

## **Lincoln Public Schools Career Center**

### **Mission's guiding principles:**

- Education: Encouraging students to graduate from high school, and be career and college ready.
- Employment: Equip all students with the skills, education and hope to follow their dreams for jobs.
- Economic growth: Students who are career and college ready contribute to the economic vitality and growth of a community.

### **Mission Statement**

Students will complete quality career-focused programs that prepare them for continued education and employment that contribute to the economic growth of their community.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Q1 What are the basic features of the career and technical center?**

A1 A high school Career Center would feature sessions of career-related classes that match the specific needs of our community. The Center would provide opportunities for students who are planning to go on to college, or who are looking into more immediate careers and employment, helping both sets of students prepare for their lives after high school. The program could best be described as a 2+2+2 program. The last two-years of high school are closely articulated with the community college to prepare students for success in college including earning up to a year of college credit before high school graduation. The next two years at the community college are aligned to prepare students to complete their associate's degree and be prepared for a four-year post-secondary institution. The last 2 years could be spent finishing a bachelor's degree at a four-year institution. The choice of completing each of the two years of education would be made by the student and their family based on the child's career path choices.

**Q2 Who is collaborating on this project?**

A2 Lincoln Public Schools and Southeast Community College are partnering on the creation of the program, but Lincoln community partners and state partners, including business and industry partners are required to sustain and keep the program viable. The program will be available for students throughout the SCC region as seats are available in the Career Center.

**Q3 How has the concept been developed so far?**

A3 The LPS Board of Education adopted a 2012-13 priority for LPS Superintendent Steve Joel to "complete the research and develop a recommendation for the career and technical high school" by June 1, 2013. LPS Superintendent Steve Joel and SCC President Jack Huck brought together a group of community leaders to explore the concept, look at national models, and envision a blueprint tailored to meet the needs of the Lincoln community. The team has identified the following key concepts:

1. A successful Career Center must be part of a comprehensive, systemic program that begins in elementary school and continues throughout high school, with young children starting to talk about strengths and job interests and middle school students exploring a wide variety of careers and career pathways, and high school students building technical skills.
2. A Career Center program must be flexible, adapting curriculum and offerings to meet the changing employment needs of students and the community.
3. The program must be collaborative and include a breadth of community partners.

**Q4 Which students could attend the center?**

A4 The Career Center would be open to any high school students in Lincoln and available to students in districts in our immediate region. The Career Center is currently envisioned as initially serving 1,000-1,200 students. Future growth in the program would be based on need.

**Q5 What type of credits would students earn at the Career Center?**

A5 The partnership between LPS and SCC would enable students to earn high school and college credit (dual credit). In the Career Center, classes could be comprised of high school students, college students, and/or a combination.

**Q6 What other unique learning opportunities would be available at the Career Center?**

A6 Students would have the option to earn progress toward business and industry certification in some career fields, including experiences like internships, apprenticeships, hands-on-training, and employment. Students have the opportunity to earn up to a year of college credit during their junior and senior year or high school.

**Q7 Would students who go to the Career Center transfer there from their home school?**

A7 Career Center students stay assigned to their comprehensive home high school while attending the Career Center for a portion of the day. It is currently envisioned as a program, not a stand-alone school. Students would continue to participate in their home school activities. Additionally, each program in the Career Center would have an associated

career student organization (HOSA, DECA, VICA, etc.)

**Q8 How would students travel to the Career Center?**

A8 Our current thinking is that LPS would provide transportation for LPS students. Students from outside of Lincoln would arrange their own transportation either personally or through their school.

**Q9 What courses or career fields are being considered?**

A9 The Nebraska Department of Education identifies six Career Fields:

Business, Marketing, and Management  
Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources  
Communication and Information Systems  
Skilled and Technical Sciences  
Health Sciences  
Human Sciences and Education

Career foci within these broad fields have not been determined but will be chosen by considering several factors:

- input from LPS, SCC, and other educational partner professionals;
- identifying high-demand, high-wage, high skills careers in our region; input from local business and industry experts;
- assessment of the expertise of LPS high school and Lincoln college-level teachers;

Student and parent interest is the final determiner.

**Q10 Who would decide which students attend the Career Center?**

A10 As currently envisioned, the students would apply to go to the Career Center in accordance with their career/college plan, created in collaboration with their parents and guidance counselor, and based on career and goal setting activities beginning in elementary school continuing through middle and high school. The comprehensive career curriculum would assist the student in developing an individualized career plan. Students will not be tracked. Students will attend the Career Center as their career path dictates that the courses provided at the Career Center help them fulfill their career goals. Post-high school plans range from on-the-job training, to two-year college, to four-year college, to post-graduate degrees.

**Q11 What is the current thinking on location?**

A11 Research indicates that the more students attend classes on a college campus and complete college work before graduating from high school, the more likely they are to pursue and complete a college degree. For this reason, the current thinking envisions a location on the SCC campus, but many considerations still need to be addressed before a final location can be selected.

**Q12 Has a facility design been developed?**

A12 No, a design has not been developed, but a concept has been discussed. The facility has been envisioned as a combination of very flexible spaces. Each space having sufficient utilities, venting, and infrastructure so that the space could be readily adapted to match changes in programming, even within a single summer.

**Q13 What time of the day would classes be offered at the center?**

A13 Classes could be offered in three sessions (morning, afternoon, and evening) with possible additional opportunities available on weekends and summers.

**Q14 How would the program be funded and governed?**

A14 We are exploring general governance and funding concepts for the Career Center as a joint LPS/SCC endeavor. Other districts would contribute based on their level of participation. School districts, businesses and industries, and other post-secondary that currently partner with SCC may be asked to contribute funds in order for students to participate in the program. Partnerships with business and industry would be essential to support program development and sustainability. Business and Industry would have a presence on Advisory Boards for each of the programs.

**Q15 How would you measure the outcomes of the program?**

A15 LPS has set goals of improving its high graduation rate. While the Career Center would contribute to that progress, high school graduation is a measure of the whole PK-12 experience, not one program alone. We would also measure academic achievement, post-secondary credits earned, business/industry certification earned, number of students completing at least three courses in a field, number of internships, college going and completion rate.

**Q16 Are there other efforts to support this endeavor?**

A16 We are combining efforts with others to put forward legislation that may bring additional resources to Career Academies.