

## High School Academics

### Grading systems

Philadelphia Performing Arts currently uses a standards-based grading system in grades K-12.

- Standards-based grading (SBG) refers to a system of instruction, assessment, and academic reporting that is centered on understanding or showing mastery of the knowledge and skills learned. This grading system takes away the bias of traditional, percentage-based grading systems, scoring students on a 1-4 point scale and solely on their mastery of a standardized skill. SBG ensures that students are being measured on grade-appropriate and rigorous standards measured at a national level.

### Keystones

Pennsylvania's ACT 158 Law requires that students must meet the Keystone Proficiency (a Keystone Composite score of 4452 or better) on all 3 Keystone exams:

- Algebra I. - grade 8 or 9
- Biology - grade 10
- Literature - grade 11

### LinkIt!

The LinkIt! platform is an assessment management, data analytics, and intervention support solution created by a diverse team of K-12 educators, technologists, and data experts who are dedicated to improving student performance and streamlining the implementation process.

LinkIt is used primarily as a benchmarking tool and helps teachers make data informed curricular decisions. LinkIt benchmarks act as a predictor for the Keystones and are given three times a year. LinkIt can also be used for other types of classroom assessments and data management.

*All core contents support student success in mastering state standards and Keystone proficiency skills.*

### High School English

Our High School English curriculum is supported by the online platform, CommonLit 360. The CommonLit program is for students in grades 9 & 10 where high-quality, grade-level text forms the backbone of each unit. Students read, discuss, and write about a wide range of fiction, poems, and non-fiction texts to answer the unit's essential questions. These authentic, debatable prompts about topics like the struggles of adolescence, the desire to belong, and the pros and cons of social media hook students right away.

Throughout the year, students get expansive and explicit instruction in writing, and daily opportunities to practice and get feedback. Writing genres include: literary and cross-textual analysis, research, and argumentative writing. Students produce several literary analysis and argumentative essays. They also conduct authentic research and produce a research report.

Grades 11 and 12 continue the work started and built upon throughout the 9 - 10 instruction and focus on shifting students to college and career readiness. Students begin to look at texts more globally and incorporate multiple perspectives in their critical thinking.

## **High School History**

The DBQ Project is an online platform and serves as one support guiding our high school history curriculum. The DBQ Project promotes strong writing and thinking skills as they pertain to learning history. DBQs (Document Based Questions) require students to evaluate primary and secondary sources and to analyze and evaluate their importance and take a position of their own. As part of the process, students learn vocabulary and gain strong content knowledge about history as they collaborate with peers, explore ideas verbally, and ultimately analyze and write an evidence-based analytical essay. These skills resemble what professional historians do, but perhaps more importantly, they provide the skills of a thoughtful citizen, capable of using factual data to formulate and defend ideas. Rubrics help teachers evaluate students' ability to analyze documents, categorize them into broad categories and to write clear, evidence-based essays.

## **French**

Our French curriculum is supported by [Chemins, a fully integrated and scaffolded program that builds proficiency through a cultural approach.](#) French classes have access to entry-level French stories and poetry through these online platforms. Courses are composed of skills, which focus on a specific aspect of the target language.

## **High School Math**

The High School math department offers a full college preparatory math sequence, beginning with Algebra I and continuing through Calculus. Honors, Advanced Placement, and dual-enrollment college-credit opportunities are available for interested students, along with electives in financial literacy and applied mathematics.

- Illustrative Mathematics (IM) is an online platform used to support our Algebra I. curriculum and help prepare students for the keystones. Following a problem-based pedagogy, the IM curriculum is designed to make the rigorous expectations of the PA Core and Common Core State Standards accessible to all learners.

### Math Curriculum supports:

- Deltamath: Teachers use Deltamath to create high-leverage assignments to enhance and track student learning. Formative assessments, summative assessment, and corrective remediation assignments are dynamically generated with instant feedback, and students can move their own understanding forward with unlimited access to model solutions and step-by-step instructional videos.

- CanFigureIt is assistive proof software that enhances the Geometry curriculum by nurturing students' deductive reasoning skills through independent, highly interactive exploratory learning. Students can easily make visual connections between ideas and track their progress through layered, multi-step justifications of mathematical arguments.

## **High School Science**

Our High School science curriculum is designed to build the knowledge, skills, and practices that empower the application of scientific ways of thinking to real world situations. Students learn through exploration, labs, digital simulations, and hands-on instruction, prioritizing experiences that engage and challenge all learners.

Leveraging the Next Generation Science Standards and a mastery approach to building scientific literacy, our high school science curriculum is guided by a Science Domains model that provides all students an internationally benchmarked science education. The science and engineering standards are competencies that range from Kindergarten through grade 12, these interwoven skills are cyclical so students are gaining 21st century knowledge of what scientists need to succeed.

Our High School Science course progression reflects this deep commitment to innovation. Our 9th Grade Foundations course is a vigorous and engaging laboratory introduction to scientific inquiry, and is followed by a Keystone aligned Biology course. From there, students map their own science pathway, with multiple course offerings in both traditional and innovative scientific disciplines and dual enrollment options for advanced study.