Youth CareerConnect (YCC) – Academy of Finance and Academy of IT
St. Paul, Minnesota

Program Model: Grades 9 – 12
Industry Focus: Finance, Business, Information Technology (IT)

Overview of the Academy of Finance and Academy of IT YCC Program
Through partnering with businesses and higher institutions of learning, St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) strives to increase college and career readiness and provide rigorous learning opportunities. SPPS has two career academies serving 9-12 graders:

- Academy of Finance (AOF) at Como Park HS
- Academy of Information Technology (AOIT) at Humboldt HS

Students in the Academies are in coholed Finance/IT classes and integrated core classes. Students receive intensive support though career-focused academic counseling, coordinated wraparound services, work-based learning experiences connected to career goals, and internship/job opportunities with business partners and Advisory Board members.

Program Highlight
One area in which our program has been particularly successful is our academies' partnerships with local employers who mentor our students. Each grade is “adopted” by a business, and these employers provide mentors who lead career-readiness activities, support a college-going culture, provide industry expertise with projects and presentations, share work experience support, and mentor students in many ways.

Employers have included Travelers, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Xcel Energy, the City of St. Paul, Grant Thornton, Securian, Granicus, and other businesses.

Success Story
St. Paul College has been a key partner in our goal to increase college and career readiness and provide rigorous learning opportunities. Our first graduating academy class provided an opportunity for SPPS and St. Paul College to collaborate and build systems to ensure that students are successful in earning and realizing post-secondary credits.
Program participants have the opportunity to earn finance/IT college credits at the college; AOF students may attain a Business Certificate from St. Paul College if they earn 16 college credits. Six AOF students earned a Business Certificate from St. Paul College in the first graduating class, and seventeen AOF students earned a Business Certificate in the second graduating class. In addition, some Academy students have had summer internships at the college.

Community Impact
YCC has been essential in the development and implementation of career academies that provide opportunities for students to increase college and career readiness. We’ve been able to build partnerships with small businesses, mid-sized companies, and Fortune 500 corporations. Our students job shadow, intern, and work in these companies as well as have mentors and advocates. YCC has made it possible to build a program that the district, community, and employers support.

YCC – Academy of Finance and Academy of IT
Contact: Hannah Chan, 651-785-6794
🌐 https://www.spps.org/domain/641
🌐 https://www.spps.org/domain/5723
🐦 @comoaof