

Shrewsbury High School
64 Holden Street
Shrewsbury, Massachusetts 01545
Office of the Principal



Memorandum

To: Dr. Joseph Sawyer
From: Todd Bazydlo
Date: January 13, 2016
Re: Proposed Changes to the 2016-2017 HS Program of Studies

I am pleased to present, for the consideration of the Shrewsbury School Committee, proposed changes, additions, and deletions to the *Program of Studies* for the 2016-17 school year. What you will find in this memorandum represents the collaborative work of the Shrewsbury High School Leadership Team. The vast majority of the proposed changes are designed to refine the overall academic program for our students. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Proposed Changes

English

1. Revision to English 12 offerings: *English 12*. The course description is as follows:
Twelfth grade English is a college preparatory course that focuses on elements of British Literature as well as high interest texts from the Americas and beyond. Literature is analyzed through many lenses, allowing teachers to highlight their areas of expertise, interest, and past teaching experiences. Students are afforded a wide array of focused instruction, and are exposed to literature, (and related writings, art pieces, journalism and film), focused on the humanities, social issues, women's studies, and drama, to name a few. The curriculum includes the literary analysis of either Shakespeare's *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*, among other typically anthologized works; it also includes more contemporary pieces. The interpretive aspects of symbolism, theme, figurative language, and style are emphasized. Students are encouraged to make connections to their own lives and the world they live in today. In writing, students produce progressively longer and more sophisticated expository writing, with explicit instruction around transitions, tone, and rhetorical strategies such as repetition, understatement, and syntactical variation. Work on the research paper and research project is continued. During the first semester, the personal narrative is an area of focus. Vocabulary study continues, and the study of grammar culminates with a unit on usage.

Rationale: As this is the most significant change to the Shrewsbury High School Program of Studies, it warrants further explanation within this memo. Additionally, Director of English, Liza Trombley, and I are happy to discuss this change in detail with the Committee at the January 20th meeting.

At Shrewsbury High School, we strive to maximize our students' opportunities and provide as much flexibility in scheduling as possible. This is especially important in the

Shrewsbury High School Mission Statement

The Shrewsbury High School community provides challenging, diverse learning opportunities; promotes creativity and independent thinking; and empowers students to become capable, caring, active contributors to the world in which they live.

senior year. The elimination of the focused literary offerings in English 12 will remove a student's ability to make a choice about a specialized area of study, however, this change will not do away with student access to a robust and challenging English curriculum in their senior year. The change in offerings will provide more breadth to the coursework, and will allow teachers to focus on multiple areas of interest and increase the variety in methods of instruction. Outside of the English department, students will have increased opportunity to take electives, as their schedules will not be constrained by the singleton offerings of the English senior electives. Additionally, more students will have the opportunity to afford themselves of the general English elective offerings of Creative Writing and Introduction to World Mythology.

The elimination of the focused literary offerings in grade 12 allows for the English department to help balance class sizes, which currently range from 15 to 28 students. This is especially important as the incoming class of 2020 is projected to increase our student population by approximately 80 students. This net gain will require an additional four sections of grade 9 English. The preliminary budget projection dictates that the English department will not receive an increase in FTE, and as such we are projecting the need to allocate those sections gained from the revamping of English 12 to English 9 to account for increased enrollment. The School Committee recommendation for class sizes is one of our guiding principles when making decisions about allocation of FTE; keeping class sizes as small as possible is essential in grade 9, as this is where students acquire foundational skills, such as writing, to help ensure their success in all academic areas.

Social Sciences

1. Add a new course: *The World at War*. The semester long course description is as follows: This course will provide students an opportunity to investigate the causes, courses and consequences of World War I and World War II. The course will focus not only on the events of the wars but also on the governments, economies, and societies of Europe that created and were created by these global conflicts. Class discussions, guest speakers and research will provide students the opportunity to explore and analyze developments in Europe during the 20th Century. Throughout the semester, students will connect the content of the course to current events. Students will continue to develop their skills as critical thinkers when analyzing evidence, issues and arguments. Students seeking honors credit must execute a written agreement with the teacher for additional independent assignments/ assessments.

Mathematics

1. Add a new course: *Advanced Math II Topics*. The yearlong course description is as follows: This senior mathematics course is meant for students who are considering attending QCC, but this is not a requirement. The course will be based on a curriculum outlined by Quinsigamond Community College. The midyear and final exam will be developed by the QCC Mathematics Department but administered at Shrewsbury High School. Topics of study will include: Algebraic Reasoning, Linear Equations, and Inequalities, Problem Solving, Systems of Equations, Operations with Exponents and Polynomials, Factoring Polynomials, Rational

Expressions and Equations, Roots and Radicals and Quadratic Equations. The topics of study will include: Algebraic Reasoning, Linear Equations, and Inequalities, Problem Solving, Systems of Equations, Operations with Exponents and Polynomials, Factoring Polynomials, Rational Expressions and Equations, Roots and Radicals and Quadratic Equations. All juniors who register for this course will be administered an Accuplacer test in the spring prior to their senior year.

Health

1. Minor language changes to *Health 9: Wellness* The changed course description is: The Wellness course is a graduation requirement for all freshmen. Emphasis is placed on analyzing influences, decision-making, and advocacy The core content includes: mental/emotional health, bullying prevention, reproduction/sexuality education/healthy relationships, and substance abuse prevention. This course meets for 3 days during the 7-day rotation.
2. Minor language changes to *Health 10: Healthy Living*. The changed course description is: The Healthy Living course is a graduation requirement for all sophomores. This course allows students to continue to develop their understanding of healthy habits and how to avoid high-risk behaviors. Emphasis is placed on analyzing influences, self-management, goal setting, and advocacy. Areas of concentration include nutrition, and healthy diets, medicines/supplements use, misuse and abuse, bullying prevention, and first aid/CPR/AED training. This course meets for 3 days during the 7-day rotation.
3. Minor Language changes for *Health 11: Lifelong Health*. The changed course description is: The Lifelong Health course is a graduation requirement for all juniors. Emphasis is placed on accessing information interpersonal communication, and advocacy through class discussions, research, audiovisual presentations, lectures, and projects. Areas of concentration include disease prevention, bullying prevention, and lifelong health skills. This is a course designed for older students preparing to enter the next stage in their life beyond high school. This course meets for 3 days during the 7-day rotation.

Physical Education

1. Minor adjustments in *Team I* and *Team II* activities. The changes in activities are:

Team I- The Team Sports strand includes the following activities: Icebreakers, Lacrosse, Field Hockey, Floor Hockey, Multicultural Games, Volleyball

The Team II strand for the 2016-2017 school year includes Icebreakers, Flag Football, Soccer, Team Handball, and Basketball

Family and Consumer Sciences Department

1. *Foods of the World* will be offered during the 2016-2017 school year, while *Mediterranean Cuisine* will not be offered during the 2016-2017 school year.

Performing Arts

1. Add a new course: *Voice in Acting*. The semester long course description is as follows: This class is an exploration of the student's voice. The main focus of the class is the learning of voice work as a preparation for performance (musical, theatrical, or class presentation) – a series of exercises designed to liberate the speaking voice from habitual psychophysical tension and develop vocal range, stamina, clarity, power and sensitivity to impulse. Work will include discovery of sound in the body, awareness and opening of the channel (jaw, tongue, and soft palate), exploration of resonance, vocal freedom and range, isolating and strengthening resonating chambers and articulation exercises. Group and individual exercises designed to stimulate and develop the imagination, physical and sensory awareness, creativity and capacity for ensemble work will be practiced as a basis for vocal presence. Text work will include a monologue from a published play, poetry or a published musical theatre solo.

Visual Arts

1. Minor language changes to *Studio III: Honors Portfolio*. The course description is as follows: Students focus on the concentration aspect of the AP Portfolio through a series of mini themed pieces. Students must be able to work independently at a demanding pace to meet deadlines preparing themselves to work outside of scheduled class time. Individual style, originality and expertise in media use are stressed. Students are evaluated using and the school-wide common and Advanced Placement rubrics. Students are NOT required to submit an AP Portfolio. Student work will be prepared for exhibit at the SHS Art Festival in the spring. In preparation for this course, *summer assignments are required*.

Science

1. Add new language to identify co-requisite *Honors Algebra & Geometry II* for *Biology Honors*. The co-requisite and course description is as follows: For Grade 9 students: Co-requisite = *Honors Algebra & Geometry II*. For grades 10-11 students: prerequisite = teacher recommendation and past academic performance. *Honors Biology* is a course designed for students who demonstrate high academic achievement and motivation in science and mathematics. Students will be expected to complete a significant amount of reading and writing assignments, as well as quantitative and qualitative analysis of laboratory work. Topics emphasized include ecology, chemistry of life, cell structure and function, genetics, evolution and biodiversity, as well as selected topics in anatomy and physiology. An independent or team research project will be completed. This course is considered a lab science.
2. Add new language to identify co-requisite for the *Introductory Physics Honors*. The co-requisite is as follows: This course is for students who are recommended for an Honors level science course in grade 9, but will not be concurrently enrolled in *Honors Algebra & Geometry II* (or a higher level math course).
3. Minor Course Title adjustment from *AP Physics* to *AP Physics I*. The course title adjustment reflects the change in title of the course by the College Board.

4. Add new language changing eliminating *Honors Introductory Physics* as a prerequisite for *AP Physics 1*. The modified course prerequisite is as follows: Prerequisite: *Honors Physics* or *AP Chemistry, Honors Advanced Math I* and teacher recommendation.
5. *Physics Honors* Prerequisite: *Honors Advanced Math I* OR Co-requisite: *Honors Pre-Calculus* (or higher honors math course) and teacher recommendation.
6. *Research Methods Biology*. Add co-requisite *Research Methods Honors Algebra and Geometry II*. Change of course description is as follows: Students will be required to complete a yearlong, independent research project in the field of science and/or math under the guidance of their teachers. Students who sign up for this course must also sign up for *Research Methods & Honors Algebra and Geometry II*. This course involves the same curriculum content as *Honors Biology* with an added emphasis on integrating concepts from *Honors Algebra and Geometry II* with scientific data developed in and out of the classroom. Note: this course meets for an extra period two days out of the 7-day cycle during 1st semester. This course is considered a lab science.
7. *Chemistry Honors*. Add co-requisite For grade 10 students: prerequisite = *Honors Algebra/Geometry II* or enrollment in *Honors Advanced Math 1* (or higher), and teacher recommendation. For grade 11-12 students: Prerequisite = *Honors Adv. Math 1* or enrollment in *Honors Pre-Calc* (or higher).
8. *Research Methods in Chemistry*. Minor language to address project requirement and lab time. The course description is as follows: Students will be required to complete a yearlong research project in the fields of science, engineering or math under the guidance of their teachers. Students who sign up for this course must also sign up for *Research Methods & Honors Advanced Math I*. This course covers the same content as *Honors Chemistry*. Note: this course meets for an extra period two days out of the 7-day cycle during 1st semester.. This course is considered a lab

Engineering

1. Engineering program description change to accurately reflect the shift from implementing *Project Lead the Way* curriculum to having established offerings. The Engineering program description is as follows: The Engineering Department offers three courses from the national *Project Lead the Way* curriculum. These courses offer a rigorous introduction to, and exploration of, the field of engineering.