

Pay attention. The high school educational system in Arkansas is changing, and it's up to you to get the most out of it and your future. Over the next eight pages, you can take a look at what's in store. No matter what comes later this is the

# Nex+Step for Arkansas' Future

## LEARNING POWER:

Everything you ever wanted to know about Smart Core and how to make it work for you.

**YOUR  
FUTURE**

We're not talking about next weekend or even next year; when we say your future, we mean the life you're working toward 10, 20, even 30 years down the road. Yeah, it's hard to get your head around something so far away, but it's important. If you want to be able to have the freedom to do what you want to do with your life in the future, that means making the right choices now, starting with Smart Core.

Yeah, Smart Core; maybe you've heard of it?

There's a reason why your teachers talk about it so much and that's because it's actually really important. Taking Smart Core courses now means that you'll be better prepared for the job market, whether you go straight there or go the higher education route. And, really, at the high school level, there's not much difference in what you need to do to prepare for your next step.

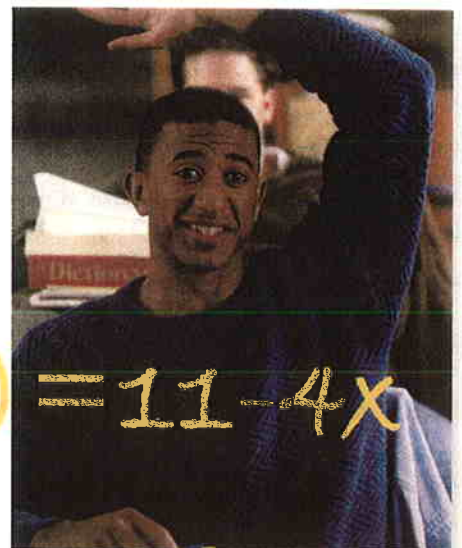
If you think, "I'm going to work at my Uncle's auto shop, I don't need Algebra."

You're just plain wrong.

$$\triangleright x + (11 - 5x) = 11 - 4x$$

Why? Because everything is so technical now. It's hard to imagine a world without the Internet, but it's really only been around for a pretty short time. And, in that time, everything has changed. So, a lot of ideas about what it means to be prepared in high school are totally outdated. You might have seen this from your parents. High school now is completely different than it was when they went there, so they can be pretty clueless about what you're doing. You need to let them know that Smart Core is the right step for you.

# SMART CORE



**THINK  
BLINK**

**84%**

**PERCENTAGE  
OF HIGHLY PAID  
PROFESSIONALS  
WHO TOOK  
ALGEBRA II IN  
HIGH SCHOOL.**

## GETTING TO KNOW THE CORE

(4)

You do think that Smart Core is the right choice, right? Let's break it down. Smart Core isn't about making school more difficult, it's about giving you

(4)

choices now, and choices later. It all starts with the core curriculum, which is a schedule of classes

(3)

to cover your four years of high school. Basically, Smart Core is four math, four English, three natural science and three social studies. (See detailed information on next page.) Within those subjects, there's choices for you depending on what you want to take.

(3)

Because Arkansas is one of the first states in the country to offer a groundbreaking curriculum like Smart Core, it gives Arkansas students a huge advantage, not just within the state, but also on the national level. If you want to stay in state to work or go to college, you will stand out from other applicants as a Smart Core graduate. The same is true around the country.

THINK  
BLINK  
43%

HOW MUCH MORE MONEY YOU'LL MAKE THAN THE AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT IF YOU GET YOUR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA.

### Why does Smart Core make such a big difference?



Because when you are better prepared, colleges and employers can save money they might have to spend on training or remedial courses. You see, it's not just good for you to be prepared because it makes the transition to the real world easier, but it's also good for businesses and schools because they currently spend more than \$17 billion dollars fixing preparation gaps from high school students. \$17 BILLION. So, you can

bet that when a Smart Core grad walks through the door, they'll take notice, giving you the edge you need to break out of cluttered applicant pools.

It's an unfortunate fact that the high school diploma is losing relevancy in today's world. It used to be that a diploma was enough to take you pretty far in the business world, sometimes even to the top, but now it's barely enough to get you into any door. Higher education or vocational training is a must for almost any job, **especially any job that would pay decent money**. And who wants to go through life just barely making it? No one.

THINK  
BLINK  
62%

HOW MUCH MORE MONEY YOU'LL MAKE THAN THE AVERAGE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT IF YOU GET A COLLEGE DEGREE.

Even though you may not know what you want to do with your life once you're out of school, it doesn't mean that you can't start preparing. You're young. It's hard to imagine making a commitment to the rest of your life right now. And no one is asking you to do that. Smart Core doesn't limit anything about your future, it only opens more doors, giving you the tools you need to build your life.

## CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

High school is a really important time. Not just because you pretty much completely change over the four years, especially because of that. Developmentally, it's hard to find another stage of your life where more will happen. And this is exactly why so many students get lost in the shuffle at this time. Research shows that the high school years are where a lot of kids will get into bad study habits and/or lose interest in school because they don't feel challenged.

The lack of challenging courses is a huge reason why kids give up on high school. Almost 47% of dropouts named that as the reason why they left school. Most students who were surveyed, both current and recent high school students, expressed an interest in more challenging course material. Even students who struggle in elementary and middle school showed massive improvements when they took advanced high school courses.

The more interesting and challenging the course, the more likely you are to want to learn it.



THINK  
BLINK  
**\$1,140,000**

THE DIFFERENCE IN  
LIFETIME EARNINGS  
BETWEEN A HIGH SCHOOL  
DROPOUT AND A COLLEGE  
GRADUATE.

When you speak to high school graduates you often hear them say, "I wish I would have worked harder." As a matter of fact, more than 65% of college students and 77% of non-college students now say that they wish they would have worked harder and applied themselves more in high school.

A lot of people look back and realize that they didn't get exactly what they wanted out of life because they didn't take high school seriously enough. But, there's no need to look back and regret because you can still make the most of your high school education.

By taking Smart Core courses, your future will be better. It's just that simple. You can get the most of your four years when you take school seriously. If you're scared or you don't understand the curriculum, talk to a parent or teacher or counselor. They want the best for you, and they'll answer any questions you have. They believe in you. You just have to believe in yourself.

It's so important that you not think about the end of high school as your goal. You shouldn't go through high school just to get your diploma - basically learning how to graduate. You need to learn the valuable and practical skills you need in the world outside of class. Think about high school as a single stop on your road. Just like you probably didn't think elementary school was the end for you, high school is the same thing - it's a place to prepare you for what comes next. Keep your eye on the road ahead, get in Smart Core and there's nothing that can stop you.

## FACTS IN FIGURES

Getting an education really pays off. The more you learn, the more you earn. It's a difference you feel not only each year, but especially over the course of your life. Check out these amazing numbers:

### HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT



### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE



### ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE



### BACHELOR'S DEGREE



\*Source: College Board, "Education Pays 2004: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society."



CURRENT PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TAKING COURSES CONSIDERED ADEQUATE FOR COLLEGE PREPARATION.

## THE CORE OF SUCCESS

Confused by Smart Core? It's pretty simple, really. You even get to choose which courses you want to take within each subject. Here's a look at the core of Smart Core.

**(4) 4 Math**  
Algebra I or Algebra A & B, Geometry or Investigating Geometry, Algebra II, Transitions to College Math, Pre-Cal, Trig, Statistics, Computer Math or Algebra III

**(3) 3 Natural Science**  
Your choice: Physical Science, Bio or Applied Bio/Chemistry, Chemistry, Physics, Principles of Tech I & II or PIC Physics

**(4) 4 English**  
9th through 12th grade English

**(3) 3 Social Studies**  
Civics or American Government, World History, American History

# SO, WHAT'S IT PAY?

Think you know what you want to be when you're out of school? Or, now that you know what kind of lifestyle goes with different salaries, do you want to see what kind of jobs will suit your needs? Here's what you can expect to bring home every year from these jobs:

Accountant .....	\$ 46,440	Legislator .....	\$ 25,510	Postal Carrier .....	\$ 41,180
Advertising Sales Representative ..	\$ 35,780	Librarian .....	\$ 39,830	Real Estate Agent .....	\$ 34,350
Air Traffic Controller .....	\$ 81,060	Mental Health Counselors ..	\$ 39,890	Reporter .....	\$ 26,710
Aircraft Mechanic .....	\$ 36,550	Microbiologist .....	\$ 57,640	Social Worker .....	\$ 29,800
Airline Pilot .....	\$ 52,430	Optometrist .....	\$113,069	Surgeon .....	\$181,060
Animator .....	\$ 30,700	Pest Control Worker .....	\$ 21,480	Truck Driver .....	\$ 33,120
Architect .....	\$ 49,100	Pharmacist .....	\$ 81,850	Veterinarian .....	\$ 59,030
Auto Mechanic .....	\$ 28,800	Photographer .....	\$ 23,800	Waiter .....	\$ 11,930
Bartender .....	\$ 15,350	Police Officer .....	\$ 31,310	Zoologist .....	\$ 50,140
Butcher .....	\$ 21,720				
Carpenter .....	\$ 21,570				
Chef .....	\$ 25,630				
Chemist .....	\$ 53,450				
Chief Executive .....	\$123,000				
Civil Engineers .....	\$ 57,800				
Clergy .....	\$ 36,180				
Coach .....	\$ 40,130				
Computer Programmer .....	\$ 47,250				
Construction Manager .....	\$ 53,890				
Dentist .....	\$ 82,950				
Elementary School Teacher .....	\$ 31,340				
Financial Analyst .....	\$ 61,740				
Fire Fighter .....	\$ 30,160				
Funeral Director .....	\$ 27,560				
Graphic Designer .....	\$ 29,930				
Hairdresser .....	\$ 17,470				
Interior Designer .....	\$ 32,590				
Judge .....	\$ 36,910				
Lawyer .....	\$ 86,150				

**GET \$300,000.00**

**FOR DOING WHAT  
YOU'RE DOING  
RIGHT NOW.**



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**MY FUTURE**  
Next Step Kansas was the first to start the movement.

For more information on Smart Core and your future, visit [nextsteparkansas.org](http://nextsteparkansas.org).

**THINK  
54%  
BLINK**

**PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS WHO AREN'T EMPLOYED.**