



PASCACK VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

PASCACK HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

Montvale * Woodcliff Lake



8TH GRADE ORIENTATION

November 21, 2024

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Sarah Bilotti, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Barry Bachenheimer, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Mr. Timothy Wieland, Principal

Ms. Christine Pollinger, Assistant Principal

Mr. Derek Piccini, Assistant Principal

Ms. Tracy Leigh, Director of Technology

Dr. Jonathan Hesney, Director of Special Services

Supervisors of Instruction

Ms. Tara Flannery

Supervisor of Special Services

Ms. Megan Graziano

Supervisor of Science and Technology Education

Ms. Valerie Mattessich

Supervisor of English, Art, and Libraries

Mr. Joseph Orlak

Supervisor of Social Studies, Professional Studies, and Internships

Mr. Steven Papa

Supervisor of Physical Education & Health, Director of Athletics

Dr. Argine Safari

Acting Supervisor of World Languages, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Music

Dr. Mark Russo

Supervisor of Mathematics and Computer Science

Dr. Sean Struncis

Supervisor of Guidance/School Counseling Services



PASCACK VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Montvale * Woodcliff Lake * River Vale * Hillsdale

CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

Dr. Barry Bachenheimer, Director

bbachenheimer@pascack.org * 201-358-7020 x22033

Luanne McGlone, Administrative Assistant

The curriculum of the Pascack Valley Regional High School District is designed to provide students with a rigorous and meaningful educational experience that prepares them for both future college and career experiences. Students are provided with a firm grounding in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards while independent and critical thinking skills, as well as oral and written expression are emphasized. College preparatory, Honors, Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment courses challenge all students to meet high district expectations.

District Vision:

To create a culture of innovation, inquiry, and individuality that promotes achievement and choice by cultivating the skills needed to compete and collaborate as ethical and responsible global citizens.

District Mission Statement:

The mission of the PVRHSD is to prepare our students for successful college and/or career experiences with the needed mindset, skills, structures, and knowledge to accomplish that goal.

District Assessment Philosophy:

To check for understanding and/or competency of curriculum standards using a balance of methods that give useful feedback to inform growth. Using departmental specific methods under the leadership of the departmental supervisor, this feedback leads to a summative grade which is an evaluation of student competency with the curriculum and associated standards.

For a complete list of course offerings, go to

<https://www.pascack.org/curriculum/program-of-studies>



PASCACK VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of School Counseling Services

PH: 201.358.7020 ext. 22007/8 PV: 201.358.7060 ext. 24008/9

www.pascack.org

OVERVIEW

The Pascack Valley Regional High School District School Counseling Department strives to assist all students to mature in self-understanding, self-responsibility and decision-making abilities. The counseling department helps students to attain the skills and attitudes necessary to become lifelong learners and productive citizens. Student services are an integral part of the counseling program. Our school counseling, student assistance program and wellness center are designed to meet the individual needs of our students, their parents and our educational community. School counselors, student assistance counselors and the student wellness counselors work collaboratively to ensure that each student's academic, social/emotional and career needs are addressed by providing programs and services prior to and throughout the freshman year of high school. Some of the programs and services offered to freshman students & parents include but are not limited to:

SAMPLE OF PROGRAMS & SERVICES FOR FRESHMEN

- ❖ Individual & small group counseling
 - ❖ Transition counseling
 - ❖ Academic counseling & support
- ❖ Articulation w/middle school counselors
- ❖ Individual freshman student & parent summer conferences
 - ❖ 8th grade student/parent orientation programs
 - ❖ Freshmen orientation
 - ❖ Scheduling & course selection

COUNSELING STAFF

Dr. Sean Struncis – District Supervisor of School Counseling

sstruncis@pascack.org

PASCACK HILLS

Mr. Steven Casamento: scasamento@pascack.org
Mrs. Marin Donnelly: mdonnelly@pascack.org
Mrs. Jenna Howard: jhoward@pascack.org
Mr. Frank Cherichello: fcherichello@pascack.org
Mrs. Cristina Schneider: cschneider@pascack.org
Ms. Erica Franceski, SFRL: efranceski@pascack.org
Ms. Jennifer Zimmermann, SAC: zimmermann@pascack.org

PASCACK VALLEY

Dr. Frank Andrisani: fandrisani@pascack.org
Mrs. Mary Jo Callanan: mcallanan@pascack.org
Ms. Jennifer Kuo: jkuo@pascack.org
Mr. Jordan Kapp: jkapp@pascack.org
Mrs. Stephanie DiStasi: sdistasi@pascack.org
Ms. Maggie Ely: mely@pascack.org
Ms. Joanna Katz, SFRL: jkatz@pascack.org
Mrs. Margaret Montenare, SAC
mmontenare@pascack.org

The PVRHSD School Counseling Department is a member of the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and the National Association of College Admissions Counseling (NACAC).



Special Services Overview:

The Special Services Department is committed to ensuring that each student with a disability receives a free and appropriate public education consisting of placement and services based on the student's unique needs. Our students are afforded full educational opportunities, and to the maximum extent possible, are educated in the least restrictive environment. A continuum of in-district placement options include:

- Mainstreaming with supplementary aids and services or an in-class resource program with a Special Education teacher collaborating in the General Education classroom
- Secondary Special classes, taught by General Education content specialists, with no more than 16 students per class
- Resource Replacement classes, taught by content specialists certified in Special Education, with no more than 12 students per class
- Resource Pull-out Support classes (Study Skills)

Special Programs:

In addition to the class offerings above, the district has five Special Programs:

- Park@PVR and R.I.S.E.: Behavioral and therapeutic supports for students in need of a smaller, more structured and academically challenging learning environment
- LLD: Modified curriculum and functional life skills development with Life Skills and Transition Education courses and community-based learning opportunities including job sampling and internships
- Milestones: Life Skills training for adult students with disabilities, ages 18-21
- Extended School Year: Offered in July according to students' individual education programs

Transition from Middle School to High School:

When your child's current middle school Child Study Team Case Manager conducts a final Annual Review Meeting at the Middle School, a high school Case Manager will attend that meeting to assist with course selection and the overall development of the Individual Education Plan for 9th grade.

Dr. Jonathan Hesney, Director of Special Services

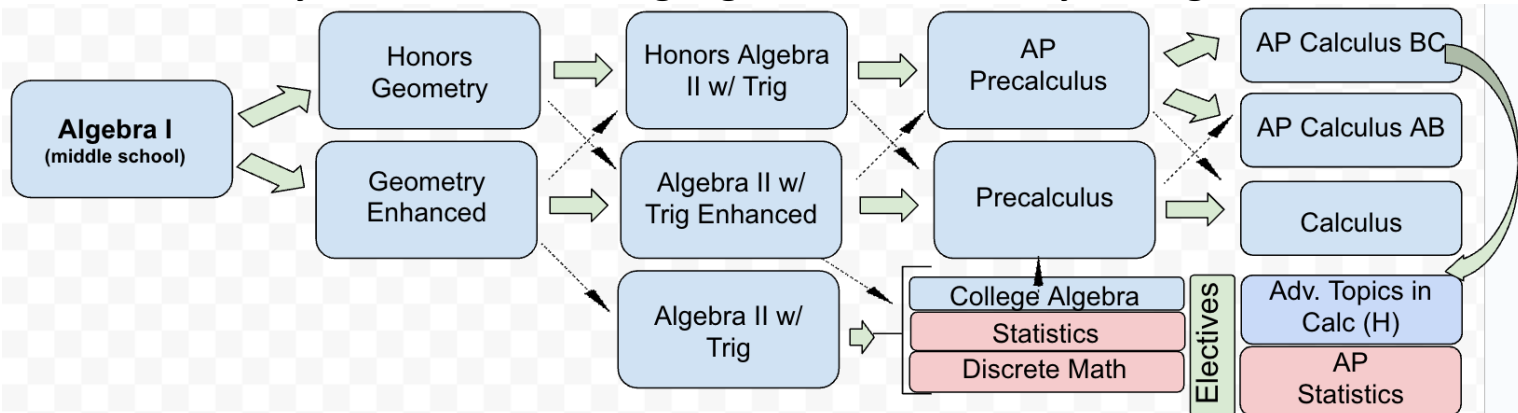
jhesney@pascack.org

Pascack Hills: 201-358-7020 extension 22016 | Pascack Valley: 201-358-7060 extension 24018

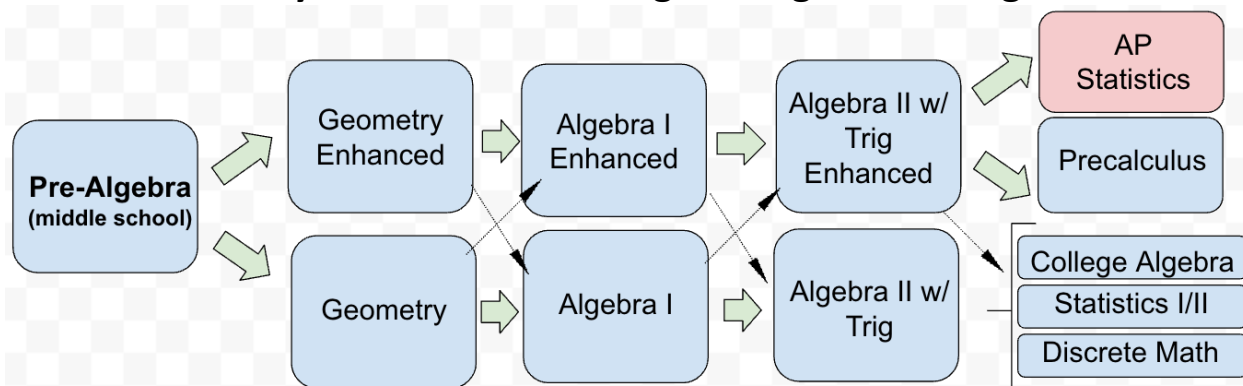
Pascack Valley Regional High School District Typical Math and Computer Science Paths

(note: levels may be adjusted with teacher recommendation)

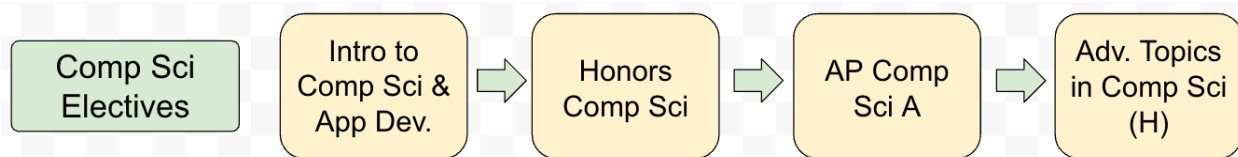
Pathways for students taking Algebra I or Geometry in 8th grade



Pathways for students taking Pre-Algebra in 8th grade



Computer Science Pathways



Pascack Valley Regional High School District
Mathematics Department
2024-2025 Placement Information

Information for 8th graders taking Algebra I

All students who meet a minimum standard of proficiency in Algebra I as an 8th grader will be placed in Honors Geometry or CP Geometry Enhanced as freshmen. The placement process will take place as follows:

1. In January, all Algebra I students will sit for a placement exam in their math classes. Students will also be asked to answer a few questions about their interest in mathematics and freshman course preference.
2. 8th grade teachers will use a common rubric to evaluate each student's academic performance and assess their potential for honors placement.
3. Students will be evaluated based on their placement exam score, teacher evaluation rubric, and test/quiz grades. Student responses and course preferences will also be taken into account.
4. Placement decisions will be made before the end of the school year, but they are contingent on a continuing high level of performance in mathematics class and on the 8th grade final exam, if applicable.

Information for 8th graders taking Pre-Algebra

In 2025-2026, Pascack Hills and Pascack Valley will be in their third year with an adjusted course sequence of Geometry first, followed by Algebra I. 8th graders currently taking Pre-Algebra will be placed into either CP Geometry Enhanced or CP Geometry, based on teacher recommendation. While there is no initial honors option for students taking Pre-Algebra in 8th grade, students who love and excel in mathematics, and are interested in acceleration and/or future work in honors courses, should speak to their 8th grade teachers, or reach out to Dr. Russo, about potential acceleration options.

Information for Out-of-District 8th graders

8th graders who do not attend one of the four district middle schools should contact the high school and indicate an intent to enroll. These students will receive communication in the middle of May with information on a placement test that will be administered in mid-June. To assist in preparing for this test, students may want to sample problems from the NJSLA practice test for their corresponding course (Pre - Algebra or Algebra I). Practice tests can be found at <https://nj.mypearsonsupport.com/practice-tests/>.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Dr. Mark Russo, district supervisor of mathematics and computer science, at mrusso@pascack.org



PASCACK VALLEY REGIONAL
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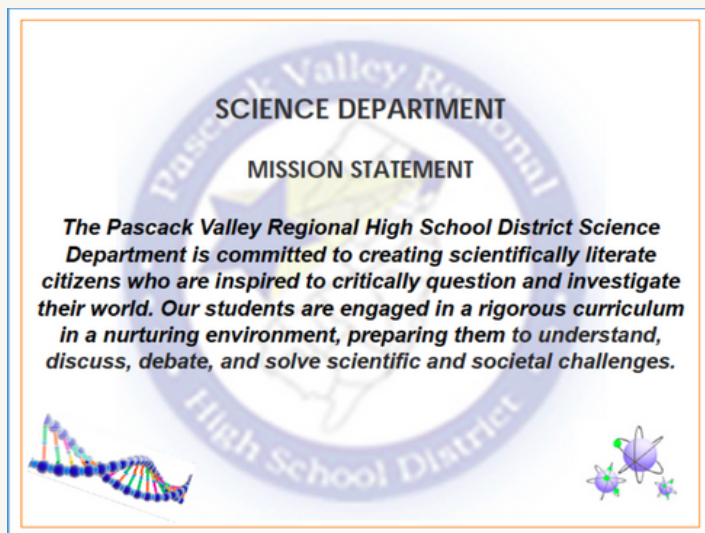
SCIENCE

EVERY STUDENT IS EVALUATED FOR NINTH GRADE SCIENCE PLACEMENT USING THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- A COMMON PLACEMENT TEST - ADMINISTERED IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL IN JANUARY 2025. ASSESSES SCIENCE SKILLS & APPLIED MATHEMATICS SKILLS.
- A COMMON RUBRIC - COMPLETED BY CURRENT EIGHTH GRADE SCIENCE TEACHERS TO EVALUATE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.
- TRIMESTER 1 GRADES IN EIGHTH GRADE SCIENCE & MATHEMATICS. *MINIMUM AVERAGE OF 90% REQUIRED FOR HONORS PLACEMENT.*
- SELF-ADVOCACY FORM - STUDENTS WILL INDICATE THEIR PREFERRED COURSE. COMPLETED DURING PLACEMENT TEST.
- MATH COURSE - ALGEBRA IS A PREREQUISITE FOR HONORS BIOLOGY ELIGIBILITY.

FOR 9TH GRADE PLACEMENT QUESTIONS, PLEASE VISIT THE [SCIENCE DEPARTMENT WEBSITE](#) OR CONTACT MRS. MEGAN GRAZIANO AT

MGRAZIANO@PASCACK.ORG



SCIENCE COURSE SEQUENCE AND ELECTIVES 2025-26

| Grade Level | Honors | | College Preparatory | |
|-------------|---|---|---|--|
| | Standard Course | Honors Electives | Standard Course | CP Electives |
| 9 | Honors Biology (Co-req: Geometry Enhanced and supervisor approval) | | Biology Biological Science | |
| 10 | Honors Chemistry (Co-req: Alg II / Trig Enhanced) | AP Biology Honors Research in Molecular Genetics Honors Anatomy & Physiology | Chemistry Chemistry in the Community | Astronomy (1/2 yr) Earth Natural Disasters (1/2 yr) Introduction to Anatomy & Physiology |
| 11 | Hon Physics AP Physics 1 (Co-req: Pre-Calc) | AP Biology Honors Research in Molecular Genetics Honors Anatomy & Physiology AP Chemistry AP Env. Science | Physics Physics & Technology Conceptual Physics | Astronomy (1/2 yr) Earth's Natural Disasters (1/2 yr) Introduction to Anatomy & Physiology Science, Ethics, Technology, & Society |
| 12 | Open for Science Electives | AP Biology Honors Research in Molecular Genetics Honors Anatomy & Physiology AP Chemistry AP Physics 2 AP Physics C SUPA Forensics AP Env. Science | Open for Science Electives | Astronomy (1/2 yr) Earth's Natural Disasters (1/2 yr) Introduction to Anatomy & Physiology Science, Ethics, Technology, & Society |

Questions?

Megan Graziano
Supervisor of Tech Ed
mgraziano@pascack.org

PASCACK VALLEY REGIONAL HS DISTRICT

Website 

Pascack Technology
Education



| Grade Level | STEM | Digital Media |
|-------------|--|--|
| 9 | Honors Engineering and Design I Introduction to Innovation and Design Robotics and Game Design Architecture | Video Production Graphic Design I |
| 10 | Honors Engineering and Design I Hon Eng Engineering and Design II (Hon Eng I pre-req) Introduction to Innovation and Design Robotics and Game Design Architecture | Video Production Graphic Design I Graphic Design II (teacher rec required) Advanced Video Production (teacher rec required) Broadcast Television Production (teacher rec required) |
| 11 | Honors Engineering and Design I Hon Eng Engineering and Design II (Hon Eng I pre-req) Introduction to Innovation and Design Robotics and Game Design Architecture Research in Innovation and Design (Capstone Course) Physics & Technology | Video Production Graphic Design I Graphic Design II (teacher rec required) Advanced Video Production (teacher rec required) Broadcast Television Production (teacher rec required) |
| 12 | Honors Engineering and Design I Hon Eng Engineering and Design II (Hon Eng I pre-req) Introduction to Innovation and Design Robotics and Game Design Architecture Research in Innovation and Design (Capstone Course) | Video Production Graphic Design I Graphic Design II (teacher rec required) Advanced Video Production (teacher rec required) Broadcast Television Production (teacher rec required) |

Social Studies

The goal of the Social Studies department is to help students become effective citizens in a changing world. The Social Studies program provides the skills needed to develop an informed citizen essential to effective participation in the process of government and the fulfillment of the nation's promise of a representative democracy. To that end, the students will gain an appreciation of cultural diversity, an overview of World and American History, and an understanding of contemporary issues. Students will develop an awareness of the economic, social, political and environmental aspects of all nations and people. They will acquire knowledge of their role in today's world and their place in the world well into the 21st century. Through the use of technology students will continue to gain skills in critical thinking, problem solving, research, and communication.

Core Course Offerings

9th Grade:

World History
World History Honors

10th Grade:

United States History 1
United States History 1 Honors
United States History 1 Advanced Placement

11th Grade:

United States History 2
American Studies
United States History 2 Honors
United States History 2 Advanced Placement

Honors Placement

The courses for the ninth grade honors programs are designed to meet the needs of the highly able student who has superior ability, a mastery of skills, high self-motivation, and a strong desire to be challenged in the specific areas of English and/or Social Studies. The courses have the highest level of difficulty for the particular grade level--the most in quantity of work and assignments, the highest expectations in quality of performance, and a great deal of independent work. Any student enrolled in an honors class must maintain a B average throughout the year in order to continue in that class, unless given special permission by the Supervisor. Students will be recommended for continuation in the Honors Program by their teacher upon the successful completion of their current course with a minimum of a B average.

Honors students are expected to maintain a high level of academic interest, demonstrate a sophisticated level of critical thinking, and be self-motivated learners and generators of scholarly material. Honors students must additionally demonstrate their ability to be effective writers, in order to enhance communication and shared knowledge within the classroom.

Honors World History:

The objectives of the Honors Program in Social Studies demand considerable student involvement in the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of historical data. Students are expected to maintain a high level of academic interest, demonstrate a sophisticated level of critical thinking, and be self-motivated learners and generators of scholarly material. Honors students must additionally demonstrate their ability to be effective writers in order to enhance communication and shared knowledge within the classroom.

1. Honors World History students may be required to complete a summer reading assignment which may or may not be accompanied by a writing requirement.
2. Honors World History students will be expected to read and analyze a wide variety of texts throughout the year including but not limited to primary documents and critical, historical analyses.
3. Students in the Honors World History course can expect to be involved in discussions that aim at an informed understanding of pertinent issues, problems, and global questions. It is expected that honors students value the spirit of critical inquiry and are desirous of rigorous academic challenges.
4. Honors World History students will be required to pursue a number of independent research projects throughout the year. In addition, they will be required to read independently and bring the results of that reading to class discussions.
5. Nightly homework is given in Honors World History. In addition, students will receive long term and weekly writing assignments, calling upon their skills as effective writers to demonstrate conceptual understandings and higher-level critical thinking.

Please visit us:

[Pascack Valley Regional Social Studies](#)

Mr. Joseph Orlak, Supervisor of Social Studies
jorlak@pascack.org

English I:
Foundations
(CP & Honors)

English II: Frameworks
(CP & H)
AP Seminar

Junior
Selectives

Senior
Selectives

AP Language & Composition
AP Literature & Composition
Classic + Contemporary American Lit.
(CP & H)
Language, Myth & Culture (CP & H, Dual
Enrollment)
American Studies (CP & H)
Science Fiction Literature (CP & H)

AP Language & Composition
AP Literature & Composition
AP Research
Literature of the Holocaust (CP & H,
Dual Enrollment)
Drama & Shakespeare (H)
World Literature & Culture (CP & H)
Sports Literature (CP)

Please visit the [English Department website](#)
Valerie Mattessich 201-358-7020, x22113; vmattessich@pascack.org



Pascack Valley Regional
HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

English Department Goals

1. Students will read critically and actively.
2. Students will write clearly and concisely.
3. Students will speak thoughtfully and respectfully.
4. Students will understand content, audience and purpose in speaking and writing.

The Pascack Valley Regional High School District's English Department engages students in the careful study of fiction and non-fiction by authors of different cultures, ethnicities, genders, and time periods in order to sharpen awareness of language and understanding of the writer's craft. It is our intent to help students develop critical standards for independent appreciation of prose and poetry and to increase student sensitivity to literature as shared experience.

Students in the four year sequential English curriculum will have the opportunity to practice increasingly complex tasks in reading, writing, listening, rhetoric, and critical thinking in order to better equip them with a multitude of high level skills for the 21st century.

The English Department is committed to enhancing technological expertise by providing research experiences whereby students learn how to access, sort, and critically evaluate the plethora of information available in the world today.

The English Department utilizes assessment for the following reasons:

- to determine students' mastery of standards, course objectives, and department goals
- to provide feedback so that students and teachers can identify strengths and weaknesses
- to give students opportunities to apply knowledge in new contexts
- to prepare students for high-stakes assessments

Assessment will look different for each course, but most will require some combination of the following: homework, classwork, quizzes, projects, tests, in-class essays, process writing, presentations, Socratic seminars/graded discussion, midterms or finals. Some courses conduct part or all of their assessments using a standards-based approach.

Pascack Valley Regional High School District World Language Department

In the Pascack Valley Regional High School District, we prepare students for confident, meaningful interactions with people around the world in the target language. It allows the learners to compare their language and culture to that of others while making connections with other disciplines and current world events within our increasingly interconnected world.

- District Supervisor: Argine Safari, 201-358-7020 (ext. 22054)
asafari@pascack.org

**Si Ud. necesita información sobre nuestro program para hispanohablantes, favor de contactar Senōra Argine Safari.*

Please visit our [District World Languages page](#) & review this informative slideshow: <https://tinyurl.com/3m6vt8ms>

To the Parents and/or Guardians of incoming 9th-grade students:

The World Language Task Committee comprised of middle school and high school teachers has a process for placement into the World Language programs at Pascack Hills and Pascack Valley High Schools.

We offer Level I, Level II, or Honors Level II for our incoming 9th-grade students as options within Chinese, French, Italian or Spanish. We also offer a track for students who speak Spanish at home, Spanish for Heritage Speakers/Honors. We have four-year sequences in ALL languages.

If a student is interested in an Honors World Language course they should self-nominate by visiting: [Self-Nomination Form](#). The honors World Language program is designed for students who demonstrate a high level of ability in oral and written expression, and who are motivated to achieve an advanced level of proficiency. Additionally, as with all other honors programs in the district, students admitted to the program are expected to "maintain a high level of academic interest and be self-motivated learners and generators of academic materials. "





PASCACK VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT MUSIC DEPARTMENT



It is our belief that every student should have the opportunity to receive a high-quality music education in school, regardless of grade level, ability level, or background. To accomplish this, the Music Department works hard to nurture an environment of inclusivity and equity, where differences are respected, embraced, and celebrated.

Pascack Hills 9th grade Music Course Offerings

5 Credit Courses

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Concert Choir | Modern Rock Band |
| Chamber Choir (*Audition) | American Pop Music |
| Concert Band | Keyboarding |
| Music Technology | Music Theory I |
| Guitar I | |

**Lunch Choir is a 2.5-credit course*

PASCACK VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

The Pascack Valley School District Family and Consumer Science Program engages students in challenging activities to further develop knowledge, skills, practices, attitudes, and behaviors, that will prepare them for future life experiences. Students are taught in a hands-on experiential learning environment by taking responsibility for their active participation in real life laboratory settings, which allows for repeated practice, application of skills, and knowledge.

Pascack Hills 9th grade FACS Course Offerings

2.5 Credit Courses

21st Century Life Skills

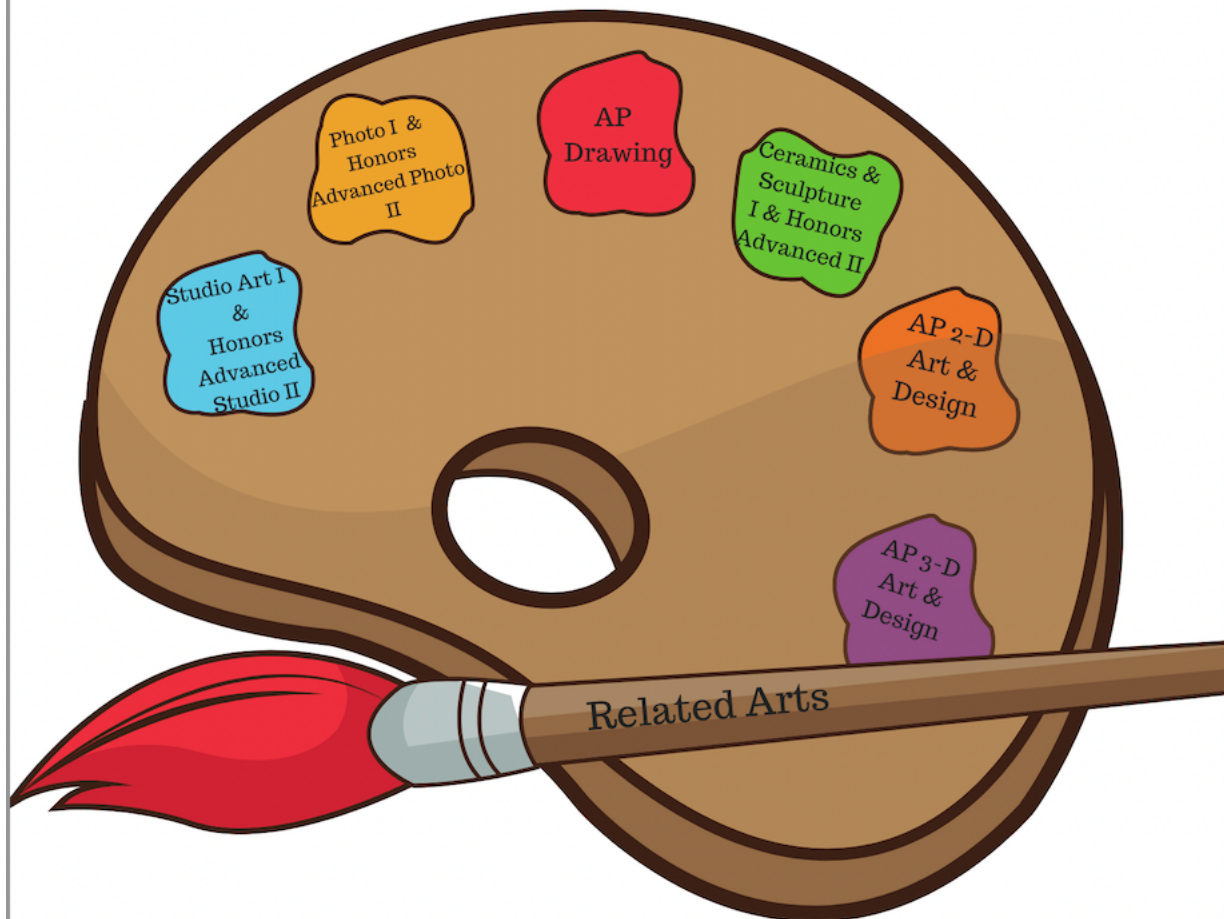


5 Credit Courses

Culinary Arts I
Clothing Construction
Early Childhood & Family Education
Fashion Design
Interior Design



Art Department Offerings



Valerie Mattessich, Supervisor of Instruction

vmattessich@pascack.org

201-358-7020 ext. 22113

WELCOME TO THE FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT

The arts are deeply embedded in our daily lives - sometimes so deeply or subtly that we are often unaware of their presence. Regardless of our paths in life, there is a time when we are moved by a painting or dramatic performance, are thrilled by a musical performance, make careful choices regarding our home decorations, or sing a simple song to our child. Art enriches us by adding fullness to our lives and helps define who we are. It gives us all a chance to express the inexpressible. The arts are an inseparable part of the human journey and are intertwined in our everyday lives.

Course work in the Arts Department challenges students to think creatively, solve problems where there are no standard answers, express themselves in a variety of forms, witness the power of the arts in our lives, and work as individuals or as part of a group. The programs are designed to help students in their continued discovery of who they are and to help them learn to adapt to and respect others and their work. The Fine Arts Department is rooted in visual/aesthetic knowledge, and hands-on technical skills in the areas of painting, drawing, sculpture, design, photography, and ceramics. With these experiences as a basis, students can select course work in any area of the department throughout their high school years. **All of our courses are elective in nature and some are available in two and three year sequences.** Study in the arts is important to life and learning.

Art Courses

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Studio Art I | Honors Advanced Studio Art II | AP Drawing |
| Ceramics & Sculpture 1 | Honors Advanced Ceramics/ Sculpture 2 | AP 2-D Art & Design |
| Photo 1 | Honors Advanced Photo 2 | AP 3-D Art & Design |
| Related Arts | | |

Business and Professional Studies

The Business Education and Professional Studies program of the Pascack Valley Regional High School District consists of courses which provide students with experiences in both professional business applications and personal problem-solving skills that are necessary to meet the challenges of today and the future.

Course Offerings:

9th Grade

Financial Literacy

Principles of Business

Marketing

Blended Financial Literacy

10th – 12th Grade

Entrepreneurship

Marketing

Economics

Financial Literacy

Principles of Business

Blended Financial Literacy

Accounting

Management and Leadership

Honors Marketing and Merchandising

Financial Investing

12th Grade

Professional Studies – Internships

Teacher Cadet Program

Please visit us:

[Pascack Valley Regional Business Department](#)

Mr. Joseph Orlak, Supervisor of Business and Professional Studies

jorlak@pascack.org

Health and Physical Education

The Physical Education program provides an opportunity for the optimal physical and emotional development of an individual. It is an integral part of the educational program and provides another discipline in which a person can become fully educated. This discipline augments other disciplines in attempting to develop young people with integrated personalities capable of functioning at a high level of efficiency in work, recreation, and everyday activities.

The Health Education program provides learning opportunities that motivate and educate students to protect, maintain, and improve their own health and that of others. These learning strategies are based on the best available scientific knowledge covering a broad range of relevant health concepts and are designed, selected, and conducted in accordance with the needs, interests, and maturity levels of the individual students and with the needs of the community at large.

Course Offerings:

9th Grade:

Physical Education – Health – Self Esteem, Identity and Safety, CPR

10th Grade:

Physical Education – Health – Driver's Education

11th Grade:

Physical Education – Health – CPR/First Aid - Stop the Bleed

12th Grade:

Physical Education – Health - Safety, Identity and Life Skills

Please visit us:

[Health and Physical Education Curriculum](#)

Mr. William VanKersen - Supervisor of Physical Education and Health - Pascack Valley

Mr. Steven Papa - Supervisor of Physical Education and Health - Pascack Hills