

# Academic Preparation

Information for Students and Their Families



## WHAT ARE GOOD WORK HABITS AND SOLID ACADEMIC SKILLS?

**Good Work Habits** are critical in high school, in college, for a career, and for the workplace. Teachers, professors, and employers value:

- **Timeliness:** attendance and being on time
- **Diligence:** completing assignments and showing good effort
- **Sociability:** treating other people — adults, peers, coworkers — with kindness and respect

**Solid Academic Skills** build the foundation for your future. They include preparation in English, mathematics, social studies, science, and world languages.

- Taking algebra in middle school leaves room to take honors and Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) courses in high school to better equip you with the skills you need to be successful in college-level courses.
- Daily reading beyond class assignments — newspaper, fiction and nonfiction, magazines — builds vocabulary, and helps prepare you for the reading that comes with honors and AP courses.

### Important Facts:

- A high school education prepares you for a variety of options and possibilities after high school.
- High schools require specific classes that you must pass in order to graduate.
- Students who acquire solid academic skills and good work habits will be prepared for college and future opportunities.

## WHAT CAN I EXPECT TO TAKE IN HIGH SCHOOL?

**English:** 4 years (including multiple courses in writing, literature, and speech). Why? Clear and effective communication skills in reading, speaking, and writing are required for every job or career.

**Mathematics:** 3–4 years (algebra, geometry, advanced algebra, precalculus, and calculus). Why? Math is about solving problems, using technology, and managing daily tasks.

**Social Studies:** 3–4 years (geography, history, world cultures, civics). Why? A focus on social studies supports good citizenship and develops judgment and understanding in local, national, and world affairs.

**Science:** 3–4 (biology, earth science, chemistry, and physics). Why? Studying science teaches about the world from plant and animal life to human life.

**World Languages:** 2–3 years (German, French, Japanese, Latin, Chinese, Spanish, American Sign Language). Why? Learning another language teaches about different cultures and supports global understanding.

- English, mathematics, social studies, sciences, and world languages are called core classes. English I, U.S. history, chemistry, calculus, and French II are examples of core classes.
- Every year, when you begin course registration, you will begin by selecting core classes.
- What are the core classes required at your school? Your counselor will be able to tell you.
- Beyond core curriculum requirements, there are many other courses offered: visual and performing arts (art, music, dance, drama); physical education and physical fitness; health; technology (computer basics, computer programming, preengineering, technical drawing).

## HOW DO I MAKE AN ACADEMIC PLAN?

1. Get a copy of the high school course guide for your school. (The guide may be online.)
2. Identify graduation requirements for your school or school district. How many credits do you need to earn in order to graduate? \_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ years of English needed?  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ years of mathematics needed?  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ years of social studies needed?  
Are there specific courses that are required? \_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ years of science needed?  
Are there specific courses that are required? \_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ years of world language needed?  
Are there specific courses that are required? \_\_\_\_\_  
  
What other course requirements does your school have? \_\_\_\_\_  
Is physical education required? \_\_\_\_\_ For how many years? \_\_\_\_\_  
Is health required? For how many years? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Other requirements? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does your school offer honors and AP courses? Students who take honors and AP courses are usually better prepared for college and education after high school. Knowing which AP classes your high school offers will help you prepare a better academic plan.
5. What courses does your high school offer that you want to take? What do you want to learn? What interests do you have that you want to continue enjoying? Fill out the rest of your schedule with classes you want to take.

Now that you've started to find out what classes are offered at your high school, which ones you must take (required courses), and which ones you want to take (elective courses), work with your parents/guardians and your counselor to map out an academic strategy that prepares you for success in high school and for your post-high-school plans.