

Advanced Academics in Middle School & Junior High

Equity and Access to Pre-AP/Advanced Courses

Dickinson ISD has a genuine commitment to preparing ALL students for challenging coursework in the middle and junior high schools that will prepare students for advanced courses in high school and for post-high school success in college, in the workplace, and/or in the military. Opportunities for enrollment in Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) or advanced courses are open and made available to ALL middle school and junior high school students. Because Pre-AP/Advanced courses are designed as college preparation, students must have demonstrated their academic preparedness and their willingness to invest the time and effort required for success in rigorous courses. College Board research clearly shows that students who participate in challenging coursework, including Pre-AP or advanced courses, have considerably higher success in college.

Benefits of Pre-AP/Advanced Courses

A Different Kind of Class:

- Through increased rigor, Pre-AP/Advanced courses help students acquire the skills and academic habits needed for success in high school and beyond. Students will improve critical reading, writing, and problem-solving skills as a result of successful completion of these courses. In addition, students' time management, note-taking, and study skills will be greatly enhanced.
- A Pre-AP/Advanced classroom is different from an on-level class/course. Instruction in these classrooms focuses on intense discussions, rigorous real-world applications, analytical thinking, critical reading, and persuasive/expository writing. Students are held to a high standard of academic engagement.
- Pre-AP/Advanced courses provide preparation for success in high school AP courses and the corresponding College Board AP Exams through which students may earn college credits.

Pre-AP/Advanced Course Admission Criteria (5-8)

In an effort to place students in appropriate level classes, recommended admission criteria have been established for Pre-AP and Advanced courses. The academic records for all students who register for a Pre-AP or Advanced course will be evaluated against the following criteria:

Personal Characteristics. Students who are successful in Pre-AP or Advanced courses demonstrate a set of skills in the classroom that will support their success in advanced-level courses. These characteristics include:

- Reading at or above grade level
- Strong foundation in algebra skills
- Proficient oral and written communication skills
- Self-discipline to plan, organize, and carry out tasks to completion
- Strong study skills and self-motivation to learn

Previous Academic Performance. Students shall have yearly average of 90 (A) or higher in an on-level class/course or 80 (B) or higher in a Pre-AP or Advanced course immediately preceding the next-level Pre-AP/Advanced course.

STAAR Assessment. It is highly recommended that students achieve a “Masters Grade Level” STAAR score for entry into each Pre-AP course. Demonstrated academic achievement on the state assessment indicates that the student has the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the rigorous Pre-AP or Advanced course. At minimum, however, students must achieve a “Meets Grade Level” score on the exam required for entry into a Pre-AP or advanced course.

Entry Criteria for Pre-AP courses (grades 5-8):

Current Grade	2017-18 Course	Course Requirements
4 th Grade	5 th Accelerated Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4th Grade Math Course Average (≥80%/90%) 4th Grade STAAR Math (≥"MGL")
5 th Grade	6 th Pre-AP Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5th Grade Math Course Average (≥80%/90%) 5th Grade STAAR Math (≥"MGL")
	6 th Pre-AP Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5th Grade SST Course Average (≥80%/90%) 5th Grade STAAR Reading (≥"MGL")
	6 th Pre-AP ELAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5th Grade ELAR Course Average (≥80%/90%) 5th Grade STAAR Reading (≥"MGL")
	6 th Pre-AP Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5th Grade Science Course Average (≥80%/90%) 5th Grade STAAR Science (≥"MGL")
6 th Grade	7 th Pre-AP Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6th Grade Math Course Average (≥80%/90%) 6th Grade STAAR Math (≥"MGL")
	7 th Pre-AP English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6th Grade ELAR Course Average (≥80%/90%) 6th Grade STAAR Reading (≥"MGL")
	7 th Pre-AP Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6th Grade SST Course Average (≥80%/90%) 6th Grade STAAR Reading (≥"MGL")
	7 th Pre-AP Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6th Grade Science Course Average (≥80%/90%) 5th Grade STAAR Science (≥"MGL")
7 th Grade	8 th Algebra I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7th Grade Math Course Average (≥80%/90%) 7th Grade STAAR Math (≥"MGL")
	8 th Pre-AP Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7th Grade SST Course Average (≥80%/90%) 7th Grade STAAR Reading (≥"MGL")
	8 th Pre-AP Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7th Grade Science Course Average (≥80%/90%) 5th Grade STAAR Science (≥"MGL")
	8 th Pre-AP ELAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7th Grade ELAR Course Average (≥80%/90%) 7th Grade STAAR Reading (≥"MGL")

Appeal of Criteria. Students and parents may appeal to the campus review committee for consideration to enroll into a Pre-AP or Advanced course if a student does not meet initial admission criteria. The committee may consist of the course teacher, the department chairperson, the AVID teacher, the student's counselor, a campus administrator, the student's parents and/or primary caretaker, and the student. Approval from the review committee and/or campus administrator is required for a student to enroll into a Pre-AP or Advanced course if eligibility requirements were not initially met. Appeal forms will be available in the counselor's office and will be due by the date indicated on the appeal form.

(See Appendix G: Appeal For Pre-AP/AP/Honors Course Entry)

Pre-AP Program Requirements

Parent Meeting. All parents of students who are enrolled in a Pre-AP or Advanced course are required to attend one of the parent meetings held in May.

Summer Assignments. A list of recommended summer assignments (if required) will be provided for students and posted on the campus and district website.

Commitment Statement. A contract signed by both student and parent will be due before the first week of school or upon enrollment of new students. *(See Appendix H: Pre-AP/AP/Advanced Course Contract)*

Exit from a Pre-AP or Advanced Course

College and university admissions officers have repeatedly indicated that high school students who successfully complete Pre-AP or Advanced courses are given greater consideration when all other college admissions indicators are equal. A transcript that indicates that a student has earned a "C" in a Pre-AP course is given higher consideration than one who earns an "A" in an on-level class/course. Because middle and junior high school Pre-AP and Advanced courses are designed to prepare students for high school and, ultimately, college success, we strongly advise Pre-AP/Advanced students to stay in these courses working through difficulties by attending tutorials, doing extra reading/work at home, joining a student study group, and taking copious notes in class.

If a student indicates that he/she wants out of the class and scheduled into the corresponding on-level course, the following timeline and procedure(s) must be followed:

Exit Point #1: Prior to Start of School

Students are registered for courses during the spring of the previous school year. It is important that students carefully select their coursework making wise decisions based on their time commitments, their interests, and their demonstrated academic achievement. Parents are given a course selection sheet in early spring in order to provide parents with an opportunity for parental input in the course selections. Parents may make changes and return the course verification sheet to the counselor by date indicated at the campus level. The first exit point after initial registration will be made available to all students in May. All students will review their course selections during the last two weeks of the school year prior. Students may request a schedule change during this

time or during the first week of school. A parent/primary caregiver signature is required for the schedule change.

Exit Point #2: First Nine Weeks.

Students who are failing the Pre-AP/Advanced course at the end of the first grading period are in danger of failing for the semester. Serious consideration must be given to the student's willingness to complete the rigorous coursework and to his/her time commitments in order for him/her to be success and pass the first semester. Students who are failing a Pre-AP/Advanced course at the end of the first 9 weeks will be moved to the respective on-level class/course. Students with a 65-69 may remain in the course as long as the student, parent, and teacher agree the student has the ability to pass for the semester. The student's parent or primary caregiver will be notified by the Pre-AP/Advanced teacher about the failing grade and course or action at the end of the first nine weeks. *(See Appendix I: Probationary Conference Documentation)*

Exit Point #3: End of the First Semester.

Any student who fails a Pre-AP or Advanced course with a grade below 70 for the first semester will be removed from the course at the end of the first semester. The student's parent or primary caregiver will be notified by the Pre-AP/Advanced course teacher of the failing grade which will result in a schedule change. The Parent or primary caregiver may also request to remove the student from the course for the second semester. Written notification must be given to the school counselor before the first business day in December.

To request an exit from a Pre-AP/Advanced course at one of the three (3) Exit Points of a semester, students and parents/guardian's must complete a Class Exit Request Form and submit it to the campus counselor prior to the Exit Point deadlines. *(See Appendix J: Pre-AP/AP/Advanced Course Exit Request)*