



Academy of Culinary Arts

Wekiva High School

2501 N. Hiawasse Road | Apopka, FL 32703

407.297.4900 | wekivahs.ocps.net

MAGNET MATTERS

Name of Magnet: Academy of Culinary Arts

Name of School: Wekiva High School

Magnet Focus/Theme: This magnet provides a unique opportunity for students to work in a real-world culinary educational setting where students master industry skills alongside opportunities to learn STEM components of food preparation, operation of commercial equipment and supplies, as well as interpersonal skills for career success. Instilling high academic achievement, the Academy of Culinary Arts creates vast opportunities from catering to leadership while preparing students for specific roles from restaurant manager to sous chef to charcuterie chef to baker.

Key Personnel

- Principal: Dr. Tamara Baker-Drayton
- Magnet Administrator: Mr. Eddie Foster – Eddie.foster@ocps.net
- Magnet Coordinator: Mr. Travis Brown – travis.brown@ocps.net
- Lead Teacher: Mr. Christopher Bates – Christopher.bates@ocps.net

Website Link: [Academy of Culinary Arts](#)

Notable Quotes:

"What I love about Wekiva Culinary is the work environment, meeting new people, making new friends, learning how restaurants work... it's an amazing experience. I'm so grateful to be in Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management! It is a great privilege." – *11th Grade Culinary Arts Student*

It's not like it's a class... the program feels like you're actually in a restaurant cooking. It gives you a feel for how the food industry really is. I've learned so much from being in this Magnet. I went from not being able to hold a knife to being able to fabricate an entire chicken by myself. I'd recommend joining because it's not just about cooking, it's about the experience and all the memories you'll make along the way." – *12th Grade Culinary Arts Student*

"There's hard times, there's good times, there's some really long days. But what I gained in work and life experience? I wouldn't trade it for anything. Some of the other seniors and I were joking in the last month that we were going to intentionally fail the class, just so we could come back and do it one last time. The impact on me was huge. It made me want to come to school. It kept



**Orange County
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me coming back, every day. Wekiva Culinary gave me a positive lifestyle and it changed me fundamentally." – 2020 Wekiva Graduate

"Students in the Culinary Arts program can draw upon the skills they have learned as well as community recognition to seek employment. The program's emphasis on professional conduct, service, and appearance benefit students and keep standards high. Students value their time in the program to the extent that many spend hours after school and on weekends cooking and working for fundraisers and culinary competitions." – *Wekiva Culinary Advisory Board Chairperson*

"The culinary wing (yes, Wekiva Culinary has expanded from one room to an entire hallway) is lined with numerous trophies, awards, ribbons, and large check donations to keep the excitement and drive for the future in everyone's focus. Students participating in the Culinary Magnet have the opportunity to earn certifications making them employable after high school graduation in a competitive market with a comparable salary. These students will be able to work in management positions with the opportunities to move up within the business and/or support themselves while attending college classes. It is proven that students who are involved and active in school perform better academically, socially, and emotionally. When interviewed, seniors from the class of 2020 referred to their experience in the Culinary Program with pride, emotion, and complete dedication. Students bond with Chef Bates, and they are often seen on campus at 4:00 a.m. to prepare an award-winning meal for students, staff, community members, elected officials, first responders or wedding receptions making our program the first to actually serve as professional caterers. Those same students often leave campus late in the evening giving them a true sense of belonging, ownership, and dedication with the program as well as with their high school. The Culinary Arts program has instilled this sense of pride in the member students as well as the staff and all connected with the school." – *Former Principal of Wekiva High School*



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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Academy of Culinary Arts is a progressive, four-year career and technical culinary education program where students learn and master, in a real-world, commercial environment, the business and practical skills industry professionals have identified as critical to post-graduation success in the rapidly growing food, beverage, and hospitality sector while gaining employability skills such as communication, teamwork, professionalism and time management.

Moving beyond basic course standards, the Academy of Culinary Arts provides students a vast array of opportunities, each in accordance with research and sound pedagogy. Some of these experiences include:

- Targeted money management
- STEM components of food preparation, especially chemistry
- Operation of commercial restaurant equipment
- Marketing and management skills
- Soft skills for career success, including problem-solving, creativity, and teamwork

Students will master skills and work towards specific roles within the program with associated responsibilities and privileges, including but not limited to the following: business manager, sous chef, restaurant manager, café manager, catering manager, pastry chef, charcuterie chef, equipment manager, facilities manager, sanitation manager, and other related careers and positions. Students who successfully complete all four years of the program have the opportunity to attend post-secondary schools with advanced standing, to attend technical schools through the CAPE Gold Seal Scholarship and to attain multiple professional and academic certifications.

Please note that bus transportation is *not* provided for this program.

Specific Eligibility Requirements: Applicant's schedule must be able to accommodate magnet classes; a 2.5 GPA is recommended.