

# FRHSD LEARNING CENTERS AND ACADEMIES

## Questions and Answers

### What are Learning Centers and Academies?

#### Learning Centers

Learning Centers are four-year programs of **academic study** offered to a selected group of highly motivated students who have demonstrated interests and abilities in particular fields of study. Students and faculty of a particular program join together to form a unique learning community located within the comprehensive high school setting. All Learning Centers include in depth study of targeted courses on an advanced level, with many courses meeting the requirements of Advanced Placement or college level work. Learning Center courses fall under traditional academic disciplines such as science, math, social studies, and language. However the four-year sequence of course work combines to make an integrated and interdisciplinary academic experience for students. The centers address the core skills, knowledge and values that are essential to success in high school and in preparation for acceptance to a competitive four-year college or university.

#### Academies

Academy programs are four-year programs of specialized coursework and experiences for students who have a particular **career interest**. The programs integrate career and technical courses in addition to the traditional academic curriculum. Students who attend our academies benefit from being part of a career-oriented learning community while at the same time being a fully participating student within a comprehensive high school. The academy environment encourages students to engage in meaningful learning activities that are relevant to real-world settings. Students who attend academies are prepared to directly enter the work force where they can immediately use the knowledge and skills; attend a post-secondary technical program; or attend a two or four year college.

### Can I take Learning Center or Academy classes if I am not a student in the program?

No. These courses are designed as part of a four-year sequence of study and are not available to students outside the program.

### How will I get to school if I am accepted into a program that is not located in my home school?

The Freehold Regional High School District provides bussing for all academy and learning center students, including an activity bus to accommodate after school participation in extracurricular activities.

### What are the eligibility requirements for Learning Centers and Academies?

To determine if you are eligible for application to a learning center or academy, you should ask yourself the following questions. Your responses will help you to decide whether or not you are eligible to apply.

#### Learning Centers:

- ✓ Do my grades in the subjects that are the academic focus of the learning center demonstrate that I am ready to accept the challenge of the program?
- ✓ Have I demonstrated that I can balance the demands of accelerated classes while still participating in sports, clubs, hobbies and other extra-curricular activities?
- ✓ Do my personal interests match the focus of the learning center?
- ✓ Am I taking the prerequisite course, Algebra I, for application to Business Administration, Science and Engineering, and the Medical Science Learning Centers?
- ✓ Can I identify two teachers in my school that will be willing to provide me with an excellent recommendation for these programs?
- ✓ Have my scores on standardized tests been strong?
- ✓ Am I willing to attend the high school where this program is located?

## What are the eligibility requirements for Learning Centers and Academies? (Continued)

### Academies:

- ✓ Do my personal and career interests match the focus of the academy?
- ✓ Have I participated in classes, after school activities, hobbies or other activities that demonstrate that I have had some experience with the focus of the academy?
- ✓ Have I demonstrated that I can balance my interests and my required school work and be successful at both?
- ✓ Am I taking the prerequisite course, Algebra I, for application to the Computer Science Academy?
- ✓ Can I identify two teachers in my school that will be willing to provide me with an excellent recommendation for these programs?
- ✓ Can I identify one other professional who has knowledge of my performing arts talent and who will provide me with an excellent recommendation for FPAA and for JROTC?
- ✓ Am I willing to participate in an audition for FPAA and/or an interview for JROTC?
- ✓ Am I willing to attend the high school where this program is located?

## Why is Algebra I required by the Business Administration, Medical Sciences, and Science and Engineering Learning Centers, and the Computer Science Academy?

9<sup>th</sup> grade coursework in these four programs assumes student proficiency in Algebra I. Therefore, middle/sending school transcripts must reflect successful completion (a grade of "B" or better) of Algebra I by 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation in order for a successful applicant to be enrolled in one of these four programs. Pre-Algebra does not satisfy this requirement, nor does Algebra I taken during the summer immediately prior to 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

## What opportunities will I have to learn more about these programs?

We will offer students an opportunity to learn more specific information about particular learning centers and academies during our **Program Overviews**. Students will have an opportunity to attend a formal presentation on the program, meet with staff and students and tour the high school where the program is located. Please see our web site for a full schedule of these events.

## How do I apply?

The on-line application will be available to you on October 7, 2011. The application will remain open to new applicants until 11:59PM on October 31, 2011. Once you log into the application site, set-up your user name and password and provide us with some basic contact information, you will officially be recognized as an applicant. Each time you log onto your application, you will be able to make changes or additions to your work. At 11:59PM on October 31, your application will be frozen and you will not be able to make further changes or additions, except to your essay(s) and personal statement. You may edit your essay(s) and personal statement until 11:59PM on November 11.

## How many programs may I apply to?

You may apply to up to **TWO (2) programs**. You can apply to any combination of learning center and/or academy programs (e.g. Law/Public Service Learning Center and Computer Science Academy). You do not have to apply to two programs. You may apply to just one, if you wish.

## What is included in the application?

The following is a list of the components of the application. Those items that appear in **blue** are part of the on-line application that is completed by the student. Those items that appear in **black** are to be completed separately by either teachers or the guidance counselor. The entrance exam will be administered on December 3, 2011. Students will receive a registration ticket for the exam once the application has been processed.

- Basic student contact information including a parent/guardian e-mail address
- Student's choice of up to 2 magnet programs
- One student essay for each program
- A list of student's activities and interests
- Student's academic records including 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade report cards
- Recommendations from appropriate teachers or professionals
- Entrance Exam for all learning centers and for the Computer Science Academy (December 3, 2011)
- Audition for Fine and Performing Arts Academy (schedule TBA)
- Interview for Navy Junior ROTC Academy (schedule TBA)

## Who may I ask for a recommendation?

You should ask **two teachers** who know you well and can provide feedback on your interest, academic work, and likelihood of success in the program(s) to which you are applying. Select these individuals carefully and ask those teachers who teach classes that most closely resemble the focus of the program (e.g.: ask your Science and Math teachers if you are applying to Science and Engineering).

Some programs may require additional paper recommendations (available as a PDF file to print) from another teacher in your school or professional outside of your school who has trained you or has knowledge of your talent.

## Why must I audition for FPAA and interview for JROTC? How do I schedule an appointment?

These programs are especially focused on a student's talents and potential for growth in unique areas of interest. You will be evaluated by the professionals who work in these programs using very carefully designed criteria. Only those students who demonstrate a genuine interest in the programs, previous training (FPAA only), and potential for success in the programs are accepted.

You will be asked to submit a request (available as a PDF file to print) for an audition and/or interview appointment at the time you apply. This request must be signed by your parent/guardian. You will be contacted by the supervisor of the program to schedule an audition and/or appointment for an interview.

## Can I prepare for the Learning Center test?

No. This is not a test that you can study for. Be sure to get a good night's rest and eat a good breakfast.

**When will you review my application?**

We will monitor the applications coming into our system during the application period, but we will not begin the review process until after all parts of the application are complete, including parts that are coming from your school and recommenders. You will be able to check "status notes" on your application so that you can be assured that all of the parts that are out of your hands have been completed. Note that applications that are incomplete (that is, missing required items) will not be reviewed.

**When will I find out if I have been accepted?**

We are planning to notify students in early February.

**Can I be accepted to both programs?**

Yes. You will be accepted to or offered a seat on the waiting list for any program for which you are qualified. You will only have several days to make your choice. Once you accept a seat in a program or a spot on a waiting list, you cannot switch into another one.

**What is the waiting list and how does it work?**

Because we have limited positions in each program, we begin by offering acceptance to the top students who qualify for admission. However, not all of those students choose to enroll. Therefore, we offer other students who meet all of the standards for acceptance a place on the waiting list. As students make their choices to attend or not, we invite students from the waiting list to attend. Because this is a fluid process, we will not tell you what your likelihood of being accepted is. We will encourage you to make decisions based on your interests.

**What happens if I am not accepted to any program?**

You will attend your home school. All of our high schools offer a variety of courses that will meet your interests and abilities.

*If you have other questions, please do not hesitate to contact our offices at:*

*(732) 792-7300, x. 8529*