Anne Arundel County Public High Schools
Signature Programs

Community Partnership FAQ

"The research shows…that good high schools push all students academically and give them lots of adult support, both inside and outside the classroom."

Craig D. Jerald for educationsector.org.

What is a Signature Program?

A Signature Program offers high school students unique thematic courses and co-curricular opportunities that are workforce relevant. The Signature Program specifically relates topics and ideas to a "theme" that is unique to each high school community. All 12 high schools in Anne Arundel County will have a Signature Program that is unique to that school.

What is the objective of a Signature Program?

The objective of a Signature Program is to create curriculum, activities and opportunities that offer real-world applications of school academics, strengthening student knowledge and skills needed for success in the 21st century workplace.

By engaging the community in the creation of a Signature Program, the student has invaluable connections with various community members and organizations that will enhance their learning, increase their motivation and interest and help them to gain the most up-to-date knowledge and skills needed to successfully advance directly to the workplace or technical school or a two- or four-year college or university.

How is a Signature Program developed at each high school?

Members of the community are invited to participate in formal and informal brainstorming to determine the unique needs of each high school community. A survey is created to collect data reflecting the interests, culture, resources and businesses in the surrounding community. A Signature Program "theme" is then proposed for the high school based on the survey results and supporting data.

Who is responsible for implementing a Signature Program in each high school?

Each high school has a full-time Signature Program Facilitator (SPF). This individual works with community members to form a group called the Integrated Community Stakeholder Team (ICST). The Integrated Community Stakeholder Team (ICST), facilitated by the SPF, includes five or six individuals from each of six community sectors - business/industry, healthcare, education, community services, media and communication, and government. The ICST is responsible for creating, implementing and evaluating the Signature Program.

What are the roles and responsibilities of the Integrated Community Stakeholder Team (ICST)?

The ICST uses the community data collected in from the survey to create a Signature Proposal. This proposal is presented to the Lead Signature Team at the Board of Education Central Office. Once the proposal is accepted by the Central Office, the ICST creates an Implementation Plan which includes timelines/schedules, budgets, program elements, outcomes/highlights, evaluation plans, current resources as well as resources needed, and proposed curricula changes that will enhance the classroom learning environment by integrating real-world applications into the curriculum.

The ICST is then responsible for implementation of the Plan, as well as oversight and evaluation of the program. The SPF, along with a support team from the Central Office, is available to work with the ICST members throughout the Signature development process.

What is required of an ICST member?

Each member of the ICST will attend regular meetings during the Proposal and Implementation Planning stages. The frequency of these meetings will be determined by the ICST members based on the work to be done.

Once the Proposal and Implementation Plan stages are completed, ICST members can be involved at various levels of responsibility and time commitment   ICST members may be called upon to help with guest lectures, co-curricular activities, curriculum writing or job shadowing. Ultimately, it will be the ICST who will determine the level of commitment needed by each member to effectively implement the Signature Plan created.

How can I learn more about the Signature Program in my community?

If you are interested in more information, contact the Signature Program Facilitator at the local high school.