

WORDS TO KNOW for High School

Academic Rigor, as Defined by the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) for HOPE eligibility: The GSFC has added academic requirements to the GPA requirements for HOPE Scholarship eligibility. A student graduating in 2017 and beyond needs a minimum of 4 academic courses that are on the Rigor list established by the GSFC. For the most part, the courses placed on the Rigor course list are considered to be advanced in content, so they tend to be math/science courses offered junior or senior year or level two of a world language. They do not have to be Honors-level classes to be considered Rigor.

By North Murray's typical plan of study, students earn 4 or 5 Rigor courses just by meeting graduation requirements. If a student asks about a modification to their plan of study that might impact HOPE Rigor, their counselor will advise them accordingly. The specific courses that meet the academic rigor requirements are listed on the "HOPE Requirements & Rigor" handout, which is available at the Counseling Office in-person or online.

ACT Exam: A 3 ½ hour national college admissions exam that tests your knowledge in English, Math, Reading, and Science. Most colleges require that students take this or the SAT as a college entrance requirement. Most students begin taking college entrance exams in the 11th grade for regular college admissions purposes, or earlier than that for Dual Enrollment purposes. The Counseling Office has dates and registration information.

Advisement Program: A structured, non-graded portion of the day in which students receive school information and discuss grade-level appropriate topics with their advisor. The topics and lessons for advisement are distributed by the school counselors to the advisors. For the last few years, Advisement has been a weekly, 20-30 minute extension of 1st period.

C2G – Commitment to Graduate: NMHS has partnered with Jostens to incorporate the C2G initiative throughout the school system. The initiative encourages students to strive for their high school diploma and to set goals for post-secondary education, in order to prepare for a successful career. A ceremony is held every fall for freshman to sign a banner committing to graduation.

Career Development: A lifelong process that includes self-assessment, career skills assessment, setting career goals, developing a plan to achieve goals, and then implementing the plan. In high school, this largely involves exploring career options based on an individual's skills and interests, and learning what education is required to obtain employment in that career/occupation.

College Knowledge: NMHS encourages all students to research colleges and financial aid by reading everything they can online, in catalogs, and in the Counseling Office. We also encourage juniors and seniors to make college visits, which can be made individually (and be excused as if a field trip) or by participating in school sponsored field trips.

Common Assessments: Tests that are administered to students in academic core courses to ensure students are learning curriculum standards.

Core Courses: Refers to English/Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies coursework. For college admission standards, World Language credits are also considered to be among core curriculum requirements.

Dual Enrollment: High School students can be enrolled in high school and in college simultaneously, earning high school credit toward graduation while earning college credit toward a college degree. See your high school counselor for more information about eligibility requirements.

Elective Courses: Classes that may be selected by the student and are included in the 23 credits required for high school graduation. NMHS offers CTAE/Career, Fine Arts, and Journalism Pathway electives (see entry for “Pathways” below), as well as physical education electives.

Eligibility: Mandatory guidelines for student participation in sports and extracurricular activities. Check with your school’s athletic director and/or the Murray County Schools Student Handbook for details.

End of Course (EOC) assessments: See “Georgia Milestones Assessment” below.

Extracurricular Activities: Activities that happen outside of the school day, including jobs (whether paid or unpaid), school-based activities (such as student government, service clubs, yearbook, etc.), or activities affiliated with a community organization or a faith-based community.

GA Futures: An online, interactive tool that helps students discover options for colleges, technical schools, and financial aid. It is a resource to help students and their families select a college, apply for admission, and make financial plans for higher education. This website is operated by the Georgia Student Finance Commission, the agency that administers the state’s college scholarship/grant programs. See www.gafutures.org

Georgia Milestones Assessment (End of Grade/Course assessments): The Georgia Milestones Assessment System is designed to provide information about how well students are mastering the state-adopted content standards in the core content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Importantly, Georgia Milestones is designed to provide students with critical information about their own achievement and their readiness for their next level of learning – be it the next grade, the next course, or endeavor (college or career). Testing features include:

- open-ended (constructed-response) items in language arts and mathematics (all grades and courses);
- a writing component (in response to passages read by students) at every grade level and course within the language arts assessment; and
- norm-referenced items in all content areas and courses, to complement the criterion-referenced information and to provide a national comparison.
- For more information please go to www.gadoe.org

Georgia Virtual School (GAVS): GAVS is an online learning experience designed to supplement the curriculum at NMHS. Students can register for GAVS courses when the courses are not offered at NMHS. A student can only sign up for one GAVS credit per year, and typically must be related to postsecondary plan or a world language of interest. Acceptance for GAVS is based on prior academic performance and standardized test scores.

Grade Point Average (GPA): GPA can range from 0.0 to 4.0 (4.5 for Honors and 5.0 for DE Courses), and is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points earned by a total number of credits attempted. Grade points are awarded depending on the final letter grade a student earns for a course. Grade points are awarded as follows: A (4), B (3), C (2), D (1), and F (0).

For calculating **Weighted GPAs**, which are used for rankings and Honors/Scholar graduate status determinations, a half-point bonus is awarded for an Honors course, and a one-point bonus is awarded for a Dual Enrollment course (as of 22-23 handbook; subject to change). Such weight bonuses are in recognition of the rigor a student has attempted to challenge themselves. **Unweighted GPAs**, which are typically what colleges and some scholarships refer to to evaluate applications, do not include such bonus points. Furthermore, some colleges will include only core academic courses to calculate a student’s GPA as part of the application process.

The Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) governs the HOPE and Zell Miller Scholarships. They calculate a student’s **HOPE GPA** in academic core courses only to determine eligibility for the HOPE Scholarship. HOPE assigns a .5 weight/bonus to Dual Enrollment courses to calculate eligibility, not to exceed 4.0 points awarded for that individual course.

Graduation Check Sheet: This chart is an outline of the graduation requirements and an individual student's progress towards graduation. Counselors and students use these to record courses taken and grades earned. Student/Parent Portal users can view a personalized graduation plan in Portal's *Academic Plan* or *Documents*.

Honors Courses: Honors courses are designed at an advanced level or advanced pace for students who excel in a particular content area. While these courses will offer challenge and weighted GPA bonus for Murray County Schools' purposes, the additional rigor of these courses do not follow a standardized curriculum and are not recognized for additional weighting regarding the HOPE eligibility.

HOPE Career Grant: Georgia's workforce development experts have identified approximately 15 trades/industries experiencing a shortage of workers, mostly due to drastically more people retiring in them than are training to enter these trades. To help keep up with the shortage of human resources in these trades, the state will cover the tuition of those eligible students who are training in Georgia technical programs for these trades. For more information, visit www.gafutures.org and/or www.tcsg.edu

HOPE Grant: An educational program funded through the Georgia Lottery. HOPE Grant pays a portion of the tuition for qualified students enrolled in eligible diploma or certificate programs at public or private *technical college programs* in Georgia. Eligibility is based on grades in those programs, not on high school performance. Also, see Zell Miller Grant.

HOPE Scholarship: An educational program funded through the Georgia Lottery. HOPE Scholarship pays a portion (~70-80%) of the tuition for eligible students enrolled in *public colleges and universities* in the state of Georgia, or a flat rate of tuition at an eligible private college/university in the state of Georgia. Also, see Zell Miller Scholarship.

Infinite Campus Parent/Student Portal: Online access to students' grades and attendance. To gain access, parents must contact the Counseling Office for an access code. Students' accounts are automatically set up, and they may log in using their student Google accounts.

Lexile and Lexile Score: The Lexile® Framework is an educational tool that links text complexity and readers' ability on a common scale metric known as the Lexile. Lately, Murray County Schools commonly refer to Lexile scores measured on iReady or EOG/EOC tests. These Lexile measures can be used to match readers with texts targeting the student's reading ability; such targeting of reading material is essential for growth in reading ability and helps to monitor student progress towards reading. Lexile Scores also help educators make decisions on appropriate placement of students in literacy intervention classes or to gauge readiness for Honors classes.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS): North Murray's PBIS plan is designed to foster a climate of cooperation, academic excellence, respect, and safety. The plan makes use of effective instructional strategies, consistent correction procedures, logical consequences, and positive reinforcement to teach students the skills and behaviors necessary to succeed now and in the future. The Mountaineer way is to *Navigate your future, Model respect, be Highly responsible, and to Strive for excellence.*

Postsecondary: Referring to college or technical college/institute coursework—higher education after high school.

Prerequisites: Courses, test scores, and/or grade level that must be completed before taking the next sequential course, grade, etc.

SAT Exam: The SAT is a 3 ¼ hour test that measures critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills. Most colleges require that students take this or the ACT as a college entrance requirement. Most students begin taking college entrance exams in the 11th grade for college entrance purposes, or earlier for Dual Enrollment purposes. The Counseling Office has dates and registration information.

Semester: 16-week instructional period (based on 160 day calendar). The school year is comprised of 2 semesters.

STAR Student and STAR Teacher Program: The Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) Foundation recognizes a STAR student from the senior class and a STAR Teacher from each high school every year. The student must be a senior in high school with the highest SAT score earned in a single test administration. The student must also be in the top 10% or among the top 10 students numerically. November of senior year is usually the last acceptable test date for student eligibility. STAR students choose a STAR teacher who has made a positive impact on the student.

Suite360: Murray County Schools' *Social Emotional Learning* (SEL) curriculum. These lessons can be served digitally to individual students or led out by a teacher for a whole class group. These interactive lessons and discussions help students build skills like regulating their emotion, setting/reaching positive goals, showing empathy towards others, building positive relationships, and making responsible choices.

Transcript: The complete record of all high school courses taken and grades earned. Unlike a progress report, the transcript only includes grades of completed courses.

Unit or Credit: Most high school classes are set up on a yearly basis and carry one unit of credit per class if the student has a passing grade (70 or above) at the end of the year for a class that meets one period each day. (Exception would be some PE/Health classes which are scheduled for one semester, in which case a student earns ½ or .5 credits for the class.) Students are scheduled with the possibility of earning a minimum of 7 Carnegie units of credit per school year.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian: The Valedictorian will be the student with the highest cumulative GPA at the end of senior year after senior finals. At that same point, the Salutatorian will be the student with the second highest cumulative GPA. These rankings are determined based on all transcript grades and all available in-progress grades available after senior final exams. These students must have completed their entire senior year at NMHS. Transfer students must have received all credits from a school accredited under an organization such as SACS. In the event that 2 or more students share the same GPA (2013 and beyond), the student with the highest numeric average will be named Valedictorian or Salutatorian. See current Student Handbook.

YouScience: An online, interactive college & career planning tool that all Georgia middle and high schoolers can access through their student information system (Infinite Campus Student Portal, in our case). YouScience is utilized by school counselors for state-mandated college/career development activities. Students are also highly encouraged to use it for further independent research about higher education and career interests. YouScience's flagship feature is an aptitude assessment that feels like brain games. In completing these approachable (and even fun!) brain games, students learn their unique combination of natural skills along with careers matching that skillset. Additional activities include an interest assessment to refine the aptitude assessment's career matches, comparison tools for those career matches, and identifying which schools provide training for career matches.

Zell Miller Grant: An educational program funded through the Georgia Lottery. Zell Miller Grant pays full tuition for qualified students enrolled in eligible diploma or certificate programs at public or private *technical college programs* in Georgia. Eligibility is based on grades in those programs, not on high school performance. Compared to the HOPE Grant, a technical program student must maintain a higher GPA to earn the Zell Miller Grant.

Zell Miller Scholarship: Students must meet all requirements for the HOPE Scholarship, **PLUS**. . . Have a 3.7 or greater GPA in core subjects as calculated by GSFC **AND** receive a score of at least 1200 combined score on a single administration of the SAT or an ACT composite score of 26. **ALSO**, students graduating in 2017 and beyond must also take 4 courses which meet the GSFC Academic Rigor requirements (see Academic Rigor entry, or the HOPE Requirements & Rigor handout available from the Counseling Office).