

Polytech High: Strong Blend of Academic and CTE Instruction



Polytech High School in Delaware illustrates much of SREB's vision for transforming high schools. Polytech has connected its 20 career pathways programs with college-ready academic courses, establishing high expectations for every student.

Polytech enrolls 1,200 students, roughly 60 percent of whom are white and 40 percent students of color. Ten percent of its students are enrolled in special education. Polytech recently graduated 97 percent of all students and ranked 6th in reading achievement and 14th in mathematics among Delaware's 60 public high schools. The graduation rate is even more impressive when you consider that Polytech has higher graduation requirements for students than the state requires. The school's standard is 28 credits, including 4 mathematics and 10.5 CTE credits; students also complete a capstone senior project.

Polytech High's success is due in part to its efforts to assist each student to find a meaningful path that will inspire their ongoing learning and achievement. The school's career pathways are grouped into four academies: industrial, professional services, health and medical services, and modern technology. Each pathway has a strong partnership with businesses and postsecondary institutions. During the first semester, students test out different career pathway fields. Each student spends three class periods in each of the 20 pathways, experiencing a sample mini-assignment and learning about potential future career opportunities and postsecondary studies.

In the second semester, each 9th grader spends 20 days exploring two career pathways. This includes a project assignment involving technology, a field trip to potential worksites, and visits to postsecondary institutions. Students then decide which of the two pathways they will spend 45 days studying in the second half of the semester and throughout their years at Polytechnic. In their sophomore year, 95 percent of students are able to enroll in their first-choice pathway.

In 2018, 76 percent of Polytechnic graduates enrolled in college their first year after high school; 82 percent returned for the second year. Only 16 percent needed postsecondary remedial college math and 11 percent needed remedial college English.