

High School Challenge Pathways Info Session

Q&A

We answered several questions during the Q&A portion of our information session, but our students are still wondering more. Below you will find a chart of questions we did not address; please take a look and add your thoughts and advice for our DHMS students.

What is the difference between AP college credit and Dual Enrollment college credit?

Taking an AP course or a DE course will give you the opportunity to earn college credit - the difference is how the credit is earned. In taking a DE course, you are earning the college credit and high school credit simultaneously; rewarded credit is dependent upon successful completion of the course. Taking an AP course counts for high school credit, and possible college credit is earned through the result of an AP exam (scores 1-5). Many universities will advertise what the required AP score is to be considered exempt from a certain course.

- K. Partington

What type of Dual Enrollment (DE) courses are offered?

- Here is the list of DE courses offered in APS for this school year to get an idea of the variety.

<https://www.apsva.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/DECourses720202021.pdf>

-EWagner

Would you recommend taking an AP course your freshman year?

Usually freshmen are not allowed to take an AP course; however, there are some exceptions. If you are able to take an AP course your freshman year and have met the prerequisites for the AP course, it is recommended to only take one.

- K. Partington

Can the IB seniors speak to their experience with the CAS?

CAS experiences are activities that demonstrate creativity, activity, and service and they have to explicitly address the 7 learner outcomes in reflections for those activities. One of those activities must be a CAS project where you have to initiate the activity and demonstrate leadership, the other requirement I think is to have the activity run for at least a month. You should have at least 8 different activities throughout your junior year, the summer between junior and senior year, and senior year. Almost everything can count as CAS and there are opportunities provided to you by the CAS coordinator at Washington-Liberty. There are many opportunities to create your own club and do your own activity as long as you take them. Personally, I do Track and Field, I tutor on Mondays, and am a member of the Key Club at Washington-Liberty. CAS shouldn't be a cause for a lot of stress because it's

something that happens after school and with good time management skills, doing all the work is manageable.

-Bill S.

My advice for finding CAS experiences is to think about how you can extend activities you are currently doing and talk to other students to get ideas. For example, I play rec soccer but I decided to take it further and become an assistant coach for a service focused CAS experience. CAS seems daunting at first, but as long as you keep on top of writing the required reflections it isn't too bad. Personally, I have enjoyed getting to try new things and have had fun creating the reflections using videos, diary entries, and photos.

- Emma B.

For TJHSST, what does the problem solving essay test look like, and how should one best prepare for it?

The problem solving portion of the SIS asks for the applicant's solution to a complex math or logic problem. The applicant is then asked to thoroughly explain their thought process with words in a detailed paragraph after solving. Keep in mind, the admissions board is not necessarily looking for correct answers. This part of the test is meant for TJ to see the applicant's thought process and how well they can communicate it. The best way to prepare is to try solving complex word problems (ACT Aspire provides some of these) and writing a structured paragraph as a solution.

-Avery P.

The essay is not like most other essays you've probably taken, as the focus isn't on getting the right or wrong answer. When I took the test the essay question could've been easily solved using trigonometry (with a calculator), but you're not allowed to use a calculator, so I had to use a less accurate method. I'm pretty sure that was done intentionally to see how you would get around that barrier of not being able to use traditional methods of solving a complex problem and to see how you think. Make sure to write out your thought process so the people grading it can see how you would go about solving a near-impossible problem. I suggest going onto [this webpage](#) for more in-depth information and [this google doc](#) for 3 practice essay problems.

-Kevin P.

Does Arlington Tech offer classes that are cyber-related?

Yes it does. The computer science pathway has at least 4 classes in it, and I know that there is an elective called cyber security that people really enjoy.

--Jack Kennedy

For the HB students, how easy is it to integrate into the school model when entering as a freshman vs. someone who has been there through middle school?

For the AP students, what do you believe are the benefits of AP courses?

The biggest advantage, obviously, is college credits. Getting them early on and graduating from high school with them can set you apart from the rest of your class. The experience as well is different from regular courses and even Intensified courses. This said, AP courses all vary class to class and depend on your teachers and school. They can also be incredibly stressful and time-consuming, and if you decide to take the TJHSST path(or any APS school for that matter), you may end up taking multiple AP courses as early as your sophomore year. I believe the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

-Avery P.

Aside from college credit, I think AP classes often go a lot deeper in depth than other courses, in a way that helps you really learn the material. While they are harder they are also very beneficial.

--Jack Kennedy

For the IB arts classes, would band count for this requirement?

I don't believe that this would count for the IB group 6 which is the arts group because band isn't offered as an IB course. You can take it as an elective if you have the space within your schedule, but it wouldn't count for the IB diploma.

-Bill S.

For Arlington Tech, what is the Capstone internship and can you describe a student experience?

As quoted from the Arlington Tech website, "Students complete a year-long work-based learning experience and participate in monthly Capstone seminar meetings. Students share their experiences through a mid-year and end-of-year presentation" I cannot give a student experience because the capstone program is for seniors and I am a sophomore.

--Jack Kennedy

Any final words of wisdom for our DHMS students as they pursue the various challenge pathways?

Don't overthink it. It's always good to plan and be extra-organized with your classwork, but stressing yourself out to the point of educational breakdowns is more detrimental than productive. Keep in mind the big picture. What do you want to get out of this experience? Best of luck to DHMS students :)

-Avery P.

Challenge pathways can be very beneficial! Don't be afraid of asking teachers for help, they became teachers for a reason, they enjoy helping students learn, and they are well versed in the subject matter.

--Jack Kennedy