



Miami-Dade Offers Summer High School Apprenticeship



Cisco Academy Apprenticeship Program

Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) offers an annual summer apprenticeship program for high school students enrolled in Cisco® Networking Academy® courses.

The apprenticeship program offers students a rare opportunity to combine classroom theory, practical hands-on training, and "real world" customer support experience, all in preparation for the demands of today's competitive workforce.

Inspired by M-DCPS core values of citizenship, cooperation, and responsibility, the Cisco Academy Apprentice Program (CAAP) offers an inside view of IT and networking to two participants from each of its 17 Cisco Networking Academy schools.

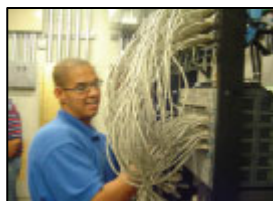
CAAP Apprentices Provide District Support

CAAP students work in the M-DCPS Infrastructure & Systems Support (ISS) group, which is part of the Information Technology Services (ITS) department.

M-DCPS is one of the largest school districts in the nation. ITS serves nearly 400 school sites and is open seven days a week, 24 hours a day to meet the district's needs.



ITS provides overall leadership for the operation and enhancement of the district's information systems and evaluates the impact of new projects, including suggesting changes to systems and procedures already in place.



It also provides an interface between information systems tools and the educational and administrative personnel who utilize them.

ITS is guided by the recommendations, evaluations, and endorsements provided by advisory groups.

Program History and Development

CAAP was initially developed in 1999 as a summer skills program for students from Miami Lake Educational Center. As it evolved into a countywide annual apprenticeship program, its developers obtained guidelines from the National Academy Foundation (www.naf.org). NAF sustains a national network of career academies to support the development of America's youth toward personal and professional success in high school, higher education, and throughout their careers. NAF academies represent school-business partnerships that prepare young people for future careers through a combination of school-based curricula and work-based experiences.

Application Process

Cisco Networking Academy students wishing to participate in CAAP must meet the following criteria:

- Junior/senior status in good academic standing
- Good moral and ethical traits
- Nomination by instructor

The application process is managed by Davion Crumel, CAAP Director and ITS network analyst. Davion visits each Networking Academy school to provide an overview of the apprenticeship program. He sets up individual interviews with nominated students—typically juniors currently taking Cisco CCNA® courses. Some seniors, who return to the program for a second summer, participate in the apprenticeship program as mentors.

Curricula

CAAP students participate in a three-phase structured learning project, including:

- Technology curricula and employability skills
- Hands-on experiential learning
- Project development and presentation



PHASE 1: weeks 1 and 2

- Soft skills: 16 objectives and deliverables for the transition from classroom to workforce
 - Time management, teamwork, communication, courage, self-assessment, resume writing, interviewing skills and techniques
 - Understanding the goals and vision of an organization
- Technology curricula
 - Taught by ITS engineers: networking, servers, programming, web design, and more
 - Guest speakers (sometimes Cisco engineers): topic and hands-on labs

PHASE 2: weeks 3 through 5

Field deployment: paired with ITS support supervisors and staff to perform specific tasks

- Each support group has its own region (typically 60 schools and district offices)
- Learning appropriate terminology to use with diverse end users (who have varying degrees of technical knowledge); tasks include everything from helping sync a Blackberry in the principal's office to setting up an entirely new school network infrastructure
- Education-specific applications and hardware

PHASE 3: week 6

- Final projects and presentations – back in classroom
 - Based on field work, participants in teams develop a complete plan for a new school network from scratch – timeline, construction, building layout, equipment, costs, etc.
 - Participants must incorporate their personal suggestions for ideas to improve on existing school networks they have seen
 - Each team produces a PowerPoint presentation and binder
 - Presentations are made at the School Board building
 - Attendees include principals, administrators, engineers, and Cisco channel partners
 - Judges assess projects and distribute prizes

- Participants network with local industry leaders

“One of the great things about CAAP is that it pulls students out of their individual classrooms into a new environment,” says Crumel. “Here they are in close contact with other students, instructors and engineers – solving problems together and expanding their network.”

Impact

- Since inception, over 100 M-DCPS students have participated
- Over 50 participants have obtained employment with M-DCPS
- 2 participants actually manage their own departments within ITS
- 9% of ISS staff came through CAAP

Cisco Networking Academy prepares its students for CAAP by providing a solid foundation in infrastructure support, including the ability to recognize issues and provide creative solutions. Networking Academy students know how to increase efficiency and success for any organization that utilizes IT and networking.

“Networking Academy curriculum is key to the success of the students in our apprenticeship program,” asserts Crumel.

CAAP’s ultimate focus is on student transition from school to the workplace and higher education. M-DCPS initially hires CAAP graduates part-time while they pursue a degree from a community college, trade school or university. M-DCPS encourages lifelong learning through its hiring policies as well as the examples set by its founders and instructors with advanced degrees.

“The benefits of going through CAAP are countless! I can honestly say that this program was the stepping stone to my career here at M-DCPS. Everything in the program helped develop and fine-tune the abilities I acquired through Cisco Networking Academy, and allowed me to translate that into my job functions here. It’s really an invaluable asset to any student looking to begin their career, to be able to see hands-on the result of their hard work put into action.” - Jerry Jerome, previous CAAP participant, and M-DCPS Exchange Support Specialist

Learn more about Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the Cisco Academy Apprenticeship Program:
<http://it.dadeschools.net/cisco.htm> and www.gocaap.com




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