

Pine Creek High School Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) Program

The Honors Program:

Honors and AP courses are open to all high-achieving, high-ability students. The Pine Creek High School Honors Program is a continuation of the District 20 elementary and middle school Talented and Gifted (TAG) Programs. TAG-identified students are encouraged to enroll in Honors and AP courses, which are the main avenue of TAG services at the high school level.

Honors courses are intended to meet the needs of students whose ability level requires significant acceleration of the standard curriculum. Honors classes stress academic excellence, preparation for college, and critical and independent thinking skills. Students who enroll in honors classes are expected to work at a high level of competence and to responsibly accept the academically rigorous challenges set forth. Honors courses exceed the minimum state standards for core content areas. While not a prerequisite for enrollment in AP courses, Honors courses provide a natural progression into AP courses. (See Advanced Placement Program information.)

WHO SHOULD TAKE HONORS CLASSES?

Students are encouraged to take Honors classes if they meet a combination of these criteria:

- A *passion* for the subject. A desire to work intellectually, think deeply, and consciously commit to the academic rigor required in an honors course
- CSAP/TCAP scores in the Advanced or Proficient level and/or display past and current academic performance in the above average range
- Formal identification in the District 20 TAG Program
- Current content-area teacher advisement to enroll in honors level coursework

All students considering honors level courses should carefully consider his/her level of preparation and passion for the content area. Likewise, students should discuss all options with parents and teachers. Students who choose Honors courses are expected to routinely demonstrate **high integrity, motivation, maturity, and intellectual curiosity.**

Honors students at PCHS are expected to maintain a “C” letter grade or above, to remain in the Honors program in a given department. If a student earns less than the expected “C” average in a particular course for the first semester, he/she may be advised to enroll in a non-honors section of that course for the second semester. All classes which have received district approval for weighted grade status are labeled “Honors” and/or are indicated as weighted credit in the course guide.

The Advanced Placement (AP) Program:

The Advanced Placement (AP) program is a national program offered by Pine Creek High School in cooperation with the College Board. The AP program provides students the opportunity to pursue *college-level studies* while in high school. At the conclusion of the AP course, students take a College Board National AP Exam administered on a national test date. Depending on scores, a student may receive college-level credit for AP classes. Currently, 90% of colleges and universities across the country offer college credit, advanced placement, or both, for qualifying AP Exam scores. Acceptance of AP scores for college credit is determined by each college or university. *It is the student's responsibility to research policies at individual institutions regarding AP credit.* For information, refer to <https://apscore.collegeboard.org/creditandplacement/search-credit-policies>

AP courses are intended to meet the needs of students seeking in-depth acceleration of curricular content. Because AP courses offer college-level curriculum, **they are more demanding than a standard high school course.** While AP courses have the academic rigor of a college program and reward achievement, they also provide greater opportunities to master a subject and to explore it in greater depth. Students who enroll in AP courses must be highly motivated and willing to work responsibly to develop analytical reasoning skills and disciplined study habits. AP courses exceed the minimum state standards for core content areas and have received District 20 approval to award weighted credit.

An AP Exam:

Students are expected to pay an exam fee of approximately \$95.00 online or in person to the TAG/AP/Honors Coordinator prior to the close of first semester. This exam fee is largely set by College Board and is subject to annual increases which may not be reflected by the time this course guide is published. Taking the national exam is part of the AP experience. Students are *expected* to pay the exam fee and take the exam. Students who qualify for Federal Aid programs may apply for assistance with AP exam fees with the AP Coordinator.

All AP examinations (except Studio Art) contain both multiple-choice questions and free-response questions, which require essay writing and problem solving. Most of the examinations are three hours long. The exam must be taken on the date published by the College Board. If a student has a valid reason for withdrawing from taking the national exam, he/she **MUST** take an equivalent exam with his/her teacher in order to retain the AP designation on the transcript and to retain weighted grade status. Refunds for exam fees may be issued, minus an exam handling fee.

Every examination taken by students receives an overall grade on a five-point scale: 5 (extremely well qualified), 4 (well qualified), 3 (qualified), 2 (possibly qualified), and 1 (no recommendation). All exams are based on the course outlined in the AP course description pages which can be found on the College Board website at www.collegeboard.com. Both the course descriptions and the examinations are prepared for the College Board by committees of school and college teachers assisted by specialists at the Educational Testing Service.

AP Scores

Only students have the right to forward their AP scores to colleges and universities; therefore, to maintain student confidentiality and follow District 20 policy, AP test scores will not appear on PCHS transcripts. Students can view their score report online from College Board in July following spring testing. Official score reports can be requested through the College Board to be sent to the institution of your choice at www.collegeboard.com. All of this information is shared with students in the student pack he/she receives at the time of testing.

Please feel free to visit the College Board/AP website for more information.
www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html

How to Enroll in AP courses

All students considering AP level courses should carefully consider his/her level of preparation and passion for the content area. Likewise, students should discuss all options with parents and teachers.

The successful AP student must:

- Possess the prerequisite skills, work ethic, and attitudes necessary for success at the AP level.
- Make a conscious decision to commit to the college level academic rigor required in an AP course
- Complete and submit the **Advanced Placement Expectation Agreement** which includes the initials from the current teacher. (If there are any questions about these skills, the student's current teacher is the best source of information in helping make this important decision.)

The Advanced Placement Expectation Agreement can be found on the Pine Creek web page at www.asd20.org/pchs

*In addition to the above requirements, all prospective AP students and their parents/guardians are advised to attend the AP Information Night.
Contact the school for details.*