



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Falcon Tech?

Falcon Tech is a Pathways in Technology Early College High School or “P-TECH” school. Students graduate with a high school diploma from St. Vrain Valley Schools and associate of applied science (AAS) degree from Front Range Community College. Students also receive mentorships and internships with IBM mentors, and are “first in line” for job interviews with IBM upon graduation. The AAS degree is free of cost to students.

How is Falcon Tech different from STEM Academy?

Falcon Tech focuses primarily on computer information systems, while STEM Academy focuses primarily on pre-engineering. Students in Falcon Tech are allowed to matriculate through the 14th grade in order to complete both their high school and community college graduation requirements. Students in Falcon Tech will simultaneously receive their high school diploma and AAS degree.

How does Falcon Tech work?

We will actively recruit students beginning in the 8th grade. Students who complete the application process and are admitted to Falcon Tech will begin the program in the 9th grade. They will enroll in college courses as early as second semester of the 9th grade, utilizing concurrent enrollment to simultaneously receive high school and college credit for their course work.

What AAS degree will be offered?

Falcon Tech offers an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Computer Information Systems (CIS). As students progress through the program, they will choose between four different specialty areas within the CIS degree: programming, web development, computer information systems, and database administration. Along with college courses, students receive mentorships and internships through IBM to provide real-world experiences to supplement their academic coursework.

Why does the program extend to a 13th and/or 14th grade?

The 13th and 14th grades allow students additional flexibility in the timing of their degree pathways. Students who are focused on finishing both degrees quickly will have the ability to finish within the traditional four-year timeframe. Students who are engaged in multiple elective courses or extracurricular activities, or students who need additional time to grasp difficult concepts, have additional time to complete their degrees.

Who will teach Falcon Tech classes?

A combination of St. Vrain Valley Schools teachers and Front Range Community College faculty will teach Falcon Tech classes. All courses will be taught at Skyline high school for at least the first two years of the program.

What are the acceptance criteria?

There are no formal acceptance criteria. All applicants will be considered. Applicants are required to fill out the online application and submit two letters of reference from adults (one teacher and one non-family member adult). We will accept 75 students for the 2017-18 school year. If we receive more than 75 applications, we will accept students by weighted lottery.





Are the FRCC courses taught at Skyline or at FRCC? If at FRCC, how will students get there?

Courses will be taught at Skyline, FRCC, and the Innovation Center. We have structured the program so all 9th and 10th grade courses will be taught at Skyline. Many students have their own transportation by the 11th and 12th grades. Since we are still in the first year of Falcon Tech, we haven't determined whether or not we will need a separate bus that runs between Skyline and FRCC. We will monitor this and make accommodations as required in the future.

Do students take time away from the regular high school curriculum? Does it take longer because students are taking more classes?

Students will take more classes and that is why the program may take up to 6 years to complete; however, we front load the high school classes, so a student will finish his/her high school graduation requirements (24.5 credits) in the standard four years. The 5th and 6th years are designed to accommodate the college level courses (60 credits).

Do the high school diploma and the AAS come at the same time, at the end of the 4-6 year period?

Yes. We intend to confer both degrees simultaneously after either 4, 5, or 6 years, depending on the individual student.

Is it true that all of a student's high school classes have to be honors or AP level?

No. We will customize courses to the level of each student; however, we will encourage students to take honors or AP courses, when appropriate, in order to allow them to get "dual credit" (high school and college) for the courses.

How much time will students have for unrelated electives in this program, like art or music?

Students will be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and elective classes. The 13th and 14th grades give us a great deal of flexibility in this regard. If a student wants to participate in more activities, s/he may take longer to achieve the AAS degree.

Is a certain GPA required to stay in the program?

We have no firm requirements for staying in the program (no GPA threshold, etc.). Our goal, truly, is to work with students every step of the way. That said, we reserve the right to set appropriate academic and disciplinary boundaries. We will gauge this on a case-by-case basis.

What kind of counseling support do the kids get?

We have a dedicated counselor for Falcon Tech. Louise March was formerly the counselor at Timberline K-8 and moved to Skyline with the first Falcon Tech class. She helped with student recruiting last year and will be very involved with the application process again this year.

This sounds pretty demanding. What happens if it doesn't work out, and a student drops out of the program - is his/her high school diploma still delayed? Will s/he have fallen behind in regular courses?

If a student chooses to stop participating in Falcon Tech, s/he will be treated like the other "regular students" - no stigma, no penalty. So long as s/he has not failed any high school courses, s/he should remain on track for graduation after the 12th grade.





Are credits transferable to 4-year institutions?

The college credits will be granted through FRCC - even for the AP courses. Just like any other student at FRCC, many, but not all, FRCC credits will be transferable to four-year colleges, and the number of transfer credits applied will depend upon the major selected by the student. FRCC has a special arrangement with Regis University to accept a higher percentage of the credits toward Regis' Bachelor of Applied Science degree in CIS. Other colleges like CU or CSU, that only offer degrees in Computer Science, currently accept fewer credits. This is something we will continue to work on as the program matures.

Are any industry certifications offered through Falcon Tech?

Yes. Industry certifications have been embedded throughout the curricular scope and sequence of Falcon Tech. Students progressing toward their AAS degree will have the opportunity to achieve certifications in "CompTIA Essentials A+" and "CompTIA 602 A+" at different intervals in their progression.

