

The idea for the New Hampshire Career Academy (NHCA) is the result of the good work of Dean Graziano, the extended learning opportunity coordinator for the Rochester School District.

Dean put together the program with the Great Bay Community College for Rochester high school seniors. This program creates real opportunity for participating students. First, it allows them, during their senior year of high school, to complete their high school requirements for graduation while simultaneously earning 30 college credits and attaining an Advanced Composite Manufacturing certificate. The program also puts them on a career pathway with one of Rochester's premiere employers, Albany/Saffron.

In its second year, participating corporate sponsors have so far funded the program. These companies include Albany/Saffron, Federal Savings Bank, Profile Bank, Waterstone Retail, MyTurn, McDonalds/Napoli Group, Home Depot and Timberland Shoes. While the generosity of these corporate sponsors cannot be appreciated enough, the instructional model that is proving to be so valuable for students does not have a sustainable funding stream and it would be difficult to scale and make available to other students.

NHCA is an approach to create that sustainable funding stream for this program. It also has the possibility of achieving what so far has eluded so many – a model that does not cost the education system ANY additional funds but makes free college available to New Hampshire students.

How Does the NHCA Work?

NHCA is a proposed new and unique school in New Hampshire. This new academy has the following attributes:

- It is a New Hampshire public charter school embedded into the campuses of and operated by the Community College system of New Hampshire (CCSNH).
- It is available only to New Hampshire high school seniors.
- It is aligned with a CCSNH career program of study.
- It requires an industry partner (or matriculating partner) that is aligned with the CCSNH career program, providing an employment pathway for participating students, if they desire.
- It requires Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with participating high schools to allow students to continue to participate in co-curricular activities such as athletic programs, clubs and proms, if they desire.

NHCA is built on a premise of win-win in which students gain exciting career pathway opportunities while employers and CCSNH are able to shape educational

opportunities. It sees education as an expanding universe of opportunity that capitalizes on learning across the board.

How does NHCA create a sustainable funding model for these unique career programs?

- While the Rochester program relied on corporate support – an excellent but unsustainable long-term model - as a charter school, NHCA will receive state support.

Public charter school funding is different than a traditional public school. Whereas a traditional public school is funded in part by the state (state adequacy) and in part by local property taxes, public charter schools receive all of their funding from the state.

If a student decides to directly enroll in NHCA, the state-funding model would apply and NHCA would receive approximately \$7,300 per student.

Will superintendents oppose NHCA since they will be losing enrollment and thus funding for those students?

- NHCA is unique as a public charter school. Traditional public charter schools directly accept students. NHCA will be no different in this aspect. Unlike a traditional public charter school, however, it will also allow school districts to tuition students to the academy.
- In exploring the concept of NHCA, we heard from superintendents that they may want to keep the students on their attendance rolls and simply tuition the students to NHCA. All enrollments would be subject to a lottery process for available spots. If a school district was interested in tuitioning a student to NHCA, the school district would retain its full state adequacy and local education funding (approximately \$16,000) and they would simply tuition their student to NHCA.

What career programs would be available through NHCA?

- As CCSNH has both capacity and interest, they will make these career or matriculation programs available to students. The selection of programs would take into consideration the high school career and technical education (CTE) programs offered to students. The goal would be to avoid duplicating existing high school programming or cannibalizing students out of the CTE programs.

Who is eligible to attend NHCA?

- Enrolment in the programs would be limited to all New Hampshire high school seniors.

Won't the CTE centers oppose this program since it will be taking students out of their career pathway programs?

- Eligible CCSNH programs will be limited in three important ways to avoid cannibalizing NH CTE programs.
 - The first pathway for NHCA students will be CCSNH programs that are not offered in the local CTE program, avoiding possible program cannibalization.
 - A second pathway for NHCA students will be for CTE students who have completed a high school CTE program as a junior and would like to continue more advanced studies at CCSNH. New Hampshire now allows sophomore students to participate in high school two-year CTE programs. If a student has completed, for example, a two-year automotive program during their sophomore and junior years, they would then be eligible to participate in a CCSNH advanced automotive program through NHCA.
 - A third pathway would be available for students who are closed out of high school CTE programs because of a limited number of seats.

How would NHCA create a "free college" opportunity for students?

- Presently, the cost of a high school education is approximately \$16,000 per year. At a cost of \$7,300 per year, NHCA students could attend for two-years at a slightly lower cost. NHCA will offer students a "super-senior" year. This would afford them two-years at CCSNH and the opportunity to complete an associate degree. Participating students, who will finish high school one year later, will have attained a high school diploma, a college associate degree, some type of career credential and an established career path with a New Hampshire employer.

While this model does make college available to students for no additional cost, there is a shifting of the burden from local taxpayers to the state.

Students won't want to participate if they have to leave their high school during the senior year and can't join their friends for athletic and social events?

- Experience has shown that a deterrent to students participating in "senior year" programs such as this is the loss of co-curricular opportunities. Each CCSNH campus will have an MOU with student home districts that will allow them to participate in athletic and other non-academic activities. By requiring MOU agreements with student home districts, students will still have the opportunity to engage with their friends.

Most students in their senior year still have academic requirements to complete for graduation. If they are not enrolled in the high school, how will they complete these?

- CCSNH offers a wide array of academic classes that will allow students to complete most, if not all, academic classes that a senior might require leading to graduation. Where CCSNH does not have a class required for graduation, which should be a rare occurrence, VLACS can be used to meet the academic requirement.

How will a program like NHCA affect students with IEP's?

- CCSNH operates under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) whereas a public high school, like a public charter school – NHCA, operates under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). ADA requires a standard of “reasonable accommodation” whereas IDEA requires more accommodations.
- Under charter school law, accommodations for IEP students are the responsibility of the student’s sending district. Thus, for purposes of meeting IEP accommodations, such supports, like any other charter school, would fall to the district.

What happens if a student is not capable of doing college level course work?

- This is a great and vitally important question.
- It is not uncommon in the current education system for students to transfer from one school to another, including mid-year transfers to/from non-charter public schools and public charter schools. If a student is enrolled in NHCA and wishes or needs to transfer back to their home district, the current process will be followed.
- In order to try to mitigate the possibility of students enrolling in the NHCA and not having the capability to do the course work, the enrolment process will include mechanisms to ensure expectations are understood, including the possible use of pre-assessments for students, as permitted.