



## Freshman Academy / Frequently Asked Questions

The 865 Academies initiative aims to **transform the high school experience** for Knox County students, through the creation of **career-themed academies**.

When fully implemented, students will choose an academy and a career pathway, which will include **at least three elective classes** aligned to a college and / or career goal.

These classes will be completed during the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, and will be **combined with learning experiences** that bring businesses, community, and college partners into the school. Students will also have the chance to **visit college campuses and job sites** to explore and apply what they are learning.

### What is the first step in this process?

Beginning in 9th grade, Karns students will participate in Freshman Academy, which is designed to welcome them to high school, provide a smaller learning community to connect with teachers and classmates, and help them select an academy pathway for Grades 10-12.

### Who is included in Freshman Academy?

Karns students from the Class of 2026 will be the first to experience the high school redesign, beginning in the Fall of 2022. In future years, all incoming 9th-graders will be part of Freshman Academy.

### What happens during Freshman Academy?

Students will participate in multiple activities:

- **Freshman Seminar** is a class students take in the 9th-grade year that focuses on helping students identify interests, aptitudes, and professional skills, through resources including the **YouScience assessment tool**;
- **Career Exploration** activities introduce students to professional opportunities and host guest speakers from various industries;
- Participation in a **career fair** gives every freshman an opportunity to discuss career opportunities with local industry partners;
- The exploration of career pathways connected to interest and aptitude leads to the selection of a **pathway within a career-themed Academy** to explore through their remaining three years of high school;

- The selection of the career-themed academy is celebrated with a **declaration ceremony** in the spring of the freshman year;
- **Advanced Academics** activities prepare students to pursue advanced academic classes (Advanced Placement, Cambridge, or International Baccalaureate), obtain industry credentials or receive dual enrollment credit through a community college; and
- **College visits** provide exposure to academic opportunities beyond high school.

**When will students pick their academy pathway for Grades 10-12?**

Students will pick their academy pathway during the second semester of their freshman year. They will work with their school counselor and the college and career counselor to make an individual plan of study for their high school coursework. The student will review the plan with advisors to make adjustments as necessary.

**What if my student wants to change their academy pathway?**

After making their initial selection, students will have the opportunity to change their pathway one time during their high school career.

**Is this change being made at other schools?**

Schools in the first cohort of The 865 Academies are Austin-East, Bearden, Central, Farragut, Fulton, Hardin Valley, and Karns. The remaining district high schools will be part of future cohorts that implement the program.

**My student attends Karns and will be in the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade this year. How will they participate in The 865 Academies?**

This is a redesign of the high school experience and will begin with students who are rising 9th-graders. Students in Grades 10-12 will continue to participate in the traditional high school scheduling process for the remainder of their careers.

**How can I find out more information about The 865 Academies?**

For more information for one of the schools in cohort 1, please contact the academy coach or principal at the high school or visit [knoxschools.org/academies](http://knoxschools.org/academies). For general information, please visit the website. If you are interested in partnering with the schools as an industry partner, please contact Mary Brooks at [mary.brooks@knoxschools.org](mailto:mary.brooks@knoxschools.org) to start the process of bringing your time and talent to community-connected learning in the KCS high schools.