



**Board Meeting Date:** 11/4/2024

**Title:** DISCOVER in Edina Public Schools

**Type:** Discussion

**Presenter(s):** Dr. Stacie Stanley, Superintendent; Nate Swenson, Assistant Superintendent; Anne Marie Leland, Director of Strategic Partnerships; Jody De St Hubert, Director of Teaching and Learning; and Paul Paetzel, Edina High School Principal

**Description:** We will be providing an overview of the vision for DISCOVER in Edina Public Schools.

**Recommendation:** No recommendation is being made at this time. This item has been prepared for board discussion.

**Desired Outcome(s) from the Board:** Please review the full report of information and come prepared with your initial reactions (comments/questions).

**Attachment(s):** [Slidedeck](#)

## **Introduction**

In today's rapidly evolving world, the DISCOVER program represents our commitment to excellence in Edina Public Schools. This innovative option creates a more relevant, engaging, and effective learning experience that equips our students for success in their future careers and lives. To fully realize this vision, adequate and appropriate learning spaces are essential - spaces that mirror real-world environments and support the hands-on, specialized instruction these learning experiences require.

## **Personalized Learning and Industry Integration**

DISCOVER recognizes each student's unique interests and aspirations, offering personalized learning experiences that connect directly to real-world experiences and applications. By bridging the gap between education and industry, we provide students with practical skills, knowledge, and industry-relevant experiences that prepare them for both higher education and direct career entry.

## **Community Impact and Lifelong Learning**

The program strengthens ties between our school district and local business industries, addressing economic needs by developing a skilled local workforce. Moreover, DISCOVER instills crucial 21st-century skills, promoting adaptability and self-directed learning, ensuring our students are prepared for lifelong personal and professional growth.

## **Expanding Opportunities**

By advancing and expanding our district's educational offerings, DISCOVER provides diverse pathways for both college-bound and career-focused students. This comprehensive approach not only attracts and retains students but ensures every learner finds a path aligned with their individual goals - what administration sees as the epitome of our mission for students to *Discover Possibilities and Thrive*.

In essence, DISCOVER is a transformative approach to learning that prepares our students for the complexities of the modern world, shaping future leaders, innovators, and contributors to our society.

## **DISCOVER in Edina Public Schools**

**DISCOVER** is an innovative career exploration and preparation program designed to equip our students for success in both higher education and the workforce. The program name is an acronym that encapsulates its core elements:

- **Defining Interests:** Helping students identify their passions and strengths
- **Shaping Careers:** Providing students with opportunities to explore and engage in potential career paths
- **Opening Vistas:** Exposing students to new possibilities, opportunities, mentors and networks
- **Empowering Resilience:** Building skills to overcome challenges, adapt to change, and support the whole student

## **Strategic Priorities**

**Strategy A: Advance Academic Excellence, Growth and Readiness**

1. Provide a coherent and differentiated educational experience that effectively engages, and appropriately challenges every student academically.

### **Strategy B: Ensure an Equitable and Inclusive School Culture**

2. Create a school culture that enhances learning and fosters a sense of belonging for all students through our values of Integrity, Compassion, Courage, Commitment, Appreciation and Responsibility.

### **Strategy C: Foster Positive Learning Environment and Whole Student Support**

4. Create environments that are conducive to learning and facilitate constructive student interaction.

### **Strategy D: Engage Parents, Schools and Community**

5. Provide strategy and direction for predicted enrollment and demographic trends while retaining current students.

### **Strategy E: Engage Parents, Schools and Community**

1. Provide engagement opportunities and information about Edina Public Schools to the community so that all community members feel connected and know how to contribute to our collective success.

### **Key Features**

**Comprehensive Career Preparation:** DISCOVER offers three distinct options aligned with high-demand industries:

a) **Aviation/Aeronautics** (Aviation Pilot 9-12):

- Prepares students for careers in private and commercial aviation, military aviation, or aerospace engineering
- Includes preparation for the FAA Private Pilot written exam

b) **Finance** (Securities & Investments 9-12):

- Focuses on financial markets, instruments, and cutting-edge topics like financial technology and cryptocurrency
- Provides a foundation for careers in investment banking, financial planning, and asset management

c) **Health Sciences** (EMT 9-12):

- Prepares students for careers including nursing, physician, physician assistant, and Emergency Medical Technicians
- Students can sit for the NREMT exam upon program completion
- Offers forensics, comparative anatomy, and human anatomy courses

**Specialized Learning Environments:** DISCOVER programs require purpose-built spaces that reflect industry standards. Examples include:

**a) Aviation/Aeronautics:**

- Dedicated space for flight simulators
- Laboratory space for aeronautical principles demonstration

**b) Finance:**

- Trading floor simulation space
- Conference areas for industry mentorship meetings

**c) Health Sciences:**

- Clinical simulation labs
- Emergency response training areas
- Anatomy and Physiology lab space
- Medical equipment storage and practice areas

**Hands-On Learning:** DISCOVER incorporates practical, real-world experiences such as clinical experiences, investment simulations, and flight simulator training.

**Industry Certifications:** Students can earn recognized certifications, including CPR, Basic Life Support, and preparation for NREMT and FAA exams.

**Community Partnerships:** Collaborations with local entities like the Edina Fire Department provide invaluable real-world exposure.

**College Credit Potential:** Partnerships with higher education institutions may offer college credit opportunities, particularly in the Health Sciences.

**Educational Value**

1. Aligns with our district's commitment to articulate a system of flexible pathways that maximizes learner engagement to grow students' strengths and talents.
2. Emphasizes STEM education across all DISCOVER options
3. Supports personalized learning by helping students explore individual interests
4. Develops crucial 21st-century skills, including resilience and adaptability
5. Prepares students for diverse post-secondary paths, including both college and direct career entry

**Program Strengths**

1. Addresses high-growth, high-demand career sectors
2. Combines academic rigor with practical skill development
3. Fosters community connections and mentorship opportunities
4. Supports both college-bound and career-focused students
5. Enhances our district's educational offerings, potentially attracting and retaining students
6. Purpose-built learning environments that mirror industry settings, preparing students for real-world work environments.

**Next Steps**

1. Develop curriculum details and resource requirements for each DISCOVER option
2. Establish necessary partnerships with local businesses and higher education institutions
3. To fully realize this vision, adequate and appropriate learning spaces are essential - spaces that mirror real-world environments and support the hands-on, specialized instruction these learning experiences require. As such, we will assess and plan for space requirements, including potential new construction needs and/or renovation of existing spaces
4. Develop a timeline for program implementation
5. Create a strategy for student recruitment and selection
6. Design an evaluation process to measure program effectiveness and student outcomes

The EPS DISCOVER program represents a significant step forward in our commitment to preparing students for future success. It aligns with educational best practices and addresses the evolving needs of our students and the broader economy.