



# GET STARTED TODAY!



HISET PROGRAM

## FAQ About Options Academy

**Q:** What is the value of the diploma?

**A:** It is nationally recognized by employers, unions and institutions of higher learning.

**Q:** Where can the HiSET tests be taken?

**A:** There is an onsite testing center at the Kurtz Opportunity Center where students attend classes.

**Q:** Are the classes required?

**A:** Yes, attendance is required so students can practice proficiency tasks in each content area. If necessary, your teacher will provide foundational instruction based upon the results of skills pretests that's part of your orientation. In order to officially test in a subject area, you must be verified as ready by a teacher.

**Q:** How do I get started?

**A:** To enroll or get additional information about Options Academy, call Mimi Willoughby at 515-242-8484 or email [options.academy@dmschools.org](mailto:options.academy@dmschools.org).

For more information, call  
or visit Options Academy at

**515-242-8484**

**[pathways.dmschools.org](http://pathways.dmschools.org)**



# TAKE YOUR COURSES AT DMPS!



Becoming the Model for **Urban Education**

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## Are You Ready to Get Your Diploma?

Through a partnership between the Iowa Department of Education and Educational Testing Service (ETS), Des Moines Public Schools is now offering a new high school diploma pathway at the Kurtz Opportunity Center.

Options Academy is a free high school program for current or reengaged DMPS students who would like to earn their high school diploma by passing the HiSET exam. In addition to a personalized teaching and learning plans for each student, Options Academy will also provide students with career coaching and postsecondary opportunities.

### HiSET Requirements

To earn the DMPS HiSET diploma, students must pass a series of tests in the following subjects:

#### Language Arts: Writing

A two-part test-half multiple choice; half essay-covering ability to edit and revise written text and generate/organize ideas in writing.

#### Language Arts: Reading

This test measures ability to understand, interpret and analyze a broad range of literary and informational texts including memoirs, essays, editorials and poetry.

#### Math

Problems are based on realistic situations as well as abstract concepts and may cover algebraic patterns, precision in measurement and/or probability. You may use a calculator for this test.

#### Social Studies

Subjects covered include history, political science, psychology, anthropology, sociology, geography and economics, and the ability to analyze and evaluate content in these areas.

#### Science

Your ability to apply principles of scientific inquiry will be measured in various contexts including physics, chemistry, biology and astronomy.

## HiSet Test Information

- **Language Arts: Writing**  
120 minutes  
Multiple-choice questions and an essay prompt  
This section measures your skill in recognizing and producing standard American English.
- **Language Arts: Reading**  
65 minutes – (English), 80 minutes – (Spanish)  
Multiple-choice questions  
The selected texts range in length from approximately 400 to 600 words.
- **Mathematics**  
90 minutes  
Multiple-choice questions  
This section measures mathematical knowledge and competencies. Questions are presented as practical problems and are solved by numerical operations, measurement, estimation, data interpretation and logical thinking.
- **Social Studies**  
70 minutes  
Multiple-choice questions  
Primary documents, posters, cartoons, timelines, maps, graphs, tables, charts and reading passages are used in questions.
- **Science**  
80 minutes  
Multiple-choice questions  
This section measures your ability to use science content knowledge, apply principles of scientific inquiry, and interpret and evaluate scientific information. Graphs, tables and charts are used to present information and results.



## You'll be Ready for Career or College!

Options Academy will not only prepare you for your tests, you'll also receive counseling and assistance with job readiness and placement.

Upon successful completion of your requirements, the diploma you'll receive is from Des Moines Public Schools, not an equivalency certificate. Also, academy students enjoy the same extracurricular opportunities as their peers at the comprehensive high schools.

## Who's Eligible for Options Academy?

Students from 17-21 years of age who are enrolled at Des Moines Public Schools may attend. The academy is located at the Kurtz Opportunity Center, 1000 Porter Avenue (the former site of Kurtz Junior High and RAILS Academy). Instruction and testing are free of charge.

Morning and afternoon sessions are offered daily and students may attend either or both. A class schedule that combines both Options Academy and a student's home high school is also possible. You may create the path that works best for you.