

HIGH SCHOOLS' ACADEMIES OF FINANCE SEEK INTERNSHIPS

Two Western New York high schools are seeking internships for their Academy of Finance students. Programs in Orchard Park High School and West Seneca Central School District introduce students to the broad career opportunities available in the ever-changing financial services industry through involvement in a hands-on business curriculum. Students learn workplace skills and develop self-confidence as they participate in a rigorous and relevant business curriculum.

To achieve these goals, the Academy is looking for positions to place high school students in the summer before their senior year to work at least 100 hours and paid at least minimum wage.

The following are the components of a paid, professional NAF Academy internship:

- Students apply and interview for the job
- Students are paid at least minimum wage to work for a defined time period, often full-time for 6-10 weeks the summer of their junior year of high school
- Students report directly to their supervisors in the workplace and benefit from periodic supervision and guidance from staff at their Academy
- Students and employers hold themselves and one another to a high standard of leadership, professionalism, and accountability
- Business partners work closely with NAF Academy instructors or administration before the internship to ensure these expectations will be met

Paid, professional internships must also offer students:

- An extension of their Academy instruction and curriculum in a particular field;
- Experience honing their soft workplace skills, such as teamwork, critical thinking, decorum, conflict resolution, time management, ingenuity, problem-solving, and a solid understanding of the importance of written and oral communication; and
- Entry-level exposure to a career in their chosen field and to experiences and situations they can expect if they pursue a career in that field.

BENEFITS TO BUSINESSES:

- Focused, direct way of getting involved in local education initiatives
- Meaningful interaction with students
- Active participation through Advisory Board and classroom teaching opportunities
- Identification of future employees and business and community leader
- Help identify, shape and retain entry level employees in the community
- Provide excellent public relations news

- Facilitate networking opportunities

This is a visible, meaningful way to give back to your community and schools, and at the same time, increase your bottom line!

Employers see real benefits from participation [in school partnerships]** Increase bottom line through:

- Lower recruitment costs
- Lower training costs
- Higher employee productivity
- Higher morale of existing workers
- Greater ability to work in teams
- Higher work ethic
- Lower employee turn over

** Institute on Education and the Economy, Teachers College, Columbia University

Additional information and contact:

- Orchard Park: <http://www.opschools.org/highschool.cfm?subpage=337>. Please contact Jim Wilson, Chair Academy of Finance Advisory Board, 716.662.1311 x 102, cell 716.998.9157.
- West Seneca student intern informational packets can be obtained by contacting Tim Oldenburg, Academy Director, at 677-3318. Academy information is also available at <http://www.wscschools.org/academics.cfm?subpage=303>

Orchard Park and West Seneca High Schools are part of a network of career academies of the National Academy Foundation which was founded in 1982 by Sanford I. Weill, Chairman Emeritus of Citigroup Inc., as a partnership between business leaders and educators.

Weill's vision was to address the lack of opportunity for New York City public high school students. He designed a program that brought businesses and educators together to put students on a career path leading to Wall Street. The New York City Board of Education accepted his program and, with a grant from the American Express Foundation, opened the first Academy of Finance (AOF) in a Brooklyn public high school in 1982.

NAF's success in raising the standard of academic and financial achievement among young people – especially among underperforming students – has garnered the endorsement of corporations, public policy makers, and foundations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The National Academy web site <http://naf.org> is a good source of information on the program and does include other area high schools if you are interested in checking for another you might want to affiliate with.