November 2026

Greetings, Current and Rising Alexandria City High School Titan Families,

We've completed quarter one of the 2026-27 school year (SY) and are ready to embark on the academic advising process for the 2027-28 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 fostering communication about this 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 9, and November 16, 2026, ACHS teachers will share the first **Academic Advising lesson** provided by the Counseling Department during the fifth (advisory) period. Students completed the **AchieveWorks Skills** assessments in Naviance to help them discover 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, students will receive the 2027 virtual Academic Advising fair **presentation**, to be shared on November 23, 2026, and the **Career Clusters** overview on November 30, 2026, 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**, which includes information regarding the additional resources that will be available from November 30, 2026, to January 29, 2027, and browse the **Academies at Alexandria City webpage** for specific pathways within each academy. All families will have an opportunity to submit career cluster selections (if applicable) and the top three academy preferences between January 6 through January 29, 2027, 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 12, 2027.

- **Eighth Grade**: Make initial academy selections (first, second, and third choice)
- **Ninth Grade**: Remain in academy selection or change during academic advising. Students who decide to change at this point use their **one** opportunity to change academies in their high school career.
- **Tenth Grade**: Remain in academy selection or change during academic advising. Students who decide to change at this point use their **one** opportunity to change academies in their 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. Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (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 and academic career planning 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 can make an informed academy choice 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 interest, 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 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. As outlined in the updated 2027-2028 Program of Studies, students MUST choose one primary elective and an alternate within their academy each school year.
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 of Studies, 2027-28 version, will be available in January 2027.

CAREER PATHWAY CURRICULUM EXPO

In addition to students learning more about our courses during advisory lessons, all families are invited to attend the annual **Career Pathway Curriculum Expo** on **Wednesday, December 9, 2026, from 5:30-8 p.m., starting at the ACHS King St. Campus**. This 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 2027-28 academic advising meetings and course request adjustments and corrections is as follows:

- **January 6-15, 2027:** 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 19-25, 2027:** Teachers enter their recommendations in PowerSchool.
- **January 29-February 3, 2027**: 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. Students will have an allotted timeframe to make adjustments after meeting with their counselor. Please note the process changes, as counselors will address schedule corrections only during the first week of school.
- **February 8-March 12, 2027**: 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. Online courses may also allow students to take courses that align with their interests but are not available 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 7, 2027**: 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 7 through May 28, 2027.

    - **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. You will only have specific periods of time to make level adjustments.**
    - DE registration ends in early June for the Fall 2027 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 between August 26-31, 2027****.*
    - **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 28, 2027, 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 10, 2027:** Academy/Pathway placement will be shared with families
- **May 28, 2027**: Deadline to submit course request changes.
- **August 13-20, 2027**: School counselors will communicate with families regarding hard schedule conflicts and share options.
- **August 18, 2027**: Student schedules are live in PowerSchool and available to families. As a reminder, schedule changes will only be accepted between May 7-28, 2027.
- **August 23-27, 2027**: Phase I - School counselors will support students in the following categories to **ONLY** resolve schedule corrections:
    - Add a peer mentor or office aide period to resolve a course conflict as needed
        - *Peer mentor and office aide periods should be primarily selected in the spring (only for grades 11 and 12 and must be on track to graduate on-time).*
    - 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 8, 2027 to May 27, 2027 (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)
    - School Counselors will **NOT** be able to honor the following requests:
        - Teacher Changes
        - Elective Changes
        - Period Changes
        - Campus Changes
- **August 26-31, 2027**: Students can request to level up to Honors or AP based on availability.
    - Schedule changes are allowed to increase academic rigor, provided the student qualifies for the advanced-level course (based on availability):
        - Move to a more advanced course within a core subject (such as moving from general math to honors math).
        - Enroll in an advanced elective, as long as they have completed the required prerequisites (such as adding Honors or advanced placement Spanish).
    - *Exception* - Students can drop a dual enrollment course if they do not meet the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) requirement, or if doing so aligns with the NVCC withdrawal deadlines.
    - *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 7-10, 2027**: 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 18-29, 2027:** Phase III - Students will have an opportunity to submit a request to level down (teacher and Academy Principal signatures are required), 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, 2027 and beyond:** Phase IV - Students can level down until the end of the 2nd quarter, but the class will remain on the transcript and indicate a Withdraw Pass (WP) or Withdraw Fail (WF). **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 ACHS school counselor or middle school counselor.

Thank you,

R. Briana Hardaway, Ed.S.
ACHS Director of High School Counseling