

HCS EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

2026 - 2027

COURSE GUIDE



2050 HWY. 501 EAST / BUILDING 400

PO BOX 261966 CONWAY, SC 29526

PHONE: 843-349-3131

FAX: 843-347-2507

WEBSITE: [HTTPS://ECH.HORRYCOUNTYSCHOOLS.NET/](https://ech.horrycountyschools.net/)

MS. DEMETRIUS WILLIAMS, PRINCIPAL



Table of Contents

Endless Possibilities - HCS Early College High School Overview	3
Vision, Mission, Beliefs, and Core Purposes	4
High School Graduation Requirements	5
Four Year College Admissions Requirements	6
Grade Classification and Promotion Policy	6
Class Rank	7 - 8
Diploma Pathways Endorsements and Criteria	9
Dual Enrollment	10
SC Grading Scale and Uniform Grading Policy	10
Course Descriptions	11
English	11 - 12
Math	12 - 13
Social Studies	13 - 14
Electives	16 - 17
CTE	17
HCS Early College High School Honor Code	18

Disclaimer: HCS Early College High School makes every effort to ensure that the information in this Course Guide is informative and accurate. However, new statutes and regulations may impact, negate, or change the implementation of programs and/or courses described. This Course Guide should in no way be seen as a contract, but as a guideline for students as they move through their high school years.



ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

HCS Early College High School, located in Conway, South Carolina, is a public high school designed to offer a personalized learning environment for up to 400 students. It is one of eleven high schools

within the Horry County Schools District. Horry County, the largest county by area in South Carolina, encompasses nine attendance zones. While the school does not have a specific attendance area, students residing in the county who meet eligibility requirements are welcome to apply for admission. The district provides transportation services for these students.

The school is situated on the Conway campus of Horry Georgetown Technical College, just a short distance from Coastal Carolina University. Its community is distinctive, comprising college students, parents, staff, and an advisory group known as Business Education Expectations (BE2).

HCS Early College is one of five schools in the district implementing the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) college readiness program. AVID plays a crucial role in supporting students enrolled in both high school and college courses. To qualify for admission, students must not be classified as gifted and talented and should be first-generation college students.

Established in 2006 as a program school, HCS Early College transitioned to a high school in 2012. It provides students the opportunity to fulfill the requirements for a South Carolina High School Diploma, along with the option of dual enrollment courses at Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) starting in the first semester of their tenth grade. Students earn both high school and college credit for these courses. The collaboration with HGTC, under the auspices of Horry County Schools, enables students to explore various programs of study while accumulating college credits necessary for obtaining an Associate of Arts degree from HGTC.

HCS Early College High School boasts a strong record of academic achievement, reflected in its high graduation rate of 97.4%. Notably, over 50% of its graduating classes earn a college degree prior to high school graduation, with all students successfully earning college credits. In the 2024 report card issued by the South Carolina State Department of Education, the school received an "Excellent" rating. Among its numerous accolades for academic excellence are: National Blue Ribbon School (2017), Palmetto Gold (2018 & 2019), recognition as one of U.S. News & World Report's Best High Schools (2020), and designation as a National ESEA Distinguished School (2021). Additionally, HCS Early College has an extensive list of alumni who have pursued diverse career paths, including successful business owners, family nurse practitioners, teachers, school psychologists, patient care professionals, veterinary assistants, business marketers, welders, cosmetologists, and chefs, among others.



OUR VISION, MISSION, BELIEFS, & CORE PURPOSES

Vision

To provide a personalized education to maximize student potential for becoming socially responsible, productive citizens.

Mission Statement

To provide a small, personalized learning community that accelerates our diverse student population

- to become responsible citizens
- who are strong critical thinkers, collaborators, and communicators
- who can successfully meet and face the challenges of competing in an ever-changing global society.

Beliefs

- All students can be successful with personalized levels of support.
- College is attainable by drawing on the college environment to build students' identity as college goes and reward mastery and competence with enrollment in college-level courses.
- A workforce is created that fulfills the desires of the students and represents the local community interests and meets the needs of the 21st Century.
- A sense of civic responsibility is instilled in all students.

Core Purposes

- We provide a rigorous curriculum and have high expectations for self and students.
- We guide students to communicate with clarity and precision.
- We develop students who use their minds well in every aspect of their lives.
- We create a culture where students are excited about learning.
- We prepare students to be productive citizens who serve their communities.





HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Subject Area	Credits
English (must take ENG 101 & ENG 102 to = English 4)	4
U.S. History	1
Economics	.5
Government	.5
Other Social Studies	1
Mathematics	4
Sciences	3
Computer Science	1
Physical Education or JROTC or Marching Band with PE	1
World Language or Career and Technology Elective	1
Personal Finance	.5
Electives	6.5
Total	24

*English courses include English 1, English 2 (EOC course), English 3, & English 4 OR ENG 101 + ENG 102

*Math courses include Algebra I (EOC course), Geometry, Algebra 2, & Statistical Modeling

*Science courses include Physical Science, Biology (EOC course), Chemistry, Environmental Science, or Anatomy

*Social Studies courses include Human Geography, Government/Economics, & US History (EOC course)

*Foreign Language course is SPA 101



FOUR YEAR COLLEGE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Subject Area	Credits
English	4
Math	4
*Lab Science	3
Social Studies	3
*Foreign Language	2 (3 for Clemson & College of Charleston)
*Fine Art	1
Physical Education/Health	1
Electives	6
Total	24

*Physical Science is not considered a Lab Science. Students will earn their 3rd Lab Science through HGTC.

*College bound students will take SPA 101 & SPA 102. SPA 201 is also available for students that wish to take a 3rd foreign language course.

*Students will take a fine art course through HGTC

GRADE CLASSIFICATION & PROMOTION POLICY

Grade	Total Credits	Minimum Requirements
10th	05	1 Math Credit & 1 English Credit
11th	11	2 Math Credits & 2 English Credits
12th	16	3 Math Credits, 3 English Credits, 2 Science Credits, & 2 Social Studies Credits



CLASS RANK

High schools uniformly determine the official class rankings of students based on the grade point averages (GPAs) of students in grade twelve, i.e., seniors, including students considered to be in grade twelve (see Grade Classification/Promotion Policy).

GPAs are calculated after seniors' grades are finalized at the end of the school year (i.e., at the conclusion of the fourth quarter grading period or after the first term if the student is a January graduate). January graduates will not be included in the final rank.

These final class rankings for seniors are computed to achieve the following three purposes:

1. To determine honor graduates, using the Latin honors system as follows:

Summa Cum Laude Graduates

- Students with a weighted GPA* of 4.750 or higher on the S.C. uniform grading policy

Magna Cum Laude Graduates

- Students with a weighted GPA* of 4.250 or higher, but less than 4.750 on the S.C. uniform grading policy

Cum Laude Graduates

- Students with a weighted GPA* of 3.750 or higher, but less than 4.250 on the S.C. uniform grading policy

*Weighted GPA calculations are based upon the S.C. Uniform Grading Policy's three decimal-point scale, and computations will not be rounded to a higher number.

Honor Graduates will be recognized at each district high school graduation ceremony in the following manner:

- A notation indicating honor status (i.e., Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, Cum Laude) will be inserted by the graduate's name in the high school's graduation program.
- The high school will announce the honor graduate's level of recognition (i.e., Summa Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, Cum Laude) when the graduate walks across the stage.
- District-wide, a uniform color-coding system will be used for the honor cords awarded to honor graduates.

The Color Coding is as follows:

Summa Cum Laude	School Color and Gold
Magna Cum Laude	School Color and Silver
Cum Laude	School Color and Bronze



- Academic regalia such as honors cords will be worn by a graduate during the ceremony provided that the student is:
 - Eligible for Latin honors recognition,
 - A member of a chartered honor society, or
 - Entering the military.
- Honor cords or other regalia may not be worn by students in graduation ceremonies to signify a student's membership or enrollment in an academy/club/organization/program, a student's completer status, and/or a student's winning a competitive event.

2. To determine students who will speak at district high school graduation ceremonies:

- **The Valedictorian** (the senior with the highest rank) will speak at his/her school's graduation ceremony.
- **The Salutatorian** (the senior with the second highest rank) will speak at his/her school's graduation ceremony.
- A third senior, who has earned magna or summa cum laude recognition, will be selected through election by his/her peers in the magna/summa cum laude student group to speak at his/her school's graduation ceremony.

3. To provide final class rank information that seniors may need.

Ranking of tenth and eleventh graders for South Carolina Palmetto Fellows Scholarship eligibility.

- For students in grades ten and eleven to be considered for initial eligibility for South Carolina's Palmetto Fellows Scholarship, calculation of GPAs and determination of class ranking for tenth and eleventh graders will occur after the 180th day of school when all grades have been finalized.

Preliminary class ranking of juniors for selection of Junior Marshals

- For the sole purpose of district high school graduation ceremonies, high schools will calculate the class rankings of eleventh graders, based upon their GPAs, on the 135th day of school.





DIPLOMA PATHWAYS ENDORSEMENTS AND CRITERIA

Consult District or School Curriculum Guides for more information regarding curriculum choices and requirements.

Honors Seal of Distinction - GPA 3.5 or higher

- **English** - 4 credits (2 at honors or higher level)
- **Math** - 4 credits (3 at honors or higher level)
- **Lab Science** - 3 credits (2 at honors or higher level)
- **Social Studies** - 3 credits (2 at honors or higher level)
- **World Languages** - 3 credits
- **Advanced Coursework** - 4 credits at honors or higher level

College-Ready Endorsement - GPA 3.0 or higher or ACT composite 20 or SAT combined score 1020

- **English** - 4 credits
- **Math** - 4 credits
- **Lab Science** - 3 credits
- **Social Studies** - 3 credits
- **World Languages** - 2 credits
- **Fine Arts** - 1 credit

Career Endorsement - GPA 3.0 or higher

- Career & Technical Education (CTE) Completer with an industry recognized credential
OR
- Silver or higher on Career Readiness Exam
OR
- Completion of Career Ready Work-Based Learning (WBL) placement

Specialization Endorsement - GPA 3.0 or higher

- **STEM** - 4 credits beyond required courses in math, science, & technology; at least 2 at honors level or higher; may be in 1 area of STEM or across 4 areas
- **World Languages** - 4 credits in the same language &/or minimum ACTFL Exam score on "Intermediate Low" or AP exam score of 3 or higher or IB exam score of 4 or higher before the senior year; English Learners must meet all criteria above and Level 5 ACCESS test score
- **Military** - 4 credits in JROTC & ASVAB score of 31 or higher
- **Arts** - 4 credits in single or multiple areas of the Arts; 2 or more at honors or higher level; Master on external exam or performance task



DUAL ENROLLMENT

HCS Early College High School provides the opportunity for students to take college courses as early as the 10th grade. Students earn high school and college credit for these courses, otherwise known as Dual Enrollment courses.

Taking college courses while in high school requires personal responsibility and a commitment to academics for the student to be successful.

All Dual Enrollment courses taken during the regular school year will be included on the students' high school transcript and factored into their GPA and class rank. Failure to complete these courses with a final grade of "C" or better may result in a lower overall GPA, as well as a loss of eligibility for financial aid in college after the student graduates.

All college courses will appear on the students' HGTC transcript and are important for the students' overall college GPA. If a student is dropped from a college course for non-attendance/participation, the student will earn a WF (50) on their ECHS transcript and either a W or WF on their HGTC transcript.

**Students that are dropped from a college course will receive the same grading on their transcripts & will also be required to reimburse ECHS for the cost of each college class that was dropped.

The South Carolina Grading Scale is as follows:

A	B	C	D	F	WF	FA	P	WP	NP
90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	0-59	50	50	No value	No Value	No Value

South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale

<https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/state-accountability/uniform-grading-policy/ugp-may-2019-final-pdf/>





COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

English/Language Arts

English I College Preparatory

Prerequisite: None
Credit: 1 Unit

This course provides a comprehensive study of literature, grammar, composition, vocabulary development, speaking, listening skills, and reference skills. Students must complete a research project.

English II College Preparatory

Prerequisite: English I
Credit: 1 Unit

This course will continue to build on the skills acquired in English I, with continued focus on literary analysis, interpretation of purpose within a variety of communication formats, extensive reading within different genres, and development of a personal voice in writing. EOC Course - This course has a state-mandated end-of-course test (EOC).

English III College Preparatory

Prerequisite: English II CP
Credit: 1 Unit

This course offers an in-depth study of American literature beginning with the Native American period. Students will refine skills in the areas of literary analysis, grammar, composition, research, vocabulary development, and public speaking. In order to receive credit for the course, students must successfully complete a research paper/project.

English IV College Preparatory

Prerequisite: English III
Credit: 1 Unit

This course offers an in-depth study of British literature. Literary criticism, expository and persuasive writing, critical thinking, vocabulary, and research are emphasized. In order to receive credit for this course, students must successfully complete a research paper.



ENG 101 English Composition I

Prerequisites: English I, II, and III (minimum grade average of B or higher)

Credit: 1 Unit

This course presents the following topics: a study of composition in conjunction with appropriate literary selections, with frequent theme assignments to reinforce effective writing. A review of standard usage and the basic techniques of research are presented. *This course is transferable to public senior institutions as part of the SC Commission on Higher Education Statewide Articulation Agreement. Students that did not complete English 4 must pass English 101 and English 102 to meet the SC Graduation Requirements.*

ENG 102 English Composition II

Prerequisite: ENG 101 (minimum grade of C)

Credit: 1 Unit

This course presents the following topics: development of writing skills through logical organization, effective style, literary analysis and research. An introduction to the literary genre is also included. *This course is transferable to public senior institutions as part of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Statewide Articulation Agreement. Students that did not complete English 4 must pass English 101 and English 102 to meet the SC Graduation Requirements.*

See [HGTC College Catalog](#) for additional course options. Students will meet individually with their school counselor to determine appropriate courses.

Mathematics

Geometry with Statistics

Prerequisite: None

Credit: 1 Unit

This course is the mathematical study of shapes, their properties, and their relationships. Emphasis is placed on student discovery and exploration and on formulating and defending conjectures. Geometry includes an in-depth study of reasoning, polygons, congruence, similarity, right triangles, circles, area, volume, and transformations.

Algebra I

Prerequisite: Geometry

Credit: 1 Unit

This course focuses on the development of your ability to use a variety of representations, tools, and technologies to model mathematical situations in order to solve meaningful problems. The course topics include generalizations, algebraic symbols, matrices, algebraic expressions in problem-solving situations, relationships, equations, inequalities, interpretations, linear functions,



systems of linear equations, quadratic functions and data representations. The state Algebra 1 end-of-course test will be given at the completion of the course.

Algebra II with Probability

Prerequisite: Geometry & Algebra I

Credit: 1 Unit

This course is an in-depth study of functions, patterns, relations, and concepts of number systems. This includes linear, quadratic, exponential, absolute value, radical, and rational functions. Conic sections are also addressed.

Statistical Modeling

Prerequisite: Algebra II

Credit: 1 Unit

Statistical Modeling is a program of mathematical studies that extends students' understanding of statistics. The SM course offers students opportunities to strengthen their understanding of the statistical method of inquiry and statistical simulations. Students will formulate statistical investigative questions to be answered using data, design and implement a plan to collect the appropriate data, select appropriate graphical and numerical methods for data analysis, and interpret their results to make connections with the initial question. The process standards, through a statistical lens, will provide the foundation for instruction and assessment. Topics should be introduced and assessed using simulations and appropriate supporting technology.

See [HGTC College Catalog](#) for additional course options. Students will meet individually with their school counselor to determine appropriate courses.

Social Studies

Human Geography

Prerequisite: None

Credit: 1 Unit

Students study Earth's human geography beginning with the use of maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies and spatial thinking to understand and communicate geographic information. Students will examine patterns and processes of how human characteristics and activities vary across Earth's surface and how humans understand, use and alter the surface of the Earth. Conceptual in nature rather than place specific, this is course is organized systematically around the topics of population and migration geography, economics geography, cultural geography, political geography, and urban geography. Students will also learn to employ spatial concepts and landscape analysis to examine human patterns and processes and their environmental consequences.



American Government

Prerequisite: None

Credit: ½ Unit

This course will focus on the Constitution; political beliefs and behaviors; political parties, interest groups, and mass media; the Congress, presidency, bureaucracy, and the federal courts; public policy; and civil rights and liberties.

Economics

Prerequisite: None

Credit: ½ Unit

This one semester course explores the choices and decisions that people make about how to use the world's limited resources. The goal of this course is to equip the student with knowledge that is strongly rooted in economic principles so that the students will be able to differentiate between economic models, understand issues pertaining to global and national economics, gain insight into choices that businesses must make, and learn the importance of managing personal finances and planning for one's future financial security.

U.S. History and the Constitution

Prerequisite: None

Credit: 1 Unit

This survey course covers the social, economic, and political developments in the United States from the earliest settlement of North America to the present. This span includes the Native Americans, establishment of colonies, creation of a new nation, the U.S. Constitution, territorial expansion to the West, Civil War and Reconstruction, industrialization and immigration of the late nineteenth century, and our nation's role in world affairs in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Students will analyze historical documents, understand varying viewpoints, and evaluate the historical interpretation of others. This course is required for graduation. The SC EOC will be given to all students.

HIS 201 American History: Discovery to 1877

Prerequisites: Appropriate placement scores

Credit: 1 Unit

This course is a survey of U.S. history from discovery to 1877. This course includes political, social, economic and intellectual developments during this period. *This course is transferable to public senior institutions as part of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education Statewide Articulation Agreement.*



HIS 202 American History: 1877- Present

Prerequisites: HIS 201 (minimum grade of C)

Credit: 1 Unit

This course is a survey of U.S. history from 1877 to the present. This course includes political, social, economic and intellectual developments during this period. *This course is transferable to public senior institutions as part of the SC Commission on Higher Education Statewide Articulation Agreement.* EOC Course - This course has a state-mandated end-of-course test (EOC). The SC EOC will be given to all students after the completion of HIS 201 American History: Discovery to 1877 and HIS 202 American History: 1877- Present. *Students must pass HIS 201 and HIS 202 to meet the SC Graduation Requirements.*

See [HGTC College Catalog](#) for additional course options. Students will meet individually with their school counselor to determine appropriate courses.

Science

Physical Science

Prerequisite: None

Credit: 1 science credit

This course is an introductory course in which you explore natural laws and scientific principles as they relate to the topics of physics and chemistry. Concepts include measurement, analyzing and graphing data, properties of matter, forms of energy, and the interaction of matter and energy. Concepts are reinforced by numerous laboratory demonstrations and investigations. This course is not recognized as a lab science by most colleges. Students must take the SC Physical Science End-of-Course test.

Biology I

Prerequisite: Physical Science

Credit: 1 Lab Science credit

This lab science course includes a study of living things and their interrelationships, levels of biological organization, human biology, and social implications. Laboratory investigations reinforce the understanding of living things, their functions, and their interdependence. EOC Course - This course has a state-mandated end-of-course test (EOC).

Chemistry

Prerequisite: Biology

Credit: 1 Lab Science credit

This course includes a study of the structure and organization of matter, chemical bonding, chemical equilibrium, chemical reactions, and environmental effects. This course is designed for students who plan to attend a four-year college.



Environmental Science

Prerequisites: Physical Science & Biology

Credit: 1 Unit

This course is the study of how natural and human-made processes impact the environment, and how the Earth's systems interact with each other.

See [HGTC College Catalog](#) for additional course options. Students will meet individually with their school counselor to determine appropriate courses.

Electives

AVID 101 & 102

Prerequisites: None

Credit: 1 unit per semester

Freshmen: Emphasizes the development of organizational and study and test-taking skills to ensure success in core academic studies.

Instruction in vocabulary development and critical reading strategies are a focus.

AVID 201 & 202

Prerequisites: None

Credit: ½ unit per semester

Sophomores: Emphasizes the refinement of students' organizational and study test-taking skills to ensure success in core academic studies. Instruction includes a focus on "writing to learn" and provides continued practice in vocabulary development and in using critical reading strategies.

AVID 301 & 302

Prerequisites: None

Credit: ½ unit per semester

Juniors: Emphasizes college awareness and the use of academic survival skills, critical reading strategies, oral communication skills, and the writing process for success in college level courses. Preparation for taking college entrance exams and college selection is also a focus.

AVID 401 & 402

Prerequisites: None

Credit: ½ unit per semester

Seniors: Emphasizes college readiness skills to include critical reading strategies, college testing



and selection, completing college and scholarship applications, college-level writing and college essays, and understanding college costs and the financial aid process.

SPA 101 Elementary Spanish I

Prerequisites: Appropriate placement scores

Credit: 1 Unit

This course is a study of the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, including an introduction to Spanish culture. *This course is transferable to public senior institutions as part of the SC Commission on Higher Education Statewide Articulation Agreement.*

SPA 102 Elementary Spanish II

Prerequisites: SPA 101 with grade of C or better

Credit: 1 Unit

This course continues development of the basic language skills and the study of Spanish culture. *This course is transferable to public senior institutions as part of the SC Commission on Higher Education Statewide Articulation Agreement.*

SPA 201 Intermediate Spanish I

Prerequisites: SPA 102 (minimum grade of C)

Credit: 1

This course is a review of Spanish grammar with attention given to more complex grammatical structures and reading difficult prose. *This course is transferable to public senior institutions as part of the SC Commission on Higher Education Statewide Articulation Agreement.*

All college classes that are not utilized to fulfill high school graduation requirements count as electives on the ECHS transcript. See [HGTC College Catalog](#) for additional course options. Students will meet individually with their school counselor to determine appropriate courses.

CTE Requirement

Personal Finance

Prerequisites: None

Credit: ½ Unit

Financial literacy is essential in meeting the financial challenge of the 21st Century. The competencies, which form the basis for this semester course, will enable you to analyze your personal finance decisions, evaluate the costs and benefits of your decisions, recognize your rights and responsibilities as consumers, and apply the knowledge learned in school to financial situations encountered later in life. Some basic financial literacy skills included in the course are budgeting, obtaining credit, maintaining checking accounts, analyzing the basic elements of



finance, computing payroll, making sound investments, and preparing tax returns. Students who satisfactorily complete this course with an overall grade of 80 are eligible for Technical Advanced Placement Credit (TAP) at HGTC, BAF 101 Personal Finance.

ECHS STUDENT HONOR CODE

1. Demonstrate behavior that is respectful and considerate of the community, campus, and yourself.
 - a. Using profane or vulgar language, slurs, or degrading comments and physically or emotionally harming another student violates the code.
 - b. Harming or stealing another student's property, a teacher's property, the campus itself, or any individual room violates the code.
 - c. Public displays of affection such as kissing, hugging, and holding hands are neither considerate nor appropriate while on campus.
 - d. Talking and/or gossiping about other students, teachers, or staff is not respectful.
2. Act in a collegiate manner by respecting and encouraging the right to teach and the right to learn.
3. Dress in a modest and appropriate nature in accordance with the HCS/ECH Handbooks.
4. Use technology at appropriate times and in the approved manner.
5. Act in a trustworthy and honest manner.
Students will not cheat on tests, plagiarize published works, or copy other students' work.
6. Be responsible and accountable for your choices.
Community members are expected to follow the spirit as well as the letter of the policies created by the ECH or found within the HCS and ECH Handbooks.

