

Programs of Study Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: Which department “owns” a Program of Study?

A1: We all own them. Programs of Study work begins with one or more department teams. Eventually, each department will consider them through a review process. Any staff member may begin a Program of Study, though some departments may find that their background helps the work to be completed faster.

Q2: Will this be used to help determine which courses run each year?

A2: Yes, but it will not be the only criterion. Courses that are needed to complete a Program of Study will be given strong consideration during the staffing process.

Q3: Will a lower subscribed course run at the expense of a higher subscribed course?

A3: This is possible if we have a course that supports an articulated sequence but has low enrollment and we have another course that is not in an articulated sequence but has high enrollment. Extreme examples of this are unlikely (i.e. where a course has just a few enrollees).

Q4: Is it fair to use Programs of Study to determine which courses run if all 79 plans have not been developed?

A4: Currently, the only other model we use is registration requests. Running a course because it is popular is not always wise. Courses that lead students along an articulated sequence is very important, which this process does.

Q5: Won't every course in our catalog be needed in a Program of Study?

A5: Not necessarily. The courses listed in a Program of Study must meet the nationally recognized knowledge and skills documents.

Q6: Why are we using this model? Is it only to get Carl Perkins grant funding?

A6: This model is recognized by the United States Department of Education and our Department of Public Instructions. The Carl Perkins grant money we receive makes this one of the few national and state funded initiatives.

Q7: Should we be forcing students into a Program of Study?

A7: A Program of Study is a suggested sequence of courses for a student. Students and their families still choose their academic path as they plan for their post-secondary options. We want to document (on paper) what we collectively and professionally agree are courses that can assist a student with her/his post-secondary goals.

Q8: Do Programs of Study track students?

A8: No. A Program of Study is a recommendation to students that they may use or ignore. Many Programs of Study plans are similar at their core, but differ with their electives. It is important to note that when students “switch” to a different Program of Study that is seen as a success (the student has learned of an area that does not interest him/her before spending valuable money on it at the post-

secondary level). Students have been organizing and planning for their post-secondary experiences for years without these documents. They have often relied on a variety of sources for that information. Not every student, however, knows how to access that information. This process puts that information in a central place – on paper – that reflects the collective, professional work of our staff.

Q9: What about educating the whole student? (World Languages, Music, Art, etc.)

A9: There are Programs of Study that specifically address these areas. Additionally, these areas are integrated into other Programs of Study. Finally, a Program of Study should not fill a student's schedule for all four years. This is why they should be kept to a minimum and only meet (not exceed) the nationally recognized Programs of Study knowledge and skills documents and still allow students to explore other areas.

Q10: What will the Programs of Study look like in the course catalog?

A10: At this time the course catalog will not change. A separate "course and career planning guide" will be created to support families in their decision-making process. The Programs of Study charts will also be made into single-page brochures. Both documents will be used with students as part of their career counseling sessions starting in 8th grade.

Q11: How long will the Programs of Study process last?

A11: Roughly three years, and "forever." To develop and implement a Program of Study can take up to three years. However, through our School-to-Careers advisory we will continue to refine our programming continuously.

Q12: Where are we in the process now?

A12: Twenty (20) Programs of Study documents have been through three review stages (they still need the last review by department chairs). Eighteen (18) Programs of Study documents have been through the first two stages of review

Q13: How will Special Education students utilize Programs of Study?

A13: We have a district team and an advisory council to work on how Programs of Study are developed and implemented with our special needs populations. That work is mirroring the work we are doing in regular education.

Q14: What does the Perkins grant fund?

A14: Mostly, time. Time for professional development. Time for meeting with stakeholders and colleagues. It does support other activities (ex. field trips), but each of them must be clearly tied to a Program of Study or career development. ANY staff member may access these funds if they are working on a Program of Study or career development.