Westford Academy

9th Grade Curriculum Night

Wednesday, February 15th 6:30pm

Tonight's Agenda

- Introduction and welcome
- Curriculum Coordinators review offerings by department
- Overview of Program of Studies and scheduling timeline
- Course recommendation process through PowerSchool
- Q&A with coordinators

Future Freshmen Visit

"What are you so stressed about?"

"These are the best days of your life..."

What is Challenge Success?

How do you define success in your family?

Family	Relationships
Community Service	Work
PSATs/SATs/APs	Social Media
College Admission	Finances
Appearance	A scary world!
Image	=Pressures

Administrators, faculty/staff and counselors all feel the same pressures...

Boston Magazine- Top 25 high schools in MA

Niche-One of the best high schools in MA

National Blue Ribbon High School

... does success come at a price?

- Mental health issues continue to be on the rise
- Social and Emotional Issues
- Stress and anxiety from the pandemic
- Isolation from the pandemic

Changes made at Westford Academy in support of our Challenge Success Vision:

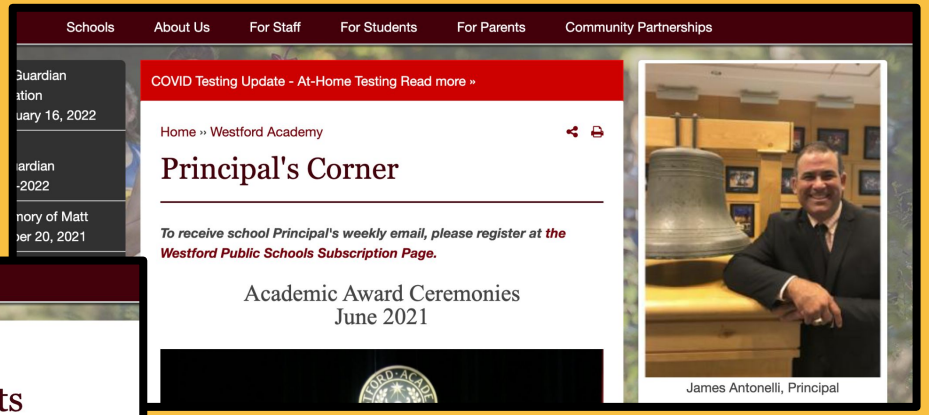
- Vacations free from homework
- Added an additional minute to passing time
- CS Schedule week each quarter
- Providing parameters to teachers testing “prior to” mid-year and final exams
- Updated the Westford Public Schools Homework Policy
- Less pressure, more balanced, deeper learning!

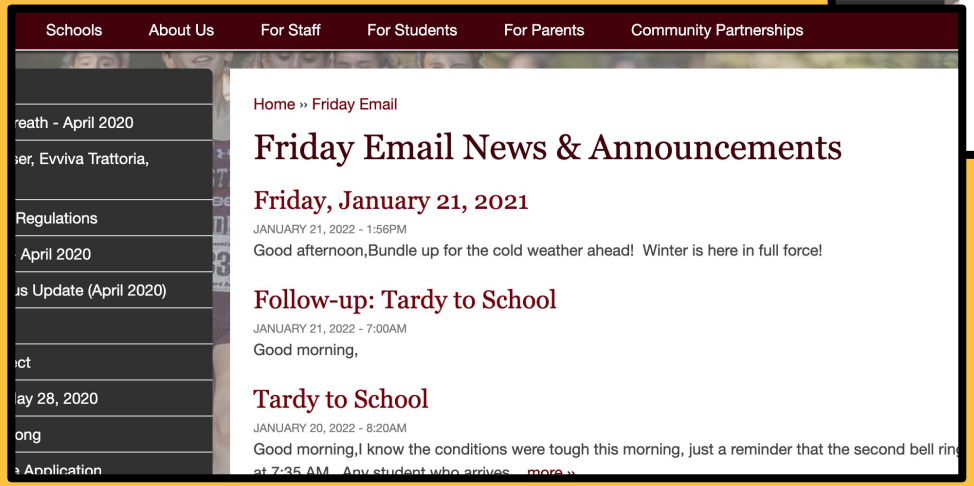
Challenge Success

Vision Statement:

We envision a school where students, faculty, staff, and parents collaborate to create a healthy and inclusive community that inspires a sense of purpose and a love of learning while supporting increased engagement and a broader definition of success.

Communication is key!



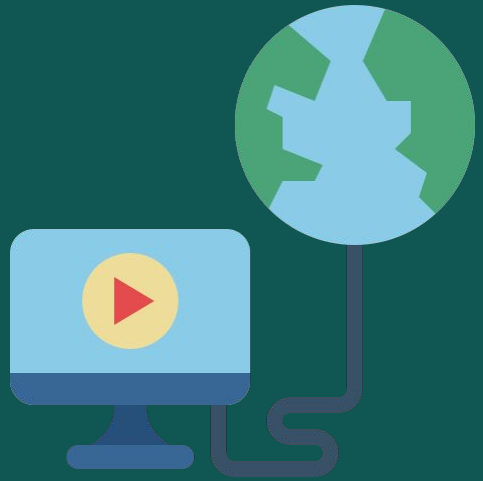


[Principal's Corner]

[Friday Email]

ONE-TO-WORLD

AT WESTFORD ACADEMY



How is OTW different?

Personal device for your student for 4 years

Brand new Chromebooks with cases!

What happens if the Chromebook needs repairing before June 2027?

The student pays **UNLESS....**

Families buy insurance

Chromebook insured from 2023-2027

One payment covers 4 years

When should I buy the insurance?

Can only purchase in August 2023 online. This is the only opportunity.

What do families need to know?

- Current 8th grade Chromebooks will be collected by the middle schools.
- New Chromebook pick up for 9th grade students is on: 8/14, 8/15, 8/21, 8/22 at WA.
- All freshmen attend with an adult on one of these dates.
- Devices belong to the school and must be handed in June 2027 in good working order.

Starting August 1: Take Action

Reminder Emails

Get ready!

You will receive reminders and detailed information via email in July.

- Read the online orientation information
- Make an appointment online
- Complete the online forms
- Pay for insurance online (optional but highly recommended)

August 14, 15, 21 and 22

CURRICULUM COORDINATORS

World Languages: Stephanie Grabowski-Devlin

Science/Math: Joe Barnas

English: Janet Keirstead

History/Social Studies: Adam Ingano

Health and Physical Ed.: Brian Roark

Visual/Performing Arts: Andrea Mejia

Student Support Services: Sejal Costa

Business: Dan Twomey

Counseling: Lauren Clark

Ms. Stephanie Grabowski-Devlin

Curriculum Coordinator

World Language Department

sdevlin@westfordk12.us

World Languages at WA

Students who **did not study a language in middle school** and students who wish to **change the language they are studying** or **add a second language** as an elective may choose from the following:

- French 1
- German 1
- Latin 1
- Spanish 1
- Mandarin 1*
  (Not offered at Middle Schools - Open to all)

*Not all level 1 classes are offered each year so students should indicate a second choice when selecting one of these courses.

*Students with <u>significant</u> prior experience in one of these languages may qualify to start in level 2 by taking a placement test in late February

World Languages at WA

Students who wish to <u>continue studying</u> the language they started in middle school will be recommended by their teacher for one of the following courses:

- French 2 CP or Honors
- German 2 CP or Honors
- Latin 2 CP or Honors
- Spanish 2 CP or Honors

Students should consider honors if they ...

- Are curious about other cultures
- Enjoy communicating - speaking, listening, reading and writing - in another language
- Can learn independently and work collaboratively
- Will be an active participant in a fast paced learning environment
- Have met the prerequisite grade listed in the Program of Studies and have the recommendation of their 8th grade teacher

World Language Graduation Requirement

Students must take two years of the same World Language in order to satisfy the graduation requirement.

Many of our students study their language for 4 years at WA. All 5 of the languages taught have courses available for students through senior year.

Mr. Joe Barnas

Curriculum Coordinator

Science Department

Mathematics and Computer Science Department

WA Science: Grade 9 Offerings

<u>Required</u>:

Biology

(Biology MCAS in June)

<u>Elective Option</u>:

CP Intro to Engineering

Descriptions and prerequisites can be found online in the WA Program of Studies – Science Department

Biology Level Prerequisites

Placement into courses is based on teacher recommendation.

Biology Level	Prerequisite
412 Honors	**95** Overall Average in 8th grade Science
410 CP	**75** Overall Average in 8th grade Science
406 CP	**Below 75** Overall Average in 8th grade Science

Students may override by ONE level only. For example, a student recommended for 406 CP may NOT override to the 412 Honors level.

Taking CP Biology does NOT disqualify students from AP courses later in high school (must have success in an honors level science course the year prior to enrolling in AP science).

Honors Biology Expectations

- Meets **Characteristics of Successful Honors Students**
- Content depth and pace is very rigorous, requiring ***advanced skill in scientific inquiry***.
- Students are required to complete an ***independent scientific research project*** as part of their final exam.
- Students will also be required to perform a ***year-long, extensive study of the local ecosystem*** including field observations, independent investigations, and formal reports.

Specific Grade Prerequisites for Incoming Freshmen for Math and Computer Science Courses

Suggested Course	Prerequisite
305 Algebra 1 CP	Less than 75 in 8th Grade Math
308 Algebra 1 CP	➢ At least 75 in 8th Grade Math ➢ Less than 80 in Algebra 1
321 Geometry CP	At least 80 in Algebra 1
322 Geometry H	➢ At least 87 in Algebra 1 ➢ Meets Characteristics of Successful Honors Students

Please note: Although a student may meet the grade prerequisite, the teacher may not recommend the requested course based upon the student's work habits.

Options for doubling up:

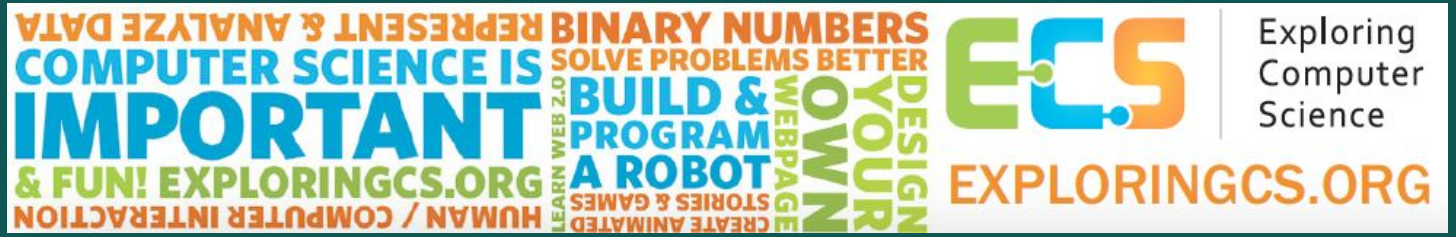
If you choose to double up, the options are:

- 9th Grade: 308 Algebra 1 with 321 Geometry (Not Recommended)
  - Must be requested by student, will not be automatically recommended by teacher
- 10th Grade: Geometry with Algebra 2

<u>Strongly</u> discouraged in 9th Grade

- Consider 10th Grade option, if at all
- Algebra 1 knowledge applied in Geometry
- Second math would take the place of a 9th Grade Elective
  - Students encouraged to explore passions and interests in other areas of WA (art, music, business, CS)

***1 Math Course Required Each Year - **Doubling Up does not replace this**



(350) Video Game Programming	•Open to all Students
(351) Exploring Computer Science Part A (Semester)	•Open to all Students
(352) Exploring Computer Science Part B (Semester)	•Open to all Students *Must earn an 80 in ECS Part A*

*These course offerings are in the electives section.

Advanced CS courses (grades 10-12):
Honors Java Programming must be completed before enrolling in AP Computer Science.

If you have any questions about your individual student, please contact me via email:

jbarnas@westfordk12.us

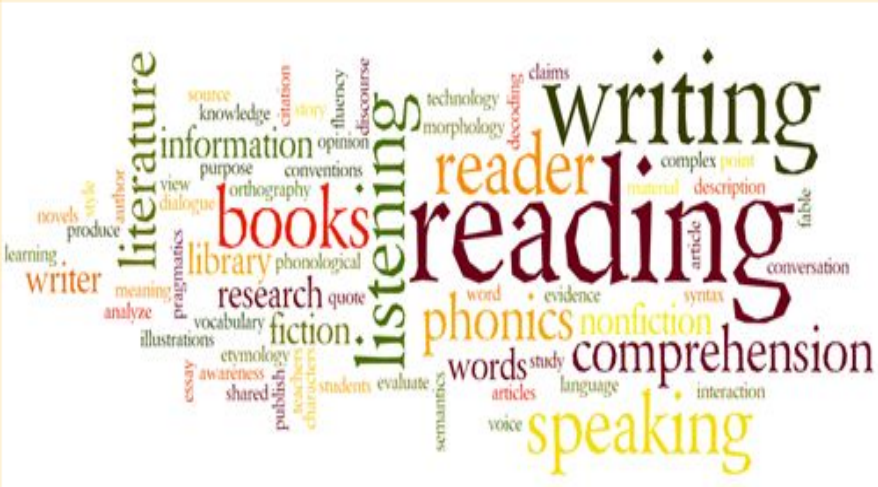
Thank you!

Ms. Janet Keirstead

Curriculum Coordinator

English Department

jkeirstead@westfordk12.us



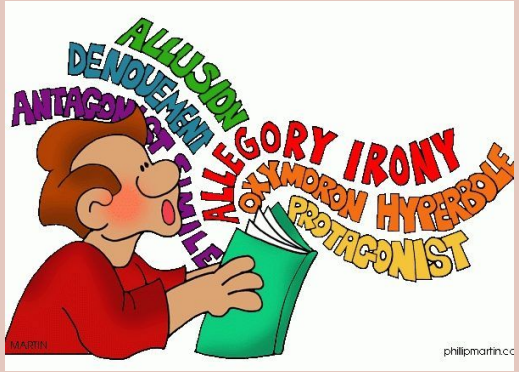
English

Required:

English 9

Elective:

Journalism I



A student who is successful in honors English:

- Has a passion for the content.
- Works independently and is self-motivated.
- Manages a fast-paced curriculum.
- Participates actively in class discussion.
- Reads and understands complex text beyond literal meaning.
- Crafts coherent, organized essays using proper grammar and mechanics.
- Uses evidence to support a thesis.
- Possesses strong organizational skills.

Mr. Adam Ingano

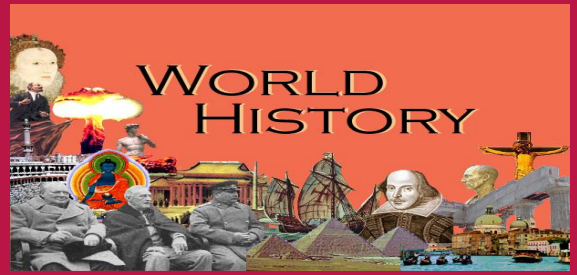
Curriculum Coordinator
History/Social Studies Department

aingano@westfordk12.us

History & Social Studies: Grade 9

Modern World History

- Starts at the French Revolution and goes through the 20th Century
- Content is challenging
- Extra focus on historical inquiry



Levels

- Honors
- College Prep
- Each year's grade determines eligibility for the next year

What is the difference between Levels?

All levels

- **Content**: French Revolution through the Cold War
  - May change levels from one year to next, no loss of info
- **Work** toward understanding
  - Primary source documents
  - Secondary works
- **Skills**
  - **Research & Writing**: Emphasis on skill development

Honors- *Greater Independence*

- **Content:** French Revolution through the Cold War
- **Read** Primary/Secondary Source Analysis…understand historical events as described by their participants or historians
- **Discuss -** come to class <u>prepared</u> to discuss material
- **Skills**
  - **Research & Writing**: identify and use appropriate evidence to support a thesis; citations

Mr. Brian Roark

Heath and Physical Education
Curriculum Coordinator, K-12

broark@westfordk12.us

Health and Physical Education

*Health and Physical Education are an **essential component of a student's well-rounded educational experience** and provide the following benefits:*

- Prevention against negative consequences of stress
- Positive association with attention, concentration and on-task behavior
- Reduction of feelings of anxiousness
- Positive relationship with academic achievement
- Encourage lifetime healthy habits

Programming Goals

Health Literacy

- As defined by SHAPE America, Health Literacy is:
  - An individual's capacity to access information, resources, and services necessary to maintaining and promoting health.

Physical Literacy

- As defined by SHAPE America, Physical Literacy is:
  - An individual's ability, confidence and desire to be physical active for live.

Grade 9 Health and Physical Education

Grade 9 Year

- Sem 1: Health and Sem 2: Basics of Kin. in P.E. ***or***
- Sem 1: Basics of Kin. in P.E. and Sem 2: Health
- Year long engagement with curriculum content and associated benefits

Deferring Physical Education

- Grade 9 is only year this can occur
- Requires enrollment in 5 P.E. credits during one of the subsequent years
- Basics of Kin. in Physical Education is a prerequisite for enrollment in future P.E. courses
- No year long engagement with curriculum content and associated benefits

Well-Rounded Educational Experience

Exposure and engagement with the curriculum content in these courses, throughout each of the four years is ***vital to a student's wellness, social and emotional well-being, and success as a lifelong learner***.

Physical Education is a MA General Law, WPS School Committee Policy, and Westford Academy graduation requirement.

Mrs. Andrea Mejia

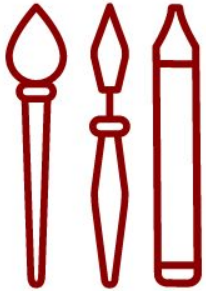
K-12 Visual and Performing Arts
Curriculum Coordinator

amejia@westfordk12.us

Westford Academy

Music

Theater Arts



Visual Art

Performance Music Ensembles for students in Grade 9 (full year)

Chamber Orchestra

Concert Band
Concert Percussion

Concert Choir

Applied Music courses available to students in Grade 9 (semester courses)

Guitar I

Piano I

Ukulele I

Electronic Music I

Theater Arts courses available to students in Grade 9

Elements of Theater (Prerequisite)
****Semester Course***

Acting I
****Semester Course***

Visual Art courses available to students in Grade 9 (semester courses)

Foundations of Art
(Prerequisite)
****Drawing, Painting, Printmaking***

Can pair with:

Drawing, Painting, Ceramics, Photography

Digital Art (formerly Image Editing)
****Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator software***

Intro to Movie Making
****Adobe/After Effects software***

3D Animation and Modeling
****Blender software***

Co-curricular opportunities available to students in Grade 9

- Marching Band
- Jazz Band
- Pep Band
- Troubadours (Strings)
- WAcapella (Vocal group)
- WATA - Westford Academy Theater Arts Main stage
- WATA - Black Box
- Art Club
- Movie Making Club

Student Support Services

Ms. Sejal Costa

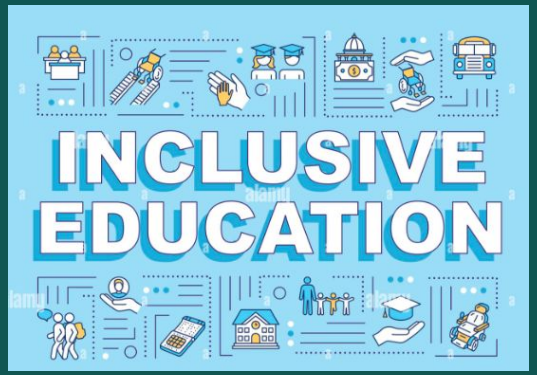
Student Support Leader

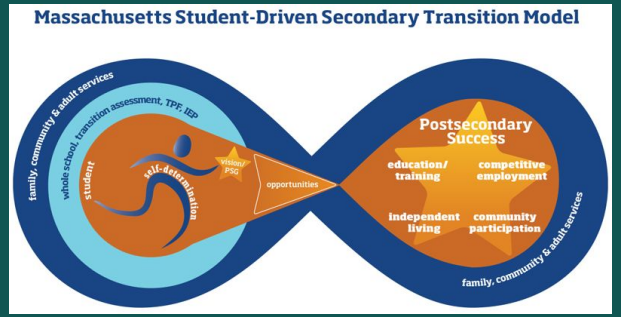
scosta@westfordk12.us

Ms. Hanna Thieme

School Psychologist

Presenter





Middle School to Westford Academy: What's the same, what's different?

Same

- ★ IEP annual meetings
- ★ IEP reevaluation meetings
- ★ Referral process
- ★ Each student has a liaison
- ★ Inclusive model
- ★ Sub separate programs

Different

- ★ Service delivery
- ★ Study Skills for grades 9 & 10
- ★ Academic Support for grades 11 & 12
- ★ Transition Planning Form
- ★ Transition/Post-Secondary Goal
- ★ Age of Majority
- ★ 688 Referral
- ★ Student participation at Team meetings
- ★ Increased independence

Special Education @ WA

Goal	*Service Type*	*Personnel*	*Freq./Duration*	*Category*	*Start/End Dates*
1	consultation	Special Education Teacher & General Education Teacher	1 x 10	A	IEP period
1	English	Special Education Teacher or Assistant	5 x 50	B	IEP period, or start of the school year to end of the IEP period
2	Study Skills	Special Education Teacher	5 x 50	C	IEP period, or start of the school year to end of the IEP period
3	counseling	counselor	1 x 20	C	IEP period, or start of the school year to end of the IEP period

Each service is connected to a goal in the IEP.

How often the service is provided within the school cycle.

A = consultation
B = support ***IN*** general education
C = direct services ***outside*** the general education setting

Special Education Courses

Small groups (max. 8 students)

Team decision

Grid C services

IEP goals & objectives/benchmarks

Concepts
5-credit core academic courses

Study Skills/ Academic Support
5 or 2.5-credit courses (not counted towards GPA)

Life Skills
Application of academics based on the state frameworks

Instruction by a special education teacher

Accommodations

Modifications

Study Skills/Academic Support

Supports progress in IEP goals/objectives

- Provide specialized instruction
- Instruction occurs 1:1 or in small group
- Completion of class assignments/assessments

Liaison: Special education teacher who manages student IEP implementation and progress

Concepts Courses

Subject area is taught in a separate setting from the general education classroom.

- Aligned with the State Frameworks
- Curriculum is modified to meet student needs
- Taught by special educator
- Smaller class size

**Concepts courses are a Team decision

Inclusion Support at WA

Grid B: Inclusion support **IN** general education setting. Math, English, Science, History/Social Studies

- Inclusion support is a Team decision
- Student requires specialized instruction to access the general education class.
- Services provided by a teaching assistant or special education teacher.

Additional Services

Services required for students to access the curriculum are determined by the IEP Team.

- Counseling
- Speech Therapy
- Social Skills
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Orientation and Mobility

Life Skills/REACH/Postgraduate

- Substantially separate programs.
- Program supports students with application of academics to real life, vocational skill development, and social skills.
- Each program is supervised by a special education teacher.

MCAS

MCAS on demand test for Math, English and Science is a graduation requirement. To earn a diploma, a student must obtain a passing score in each content area.

Some students will complete an MCAS Alternative Portfolio.(Team decision)

- Alternative portfolio does not meet DESE competency determination for graduation
- Student receives a certificate of attendance.

Post-Secondary Planning (Transition)

Age 14:

- Student begins to attend their IEP meeting
- Vision statement developed
- Transition Planning Form begins to develop

Age 17:

- Age of majority notice
- 688 referral for adult funding and supports

Age 18:

- Students are considered an adult by the state and can make their own decisions, share the decision or appoint someone to make educational decisions

Questions? Concerns?

Sejal Costa
Student Supper Leader
scosta@westfordk12.us

Now on to Mrs. Lauren Clark !

Mrs. Lauren Clark

Director of School Counseling

laurenclark@westfordk12.us

Contact info for Mr. Dan Twomey

Curriculum Coordinator
Business Department,
Dean of Students

dtwomey@westfordk12.us

WHAT IS DECA?

- **DECA is a Business Club/Competition** for high school students around the *globe with 200,000+ Members*
- DECA Members learn various business concepts and skills that prepare them for a professional career
- **DECA Prepares YOU to be a leader!!**
- WA DECA has over 300 members and is the **Largest Club at WA!!**

THE BUSINESS PROGRAM AND THE DECA CONNECTION

- DECA prepares **emerging leaders** and **entrepreneurs** for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, sales and management in high schools and colleges around the globe

- **DECA is the APPLICATION** of the WA business classes content/skills to **real world** opportunities and simulations

WA'S BUSINESS PROGRAM

In order to participate in the DECA Club - you must take at least one business class at WA each year.

Classes to Choose from for your Freshman Year:

- Principles of Marketing
- Principles of Management
- Accounting
- Introduction to Business and DECA
- Webpage Development
- Microsoft Certified Application Specialist

Counseling Department

- 8 School Counselors
  - Split up by alpha
  - Students will know who your counselor is by June
- 2 School Adjustment Counselors

Communication is key

WA COUNSELING NEWSLETTER

Emailed to students & parent(s) & guardian(s) every month

INSTAGRAM

@WA_COUNSELING

WA CLASS OF 2027

GOOGLE CLASSROOM for students

SCOIR

Counseling Website

All Scheduling Information is posted HERE!

Freshman Resources:

- Freshman Transition
  - Full Course listing
  - Elective course composites
  - Co-Curricular Activities
  - Academic Planning Tools
  - Course Selection Worksheet
    - If you complete this worksheet in advance, the software piece is easy!

Freshman Transition

Welcome Class of 2027

Welcome Students and Parent(s)/Caregiver(s) of the Class of 2027. I hope you will take some time to explore all the information that is available to you on this website. You will utilize the Program of Studies and Freshman Course Listing to create your Freshman course load. I cannot express enough the importance of placing value in your current teacher's course recommendations. Members of each academic department use data from prior years to develop their departmental guidelines, which are designed to ensure that students are set up for success.

This year, we look forward to having our 8th grade students visit WA for our Future Freshmen Visit that will be held on February 14th from 8:45-10:45am. We also would like to invite our 8th grade families to our Curriculum Night on February 15th at 6:30pm in our PAC.

Time Management Activity

Time Management Activity

This activity is intended to help students anticipate the time they will need to remain balanced, healthy, happy and engaged learners.

Fill out for your BUSIEST Term:

School Day (5 Days x 7 Hours)	**35**

Anticipated Hours of Homework*	**Average Hours/Week**
Honors & CP: .5 Hours x 5 nights weekly x # courses	
AP: 4 – 5 hours weekly x # courses	
Total School Hours:	

Extra-Curricular Activities	**Average Hours/Week**
Clubs/Interests/Hobbies	
Paid Job	
Community Service	
Sports/Physical Activity	
Music/Theater/Performance	
Other (Driver's Ed, SAT Prep, College Apps, etc)	
Total Extra-Curricular Hours:	

Daily Living Activities	**Average Hours/Week**
Sleep (7 days x 9 Recommended Hours)	
Necessities (Eating, Showering, Chores, etc)	
Travel to and from School	
Family Time	
Free Time (Friends, TV, Phone, Internet, etc)	
Total Daily Living Hours:	

School Day Hours	=	35	**Available Hours/Week**
Homework Hours	=	_____	**168**
Extra-Curricular Hours	=	_____	
Daily Living Hours	=		
YOUR TOTAL HOURS		_____	**VS.**

Daily homework amounts are estimates

Credits/requirements

Each full year course = 5 credits

Each half year (semester) course = 2.5 credits

Students must enroll in 32.5 or 35 credits each year, except for senior year.

PE & Health = Already added to PowerSchool for you

WA Graduation Requirements

- English: **20 credits**
- Math: **20 credits**
- Science: **15 credits**
- Social Studies: **15 credits**
- World Language: **10 credits**
- Visual & Performing Arts: **2.5 credits**
- PE: **10 credits**
- Health: **2.5 credits**
- Other credits needed: **22.5**

Total of 117.5 credits

Scheduling Overview

The scheduling process involves three parts:

- Recommendations for course levels will be inputted into PowerSchool for students by their current teachers.
- Students review those recommendations in PowerSchool, select their required classes and choose other courses based on their interests during the open window (February 18th- March 3rd).
- Once all requests are input in PowerSchool, the master schedule will then be built based on requests.

Scheduling timeline

- February 14th: All 8th graders visit WA!
- February 15th: Parent(s)/Caregiver(s) Curriculum Presentation
- February 18th: PowerSchool portal opens for students
- February 18th: Override Link available/open
- **March 3rd: PowerSchool portal and override link closes at 2pm**
- Master schedule created in May
- Schedules given to students in June

PowerSchool ... when scheduling

Please refer to the Scheduling 2023-2024 and Program of Studies for everything scheduling!

Please note all prerequisites and grade level requirements. Students will not be scheduled for a class for which they do not meet the prerequisites.

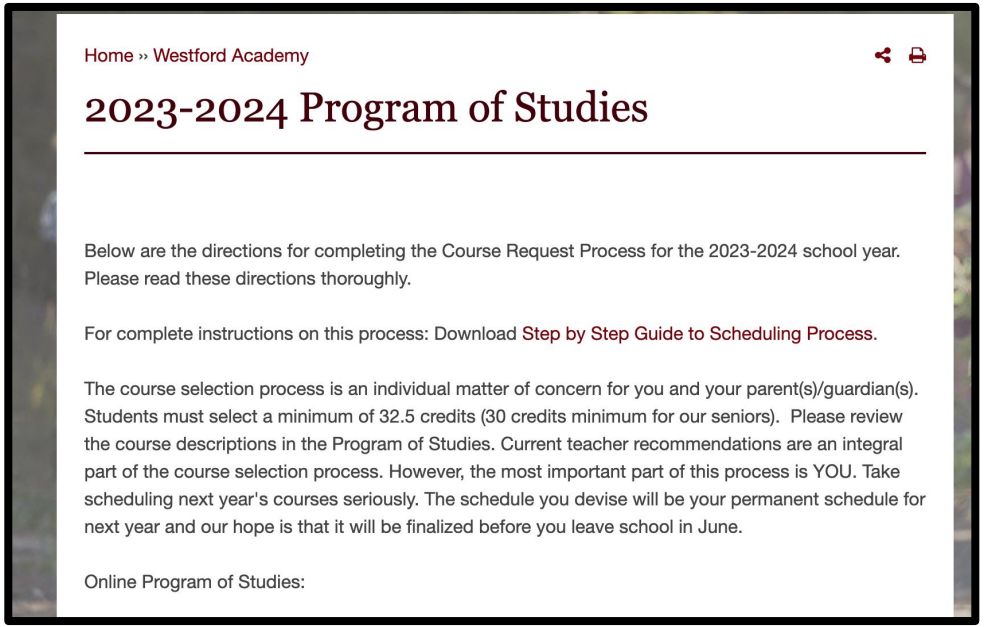
Use a chromebook or laptop…. Not your phone.

Please enter an alternate choice for each elective in the event that we are unable to schedule you for your first choice elective.

One of the biggest benefits of attending WA is the access to a multitude of classes. We ask that students **take their time and make the best decisions they can for themselves!**

How to select your courses...

Step 1 - Review the Program of Study to read course descriptions and graduation requirements



Home ›› Westford Academy

2023-2024 Program of Studies

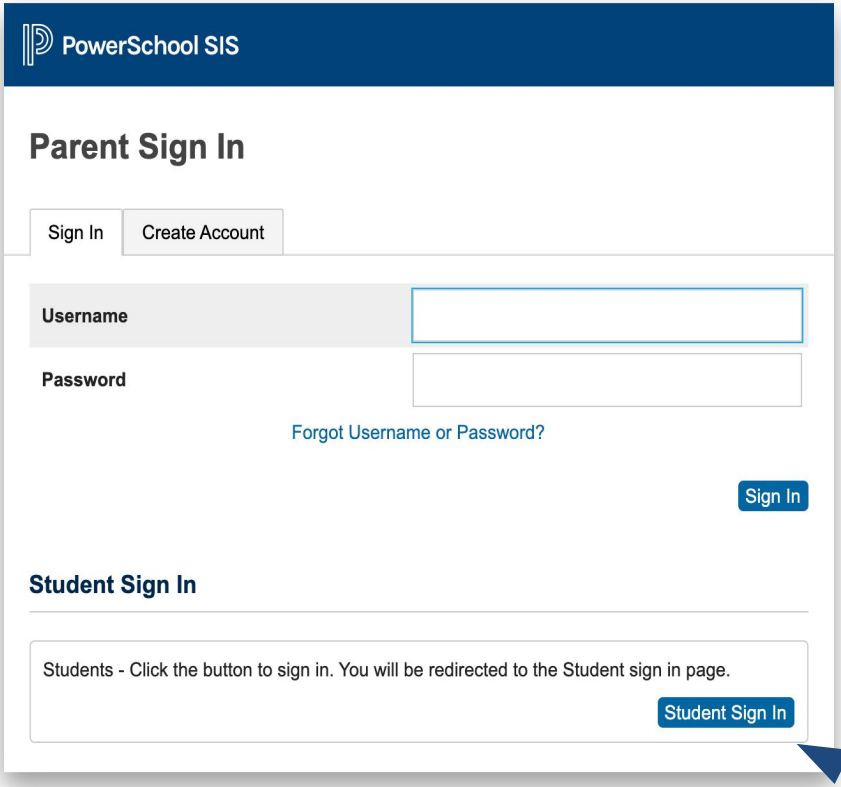
Below are the directions for completing the Course Request Process for the 2023-2024 school year. Please read these directions thoroughly.

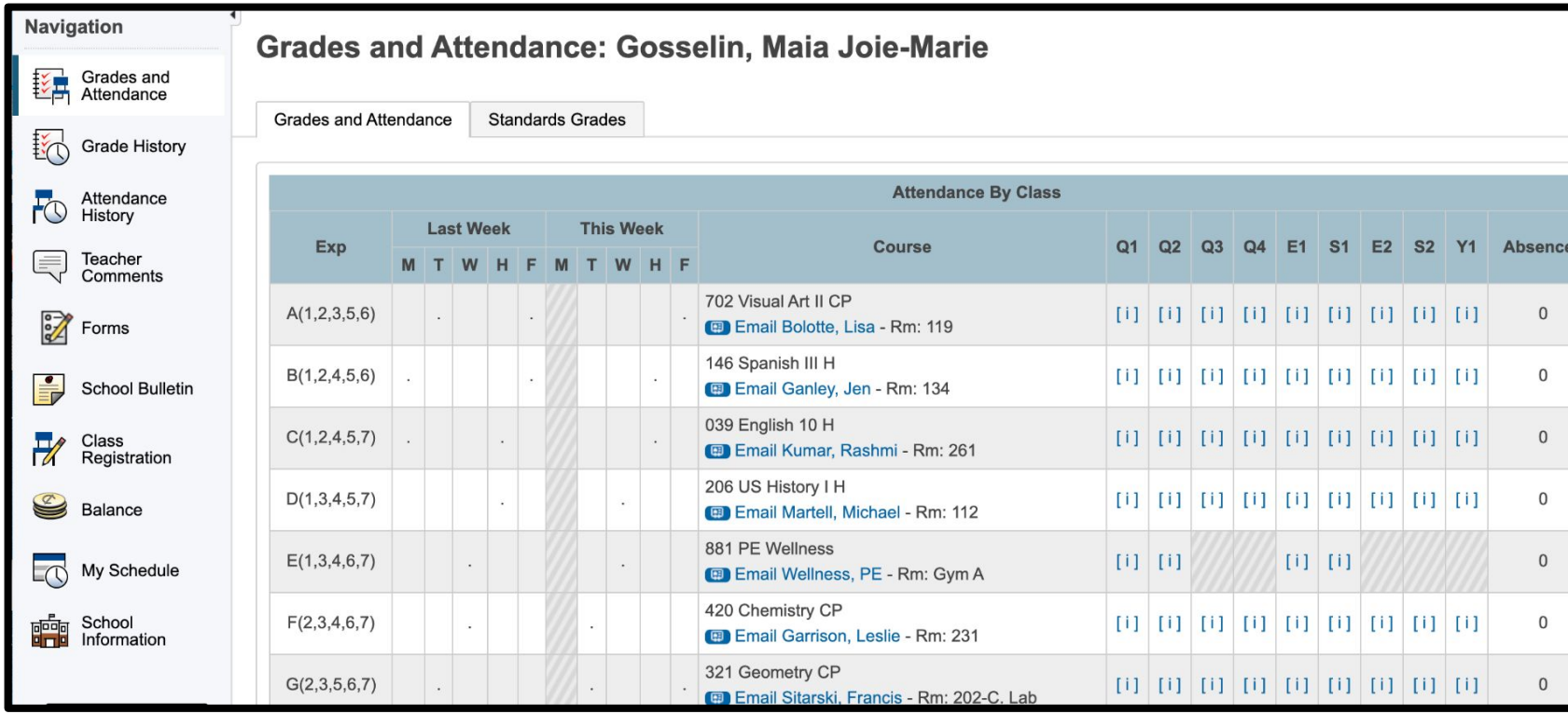
For complete instructions on this process: Download Step by Step Guide to Scheduling Process.

The course selection process is an individual matter of concern for you and your parent(s)/guardian(s). Students must select a minimum of 32.5 credits (30 credits minimum for our seniors). Please review the course descriptions in the Program of Studies. Current teacher recommendations are an integral part of the course selection process. However, the most important part of this process is YOU. Take scheduling next year's courses seriously. The schedule you devise will be your permanent schedule for next year and our hope is that it will be finalized before you leave school in June.

Online Program of Studies:

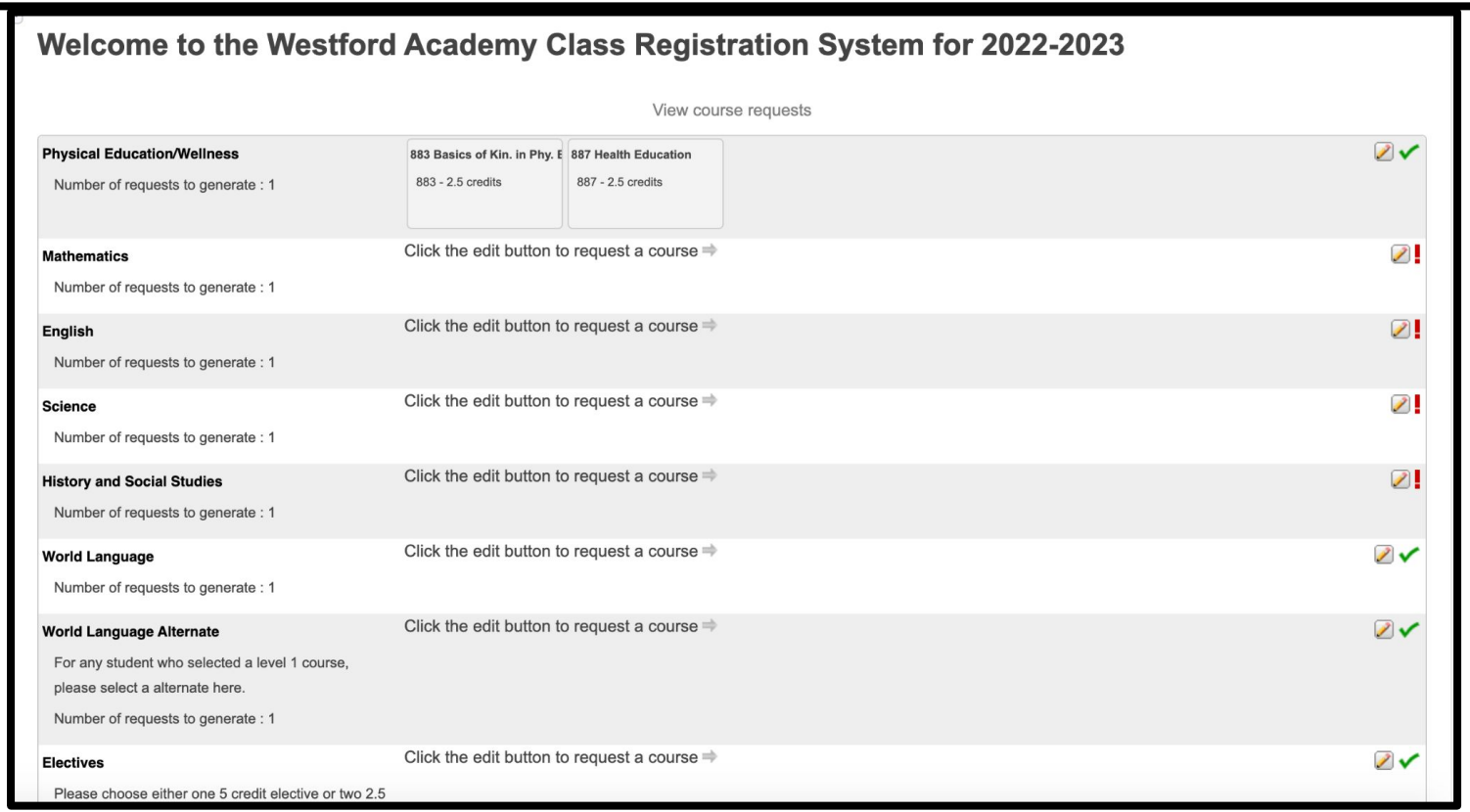
Step 2 - Log in to Powerschool (https://westford.powerschool.com/public) from February 18th-March 3rd.



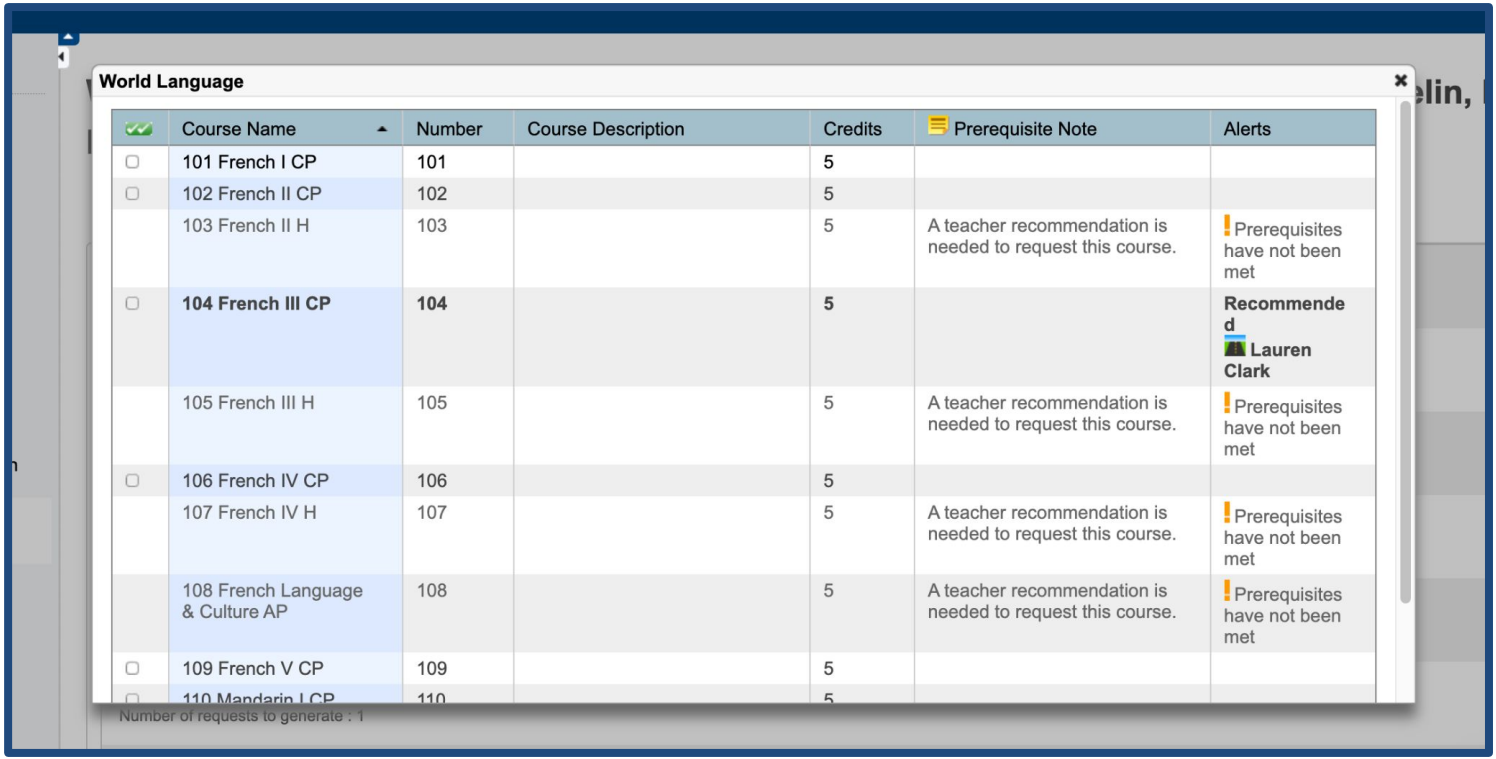


Step 3 - Click on the "Class Registration" button on the left side of the screen

Step 4 - Click the Pencil Icon on the right side of the screen under each subject to see your recommendation and/or select the courses you would like to take (for courses that require a recommendation, you can *only* select the course that was recommended for you.)



To change a level up, follow the steps below for completing a request for an override but you MUST select the course that you were recommended for. If the override is approved, those will be manually entered by a counselor.



World Language

	Course Name	Number	Course Description	Credits	Prerequisite Note	Alerts
☐	101 French I CP	101		5		
☐	102 French II CP	102		5		
	103 French II H	103		5	A teacher recommendation is needed to request this course.	Prerequisites have not been met
☐	**104 French III CP**	**104**		**5**		**Recommended Lauren Clark**
	105 French III H	105		5	A teacher recommendation is needed to request this course.	Prerequisites have not been met
☐	106 French IV CP	106		5		
	107 French IV H	107		5	A teacher recommendation is needed to request this course.	Prerequisites have not been met
	108 French Language & Culture AP	108		5	A teacher recommendation is needed to request this course.	Prerequisites have not been met
☐	109 French V CP	109		5		
☐	110 Mandarin I CP	110		5		

Number of requests to generate : 1

Step 5 - Review your selections and submit your requests.

Override Process

- Trust the recommendations that are in the system.
- Start with a conversation. Teachers make their recommendations based on departmental guidelines. This is not a subjective decision. Student should discuss the recommendation with their current teacher.
- There are limitations in place. Please follow our **OVERRIDE POLICY & PROCESS** for details of the process.
- Override google forms are due by 2pm on March 3rd.

Override Process Questions:

If my child is filling out an override form, what do they do in PowerSchool?

- **Your child should mark what was recommended for them EVEN if they plan on overriding. After the portal has closed, the override note will be added to PS if it is approved.**

If a student is recommended for honors, can they request CP instead? Does that require an override?

- **Yes, they can choose CP instead. No, that is not an override.**

How will I know if my child's override was denied?

- **You would receive an email from the curriculum coordinator if the request was denied.**

FAQs:

- Who does my child go to if they have questions about their recommendations?
  - **Students should be connecting with their teachers if they have questions regarding their recommendations.**

- Who does my child go to if they have questions about scheduling?
  - **Their middle school counselor with questions.**

- Is there a limit to how many honors courses a student can take?
  - **We do not limit the number of honors courses.**

- How much homework can students anticipate nightly?
  - **See Time Management activity for estimated time by level**

FAQs cont:

- How is the GPA calculated ?
  - **See WA Profile on Counseling webpage for scale/formula**

- When will schedules be available for 8th graders?
  - **Mid-June**

- How can my child prepare now for success in high school?
  - Practice time management, study skills, self-advocacy skills

Thank you and Q&A

- If you have any general questions for our curriculum coordinators, please join them in a various parts of the PAC!
- If you have very specific questions, please email the curriculum coordinators.
- You can meet with more than one coordinator... just hop around!

If you have more questions after tonight, please feel free to email us.