

# Counselor's Corner: SHS Counseling Center

## Newsletter for Incoming 9th Graders

JANUARY 2021

### Understanding the HS Course Selection Process and Timeline

Following **SHS 8th Grade Parent Orientation on January 7th**, current 8th grade students will begin selecting their HS courses for the 2021-2022 school year. 8th Graders recently completed a survey regarding their transition to SHS, and will meet with high school counselors and students remotely following the holiday break. This is another step in preparation for course selection and the transition to SHS. The timeline for course selection and scheduling is as follows:

**1/7:** 8th Grade Parent Orientation, [Zoom Link](#)

**1/13-3/12:** Students are individually called to the MS Counseling Office to take course requests. As students complete requests, a printed copy will be provided directly to the student.

**1/21:** SHS Curriculum Night, (Zoom link to follow)

**1/22:** Virtual Taste of High School visit

**3/22:** Student course requests are loaded to the online Backpack for parent verification. An email with directions to access this report will follow.

**3/26:** Changes to student course requests are due to the SMS Counseling Office. If a higher level course than what has been recommended is requested, students and parents will be asked to complete an Academic Advising Form. This communicates the reason for the recommendation, but choice of level is still a student and parent decision.

**4/6-5/26:** The HS Master Schedule is created. This involves determining what courses are able to run, based on course requests and staffing.

**6/11:** Courses in which students can be enrolled are loaded to the online Backpack for viewing. An email with directions to access this report will follow.

**8/20:** High school schedules, including teacher and period assignments are opened in Infinite Campus.

### Preparing for Ninth Grade

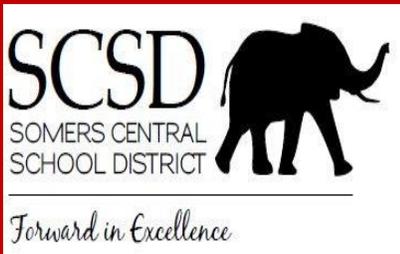
Preparing for high school can mean different things for each student. Some important things for all students to work on are:

- Getting into the habit of completing assignments and all classwork in a timely manner, and meeting due dates.
- Organizing time and daily schedules effectively, where there is a balance between time for school work, time for extra-curricular commitments and online time.
- Getting into the habit of seeking help from teachers outside of class time. Students who are most successful in high school access academic support from teachers the most—both during the school day and after school. Students who persist (not once and stop) towards seeking out help and support will reap the greatest rewards.
- Thinking about personal learning style, interests, and how that fits into classes and extracurricular activities. Knowing this information, can help students game plan strategies for being successful in classes and to have a more positive school experience through extra-curricular connections.

Practicing these habits now so that students are prepared to start high school will make for a much smoother transition in September.

### Looking Further Ahead

Parents and students seeking clarity on testing, timelines for post high school planning, and other important resources, including the HS Course Selection Guide, are encouraged visit the [Guidance and Counseling web page](#).



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## Honors or Regents??

Deciding between a higher level course and a standard Regents, college preparatory course can be confusing. Fortunately, much of the stress of that choice has been removed with embedded honors in English 9 and Global 9. With option of honors math, science and Advanced World History still present, it is important to begin with the understanding that the choice of any single course level in 9th grade won't change a student's post HS opportunities. Demonstrating gradual improvement and challenge on a HS transcript is preferable to taking on too much and needing to step back. Students should demonstrate academic curiosity and academic maturity before pushing themselves to a more demanding level. Bear in mind that academic curiosity and maturity are different than personal or emotional curiosity or maturity. Both are valuable commodities that can lead to future success, but they do not always co-exist. If they are also not currently evident, it doesn't mean they won't be developed in the future. It is important to meet our students where they currently are, and recognize and appreciate different levels of readiness.

In addition to teachers and counselors offering advice on the best academic options for students, here is a short **self-assessment check list** for students to help determine if they are ready for honors level work:

- I read independently.
- I consistently complete my assignments on time.
- I am comfortable learning independently of direct teacher instruction.
- I believe my extra-curricular commitments will not conflict with my course requirements.
- I believe my total course load will not conflict with my course requirements.
- I understand that earning high marks in this course will require routine practice and management of this check list.

## What About AP, IB, or DE?

For most students, decisions regarding AP (Advanced Placement), IB (International Baccalaureate) or DE (Dual Enrollment) level courses won't be a consideration until junior year. These are college level courses that also offer the possibility of college credit at a greatly reduced rate. The one exception is Advanced World History, which represents the first year of a two year AP-level curriculum. The AP Exam for World History will assess content covered in 10th grade, as well as four units covered in Advanced World History. Student progress through 9th and 10th grades will help to inform whether these options are appropriate for students as they make selections for 11th grade.

## What About Career and Technical Education (CTE) Options Through BOCES?

CTE options are typically available to students at the start of junior year. For younger students who struggle to find connection and meaning in the regular school program, options are also available. Students are educated about CTE options by attending a voluntary informational session at SHS, and then will have the opportunity to visit BOCES in Yorktown prior to course selection to see the programs available in action. Students who enroll in BOCES attend SHS for half of the school day, and attend either a morning or afternoon session at BOCES. Upon graduation, students may move directly into the workforce with an employable skill, or attend college.

## Important Dates of Note

**1/7: 8th Grade Orientation for Parents, 7pm:** students are welcome as well to this orientation to the high school.

**1/21: SHS Curriculum Night, 7pm:** a presentation of the full range (9-11) of academic offerings in '20-'21.

**1/22: Taste of High School:** a day program for students.