

# Curriculum Handbook

## A Message to Our Students

This Curriculum and Course Planning Guide has been prepared to provide a general overview of the courses and graduation requirements at West Seneca East and West Seneca West High Schools. We are confident this will assist you and your parents when you meet with your School Counselor to develop a program of study which best meets your needs and interests. Additional information on all of our courses can be obtained by contacting your counselor. We would also suggest you seek out the appropriate teachers in order to obtain more information about specific courses. Keep in mind that the only bad question is the one not asked. Strive to become all that you can be, and take full advantage of our curriculum offerings. We hope that this guide will assist you in developing your potential to the fullest while attending East and West Seneca High Schools.

Jason Winnicki, East Senior Principal  
John S. Brinker, West Senior Principal



## West Seneca Central Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the West Seneca Central School District is to provide a diversified educational program which will produce literate, caring, ethical, responsible, and productive citizens who are capable of adapting to change.

Updated January 2024

## Report of Grades

Students are graded numerically four times during the school year. Report cards are available via Parent Portal at the end of the 10th, 20th, 30th and 40th week of school. Report of grades is a summary of achievement. Sixty-five (65%) is the minimum passing grade. Individual teacher comments will be on the report card. Parents are invited to confer with the school at any time. Passing a Regents exam does not entitle a student to course credit. A student must achieve a final course average of 65% or higher to be awarded course credit. If a student drops a course after 5 weeks for a semester course or after the 10 week mark for a full year course, a DP (drop Pass) or DF (drop Fail) will be designated on the transcript.

The Honor Roll is based on quarterly averages.

High Honor Roll • 95.00 -100 \* Honor Roll • 90.00 -94.99 \* Merit Roll • 85.00-89.99

## Calculation of GPA /Rank/Graduation Honors

All class members eligible to graduate in June are included in the ranking computed at the end of the 6th semester. Class ranking is determined using a weighted grade point average (GPA).

Students transferring into the district in their senior year are not ranked. Subjects of 1/2 (Carnegie credit) are given a factor 1; 1 unit a factor of 2, 2 units a factor of 4, etc. The sum of the adjusted scores is divided by the number of scores. Students will be given both a weighted and unweighted GPA. A weight of 1.05 is used for Advanced Placement/SUPA/UB Math courses (GMP V and VI); 1.03 is used for Enriched classes and UB Math courses (GMP III and IV). Exam scores are 20% of the final course average. GPA calculation will include Physical Education. A notation of DP (drop pass) or DF (drop fail) is used if the student drops a course after the first 5/10 weeks respectively. *\*This is the most current information and is subject to change.* Graduation Honors are calculated using the student's Cumulative GPA and the first three marking periods of senior year.

The division of honors is as follows:

Magna Cum Laude (MCL) 99-93.6 \* Cum Laude (CL) 93.5-89.6 \* Honors (H) 85-89.5

## Early Release/Late Arrival/Open Campus Policy

The administration, faculty and staff of East and West encourage all students to take full advantage of the courses and programs offered during their four years. The State Education Department has established guidelines concerning the school day and the early release of students to participate in activities that are properly supervised. In view of this, the following procedures regarding early release and late arrivals have been established:

1. All students, grades 9-11, must carry a minimum course load of six (6) credits, plus physical education, each year. It is recommended that all seniors carry a minimum course load of five (5) credits plus physical education.
2. Only seniors are eligible for an Early Release/Late Arrival

## **Advanced Placement/SUPA Courses**

Several academic courses prepare students to take the Advanced Placement (AP) Examination that is given in May of each year. These courses are designed for students who wish to be eligible to earn college credit while still enrolled in high school. Successful completion of the course, along with satisfactory results on the AP examination, can earn credit that will be accepted by colleges. All students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses are expected to take the Advanced Placement examination in May. Syracuse University Project Advanced (SUPA) gives a final exam at the conclusion of the course. Because AP/SUPA courses have the same difficulty level as that of first year college offerings, it is recommended that students considering Advanced Placement have a sound academic background, the recommendation of the teacher, and a willingness to work diligently.

The selection criteria for assessing a student's eligibility for enrollment in college courses may include scores on Regents Exams; scores on standardized tests; teacher comments from all classes; report card grades from all courses; and the student's attendance record. Prospective AP/SUPA students and their parents should realize that these courses are quite challenging, and require more time and effort in the areas of preparation and study. Enrollment in college classes means that the students are willing to make a serious commitment throughout the school year.

## **Student Services Department**

The West Seneca East and West Student Services Departments, which includes the School Counselors, Psychologists and Social Workers, work with the school community to help students maximize their high school experience. Student Services coordinates a number of programs available to all students and their parents, including parent-teacher conferences, career awareness programs, college applications and scholarship information, student orientations, academic and personal counseling and course scheduling.

## **Special Education Programs**

Special Education services are offered at both High Schools.

## **Academic Eligibility Policy**

The West Seneca Central School District extends the privilege of extra-curricular activities to students who recognize their obligation to themselves, their co-participants and their school community while striving for academic excellence. Students must adhere to the district's policy regarding academic co-curricular eligibility, attendance, and good citizenship in and out of the classroom.

Extracurricular activities are defined as any school function NOT grade dependent (e.g.: athletics, intramurals, school musicals, marching band and all clubs/group meetings, activities, tryouts and performances held before or after school). The Extra-Curricular Policy will affect participation in all extracurricular programs and activities.

### **Standard**

1. The eligibility standard will apply to students in grades 7-12.
2. Students are considered eligible when they have a passing average in all subjects at each time that eligibility is determined (typically every 5 weeks). Students transferring into the district at any time shall have a clean slate for eligibility purposes.
3. Students who are failing **one course** (exclusive of Physical Education) at each 5-week marking period will be placed on **probation**, but will retain eligibility. This includes being able to practice and compete in contests and activities.
4. Students who are failing **two or more courses, or Physical Education (for Athletics)** at each 5-week marking period will automatically be **ineligible** to participate in any interscholastic contests, intramurals, or any extracurricular activities during the next 5-week period. Incomplete grades that are not changed to a passing grade within ten school days after the report cards and/or progress reports are issued will be considered failing grades for eligibility purposes.

### **Terms of Probation**

1. Probation is the 5-week time period where a student must seek remediation with the teacher of his/her failed/INC course(s).
2. Each student on probation will be issued a West Seneca Eligibility Evaluation Form from his/her coach/advisor. Students on probation or ineligible students must seek remediation with the teacher of his/her failed/INC course(s) every day.
3. Teachers must sign-off on the eligibility form each time verifying that the student sought remediation that day(s).

### **Restoring Eligibility**

1. At the end of the second full week of remediation, an ineligible student may have their eligibility reinstated by submitting proof of successful remediation using the West Seneca Academic Eligibility Evaluation Form.
  - a. In order for this to occur the student must show the proper motivation and work ethic/effort to be successful in class, and/or elevate his/her grade to a passing grade of 65 or higher.
  - b. An ineligible student may establish eligibility at any time after the second full week of remediation. All students on probation will remain on probation for the entire five week period until a new eligibility list has been issued.
  - c. Students forging his/her teacher's initials/signature will lose his/her privileges to participate in the extracurricular activity for the remainder of the current sports season/semester.

### **Procedure**

1. Activity advisors/coaches are required to generate a student roster in PowerSchool immediately following the first practice of the season or first activity meeting.
2. Activity advisors/coaches are required to review their student members' standing and determine eligibility at five week increments beginning at week five and concluding at week 35 (as per the academic calendar).
3. Activity advisors/coaches will meet with ineligible students and/or students on probation and will be given the West Seneca Academic Eligibility Form.
4. Activity advisors/coaches will contact the student's parent/guardian to inform them of the terms of their probation/ineligibility.
5. Activity advisors/coaches will submit a list to administration of ineligible students and students on probation.
6. A letter to the parents/guardians will be generated from building administration confirming the status of the student's eligibility.

### **Appeal Process**

A parent/guardian may request an appeal by submitting written notification to the building principal no more than five school days after receiving notification from the school. The Academic Eligibility Committee consists of: a building administrator, athletic director, coach or advisor and the teacher(s) whose class(es) are being failed. The committee will have the authority to remove students from the ineligibility list if it is determined there is adequate cause for such action due to a student's ability or recent extenuating circumstances.

Furthermore, the building principal may exclude a student from participation for a period of time if he/she deems necessary based on the severity and/or chronic nature of academic, behavioral or attendance difficulties.

### **East and West Library Media Center**

Each Library Media Center is staffed with a full time, certified Librarian to offer support for students in a range of ways. They provide vital curricular support, teaching on topics such as information literacy, critical thinking, as well as critical research strategies. These skills apply across the curriculum and can be supported in all classes. Additionally, the Librarians maintain a rich and diverse collection of materials to meet both the scholarly and recreational reading needs of the students.

The West Seneca school libraries have resources on site, but also provide many important and valuable resources through their web presence. Students have 24/7 access to a wide variety of materials in the form of eBooks, databases, and other electronic resources and tools. Many of these resources offer helpful features like read-aloud functionality, language availability, and on-demand word definitions, to assist students with understanding and processing the content. There are also fiction titles if a student wants to enjoy their book on their phone or personal device.

In addition to being great gateways to resources on colleges and careers, our high school libraries offer students the tools and instruction needed to prepare them for life beyond high school. By encouraging

lifelong learning, strong reading skills and the ability to find, evaluate and utilize information, we prepare students for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Both libraries offer access to Maker materials as well, giving students a variety of ways to tinker, explore, and learn through hands-on use of materials. Recognizing that students have a variety of needs and learning styles, the WS high school libraries strive to provide a variety of materials and access points to learning.

## **School Resource Officer**

The School Resource Officer (SRO) Program places a uniformed officer in each of the high schools in an effort to create and maintain a safe learning environment. The SRO's first duty is that of a sworn police officer, investigating crimes and activities associated with criminal behavior. However, SRO's are not "security guards", but rather "police officers at school" who promote a positive image through interaction with students, parents, teachers and administrators." The officers take a proactive approach with the schools to identify youth at risk, try to intervene with appropriate action plans, build healthy and trusting relationships and encourage a forward looking approach to deal with the pressures today's young people face.

## **Parent/Student Portal**

PowerSchool Parent/Student Portal gives parents access to information including attendance, grades, detailed assignment descriptions and lunch balance. Everyone stays connected: Students stay on top of assignments; parents are able to participate more fully in their student's progress, and teachers can use their gradebook to communicate with parents and students. Because this information is available online, progress reports and report cards are not mailed home. If you do not have access to technology, contact your school's Student Services department. The parent portal can be accessed through [www.powerschool.wscschools.org/public](http://www.powerschool.wscschools.org/public). Students can use their West Seneca login to access the student portal once their parent completes the user agreement via the parent portal.

## **Student Support**

Adolescence can be an exciting time for new experiences. It can also be a time of stress and challenge both at school and at home. East and West Senior offers a variety of resources to help students during this unique period. The School Counselors, Social Workers, and School Psychologists are available to meet with students on an individual basis.

## **HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

Parent-Teacher conferences are also an integral part of the Student Services Department's program. These conferences help to establish, improve and maintain communication between the school, the students and their parents. Any parent, who is interested in scheduling a conference with either the teacher or counselor, should contact their student's counselor or teacher. Teachers can also be easily reached via email. All email addresses are listed on the District website or can be accessed through Parent Portal.

## **CAREER GUIDANCE**

Good planning and preparation are the keys to a successful future. The academic courses offered at East and West Senior help develop the skills that will open the doors to a successful career. Student Services utilizes the CHOICES program which is designed to help our students with career interest inventories, the college search process, finding sources for financial aid and scholarships, and matching their aptitudes, abilities and interests with appropriate career areas. This is a web-based program and can be accessed from any computer or electronic device by logging in with Clever.

## **SCHOOL-TO-SCHOOL/SCHOOL-TO-CAREER**

Counselors also work very closely with upperclassmen on college and career plans. Programs related to the college application process and financial aid are sponsored annually by Student Services. Scholarship information is publicized through Family Connections, homeroom bulletins, announcements, via the WSCSD website and email list. The counselors meet with each student at least once a year to review the student's academic progress and to make plans for the following year. This process is further explained in the section that focuses on the "Course Selection Process".

## **Course Selection Process**

### **STEP ONE - Orientation of Courses**

Before scheduling an annual review with a counselor, there will be an opportunity to become familiar with all course offerings through a series of grade level orientation programs.

### **STEP TWO - Course Selection via Parent Portal**

Students and parents will initially request their courses online through the Parent Portal. Please be sure you are registered and active with Parent Portal. Teacher placement recommendations will be available via Parent Portal to assist with the selection process.

### **STEP THREE - The Annual Review**

During the annual review, the student's academic achievement and career interests will be discussed; the four year plan will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary. The list of courses requested will be reviewed and confirmed based on teacher/counselor recommendations and student interests.

### **STEP FOUR - Parent/Guardian Communication**

Course requests selected by parents and students can be viewed in the parent portal while the selection process is open. Student requests will be confirmed at the student's annual review with their counselor. Final requests will be available via parent portal.

*Student Course selections should be finalized by **June 3, 2024**. There will not be any changes made after this date.*

## **Participation in Graduation Ceremonies and Activities**

Any student who has satisfactorily completed all graduation requirements will be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony and all related graduation activities of his or her graduating class subject to certain exceptions. Students may be prohibited from participating in the graduation ceremony or related graduation activities as a consequence of violating the District's Code of Conduct.