

Bear River High School Counseling Department

Frequently Asked Questions

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

What are the graduation requirements for Bear River High School?

Students need to accrue 220 total credits and 155 of those are in specific areas: 40 credits in English, 30 in Math (students must pass Integrated Math I), 30 in Social Studies (History), 20 in Science (10 in a Life Science & 10 in a Physical Science), 20 in PE, 5 in Health, and 10 in a Visual /Performing Art, World Language or CTE class.

How do students earn credits?

Courses award 5 credits per class period completed each semester with a grade of D or higher. Quarter grades are intended as progress reports and do not earn credits. They are used for athletic eligibility and checking course progress.

How many credits can a student earn each semester?

Students normally take 6 class periods each day, so it is possible to earn 30 credits each semester.

What is a CTE class?

CTE stands for Career Technical Education. This year, in addition to our award-winning Ag Mechanics and Ag Science/communication classes, we have Communication Arts, Journalism in the Digital Age, Yearbook, Exploring Computer Science and AP Computer Science.

Does my student have to have a world language to graduate?

No, they can take a VPA (Art) or CTE class to meet that requirement instead.

My student played a sport in their freshman year; does that count toward PE credits?

No. All students are required to take Freshman PE which counts as the first PE course. The second year requirement may be met by taking another year of a PE class such as Weights, Basketball, Dance or Upper Level Activities, or complete 2 full seasons of an on-campus sport after freshman year. Only sports participated in after freshman year count for this choice. Each season of a sport equates to one semester of a PE class. While your student may participate in off-campus sports teams, the district does not recognize those for PE credits.

What happens if a student fails a class?

If it is a required core class such as English, math or history, it must be made up. Usually students will make up required classes in a credit recovery class during one of their 6 periods. These classes are through the Apex program and require students to repeat the class using this online program with no direct instruction. NJUHSD does not offer summer or night school options for credit recovery. Students that need to make up more than 20 credits will need to discuss their options with their counselor.

Can my student take night classes or summer school to make up work?

Yes, but as our district does not provide night classes or summer school, the institution that you choose must be accredited. Please check with your student's counselor to make sure they are taking the appropriate class.

Will all the classes that the students take be included their record/transcript?

Yes, including those classes that are failed.

COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS

What are the basic requirements for my student to get into a 4 year college?

It is important to remember that colleges do look at GPAs and do not recognize any grade below a C.

UC/CSU "A-G" Requirements*
A—History: 2 years
U.S. History, AP U. S. History **
American Government, AP American Government **
World History
B—English: 4 years
English I-IV (all 4 years), English 3 Honors** and English 4 AP **
C—Mathematics: 3 years/4 years recommended
Integrated Math I (Algebra I)
Integrated Math II
Integrated Math III
Transition to College Math, Pre-Calculus, Intro to Calculus**, AP Calculus **
D—Laboratory Science: 2 years/3 years recommended
Chemistry, AP Chemistry **, Physics, AP Physics ** (1 year of one)
Biology, Ag. Biology, AP Biology **, AP Environmental Science** (1 year of one)
E—Foreign Language: 2 years/3 years recommended
Spanish 1, 2, 3, Spanish 4 AP**
Sierra College options (i.e. Deaf Studies) - must be a junior, 16 and have a 3.0 GPA
F—Visual or performing arts : 1 year
Drawing, Clay, Photography, TV Video Production, Communication Arts, Choruses,
Symphonic Band, Jazz Band, Dance, Drama, AP Studio Art**
G—College Prep Elective: 1 year

Social Justice Theory, Journalism, Environmental Horticulture Science etc., an additional year beyond the required core classes (eg. 4th year of math) etc.

**** Honors and Advanced Placement (classes are recommended for the UC System)**

What is a VPA?

VPA is the acronym for Visual or Performing Arts. These courses would include drawing/painting, clay, photography, chorus, band, drama and dance.

What are AP classes?

AP are Advanced Placement classes. They are universal standardized college classes offered through the College Board to high school students. They are fast-paced, challenging courses, that are more in-depth and students need to be aware of the increased time commitment involved. Grades above a C are given a grade bump that is reflected in weighted GPAs. If a student signs up for an AP course, it is difficult to switch classes after scheduling due to limited space availability in other classes.

Do students have to take both a world language and an art class?

Yes, they do. Colleges require that they have one year of a VPA and a minimum of 2 years of a world language (CSU/UC highly recommend 3 years).

Should my student take a college entrance exam?

Yes if your student is planning on going directly to a 4 year university. Most all colleges require an entrance exam. Your student can choose to take the SAT and or ACT. These exams "level the playing field" for colleges to better determine student potential. Most universities use a matrix that combines GPAs, coursework and college entrance exam scores. We encourage juniors (and sophomores) to take the PSAT offered in the fall semester as a great practice tool. The PSAT results can be used through Khan Academy to tailor a study/tutorial program for individual student needs. If your student is planning on attending a junior/community college first, the college entrance exams are not necessary as they are not required.

My student got a D in Spanish 1; does this disqualify him/her from applying to colleges?

Not necessarily. While that D will affect their overall GPA, if they have done better with at least a C in the subsequent Spanish/world language level 2 course, CA state and UC colleges will "validate" that D grade. Students always have the opportunity to retake the class or use our online Apex program. Please check directly with the colleges that the student interested in. Private and out of state colleges may not validate, or may have other requirements.

What is the difference for sciences between graduation and college requirements?

While both BRHS and CA state colleges require 1 physical science and 1 life science, the college requirements are very specific. Students need to take 1 of the Biology courses and 1 of either Physics or Chemistry to meet the minimum requirements.

What should we be doing to best prepare for college?

Colleges have become very competitive. In addition to taking challenging coursework (Honors/AP classes) and having good grades, colleges also look at a student's extracurricular activities, volunteering opportunities and jobs. They are looking for well-rounded students who are globally minded and have good time management skills. Outside experiences also are a great resources for letters of recommendation necessary for private colleges and scholarships. Here are some basic guidelines.

9th Enroll in college prep classes, pay attention to grades, learn to ask for help, review college admission requirements, take an interest inventory on Career Cruising and practice time management/organizational skills.

10th In addition to the previous tasks, continue to take challenging college prep classes, volunteer in the community in an area student is passionate about, consider taking the PSAT for feedback on academic skill set, review college plan with counselor, do career exploration on Career Cruising and attend the college nights to hear directly from college admissions representatives about what student should be doing. If student is interested in playing collegiate sports, please register with the NCAA to make sure they are meeting NCAA additional requirements as well.

11th Research college websites for their specific requirements, take the PSAT/NMSQT again for feedback and a chance to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship, register for the ACT or the SAT for spring testing, make campus visits during weekends and breaks, research scholarships to screen for applicably, attend the Parents Guide to College (college nights), attend Parent's Guide to Financing College (financial aid nights) to start preparing, compile everything needed for admissions and scholarships, meet with counselor to review graduation and career goals.

12th Continue taking challenging classes and volunteering, finish strong (remember colleges will rescind acceptances if student fails to accurately report or follow through), attend any colleges that come on campus for comparison and inspiration, attend the Parents Guide to College (college nights) and Parents Guide to Financing College (financial aid nights) to start preparing, work on any essays that student may need/sign up for UC Readers if applying for the UCs, apply for scholarships, apply for FAFSA in October, get letters of recommendations (submit requests for letters 3 weeks prior to deadline-do not include breaks!), complete college applications and feel the excitement!

College Bound Resources:

College Board SATs	https://www.collegeboard.org/
ACTs	http://www.act.org/
NCAA	http://www.ncaa.org/
FAFSA	https://fafsa.ed.gov/
FAFSA How To videos:	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL23B9A23CD8DD82DD&feature=plcp
California Student Aid Commission	http://www.csac.ca.gov/
ECMC-student loans	https://www.ecmc.org/borrowers/index.html
University of California	http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/ http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/
California State University	http://calstate.edu/ https://secure.csumentor.edu/
California Community Colleges	http://www.cccco.edu/ http://www.sierracollege.edu/
Private California Colleges	http://www.aiccu.edu/
California Colleges	https://secure.californiacolleges.edu/
Common Application	https://www.commonapp.org/
Western Undergraduate Exchange	http://www.wiche.edu/wue

GENERAL INFORMATION

My student is failing a class; what can we do?

Fortunately, we have a remediation time built into our schedule. While Bruin Time is required for freshmen and sophomores, it is available for all students. If your student has a D or F at progress reports, they will be placed a Bruin Time for remediation in that subject. We also provide after school tutoring for our core classes (math, english) Monday -Thursday from 3:30 to 4:30. Please note that as the tutors try to support all areas of academics, it is student responsibility to let the after school teacher know specifically what they need assistance with. Teachers are also frequently available for student support, before and after school and at lunchtime. We recommend that you communicate your concerns directly to the teacher to make a plan that works for your student. If working with the teacher and your student does not yield successful results, please contact your counselor to review the situation and set up an SST (Student Success Team meeting) as needed.

My student doesn't like his/her elective; can we change it?

As general rule, it is very difficult to change an elective. We try to help the students understand to choose carefully when making course selections. With our smaller numbers, we have less sections, so there are limited spaces available to make changes. We base our number of sections on what courses the students have selected and therefore there may be no room in other electives. They may request a schedule change only during the first week of each semester. Any changes will be based on need (wrong level of math, specific need for graduation, etc.) and seat availability. Our classes are year-long, so changes at second semester are very limited. Changes requested during the semester will be a Withdrawal/F grade due to state requirements regarding seat time in courses. [Ed Code Seat Time: Seat time, or the Carnegie Unit, bases the awarding of academic credit on a defined minimum amount of instructional time in a subject area. The [standard Carnegie Unit is defined as 120 hours](#), which translates into one hour of instruction per subject per day, for 24 weeks. Most public high schools use the Carnegie Unit and award students one credit for a course that lasts all school year and a half credit for a course that lasts a semester. Please note that NJUHSD offer 5 credits per semester and 10 for the full year.]

My student's teacher doesn't post grades regularly; how can I track their progress?

Although many teachers are now using Schoology which is a learning management system that allows them to create, manage, and share content and resources easily with their students, it is an optional program. Teachers are only required to provide grades at progress report intervals. The best way to help your student to track their progress may be an old fashioned agenda. Having your student write down all their assignments and checking with them to see if they have been handed in regularly helps keep them organized. Work that is handed in on time tends to get graded more quickly as the teacher is entering a number of grades from a single assignment at one time. Late work requires more time to sort, organize and review for grading purposes. If you are concerned about a specific assignment, please contact the teacher with the specifics to inquire what the anticipated timeline might be.

My student doesn't get along with his/her teacher; what can we do?

We are always sorry to hear about student teacher conflicts. The first step is to speak directly with the teacher to discuss your concerns. If that does not resolve the problem, then we will meet as a team; teacher, student, parent and counselor to find a solution. We want your student to have a wonderful experience here at BRHS, but the importance of learning to adapt to different learning styles (which is equally important in the adult working world as it will be in college), coupled with the limited availability

of scheduling options, makes problem solving a priority. Administration will get involved only if these steps have been unsuccessful.

What role do counselors play?

Counselors are student advocates and Jack of all Trades. We do; scheduling, parent and student informational presentations, assist in developing new coursework, facilitate SST's/504's and act a referral/resource for students/staff/parents. We are required to have a Master's Degree to deal with the most important part of our job, providing personal and crisis counseling for our students. We are the messengers; we disseminate information for/about graduation requirements based on district policy and state mandates; we provide information about colleges based on their requirements; we act as a resource for students in finding the appropriate supports. While we are not administrators and do not make policy or administrative decisions and (quite happily) do not do discipline, as School counselors we do provide services to students, parents, school staff and the community in the following areas:

Direct Student Services

Direct services are in-person interactions between school counselors and students and include the following:

School counseling core curriculum: This curriculum consists of structured lessons designed to help students attain the desired competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge, attitudes and skills appropriate for their developmental level. The school counseling core curriculum is delivered throughout the school's overall curriculum and is systematically presented by school counselors in collaboration with other professional educators in K-12 classroom and group activities.

Individual student planning: School counselors coordinate ongoing systemic activities designed to assist students in establishing personal goals and developing future plans.

Responsive services: Responsive services are activities designed to meet students' immediate needs and concerns. Responsive services may include counseling in individual or small-group settings or crisis response.

Indirect Student Services

Indirect services are provided on behalf of students as a result of the school counselor's interactions with others including referrals for additional assistance, consultation and collaboration with parents, teachers, other educators and community organizations.

For more information and resources, please check out our website at

<http://bearriver.njuhsd.com/Counseling/index.html>

or contact us at 530.268.3700.

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