

Plaza Academy
Curriculum & Planning Guide
2020-2021



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Welcome to Plaza Academy!

As a 1985 Plaza Academy graduate, I am aware of how impactful this school can be for students, like me, that may not have had success in traditional schools. I have been the Executive Director of Plaza Academy since 2013 and am extremely proud of how far our school has come in that time. After renting in the community since 1974, Plaza Academy was able to purchase and renovate our first very own building in 2017. This has given us a sense of security and stability and has solidified our place in the community for years to come. As a result, we have been able to attract a wonderful professional staff and have a staff retention rate of 97% over the past 3 years. The wealth of talent and diversity at our school makes this truly a special place. Another source of pride for us is the immense success our students have at Plaza Academy. Our students come to us broken, yet after a short time in our warm, family environment, they find that they are finally able to completely be themselves without fear or anxiety. Due to the daily partnership and hard work of our staff, students, and parents, our teens are able to rebuild their confidence and become successful young adults and Plaza Academy high school graduates.

Ward Worley

Executive Director

Plaza Academy History: Plaza Academy is an accredited institution founded in 1974; this makes us the oldest continuously operating alternative school in the Kansas City Metro Area. Initially, Plaza Academy evolved out of a research grant from Kansas University. The original Executive Director, Gary Seabaugh, was dedicated to serving this unique population of students. Over the years, Plaza Academy has evolved with the changing times – but the dedication to serve students whose needs are not met in traditional schools continues to be our focus. In 2017, we bought and renovated our own building thus creating a permanent home for Plaza Academy.

Plaza Academy Mission: The Plaza Academy mission is to provide individualized academic, therapeutic, and civic education in an ownership-based environment that empowers our non-traditional learners to graduate high school and become successful young adults.

Our Philosophy: The Plaza Academy is an alternative school in which our staff, students, and parents work together to achieve academic, social, and familial success for teenagers who have been unsuccessful at traditional schools. We offer rigorous college preparatory academics in an environment that encourages critical and creative thinking through both verbal and written expression. The Plaza Academy designs curricula to meet the needs of teenagers and their families as we prepare students for college and other post-high school environments. Our civic education model and therapeutic curriculum teaches our students to take control and have ownership over their own livelihood. The Plaza Academy prepares our non-traditional learners for their type of adult success: whether they matriculate to college, trade school, the military and/or enter the workforce directly to begin providing for themselves.

Full Accreditation: The Plaza Academy has been fully accredited by Cognia, formally Advanced Ed, since 1986 and is recognized by the state of Missouri Department of Education, DESE. In addition, DESE has approved us as a contracting educational organization to serve students with disabilities and we are an Approved Private Agency for the mental health care of adolescents. We are approved to treat students with autism, emotional disturbance, OHI, orthopedic impairments, specific learning disabilities, and TBI.

Enrollment Process: Call Plaza Academy, (816) 561-0770, to initiate an overview of your child's needs, then you will be invited to set up an interview with our Executive Director and tour the school. If agreeable by both parties a two day shadow visit will be scheduled. After that, completing [enrollment papers](#), paying initial enrollment fee and first month's tuition, and your student will be on their way to success.

Diploma Credits Required: Plaza Academy **requires 24 credits to graduate.** Our required course work is below.

- 4.0 credits - English Language Arts
- 3.0 credits - Mathematics
- 3.0 credits - Science
- 3.5 credits - Social Studies (this includes Government and American History)
- 1.5 credit - Health and Physical Fitness
- 1.0 credit - Fine Arts
- 1.0 credit - Practical Arts
- 0.5 credit - Personal Finance
- 6.5 credits - Electives

To calculate Grade Point Average (GPA): course grade points are summed and divided by the number of course units completed. For GPA calculations, points are assigned for each course completed as follows:

- 4.0 grade points for an A
- 3.0 grade points for a B
- 2.0 grade points for a C
- 1.0 grade point for a D
- 0.0 grade point for an F

Credit Recovery & Grade Replacement: Students have several options if they fail a course or earn a low grade. A student may retake a course to improve their grade; the original grade will not be included in the calculation of the student's GPA. Summer school is also an option for students to recover credit and finally, online credit recovery is available in some situations

Dropping Classes: Dropping courses may jeopardize eligibility, progress towards graduation, and post-secondary options. Courses dropped after the tenth week from the start of the semester may be recorded as an F. Appeals may be made to the building principal. Students who select full credit courses are expected to remain in the class for the full year. Students may not drop required or core classes and must maintain a full schedule of classes. Schedule changes have to be approved by the building principal, executive director, and the appropriate classroom teacher.

On-Line Learning: Plaza Academy partners with the Springfield Public Schools and North Kansas City School District to offer LAUNCH, a virtual school that was created as a solution for course access issues. It serves to provide flexibility and personalized learning options. Each student's option for online learning is evaluated individually. The course fees range from \$150-\$255 per course, a full list of course offerings is available through the school principal.

Early College Experience: This opportunity is offered through Metropolitan Community College and these programs are open to juniors and seniors who are ready to start college-level work and get a head-start towards a high-skill, in-demand career field. There are a variety of career field options. Schedule a tour with the school principal. The Metropolitan Community College has several campus locations to serve you. This is college level work and grades earned will go on your permanent college transcript. Poor grades may affect your ability to receive Financial Aid. However, MCC provides additional tutoring and lab support for Early College students. Additional information can be found on their website: www.mccckc.edu

ACT/SAT: Plaza Academy offers an ACT preparation class for our students. The ACT, SAT I, and SAT II tests are administered on a limited number of national test dates during the year. The deadline to register for one of these tests is approximately one month prior to the test date. Plaza Academy offers test fee waivers for our students who qualify. See the school principal for access to a waiver.

Enroll using the following websites: www.ACTstudent.org or www.collegeboard.com. ACT research shows students who complete the following core curriculum consistently score higher on the ACT than those students who do not take the core curriculum:

- *4 English Language Arts credits*
- *4 Math credits (Algebra I & above)*
- *3 Science credits (Lab Sciences)*
- *3 Social Studies/History credits*

The Recording Studio is the heart of the music program at Plaza Academy. A full recording studio offers students a chance to create and record their original songs and beats. The students have an opportunity to learn how to write their own music, putting beats/rhythms together, mixing the song, recording, branding and advertising of the song. The Recording Studio is fortunate to have close ties to the Hip Hop Scene in Kansas City and have the support of a number of musicians. Through the dedication of many people and generous donations, the Music Program continues to support young student musicians.

Special Services for Students with Disabilities: Plaza Academy, by design, is a small personalized setting for students that are not successful in a traditional school setting. Therefore, students with an IEP or 504 Plans are intermingled in our student population and teachers are accustomed to providing accommodations and modifications that students need to be successful. This is for both academic and social goals. Plaza Academy has a special education coordinator who oversees all IEP's and 504's, providing quarterly updates on goals and progress monitoring to partnering school districts.

Special Services Course Options:

Functional Academic Skills: Students with significant cognitive impairment require an education that goes beyond the basic subjects that state standards require. While academics, such as math and reading, are part of a functional curriculum for students with developmental disabilities, this type of alternative instruction also includes self-determination and self-advocacy, building social-skills, as well as money-management, independent living skills, and daily living skills education. Functional academics are a practical focus on life skills that help the student to be a contributing member of society and to become as independent as possible. This course has specially designed instruction and **may be repeated for credit.**

Basic Literacy Skills: This course is designed to provide explicit instruction in foundational skills needed in English Language Arts including phonemic awareness/phonics, encoding/morphology, decoding (word recognition), reading fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension strategies for informational texts and literature, as well as grammar and writing. This course provides specially designed instruction on appropriate IEP goals as outlined in each students' IEP and **may be repeated for credit.**

Social Skills: This course provides instruction that helps the student generalize acceptable social skills into daily routines. A major goal of social skills training is to teach verbal and nonverbal behaviors involved in social interactions. The instruction includes interpersonal skills (e.g., making eye contact and practice turn taking during conversations, making "small talk" in social settings, reading social cues, indicating interest in others, discussing a variety of topics rather than just areas of personal interest). Social Skills provides instruction and opportunities to practice social behaviors in a variety of settings to enable the student to read subtle social signals and to interact with others in socially appropriate ways to participate in school, family, and employment. **This course may be repeated for credit.**

Applied Mathematics: Refinement and application of math skills that could be used in careers and industries which students might encounter after they have graduated from high school. Topics may include data gathering and analysis; measurement and conversion; budgeting and purchasing; communicating with numbers; construction math; electrical/pressure systems analysis and adjustment; transportation planning; statistical process control; and financial planning. This class may be especially helpful for those students planning careers in construction, quality control, manufacturing, electrical, HVAC, agriculture, or transportation. This course is taught by special education staff and is designed to provide specialized instruction on appropriate IEP goals as outlined in each student's IEP. This course will modify the math curriculum of general education and **may be repeated for credit.**

Adaptive Physical Education: This class meets the physical education requirement for students with a health problem which prevents them from taking a regular physical education class. A health form is required from a doctor indicating the activities in which the student should not participate. **This course may be repeated for credit.**

General Education Course Descriptions:

Mathematics:

General Mathematics: This course is designed to give students a foundation for future math classes.

Pre-Algebra: This course is an introduction to basic algebra concepts and emphasizes skills needed to be successful in high school math courses. It will also help students develop practical mathematical learning strategies, as well as provide opportunities to strengthen cooperation and teamwork techniques.

Algebra 1: This course is designed to give students a foundation for all future mathematics courses. The fundamentals of algebraic problem-solving are introduced, explained, and practiced.

Geometry: This course covers concepts of Euclidean geometry including definitions, postulates, and theorems, tools and language of geometry, reasoning and proof, parallel and perpendicular lines, congruent triangles, relationships within triangles, polygons and quadrilaterals, similarity, right triangles and trigonometry, transformations, area, surface area and volume, circles, and probability.

Algebra 2: This course continues the study of algebra and geometry, the representation of quantities using variables, and mathematical operations to show relationships. A scientific graphing calculator is required.

Pre-Calculus: calculus is a course designed to prepare students for topics covered in an elementary Calculus course at the college level. A scientific graphing calculator is required.

College Algebra: Topics include relations and their graphs, ratios, proportion, variation, quadric and quadratic form equations, theory of higher degree equations, systems of equations, inequalities, conic, determinants, progression, and binomial theorem. A scientific graphing calculator is required.

Science

General Science: Students will develop an-in-depth understanding of content and develop key skills: communication, collaboration, inquiry, problem solving, and flexibility.

Biology: is the study of all things pertaining to life, including ecology, cellular biology, and genetics. The course content will be taught through lecture, activities and labs.

Earth & Space Science: is a physical science that studies the dynamic processes that shape our planet earth as well as investigates our place in our galaxy and our universe.

Environmental Science: The study of the environment and how it impacts life on earth.

Chemistry: is the study of the composition of matter and the changes that matter undergoes. Everything from making breakfast, our clothes, and even our behavior involves chemistry. A scientific graphing calculator is required.

Physics: Physics is the study of the interactions of matter and energy. This course will focus on introducing students to the language of Physics as well as the motion of bodies, both large and small. A scientific graphing calculator is required.

Social Studies:

Government: This course offers students the opportunity to study American Government and Politics with specific reference to the US Constitution. **This is required for graduation.**

American History: Students will explore American history through the themes of: geography, culture, economics, government, and conflict, from 1600-1945. **A full credit of American History is required for graduation.**

Modern American History: Students will develop a greater understanding of the evolution of global processes that affect the interaction human societies have with one another. Time Period of Study 1945-Present

World History: World History is a survey course with an emphasis on themes in history. Time Period of Study 500 CE - Present.

Ancient Civilizations: Ancient History is a survey course with an emphasis on exploring the earliest record of our earth and human growth and change throughout the world. Time Period of Study 4 million BCE to 700 CE.

Geography: This course utilizes geographic processes to systematically include population, migration, culture, language, religion, ethnicity, political geography, economic development, industry, agriculture, and urban geography.

Missouri History: The content will encompass information about Missouri society, politics, and economic development.

Sociology: Sociology is the study of social relations, organization, and change.

Psychology: Psychology is the study of our mental processes (how we think and why)

History of Pop Culture: This course will dive into the current events of the 1950-1990s decades and the American citizens' response via music, TV, movies, products.

Art History: This survey course explores the nature of art, art making, and responses to art. By investigating specific course content of 250 works of art characterized by diverse artistic traditions from prehistory to the present, students develop in-depth, holistic understanding of the history of art from a global perspective. Students become active participants in the global art world, engaging with its forms and content. They experience, research, discuss, read, and write about art, artists, art making, responses to, and interpretations of art.

Missouri History: Students will explore Missouri history through the themes of geography, culture, economics, government, and conflict. The content will encompass information about Missouri society, politics, and economic development.

English Language Arts

ELA 7 & 8: The overall objectives are reading literary text, reading informational text, writing, speaking and listening. Comprehension skills include the ability to and interpret texts, analyze multiple forms of a story and evaluate how each version interprets the original source of the text.

ELA 9: This course emphasizes reading, writing, speaking, listening, technology, and research skills. Reading includes multicultural literature selections like short stories, plays, novels, poetry, and biographies.

ELA 10: This course emphasizes reading, writing, speaking, listening, technology, and research skills, and builds upon skills from the previous English Language Arts courses. Broad-based, multicultural reading selections include short stories, plays, novels, poetry, and biographies.

ELA 11 & Multicultural Literature: This course examines contemporary multicultural authors that exist inside and outside of the United States. Topics of discussion will include diversity appreciation, cultural differences and similarities, and multiculturalism. Skills emphasized include reading, writing, literary analysis, research, technology, and vocabulary development. A major research paper in MLA format is included.

ELA 12: This course is a composition and literature course with emphasis on the reading and writing needed for college. Students will study grammar, vocabulary, usage, and research skills. Students will write literary criticism, expository essays, and a research paper.

Creative Writing: This course is designed for students seriously interested in acquiring skills necessary to produce short stories and poems of publishable quality.

Business:

Business Management: This course is designed for students entering the business field, those planning to enter management, those studying any business major in college, and those thinking about owning and/or managing their own business. This class is highly beneficial for high school students as the relationship between employees and management is studied.

Business Law: This course is designed to acquaint students with basic knowledge of law for personal and business use. It will highlight concepts such as ethics and law, and criminal law.

Entrepreneurship: Students will develop a business plan for owning and operating their own business. Financing the business, site location, advertising and selling, governmental regulations, and management will be major topics of study.

Personal Finance: This course is designed to provide students with a working knowledge of the multitude of personal, business, and family records used by consumers. This course provides a foundation for managing money, investments and taxes, consumer spending, planning for savings, evaluating insurance and housing needs, and understanding financial markets such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. **Personal Finance is required for graduation.**

Introduction to Computer Science: is an interactive preparatory course for students brand new to programming, it will also teach students how to think computationally and solve complex problems, skills that are essential for all students. This course will cover the foundations of computer science using the Python Programming Language.

Computer Applications: Is an introductory class designed to explore basic computer software such as: Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Students will develop proficient skills to utilize these programs in school and/or work environments.

Health/Physical Education:

Health: This course addresses individual wellness and health issues confronting society today. Topics include prevention of disease, AIDS prevention, alcohol and drug abuse, over-the-counter drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, nutrition, fitness, mental health, and responsible decision making concerning one's health. State-mandated CPR training is a component of this course. **0.5 credit of Health must be passed prior to graduation.**

Physical Education: This course includes basic skills in sports, recreational activities, and emphasizes physical fitness. Students will be provided with the knowledge and skills necessary for developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle that fosters regular participation in physical activities. May be repeated for credit. **1 full credit of PE must be passed prior to graduation.**

Electives

Art 1: A course for beginning students emphasizing concepts, design principles, and techniques fundamental to all aspects of the visual arts. Project work will include drawing, painting, color theory, sculpture, design, art history, and more. This class is a prerequisite for all advanced art courses.

Art 2: A class for students to develop skills in drawing, painting, printmaking, and other two-dimensional visual art media. Students will explore graphite drawing pencils, charcoal, acrylic paint, mixed media, 3D, and relief printmaking. Students will further their understanding of the principles of design and elements of art in order to develop a 2D media portfolio. **May be repeated for credit.**

Photography 1: The course will begin by researching the history of photography with students deciding on an influential photographer to research and present to the class. Then students will focus on how to use various features of digital cameras to gain creative control over photographs. Students will learn how to manipulate lighting and use photographic composition to achieve their artistic vision. **May be Repeated for Credit**

Textiles/Fashion Design 1: This course will introduce students to beginning hand and machine sewing techniques. It is for students with little or no experience in sewing construction methods. Students are responsible for the purchase of all supplies, fabrics, and materials. The class will emphasize safety first with all sewing equipment and ensure each student has the confidence and knowledge to properly apply these techniques. Students will complete the course by designing and sewing a final garment of their choice to demonstrate what they have learned throughout the year. The goal is to instill a lifelong skill that students can incorporate into their lives as they grow and perhaps even inspire future careers in the fashion industry.

Textiles 2: This course will be a continuation of Textiles 1. Students will continue to expand their knowledge of patterns and more complex sewing projects. They will also have the opportunity to do additional hand sewing projects such as: knitting, crochet and/or embroidery. **May be Repeated for Credit**

Film: This course explores the specificity, history, and function of media forms, focusing on the language of cinema and the critical repertoire of film/media theories.

HUMANITIES

Child Development 1: This course is designed to help students understand and appreciate children, the parenting process, and related careers. Topics covered include human reproduction, labor and delivery, and parenting skills. Students will study development during a baby's first year & the 8 Stages of Development.

Child Development II: This class will build an understanding of children's growth and development and a solid foundation of skills needed when interacting with children. Units of study also include adoption, childhood diseases and immunizations, special needs, establishment of routines, sibling rivalry, toy selection, and play activities. Child Development II is a good class for anyone interested in working with children or being a parent.

ACT Prep/Senior Seminar: This course introduces students to the concepts of (including but not limited to): time management and goal setting, career interest exploration, college search, how to pay for college, college application portfolio, and ACT/SAT test preparation. It is recommended for all students who are planning to attend college. Fee vouchers are available, see the school principal. **May be repeated for credit.**

Spanish 1: This course is designed so that students are able to use fundamental language in personal, practical, and culturally authentic everyday situations in oral and written form.

Spanish 2: This course is designed so that students may continue to expand their mastery of fundamental language usage in personal, practical, and culturally authentic everyday situations.

Music:

Music/Humanities:

Intro to Audio Production: This course will cater to beginners. Students will be introduced to the FL Studio Software. Fundamentals in music will be the focus. Some projects may involve song writing, rapping, singing, and recording.

Advanced Audio Production: After completing a semester (or more) in the Intro to Audio Production course, students will have the option of taking this class. The next logical progression from composing musical works is recording/mixing vocals to accompany them.

Musical Social Media/Marketing: Some students love music but can't seem to grasp or fall in love with the process of marketing it. Social media and marketing are critical parts of the modernized music industry. It is easier than ever to make and even release music. However, to be a successful musician/artist, an on-line platform/social media presence is essential.

Intro to Live Instruments: This class is a good option for both students who are advanced in the audio production courses, as well as, students with a specific interest in learning to play an instrument.