



Vista PEAK Preparatory

Business Education

Business Management & Administration Career Cluster

Overview

The Business Education pathway at Vista PEAK Preparatory in Aurora, Colorado began with the school's inception in 2010. Featuring four Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways, the school has grown from 130 to 1200 students in a mere six years, in part because of its proven ability to develop college- and career-ready students through strong partnerships with higher education institutions and industry partners. The business education pathway courses provide students with a combination of business expertise, employability skills and academic rigor that prepares them for a lifelong career in today's business environments.

| Students (134) | Percentage |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Male | 46% |
| Female | 54% |
| Low-income | 51% |
| Minority | 74% |
| English Language Learners | 33% |

Alignment with Business & Industry

The business education pathway taps into Colorado's workforce needs in a variety of ways. The school leads Post-Secondary Workforce Readiness (or "PoWer") sessions with community members to foster more extended learning opportunities for both students and staff, such as internships, externships, project-based learning, job shadows and leadership opportunities.

Additionally, the Pathways Advisory Committee (PAC) is charged with keeping the program of study abreast of business and industry trends to keep course curriculum up-to-date and resources relevant. PAC meetings take place every semester and include a review of current labor market statistics and information on occupational and employment trends, which can lead to the modification of the pathway's offerings and curriculum. PoWeR sessions, as well as PAC meetings ensure the pathway meets the ever changing demands and needs of both business and industry.



Work-based Learning

In the program of study, students have the opportunity to work for and run the PREP Stop, a school-based enterprise that has weekly revenue of approximately \$1,200. Revenue goes towards the cost of Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSO), in which every student takes part. In the entirely student-run store, students take on various positions including market research analyst, apparel and fashion designer, concession buyer, inventory control, cashier, and shift

managers, giving them insight into the many roles it takes to run a successful business.

Students also have a plethora of work-based opportunities from job shadowing to internships with business including Noodles & Company, Pepsi Center, OUYA and Cassidy Turley Real Estate. In an innovative project with Noodles & Company, students were paired with the engineering pathway to develop a mobile application that could help to streamline company operations. Students worked weekly on campus and at Noodles & Company headquarters during this year-long project. Students also have opportunities to travel across the country to job shadow leading startups like BirchBox and Snapchat as well established corporations to learn more about how their coursework will translate into careers across a variety of sectors.

Pathways to Postsecondary Education

Vista PEAK Preparatory has also established a strong pathway from secondary to postsecondary education. Through the Community College of Aurora, students can earn up to 18 credit hours through five concurrent enrollment courses, including Introduction to Business, Business Communication & Report Writing and Legal Environment of Business.

Students are also able to take part of the Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT) program, which allows seniors to remain enrolled at the high school for a fifth year consisting entirely of college courses, if they have met all of their high school graduation requirements, have taken 12 credit hours of college classes prior to the end of their senior year, and are considered “college and career ready.” Through participation in ASCENT, students attend college while Aurora Public Schools pays their college tuition. Through dual enrollment and ASCENT, students can earn an Associate’s degree during high school, and either directly enter the workforce or transfer those credits to the institution of their choice.

“The Business Education Pathway at Vista PEAK Preparatory has provided hundreds of students with real-life, relevant business skills, seamless transition into postsecondary programs, and access to work-based contextual learning experiences. All of these components have prepared students for the rigorous academic coursework in postsecondary business programs, as well as entry into high-skill and in-demand careers. – Valerie Dodrill-Killen, CTE Coordinator, Aurora Public Schools

Success by the Numbers

Though the program is only six years old, through dedication from the administration and staff, strong education and business and engaged students, rigorous coursework and engaged students, the business education pathway has had incredible success preparing students for lifelong careers.



100%

Earned Industry-recognized Credential



60%

Earned Postsecondary Credit



100%

Participated in Work-based Learning



100%

Graduated High School



98%

Enrolled in Postsecondary Education or entered the Workplace/ Military

Data based on 2014-2015 school year