schools. It takes each and every one of us to ensure students and business can *Be Future Ready*.

## Dallas ISD Demographics



SOURCE: Dallas Morning News analysis of Texas Education Agency data

Located in Texas, the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) is the 14th largest school district in the nation with a population of about 157,000 predominantly black or Hispanic, and low-income students. Serving these students are more than 20,000 employees, making the Dallas ISD one of the largest employers in the city of Dallas. In addition, the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex boasts the largest concentration of corporate headquarters in the United States, with over 10,000 companies based there.

In 2012, Dallas had the third-widest divide between rich and poor neighborhoods out of the 30 largest metro areas in the nation, according to a study on economic segregation done by the Pew Research Center, just behind San Antonio and Houston. The concentration of this issue in Texas has not gone unnoticed.

Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings knows that change needs to start with integrating schools in his city.

He is working with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to ensure that housing tax credits, provided to developers who create affordable housing, are spread throughout the city instead of being concentrated in poor areas. Dallas ISD has already offered more quality programs to attract families back to the public schools.

### **But policy and educational leaders cannot do this work alone. Corporate engagement is essential for creating integrated communities and job opportunities for all.**

Dallas ISD is working to align educational opportunities at schools with the area's labor market. Depending on the campus, students can study different "pathways" such as information technology, health sciences, finance, and engineering — all career clusters representing area businesses. NAF has been a critical partner with Dallas ISD in this effort. NAF has set the industry standard for business and corporate partnerships with K-12 education. Corporate engagement is a critical element in the NAF educational design, as local advisory boards made up of business professionals help to secure work-based learning and internship experiences for students.

Dallas ISD boasts one of the largest number of students in the NAF network who are completing paid internships and assessments leading to certification. This is due in large part to buy-in from major businesses that understand the importance of integration in creating a diverse and highly skilled workforce and their role in creating the talent pipeline.

**NAF offers "Scaling Impact: Taking Corporate Engagement to the Next Level" as inspiration to companies on their critical role in shaping the future workforce and how all-in corporate engagement can benefit their business.**

## THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT INTERNSHIP: A CORPORATE PERSPECTIVE

Paid internships are the culmination of the NAF experience. This is when students are able to put all of their lessons into practice in a real work environment, doing meaningful work that creates value for the employer. NAF's gold standard for internships provides guidelines for employers on the hiring process, compensation, time worked, supervision, planning, and evaluation.

Capital One, one of NAF's most dedicated partners with Division Headquarters in the Dallas area, has been hiring NAF interns since 2014. Their hiring process mimics a college application process, including the submission of a resume, letters of recommendation, and an essay. An interview is the final step. In preparation for internships, Capital One seeks manager volunteers from all departments—IT, finance, marketing, human resources and training, —so that students can experience several angles of the business. Capital One trains managers on how to present Capital One culture and how to develop creative projects and work plans for interns based on NAF's guidelines. Managers also review the NAF internship assessment, similar to an employee performance review, and meet with academy teachers to agree on general competencies that will be developed. Through trial and error, Capital One now knows how to identify projects for summer interns that build problem-solving skills, address real work issues, and add value to the company.

Over at Hewlett-Packard Enterprise (HPE), another leading NAF partner with offices in Dallas, supervisors develop projects that have long-term value for their company. Procedures and practices are developed before interns ever come to the site, including developing appropriate training and guidance for accessing systems. Many departments such as human resources, IT, and finance all play a role in supporting the internship program.

Often corporate and other business leaders would like to get involved, but figuring out the mechanics of hiring high school interns can be a deterrent: legal and logistical barriers need to be overcome. For example, Capital One has employment policies limiting the hiring of minors. Capital One used a temporary staffing agency that was familiar with state law and the paperwork necessary to hire minors. The agency ends up being the entity that hires and pays students as authorized by managers at Capital One. Managers were already familiar with the temping process, which was an added benefit.

### *Internship Guidelines*

Students are assessed by their internship provider. Internship requirements include:

- No less than federal (or local, if higher) subminimum training wage
- 120 hours. May consist of two 60+ hour internships
- Direct supervision by an adult who is not the student's teacher
- Work produced is of value to the employer
- Written individualized learning plan targeted to work-based learning outcomes



## WHAT BUSINESSES RECEIVE IN RETURN

“Success is in the eyes of the beholder,” said Sanjiv Yajnik, President of Financial Services for Capital One. “If participants believe it was a valuable experience, then it was: students learned how business works and had a chance to solve real problems.”

There is a strong sense of volunteerism at Capital One, starting from the top down. “It’s a great way for associates to give back—without leaving their desk—people feel pride in their work and are glad to share their knowledge. You should get excited about this—we can be active participants in building the future workforce,” said Capital One’s Senior Manager of Social Innovation, Monica Shortino.

While Yajnik reiterates that companies have an obligation to contribute and give back to their communities, what company leaders don’t always understand are the benefits: “When interns come in, associates get enrichment they did not expect: working side by side, the high school interns surprise them with what they’re thinking of.”

John Wallace, of the HPE Global Procurement business unit, focus on similar matters: “Did students learn what they wanted? Will we benefit from the work they were doing? Will their work experience leave a lasting impression on them so that they want to stay at HPE?” The power of a positive internship experience can also be that the student becomes a loyal customer. Providing internships can benefit a company’s reputation. In this way, companies can meet aspirations to be community partners while bridging their business needs.

At HPE, managers were pleasantly surprised at the positive impact the students had. Wallace said, “These young people have drive and desire. You’ll see benefits from their work, and your staff will grow by being mentors, youth will grow by learning how to function in a corporate environment. Don’t be afraid because the payback is 3-4 times your investment.” Wallace explained that having interns take on the impactful work that employees would otherwise do frees up employees to do more strategic work.

### ***Much More Than Busy Work***

When they agreed to hire interns, Wallace admitted he was not sure what they would get. But at the first interviews, he recognized that these students were well prepared; their main shortcoming was unfamiliarity with the professional environment, so HPE trained employees to be mentors. Next, supervisors realized that the internships were too short to complete some large-scale and meaningful projects so HPE extended the internships to ten weeks, after which time the students learned a lot, were able to accomplish a goal set forth at the beginning, and “we learned from them,” said Wallace. His main recommendation to other corporate leaders is to give students “real work” and measure them against project goals, as with any other employee.

HPE interns processed internal capital requests; worked on the duplication of an internal procurement tool; submitted test purchase orders to ensure that they continued to route correctly; and helped support the replication of internal websites after the company split into HPI (Hewlett-Packard Inc.) and HPE (Hewlett-Packard Enterprises), testing and implementing more than 2,000 intranet sites and pages. Wallace said, “each one of these interns made a difference in separating a \$100 billion company.”

At Capital One, interns learn about the company’s culture of quality and lean management. Interns are exposed to tools used to identify process improvements, improve quality, and reduce or eliminate waste. They also learn design thinking to be sure they ask questions of end users, create a prototype, and get feedback. They are given a problem to solve, for example, the Capital One campus shuttle bus often made its rounds empty, but at the same time, employees often had to wait for a ride. An intern designed an app to hail the shuttle bus, which would otherwise waste fuel by running with no passengers. Another intern solved the crowded cafeteria problem by making employee ID cards double as cafeteria debit cards, thus moving the lines faster.

**At the conclusion of NAF internships, supervisors are expected to complete an internship assessment form describing skills that students acquired and areas in which they worked and excelled. Corporate partners have welcomed the assessment, as it promotes because it shows accountability.**

## THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT INTERNSHIP: DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

Dallas ISD began working with NAF in the 1990s as a way to provide better opportunities that would improve students' outlook and motivation for the future. District officials were impressed with NAF as a high quality educational design that offered rigorous curriculum in high-growth career clusters and a solid structure with supports for students, teachers, and business partners serving on advisory boards. "There's nothing else out there like NAF," said Linda Johnson, the Dallas ISD Executive Director of College and Career Readiness.

School systems traditionally focus on academic subjects and college preparation, Johnson said, and teachers rarely have an understanding of what it takes to work in a career field like finance or IT. "The whole K-12 system is an island, disconnected from higher education and the workforce, and NAF starts to help align those systems."

Johnson said she has seen a growing corporate focus from NAF, which influenced Dallas ISD to develop more partnerships. When Sanjiv Yajnik joined the NAF Board of Directors in 2011, the Capital One offices north of Dallas approached Dallas ISD with internship opportunities. These started with a handful of students and has continued to expand throughout the partnership. Capital One funded transportation for students, so that the traveling distance would not be a barrier to participation. Capital One also provided feedback to the district on the first interns and how they could be better prepared, leading Dallas ISD to develop a three-day training program prior to the internship in which students hone their soft skills and learn workplace etiquette.

Richard Grimsley, Director of Career Education and Workforce Partnerships, described the next step in their commitment to provide businesses the most prepared interns they can: Dallas ISD is developing a 32-hour set of online internship preparation modules for students to take during the school year, prior to the internship interview process. Due to the pressures to teach content to meet state standards, soft skills are not always given the attention they deserve. This online program, once refined, may become part of all Dallas ISD career and technical education students' curriculum.

Dallas ISD has a cadre of support for its over 40 NAF academies, including district instructional specialists who help classroom teachers with the resources they need for internships and site visits, such as bus transportation, as well as consultants dedicated to helping school staff prepare to implement academies, and overseeing advisory boards, work-based learning, internships, and partnership management – all important areas of work that require dedicated attention and a trained professional that can bridge the culture gap between schools and employers. While the district has seen high turnover rates at all levels, NAF has remained an active, stable, and growing partner ensuring the good work Dallas has been doing continues through change.



## THE HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP: STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Often when people hear the word “internship” they typically think of a college student. At NAF, we believe that a paid high school internship is critical to ensuring student success in college and in careers. Students who complete a paid high school internship have the opportunity to build their resume and their professional network early on, paving the way for future opportunities.

In the summer of 2016, Sergio, an Academy of Finance (AOF) student from W. H. Adamson High School, interned at Capital One in their customer service department, fielding requests for car titles and the like. Sergio learned that people didn’t like to be kept on hold—the longer a customer stays on hold, the more likely they are to change banks, he said. So Sergio took the quality solutions tools that Capital One taught him and produced a pamphlet of “small talk” recommendations, which the representative can use to keep the customer engaged instead of putting them on hold.

Sergio was soon asked to run his team’s visual management board. Every morning, teams gather to review the prior day’s performance, and Sergio was in charge of setting up the board. He said he got pretty creative in his displays. “They rely on information to improve,” Sergio said. The most important thing he learned was how to talk to people because he said he was naturally shy, but his NAF academy helped him prepare: “With NAF, we always had projects that involve talking in front of students and, at the end of the year, in front of crowds of teachers and business partners, too. That helped a lot.” Sergio said that the mock interviews he did were also helpful because they allowed him to practice with someone who was in the business world.

Solomon, a student from Kimball High School’s Distinguished Academy of Hospitality & Tourism interned at the Hilton Anatole, a four-star hotel in Dallas that was set to open a large resort pool complex. The day before the massive complex was set to open, the hotel was still not ready. Solomon, a football player, worked overtime and missed practice that day to help set up the complex, allowing them to open on time – a great accomplishment Solomon could take pride in. He gave his NAF academy credit for having prepared him “tremendously” for this opportunity and having impacted his life. His NAF academy gave him the tools to be professional on the job. His dream is to own a hotel, and his internship allowed him to network and see the many opportunities in this industry.

## IT’S A RECORD: MONSTER CODING EVENT

Capital One knows the importance of reaching out to students at the start of their high school journey. Dallas ISD’s Monster Coding Jam was an exciting opportunity to make that connection. The event was an attempt by Dallas NAF academies to break A GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ title for the largest coding session, and they succeeded, smashing the prior record. Over 650 Dallas ISD 9th grade students and teachers from 19 NAF academies participated along with 300 employee volunteers from Capital One who coached students through the coding exercise. In addition to the fun and challenge of breaking the record, the exercise also modeled how people work in teams to develop apps and other products, as well as the role business professionals can play in supporting students.

The work was done on Lenovo equipment, another NAF partner, donated at a discounted rate by Capital One. Capital One paid for bus transportation for all students and teachers from their high school to the venue, paid for substitute teachers so that their teachers could accompany them, and provided boxed lunches for all participants, including the bus drivers. An Emmy Award-winning talk show host emceed the event and a GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ official timekeeper had to be present. The venue also had to be safely wired for large-scale computer use. There were many details for staff to attend to and reams of paperwork to complete, but in the end it was well worth it.



## WHY COMPANIES SHOULD INVEST IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Businesses work with colleges and universities to provide internships and hands-on experiences to college students. What many don't realize is that the shortage of skilled workers that many sectors are seeing cannot be resolved without connecting to students earlier than college, before they make decisions such as a college major, whether or not to attend college, or even whether to complete high school. As Yajnik, says, "our nation cannot waste talent. As innovation skyrockets, we need every brain in the game."

Yajnik explained that when corporations like Capital One recruit talent, the first question candidates who are relocating often ask about a region is the quality of the schools. Strong school districts lead to vibrant communities and quality places to raise families. Business needs to be present in the local community in ways that add the most value—such as ensuring that the schools are high quality. For all of these reasons, Capital One partners with Dallas ISD.

Scott Smith, Senior Vice President of Human Resources for AT&T, said that his company works with Dallas high schools by providing students opportunities to experience the workplace firsthand. "If you don't know what you might be interested in, you can't pursue it. By the time students are in college, a whole group of students who might have the aptitude but did not get the exposure are lost to my corporation. Even middle school is not too early to provide exposure."

AT&T supports and hosts work-based learning events for hundreds of students in Dallas ISD. If someone impresses Smith, he gives them his card to contact him if they would like to talk further. The students who follow up become potential job candidates, because they are assertive and follow through. "They took the time and energy (and the risk) to send me a personal note. If they did that once, they'll do it again." That assertiveness is a trait that AT&T looks for in people to hire.

Wallace, along with Marcus Ray, Business Operations Leader of HP Worldwide Managed Security Services sit on advisory boards for Dallas NAF academies. Advisory board participation is another way for the business community to partner with the district. Members of these boards recruit additional employer support, organize events in the workplace, review student projects at the school, and raise funds to support scholarships and other activities for students.

For smaller firms or ones located in smaller areas than the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, there are different advantages to partnering with NAF. In those areas, students are far more likely to join the local workforce. It is often difficult to recruit talent from outside the area. In many cases, talented students leave the area for more opportunities. If the goal is to keep young people in their hometowns, but with the skills to build a career, then local companies must invest in them.

By working with NAF, your company will be at the forefront of workforce development, recruiting diverse talent with a solid foundation in hard and soft skills. NAF has over thirty years of experience cultivating national corporate engagement partnerships in order to create a lasting impact for students and communities.

When your company works with NAF, the result is a high impact, integrated partnership that:

- Strengthens talent development and recruitment processes
- Produces a diverse workforce equipped with the skills businesses needs
- Saves time and resources on training expenses for new employees
- Supports schools and communities, making them more desirable for relocation
- Strengthens the local economy
- Reinforces consumer loyalty
- Provides opportunities for those in need, helping to close the wage gap and lift low-income students to careers with rising income

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

You have the power to prepare future leaders and widen the workforce pipeline with knowledgeable, diverse, and driven talent.

There are numerous ways to get involved on the local and national levels, both as an individual and as a company. NAF views work-based learning as a continuum of experiences, beginning with career awareness activities, followed by career exploration, leading to career preparation and internships.

Examples of ways to get involved:

- Guest speak in a classroom
- Host a worksite visit
- Present at a career fair
- Host a job shadow
- Participate in mock interviews
- Participate in informational interviews
- Host an intern
- Join a local advisory board
- Connect with students virtually

## BEING FUTURE READY

At its core, the Dallas story is about people making connections: schools and businesspeople, students and employers. Students acquire social capital and an understanding of how connections create opportunities in the business world. When corporate leaders are talking to the chamber of commerce, the workforce development agency, and the education sector, it starts the synergy. When the NAF advisory board member is also on the regional workforce development board and attempts to bring together initiatives that share goals, that starts the synergy. In other words, as JD Hoye, President of NAF, put it, “systems don’t connect people; people connect systems.” The corporate leaders of Dallas have brought together people from various systems, and changed the opportunity landscape for Dallas youth.

Now it’s time to take it to the next level. There is more we can do to make sure all students, not only NAF students, have the opportunity to succeed. NAF’s industry-recognized student certification, NAFTrack Certification, is growing in participation from both the student and employer sides, leading to long-lasting relationships and ongoing opportunities. NAFTrack Certification will pave the way for students to sustainable careers with rising incomes and for corporations to find highly qualified talent to fill their workforce pipelines.

More and more corporations are beginning to understand their role in shaping the future workforce, and the opportunities this presents to them. It’s not only about filling jobs. It’s about creating a sustainable ecosystem of opportunity that lifts communities and leads to economic prosperity. It’s about taking ownership and contributing to the well-being of your local community, taking pride in all that comes with it. It’s about coming together and pooling our skills to ensure the next generation is prepared to take on whatever comes their way.

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**MISSION**

NAF solves some of the biggest challenges facing education and the economy by bringing education, business, and community leaders together to transform the high school experience.

**VISION**

NAF envisions a world in which all young people have equal opportunity for successful futures.



**BE FUTURE  
READY**

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