

## **COURSE SELECTION 2018-19 Freshmen**

This presentation is intended for rising freshmen. This segment will include specifics for completing each section of the course selection card as well as additional information.

You may have received a **High School Planning Guide** from your middle school counselor. If not, please use the link on Butler's website to access the online High School Planning Guide. The planning guide contains a chart on page 20 that lists graduation requirements. It's always advised to use the graduation requirements chart when selecting courses each year so that you will register for and complete necessary graduation requirements each year. High School Counselors check for these graduation requirements each year when they meet with students after they have turned in their course selection cards.

### **Course Rigor**

Deciding upon course levels for core academic courses is an individual and family decision. Students should choose levels (which include standard, Honors, and eventually Advanced Placement) based on their own individual ability and work ethic. Selecting advanced courses such as Honors and eventually Advanced Placement does help with compiling a competitive transcript for college admissions, but not if the student is overworked and scores poorly. The goal is to select the right combination of courses that challenge a student without having to stay up to 1:00 or 2:00 am to complete homework. Students should also consider time needed for extracurricular activities. Honors courses will move at a faster pace than standard courses and will require more work. A strong work ethic is key to being successful in an Honors level course. The final year-end grade in each course is the only grade that is officially recorded on a high school transcript. Quarter grades and course exam grades are not listed in the grades section of a transcript.

### **4X4 Hybrid Schedule**

Students will select a total of 8 courses for the entire school year. Schedules received in August will include courses for the entire year, not just first semester. Courses are offered on both a 4x4 and A/B day configuration. Both types of courses are 90 minutes per day. There will always be only 4 blocks or periods per day, whether a student has 4x4 courses, A/B day courses, or a combination of the 2. A 4x4 course is much like a college course as it meets for only 1 semester. It meets daily and a final grade is recorded at its conclusion, which means that if a student has four 4x4 courses during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, they will finish those

courses at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> semester and receive 4 final and permanent grades on the transcript. They will then start 4 brand new courses at the start of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Those courses will meet every day for 90 minutes each. Students will again receive 4 final and permanent grades at the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. All students should receive a total of 8 grades by the end of the year, with the exception of some upperclassmen who may be taking double-blocked courses. Students may elect to have some A/B day courses. A/B day courses meet for the entire year, but only meet every other day. Therefore, A/B day courses must always be selected in pairs or even numbers so that there will always be a course to pair it with for a particular block. Some Math and Science courses are offered on both the 4x4 and A/B day configuration. A decision will need to be made as to whether you would like to take these subjects daily for just a semester, or year-long at the every other day pace. Taking math every other day for the entire year allows more time to process and master the material. Students scoring a level I, II, or III on the EOG Math are typically registered into the Foundation of NC Math I and Math I courses for completion of the Math I graduation requirement. The first course counts as an elective credit, and the Math I credit is earned with completion of the Math I course. The Foundations course is meant to add support for a strong foundation in Math I and can actually be used as a math credit in certain situations. Students scoring a level IV or V are eligible to take the NC Math I course without the Foundations course. Eighth grade EOG scores will determine placement.

Our goal would be to schedule core academic courses evenly amongst semesters. That means that if a student selects all 4x4 courses, we would try to have 2 of the academic courses scheduled during 1<sup>st</sup> semester and 2 scheduled during 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Occasionally we are unable to do this, sometimes due to the specific courses a student has requested, and sometimes due to course availability. If you receive your schedule in August, and you have all 4 academic courses in one semester, please attend your assigned schedule change day in August to work on the schedule. If you receive 3 academic courses in one semester and only 1 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, you could also attend the schedule change day to request redistribution if you would like. Note that if you are selecting a World Language course, that's equivalent to a core academic course, which means you basically have 5 academic courses. That means that we would want 3 academic courses in one semester, and 2 academic courses in the other semester.

**Card Specifics.** Please complete the demographic information at the top of your card, which means your name, address, phone number, etc. Examine and familiarize yourself with the layout of the card prior to selecting any courses on the card.

Notice the statements in bold writing above each section that alert you of whether you are looking at 4x4 or A/B day courses. Please notice the areas on the back of the course selection card that are designated for Alternate Courses and Student and Parent Signatures. Alternate courses are to be written in the boxes provided, and not checked off on the card. Alternates are back up courses for electives. If we are unable to schedule you into the electives you have selected, we will try to place you in the alternate courses you have selected. Please list two 4x4 alternates as well as two A/B day alternates. Please also notice the legend on the back of the card that explains the symbols that you will see beside some courses. At the bottom of the back of the card, please read the statements above the place for your signatures. Please sign and have your parents sign the course selection card after reviewing it with them.

Let's look at each section of the course selection card. Let's start with English. You can choose English at the standard or Honors level. If you are in the English Learners program, you can select the ESL English courses. Your Reading EOG score and Language Arts course level and grade will be used to guide the selection of level for your English I courses.

Next, let's look at the math section. The math section requires that you get this year's math teacher's signature as a helpful recommendation for the course and level of math that seems to fit your ability best. Please do not turn in your card without this signature. Your middle school counselor may help with this signature. If you select an Honors level math course, you will be required to also complete the Honors Course Agreement for Mathematics form. This form requires your signature and your parent's signature. Make sure you are aware of the prerequisites for math courses. Prerequisite means courses you must take prior to taking the intended courses. You can refer to the math flow chart in the ONLINE Planning Guide to determine sequencing in math for the years to come. Be thoughtful about jumping to an Honors level math course if you have previously only taken standard level math courses. Notice that some math courses are offered on the 4x4 and A/B day formats.

Next, let's look at the science section. You have Earth Environmental Science or Biology to choose from. Most students will need to take Earth/Environmental Science. Students electing to take Biology should be concurrently enrolled in Math 2 Honors. If students do not select Earth/Environmental Science as freshmen, they are expected to complete this Earth/Environmental Science graduation

requirement by completing AP Environmental Science as a junior after they have completed Chemistry.

Next, let's look at **social studies**. Students will need to select a standard or Honors World History course. Any student wishing to enroll in AP World History instead of Honors must have a conference with their 8<sup>th</sup> grade counselor. They may also be asked to complete a writing sample and afterwards speak with our Social Studies Department Chairperson, Cynthia Lloyd. Please note that AP courses are true college level courses and contain mostly juniors and seniors. A strong work ethic and maturity are greatly needed for success.

Next, let's look at Health/PE. All freshmen should plan to take the 4x4 Health/PE course which is already checked off for you. This is a graduation requirement.

Next, let's look at **World Languages**. All world languages, with the exception of Spanish 2, will be offered on the 4x4 configuration. If you took and passed level I of a World Language in middle school, please select the next level for 9<sup>th</sup> grade, which is typically level 2. If you are a native speaker of Spanish, you are encouraged to enroll in our Spanish for Native Speakers courses. You can speak with your World Language teachers at your school regarding these courses or may contact our World Language Department Chairperson, Tina Ziegler, for more information.

Next, let's look at **electives**. Electives are listed on the back of the card. Electives include World Language, CTE, Performing Arts, Physical Education, and JROTC courses.

Let's look at **Career & Technical Education (CTE)**. CTE courses include computer, marketing, business, apparel, interior design, health science, and engineering courses. Principles of Biomedical Sciences can only be taken by students in the Academy of Health Sciences program. Academy of Health Science applicants should contact Mrs. Mary Heston for questions. CTE courses are grouped into pathways and students are encouraged to follow pathways through their years in high school.

Let's look at **Fine Arts**. You must have met prerequisites to register for upper level arts, photography, band, choral, and theatre courses. A teacher signature is a requirement for any level beyond Beginners. Please do not select these upper level courses if you have no teacher signature. Please note the \$60 fee associated

with Photography and Ceramics courses. If you are selecting band or orchestra, please write the instrument that you play in the designated area.

Next, let's look at **JROTC**. Please note that JROTC courses require strict appearance codes with mandatory uniform wear weekly.

Next, let's look at **Physical Education**. When selecting elective PE courses, please remember that you have already selected Health/PE which includes a half semester of PE and a half semester of health. We will try to schedule this course for all freshmen, but sometimes do not have room to fit in every student. The course should be scheduled for sophomore year if it is not completed during freshman year. You may only complete Lifetime Sports or Teams Sports once during your high school years.

In **summary**, please remember to make course selections carefully. You should have a total of 8 courses checked off on your card whether they are 4x4 or A/B day courses. There should not be more than 8 courses chosen on your card. Alternates are to be written out in the space provided and not checked off on the card. Do not select courses that you have already received credit for as you cannot receive credit for an exact course twice. Example: if you received credit for Spanish I in middle school, you cannot retake it in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and receive another credit. The first credit earned is the one that will count. Courses with levels are an exception to this rule. Courses with levels would be courses such as Strength Training and Cardio Core Conditioning. Please be aware that you are selecting courses for the entire year and schedule changes in the fall are extremely limited. Remember to consult the High School Planning Guide for course descriptions, prerequisites, and course sequencing.