

December 1, 2025

Greetings Current and Rising Alexandria City High School Titan Families,

We are almost mid-way through the 2025-26 school year (SY) and ready to embark on the academic advising process for the 2026-27 school year. Students will receive information over the next few weeks that will help guide them in the course selection process. The Alexandria City High School (ACHS) Counseling Department is sharing this information with families in advance to continue to foster communication about this very important process. ***We encourage you to please read this letter in its entirety as it contains important details to support your child through this critical period in their academic journey.***

On Monday, November 17 and November 24, 2025, ACHS teachers shared the first [2026-27 Academic Advising Advisory lesson](#) provided by the Counseling Department during the fifth (advisory) period. Students completed the [AchieveWorks Skills](#) assessments in Naviance to assist them in discovering careers that align with their interests. Students can access their results at home and are encouraged to review the results with their families. In addition, the 2026 virtual Academic Advising fair [presentation](#) will be shared with students on December 8, 2025, during the advisory lesson. All of the advisory lessons will be accessible to students for all campuses on the **Titan Student Resources Canvas** page. Middle school families will receive separate communication specific to advisory lessons, and all presentations provided to ACHS students will be shared with eighth-grade families at a later date.

Please take time to review the detailed [calendar of events](#) that contains information regarding the additional resources that will be available from December 1, 2025, to January 30, 2026, and browse the [Academies at Alexandria City webpage](#) for specific pathways within each academy. All families will have an opportunity to submit the top three academy preferences between January 8 through January 30, 2026, using an online survey. We will leverage the use of a lottery system for academy choice if we do not have enough open seats to honor all primary requests. Priority will be given to sophomores who will not have another opportunity to make an academy change after this school year.

ACADEMY/PATHWAY SELECTION

The school counselor will review the selections with your child during the individual meetings. Families can contact school counselors to adjust academy selections until March 13, 2026.

- **Eighth Grade:** Make initial academy selections (first, second and third choice)
- **Ninth Grade:** Remain in academy selection or change during academic advising. For students who decide to make a change at this point, you are utilizing your **one** opportunity to make an academy change in your high school career.
- **Tenth Grade:** Remain in academy selection or change during academic advising. For students who decide to make a change at this point, you are utilizing your **one** opportunity to make an academy change in your high school career.
 - Please note, if you elected to use your one opportunity to change your academy for this current school year, you will not be able to make an academy change and should disregard the Academy/Pathway survey when it is sent to students in grades 8-10.
- **Eleventh Grade:** All juniors will not be allowed to make a change to their academy at this point.

All students should select a pathway within one of these four (4) academies:

1. STEM Academy;
2. Business and Government Academy;
3. Education, Liberal Arts and Human Services Academy; or
4. Visual, Performing and Applied Arts Academy.

Students enrolled in the International Academy and the City-Wide program should select the General Studies Academy.

Early academy selection within a student's high school academic career supports them in meeting graduation requirements before reaching senior year, fosters student engagement through small learning communities and allows the opportunity for students to learn and apply their learning within a space that interests them, while building a strong foundation for a successful future.

Students and families will be able to make an informed choice regarding an academy selection using results from AchieveWorks in Naviance, counselor lessons, the Academies webpage, evening programs and individual student meetings. ACHS school counselors will use this data to help students narrow their areas of interests, passion, talents and abilities if they remain undecided. Please keep in mind that the academy and pathway selection will provide students with transferable skills, such as creative and critical thinking skills, that benefit the student no matter what career they

eventually enter into in the future. Students must take two sequential electives in order to meet [Virginia Department of Education \(VDOE\) Graduation requirements](#). All students will have the option to choose sequential electives within the various pathways. Please reference the [Academies FAQ](#) document as an additional resource.

ACADEMIC ADVISING ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS

Next school year, students will continue taking seven (7) academic classes. Families will have the opportunity to discuss selections and enter them using their PowerSchool account. School counselors will assist students in their course selection process and request two (2) alternate elective options in the event the initial courses are not available due to various scheduling conflicts. Course descriptions and other valuable information are available in the [ACPS Program of Studies](#). The updated Program on Studies, 2026-27 version, will be available in January 2026.

CAREER PATHWAY CURRICULUM EXPO

In addition to students having an opportunity to learn more about our courses during advisory lessons, all families are invited to attend the annual **Career Pathway Curriculum Expo on Monday, January 12, 2026, from 5:30-8 p.m. starting at the ACHS King St. Campus**. This year's expo is a combined one-night event that highlights the Academies at Alexandria City, career connections and our extensive curricular opportunities. We will share a complete session schedule for the evening's event closer to the date, but below is a snapshot of the evening's events:

- **MEET** with teachers and visit informational tables from core and elective classes.
- **START PLANNING** and learning about expectations for next year at grade-level meetings.
- **ATTEND** information sessions on the pathway options for the Academies at Alexandria City.
- **GET TO KNOW** our Community Partners.

A shuttle bus will be available for transportation between campuses.

TIMELINE FOR ACADEMIC ADVISING MEETINGS AND COURSE REQUEST ADJUSTMENTS/CORRECTIONS Process and Guidelines

The timeline for SY 2026-27 academic advising meetings and course request adjustments, and corrections is as follows:

- **January 7-16, 2026:** Teachers will take the opportunity to meet with students during class to discuss course options for next year and provide their recommendations for students and families to consider prior to entering their selections in PowerSchool.
- **January 20-26, 2026:** Teachers enter their recommendations in PowerSchool.
- **January 30-February 4, 2026:** Students and their families will have the opportunity to enter selections in PowerSchool. Please ensure you consider the recommendations from teachers when making your selections. Please take the time to communicate with your students about the academic advising process. The course requests they make between February through March are instrumental in the development of the schedule for the next school year. There will be an allotted timeframe for students to make adjustments after meeting with their counselor. Please note the changes in the process, as counselors will only address schedule corrections during the first week of school.
- **February 9-March 13, 2026:** Students (grades 8-11) will meet with their counselors during specific class periods throughout this timeframe. Students may email their school counselor to update course requests and academy/pathway options if they have already held their one-on-one academic advising meeting.
- **Online Course Selection:** A limited number of spaces are available each semester for online courses, and priority is given to near-term graduates and students whose in-person school schedules do not permit them to take the course in person. Please note that, while online classes allow students to complete their coursework, students must stay on pace to complete the course on time. Therefore, a student's quarterly grade (appearing on the quarterly report card) is derived from a formula that is inclusive of both pace and performance. It is critical that students remain on pace. Students who take an online course during the school day (blocks 1-7) are required to report to the online learning classroom. Students and families should review the Online Learning Contract that they are required to complete prior to online course enrollment, as this document extensively covers grading and expectations.
- **May 8, 2026:** Course requests will be shared with students and their families to review and make adjustments based on open/closed classes due to enrollment requests. It is important to note that schedule adjustments will only be accepted between May 8 through May 29, 2026.

- **Remember, please ensure you select the courses - including Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment (DE) courses - that best align with teacher recommendations, current grades and personal obligations that require a commitment outside of school.**
- DE registration ends in early June for the Fall 2026 semester. Students must be registered by the first day of class for DE courses. ***NOTE: Students will be given one last opportunity to request to level up into an Honors or AP course based on availability only on August 27 and 28, 2026.***
- **Students should ensure all courses they requested are reflected and submit any adjustments at this time.**
- Students will **NOT** be able to request changes after May 29, 2026, and this includes elective classes.
- If a student receives their seven primary choices, we will not adjust a course to an alternate class in the fall.
- **May 8, 2026:** Academy/Pathway selections will be shared with families.
- **May 29, 2026:** Deadline to submit course request changes.
- **August 14-21, 2026:** School counselors will communicate with families regarding hard schedule conflicts and share options.
- **August 19, 2026:** Student schedules are live in PowerSchool and available to families. As a reminder, schedule changes will only be accepted between May 9-30, 2026.
- **August 24-28, 2026:** Phase I - School counselors will support students in the following categories to **ONLY** resolve schedule corrections:
 - Add a peer mentor period to resolve a course conflict as needed
 - *Peer mentor periods should be primarily selected in the spring.*
 - Enact Senior Privilege with Parent/Guardian Permission
 - Duplicate course on schedule
 - Missing a core academic course
 - Missing a graduation requirement
 - Missing a class period
 - Missing the prerequisite or corequisite required for a course
 - Placed in an elective **NOT** selected between February 10, 2026 to May 29, 2026 (based on availability/space)
 - *A counselor will review documentation to verify before making a correction.*
 - Remove a repeat class (where a student has already earned credit)
- **August 27-28, 2026:** Students can request to level up to Honors or AP based on availability.
 - *Exception* - Students can drop a DE course if they do not meet the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) requirement, or if doing so aligns with the NVCC withdrawal deadlines.
 - Please note that if students are scheduled for the seven primary requests they selected, they will not have an opportunity to change to one of their alternate choices.
- **September 7-11, 2026:** Phase II - Students will have the opportunity to submit a request to supervising Academy Principals to level down, subject to availability. Classes dropped at this time will not appear on the high school or the NOVA transcript (for those in DE courses). They will review the request and make a decision based on attendance, current academic effort, input from the teacher, family, etc.
- **October 20-30, 2026:** Phase III - Students will have an opportunity to submit a request to supervising academy principals to level down, subject to availability. DE classes dropped at this time will be reflected on the NVCC transcript. They will review the request and make a decision based on attendance, current academic effort, input from the teacher, family, etc.
- **November 1, 2026 and beyond:** Phase IV - **Only Seniors** will have an opportunity to drop a class for a Withdraw Pass (WP) or Withdraw Fail (WF) if it is not required to graduate.

If you have questions or need further guidance about the academic advising process, do not hesitate to contact your student's [school counselor](#).

Thank you,

R. Briana Hardaway
ACHS Director of High School Counseling