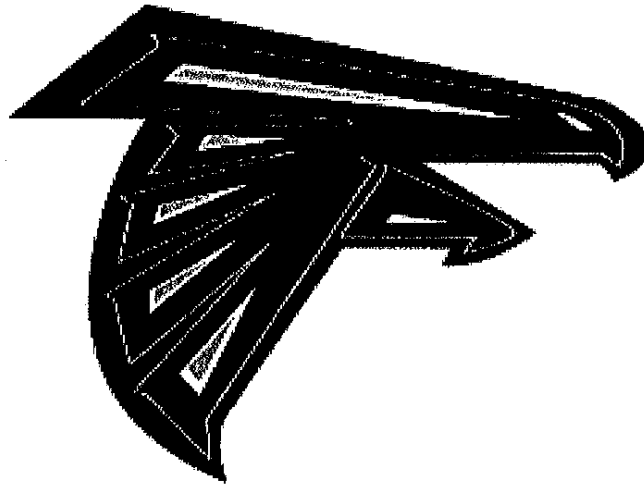


# INNOVATION SCHOOL APPLICATION



## **Falcon High School** Falcon District 49 December 2011

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# Falcon High School

## SECTION I: MISSION, BELIEFS, GOALS, VISION, GUIDELINES AND COMMITMENTS

### Mission Statement

*The Falcon High School community is dedicated to educating our students in a safe and supportive learning environment and to developing responsible 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens through innovative educational programs.*

### Our Motto

*"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."  
-President Franklin D. Roosevelt*

### Belief Statement

*The Falcon High School Community believes in:*

- Fostering responsible 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens**
- Academic excellence**
- Leadership and lifelong learning**
- Creating innovative opportunities**
- Original and diverse teaching strategies**
- Neighborly and accepting environment**

### Goals

The ultimate goal at Falcon High School is to ensure that all students who graduate will do so at, or above, grade level in all academic subject areas thereby being well prepared for post secondary/career opportunities. By doing so, our goal is to increase student achievement across all academic areas, improving our overall academic rating as measured by the Colorado State Accountability Report. All students will participate in learning opportunities that are designed to build upon and enhance their individual strengths and talents. Academic instruction will incorporate mastery learning strategies into daily lesson plan development and delivery. Teachers will investigate and utilize grading practices that ensure student proficiency of content area curriculum. All Falcon High School teaching staff will also utilize professional learning community time to collaborate with colleagues to develop sound assessments that will enable them to increase the use of that data to drive instruction that promotes increased student achievement.

### Vision Statement

#### **School Setting & Environment:**

Falcon High School is an exemplary school that fosters a safe, respectful, and purposeful educational environment through:

- Productive and positive interactions between staff and students.
- Ongoing technology updates.
- Academic rigor and relevance.
- Consistent policies and practices of attendance and discipline that reinforce good citizenship.
- An aesthetically pleasing and functional building structure and classroom setting.
- A caring environment that values the diverse background of all students.



**Student Academic Achievement:**

All Falcon High School students will:

- Meet high academic standards through a coordinated curriculum.
- Contribute to and maintain a safe and positive learning environment.
- Ensure and respect the rights of others.
- Focus on an educational or career path for life beyond high school and the skills necessary for success.
- Uphold and honor the habits of good citizenship.

**Falcon High School faculty will:**

- Provide a safe and positive learning atmosphere and climate.
- Interact positively and communicate appropriately with all students, parents, and patrons.
- Collaborate with one another to improve student achievement within and across academic departments.
- Provide a comprehensive, coordinated curriculum.
- Provide prompt feedback to students and parents.
- Make full and efficient use of instructional time.
- Focus on student learning and commit to the success of all students.

**Six Guidelines For Success****1. Student Achievement –**

Student achievement is our top priority at Falcon High School. Each department will establish SMART goals for their students. For individual students, we will establish goals that coincide with their Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs), and Response to Intervention Plans (RTIs).

Additionally, we have established student achievement goals within our School Improvement Plan. All goals revolve around the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP). These measurable goals are limited to reading, writing, science, and math.

All teachers will use the At-a-Glance maps, Unit plans, and District, State, or National Standards when building lesson plans.

**2. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment –**

Following current research and best practices, the existing curriculum and structure at Falcon High School will be supplemented with a multi-strand approach that encourages learning and growth for all students. Falcon High School will integrate a rigorous career and college-preparatory curriculum with the option for students to pursue a course of study in one of six comprehensive Academies: Information and Technology, Finance, Health Careers, Visual and Performing Arts, Character and Leadership, or Pre-Collegiate. The academic environment will be supplemented to increase internal supports, safety, and school attachment – characteristics that have been shown to eliminate the achievement gap in public schools. The curriculum at Falcon High School will be overlaid and aligned to the CTE (Career and Technical Education) system of instruction, which is based on the premise that students of all abilities can succeed if held accountable to the highest standard, provided appropriate academic and social supports, and encouraged to participate in opportunities for learning enrichment. We at Falcon High School believe that a standards-based assessment system will promote academic success for our students. Teachers, students, and parents will have a clear understanding of each student's strengths and weaknesses so that this information can be used to promote growth and provide remediation where needed to ensure student success.



### 3. **Professional Learning Community –**

Falcon High School is fully committed to the vision and structures within Professional Learning Communities. Listed below are our answers to the key PLC questions:

- How will you determine if students have learned the material? We will monitor student progress through pre/post, lesson, unit, formative, and quarterly assessments. All teachers must monitor student progress and provide feedback. Administrators must monitor the quarterly test results and offer feedback.
- What will you do when they “get it or don’t get it?” We must focus our attention on why students are not learning at the appropriate level. We will use research based effective instruction strategies (re-teaching, mastery learning, etc.) to address our student’s educational needs in the classroom. For our school to be completely successful, all general and special education classrooms must base their lessons on this principle. Students on IEPs can receive extra help at the classroom level. We offer tutoring after school for all subject areas.
- Falcon H.S. teachers are encouraged to collaborate about students who are testing below standard. Lesson plans should be built accordingly.

FHS will continue to train staff members using the PLC model. Collaboration among staff members is a common and shared vision of the school.

### 4. **Staff Development –**

Our staff is fully committed to a comprehensive staff development model. For this to occur, we must fund the staff development line item sufficiently. We will place our staff development funds in the following areas: Professional Learning Communities, Instructional methods and techniques, CPM Math and other Math related topics, Information Technology, Finance, Business Conferences, Social Sciences, Science, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, CASE Conferences for the administration, NACAC and other conferences for counselors, Student to Student training sessions, Pre-Advanced Placement training for instructors teaching these classes, Creative Writing, Response to Intervention (RTI), Physical Education and Health, Special Education, Character Education, AFJROTC, Inclusivity training, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, Scantron, Advanced Placement Training sessions for classroom instructors, and some national conferences for teachers and administrators. Classified staff members will attend staff development training in their specific areas.

### 5. **Parental/Community Involvement –**

Falcon High School values and honors the necessary communication between school and home. Therefore, we will incorporate the following events and/or programs for parents and guardians: 2 Parent-Teacher Conferences per year, an Open House at the beginning of each school year, Homecoming Events for the entire community, Cheerleading Camp for elementary and middle school students, Infinite Campus access for parents to check grades, e-mails or phone calls to parents from teachers, Parent Nights for Athletics, Sports Physicals for Athletes, Band Concerts, Choir Concerts, Rachel’s Challenge Assemblies for students and community members, Clothing Drive for those in need, Harvest of Love food drive for the community, School Newsletter, Parents’ Night at Sporting Events, School Plays, Art Exhibits, Treat Street for younger kids on Halloween.

### 6. **School Climate –**

FHS may offer the following events, activities, and clubs (but not limited to) to enhance the school climate and support our vision beliefs: Link Crew to help freshmen acclimate to the rigors of high school, National Honor Society, Student to Student activities for new students, Student of the Week awards, positive referrals, kudos for staff including lunches, Golden Apple awards for staff, planned events for staff, Student Hall of Fame, Display of Valedictorians and Salutatorians, Art Open Studio, Bowling Club, DECA, School Play, FCA, Drill Team, HOSA, FBLA, B Jazz Band, AFJROTC – Rocket Club & KHAS, Knowledge Bowl, Marching Band, Math Olympiad, UNC Math Contest, AMC 10/12, Mock Trial, Athletic Teams, Science Olympiad, and Extreme Riders Ski and Snowboard Club.



## **Commitments**

### ***Administrative Commitments to Falcon High School***

The Administrative Leadership Team of Falcon High School is committed to the education and well-being of each student. As part of a professional learning community, we have identified the following values in order to guide the policies, procedures, programs, priorities, and day-to-day decisions of the school. The Team will honor, advance, and protect these values. We will also acknowledge and address behaviors that are inconsistent with the school's mission, vision and goals.

1. We will model and advance the behaviors established in the Falcon High School's Vision Statement to all members of the Falcon community. These behaviors include:
  - active promotion of the school's mission, vision, values, and goals;
  - high standards and expectations for student success and engagement in reflection and collective inquiry regarding best practices;
  - a commitment to the contribution toward high-performing collaborative teams;
  - a commitment to life-long learning through ongoing professional development and growth;
  - a commitment to collective inquiry and reflection on the results of student achievement in order to improve student learning; and
  - a commitment to a high level of mutual support and trust between all members of the learning community.
2. We will recruit and retain individuals who are best suited to advance the vision and goals of the school, and we will create conditions which support their ongoing professional growth.
3. We will facilitate the development of curricular and co-curricular programs which result in high levels of student engagement, address student needs and interests, integrate technology when appropriate for achieving program goals, and enable students to understand and appreciate diversity.
4. We will model, monitor, and enforce student and adult behaviors that contribute to a safe and orderly environment while respecting the rights of others within a diverse community.
5. We will develop and implement policies, programs, and procedures to monitor and support collective achievement and individual student success.
6. We will develop and implement policies, programs, and procedures which result in increased responsibility for student learning, decisions, and actions.
7. We will recognize and celebrate the individual and collective efforts and achievements of the Falcon High School community.
8. We will fulfill our responsibilities for good stewardship by managing the school's resources in a manner that addresses the needs of the community, establishes community partnerships, and builds community support.
9. We will celebrate school accomplishments and promote school spirit.

These commitments are designed to help the Administrative Leadership Team serve the advancement of the six components of the Vision and Values Document: *Emphasis on Student Achievement, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Working Within a Professional Learning Community, Staff Professional Development, Parental and Community Involvement, and School Climate.*



### ***Faculty Commitments to Falcon High School***

We have established these guiding principles as a basis for our values as teachers and professionals at Falcon High School. They are intended as a means for informal personal reflection and are not intended to be used in the formal evaluation process. They represent our *shared purpose* and will continue to guide us as educators.

1. We will develop curriculum and instructional strategies that utilize various resources which will promote active involvement of students, provide for their varied experiences, as well as individual abilities and talents.
2. We will assist each student in their transition into high school, through high school, and beyond by providing appropriate instruction, monitoring his/her progress, and offering guidance and support services tailored to individual needs.
3. We will model the importance of life-long learning through our ongoing professional development.
4. We will collaborate with one another to create conditions that provide equity and promote student success.
5. We will act in a professional manner with integrity and honesty and will develop relationships characterized by caring and respect.
6. We will provide a supportive school atmosphere where everyone feels emotionally, physically, and intellectually safe.
7. We will hold high expectations for student achievement and character, and will guide students to make responsible choices for their lives and the learning process.
8. We will care for our physical environment and school property and will expect the same of students.
9. We will communicate with parents and each other about students and will encourage parents to be positively involved in their children's education.
10. We will celebrate school accomplishments and promote school spirit.

### ***Support Staff Commitments to Falcon High School***

As members of the Falcon High School support staff, we affirm our active participation in helping Falcon achieve its mission to become an exemplary learning community. In fulfilling our respective responsibilities, we share common commitments.

1. We will support the collective effort to create the school described in Falcon High School's Vision and Values Document.
2. We will foster a safe, nurturing, responsible, and positive environment that is conducive to the academic, ethical, and social growth of each individual student.
3. We will continue to develop and support positive relationships with our colleagues, students, and community.



4. We will show appreciation for cultural diversity and be sensitive to the thoughts and opinions of others.
5. We will participate in effective and open communication throughout the school and community.
6. We will pursue a commitment to continuous improvement in our performance.
7. We will honor our commitment to life-long learning.
8. We will demonstrate pride and ownership in the school taking responsibility for informed decision-making.
9. We will develop a sense of responsibility and mutual respect in each student.
10. We will celebrate school accomplishments and promote school spirit.

### ***Parent Commitments to Falcon High School***

As parents, we must first become familiar with the established mission and vision statements of Falcon High School. We can contribute to the pursuit of the mission, vision and the success of our children when we:

1. Become informed and knowledgeable about the curricular, co-curricular, and student support programs available to students by:
  - carefully reviewing all school publications such as the Curriculum Course book and Student Code of Conduct.
  - attending and participating in parent information programs sponsored by the school.
  - reading The FHS Newsletter each month.
  - reading/using the FHS website.
2. Assist our children in making important educational decisions by:
  - helping our children set educational goals which are appropriate to their individual capabilities, interests, and needs.
  - participating in the course selection process.
  - encouraging involvement in school activities.
  - helping our children identify and pursue post-secondary education and career goals.
3. Engage in open and timely communication with the school by:
  - responding to the school's feedback about our children's academic progress and behavior.
  - advising school personnel of any special circumstances or needs of our children.
  - being proactive in asking questions, expressing concerns, and seeking information.
4. Become actively involved in the life of the school by:
  - attending school programs.
  - participating in parent support groups such as the PTSA, Booster Clubs, etc.
  - volunteering in the school.
  - acting as an advocate for quality education within the community.





- promoting Falcon High School to the extended community.
  - celebrating school accomplishments and promoting school spirit.
5. Help our children become responsible, self-reliant members of the school community by:
- teaching them to accept responsibility for their own learning, decisions, and behavior.
  - insisting they observe the rules of the school.
  - demonstrating respect, consideration, and cooperation in dealing with others and expecting others to do the same.
6. Create a supportive environment for learning in our homes by:
- modeling the importance of life-long learning.
  - providing a quiet time and place for study.
  - helping our students make connections between their learning experiences and their everyday lives.
  - expecting achievement and offering encouragement and praise.
7. Promote healthy lifestyles by:
- modeling and supporting responsible lifestyle choices.
  - monitoring the activities of our children and responding to behavior which jeopardizes their health and well being.
  - becoming informed of the risks associated with teenage use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
  - discussing and developing family rules which prohibit illegal use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

### ***Student Commitments to Falcon High School***

As a student of Falcon High School, you are asked to help contribute to our tradition of excellence. By maintaining high personal expectations for success, utilizing open communication with staff and fellow students, and following the guidelines listed below, you both increase your opportunities for success and help make Falcon High School an excellent school. To ensure this success, as a student you will:

1. Take responsibility for your education, decisions, and actions.
2. Act in a manner that best represents you, the school, and community.
3. Be active in the school and community.
4. Maintain a balance between academics, co-curricular activities, and other endeavors; continually giving your best efforts to each.
5. Respect your fellow students and their activities.
6. Respect cultural diversity, individuality, and the choices and rights of others.
7. Promote a safe and healthy learning environment
8. Celebrate school accomplishments and promote school spirit.



## **SECTION II: INNOVATIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED**

### **1. School Staffing/Employment**

#### **Principal Leadership**

The Principal of Falcon High School reports to the Innovation Leader of the Falcon Innovation Zone. The principal's responsibilities are to the students, staff and community of Falcon High School. In order to be a true instructional leader, the principal, with the advice of the Leadership Team, must be able to make full use of time, money and resources to meet the requirements of this Plan. In the event of a change in leadership (principal), Falcon District 49 will work in cooperation with the Falcon High School Leadership Team and staff to make every effort to secure a principal who understands the nature of the innovation status and the provisions within this application.

In the event of a change in leadership (principal) at Falcon High School the provisions of this innovation plan will remain in place for a period not to exceed nine (9) months. For purposes of this requirement, the nine (9) month period will begin on the date the Board of Education approves the hire of a new principal. During this nine (9) month period the new principal, Leadership Team, and staff at Falcon High School will review the Plan and make suggestions concerning items to add to or remove from the existing Plan. On or before the end of the nine (9) month period, the revised Plan must be approved by the Falcon High School staff with the same approval requirements as were utilized during the initial approval and as stated in the Innovation Act and in CO state law. This plan cannot be altered without a majority approval by the administration, the School Accountability Committee, and the Falcon High School Staff.

#### **Participatory Leadership**

All members of the Falcon High School staff will work with strong instructional leaders to share the decision-making responsibility in order to provide professional leadership and expertise needed to ensure high student achievement. Although the principal will always remain accountable as the final decision-maker at Falcon High School, there is a commitment to participatory leadership, by the Falcon High School staff, in all aspects of school operations, especially instruction.

#### **Leadership Team**

The principal will continue to lead an instructional leadership team which includes assistant principals and members from each core and elective area. Any other staff member that wishes to attend and be part of the Leadership Team is also welcome. The leadership team will be responsible for establishing and reviewing the conditions for student learning at the school. The Leadership Team will meet as needed throughout the school year to review, plan, and provide feedback regarding curriculum, instruction, assessment, and operations of the school. It is expected that members of the Leadership Team will report to the rest of the faculty details from these meetings.

### **2. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

At times, recommendations are made by the district/zone to implement a program, adopt a textbook, use an assessment or modify the scope and sequence of curricular content in a way that does not match the educational programs or meet the needs of the students at Falcon High School. The staff at Falcon High School is requesting the liberty to make curricular and instructional decisions that are in alignment with our educational plan, within state standards, that support the programs and goals of our school, and allow us to provide rigorous, appropriate grade level instruction. Falcon High School is requesting a waiver from District 49 policies JICJ, EG, JJJ-R, and JQ-R which will allow the school the authority to strengthen our instructional programs and assessment and grading system that is aligned to Colorado State Standards. See waiver matrix for further information and specific rationale for each policy waiver requested.

## **Academies**

Following current research and best practices, the existing curriculum and structure at Falcon High School will be supplemented with a multi-strand approach that encourages learning and growth for all students. Falcon High School will integrate a rigorous career and college-preparatory curriculum with the option for students to pursue a course of study in one of six comprehensive Academies. Falcon High School currently has two functioning academies; Information and Technology and Health Sciences, with the short term goal of adding four additional academies; Finance, Visual and Performing Arts, Leadership and Character, and Pre-Collegiate. The academic environment will be supplemented to increase internal supports, safety, and school attachment – characteristics that have been shown to eliminate the achievement gap in public schools. Incoming students will be filtered through a freshman exploratory program. This exploratory program will offer a general studies curriculum that could be enhanced by an extra study hour and data-informed academic supports, as well as preparatory sessions to introduce upper-level academies.

The curriculum at Falcon High School will be overlaid and aligned to the CTE (Career and Technical Education) system of instruction, which is based on the premise that students of all abilities can succeed if held accountable to the highest standard, provided appropriate academic and social supports, and encouraged to participate in opportunities for learning enrichment. Falcon High School will also utilize District 49's Response to Intervention strategies for creating appropriate learning interventions for all students – whether they are low-achieving or gifted. In addition to this, every student will develop an Individual Career Achievement Plan (ICAP) designed to evolve throughout their high school career. Students completing the exploratory program will have the option of either remaining in the rigorous General Studies program or matriculating into one of the Academies. Entrance to the Academies will be based on four factors: grades, attendance, citizenship, and an interview or audition score.

### **Identified issues within FHS:**

1. Student motivation and direction
2. Career/job readiness
3. Student accountability
4. Opportunities to apply learning to "real world" situations
5. High number of students desiring non-academic avenues of career/lifelong learning
6. Mass exodus of students from district due to finances, transportation, academic performance, culture, etc. → decreased revenue within the district

### **Projected academic achievement improvements:**

1. Improved assessments to create a superior understanding of student learning and ability to apply learning to "real life" situations.
2. Increased student accountability through the implementation of specific, relevant requirements and assessments.
3. Increased student performance through increased student buy-in, direction, and motivation.
4. Improved student preparedness by decreasing class sizes.
5. Increased revenue for D-49 schools by providing superior options and marketing/publicity for the district.
6. Increased connections to 21<sup>st</sup> century skills requirements.

The concept of career academies is to address academic rigor, relevance of instruction and to build strong and supportive relationships between students and adults. The success of career academies over the years has been attributed to their dual objective of college and career preparation, the broad cross section of students they serve. Students who participate in academies are engaged in a significant way, as academies support the students' positive motivations. Understanding the student's motivations or career goals have helped engage students in a significant way.

### The Academy concept:

- Focuses on academies in the high school environment enable students to complete college entrance academic requirements while exposing them to a vertical segment of the occupations within a career field, encouraging them to aim as high as they wish.
- Raises student aspirations and commitment. An academy seeks to increase the level of the students' motivation while in high school. The biggest limiting factor in many youth's future plans is not their ability, but where they set their sights.
- Increases student achievement. An academy provides support to its students to increase their achievement in high school. This comes through close relationships with teachers and fellow students, rigorous and relevant curriculum and exposure to career and educational options outside the high school.

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation has conducted a 5-year evaluation of career academies, covering 9 academies and 1,900 students. The evaluation report (Kemple and Snipes, 2000) documents the following findings:

- Career academies reduced dropout rates by nearly one-third for at-risk students (those identified as least likely to do well in a traditional school environment).
- Students enrolled in career academies attended high school more consistently, completed more academic and vocational courses, and were more likely to apply to college than their counterparts who were not enrolled in academies.
- Career academies provide at-risk youth opportunities to set goals and reach academic and professional objectives that may have otherwise been unobtainable.

The upper-level Academies and General Studies curriculum will allow students to prepare themselves for post-secondary pursuits through accelerated coursework, internships with community partners, service learning opportunities, and concurrent enrollment options. In addition, each strand will include career certification programs designed for those interested in the world of work immediately after high school.

The curriculum at Falcon High School is designed to be as rigorous and relevant as possible so that students will be prepared for the real world – whether that includes college or the world of work. Every student at Falcon High School will have the opportunity to perform at high levels, seek post-secondary opportunities, and become successful 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens.

### **Visual and Performing Arts Academy**

This Academy will encourage students to take risks and explore new mediums and opportunities for artistic expression such as:

- use digital computer technology to enhance their art
- develop the emotional powers that music can bring
- make a personal statement in theater.

Students in this program will become goal-oriented and self-directed learners that are able to work independently, but know the value of a creative team. The Visual and Performing Arts Academy offers creative students a chance to participate in many cross-curricular, and community, integrated projects with an emphasis on student publication and the creative process. The Visual and Performing Arts Academy prides itself as an opportunity to develop careers in a variety of media and receive college level credits/credentials upon completion of a three year program.

The Academy will provide students with access to Colorado Springs' most qualified arts professionals. Through interaction with their instructors and a series of artists-in-residence, students will have exposure to art specialists that will inspire and motivate them while enhancing their artistic skills.

During their junior and senior year, students will have the chance to apply for internships pertinent to their art focus area. Seniors will be assigned mentorships and have the opportunity to collaborate with art professionals in their respective fields as well as workshops to prepare their college applications. At the completion of their senior year, all students will complete a Senior Project and produce evidence of learning in portfolio format. Students will showcase their work in a special evening dedicated for the community to witness the talents of graduating Visual and Performing Arts Academy students.

Within this Academy, students will experience a sequential, standards-based curriculum in: Music Theory, Composing, Band, Choir, Jazz Band, Jazz Choir, A Cappella Singing, Music Composition, Music Arranging, Music Theatre, Choreography, Private Voice, Private Instrumental, Percussion Ensemble, Orchestra, Theatre Appreciation, Improvisation, Costuming, Conducting, Playwriting, Lighting/Electricity, Acting, Audio/Sound, Dance, Production Design, Set Design, Stage Combat, Stage Management, Theatrical Production, Two and Three- Dimensional Design, Drawing, Painting; Watercolor, Acrylic, Oil, Printmaking, Graphic Arts and Design, Sculpture, and Functional/Non-functional Ceramics

Students will be heavily supported by classes that provide multiple levels of skills-based training and extended learning opportunities outside the classroom.

### **Leadership and Character Academy**

The Leadership and Character Academy is designed for students with an interest in pursuing careers in the fields of government, military, law enforcement, or community leadership. Students in the Leadership Academy will be challenged with a diverse leadership, character and social sciences curriculum that fosters a sense of responsibility to lead and improve their local, state, and national communities.

### **Academy of Pre-Collegiate Studies**

The Academy of Pre-Collegiate Studies will be a grass-roots project dedicated to creation of a framework in which:

1. Students must take a minimum of 1 Pre-Collegiate course (AP/CU/Honors course per semester of sophomore year.
2. Students must take a minimum of 2 AP/CU courses and one other (or an Honors designation course for a total of 3 each semester.
3. Students must maintain and finish the course with a 73% (C-) in all courses to remain in the Academy (otherwise be re-assigned to the Academy of Exploratory Learning)
4. Movement into and out of the Academy will be fluid: Courses contained within the Pre-Collegiate academy will also fulfill requirements within other Academies.

Students who wish to join the Academy may apply as well as be removed each semester (however, a set number of seats will be available and a waiting list may be implemented if interest/demand exists) A possible 3 year implementation plan may be necessary.

Year 1: Research/alignment

Year 2: Minimum of ½ of Academy implemented (in particular those courses that align with other existing academies (e.g. CTE/Nursing, Finance, etc.)

Year 3: Full implementation



The structure for this Academy (i.e. classes offered, teachers trained/qualified, etc.) is already in place, making implementation more streamlined. Marketing of the Academy (mission statement, course offerings, etc.) could also begin via link on district/zone website.

### **Finance Academy**

With an emphasis on accounting, finance, business law, economics, and E-commerce, students at Falcon High School have the opportunity to excel in the world of finance, by participating in a new Finance Academy. In addition to core high school classes and above-mentioned electives, the four-year Finance Academy will offer classes in entrepreneurship, marketing, and computers. The academy will also give students the chance to participate in a paid service-learning experience. Moreover, this Career and Technology program will engage every student in rigorous 21<sup>st</sup> Century relevant educational pathways utilizing problem-solving and program based curriculum; preparing and empowering students in a technological and global society.

### **Blended Programs: Supplemental Online Programs**

In order to provide a school structure that both challenges and engages all students, providing options that will improve efficiency during this time of educational transition is of utmost importance. According to research done by Michael Horn and Heather Staker, in their January 2011 Innosight Institute article, *The Rise of K-12 Blended Learning*, online education courses that are supplemental to the education program provided by a school are a valuable resource for schools because they allow a school to provide a much richer, more varied curriculum of courses for students at all levels of achievement; decreasing the college remediation rates and helping students comply with the higher education admission guidelines. Falcon High School proposes to create a learning environment where students can learn in a blended classroom environment which characterizes programs that rely on an online platform to deliver components of the course, but in a brick-and-mortar lab environment. Falcon High School also proposes to utilize the self-blend model which encompasses any course students take online to supplement their traditional school schedule.

### **Student Performance Reports**

Reporting the progress of each individual student to parents/guardians is an essential part of the education process. To best match the educational program at Falcon High School and report progress toward the mastery of standards, we reserve the right to develop our own grading and reporting system if it is determined to benefit FHS's mission, vision and goals. The timeline will be shared with teachers, students, and parents as the system is implemented.

### **Standards-Based Grading**

General Beliefs:

1. We at Falcon High School believe that a standards-based grading system will promote academic success for our students.
2. Teachers, students, and parents will have a clear understanding of each student's strengths and weaknesses and we can use this information to promote growth and provide remediation where needed to ensure student success.
3. The purpose of grades is to communicate about the student's current level of achievement. Assigning grades to shape behavior is not consistent with a Standards-based educational system.

## Grading Guidelines:

1. Arrange grade book entries according to course objectives (learning targets, benchmarks, standards, skills, etc).
2. Utilize a scoring system in which interpreting a score can easily translate to meaningful information.
3. Collect sufficient evidence of student learning to justify the current grade. Replace old evidence with the most current evidence when it is reasonable to do so. Provide multiple opportunities throughout the semester for students to demonstrate mastery.
4. Every graded item on an assessment (written or otherwise) must be tied to course objectives so that final grades are criterion-referenced and not norm-referenced.
5. Convert, weight, and combine grading information carefully and purposefully.
6. Students will be involved in tracking their own learning and be informed of their progress throughout the year.
7. Evidence of learning is required to progress through the curriculum.

Standards-based grading is a way of combining alternative forms of assessment by assessing students on specific criteria and reporting on students' specific strengths and weaknesses. Guskey (2001) argues that "standards-based grading offers important information about students' achievement and performance. If sufficiently detailed, the information is useful for both diagnostic and prescriptive purposes. For these reasons, standards-based grading facilitates teaching and learning better than almost any other grading method."

The main purpose of grades is to communicate achievement to students, parents, administrators, counselors, and post-secondary institutions. The problem is that teachers use a variety of methods for calculating grades. Many teachers grade students based on factors such as conduct, attitude, and attendance (Cross and Frary, 1996). In addition, in one survey, many teachers reported that they inflated the grades of low-ability students, possibly due to lower student expectations (Cross and Frary, 1996). Furthermore, some teachers use norm-referenced grading in which a student's grade is based on performance compared to other students (above average, average, below average). Under this system, "high-graded students might actually have performed very poorly in terms of established learning standards, but simply less poorly than their classmates" (Guskey, 2001). Guskey also notes that this type of grading can create a competitive environment in which students feel that helping others threatens their own success in the class. According to measurement experts, student performance should be compared to clearly defined criteria (criterion-referenced), not to the performance of other students (Friedman and Frisble, 2000; Guskey, 2001). Friedman and Frisble (2000) note that grades should indicate the extent to which students have mastered the standards while conduct, effort, attitude, and attendance should be reported separately from academic grades.

Cross and Frary (1996) supported this opinion by stating that "percentage grading scales are usually arbitrary, since 90% correct on an easy test may represent performance comparable to 80% on a more difficult test of the same topic." In addition, teachers may be less inclined to include challenging test items. Hopkins et al. (1990) explained, "a rigid adherence to the conventional percentage could discourage teachers from including many items from the higher taxonomy levels" (as quoted in Cross and Frary, 1996). On the other hand, the use of a standards-based grading scale in which students are given the opportunity to *exceed* the standard requires teacher to include high level questions on assessments.



Furthermore, percent scores do not accurately reflect the amount of content a student has learned in the course. Friedman and Frisble (2000) argued that "a percent score of 87, for example . . . seldom means that the student knows 87% of the important content studied during the grading period." A standards-based grading scale more accurately reflects students' knowledge of the course content since students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate knowledge. "If past assessment information doesn't accurately reflect their learning, new information must take its place" (Guskey, 1994).

Standards-based grading also allows for students to be involved in the process of tracking their own learning and setting their own goals towards meeting course objectives. According to Stiggins (2004), maximum learning takes place when students are involved in the assessment process. Having students setting their own learning goals has been linked to student achievement gains of one-half to two standard deviations on high-stakes tests, with the largest gains made by low achievers (Stiggins, 2005).

Although there have been few studies conducted on the impact of student achievement of standards-based grading, especially at the high school level, it is clear that providing fair, accurate information to students and parents is an important component of a plan to improve student achievement.

### **3. Innovative Learning Community (PLC)**

The principal, faculty and support staff at Falcon High School (FHS) will collaborate to promote the professional growth of all staff members that will incorporate best practice strategies vital to increasing the academic achievement of all students. "The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is developing the ability of school personnel to function as professional learning communities" (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). A Professional Learning Community (PLC) can contribute to instructional improvement and school reform (Annenberg, n.d.; Little, 2003). This process allows for FHS to develop the collective capacity of educators to function as members of this innovative community, using the PLC process as the strategy for overall school improvement.

Falcon High School has been shifting from a culture of teaching to a culture of student learning in a collaborative environment; however, what we have been doing is only the beginning. In order to truly create and sustain this collaborative culture, a school-wide effort to operate as a professional learning community is essential. "Schools that function as professional learning communities are always characterized by a collaborative culture. Teacher isolation is replaced with collaborative processes that are deeply embedded into the daily life of a school. Members of a PLC are not 'invited' to work with colleagues. They are called upon to be contributing members of a collective effort to improve the school's capacity to help all students learn at high levels" (Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2002). The principal, faculty, and staff at Falcon High School will collaborate to promote the professional growth of all staff members through professional learning communities and ongoing professional development. The professional growth system will incorporate practices vital to improve the achievement of all students and ensure teachers the professional latitude necessary to enact the mission of Falcon High School.

The Professional Learning Community, which FHS will call the Innovative Learning Community (ILC), is a concept which represents an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Many, 2010). It does not require educators work harder; it asks them to redefine their roles and responsibilities.

PLCs promote results-oriented thinking that is focused on continuous improvement and student learning (Reichstetter, 2006). Professional learning community discussions and professional development will be relevant, research based and data based. Professional development will be relevant such that it will support the staff to implement a viable academic program (that is responsive to the needs of the students), ensure ongoing improvement, and cultivate a positive intentional school-wide culture. The focus goes beyond a team getting together to look at data. In PLCs, teachers respond





to data that require mutual accountability and changing classroom practices. Data helps motivate teachers to see what is happening and what they need to do collectively (White & McIntosh, 2007). PLCs are most effective when their purpose is to enhance teacher effectiveness for the ultimate benefit of students (Stoll et al., 2006). By participating in PLCs, teachers may experience a variety of benefits that contribute to improved student achievement, including:

- Reduction of isolation
- Increased commitment to the mission and goals of the school
- Shared responsibility for student success
- Greater job satisfaction and higher morale
- Lower rates of absenteeism (Hord, 1997)
- Sustained school improvement efforts also have been attributed to PLCs (DuFour & Eaker, 1998)

Types of collaboration, professional actions, and professional development to be implemented through professional learning communities include, but are not limited to:

- Response To Intervention (RTI)
- Data Analysis
  - Review and analyze data
  - Data driven instruction
- Peer Collaboration
  - Co-Teaching Planning
  - Building Assessments
  - Core Team Planning
  - Teaching Strategies
  - Mentoring
  - Standards Based Grading
- Staff Training
- Faculty meetings

The primary outcomes related to staff development will:

- Effectively analyze data for the purpose of improving student achievement
- Instruct teachers to create multiple standards-based materials
- Maintain teacher focus on state standards
- Collaborate, mentor, and coach between teachers
- Develop a strong and effective RTI process
- Schedule time for teachers to engage in professional learning communities and complete staff development

The non-negotiables of this process are as follows:

- All teachers must work collaboratively, because school improvement is people improvement and the quality of instruction is the most important variable in student achievement.
- Regular ILC time must be embedded into the routine practices of the school.
- Educators are clear on the purpose and priorities of their collaboration. We must stay focused on the right work.
- Indicators: Evidence of student learning is being monitored on a continuous basis through the use of ongoing formative assessments in the classroom and frequent common formative assessments developed by teams. Each team demonstrates that its members have clarified the criteria they use in judging the quality of student work and have established inter-rater reliability in assessing student work. The team has an intervention plan to provide students who struggle with resources and support for learning in a way that is timely, directive, precise and systematic. The end result being that all practices make progress toward established SMART goals.

- Educators work together to clarify: What it is we want our students to know? How will we know if our students are learning? How will we gather evidence of each student's proficiency as a team? How will we respond when students do not learn? How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?
- To know if students are learning/achieving, goals must be set and evidence of that learning must be analyzed. There must be a focus on results.

Innovation status allows Falcon High School to design and implement a master schedule, a teacher work schedule, and an annual calendar that will best serve our students, families, and teachers. We believe that teachers need individual and collaborative planning in order to be most effective.

Professional learning community time will be scheduled for up to two (2) hours each week during the regular school year and regular school day. This time will be used to collaborate in small professional learning communities and to receive professional development. It will be scheduled as work time with no student supervision duties; therefore, the student schedule will need to accommodate up to a two hour late start or up to a two hour early release once a week. This time will replace the current staff development days that are on the district calendar.

Converting to innovation status allows Falcon High School to become a collaborative body utilizing shared decision making. With more stakeholders explicitly committed to and engaged with the process of professional learning communities and professional development, our students will be the greatest benefactors of our collaborative and mission-driven approach.

### SECTION III: DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICT POLICIES THAT NEED TO BE WAIVED

To allow Falcon High School to become a school of innovation, the request is being made to waive the following BOE policies.

<b>Innovation Area</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Use of Electronic Communication Devices	D49 Policy JICJ	The FHS faculty recognizes the value of electronic devices in the learning process as well as the vital communication role they can play during emergency situations. A waiver from this district policy would allow electronic communication devices to be used for educational purposes in the classroom at teacher's discretion and supervision with the exception of privacy matters.
Budget	Fee Schedule Changes	D49 Policy JQ-R	A waiver from this district policy would allow FHS to set its own fee schedule to accommodate the needs of individual classrooms.
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Information Technology Management	D49 Policy EG	A waiver from this district policy would allow FHS to purchase technology to accommodate the needs of the individual classrooms according to FHS's innovation programs.
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  Standards-Based Grading	Athletic/Activities Eligibility	D49 Policy JJJ-R	This waiver would allow FHS to set eligibility requirements based on CHSAA guidelines to accommodate the transition to a standards-based grading system.

## SECTION IV: SCHOOL BUDGET FROM PREVIOUS YEAR AND A PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE INNOVATIONS BEING IMPLEMENTED

The budget below illustrates the current year's budget plan along with some proposed figures for the 2012-2013 school year. In the proposed budget, additional monies are shown to be required to cover technology expenses and staff professional development in anticipation of the approval of the Innovations related to grading practices and technology enhancement. These monies will be collected from any additional contingency funds that are allocated to Falcon High School. If no contingency funds are allocated to the school at the beginning of the year, some funding from the media center, furniture, and instructional supplies will be reallocated into the technology and staff development fund, which will be decided upon by the administration and staff of Falcon High School. The budget also projects for a 15% cut in anticipation of further cuts coming from the state level. The budget process for Falcon High School will become a collaborative effort between administration and staff to determine true budget amounts for the upcoming school year. After these amounts have been determined, the administration and staff at Falcon High School will seek input and approval from the School Advisory Committee. All of the innovation factors will be taken into account to ensure the programs are implemented with fidelity and meeting the instructional needs of our students. This budget is subject to review/change as new figures come from the state and district level, along with changes in costs related to various purchases for technology and professional development for the upcoming year.

<b>Budget Description</b>	<b>Line Item</b>	<b>Current 11-12</b>	<b>Proposed 12-13*</b>
<b>Staffing Expenses</b>		<b>\$3,594,058.00</b>	<b>\$3,594,058.00</b>
	Certified	\$2,972,149.00	\$2,972,149.00
	Classified	\$621,909.00	\$621,909.00
<b>Non-Salary Expenses</b>		<b>\$126,872.00</b>	<b>\$114,540.00</b>
	Administration Funds	\$10,400.00	\$8,840.00
	Department Funds	\$21,834.00	\$19,519.00
	Furniture	\$6,750.00	\$5,738.00
	Instructional Supplies	\$30,000.00	\$25,500.00
	Media Center	\$7,948.00	\$6,756.00
	Office Supplies	\$28,190.00	\$23,962.00
	Staff Development	\$23,500.00	\$19,975.00
	Technology	\$5,000.00	\$4,250.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$3,720,930.00</b>	<b>\$3,708,598.00</b>
<b>Contingency</b>		<b>\$94,128.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>		<b>\$3,815,058.00</b>	<b>\$3,708,598.00</b>

\*The proposed budget includes a 15% reduction.

## SECTION V: ESTIMATION OF THE COST SAVINGS AND INCREASED EFFICIENCIES AS A RESULT OF THE INNOVATIONS

There will be slight changes in the effective use of funding at Falcon High School as a result of the innovations that have been proposed. By delegating authority to the school to make decisions regarding curriculum, student fees, and technology, we are better able to make decisions based on the specific needs of our students and staff. As an innovative school we will work to set a budget that accurately represents the mission, vision and goals of our school, thus increasing our overall efficiency.

Technology is required to enhance our infrastructure. This includes, but is not limited to, acquiring needed equipment and devices, and purchasing software to meet the constantly changing technological advancements. This line item will be impacted by our proposed innovations, but will ultimately result in cost savings as we align ourselves with career and technical education through our Academies and seek reimbursement for newly implemented programs through CTE.

The current Student Fee Schedule does not accurately represent the exact cost of consumables, technology, and other classroom expenses. There are circumstances where the set fees from the district do not cover the expenses the school incurs throughout the school year. A waiver from District 49 policy JQ-R, which designates the current fee structure, will allow Falcon High School to set fees according to need, thus increasing our overall efficiency.

#### **SECTION VI: ADMINISTRATOR, TEACHER, COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT**

On December 1, 2011, the teachers employed at Falcon High School voted 40 to 19 in favor of the Falcon High School Innovation Plan.

On December 1, 2011, the School Advisory Committee voted unanimously in favor of the Falcon High School Innovation Plan.

On December 1, 2011, the Administrative Team voted unanimously in favor of the Falcon High School Innovation Plan.

## Additional Information/References

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## **APPENDIX A**

December 1, 2011

Falcon D49 School Board,

The purpose of this letter is to inform the school board that the paraprofessionals and classified staff members at Falcon High School support the school's application for Innovation Status. We feel that this plan will provide an innovative and rigorous instructional program that targets state standards and implements best practices based on research. We also feel that this plan supports the mission and vision of the school to provide students a variety of opportunities which will prepare them for success in college and careers. We support the Innovations as stated knowing that it will provide our teachers the academic freedom needed to prepare our students for success.

Sincerely,

(See attached documentation for signatures of those support staff members who participated on December 1, 2011)



## APPENDIX B

December 1, 2011

Falcon D49 School Board,

The purpose of this letter is to inform the school board that the members of the School Advisory Committee (SAC) at Falcon High School support the school's application for Innovation Status. We feel that this plan will provide an innovative and rigorous instructional program that targets state standards and implements best practices based on research. We also feel that this plan supports the mission and vision of the school to provide students a variety of opportunities and prepare them for success in college and careers. We support the Innovations as stated knowing that it will provide our teachers the academic freedom needed to prepare our students for success.

Sincerely,

*Lloyd A. McIntire*  
*Anne M Lloyd*  
*Gabriel Carter*  
*Melvin D. Stone*  
*Susan Thomas*

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+7  
68

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-4  
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STAFF MEMBER	12-1-11	Column 1	Innovation Plan Vote
Acuff, Mark			
Albertson, Jennifer			
Austin, Paul			
Bagby, Cheryl (Library)			
Baun, Seth			
Berkeley, Robert			
Blocher, Lisa (English)			
Boulett, Sarah			
Brickner, Dennis			
Burnside, Derek ABSENT			
Butcher, Gary			
Buxa, Brian			
Catron, Jason			
Divine, James			
Dunn, Jeff			
Estepp, Kelli			
<del>Elink, Jon</del>			
Gale, Vance			
Gibson, Katherine			
Goad, Ron			
Gray, Jennifer			
Green, Maria			
Greene, Dan			
Hafner, Steve			
Hall, Josh			
Hartley, William			
Hederson, Terry (Science)			
Henderson, Trugina			
Hudgens, Beth			
Johnson, Alan			
Johnson, Sarah			
Kennedy, David ABSENT			
Kincaid, Angela			
Knowles, Christina ABSENT		Christina Knowles	
Kranz, Dave			
McCluan, Matthew (Business)			
McCullohs, Kathryn			
McDonald, Jennifer			
<del>McIntire, Alex</del>			
Michaels-Lipp, Connie (HCA)			

25

Schaefer

Morris, Greg	<i>Greg Morris</i>
Murphy, Lauren	<i>Lauren Murphy</i>
Neilson, Brooke	<i>Brooke Neilson</i>
Painter, Larry	<i>Larry J. Painter</i>
Patterson, Diane ABSENT	<i>Diane Patterson</i>
Paxton, Nicole	<i>Nicole Paxton</i>
Rainford, Wayne (Math)	<i>Wayne Rainford</i>
<i>Schaefer</i> Reyes, Jennifer (Spanish)	VOTED <i>DKs Lori!</i>
Roberts, Bonnie	<i>Bonnie Roberts</i>
Roberts, Davlyn	<i>Davlyn Roberts</i>
Robinson, Claude (SPED/Eng)	<i>Claude Robinson</i>
Rohr, Beth	<i>Beth A. Rohr</i>
Ross, Jennifer ABSENT	<i>Jennifer Ross</i>
Rottenborn, Jim	<i>Jim Rottenborn</i>
Ruecker, Natalie	<i>Natalie Ruecker</i>
Russell, Thomas (IT)	<i>Thomas Russell</i>
Salas, Nickolas ABSENT	<i>Nickolas Salas</i>
Sieczkowski, Joshua (English)	<i>Joshua Sieczkowski</i>
Stegner, Kristin	<i>Kristin Stegner</i>
Stell, Theresa	<i>Theresa Stell</i>
<del>Stump, Nathan</del>	<del><i>Nathan Stump</i></del>
Sturgill, Donnie	<i>Donnie Sturgill</i>
Torrance, Tom ABSENT	<i>Tom Torrance</i>
Turner, Jim	<i>Jim Turner</i>
<i>C</i> <del>Tuten, Suzanne (Nurse para)</del>	<del><i>Suzanne Tuten</i></del>
Uy, Arlene	<i>Arlene Uy</i>
Villani, Amber	<i>Amber Villani</i>
<del>Weber, Patrick (ELL)</del>	<del><i>Patrick Weber</i></del>
Wernsman, Joyce	<i>Joyce Wernsman</i>
<del>Acosta, Anthony UCCS</del>	
<del>Acosta, Nancy UCCS</del>	
<del>Belflower, Maddie UCCS</del>	
<del>Jackson, Kaitlin UCCS</del>	
<del>Rushing, Cody UCCS</del>	
<del>Striebel, Bobby UCCS</del>	
<del>Vanney, Lindsey UCCS</del>	
<del>Woodson, Chaz UCCS</del>	
<del>Zeiters, David</del>	
<i>C</i> Ausmus, Amanda	

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Bornhoft, Sheri ✓	
Dick, Sueanne ✓	
Johnsion, Sandra ✓	
Martin, Vicky ✓	
Oliphant, Candice ✓	
Paffile-Beardslee ✓	
Romero, Lupe ✓	
Scholer, George ✓	George W. Scholer
Struska, Joseph ✓	

↓

Tanya Martens - Tanya M. Martens  
 Tammy Cruze - Tammy Cruze  
 Laurie Maddox - Laurie Maddox  
 Dorette Schimpf - Dorette Schimpf  
 Ilena Brewerton - Ilena Brewerton

Barby - Signed  
 Tuten - Signed

Scott Branham - Scott A. Branham  
 Susi Biernat  
 Chris Hudspeth  
 Sergio Bonilla  
 Casey Nall  
 Bill Pierce  
 Greg Sherman  
 Kim P

Candice Oliphant - Candice Oliphant  
 Sandra Johnson  
 Amanda Aasmus  
 Lupe Romero - Lupe Romero  
 Joe S  
 Sherri Bornhoft - Sherri Bornhoft  
 Sueanne Dick  
 Vicky Martin  
 Kim Beardslee - Kim Beardslee

(U)

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24 total