

A new education and community-based support services program will open in Sioux Falls in August. The focus of the program is to provide secondary students whose education has been interrupted an opportunity to earn a high school diploma in an individualized instructional setting and to receive community-based career preparation services.

The new Sioux Falls Multicultural Academy (MCA) is a partnership among the Sioux Falls School District (SFSD), the Multi-Cultural Center of Sioux Falls (MCCoSF) and Ombudsman Educational Services. The Academy supports the missions of SFSD to “educate and prepare each student to succeed in a changing world,” and the MCCoSF, whose mission is to “provide opportunities for all people to learn, celebrate and share through cultural experiences.” It will be located at the MCCoSF.

Students who meet the following requirements are eligible to attend:

- Are at least 16 years old and are currently enrolled in SFSD;
- Are considered at risk of not completing high school graduation requirements due to at least two of the following:
 - Chronological age is older than their grade-level peers, or
 - Have one or more years of interrupted or disrupted schooling, or
 - Have limited or no prior schooling, or
 - Have been enrolled in any school district in the United States less than one full academic year, or
 - Literacy skills in their native language are below grade level as indicated by a writing sample or other native language assessments, or
 - Reading skills or level hinder the students’ ability to comprehend grade level content as evidenced by a reading comprehension assessment, or
 - English language proficiency level is non-English speaking or beginning, as determined by an English language proficiency assessment, or
 - Have demonstrated subject area gaps as documented by below grade-level proficiency score in prior year annual assessment or course equivalency exams in mathematics, science or language arts.

Participation is voluntary, and up to 75 students may enroll. Interested students or their families should contact the district’s ELL intake office at Jane Addams Elementary School.

The new program is designed to meet the learning needs of older students who have little or no formal education or who have had several extended interruptions in school including English Language Learners. Through this program, educators, community leaders and students will learn from one another and exchange cultural experiences. School district and community leaders welcome this opportunity to prepare young people for success in their post-secondary academic and career aspirations.

Sioux Falls Multicultural Academy (MCA)

Students will attend four hours of intensive instruction in language and secondary academic content Monday through Friday for 215 days each school year – an unprecedented year-round program in SFSD. The program’s blended learning model will enable students to accelerate their educational progress by following a personalized academic plan that includes teacher-led instruction in small and large groups, independent practice, collaboration, enrichment activities and one-on-one instruction in a technology-rich environment.

In addition, students will be able to access services such as job skills training, interpreter training and drivers’ education. They will have regular and ongoing opportunities to interact with other students and can participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities at their district school. Upon program completion, students will receive an SFSD high school diploma and be fully prepared to enter the workforce or continue their education.

Ombudsman Educational Services partners with more than 130 school districts, including SFSD, in 20 states to provide alternative education programs for nontraditional learners who prefer a smaller class size and personalized instruction, require a flexible schedule to meet family or work commitments, or wish to recover credits to graduate.

