

GA College & Career Academies 101: How to Get Started

- **Form a Steering Committee:** In forming the Steering Committee, it is important to remember that the committee represents the strength and depth of the community partnership.

The steering committee should be composed of key community leaders who represent Business/Industry, Secondary and Post-secondary Education, as well as community planners such as the local Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Development Authority.

It is important to remember that the members of the Steering Committee will likely morph into the future College & Career Academy (CCA) Governing Board members.

- **Scheduling Steering Committee meetings:** It is important that meetings are scheduled when a majority of members are able to attend. Monthly meetings are recommended and should be led by an elected Chair and recording Secretary. Electronic minutes are recommended for distribution to all team members.
- **Applying for (or Amending) your Performance Contract:** The steering committee should identify the local school district representative who will serve as the liaison between the CCA partnership and the GA Department of Education's Division of District Flexibility & Charter Schools, as this person will be responsible for developing and/or amending, and renewing the state contract for the CCA.

For assistance, please contact:

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- **Conducting a Needs Assessment:** The Needs Assessment is an extremely important data-gathering process designed to identify present and future employment needs for the community and region.

Local entities that could be of assistance in providing/gathering workforce projections data are the local Chamber of Commerce and the local Technical College (Economic Development Division).

This data serves to identify which Career Pathways should be offered at the secondary and post-secondary levels to meet the community's present and future job needs.

Business/Industry representatives from the resulting target sectors should be involved - and ultimately drive - the development of CCA curriculum.

A Strategic Plan for the Academy should be developed after a couple of years of operation.

- **Developing a Mission Statement:** A mission statement is required for all CCAs and is a formal summary of the aims and values of the Academy that should guide the partnership in high levels of decision-making. It is recommended that it be developed by the steering committee or the Governing Board in conjunction with the CEO.

The mission statement should be approved and supported by all members of the partnership. Once developed, the Mission Statement should be posted at several locations within the CCA facility, and on the Academy website, in addition to appearing on most official documents.

- **Creating By-Laws:** It is recommended that legal counsel assist with this process. The By-Laws are a working document and can be amended as needed. The process by which amendments can be made should be clearly defined.

One major section of the By-Laws should address the nomination, selection, and terms of office for the Board of Directors (and Board Officers). Terms of office should be staggered to ensure a self-perpetuating Board.

- **Hiring an Academy Chief Operating Officer (C.E.O.):** The process of hiring this important position should begin with a job description that clearly outlines that the position is being external, in as much as possible. It is recommended that this position NOT be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Academy, but rather that they should be “outwardly focused” – engaging in the community.

It is recommended that the job description also include the person or entity to whom the CEO directly reports, and who is responsible for the CEO’s compensation package. The CEO’s major responsibility is to manage and build support for the partnership/Academy.

The CEO should have a vested knowledge of economic and workforce development in the region and attend meetings where important community advocacy decisions are made (Chamber of Commerce, Development Authority, etc.).

The CEO should also serve as the direct liaison with all post-secondary partners, working with them to align secondary career pathways with dual enrollment classes at the post-secondary level.

The CEO may have a background in both business and education and they demonstrate clear knowledge of economic and workforce goals and issues in the region.

The CEO should have experience in conducting public meetings, have knowledge of the laws that impact open meetings, and understand strategic planning.