**Signature Programs FAQ**

**What is a Signature Program?**

A **Signature** is a theme chosen by a school and its surrounding community, to connect classroom instruction with real-world situations and workforce-relevant skills. A **Signature** brings together educators with local business and community leaders to make classroom instruction relevant, interesting, and challenging for students with opportunities that connect to the 21st century workplace. Each of the 12 comprehensive high schools in Anne Arundel County will offer a unique **Signature Program**. These programs align with the AACPS goals to eliminate the achievement gap by providing all students with access to rigorous coursework.

**How is a Signature Program theme selected for a high school?**

Members of the community are invited to participate in formal and informal brainstorming to determine the unique needs of the community. A survey collects data reflecting the interest, culture, resources and businesses in the surrounding community. A **Signature Program** “theme” is then selected for the high school based on survey results and supporting data.

**Who is responsible for implementing a Signature Program in each high school?**

The school personnel, including the **Signature Program Facilitator (SPF)** and the **Integrated Community Stakeholder Team (ICST)** are responsible for implementing the **Signature Program** in each high school. An Integrated Community Stakeholder Team (ICST), facilitated by the SPF, includes five or six individuals from each of 6 community arenas - business/industry, health, education, community services, media and communication, and government.

**What are the roles and responsibilities of the Integrated Community Stakeholder Team (ICST)?**

After selecting the theme, the ICST works with the school to determine needs, timeline and budget, program elements, outcomes, resources, curricula and creates a detailed **Signature Program** plan. In partnership with school personnel, the ICST will remain involved with the sustainability of the **Signature Program**.

**How does my child participate in the Signature Program?**

There are multiple pathways for a student to participate in the school’s **Signature Program**. Students will be able to engage in signature-related courses, after school offerings, field trips, guest speakers, and internship work opportunities throughout their high school years. Individual Signature Program offerings will be available to all students on a space-available basis during annual student scheduling or registration time.
How will the Signature change my child’s high school program?

Students who participate in the Signature will be able to choose from specially designed courses, co-curricular and career opportunities enhanced with the school’s unique theme. These may include seminars with leaders in their field, internships, mentoring, technical and community college courses, online learning, and other real world experiences. Students may develop individual pathways and create a portfolio that demonstrates their unique skills and talents surpassing information found in a standard high school transcript.

What if my child is not interested in his/her school’s Signature theme?

Students do not have to participate in their school’s Signature. The Signature is a specialized program within the regular high school in which students may opt to participate. As Signatures are community chosen and based, students may only participate in their local high school’s Signature.

What are the benefits of being involved with a Signature Program?

-For a Student

There are many advantages for students who participate in Signature opportunities. Students who take full advantage of the Signature Program will complete high school highly qualified for both the workforce and higher education experiences. Many Signature students will complete high school with a technical certificate or college credit. Students who select to participate in some courses and co-curricular activities will be able to create a portfolio that will enhance their high school transcript with enhanced Signature-related experiences in the community and in the greater Baltimore-Washington workplace.

-For a Business Partner

There are wide-ranging benefits to businesses and employees in getting involved in Signature Programs. These benefits include:

- Increased employee motivation through involvement in volunteering
- Development of leadership and management skills
- An opportunity to shape the future workforce
- Raising the profile of your business in the community through linking with local schools

For more information, please contact the Severna Park High School Signature Program Facilitator:

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