

Citibank Banking and Finance Summer Internship

*Naperville North High School
Naperville, Illinois*

A summer partnership with a national bank laid the foundation for a major internship program at Naperville North High School. The school's Citibank Banking and Finance Summer Internship offered students a rigorous introduction to the business world.

Students and parents on Naperville's School Family Community Partnership (SFCP) team created the internship to give college-bound students opportunities to participate in and investigate certain careers. One board member, a regional manager at Citibank, offered to spearhead a pilot internship for Naperville students at her bank offices.

She worked with the career and technical education teacher to develop the program. The application and selection process included minimum class credit requirements, a teacher recommendation, and a short essay. The board member-banker drew on her knowledge of the company and the banking industry to help develop a mini-curriculum designed to introduce the interns to more than 12 facets of the banking business.

The high school's business management teacher promoted the program. Other staff members publicized the program through committee meetings and an article in the school's newspaper.

For six weeks in June and July, two Naperville graduates in the Class of 2007 donned coats and ties to work at Citibank before heading off to college. Nearly two dozen mentors at the bank introduced the students to the various departments, including finance, sales, operations, and human resources. Students met with secretaries, loan officers, and senior managers and learned about interest rates, home mortgages, and the stock market. They worked at the bank's corporate office, as well as at several Chicago and suburban locations.

"The interns got a real-life perspective of the world and a taste of what it takes to succeed —things that can't be learned from textbooks or in the classroom," a bank manager said.

Students were required to keep a journal and a portfolio of their experiences. At the end of the program in July, they gave short presentations to the SFCP team and bank officials.

Everyone involved in this pilot agreed that the internship was a unique opportunity for the students, one that was worth repeating and expanding.

"I have a whole new perspective on the banking industry. I learned retail banking the old-fashioned way, by working with and observing all sectors . . . top to bottom, president to teller," said one of the students.

The only cost associated with the program was the students' train fare—about \$120—covered with grant money. Citibank donated its time and human resources.

The school is using the students' experience as a blueprint for future internships. The opportunity will be open to incoming juniors and seniors in future years. The SFCP committee is investigating and recruiting other businesses so that more students will have authentic experiences in various professions to enhance their classroom knowledge.

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