

WISE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CURRICULUM FOR THE NEW HIGH SCHOOLS

Introduction:

One of the primary missions of the Wise County Public Schools is to provide our students with a challenging and rigorous curriculum that will afford them the best possible educational opportunities. We believe the consolidation of the high schools will enable us to provide greater equity to all students within our division. With the consolidation of the schools, the same curriculum will be offered at all three new schools. By having more students, classes that could not be offered at some of the existing schools will now become a reality. Although the majority of our curriculum is dictated by state requirements for the Standard and Advanced Studies Diplomas, we will now have the flexibility to be more creative in our schedules do to the simple fact of increased numbers.

Dual Enrollment Classes:

Another major initiative of the division is to provide a means for students to earn dual enrollment credit at the new schools and not have to leave campus. Students in some of the existing high schools are unable to take dual enrollment classes at the local colleges because of the distance from the high school to the college. In order to provide equal access to all dual enrollment classes, we must have certified teachers in the new schools to teach dual enrollment classes. To accomplish this, teachers will receive help in obtaining this certification as a portion or all of the college tuition needed for these courses will be paid for. By using the dual enrollment program, our high school students will have the opportunity to complete their freshman year of college courses before graduating from high school. Upgrading our in-house dual enrollment program will allow us to accomplish this.

Foreign Language:

A second advantage of the new schools will be that all students will have access to foreign language teachers. At this time one of our high schools does not have a foreign language teacher and must rely on the fiber optic network to bring classes to their students. With the number of students in the new schools, justification can be made in offering level IV courses in Spanish and French.

English:

Along with dual enrollment English, the plan is to offer an Advanced or Honors English class for ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students.

Math:

A concern voiced by many parents is that many of our students finish the required high school math courses by the end of their sophomore year and have no math for two years, thus creating problems for these students their freshman year of college. A point of emphasis will be to bridge this gap. All new schools would teach Pre-Calculus I & II, Calculus I & II. Advanced or Honors classes in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II will be offered at the new schools.

Social Studies:

AP History has been a vital part of the social studies curriculum for several years. This will continue in the new schools along with dual enrollment US History and Western Civilization. This would fulfill the college requirement for freshman history.

Science:

With new schools come modern up-to-date science classrooms and laboratories. Our science teachers have taught for many years, and done an excellent job, in classrooms that were inadequate. Students have not been able to excel in the lab sciences because of these conditions. These new schools will make it possible for our teachers to introduce our students to a rigorous science curriculum that will prepare our students for college science programs. More investigative labs, state of the art technology for science, and equipment will facilitate this goal. Classes to be added will be AP Chemistry, Advanced or Honors Biology, and Physics.

Fine Arts:

With the increased numbers due to consolidation, an effort will be made to expand the fine arts programs of music, art, theater (drama), and forensics. The band programs at several of our high schools have declined over the past several years as numbers decreased to all time lows. Music is a very vital part of any school curriculum. The band programs will again be strong in each new school. With these new schools chorus, theater, and forensics should be outstanding and very competitive at all levels of state competition. Wise County's art curriculum has continued to be very strong and with the new schools and modern art classrooms will continue to be one of our best elective programs.

Career and Technical:

Wise County's Career and Technical Program is second to none in the state. Year in and year out our students excel in the various courses that are offered. Enrollment has increased. The goal is to try and reach those students who want to have a career in the technical field at an earlier age. Many of our career and technical classes are now dual enrollment with Mountain Empire Community College. At the high schools a wide variety of business and consumer science classes are taught. With the new schools more business labs will allow more of our students to engage in these classes.

Electives:

For a school system our size, Wise County offers a wide variety of electives in all departments. One elective that will be made available to all students will be the move of the ROTC program to a central location either at the Career and Technical Center or on the campus of the Central Office complex.

Conclusion:

The primary focus for the curriculum of the three new schools is to expand on what is now offered, to find new and innovative ways to teach the curriculum so that all levels of learner can be challenged and be successful. Also, to provide consistency at each new school so that no student feels left out or not given equal opportunities.