



# **ACADEMICS**

## **Academic Audits**

Students may choose to audit a class for enrichment or to repeat a course that is a prerequisite for another. If a student is interested in auditing a course, he/she should first speak with his/her Guidance Counselor. Approval will need to be granted from the Director of School Counseling, the Supervisor of the Department, and the Principal. Acceptance is based on enrollment only, and if seats are available. If an audit agreement is made, teachers are not required to evaluate student work or progress. The course audit, when completed, will appear on the permanent record, but no credit will be issued; audited courses do not fulfill graduation requirements.

## **Advanced Placement Courses**

AP African American Studies	AP Latin V
AP American Gov't & Politics	AP Macroeconomics/Microeconomics
AP Art History	AP Music Theory
AP Biology	AP Physics I
AP Calculus AB	AP Physics II
AP Chemistry	Physics C: E&M Mechanics
AP Computer Science	AP Psychology
AP Computer Science Principles	AP Spanish V
AP English Language and Composition	AP Statistics
AP English 12 Literature and Composition	AP Studio Art I/II
AP Environmental Science	AP Studio Art II
AP European History	AP U.S. History I
AP French V	AP U.S. History II
AP Human Geography	

## **Advanced Placement (AP)/Honors (H) Level**

This level is for an official Advanced Placement course or part of a sequence of courses that lead to an official placement program. These courses have the highest level of difficulty for that grade level. These courses require the most in terms of work and assignments, the highest expectation in quality performance, considerable independent work, and high levels of critical and analytical thinking. These are college-level courses.

Students scheduled for AP courses are expected to take the AP examinations. Any student enrolled in an AP course who does not sit for the AP examination will have the course appear as an AP course with Honors weighting on the transcript.

AP level is designed to meet the needs of the gifted, talented, and highly able student with excellent ability, mastery of skills, motivation, and a strong desire to be challenged in the specific subject area. A student should have most of these characteristics, but not necessarily all, in order to be identified as being likely to succeed at the level.

Previous teacher's recommendation is based on the following:

- Excellent performance in writing, interpretive skills, computation skills or any skills necessary for quality performance in the subject
- Excellent ability in conceptualizing complex ideas
- Excellent ability in analyzing data and evaluating it and in making logical inferences and drawing valid conclusions
- Highly responsible for completing and fulfilling course requirements, including standards and assignments
- Consistency of quality performance in coursework
- Positive attitude toward rigorous demands and the challenge of the level and course
- Genuine interest in the subject area
- Self-motivated
- Self-disciplined and capable of doing independent work

Grades and standardized test data indicating excellent level of ability are:

- Previous performance in subject indicated by grades of "A," or "B," in an AP/Honors course or "A" in a CP course
- Standardized test scores ranging from the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in skills needed for the specific subject area and scores that indicate competency of skills at least two (2) or more years beyond grade level
- A pattern of data indicating quality grade achievement in previous courses in the subject area and an excellent ability in verbal and non-verbal skills needed for successful achievement

## **Assessment Policies**

In order to help students manage their workload, teachers are not permitted to give any graded test, quiz, or 'quest' during the first period of the day and the first period after lunch. This allows for the rotation to alleviate too many assessments on one particular day. Science classes are exempt from this policy because the 70-minute block is utilized for labs.

AP double-lab periods should be used for labs. This will be the non-testing period for science. No test, quiz, or graded assessments, that do not directly pertain to the lab, are to be given/collected during this period.

No homework or graded assignments can be assigned when the class does not meet; homework can only be assessed/checked the day the class physically meets.

In-class graded assignments are permitted on all days, but nothing that would require a student to prepare the night before on non-testing days.

## **College Preparatory (R) Level / Survey (G) Level**

College Preparatory (CP) is a broad-based, in-depth course for those students planning education beyond high school and for those planning to enter directly into a career. This level is designed to meet the needs of students who desire a strong background of skills and subject matter necessary for success at college, other post-secondary schooling, or in a career.

CP courses demand high levels of cognitive and problem-solving processes. The instructional pace is rigorous and emphasizes curricular breadth, depth, and enrichment. CP survey courses provide instruction to enhance skills in reading, writing and research, critical thinking, and reasoning.

A student should have most of these characteristics, but not necessarily all, in order to be identified as being likely to succeed at this level. Previous teacher's recommendation based on the following:

- Satisfactory, good, or excellent performance in the course such as writing skills, reading and analytical skills, computation skills, or any skills necessary for successful performance in the subject

- Responsible in completing and fulfilling course requirements
- Consistency of satisfactory, good or excellent performance
- Positive attitude toward coursework
- Satisfactory, good, or excellent study habits
- Self-motivated

Grades and standardized test data indicating satisfactory, good or excellent levels of ability in the following areas:

- Previous performance in subject indicated by grades of "A," "B," or "C" in the course
- Standardized test scores indicate the student is at least at grade level competency, or beyond, in skills needed for successful achievement in the course

### **Course Change Deadlines**

Students may drop or change courses only after the teacher, parent/guardian, and counselor have completed the Course Drop form. The Department Supervisor must be consulted and must sign the form. Semester and full year courses dropped after ten (10) full class sessions, regardless of when a student enrolls in RHS, will carry a grade of W/E (withdrawal failing) or W/P (withdrawal passing) on the student's permanent record, unless extenuating circumstances require a review by the Principal. Two (2) important points need to be remembered when dropping or changing courses:

- Students must continue attending the classes they are enrolled in until a drop or change is approved
- Seats may not be available in the replacement course selected in which case the student would have the choice of remaining in the original course. If the dropping of the course places the student below minimum course load, the student will be assigned a study hall

Course change requests may be initiated by a teacher, student, guidance counselor or parent/guardian. A student's performance in present and past courses, plus any relevant test scores and current progress, can be used in deciding on a course change. The student must pick up an Add/Drop form in the Guidance Department and obtain teacher, department chair, parent/guardian and guidance counselor signatures. It is expected that a conversation will happen at each level to make certain that the change is

appropriate. Student and parent/guardian must be aware that the student's schedule may change. The grade will follow the student to the next course. Please note that student-initiated changes will be allowed up until the first week of each semester.

### **Course Changes**

As the school year progresses, some students may find themselves in a class that is too challenging or not challenging enough. If the counselor, teacher, and subject supervisor agree that a student is misplaced, a level change will be considered, provided space is available. Please be advised that students must maintain thirty-five (35) credits per school year.

### **Criteria for Student Level of Instruction**

General guidelines to be applied by counselors, subject supervisors, and teachers in recommending students for guiding them into the proper ability level – either Advanced Placement, Honors, College Preparatory, or Survey College Preparatory. A student should possess most of the characteristics listed under each major category of criteria; however, he/she does not necessarily have to have all of the characteristics listed. No one item of criteria should be considered single-handedly from the others and no one item should be considered as a reason to exclude a student from the level. A pattern of characteristics from among teacher recommendation, past grade achievement, and standardized test data should be used to determine the proper grouping for the student. If it is recognized that a student is not properly placed in a level, there is the opportunity to move the student to a level that is more suitable.

### **Enrollment in Courses**

Any course listed in the Course Catalog that does not receive the necessary minimum enrollment may be dropped. Students who registered for any dropped course will be given the opportunity to select an alternate course.

### **Examinations**

Midterm and Final exams are given on half-day schedules. Students who cut any exam, as well as students who do not make arrangements for make-up exams, will receive a zero (0) on the exam.

For departments that will not be administering an exam, the students are not expected to report to class. Teachers will administer their own make-up exams. Students will be expected to take the missed exam the day they return.

A senior who earns an “A-” average or higher (90-100) in a course, based on all four (4) quarters, may elect exemption from the final examination with teacher permission. Semester courses may not have exemptions.

### **Extra Credit Policy**

Extra credit is offered at the discretion of the individual teacher. It is not a requirement to offer extra credit. Students and parents/guardians should not ask for extra credit. If a teacher decides to offer extra credit, the assignment:

- Must be related to the current curriculum
- Should not impact a student’s marking period grade more than 1%
- Must not require a monetary fee or purchase of goods
- If it requires a presence at an after-school no-cost event or activity, an alternative equivalent assignment must be provided. Equivalency is determined by the teacher.
- Must be offered to all students in the class
- Extra credit or homework passes, etc. may not be bought, sold, or exchanged between students

Nothing in this policy should limit incentivizing students (non-grade bearing) to participate in school activities, fundraising, and cultural activities.

### **Final Assessments**

Examinations or other assigned culminating projects are usually given for each course at the end of each semester. These final assessment grades are averaged with the second quarter grade and the fourth quarter grade. School days are set aside for the administration of these exams. It is expected that students will take their exams when they are scheduled. Requests for exceptions must be made to the Assistant Principal.

### **Financial Assistance**

Any student unable to pay any special course costs or purchase required workbooks may apply for financial assistance in the Principal’s office.

## GPA Distribution

RHS does not calculate a numerical rank. The high school profile will include a GPA breakdown illustrating College Preparatory GPA rank ranges and a College Preparatory Grade Point Average. In determining the weighted College Preparatory GPA, AP courses, and academic courses (Math, Science, Social Studies, World Languages, and English) are used.

Students who have attended RHS fewer than six (6) quarters are not included in the GPA distribution.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Numeric Equiv.</b>	100-93	92-90	89-87	86-83	82-80	79-77	76-73	72-70	69-67	66-63	62-60	59-0
<b>AP Weight</b>	5.00	4.67	4.33	4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	0
<b>H Weight</b>	4.50	4.17	3.83	3.50	3.17	2.83	2.50	2.17	1.83	1.50	1.17	0
<b>CP Weight</b>	4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	1.33	1.00	0.67	0

## Grade Meanings

The purpose of grading is to assist students in the process of learning; all grading systems will be subject to continual review and revision to that end. All teachers will hand back graded assignments within two weeks of due date. Grades acknowledge a student's demonstrated proficiency in the Common Core Curriculum Content Standards and locally established curriculum of learning goals and objectives:

- Active participation in and attention to daily lessons
- Frequent contribution to discussions
- Prompt, thorough, accurate, and neat preparation of assignments
- Thorough preparation and performance on tests and assessments
- Display of an eagerness to learn and an inquisitive approach to lessons
- Attention to the need for proper materials
- Cooperation with the teacher's efforts
- Willingness to work to the student's best ability and do more than the expected

The following grades will be given in each academic subject at the end of each marking period:

- A grade of "A" indicates superior performance. It may be given to a pupil whose achievement is significantly above grade level; whose work

achieves a quality and quantity that consistently excels; and who demonstrates a high degree of initiative, application, and purpose

- A grade of "B" indicates above average performance. It should be given to a pupil whose achievement is above grade level; whose work frequently excels; and who generally demonstrates strength in the subject
- A grade of "C" indicates average performance. It should be given to a pupil whose achievement in most areas of the subject is average; whose work is acceptable; and who demonstrates a satisfactory degree of proficiency
- A grade of "D" indicates below average performance. It should be given to a pupil whose achievement in the subject is barely passing; whose work is the minimum acceptable for credit; and who demonstrates only weak proficiencies in the subject
- A grade of "E" indicates failing performance and that no credit can be given for the subject. It should be given to a pupil who has not met the minimum requirements of the course; who has demonstrated an inability or unwillingness to master the basic elements of the course; or who has failed to meet the minimum attendance standards necessary to pass a course of study

Letter grades may be modified by plus or minus signs (except for "A" or "E" grades). Numerical averages will be converted into letter grades based on a scale. Final exam grades will be averaged into the fourth quarter grade. Individual departments will decide on the weighting of each exam not to exceed 20%. The final grade will be the average of all four (4) quarter grades.

### **Grade Reporting/Progress Reports**

Grades are reported mid-marking period and at the end of each quarter. Grades will be available online through Skyward.

### **Homework/Makeup Work**

The Ridgewood Board of Education believes that homework relevant to material presented in class provides an opportunity to broaden, deepen or reinforce the student's knowledge. Teachers use discretion in deciding the number and length of assignments.

It is, however, expected that an average of thirty (30) minutes of homework, per day, will be assigned in each academic class. All homework must be



assigned by the end of the class period. The amount of homework assigned will correlate with the level of the course and age level of the students, it is, however, important to remember that students are involved in many things and co-curricular activities are important as well. Compromises must be made sometimes to allow our students to be successful in all endeavors.

It must be understood that the term "homework" does not necessarily mean only written work. Homework may consist of assigned or preparatory reading, developing research, and/or preparation for quizzes, exams, class presentations, etc. The determination of the composition, organization, and structure of homework rests with the individual teacher.

It is clear that homework is a basic requirement of any academic or solid subject area. As such, it must be stressed in terms of preparation, review, summary, and/or conclusion. Homework will, therefore, carry a major emphasis in terms of grading. The students should be made aware of that component of the grade as early as possible in the term.

It is expected that homework that is collected be graded with comments and constructive criticism and returned to the students in a timely manner. In no case, should students' work be collected and returned without a comment or a grade, and in no case should collected assignments be retained for more than three (3) days.

Homework will be updated and posted regularly on teacher websites concurrent with the work being assigned in class.

Students absent for any reason must make up assignments, class work, and tests within a reasonable length of time. In most cases, a reasonable length of time shall be the same number of school days as the days missed.

### **Honor Roll**

At the end of each grading period, a student's quarter grades are used to compute an Honor Roll, a recognition for high achievement. The achievement is communicated to parents/guardians on the quarterly grade report as Honors, High Honors or Highest Honors. Any grade of "E," "I," or "D" disqualifies a student from any Honor Roll. Students must be fully scheduled to qualify for any of the Honor Rolls:

- Highest Honors: Unweighted GPA of 4.00
- High Honors: Unweighted GPA of 3.99 – 3.50
- Honors: Unweighted GPA of 3.49 – 3.00

### **Incompletes**

When a student does not complete work missed for absence or other excused reasons, he/she will receive an “incomplete” for the marking period. Students will be given two weeks following the end of the marking period to make up the missed work.

If work critical to the student’s understanding of the subject is not made up, a failing grade for that subject area may be assigned.

If work is missing during the final marking period of the school year, the grade will be left to the discretion of the teacher. The teacher who has given an incomplete is responsible for reporting to the student the work he/she has missed and citing the consequences mentioned above.

The grade of “I” will only be assigned if coursework is not completed because of extenuating circumstances, i.e., illness, death in family. Incomplete grades will NOT be given to students who choose not to complete the coursework by the end of the quarter.

If the “I” grade is not converted within the expected timeframe, a failing grade will automatically be assigned.

### **Minimum Course Requirements**

Credits must be earned in the following areas to fulfill RHS graduation requirements.

<b>Course Area</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Credit Years</b>
English/Humanities	20	4
Mathematics/Computer Science	15	3
Business/Technology	2.5	0.5
Science	18 incl. labs	3
Social Studies	10 U.S. History	2
	5 World History	1
World Languages	10	2
Visual/Performing Arts	5	1

Career/Technical Education (Practical Arts)	5	1
Wellness Program	18.75	3.75

English 10 and 11 and U.S. History I and II requirements may also be fulfilled with American Studies or American History and Literature with Integrated Study in the Arts (AHLISA).

The New Jersey Department of Education may change graduation requirements. If changes are made, parents/guardians and students will be notified.

### **Minimum Credit Requirements**

Credit is granted for passing work at the end of each course. Most courses are assigned five (5) credits per year-long course, two and one-half (2.5) credits per semester course, and one and one-quarter (1.25) credits per quarter course. A total of one hundred twenty (120) credits are required for graduation from RHS.

### **National Honor Society**

RHS is a member of the National Honor Society and we are a recognized chapter. Eligible students will be notified of the application process in spring of their junior year. Eligibility for acceptance into the NHS is based on the following criteria:

- Possess and maintain a 3.90 Grade Point Average on the General GPA Scale or the Academic GPA Scale by end of 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter junior year
- Maintain the school standards of conduct
- Demonstrate leadership, character, and service to the school and community
- Complete forty (40) hours of service in RHS

Eligible students will be notified of the application process in spring of their junior year. National Honor Society members provide peer tutoring before and after school.

### **New Work for Credit**

New work for credit courses given by an accredited high school can be used for transcript purposes. Only courses given by RHS can be used for calculating a GPA.

College courses or special programs taken during the year cannot be used for credit toward high school graduation. The Department Supervisor must approve credit for those seeking acceleration in the curriculum pattern.

### **Remediating Courses**

A student earning a grade of “D” or “E,” is entitled to remediate the courses through an approved summer school. Approved summer schools will be accepted for credit and the department supervisor’s approval is mandatory for remedial courses. Both grades will appear on the transcript. (Only RHS summer school grades will be calculated into the GPA. Other approved summer schools will be honored for credit but not GPA weighting.)

### **Student Class Load**

In Grades 9 and 10, the minimum program expected at RHS consists of seven (7) subjects each semester. In Grades 11 and 12, the minimum requirement is six (6) subjects each semester. Exceptions to this policy may be granted with the approval of the Assistant Principal of Guidance, Curriculum & Instruction.

### **Student Records**

The Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1975 permits parents/guardians to access their child’s school records. Copies of the procedures regarding student records are available upon request.

- A student’s school records may be examined upon request by natural parents/guardians or any person designated as a representative by them. Students 14 years or older may examine their records. Younger students must have parental consent.
- Official student records may not be released to other persons or institutions without written permission of the parent/guardian/child, except as otherwise authorized by law.
- Procedures for challenging the contents of student records are included in the policy.

### **Transferring Credit**

Credit earned by RHS students in educational programs outside the High School District is subject to review prior to acceptance. Coursework taken by students at another Bergen County District high school prior to their matriculation as freshmen shall not receive high school credit. Evening high

school, foreign study programs, and junior college coursework may be accepted as credit toward graduation with the prior approval of the Principal.

The practice for grade transfers for students who enter RHS mid-term directly from another school is as follows:

- The counselor will inform each teacher of the grade earned by the student in the similar course at the previous school
- The teacher will use that grade in conjunction with the grades earned at RHS to determine quarter and semester grades

The practice for grade transfers for students who enter mid-term without having attended school previously that semester is as follows:

- A student who enters school during the first three weeks of the semester without having attended school previously that semester will be required to do make-up work in each of his/her courses

A student who enters after the third week but before the end of the twelfth week without having attended school previously that semester can get credit for courses if:

- Required work for the date of entry is satisfactory passed
- The final examination is passed
- The teacher recommends that full credit be awarded

The teacher will recommend that full credit be awarded if the student is judged to be ready to move onto the next course in the sequence, by having achieved a level of learning similar to other students in the course.