JOURNEY TO HIGH SCHOOL



The Journey Starts HERE… The Journey Starts NOW!

A Guide for Grade 8 Students

VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOURNEY TO HIGH SCHOOL 3

WHAT IS SO DIFFERENT ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL? 4

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS 5

24 – CREDITS STANDARD DIPLOMA 5

18 – CREDITS ACADEMICALLY CHALLENGING CURRICULUM TO ENHANCE LEARNING (ACCEL) DIPLOMA 6

18 – CREDITS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) DIPLOMA 7

CAMBRIDGE AICE DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS 8

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB) PROGRAM 9

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIES 10

DIPLOMA DESIGNATIONS 10

FINANCIAL AID 12

FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP 13

JOURNEY TO HIGH SCHOOL

Dear 8th graders,

Congratulations on making it a step closer to high school! This will be a time of great change and opportunity, and we are excited for you to see what the next four years have in store. High school is a time to explore your interests, challenge yourself academically, and make new friends. It is also a time to learn about yourself and what you want to do with your life.

There are many keys to success in high school. Here are a few tips:

- Stay organized.
    - This will help you keep track of your assignments and due dates.
- Manage your time wisely.
    - There will be a lot on your plate in high school, so it is important to learn how to balance your time between school, work, and social activities.
- Set goals and work hard.
    - Don't be afraid to set high goals for yourself. With hard work and dedication, you can achieve anything you set your mind to.
- Get involved.
    - There are many clubs, activities, and sports to get involved in at high school. This is a great way to meet new people, learn new skills, and make memories that will last a lifetime.
- Get to know your teachers and school counselor.
    - These adults are there to help you succeed. Try to get to know them and build relationships.

High school can be a challenging but rewarding experience. By following these tips, you can set yourself up for success. I wish you all the best in high school!

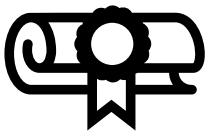
VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOLS
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

WHAT IS SO DIFFERENT ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL?

High school is very different from middle school in many ways. You have more choices, independence, and responsibilities. The most dramatic change you will encounter at the high school level is understanding the importance of maintaining a minimum 2.0 unweighted grade point average (GPA). Your GPA is a number that represents your average grades earned throughout your time of taking high school courses. This means your final semester grade in all your courses taken MUST be a "C" grade or better. You will also have many standard diploma pathways, programs, and academies. You must decide which diploma pathway you will work towards earning a standard high school diploma and which special program or academy for your participation. The following chart shows a *mock schedule* of your freshman year.

9th GRADE YEAR					
Special Program (AICE/IB)		**Honors**		**Regular**	
1	English 1 (Pre AICE/Pre IB)	1	English 1 honors	1	English
2	Biology (Pre AICE/Pre IB)	2	Biology 1 honors	2	Environmental Science
3	Math (Pre AICE/Pre IB)	3	Math honors (Alg.1, Geometry, or Alg. 2)	3	Math (Alg. 1A, Alg. 1, or Geometry)
4	Geography or World History (Aice/AP: College credit bearing classes)	4	Personal Financial Literacy; Personal Fitness/Recreation or Pre-Aice PE	4	Personal Financial Literacy; Personal Fitness/Recreation
5	Elective 1: Special Program (Ex. World Language)	5	Elective 1	5	Elective 1
6	Elective 2	6	Elective 2	6	Elective 2
7	Elective 3	7	Elective 3	7	Elective 3

The most important difference between high school and middle school is that it is a new beginning! It does not matter what happened at the middle school level, high school gives you the opportunity to start over or continue the successes that you had before. This is your chance to define or redefine who you are as a student.



"Intelligence plus character—
that is the goal of true education."

- Martin Luther King Jr.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students have five (5) diploma pathways to earn their standard high school diploma. Graduation requirements can vary from one year to another, so your requirement might be different than someone who started high school before you. This is the current requirements for students who will enter grade 9 for the 2025-2026 school year.

24 – CREDITS STANDARD DIPLOMA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) – 4 credits

- **ELA 1, 2, 3, 4**

ELA honors, Advanced Placement (AP), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), International Baccalaureate (IB) and dual enrollment courses may satisfy this requirement

MATHEMATICS – 4 credits

- 1 credit in Algebra I*
- 1 credit in Geometry*
- 2 credits in any additional math courses
  - Industry certifications that lead to college credit may substitute for up to two mathematics credits (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)
  - An identified computer science credit may substitute for up to one math credit (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)
  - A computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and science credit.

SCIENCE – 3 credits

- 1 credit in Biology 1*
- 1 credit in a physical science course (Earth/Space Science, Physical Science, Chemistry, or Physics)
- 1 credit in an equally rigorous science course
  - Industry certifications that lead to college credit may substitute for up to one science credit (except for Biology 1)
  - An identified computer science credit may substitute for up to one math credit (except Biology 1)
  - A computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and science credit.

SOCIAL STUDIES – 3 credits

- 1 credit in World History
- 1 credit in United States History*
- ½ credit in Economics
- ½ credit in United States Government

PERSONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY - .5 credit

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – 1 credit

- ½ credit in Personal Fitness
- ½ credit in any other PE course

Performing Fine Arts, Speech & Debate, Practical Arts, or CTE – 1 credit

ELECTIVES – 7.5 credits

TOTAL	**24 Credits**

Students must earn a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale and pass statewide assessments (Grade 10 ELA Reading and Algebra 1 EOC) or meet the criteria for a waiver of assessment results by the IEP team.

* Student must participate in the EOC Assessment and their performance on the EOC constitutes 30% of the final course grade.

18 – CREDITS ACADEMICALLY CHALLENGING CURRICULUM TO ENHANCE LEARNING (ACCEL) DIPLOMA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) – 4 credits
• **ELA 1, 2, 3, 4** ELA honors, Advanced Placement (AP), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), International Baccalaureate (IB) and dual enrollment courses may satisfy this requirement
MATHEMATICS – 4 credits

• 1 credit in Algebra I*
• 1 credit in Geometry*
• 2 credits in any additional math courses
  ○ Industry certifications that lead to college credit may substitute for up to two mathematics credits (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)
  ○ An identified computer science credit may substitute for up to one math credit (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)
  ○ A computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and science credit.

SCIENCE – 3 credits

• 1 credit in Biology 1*
• 1 credit in a physical science course (Earth/Space Science, Physical Science, Chemistry, or Physics)
• 1 credit in an equally rigorous science course
  ○ Industry certifications that lead to college credit may substitute for up to one science credit (except for Biology 1)
  ○ An identified computer science credit may substitute for up to one math credit (except Biology 1)
  ○ A computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and science credit.

SOCIAL STUDIES – 3 credits
• 1 credit in World History • 1 credit in United States History* • ½ credit in Economics • ½ credit in United States Government
PERSONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY - .5 credit
Performing Fine Arts, Speech & Debate, Practical Arts, or CTE – 1 credit
ELECTIVES – 2.5 credits
TOTAL | **18 Credits**
Students must earn a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale and pass statewide assessments (Grade 10 ELA Reading and Algebra 1 EOC) or meet the criteria for a waiver of assessment results by the IEP team. * Student must participate in the EOC Assessment and their performance on the EOC constitutes 30% of the final course grade.

18 – CREDITS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) DIPLOMA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) – 4 credits

- **ELA 1, 2, 3, 4**

ELA honors, Advanced Placement (AP), Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), International Baccalaureate (IB) and dual enrollment courses may satisfy this requirement

MATHEMATICS – 4 credits

- 1 credit in Algebra I*
- 1 credit in Geometry*
- 2 credits in any additional math courses
    - Industry certifications that lead to college credit may substitute for up to two mathematics credits (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)
    - An identified computer science credit may substitute for up to one math credit (except for Algebra 1 and Geometry)
    - A computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and science credit.

SCIENCE – 3 credits

- 1 credit in Biology 1*
- 1 credit in a physical science course (Earth/Space Science, Physical Science, Chemistry, or Physics)
- 1 credit in an equally rigorous science course
    - Industry certifications that lead to college credit may substitute for up to one science credit (except for Biology 1)
    - An identified computer science credit may substitute for up to one math credit (except Biology 1)
    - A computer science credit may not be used to substitute for both a mathematics and science credit.

SOCIAL STUDIES – 3 credits

- 1 credit in World History
- 1 credit in United States History*
- ½ credit in Economics
- ½ credit in United States Government

PERSONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY - .5 credit

ELECTIVES– 3.5 credits

- Career and Technical Education (2 Credits) - Courses must result in a program completion and an industry certification
- Work-Based Learning Programs (1.5 Credits) -Complete two credits in work-based learning programs
    - May substitute up to 2 credits of electives, including one-half credit in financial literacy, for work-based learning program courses to fulfill requirement

TOTAL	**18 Credits**

Students must earn a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale and pass statewide assessments (Grade 10 ELA Reading and Algebra 1 EOC) or meet the criteria for a waiver of assessment results by the IEP team.

* Student must participate in the EOC Assessment and their performance on the EOC constitutes 30% of the final course grade.

CAMBRIDGE AICE DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

Current high schools offer this diploma option: Atlantic, Deltona, Mainland, New Smyrna Beach, Pine Ridge, Seabreeze, and University.

To achieve the Cambridge AICE Diploma Award, learners must achieve a minimum of seven credits (including Cambridge International AS Level Global Perspectives & Research) from subject groups 1, 2, and 3 (and optionally Group 4) to be awarded the Diploma. Learners must achieve at least one credit from each of Groups 1, 2 and 3.

The remaining credits can come from any of the groups. To earn AICE credits for the course, the student must earn a grade of an E-A on the exam at the end of the course. The qualifying 7 credits must be earned within a 25-month period from the time the first exam is sat for until the time that the diploma is applied for.

The following combinations of credits are valid for the Diploma Award:

A Levels (2 credits each)	**AS Levels (1 credit each)**	**Cambridge International AS Level Global Perspectives & Research 9239**	**Total**
3	0	1	7 credits
2	2	1	7 credits
1	4	1	7 credits
0	6	1	7 credits

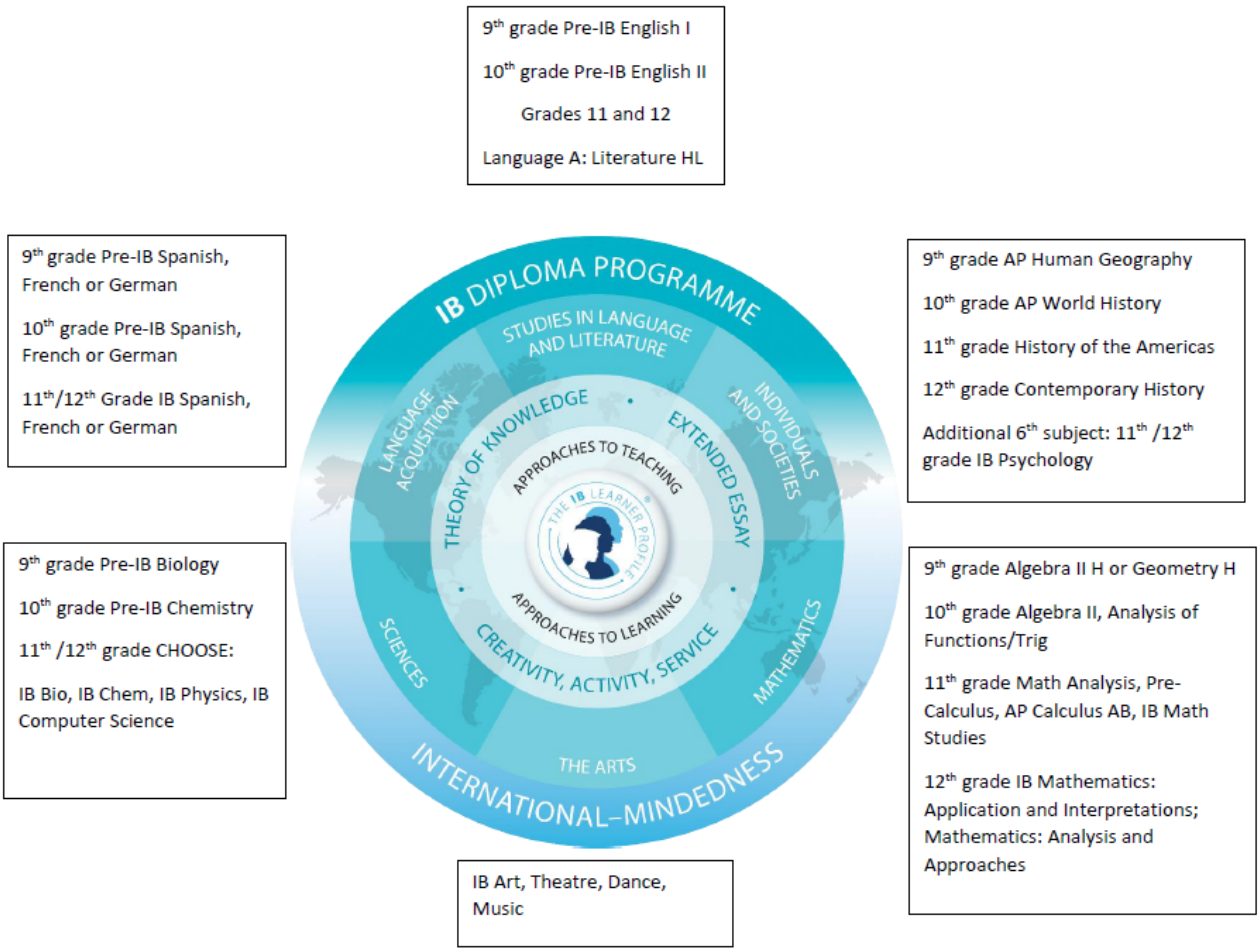
For students participating in this diploma award option, speak to your school's Cambridge AICE Coordinator to obtain more information.

High School	Coordinator
Atlantic High	Mariela Cox
Deltona High	Michelle Potter
Mainland High	Kallie Walker
New Smyrna Beach High	Susan Zona
Pine Ridge High	Marlo Spallone
Seabreeze High	Dodi Gaines
University High	William Lastowski

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB) PROGRAM

Current high schools offer this diploma option: DeLand and Spruce Creek.

26 credits are needed for an IB diploma, but you must also have a certain number of points on the tests.



For students participating in this diploma option, speak to your school's IB Coordinator to obtain more information.

High School	Coordinator
DeLand High	Lisa Nehrig
Spruce Creek High	Karie Cappiello

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND ACADEMIES

There are many program offerings and academies available to you in high school. These provide you with an opportunity to explore pathways that can extend after high school. You can choose to participate in any or each of these programs and/or academy.

One of these programs is Dual Enrollment. Dual Enrollment allows you to earn college credits while simultaneously earning high school credits. To be eligible for dual enrollment courses, you must have a high school 3.0 unweighted GPA or a 2.0 unweighted GPA for the vocational programs for Daytona State. Or, have a 3.6 unweighted GPA, for the University of Florida. There are other test scores needed and you must be college ready in your conduct and mindset.

Advanced Placement (AP) courses can also provide college credit by passing the AP course exam. AP courses provide students an opportunity to explore their interest, potential college major, or future career pathways.

There are also over forty-seven (47) Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs across all our high schools. CTE programs consist of three or more job preparatory courses in a career cluster area of interest.

In addition, across nine (9) of our high schools we have twenty-one (21) Career Academies. A Career Academy ranges up to a four-year full sequence of specific elective courses and requires additional national CTE standards.

DIPLOMA DESIGNATIONS

These designations are additional recognition students can obtain. This will help make students more competitive for post-secondary. You have the Scholar Designation, Industry Scholar Designation, and the Florida Seal of Biliteracy. Below are the requirements for obtaining the designations.

Scholar Designation

In addition to meeting the standard diploma requirements:

- Earn 1 credit in Algebra 2 or an equally rigorous course
- Pass the Geometry EOC
- Earn 1 credit in Statistics or an equally rigorous mathematics course
- Pass the Biology 1 EOC*
- Earn 1 credit in Chemistry or Physics
- Earn 1 credit in a course equally rigorous to Chemistry or Physics
- Pass the U.S. History EOC*
- Earn 2 credits in the same World Language

- Earn at least 1 credit in an AP, IB, AICE or a dual enrollment course

*A student is exempt from the Biology 1 or U.S. History EOC assessment if the student is enrolled in an AP, IB or AICE Biology 1 or AICE U.S. History course; takes the respective AP, IB or AICE assessment; and earns the minimum score to earn college credit.

Industry Scholar Designation

- Meet the standard high school diploma requirements
- Attain one or more industry certifications in high school.
    - Adobe Certified Associate
    - Certified Medical Assistant
    - Certified Food Safety Manager
    - Child Development Associate
    - Air Conditioning Service
    - And many other industry certifications are offered throughout the high schools.

FL Seal of Biliteracy

The FL Seal of Biliteracy identifies students who have attained a certain level of proficiency in at least 2 languages by high school graduation. Its purpose is to recognize students who have learned language(s) in school, as well as those who have acquired language(s) outside of school. Students who have attained the Gold and/or Silver Seal of Biliteracy will receive the appropriate seal(s) for their diplomas. The following designations will also be printed on their high school transcripts.

Requirements:

- **Gold Seal of Biliteracy**: 4 or 5 on Reading ELA plus 4 credits (3.0+) in a world language or the appropriate score on any of the approved assessments or portfolio.
- **Silver Seal of Biliteracy**: 3 on Reading ELA plus 4 credits (3.0+) in a world language or the appropriate score on any of the approved assessments or portfolio.

FL Seal of Fine Arts

The Florida Seal of Fine Arts Program was established within the Department of Education to recognize high school graduates who have met exemplary benchmarks in fine arts coursework. The purpose of the Florida Seal of Fine Arts Program is to encourage students to develop an exemplary level of proficiency in the performing or visual arts.

Requirements:

Successfully completed at least three year-long courses in dance, music, theatre, or the visual arts with a grade of "A" or higher in each course or earned three sequential course credits in such courses with a grade of "A" or higher in each course; and meets a minimum of two of the following requirements:

1. Successfully completes a fine arts International Baccalaureate, advanced placement, dual enrollment or honors course in the subjects listed in the paragraph above with a grade of "B" or higher.
2. Participates in a district or statewide organization's juried event as a selected student participant for 2 or more years.
3. Records at least 25 volunteer hours of arts-related community service in his or her

community and presents a comprehensive presentation on his or her experiences.
4. Meets the requirements of a portfolio-based program identifying the student as an exemplary practitioner of the fine arts.
5. Receives district, state or national recognition for the creation and submission of an original work of art. The term "work of art" means a musical or theatrical composition, visual artwork, or choreographed routine or performance.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is money to help pay for college or career school. Grants, work-study, loans, and scholarships help make college or career school affordable.

- **Grants** – federal money that does not need to be paid back.
- **Work-study –** federal program allows you to earn money from working an approved part-time job.
- **Loans –** money you borrow and must pay back with interest.
- **Scholarships -** free money, based on academic merit, talent, or a certain area of study.

Students can obtain federal student aid – grants, work-study, and loans – by completing the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** form. There is also the **Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA)** where students can earn state scholarships and grants. One of the most known scholarships is the Bright Futures scholarships. You will complete the FAFSA and FFAA forms during your senior year in high school.



FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP

These are the current award amounts and requirements for a student graduating in 2025. This will provide an idea of the requirements needed for the scholarships. Award amounts are approximate and subject to change after each legislative session.

	Florida Academic Scholarship (FAS) -Covers 120 credit hours-	Florida Medallion Scholarship (FMS) -Covers 120 credit hours-	Florida Gold Seal Vocational (GSV) -Covers 72 credit hours-	Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars (GSC)**
Award Amount[1]	100% of tuition & applicable fees at a public Florida institution. Students attending a nonpublic institution will receive a comparable amount. Students can receive an award during summer sessions.	75% of tuition & applicable fees at a public Florida institution. Students attending a nonpublic institution will receive a comparable amount. Students can receive an award during summer sessions.	Up to: $48/credit hour – AS, AAS, CCC* $39/credit hour – PSAV* $39/credit hour – ATD*	Up to: $48/credit hour – AS, AAS, CCC* $39/credit hour – PSAV* $39/credit hour – ATD* $48/credit hour – BS, BAS*
Requirements:				
1. GPA	3.5 weighted in core classes only	3.0 weighted in core classes only	3.0 weighted in core classes AND 3.5 unweighted in a single CTE program	
2. Core Classes	4- English (3 with substantial writing) 4- Math (Algebra 1 & Above[2]) 3- Science (2 with substantial lab) 3- Social Science 2- World Language - (sequential, in the same language)	4- English (3 with substantial writing) 4- Math (Algebra 1 & Above[2]) 3- Science (2 with substantial lab) 3- Social Science 2- World Language - (sequential, in the same language)	4- English 4- Math (Including Algebra 1[3]) 3- Science (2 with substantial lab) 3- Social Science 1 - Fine/Performing/ Practical Arts 3- in a single Career Tech Ed program	- Earn a standard high school diploma. - Earn a minimum of 5 postsecondary credit hours through CAPE industry certifications that articulate for college credit
3. Service Hours	100 hours or 100 paid hours or 100 combined	75 hours or 100 paid hours or 100 combined	30 hours or 100 paid hours or 100 combined	30 hours or 100 paid hours or 100 combined
4. Test Scores	**ACT – 29** (Composite) ~OR~ **CLT – 96** ~OR~ **SAT – 1340** (CR & Math only)	**ACT – 25** (Composite) ~OR~ **CLT – 84** ~OR~ **SAT – 1210** (CR & Math only)	**ACT** 19 Reading 17 English 19 Math **SAT** 24 Reading 25 Writing & Language 24 Math **PERT** 106 Reading 103 Writing 114 Math	

Other ways to Qualify for Bright Futures Scholarships

Students who have demonstrated academic merit through a recognition program may be eligible for Bright Futures without having to meet one or more of the requirements. Note: Both AICE and IB Diplomas must be earned prior to high school graduation. Confirmations may come from AICE and IB as late as September. Please refer to the table below for how to qualify based on one of the merit recognition programs.

Merit Recognition Program	College Entrance Exams by High School Graduation Year		Volunteer Service*	Paid Work Hours*	Combination of Volunteer/ Paid Hours	Bright Futures Award
	2023-24	2024-25				
National Merit® Finalists and Scholars			100 hours	100 hours	100 hours	FAS
			75 hours			FMS
National Hispanic Recognition Program			100 hours	100 hours	100 hours	FAS
			75 hours			FMS
Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) - Diploma			100 hours	100 hours	100 hours	FAS
			75 hours			FMS
International Baccalaureate (IB) - Diploma			100 hours	100 hours	100 hours	FAS
			75 hours			FMS
AICE - Curriculum	29/96/1340	29/96/1340	100 hours	100 hours	100 hours	FAS
	25/84/1210	25/84/1210	75 hours	100 hours	100 hours	FMS
International Baccalaureate (IB) - Curriculum	29/96/1340	29/96/1340	100 hours	100 hours	100 hours	FAS
	25/84/1210	25/84/1210	75 hours	100 hours	100 hours	FMS

*Student must earn the required volunteer service, paid work hours, or a combination of both equal to 100 total hours.

National Merit Finalists and Scholars, or National Hispanic Recognition Program

- To identify National Merit Scholarship Corporation students, OSFA will need the official letter of recognition from National Merit Scholarship Corporation sent to High Schools.
- To identify National Hispanic Recognition Program students, OSFA will need the official letter (email) of recognition from College Board Recognition Program as well as the certification showing the student has been recognized by the National Hispanic Recognition Program as a scholar recipient. The documents should be uploaded to OSFA's secure file by either the high school or the student.

AICE Curriculum

- Complete a minimum of 14 AICE credits* identified by the Cambridge Assessment International Education (Cambridge International) in the Diploma Core and three academic areas as follows:
    - Acie Diploma Core – AICE Global Perspectives & Research AS level (Two Credits required)
    - Group 1 – Mathematics and Sciences (Two Credits required)
    - Group 2 – Languages (Two Credits required)
    - Group 3 – Arts and Humanities (Two Credits required)
    - Group 4 – Interdisciplinary Skills (Optional – Four Credits maximum)
    - Six additional credits are required in any combination from the above four groups.

*Students earn one credit by completing and passing one AICE full credit course and another credit for taking the corresponding AICE examination.

IB Curriculum

- Complete a minimum of 10 credits identified by the International Baccalaureate Organization:
    - Two credits each in three of the following areas and one credit each in the remaining three areas: Language Arts, World Language, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics and Arts/Electives. Each of these credits must be an IB or AP course. Pre-IB courses do not meet IB curriculum requirements
    - One credit in Theory of Knowledge
    - Complete the Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) requirement
    - Complete an extended essay

NOTES: