

## COURSE SELECTION INFORMATION

### IMPORTANT LINKS

[Principal's Memo Regarding Course Selection](#)

[Directions to Enter Student Requests in Home Access Center](#)

[Recommendation Change Form](#)

[Program of Studies 2019-2020](#)

[Ninth Grade Program of Studies 2019-2020](#)

### COURSE SELECTION PROCESS

1. Please read the [Principal's Memo regarding course selection](#). Since the scheduling process operates on a strict timetable, it is **very important** that you meet the deadlines listed below for submitting your course requests:

March 25th      Deadline to [request courses through HAC](#) and for [Recommendation Change Forms](#)

May 3th          Deadline to submit an override appeal with evidence

May 24th        Resolution of override requests and placement onto waitlists

2. To familiarize yourself with the courses that might be appropriate for you, first read the Course Level explanation below at the beginning of this document; then read the more specific course descriptions listed in the [Program of Studies](#).

3. For any course that represents continued study within a department, the current teacher will confer with the student and make a recommendation directly into eSchool by mid March.

4. Starting in mid March, parents will be able to see teacher recommendations via their eSchool Home Access Center accounts. Students and parents/guardians should speak directly to the teacher if there is any question about a course or level placement.

5. If there is still disagreement about course placement after conferring with the teacher, the student may initiate the **override procedure** assuming that he/she meets the eligibility criteria (see below). Only students who have earned a C+ in honors courses or B+ in college preparatory courses in the outset of the course selection process are eligible for the placement appeals process. An override request must be submitted to the department head no later than **May 3rd**.

6. It is our intention to complete the scheduling process by June so that schedule conflicts can be resolved and class sizes can be balanced before the end of the school year. Opportunities for schedule changes during the summer vacation and fall are very limited.

### Course Levels

Most courses are divided into levels that differ in depth and complexity of content and pace of learning. Students are assigned to appropriate levels in each subject and may move from one level to another when recommended. Level assignments are determined by the classroom teacher based on student performance and the demonstrated level of student educational development (i.e., concrete versus abstract learning style).

**Honors and advanced placement level courses** are appropriate for students who demonstrate high achievement and display strong motivation in their classes. These classes require students to be self-directed and have the highest reading, writing, mathematical, organizational, and participation skills.

**College level courses** are appropriate for those students who want rigorous college preparatory content with more structured tasks than they may find in an honors class. These classes require relatively strong reading, writing, mathematical, and organizational skills.

**Introductory and principles level courses** are provided for those students who want access to college preparatory content but also require more structured tasks and specific instruction in study skills.

**Foundation level courses** are designed for students whose learning needs require substantial modifications to the regular course content and assessments. These courses are typically offered concurrently with Introductory or College level classes (i.e., in the same classroom, at the same time). Students in foundation courses are enrolled in these leveled regular education classes and are fully included in all aspects of the learning experience except as required by their individual learning needs. These courses require permission of an administrator.

### Criteria for enrollment in Honors and AP courses

Enrollment in honors and AP courses is generally determined by the following:

- ❖ Recommendation by the teacher (assessments of content--primarily formal written work, tests, and quizzes will be used as the most important criteria for teacher recommendations to each leveled course).
- ❖ Attainment of a B- grade or better in an **honors or AP course** in the same subject.
- ❖ Attainment of an A- or better in a **College-level class** in the same subject.

There are more additional prerequisites for AP English, AP Calculus, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, and AP United States History.

### Override Eligibility

Only students who have earned a C+ in honors courses or B+ in college preparatory courses in the outset of the course selection process are eligible for the placement appeals process. Recommended students whose performance dips below the criteria threshold could risk being moved to the waitlist for the desired course.

Students who meet the override eligibility criteria, but do not meet the academic prerequisite(s), to enter an Honors or A.P. course may initiate an appeals process. The process is as follows:

1. The student must submit a one-page statement in support of entering the desired course and supporting evidence (i.e., writing samples, tests and quizzes, plans for additional support, etc.). **Appeals must be received by the subject department head no later than Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>.**
2. An appeal meeting involving the student and his or her parents/guardians, the teacher, the department head, and the guidance counselor will be scheduled **before Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup>** to discuss the request. A decision will be rendered at that time.
3. If agreement is still not reached between the requesting student and the department, the original teacher recommendation stands and the student will be placed on a **waitlist** for the desired course in question, with priority given to students who have met the prerequisite conditions at the end of the year. Overridden students are placed in the class **only** if space permits.
4. At this point also, the parent signs a statement acknowledging the recommendations of the professional staff, and indicating that if the student enrolls in a course for which s/he is not recommended and fails to maintain a B- average or better at the end of the semester, the student would be moved to the more appropriate level. If not practical to reschedule a student at that time, the student will remain in the course in question but with the clear understanding that the student will not be allowed to enroll in an honors level (or A.P.) course in that discipline in the ensuing year.

***For incoming 9th graders:*** All override meetings will take place at the middle school level.

### Override Procedure

Sometimes parents/guardians/students choose to reject placement recommendations and request placement in a more demanding level. There are risks in doing so. Specifically:

- ❖ A student who does poorly in a more advanced class weakens his/her record. Sometimes, difficulties in one course generate difficulties in others as well.
- ❖ To keep up with the class, the students may require more individual help than the teacher can reasonably be expected to provide. The demands of an advanced curriculum do not allow teachers to accommodate to the pace of a student who is misplaced. The teacher cannot provide individual tutoring.
- ❖ We cannot assume that a student who has difficulty in one level class will be able to move back to a lower level. Classes are tightly scheduled and it may not be possible to find a place in mid-semester. The student must then either drop the course or remain in the requested section despite diminished performance.
- ❖ When a transfer is possible, it may be necessary to reschedule other classes to accommodate the shift. This general disruption can cause problems in other courses where the student may have made a good adjustment.
- ❖ In any event, we will do all that we can reasonably do as educators to assure that your son/daughter succeeds.