

**2014
AWARD
WINNER**

EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

Arts, A/V Technology & Communications

CAREER CLUSTER

Union County Academy for Performing Arts

"The Union County Academy for Performing Arts provides a unique high school experience. When students graduate, they will have earned a high school diploma and finished their first year of college. The Kean University and Academy for Performing Arts partnership is truly able to provide residents of Union County with an amazing opportunity that challenges students academically and provides the technical and artistic training necessary to prepare students for the future."

*- Scott Rubin,
Principal of APA*

When most people think of Career Technical Education (CTE) they think of the Manufacturing Career Cluster®, or perhaps the Information Technology Cluster, or Health Sciences.

While each of the above has an important role to play in the dynamic future of CTE, some of the finest work-based learning takes place far from laboratories and power tools. Union County Academy for Performing Arts (APA), the winner of the 2014 Excellence in Action Award out of the equally-important Arts, A/V Technology & Communications Career Cluster, is taking innovative strides to prepare its dance and theater students for a career in the performing arts.

In partnership with Kean University, APA students in dance or theater arts learn CTE skills to prepare them for a career in acting, dance, writing, choreography, directing, stage managing, lighting design, sound engineering, technical theater, production, make-up, costume and set design and more. Learning technical skills through their high school study, APA students spend their senior year at Kean University, taking honors level academic courses while getting a jump on postsecondary study owing to an unmatched partnership between Kean University, APA and the New Jersey Department of Education.

Fast Facts

Students Served (2013)	184
Male : Female	14 : 86
Low-Income Students	14%
Avg. Post-Secondary Credits Earned (2013)	30.7 hrs
Graduation Rate	100%
Graduates Who Enrolled in Post-Secondary	98%



More on STEM Innovation Academy: <http://moody.ccisd.us/>

More on CTE: <http://careertech.org>



Performance matters! APA students learn by doing, performing "Into the Woods"

Getting results

Founded in 2008, APA's first six years have been a success along several metrics. APA has yet to have a student fail the New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment (to pass high school), and its college-ready seniors have earned consistently high marks during their time at Kean University, including a 3.44 cumulative GPA over the fall semester of 2014.

In spite of having only begun in 2008, APA's success has not gone unnoticed; it earned a Bronze Medal from *U.S. News and World Report's* 2014 Best Schools in America and was named one of *Newsweek/Daily Beast's* America's Best Schools 2013.

A Path to Postsecondary Education

While APA never loses sight of teaching its students the skills they need to succeed in their careers, its structure is primarily designed to help students make their way into postsecondary study. Seniors at Kean University receive individualized postsecondary guidance in addition to transcript evaluations, scholarship criteria, guidance through the college application process and conduct college campus visits. College admissions counselors are also invited to APA regularly to speak with students about specific programs, majors and university admission requirements.



Like its students, APA is no stranger to striking a delicate balance — between academic education and CTE

Partnerships

Kean University
George Street Playhouse
Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey
Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company
SkillsUSA

It is APA's vision to foster the discipline, integrity and passion necessary for students to succeed at the post-secondary level and as members of the performing arts community. Its deep integration with Kean University — a high-quality post-secondary institution in the field — begins that process, but APA has a number of other mechanisms for cultivating its students' dedication and work ethic.

APA goes to great lengths to bring expert professional instruction into students' studies. Its partnerships are built on bringing in outside professionals to teach.

APA also takes seriously its mission to establish its own rigorous standards for excellence in CTE instruction, relying on partners and broad-based consultation with professionals to integrate its own rigorous program standards into those of the New Jersey Department of Education and the Common Career Technical Core®. APA also excels at contextualizing student learning in their chosen discipline; instructors describe teaching physics through dance and history through theater.

Never derelict in its advising duties, APA provides robust career counseling services and guidance in addition to their innovative POS. Incoming seniors are also given extensive application, admission and enrollment materials to ensure they are prepared to take on early college.

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