



Nutley Public Schools

Program of Studies Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

What impact will the proposed changes have on existing students' ability to get into college?

Throughout the process of creating the Program of Studies, a number of colleges and universities were contacted to gather information about how the proposed changes might affect a student's ability to be accepted to college. Dozens of colleges were contacted from Haverford to Swarthmore, from College of William and Mary to Vassar, and from The College of New Jersey to Princeton. While each school may have different practices and procedures for accepting students, the representative from each school did state that they utilize the Nutley High School Profile to gather specific information about our school's curriculum, grading scale, GPA scale, and community biography.

How was the public informed about the Program of Studies?

Prior to the January 9, 2012 Board meeting, the PTO sent out an email stating that the Program of Studies was written and was going to be presented at that meeting. The Board Agenda is made available to the public on the Friday before each meeting.

The Program of Studies was presented at the Board of Education meeting on January 9, 2012. At that meeting the Director of Curriculum, the Director of Guidance, the High School Principal and Vice Principals as well as the Coordinators presented an in-depth review of the proposed Program of Studies. That meeting is available for viewing on line. On Tuesday, January 10, 2012, the video from the Board meeting as well as the proposed Program of Studies and the accompanying PowerPoint were available on line. Ms. Divilio sent an e-mail through Naviance to all students and parents which included a link to the proposed document. An e-mail address has been dedicated to answering questions related to the proposed Program of Studies. Various district administrators have met with parents. The Superintendent of Schools presented information to the Academic Booster Club.

Advanced Placement and Honors Courses

Will weighting the honors and AP courses similarly will put Nutley students at a disadvantage?

Similar weighting will not put Nutley students at a disadvantage. When information is sent to colleges, they also request the highest possible GPA. GPAs are relative to the highest GPA offered. A Nutley High School profile is sent to colleges with each transcript during the application process.

The profile explains Nutley High School's grading procedures/practices. The school profile is available in the document library in Naviance.

Do most universities use an unweighted GPA or an academic index?

Colleges and universities may use GPA, academic index, or a combination of both depending upon the school. Some schools use an academic index, some schools use unweighted GPA, and some schools recalculate the GPA.

Is a 9th grade honors class as rigorous as an AP class?

AP courses are "locked in" to specific guidelines for that course to run. Honors classes can go above and beyond the outlined requirements for AP courses. Depending upon the curriculum and instruction, any honors class can be just as or more challenging than an AP course.

Honors and AP courses are two separate offerings which really cannot be compared. A grade 9 honors class should be compared to the corresponding "regular" class in grade 9. The honors course should show increased rigor above and beyond what is expected of a student in a "regular" grade 9 class. Similarly, we could not compare an honors class at grade 9 and one at grade 12 as they should be measured against their "regular" level course, not each other.

If Honors and AP are similar in rigor why do students have to fill out an application to take an AP course?

In the past, many students would sign up for an AP course and then drop out. By using this form, it has helped the students understand what will be expected of them in the course. In honors classes, the current year teacher recommends the students to the next level. Those teachers should have a solid understanding of the course sequence and the expectations in the next honors level. Often, the classroom teachers do not have an understanding of the requirements of an AP course. An interview with the AP teacher allows the student to have a solid understanding of the course.

Can students who take an AP exam and score a 3 or higher get an increased weight in their GPA?

AP exam scores are not factored into final averages or GPAs. Students who score 3 or higher on the AP exam have the possibility of obtaining college credits.

Course Offerings

Do the mathematics courses fulfill the NCAA requirements? Do we offer "basic" mathematics courses?

Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 have all been approved by the NCAA. These curricula have been updated to satisfy state and college requirements as well as those from the NCAA. 'Basic' Algebra, Geometry, or Algebra 2 courses are no longer offered because they do not fulfill the NCAA requirements.

The only 'basic' math courses offered are the Math Strategies classes. Students are offered one section per grade level during the school day and a zero period abridged course for those who are unable to schedule it during the day due to conflicting courses. These are the only courses in the mathematics program that do not count towards the three required mathematics courses for

graduation, but the credits do count towards the 120-credit total for graduation. These courses do not meet the NCAA standards.

Rank

Will the decile/class rank information be provided for the students when specifically required for college and scholarship applications?

In terms of decile/class rank, this information will be provided for colleges and scholarship applications through the Guidance Office. The office will provide that information directly to the requesting school or organization.

National Honor Society

Will GPAs be reformulated for existing students for entry into National Honor Society?

GPAs will be recalculated based upon a conversion scale for all students beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. The recalculated GPA will be used as needed for requirements for activities such as the National Honor Society and the World Languages Honor Society.

Last year, my child did not qualify for World Languages Honor Society because the overall GPA was less than 3.8 even though the GPA in the language was over 4.0. The Program of Studies lists the GPA needed to be eligible for the World Language Honor Society as 3.3 overall with a 3.7 GPA in the target language. What does that mean for this year? Does 3.8 overall still apply for 2011-12?

Current practices will remain in place for the 2011-2012 school year. Once the Program of Studies is approved by the Board of Education, the requirements outlined in the document will take place in the 2012-2013 school year.

Previously, there was a formula for National Honor Society and different classes had different GPA requirements. Is that still going to be used?

Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, eligibility for National Honor Society will be based upon GPA as well as the service requirements and community service hours required for entry. The new requirements are not scaled by year of graduation.

Athletic Eligibility

Is there a minimum grade requirement for athletic eligibility? If so, what is it? If not, why?

A minimum grade requirement is not applicable for athletic eligibility. Students must meet a minimum credit requirement for each season during which he or she wishes to participate in a sport. These credit requirements are established by the Interscholastic Athletic Association. Please see page 17 in the Program of Studies for specific guidelines.