

2025-2026

Culinary Arts Academy School Profile

ABOUT THE CULINARY ARTS ACADEMY

The Mercer County Technical School District launched the Academy of Culinary Arts in September 2016. The new full-time, 4-year high school program is located at the Arthur R. Sypek Center. Students will work toward the completion of Mercer County Community College credits and industry-valued credentials while in high school. In addition to taking college courses while in high school, student learning will be enhanced through key business partnerships, allowing for multiple workplace readiness and experiential learning opportunities.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of The Academy of Culinary Arts to provide a highly specialized learning environment that promotes the development of a confident, well-rounded culinary professional through unique academic experiences specific to the field.

This will be achieved by:

- implementing challenging cross-curricular experiences that promote critical thinking skills and foster opportunities for leadership
- embracing high professional standards in ethics and character development
- providing authentic clinical experiences and internships through professional and community partnerships
- utilizing commercial kitchen equipment that will enhance employment and academics

ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Matthew Carey, Superintendent

Mr. Jared Warren, Principal

GUIDANCE

Ms. Dana Tanzini, School Counselor

LOCATION

Culinary Arts Academy

Sypek Center

129 Bull Run Road

Pennington, NJ 08534

T: 609.737.9784



www.mcts.edu



ACCREDITATION

Mercer County Technical Schools is certified by the New Jersey State Department of Education and is also accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

CLASS LENGTH

Classes are 80 minutes long and are on a rotating A/B block schedule.

CLASS RANK

The Academy of Culinary Arts does not rank its students.

COLLEGE CREDIT

Students will undertake college-level classes at Mercer County Community College during their senior year in high school. Through an articulation agreement with Mercer County Community College, students begin earning college credit during 9th, 10th, and 11th grade and spend the majority of their 12th-grade year on the Campus of Mercer County Community College. Students can also earn up to 12 academic courses for high school and dual enrollment credit through Mercer County Community College (MCCC). A grade of A, B, or C qualifies for both high school and college credit, with a maximum of 60 dual credits available through the Academy program (unless otherwise approved).

CREDENTIALS

Culinary students will earn industry-valued credentials each academic year. In year one (1), students will earn their ServSafe (Food Handler) certification. In year two (2), students will earn their ServSafe (Food Protection Manager) certification, a food and beverage safety training and certificate program administered by the National Restaurant Association. In year three (3) students will earn their ProStart certification. All culinary arts students join their respective Career Technical Student Organization, Skills USA, and are continually challenged as they compete in local, regional, and state-level competitions. Students who successfully complete MCTS's Culinary Arts Academy pathway will also earn dual credits as part of our dual credit arrangement with Mercer County Community College.

ENROLLMENT

There are 114 students enrolled in grades 9-12. An additional 35-40 students will be admitted in each subsequent year.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Students have the opportunity to demonstrate what they've learned by participating in such co-curricular student organizations as SkillsUSA and ProStart. In addition, students may elect to participate in the Debate Team, Student Council, Math League, Esports, Literature Club, Roots Club, Music Club, and Yearbook.

FACULTY

The average teacher-to-student ratio is 1:10.

STRUCTURED LEARNING EXPERIENCE

SLE will support learners as they gain experience in the culinary field by restaurant management, cooking for large events, and many more.

QUALITIES FOR SUCCESS

Business skills, communication skills, creativity, dexterity, leadership skills, physical stamina, passion for food, a drive for success, and time-management skills.

CURRICULUM

Our program prepares students for a professional role in the fast-growing commercial food industry in the culinary and baking fields. Students begin with basic food preparation skills and advance to areas such as purchasing, managing, and leading. The comprehensive program teaches students to master the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the culinary field. Students experience intensive instruction and gain hands-on training using professional equipment with the help of our highly trained faculty in state-of-the-art kitchens. Each year, learners engage in a semester of culinary arts and a semester of baking. The program emphasizes safety and sanitation along with the proper use of equipment and utensils. The curriculum combines theoretical foundations of terminology, culinary skills, safety, and industry standards with practical, hands-on experiences.

OUR GRADUATES HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED TO THESE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Culinary Institute of America

Rider University

Fairleigh Dickenson

Rowan University

Georgian Court University

Stockton University

Johnson and Wales University

The College Of New Jersey

Mercer County Community College

University of East London

Monmouth University

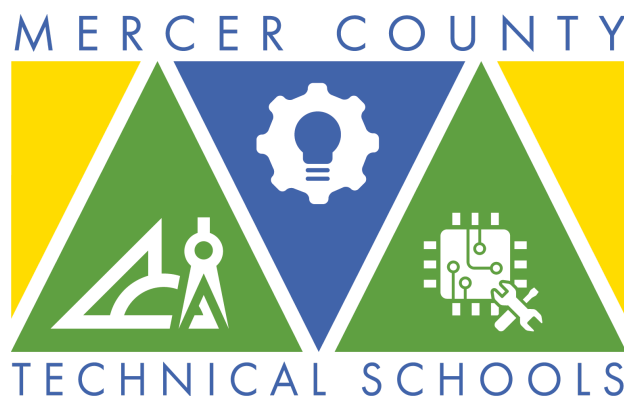
University of Delaware

Montclair University

Ursinus College

AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS

- 2024, one student earned their Associate's degree from Mercer County Community College
- 2025 Sustainable NJ Bronze Certification
- 2024 SKILLS USA National Gold Medalists: Career Pathways Human Services
- 2024 NJ Prostart educator of the year
- 2024 Esports Valorant State Champions
- 2025 Esport Overwatch 2 State Champions
- 2019, 2021 Prostart Culinary Arts State Champions
- 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 Prostart Management State Champions



Culinary Arts Academy

Course Sequence

Bolded courses provide an opportunity for students to earn dual enrollment credit on MCTS's campus if they receive an A, B, or C for the dual enrollment course.

Core	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
English Language Arts	English I	English II/AP Seminar	English III	English IV
Mathematics (*)	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	HOS111 Culinary Math
				MAT120 Mathematics for Liberal Arts
Science	Biology	Chemistry	Physics or Environmental Science	
Social Studies	World History	US History I	US History II	HOS115 Food and Culture
Financial, Economic Business, and Entrepreneurial Business Literacy			Foundations in Personal Finance	
Health, Safety, and Physical Education	Physical Education & Health I	Physical Education, Health II, & Drivers Education	Physical Education & Health III	Physical Education & Health IV
Visual and Performing Arts		Visual & Performing Arts Seminar		HOS116 Techniques of Healthy Cooking
World Languages	Spanish I / Spanish II	Spanish II		
21st Century Life & Careers, OR Career Technical Education	Culinary Arts I	Culinary Arts II	Culinary Arts III	HOS102 Food Prep II
				HOS109 Advanced Culinary Arts*
				HOS210 Applied Kitchen Skills
Technology	Integrated throughout all courses			

Students have the opportunity to earn up to sixty (60) credits at Mercer County Community College, per the requirements in the articulation agreement.

All post-secondary agreements are reviewed annually.

*All courses **may be subject to change***

GRADING

Mercer County Technical School holds the door to student achievement wide open at all times. Students are invited to assess and reassess until each reaches the level of achievement in which he or she is willing to invest. Subjective factors are removed from the equation. When students are judged on academic achievement, they commit to academic excellence.

MCTS has adopted the following grading calculation guidelines:

- 50% Measurements of Achievement
- 40% Measurements of Process
- 10% Measurements of Practice

All teachers will use the following Grading System in determining student grades.

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade Range	Explanation
A	93-100	Mastery Demonstrates excellence in skills and course expectations.
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	Proficiency Demonstrates competence in skills and course expectations.
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Emerging Demonstrates progress in skills and course expectations.
C	70-76	
D	60-69	Difficulty Demonstrates limited progress in skills and course expectations.
F	0-59	Failing: Does not demonstrate necessary skills and does not meet the requirements to earn course credit.

Students who fail to earn at least a 60 final average in a non-elective course as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.1 and attend and receive a passing grade in an approved summer school make-up program will receive the grade they earn. Both grades will appear on the student's transcript. Both grades will be used to calculate the student's grade point average.

Grade Scale Chart

Numerical Grade Range	Letter Grade	Non-Weight scale number	Half-Weight scale number	Full-Weight scale number
93-100	A	4.00	4.50	5.00
90-92	A-	3.75	4.25	4.75
87-89	B+	3.25	3.75	4.25
83-86	B	3.00	3.50	4.00
80-82	B-	2.75	3.25	3.75
77-79	C+	2.25	2.75	3.25
70-76	C	2.00	2.50	3.00
67-69	D+	1.25	1.75	2.25
60-66	D	1.00	1.50	2.00
0-59	F	0.00	0.00	0.00

The GPA can be calculated as weighted or unweighted. For the final GPA, MCTS will utilize the unweighted GPA.

CALCULATING GPA

Weighted GPA

Determine which types of weighting each of your classes are categorized as (non-weighted, half-weighted, or full-weighted). Match the numerical grade to the corresponding scale number in the Grade Scale Chart. Determine the number of course credits allotted for each course. Multiply the course credits by the scale number for each class to get a final score number for each class. Add all the final score numbers together and divide that number by the total number of credits. This will give you your weighted GPA.

*The current 2025-2026 senior class is weighted out of a 4.0 grading scale. The grading scale above was implemented during the 2023-2024 school year.

Unweighted GPA

Match the numerical grades received in each class to the non-weighted scale number. Determine the number of course credits allotted for each course. Multiply the course credits by the non-weighted scale number for each course to get a final score number per class. Add all of the final score numbers together and divide that number by the total number of credits. This will provide you with your unweighted GPA.

Courses in the various subject areas will be categorized into one of the following levels.

Weighted Levels:	Full-Weighted (AP)	Half-Weighted (Honors)	Non-Weighted
Weight:	5.0	4.5	4.0
Courses:	→ AP Precalculus → AP English Seminar	→ English I, II, III, IV → Algebra I, II → Geometry → Biology → Chemistry → Physics → Spanish II → World History → US History I → US History II → Visual & Performing Arts Seminar → All CTE-related courses	→ Spanish I → Health and PE → Foundations in Personal Finance