

Grafton High School Class of 2028

Sophomore Newsletter



Fall 2025

GHS Counseling Department

As you continue your journey through high school, remember that your school counselors are here to support you every step of the way. Sophomore year is a great time to build on what you learned last year and start thinking more about your future. Explore new interests, challenge yourself academically, and get involved in activities that inspire you. Whether you're balancing coursework, discovering career pathways, or beginning to plan for life after graduation, we're here to help you navigate it all. Don't hesitate to reach out with questions or stop by to say hello—we're excited to help you make this year a success and lay the groundwork for everything ahead!

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Contact Us

Mrs. Andrea Ross

Counseling Director, (A-Ca)

aross@ycsd.york.va.us - (757) 898-0551

Ms. Taryn Grasty

School Counselor (Ch-H)

tgrasty@ycsd.york.va.us - (757) 898-0552

Mrs. Amy Farmer

School Counselor (I-Po)

afarmer@ycsd.york.va.us - (757) 898-0553

Mrs. Kara Hogge

School Counselor (Pr-Z)

khogge3@ycsd.york.va.us - (757) 898-0554

Mrs. Debi Johnson

Counseling Secretary

djohnson3@ycsd.york.va.us - (757) 898-0550



Save the Date

Grafton High School
Course Planning Night

Tuesday, December 9th
6:00-7:30 PM

Course Fair:
6:00-7:00PM

Presentation:
7:00-7:30 PM



Course Planning Night - December 9th

Course Planning Night is an important evening focused on planning your academic future!

Course Fair - 6:00-7:00 PM

- Get firsthand insights about courses directly from the teachers who teach them.
- Discover exciting new course offerings for the upcoming year.
- Connect with representatives from Special Programs, including New Horizons, NJROTC, and SOA.

Presentation - 7:00 PM

- Graduation Requirements
- Course Sequencing
- Course Offerings



Don't miss this opportunity to learn about your options and make informed decisions for next year!



Graduation Requirements

ADVANCED STUDIES DIPLOMA

(26 CREDITS)

Subject	Credits
English	4
History	4
Math	4
Lab Science *from 3 different disciplines	4
Health & PE *to include First Aid/CPR/AED Cert.	2
World Language *3 consecutive years or 2 years from 2 different languages	3
Fine Arts or CTE	1
Econ. & Personal Finance *counts as required virtual course	1
Electives *to include 2 sequential electives	3
Completion of an AP, Dual Enrollment, Work-Based Learning or CTE (Career & Technical Education) Credential	

STANDARD DIPLOMA

(22 CREDITS)

Subject	Credits
English	4
History	3
Math	3
Lab Science *from 2 different disciplines	3
Health & PE *to include First Aid/CPR/AED Cert.	2
World Language, Fine Arts, or CTE	2
Econ. & Personal Finance *counts as required virtual course	1
Electives *to include 2 sequential electives	4
Completion of an AP, Dual Enrollment, Work-Based Learning or CTE (Career & Technical Education) Credential	



If you're unsure about a requirement or want to learn more about a course, explore your options in the [YCSD Program of Studies](#).



Explore Your Future with SchoolLinks



Sophomores are encouraged to continue using SchoolLinks, our college and career readiness platform, to explore interests, discover strengths, and refine future goals. SchoolLinks helps students learn about different careers, explore high school course options, and build a personalized plan for success.

Logging in regularly is a great way to stay familiar with the platform and complete any assigned tasks. SchoolLinks will grow with you over the next two years, eventually becoming the central hub for college, career, and post-secondary planning. Staying engaged now ensures you're prepared for course planning and future opportunities!

Students may log in through Clever and select the SchoolLinks logo. Parents/Guardians may access SchoolLinks via an invitation from your student or by using the Claim Code in Aspen under Details > Demographics.

Special Programs

York County School Division offers specialty programs that help students discover their interests and reach their goals. These programs give students unique opportunities to learn in ways that fit their strengths and prepare them for life after high school—whether that's college, career, or military service.

Governor's School for Science & Technology

Admission to GSST is highly competitive. This program offers a two-year, half-day experience for 11th and 12th graders, focusing on advanced STEM coursework through three specialized strands:

Engineering Strand

- Rigorous study of engineering principles and calculus-based physics.
- Prerequisites: Biology, Chemistry, and Pre-Calculus minimum in math.

Biological Science Strand

- In-depth exploration of organic/inorganic chemistry and cell/molecular biology using advanced technologies applied in medicine, forensic science, and research labs.
- Prerequisites: Biology, Chemistry, and Algebra II/Trig minimum in math.

Computational Science Strand

- Detailed study of Computer Science (Java) and non-calculus-based physics.
- Prerequisites: Biology, Chemistry, and Algebra II/Trig minimum in math.

Application Information:

The application portal is open now. Apply [here](#) by February 14, 2026.

Visit the GSST website [here](#). Learn more & join the Prospective Student Pipeline [here](#).

New Horizons Career & Technical Education Center

New Horizons offers hands-on programs for juniors and seniors that prepare students for high-demand careers. Students must meet prerequisites and apply online. After applying, follow up with your counselor—they will submit your transcript and attendance information.

Career Pathways:

- Transportation & Logistics
- Architecture & Construction
- Manufacturing Technology
- Health Sciences
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Public Service

New Horizons has over **25** programs within these career clusters, giving students a wide range of options to explore their interests and future careers.

Application Information:

The application portal is open now. Apply [here](#) by March 15, 2026 to be considered in the first selection round.

Visit the NHREC website [here](#). Watch the recruitment video [here](#).



School of the Arts

The York County School of the Arts (SOA) offers high school students specialized training in literary arts, theatre arts, technical theatre, and dance arts. This rigorous program promotes creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving while building leadership and collaboration skills for future careers.

Application Information:

The application window is open now. Submit applications by December 18, 2025.

Visit the SOA website [here](#) for application and audition information.

Dual Enrollment Opportunities

Dual Enrollment (DE) courses allow eligible students to earn both high school and college credit by completing college-level coursework with a grade of C or better while still in high school. These courses are taught by YCSD teachers in partnership with Virginia Peninsula Community College (VPCC).

Possible pathways through YCSD & VPCC:

- YCSD/VPCC Dual Enrollment
- Early College Program
- Associate of Social Science Degree
- Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS)
- Passport (component of UCGS, can be completed independently)



Click [here](#) for additional details and speak with your school counselor to see if one of these pathways is right for you.

Sophomore Course Planning: Classroom Lessons, Course Planning Night, & 1:1 Meetings

Counselors will visit sophomore classrooms during the first two weeks of December to share important information about graduation requirements, special programs, and course planning for junior year.

Students and parents are encouraged to attend Course Planning Night on December 9th for detailed information about course options and planning for next year.

In February, school counselors will meet individually with sophomores to review classes and grades, discuss academic and career goals, and identify class requests for next school year. These meetings will take place back-to-back through Health/PE classes.

Parents and guardians who wish to schedule a one-on-one meeting with their student and school counselor are asked to notify their student's assigned counselor so that arrangements can be made. Please note, these meetings will not begin until February. If parents have immediate questions, they are encouraged to reach out to the school counselor by phone or email.

PSAT Information & SAT Test Prep

All YCSD students will automatically be registered to take the PSAT in October of their junior year. Taking the PSAT helps you prepare for the SAT and become familiar with the types of questions and directions you will see on the SAT.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation uses PSAT scores to determine eligibility for its scholarship programs. In addition, College Board and Khan Academy have partnered to provide free personalized SAT practice.

Use the [College Board Practice and Preparation](#) tools to build your own study plan and take a practice test.



Students are encouraged to start early and use these tools to strengthen their skills!

Get Involved!

Explore extracurricular activities to make the most of your high school experience. Visit the [GHS Activities & Clubs](#) page to find opportunities that interest you.

Stay active over the summer—research volunteer opportunities or consider joining the workforce. Check out [GHS Summer Programs](#) for details.



Community Service

While community service is not required for graduation, it can count toward certain diploma seals that recognize achievement and involvement. The YCSD Community Service Seal requires 150 documented volunteer hours submitted by April 15 of senior year. Service is a great way to give back, build skills, and strengthen college or career applications.

View the [YCSD Program of Studies](#) for details, and be sure to document your activities on the [Community Service Log](#) so you can include them on a resume for college or the workforce.

Sophomore Success Tips

- **Stay organized:** Use a planner or digital calendar to keep track of assignments, tests, and activities.
- **Challenge yourself:** Consider honors, AP, and/or DE courses if you're ready for more rigor. Colleges prefer courses with rigor, so take a challenging course load.
- **Explore careers:** Use tools like SchoolLinks to research career paths and college options.
- **Get involved:** Join clubs, sports, or volunteer opportunities to build skills and connections.
- **Monitor your progress:** Review your grades and credits regularly to stay on track for graduation.
- **Discuss your Academic/Career Plan:** Meet with your school counselor each year to review graduation requirements and future goals.
- **Work hard:** Grades are a direct correlation to your future goals. Put in your best effort every day.
- **Ask for help:** Don't wait—reach out to teachers or counselors if you need support.

Check Your School Email Regularly



Your GHS Outlook email is the main way school counselors share important information and connect with students. Since counselors don't have Canvas classrooms to communicate, it's important to check your email often so you don't miss announcements, meeting invites, or helpful resources. Staying on top of your email helps you stay informed and connected!

Visit the [GHS Counseling page](#) for additional resources, announcements, and opportunities!