

# General Information

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### Planning your schedule ...

The purpose of the **Course Selection Guide** is to provide a road map to a successful high school experience that will ultimately prepare students for meaningful post-secondary experiences in college and career readiness. Students are encouraged to choose a meaningful program and to evaluate that program each year with the help of the guidance counselor and parents.

Cooperation among parents, students and staff is important when selecting a program of study that will provide for the educational needs of each student. The WAJ staff will provide assistance to you in the decision-making and problem-solving process. Student conferences will also be scheduled for this purpose. If you have any questions, you are urged to call the Guidance Office.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADE-LEVEL ASSIGNMENT – PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Grade Level	Requirements / Credits needed to move to next grade level*
<b>Grade 9 Freshman</b>	Promotion from 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<b>Grade 10 Sophomore</b>	Students must have earned five (5) units of academic credit* including at least one (1) unit of credit in English, and/or one (1) unit of social studies, and one (1) unit of credit in math or science
<b>Grade 11 Junior</b>	Students must have earned ten (10) units of academic credit including at least three (3) units of English and/or social studies, one (1) unit of math, one (1) unit of science, one (1) unit of L.O.T.E., and in addition, at least one half (.5) unit of physical education.
<b>Grade 12 Senior</b>	Students must have earned fifteen (15) units of academic credit including at least five (5) units of English and/or social studies, two (2) units of math, two (2) units of science, and in addition, at least one (1) unit of physical education and the student must be enrolled in courses that will meet all graduation requirements by June of their senior year.
* Academic credits include all courses other than physical education.	

### Guidelines for Course Planning

- Establish personal goals. Even though your plans may change, you should have some general educational, occupational and personal objectives.
- Honestly evaluate your strengths, interests, aptitudes, and needs.
- Learn the requirements for entrance to the college or program of your choice or to the career area you plan to pursue after graduation.
- During your junior year, visit the colleges or vocational resources of interest to you.
- Consult your parents, talk with your teachers and consult your school counselor in order to benefit from their experiences. Talk and visit with citizens of the community who are currently working in the professions that you find most interesting.
- Select the subjects that will contribute MOST toward helping you achieve your goals.
- If you want to add or delete a course after you receive your schedule, please bring a note from your parents to your counselor.
- Parents and students are encouraged to use the Naviance website to help with college and career planning. The Naviance College and Career Readiness Curriculum is a blended learning solution for students in grades 6-12 that helps them develop critical non-cognitive skills and college knowledge, and instills confidence so that they'll persevere to reach their long-term college and career goals. This website can be found on the WAJ homepage. See your counselor for more details on how to maximize your use of the site.

**Course Requirements**

Required Courses	Regents Diploma	Advanced Regents Diploma **
English	4 credits	4 credits
Social Studies	4 credits	4 credits
Mathematics	3 credits	3 credits
Science	3 credits	3 credits
Language	1 credit	1-3 credits*
Health	½ credit	½ credit
The Arts	1 credit	1 credit
Physical Education	2 credits	2 credits
Electives	3 ½ credits	1 ½ - 3 ½ credits
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 credits</b>	<b>22 credits</b>

\* To earn the Advanced Designation, the student must compete ONE of the following: 1) three credits in a language other than English; 2) Career and Technical Education (5 credits) plus one credit in a language other than English; 3) Five credits in the arts plus one credit in a language other than English.

**Assessment Requirements**

Required Assessments	Regents Diploma	Advanced Regents Diploma **
English	Required	Required
US History***	Required	Required
Global History & Geography***	Required	Required
Algebra I	Required	Required
Geometry		Required
Algebra II		Required
Living Environment	Must pass ONE of these science exams – usually Earth Science OR Living Environment	Required
Earth Science		Must pass a second physical science exam (in addition to Living Environment)
Chemistry		
Physics		

\*\* Advanced Regents Diploma with Honors awarded to those students who complete all the requirements of the Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation and achieve an average of at least 90% on all Regents exams.

\*\*\*Additional pathways to graduation can be substituted for one of the two required social studies Regents exams. See your counselor for details.

**PLEASE NOTE....**

This guidebook is published annually stating policies and procedures that are up to date at the time of publication. All policies and procedures are subject to change based on changes mandated by the New York State Education Department, WAJ Board of Education, or as determined necessary by school administration. All course offerings and programs are subject to change based on enrollment, funding, staffing implications and other relevant data used to develop our academic program.

**Title IX**

WAJ hereby advises students, parents, employees and the general public that it offers employment and educational opportunities, without regard to sex, race, color, national origin or handicap. Grievance procedures are available to interested persons by contacting the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Students interested in enrolling in any one of these AP courses should consult with their teachers and school counselor. Colleges may give credit and/or advanced course placement to those students who take the AP examination and demonstrate mastery of the material presented in the course. Students and parents should contact colleges directly for full information about their AP credit policies. Not every AP course is offered every year, so students should plan accordingly.

Students should refer to the specific courses listed in the Program of Studies for the prerequisite requirements for each course; however, generally speaking, students need an 85% average for courses taken since 9th grade in the content area. Teacher recommendation is also needed for ALL AP courses. Five (5) quality points are given for each AP course successfully completed when the weighted GPA average is calculated during the senior year to determine class rank.

WAJ currently offers the following AP courses:

AP US History (every year)

AP World History (every year)

AP Calculus (every year)

AP English Language and Composition (every year)

AP Computer Principles (every year)

AP Statistics (every year)

AP Computer Science (\*odd years only)

AP Music Theory (\*even years only)

AP Language and Composition (every year)

AP Art (\*every year contingent on enrollment)

AP Biology (\*even years only)

All WAJ students who take AP courses agree to pay the exam fee. Fee waivers and reductions may be available through your school counselor.

## CRITERIA FOR AP RECOMMENDATIONS

The Student:

- Works well independently, seeks help only when necessary, and does not require detailed or repeated directions from teacher in order to proceed.

- Is creative, can think of methods to try or use original methods when faced with a problem or situation.
- Readily applies learned principles to new situations, can solve novel problems, and responds well to guided discovery.
- Responds positively to challenging situations, shows persistence in searching for solutions, and finds satisfaction in independently solving a problem rather than accepting another person's solution or help.
- Likes to analyze, generalize, derive, prove, and abstract to investigate relationships and alternative solutions.
- Has a strong intuitive sense for the subject matter.
- Sorts out key relationships quickly.
- Shows a high degree of interest and motivation and is intellectually curious and a critical thinker.
- Has experienced high achievement in past courses without undue stress and has not depended heavily on rote learning or tutoring.
- Shows above average ability in oral and written expression.
- Has the ability to demonstrate long-term planning skills.

(Adopted from the College Board Advanced Placement Statistics List serve.)

## ACCELERATION (SINGLE COURSE ADVANCEMENT IN GRADE 8)

Single-course acceleration is available in math and science to **students entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade**. All interested students must complete a Request for Acceleration form and return it to the Guidance Office by the deadline. Later—during 8<sup>th</sup> grade—if students are interested in continuing their studies in a high school, credit-bearing course (usually Earth Science and Algebra I), they do not need to repeat the application process. Multiple indicators are used to determine acceptance for acceleration. These indicators include, but are not limited to, GPA, teacher recommendation, IQ testing, performance on summative assessments (e.g. state tests, local benchmarks, PSAT),

developmental, social, and emotional readiness, and parent input/support. Additionally, one quality point will be awarded for successful completion of each accelerated course completed in grade 8. These quality points will become part of the weighted average when rank is calculated during the senior year. For more information on WAJ's Acceleration Policy, see BOE policy #7431.

### COURSE LOAD REQUIREMENTS

Students in grades 9-11 must carry a minimum of 6 credits PLUS Physical Education each semester. **Seniors** must carry a minimum of 5 credits PLUS Physical Education each semester.

### COURSE SELECTION PROCESS

**STEP ONE:** Planning for course selection is an ongoing process. Every 9th grader will create a tentative 4-year plan which will be evaluated--as needed--with the school counselor.

**STEP TWO:** The *Program of Studies* will be available to every student in grades 8-11 prior to course registration. Parents are asked to review the course description and policies with their child as they help them make appropriate selections.

**STEP THREE:** Each student in grades 8-11 will then meet with the counselor to make the final course selections in eSchool. A transcript check will be part of this meeting which will confirm that the student is on track for meeting graduation requirements. The student will also be responsible for sharing with parents the course selections that were made in eSchool.

**STEP FOUR:** Parents are required to sign a parent approval form after reviewing the Course Selection Form.

### ADVANCING THROUGH SEQUENTIAL COURSES

There are specific requirements or prerequisites for advancing through sequential courses in most content areas. Please read those departmental sections carefully. When in doubt about electing the next sequential course, consultation with the teacher and school counselor is recommended. Also, there are some

allowable substitutions (e.g. college-level coursework) for some Regents-level courses. (e.g. substituting Accounting for a required math credit). Students should make these requests to the counselor when making their schedule.

Students may not request substitutions for any course that includes a state-mandated Regents exam (e.g. US History) unless the substituted course is equally able to satisfy the graduation requirement (e.g. substituting Living Environment for Earth Science in order to meet the Regents exam requirement for a Regents Diploma).

### LEVELS OF COURSES

WAJ has five levels of courses: Regents, Accelerated, Upper-level Academic, College-level, and Advanced level.

Regents-level courses are all courses not designated as AP or college-level for students receiving a Regents or Local diploma. This includes all courses needed for graduation and all electives.

Accelerated courses are those that meet the requirements of the district's Acceleration Policy. Currently, WAJ only offers acceleration to grade 8 students in math and science (for 9-12 courses).

Upper-level courses are 4th year courses that are NOT required for graduation. Generally, these courses are taken in the senior year; however, some students (because of acceleration or doubling) could take them in years other than the senior year. Such courses include--but are not limited to--Physics and Calculus.

College-level courses are any college courses taken with institutions that have agreements with WAJ. Currently, these institutions are SUNY Albany, SUNY Delhi, SUNY Cobleskill, TC3, Syracuse University, Columbia Greene Community College, Rochester Institute of Technology and Hudson Valley Community College. WAJ's agreements with these institutions are for specific courses identified in the *Program of Studies* only--or courses that get added via Distance Learning agreements with ONC BOCES. Parents and students will be notified if additions are made prior to the school year so that all students have equal access to those opportunities.

Advanced Level courses are Advanced Placement courses.

### WEIGHTED CLASS RANK & GPA

Class rank will be determined by weighted averages. Adding all of the weighted grades and dividing by the total number of credits will determine the final average. (Earned grade + quality point = weighted grade.) The calculation of the weight is as follows: Regents courses = 0 quality points; Accelerated courses = 1 quality point; Upper-Level = 2 quality points; College level = 4 quality points; and Advanced level (AP) = 5 quality points. For more information, please see your counselor and/or consult BOE policy #7430.

### HOW 4-YEAR COLLEGES VIEW YOUR HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Four-year colleges look for students who have taken the most challenging program available to them and in which they can demonstrate success. Most colleges indicate that the single most important part of a student's application is the high school transcript.

The transcript includes:

- The course titles and levels (e.g. AP, Regents, College-Level).
- The final averages earned in each course completed.
- Final exam and Regents exam scores.
- The 4-year cumulative grade-point average.
- Weighted and unweighted GPA.

### SUPPORT SERVICES

If you find that you are having difficulty in school with academics or issues outside of school, there are people in the high school who can help you.

#### School Counselor

Your counselor is your academic advisor, helping you to choose appropriate courses which will prepare you for college, the military or full-time employment after high school. If you are having personal or social concerns, your counselor can also provide you with assistance.

#### School Social Worker

WAJ provides crisis counseling and referrals to Greene County Mental Health for students experiencing personal or family problems. Also, they provide networking and assistance when students are placed or referred to other outside agencies.

#### School Psychologist

This professional performs psycho-educational evaluations to determine eligibility for special support services for students who are encountering academic and/or emotional difficulties in school.

#### Director of Student Services

This administrator acts as your advocate, ensuring that you have the supports in place to succeed.

#### Classroom Teacher

Your classroom teacher is available during the school day to provide extra help. Before and/or after school help may be available as well. See your teachers to make arrangements.

#### Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

This administrator is available to assist you with questions you may have regarding curriculum and specific course offerings.

#### Homework and Technology Resources

Students can get academic assistance from teachers or student tutors after the regular school day. Students who take advantage of this time can take a late bus home.

WAJ has a commitment to provide a comprehensive education program and the support required to enable all students to meet the New York State learning standards and be successful.

In keeping with this commitment, the District provides a variety of integrated services, technology platforms, and personnel to help all students in their academic success.

Parents can also track their child's progress in every class through the use of the technology platform, eSchool. Contact the guidance office for a login and password to be able to view your student's classes and grades.

WAJ prioritizes the core classes as they are required for graduation and prepares our students for commencement level exams; thus,



we meet as grade levels every five weeks to monitor every student's progress toward success on these assessments.

### ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES

"Academic intervention services are intended to assist students who are at risk of not achieving the State learning standards in English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science, or at risk of not gaining the knowledge and skills needed to meet or exceed designated performance levels on State assessments." (Commissioner's Regulations, adopted by the Board of Regents in July 1999; Section 100.1(g)). AIS is offered at WAJ in a variety of ways: during the school day as a pull-out service, during activity period after school, as additional instruction during the school day, and before school--or any combination thereof.

At WAJ, students are placed within these services based on the following criteria:

- Students who have not passed state-mandated assessments in subjects listed above
- Students who either have not met requirements of state-mandated assessments, but have passed the course, or who score at level 1 or 2 on the grade 8 ELA assessment

Students who have a disability may be eligible for an individualized plan that provides accommodations and/or services to assist the student in meeting the New York State learning standards.

#### *Section 504 Accommodation Plan*

Students who have a disability that affects the student's ability to be successful in the general education setting without accommodations may need a Section 504 Plan. With a 504 Plan, students are provided classroom accommodations such as preferential seating, being allowed to leave class to go to the health office, or use of the elevator. Students may also receive testing accommodations such as a scribe or separate location. Students receive minimal services with a 504 plan, such as access to resource room or social work counseling.

#### *Individualized Education Plan under IDEA*

Students who have a disability that adversely affects their learning may need an Individualized

Education Plan (IEP). The IEP describes the student's educational strengths and needs related to the disability. It also outlines the special education and related services goals, services, classroom accommodations, technology needs, and testing accommodations that the student requires. WAJ offers a full continuum of special education services and supports for students with disabilities.

#### *Related Services*

Students may receive related services (speech therapy, adapted physical education, and/or counseling) 1-5 times per week. Related services may be provided within the general education classroom, in a special education classroom, or in a therapy room. Services will be individual or group.

#### *Life Skills Instructional Program*

This program is for students with an IEP who are pursuing an IEP diploma and who need a life skills-based curriculum. During the freshman and sophomore years, the students are enrolled in Life Skills classes in English, math, science, and/or social studies. Students also take physical education and electives. During the junior and senior years, the students are enrolled in Life Skills classes in English and math and physical education for half a day. For the remainder of the day, the students may participate in a career and technical work program through either WAJ or ONC BOCES.

#### *Functional Skills Instruction Program*

This program is for students with an IEP who are pursuing an IEP diploma and are eligible for the New York State Alternate Assessment. Students participate in functional skills instruction through the Functional Skills Instruction classroom and through community-based instruction and work experiences. Students in this program generally remain eligible for the program until age 21. As the student progress through high school and their post-graduate years, the focus is on transitioning to post high school experiences. Additionally, their time spent in the community-based work program increases and their classroom-based instruction decreases.

#### *Co-Taught Academic Support Program*

This program is for students with an IEP who are pursuing a high school diploma and who need

significant support and modifications in the general education program due to reading and math skills that are well-below grade level. The general education teacher and the special education work together during classroom instruction to maximize the success of all students in the class.

### GPA NUMERICAL EQUIVALENT

GPA	Numerical Equivalent	GPA	Numerical Equivalent	Letter Grade	Numerical Grade
4.0	100-97	2.4	79	A+	100
3.9	96-95	2.3	78	A	96
3.8	94-93	2.2	77	A-	92
3.7	92	2.1	76	B+	89
3.6	91	2.0	75	B	86
3.5	90	1.9	74	B-	82
3.4	89	1.8	73	C+	79
3.3	88	1.7	72	C	76
3.2	87	1.6	71	C-	72
3.1	86	1.5	70	D+	69
3.0	85	1.4	69	D	67
2.9	84	1.3	68	D-	65
2.8	83	1.2	67	F	60
2.7	82	1.1	66		
2.6	81	1.0	65		
2.5	80				