

STEP

The Promising Practice

Secondary Technical Education Program (STEP) is a high school career and technical education (CTE) program in a college setting, where students can explore hands-on careers, take academic courses, fulfill district academic requirements and earn high school and college credit.

In this program, students have the option of being full-day or half-day students. The fully equipped, 60,000 square foot STEP building is located on the Anoka Technical College campus and houses both high school academic courses and high-tech career and technical programs. Courses are offered in the following careers: art and communication, business management and administration, engineering and manufacturing, health science, human services, and academics. Math with CTE courses are also offered.

STEP is a joint effort of the Anoka-Hennepin School District #11 in collaboration with Anoka Technical College, Anoka Ramsey Community College, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), and Anoka County with support from the local legislative delegation and business and industry partners. The Anoka-Hennepin School District serves 13 suburban communities north of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Goal

To provide a transition between high school and college by offering relevant education that prepares students for the high-tech, high-skill workplace of the 21st century.

Question

Can offering CTE courses of study to high school students in a college setting result in positive outcomes?

Target Audience

11th- and 12th-grade high school students

Design

Since 2002, the STEP program has provided advanced educational opportunities in CTE to students from several area high schools, including Andover High School, Anoka High School, Blaine High School, Coon Rapids High School, Champlin Park High School, and Crossroads Alternative High School. The program offers courses of study in a variety of career fields and clusters as an extension of the home high school. Courses of study focus on communication and mathematics literacy skills and CTE skills required in the high-tech, high-skill workplace. STEP assists students in the transition between high school and college, providing 100% articulation in all career areas and connecting with local businesses, industries, labor, and community organizations through advisory committees.

Evaluation

Data gathered annually are reported in the Carl Perkins Annual Report and the Carl Perkins Core Indicator Report, including the number and demographics of students served, number of college credit hours earned, degrees or certificates earned, and the number of schools participating in STEP.

Results

High School Data

In 2008-2009, more than 1,800 non-duplicated students were served, with between 64% and 67% of the students earning two or more college credits through articulated or concurrent enrollment. The special education population was equal to the district average (approximately 17% to 18%). High school students were served from five different high schools, three alternative high schools, and transition programs in the Anoka-Hennepin School District as well as local high schools from neighboring school districts.

Anoka Technical College Data

Since 2005, 39 STEP students have earned degrees or certificates in majors such as Advanced Welding, Basic Welding, Electronic Engineering Technology, Fabricator, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Pipe Welder, and Plumbing Technology through dual enrollment in high school. The number of dual enrolled STEP students increased from 20 students in Spring 2005 to 379 in Spring 2009.

Sources

Anoka-Hennepin STEP: A high school in a college setting.
Retrieved from:
<http://www.anoka.k12.mn.us/education/components/scrapbook/>.

For detailed course offerings, see Course Descriptions on the website.

Carl Perkins Annual Report – by Career Cluster – School Basic, Report Year 2009.

Minnesota Department of Education, Carl Perkins Core Indicator, Report Year 2008-2009.

Contact

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Promising practices as a concept has many operational definitions. The NRCCTE approach to this designation is to identify research from reputable sources (e.g., major funded studies, institutional research, district or state analyses of data) and share this with you. Some of the research identified here is a result of very rigorous research (e.g., longitudinal designs with carefully matched samples, experimental designs). However, other studies may not rise to that level of rigor but nonetheless suggest a practice worth examining. We invite readers to follow the links provided and form their own judgments regarding the quality of the research.