

**Tallapoosa County Schools**

**Academic Guide**

**2024-2025**

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**FOREWORD**

This publication is designed as a guide for teachers and administrators to assist in planning high school courses and graduation. Included you will find course requirements, graduation requirements, and other course information.

Careful steps should be taken in planning the student’s high school courses. Students and parents should review progress yearly to ensure graduation requirements are met and to adjust should the student’s goals change.

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**Alabama High School Graduation Requirements**

| (Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-02(8) and (8)(a)) |
| --- |
| Effective for students in the ninth grade in the 2013-2014 school year, all students shall earn the required credits for the Alabama High School Diploma. A local board of education may establish requirements for receipt of diplomas and endorsements, but any diploma or endorsement shall include the requirements of the Alabama High School Diploma. The Alabama courses of study shall be followed in determining the minimum required content in each discipline. |
| **COURSE REQUIREMENTS** |
| English Language Arts | Four credits to include: | Credits |
| English 9 | 1 |
| English 10 | 1 |
| English 11 | 1 |
| English 12 | 1 |
| English Language Arts-credit eligible options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses. |  |
| **English Language Arts Total Credits** | **4** |
| Mathematics | Three credits to include: | Credits |
| Algebra I or its equivalent/substitute | 1 |
| Geometry or its equivalent/substitute | 1 |
| Algebra II w/Trigonometry or Algebra II, or its equivalent/substitute | 1 |
| Mathematics-credit eligible options may include: Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses. | 1 |
| One credit from: |  |
| Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics or mathematics-credit eligible courses from Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses. | 1 |
| **Mathematics Total Credits** | **4** |
| Science | Two credits to include: | Credits |
| Biology | 1 |
| A physical science (Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science) | 1 |
| Science-credit eligible options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses |  |
| Two credits from: |  |
| Alabama Course of Study: Science or science-credit eligible courses from Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses. | 2 |
| **Science Total Credits** | **4** |
| Social StudiesThe (\*) means that these history courses must be taken in this sequence. Government and Economics are to be taken after the history courses but not in any given sequence.  | Four credits to include: | Credits |
| World History | 1 |
| United States History I | 1 |
| United States History II | 1 |
| United States Government | 0.50 |
| Economics | 0.50 |
| Social Studies-credit eligible options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses. |  |
| Civics Test Requirement | Students are required to pass the Civics Test in the United States Government class effective the 2018-2019 school year. Social Studies |  |
| **Social Studies Credits** | **4** |
| **Total Core Credits** | **16** |
| Physical Education(not calculated in Val/Sal) | Lifelong Individualized Fitness Education (LIFE) or one JROTC Credit | 1 |
| Health Education(not calculated in Val/Sal) | 0.5 |
| Career Preparedness(not calculated in Val/Sal) | 1 |
| Career and Technical Education (CTE) and/or World Languages and/or Arts Education(not calculated in Val/Sal) | 3 |
| Electives(not calculated in Val/Sal) | 2.5 |
| Distance Learning: Effective for students entering the ninth grade in the 2009-2010 school year, Alabama students will be required to complete one online/technology-enhanced course or experience prior to graduation. Exceptions through Individualized Education Plans will be allowed.(not calculated in Val/Sal) |  |
| **Total Credits for Graduation** | **24** |

\*Students must receive one full year of the Beginning Kinesiology curriculum. Waivers are offered through one year of JROTC or two years of marching band.

\*\*Students must receive three full credits of fine art, world languages, and/or career technical coursework. These additional required electives may limit a student’s opportunity to retake failed courses during the school year. Therefore, it is recommended that credit for all failed coursework be obtained during summer school each year.

\*\*\*Additional diploma pathways are available for special education students. Eligibility is determined by IEP.

**Valedictorian and Salutatorian Selection**

for

Students Entering Grades 9-12

The Tallapoosa County School district encourages all students to attempt the most challenging coursework available. The following criteria are used in the selection of the Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Honors Graduates:

• Valedictorian – The student at each Tallapoosa County high school who satisfies the requirements for the Honors Endorsement and who attains the highest cumulative grade point average in his/her graduating class based on the scores for all courses taken in grades 9-12. Students transferring into a Tallapoosa County school during their senior year are not eligible for Valedictorian designation.

• Salutatorian – The student with the next highest cumulative grade point average who satisfies the requirements for the Honors Endorsement based on the scores for all courses taken in grades 9-12.

• Honors Graduates – Students who satisfy the requirements for an Alabama High School Diploma or Honors Endorsement and who also attain a cumulative grade point average of 4.0, or are in the top 5% of the graduating class, which includes the Valedictorian and Salutatorian based on the scores for all courses taken in grades 9-12.

Class rank is determined by ranking each student’s overall weighted grade point average within the graduating class based on the scores for all courses taken in grades 9-12. The final senior class ranking is calculated at the end of the third nine weeks of the senior year. Valedictorian and Salutatorian determination will be announced after the posting of third nine weeks grades.

**Tallapoosa County Schools**

**Honors Endorsement Requirements**

The following coursework is required to receive the Tallapoosa County Schools Advanced Endorsement:

• Minimum of Algebra II with Trigonometry or Algebra II with Statistics

• Chemistry

•Minimum of two AP or Dual Enrollment courses with one in a core content or the equivalent (Dual Enrollment/ Dual Credit)

**Grading Plan**

Because students’ grades should reflect academic achievement in the classroom, classroom teachers will measure academic achievement in a variety of ways over the course of a given grading period. To foster a consistent, equitable method of classroom assessment, Tallapoosa County high school teachers will implement the following categorical grading plan for computing nine-week averages:

* Elementary- all assignments will be counted equally
* Major tests and work products/projects will comprise 60% of a student’s grade grades 6-12
* Quizzes and secondary assignments will comprise 40% of a student’s grade 6-12

\*Semester averages will be comprised of two nine-week grading periods

**Graduation Credits**

Rather than being promoted, high school students progress as credits are accumulated. Grade classifications are determined by the number of credits earned. Credits are awarded each semester. Successful completion of one semester in a given course is equivalent to .5 credit in that course.

• Sophomore = at least six (6) earned credits;

• Junior = at least twelve (12) earned credits;

• Senior = at least eighteen (18) earned credits;

 Twenty-four (24) credits are required for graduation (see page two)

**Grade Point Average Calculation**

The grade point average (GPA) is computed using the following table:

| **Core Courses** | **Honors Courses** | **Dual Credit Courses** | **AP Courses** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A = 4.0** | **A = 4.0** | **A = 5.0** | **A = 5.0** |
| **B = 3.0** | **B = 3.0** | **B = 4.0** | **B = 4.0** |
| **C = 2.0** | **C = 2.0** | **C = 3.0** | **C = 3.0** |
| **D = 1.0** | **D = 1.0** | **D = 2.0** | **D = 2.0** |
| **F = 0.0** | **F = 0.0** | **F = 0.0** | **F = 0.0** |

Grade point average and credits for transfer students cannot exceed Tallapoosa County graduation credits and GPA calculation policies.

**Guidelines for Students Transferring**

**Into Tallapoosa County Schools**

Students who transfer to a Tallapoosa County high school from another school must meet the Alabama graduation requirements to receive a diploma from the State of Alabama.

1. Transfer students coming in with Honors/Advanced, AP/IB, or DE/DC courses:

• Students receive the weight indicated on the transcript for Honors/AP/DE courses. The transcript is not changed. Credit awarded cannot exceed 1.0 for AP/DE and .5 for Honors.

• Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, Dual Enrollment/Dual Enrollment courses will receive an additional 1.0 GPA weight.

• Weighted credit of 1.0 will be given for AP/DE courses even if the former school did not award an additional quality point.

• No additional quality points will be awarded by Tallapoosa County Schools for honors courses.

2. Middle school transfer credits from an accredited transfer school will be accepted as they appear on the official transcript and will count towards GPA and graduation credit.

3. Transfers from Non-Accredited Schools (to include home/church/virtual schools)\*:

• The evaluation of any student entering a Tallapoosa County high school from a non-accredited institution shall begin with a thorough review of all available standardized test data. In the absence of a transcript from an accredited school, such data provides an objective snapshot of the student’s abilities and achievements. Standardized test data that may be considered include the following: ACT and any of its products, SAT, and any other nationally normed standardized instrument that may be deemed appropriate;

• Elective credits (defined as any credits earned in non-core courses) will be accepted without any validation beyond the transcript;

• Credits earned in core courses shall be validated in the following way(s):

* Any student whose standardized test results demonstrate benchmark-level proficiency in a given core area will be awarded credit for courses completed in that subject area. For example, if a student has scored a 19 on the English subtest of the ACT, his or her English credits earned at the non-accredited school will be deemed valid;
* In the absence of satisfactory standardized test data, students will be required to earn a passing score on targeted exams to demonstrate proficiency in various core academic areas. For example, if a student coming from a non-accredited school has most recently completed Geometry, he or she would be asked to take a cumulative exam provided by the school in which the student wishes to enroll;
* Whenever possible, the most advanced courses completed in each core academic area will be used to validate the credits earned in the respective natural prerequisites. For example, if a student earns a passing score on a Chemistry exam, then his or her Physical Science credit would also be considered valid without an additional exam because both are physical sciences.
* When courses in the same academic area are qualitatively different based on standards associated with the subject, additional exams shall be required to validate credits. For example, if a student earns a passing score on a Chemistry exam, his or her credit for that course will be accepted. However, a Biology exam will be required to validate the credit earned for that course because the two courses focus on separate standards. While Chemistry was taken more recently, the additional exam is necessary because the two courses are qualitatively different; one is a physical science while the other is life science. This may be true of other courses regardless of the grade level taught.

4. Courses Required for Graduation:

There are courses required for graduation in Alabama such as Beginning Kinesiology, Career Preparedness, and two years of U.S. History. Students who transfer and have not had these courses must take these courses in order to graduate.

\*Tallapoosa County Schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This is the only accreditation organization recognized by the Alabama State Board of Education. Transfer credits from other schools will be accepted from other regionally accredited associations as verified in AdvancED without further validation. However, the procedures for awarding credit to students coming to a Shelby County high school from a non-accredited school or home school will follow the Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-02(7)(j)290- 3-02(7)(L).

**High School Gifted Education Program**

The Tallapoosa County School System’s High School Gifted Education Program provides indirect services for 9th-12th grade students identified (according to the Alabama State Department of Education guidelines 290-8-9-12 Gifted) for gifted education placement.

The goals are as follows:

• To maintain each student’s gifted identity.

• To meet students’ academic needs through:

o Advanced core curriculum classes provided by qualified regular or gifted educators

o Counseling services for college and career preparation

* College and career counseling are available through the high school guidance department.

All students enrolled in gifted education courses at the middle school will remain on the gifted education rolls at the high school level. Any students who have been placed in gifted education, but have chosen not to receive services in middle school, may choose to be re-enrolled.

**Controversial Texts in the**

**English Language Arts Classroom**

High school students may encounter works of literature or nonfiction which make them confront certain unpleasant realities, historical or otherwise. Reading, writing about, and discussing controversial topics may occur in any course but are especially likely in the English Language Arts classroom due to the nature of the subject itself. When this sort of instructional challenge arises, parents and students can expect the following from Tallapoosa County Schools:

• Advance notice of the texts(s) to be studied;

• Specific details about potentially objectionable language and/or content;

• Candid rationale as to why the text is important for whole-group study;

• Instructional practices and approaches that reflect awareness and sensitivity;

• Possible alternative texts/assignments.

Tallapoosa County Schools is committed to developing an engaging, inclusive classroom culture by honoring the inherent value and life experiences of all our students.

**Dual Enrollment and Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit**

The Alabama State Board of Education has authorized the establishment of dual enrollment programs between public colleges and universities and local boards of education.

The following dual enrollment options may be offered:

• Dual enrollment (DE) is available to students who would like to earn college credit. DE students may take college courses and will receive college credit hours for all coursework. DE students’ courses and grades will not be reflected on the high school transcript.

 •Dual enrollment/dual credit (DE/DC) is available to students who would like to earn both high school and college credits for the same course. DE/DC credit courses will be added to the high school transcript and will be calculated into the GPA.

Tallapoosa County Schools currently has a dual enrollment/dual credit agreement with Central Alabama Community College.

DE/DC students will receive one-half Carnegie Unit for successful completion of a three-semester hour college course.

 DE/DC coursework, assessment, and grading are consistent with college-level instruction. Students participating in DE/DC courses are required to follow college procedures and complete required college forms and applications.

Students participating in DE/DC courses are required to adhere to Tallapoosa County Board of Education’s Student Code of Conduct and Attendance.

Students interested in participating in DE/DC must meet the criteria, and the student and his/her parent/guardian must sign up through the school counselor.

**Tallapoosa County Schools**

**Dual Enrollment – Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Requirements**

1. A student is eligible for Dual Enrollment or Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit in the Tallapoosa County School System if the student meets the following criteria:
2. The student must have and must maintain a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0. (Career technical courses offered through the Career Technical Education Center require a GPA of 2.5.)
3. Payment of the current rate of tuition and fees per credit hour, books, transportation, and equipment will be the responsibility of the student.
4. The student must notify the school counselor of any changes to his/her DE/DC schedule and of any DE/DC courses from which he/she chooses to withdraw passing or withdraw failing during the semester.

**Advanced Placement Program Guidelines**

\*AP Program is only available at Dadeville High School

The Advanced Placement Program (AP) is an academic program of college-level courses and examinations for high school students. Students enrolled in AP courses may take the College Board AP Exam and have an opportunity to earn college credit based on accepted exam scores. Participation in Advanced Placement courses also offers a competitive advantage in college admissions. All students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses are strongly encouraged to take the AP Exam.

The Advanced Placement curriculum offers a variety of courses allowing students to take advanced classes based on their areas of interest. AP courses require students to use advanced research and communication skills as they exercise their creative, problem-solving, and analytical acumen. College readiness is fostered as students develop various academic habits in response to the accelerated rigor and pace.

Considerations and Necessities:

1. Review your transcript for prerequisite courses as specified in the academic guide;

2. Value academic achievement and rigor as evidenced by your GPA;

3. Possess good study habits, strong motivation, and above-average reading and writing skills;

4. Be prepared to complete summer reading and assignments;

5. Discuss your AP decisions with your parent or guardian;

6. Sign an AP agreement outlining expectations.

Grading: For students enrolled in an AP course, a weighted GPA is awarded at the end of each semester: A = 5 points B = 4 points C = 3 points D = 2 points F = 0 points

The grading policies for individual AP courses will be distributed during the first week of school.

Academic Integrity: The nature of AP work often requires that students complete graded assignments outside of class. Students are expected to complete their own work (assignments and homework included) without the assistance of others unless the instructor specifically allows collaboration.

Parent/Teacher/Student Expectations: AP classes are college-level courses; as such, students are expected to be responsible for their own behavior, assignments, and relationships. Parents are welcome to conference with AP teachers, but students are expected to use this opportunity to develop the independence needed in the college setting they will soon encounter. The goal of all AP classes is to give students the opportunity to develop the academic and personal skills needed for success in high school and college. Parents need to encourage their children to plan their schedules wisely so that they do not take an excessive number of AP courses during any one year.

Exam Policy for Advanced Placement Courses:

• Students are strongly encouraged to take the AP exam in May for each AP course in which they are enrolled or completed earlier in the year.

• Students in certain AP courses may be REQUIRED to take the AP exam or complete summative portfolios or projects (this information will be made available during course selection).

 • The College Board’s AP exam schedule will be made available at the beginning of the school year; the AP exam schedule is also on the school system’s website. It is the student’s responsibility to plan his or her schedule to avoid conflicts.

• Exam fees are the responsibility of the parent or guardian and are due by October 1st.

 • Students who opt to not take an AP exam in a given course will complete an end-of-course final examination which will comprise twenty percent of their second-semester grade; the current exam exemption policy for second-semester seniors also applies to AP courses.

DHS students or parents/Guardians may speak with your school counselor to register for AP courses.

**Credit Recovery and Summer School**

Credit Recovery during the academic school year is intended for seniors and select freshmen. Sophomores, juniors, and most freshmen are expected to attend summer school for failed courses. Beginning with freshmen during the school year, a maximum of one (1) credit per subject area and four (4) total credits may be earned through credit recovery during a student’s academic career.

**Summer School**

A model featuring an online learning platform will be utilized. A certified teacher will be the facilitator of the online course at the school. The credit recovery model used throughout the school year may or may not be used for summer school.

• In order to make up a lost credit, students will be required to attend the entire term. Absences are not allowed.

• The school administrator responsible for summer school should be contacted about the cost.

• No distinction between “credit recovery” and “full course” will be made.

• Courses taken during summer school will not count as one of the four (4) credits that may be earned during school-year credit recovery.

• Students must receive three full credits of fine art, world language, and/or career technical coursework. These additional required electives may limit a student’s opportunity to retake failed courses during the school year. Therefore, it is recommended that credit for all failed coursework be obtained during summer school each year.

**Non-Traditional Athletic Students**

The Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) allows non-traditional students to participate in interscholastic contests and practices at the public school that serves the area in which the student’s parent or legal guardian resides. Non-traditional students are subject to enrollment and eligibility requirements as determined by Tallapoosa County Schools and the AHSAA. These will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance. For additional information, interested students should contact the school administration at the middle or high school in the zone of residence.

**NCAA Division I, II, and III Eligibility**

Each high school maintains a current list of NCAA core courses on the individual school’s NCAA High School Portal. Students who plan to pursue athletic eligibility after high school should register with the NCAA Clearinghouse by creating an account at www.eligibilitycenter.org. Additional information regarding specific eligibility requirements can be found online at www.ncaa.org/studentfaq. To learn more about different NCAA Divisions, visit www.ncaa.org/divisions. Counselors and coaches may also provide assistance with course selection and eligibility questions. Eligibility for collegiate athletics including appropriate course selection, GPA and admissions test requirements, and NCAA Clearinghouse registration is the responsibility of the student and his/her parents.

**Promotion Policy for Kindergarten**

In the State of Alabama, kindergarten attendance is not mandatory. However, Alabama requires that all school systems offer kindergarten programs. When and if you choose to enroll your child in a Tallapoosa County kindergarten program, you accept all policies and procedures, including the attendance policy and the promotion/retention policy found in this handbook. To be considered for promotion, kindergarten students must score 70 or higher on the Kindergarten End of Year Assessment. In all cases, whether a student should be promoted or retained will be a collaborative Retention Team decision based on multiple data points (AlaKids, mClass, Forefront, Edmentum, classroom efforts, etc.). The decision of the Retention Team will be final.

**Promotion Policy for Grades 1-5**

Students in grades 1-3 must pass Reading, ELA, and Math to be considered for promotion, except third grade. All third-grade students must also meet the requirements of the Alabama Literacy Act to be promoted. Students in grades 4-5 must pass ELA (combined grade of reading and language) and Math to be considered for promotion. A student performing below grade level in grades 1-5 could be considered for retention. The determination process will be a collaborative Retention Team decision based on multiple data points (mClass, STAR, Edmentum, classroom efforts, SPIRE, Heinneman, etc.). The decision of the Retention Team will be final.

**Tallapoosa County Schools Grading Guidelines:**

Grading Procedures

* Grades 1-5 will have an equal percentage/category. There will only be one category.
* Grades 6-12 will still have two categories- 60% major and 40% minor
* Grade 1-3 (Self-Contained)
	+ Science- 4-6 assignments
	+ Social Studies 4-6 assignments
	+ Reading- 6-8 assignments
	+ ELA- 4-6 assignments
	+ Math- 6-8 assignments
* Grades 4-5
	+ Science- 4-6 assignments
	+ Social Studies 4-6 assignments
	+ Reading- 5-7 assignments
	+ ELA- 3-5 assignments
	+ Math- 6-8 assignments
* Grades 6-12 - a requirement of 6 major grades and 9 minor grades (minimum per 9 weeks; it is suggested that semester-long classes should have more)

Graded items

* Major: Summative proof of standards mastery.
* Minor: Formative proof to check for understanding of standards.
* Homework: (elementary) will not be assigned due to grade inflation, homework CANNOT be put in the conduct grade!!; (secondary) is to be counted as complete or incomplete as a minor grade.
* Extra credit/bonus points should not be given for supplies or on graded items (grade inflation). Grades over 100% CANNOT be entered into PowerSchool. No extra credit is to be awarded for AR tests!!!
* Work completed with a substitute can only be a minor grade (secondary) no assessments (elementary) unless it is a long-term sub (10 days or more).

Instructional Enhancements

* Renaissance/Star 360, Forefront, Edmentum, and mClass will be used as our county-wide universal screener and progress monitoring tool in grades K-12. It will be administered in the fall, winter, and spring (dates selected by the central office). 11th and 12th-grade testing is at the discretion of the individual school.
* Edgenuity will be used for credit recovery and/or failed core classes during the school year, Summer School for Credit Recovery, or other superintendent-approved reason -or- for Special Education students upon an IEP Team Decision.
* IXL will be used as a supplemental to tiers 1 and 2 instruction in grades 6-12 Reading and Math
* SPIRE and Take Flight will be used as intervention reading programs during school, after school, and during the summer learning camp.
* Heinnaman will be used as an intervention for math programs during school, after school, and during the summer learning camp.
* BASE programs will be used for social-emotional learning and may be used for behavioral interventions, etc.
* Items from Teachers-Pay-Teachers may be purchased and used by teachers as supplements if approved by school instructional specialists and/or administration. These items are not approved as core curriculum by TCBOE.

● Elementary Guidelines

* Reading coaches will develop the EOY assessment for kindergarten (all 3 schools must use it)
* Kindergarten will not have nap time
* No parent requests for teachers
* Classes will be divided and teachers will draw to avoid “selected placement”
* A district kindergarten report card will be developed and used at all schools. (collaborative creation by teachers and specialists)
* Students with a consistent reading/math deficiency will have a student Reading/Math Plan written outlining instructional supports/strategies that will be used for those students
* Grades 3-5 Conduct will be a grade in its own category
* ALSDE/ARI is/are working on a first-grade readiness assessment. More information will be provided as it becomes available.
* No fluency grades (per admin decision)
* No AR Grades (per admin decision)