



California Academy of Learning Charter School
2025–2026 Program of Studies

Contact Information

750 Orchard Street
California, PA 15419
724-719-9040

Mrs. Heather Nicholson <i>Chief Executive Officer</i> nicholsonh@calcharteracademy.org	California Academy of Learning Charter School's Board of Trustees:
Mr. Seth Springer <i>School Principal</i> springers@calcharteracademy.org	Susan Hurley Ellen Hasbrouck Linda Jukes Lynne Langley
Mrs. Gia Edwards <i>School Counselor</i> edwardsg@calcharteracademy.org	Cristal Rettger Herbert "Mitch" Mitchell III Gary Gregg Susan Bitonti

EEO and Title IX Statement

California Academy of Learning Charter School does not discriminate in its educational programs, activities or employment practices based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, genetic information, or any other legally protected category. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with State Law including the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and with Federal law, including Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

For more information, please contact:

EEO and Title IX Compliance Officer
750 Orchard Street
California, PA 15419
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Introduction and Welcome Message

On behalf of the administration and staff of California Academy of Learning Charter School, we are excited to share the 2025-2026 Program of Studies! Our school is dedicated to preparing every student for success in a changing world by offering dynamic, rigorous, and individualized educational experiences tailored to student interests and future goals.

The California Academy of Learning Charter School's Program of Studies provides a comprehensive listing of high school courses and an overview of policies and procedures related to graduation requirements. This document assists students entering grades 9 through 12 in planning their high school education. It is designed to guide you through important information on curricular offerings, course selection, and the scheduling process.

Graduation requirements are clearly defined on page 5. We ask every family to review the state exam expectations, as these exams are a component of California Academy of Learning Charter School's high school graduation requirements, and federal regulations mandate participation in state assessments.

Families should carefully review course descriptions and requirements. Our staff collaborates with each student and family throughout the scheduling process. When making scheduling decisions, it is crucial to consider the requirements for college admission and career placement. Teachers and our school counselor work together to make course approvals before scheduling. Students also select elective courses based on their interests and goals, and are encouraged to discuss any concerns with teachers, our school counselor, and families.

California Academy of Learning Charter School fosters student growth and resiliency by providing support for all students. Academic and personal resilience is built on various social, environmental, and cultural factors that shape the student experience. While we cannot control all challenges students face, we can offer opportunities to develop skills needed to thrive.

Our team is committed to supporting your educational journey and ensuring your success in a changing world. We look forward to collaborating with each student and family through the scheduling process. Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year, and we wish you all the best in your educational endeavors.

California Academy of Learning Charter School reserves the right to make adjustments to the Program of Studies, including course offerings, graduation requirements, and scheduling, based on enrollment trends, staffing availability, state or federal mandates, evolving student needs, or other unforeseen circumstances upon approval of CAL Charter's administration.

2025 – 2026 Program of Studies, Grades 9 – 12

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High School Graduation Requirements

To earn a diploma from California Academy of Learning Charter School, students must complete the minimum number of required credits during their high school years (see chart below for details).

California Academy of Learning Charter School requires a minimum of 24 total credits for graduation.

Course	Credits Required
English / Language Arts	4.0
Social Studies	3.0
Mathematics	4.0
Science (includes Biology)	3.0
Health and Physical Education	2.0
Financial Literacy	1.0
Arts and Humanities	2.0
Electives	5.0
Total	24

Additional Scheduling Requirements

1. Students must schedule a minimum of 8.0 credits each year. Students who deviate from this requirement must have the approval of the Building Principal.
2. California Academy of Learning operates on a block scheduling system, with students taking four (4) classes per semester. This structure allows for longer instructional periods each day to deepen learning. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the many and varied elective courses offered by the school
3. Students are encouraged to investigate college admissions requirements. Many colleges recommend 4 years of English, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science. Many colleges recommend 2-3 consecutive years of study of a World Language in high school.
4. Students must meet the Keystone Exam requirements.

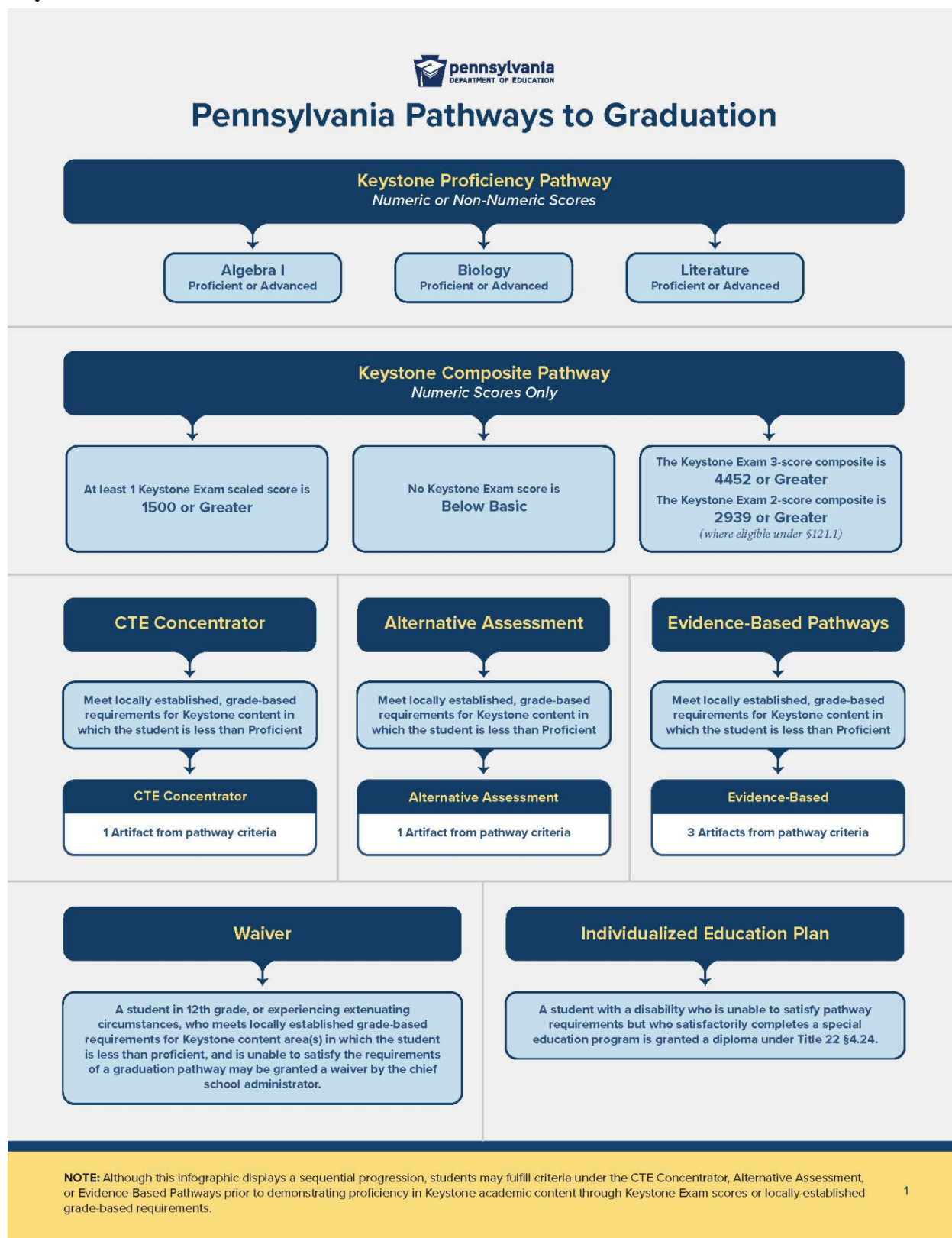
Keystone Exam Requirements and Information

[Link for More Information - Keystone Exam Requirements and Information](#)

Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in three subjects: Algebra I, Literature, and Biology. Keystone Exams are one component of Pennsylvania's system of high school graduation requirements and help school districts guide students toward meeting state standards. Federal regulations require schools to participate in state assessments. Keystone Exams are typically taken during the spring of the year in which a student is enrolled in the given course. Students must demonstrate proficiency on each of the three Keystone Exams. If a student does not receive a score of "Advanced" or "Proficient", the student will be scheduled to retest during the next designated testing window. If a Proficient or Advanced score is still not obtained during a student's second attempt, additional pathways will be explored at that time. It is our goal that all California Academy of Learning Charter School's students demonstrate a Proficient or higher score on each Keystone Exam.

Through Act 158 of 2018 and Act 6 of 2017, students graduating from a Pennsylvania public high school will have greater flexibility in reaching proficiency through five pathway options. These pathways provide greater flexibility to students; however, they are not considered until a student has made two attempts to reach Proficiency on each of the Keystone exams. These five pathways are defined in detail using the link in the section title (above), and outlined below.

Keystone Information Picture A -



Keystone Information Picture B -



Pathway Criteria

CTE Concentrator	Alternative Assessment	Evidence-Based
1 Artifact	1 Artifact	3 Artifacts consistent w/student goals ONE or more from Section One No more than TWO from Section Two
Industry-based competency certification Likelihood of industry-based competency assessment success Readiness for continued engagement in CTE Concentrator program of study	Attainment of one alternative assessment score or better: ACT (21), ASVAB AFQT (31), PSAT/NMSQT (970), or SAT (1010) Attainment of Gold Level or better on ACT WorkKeys Attainment of 3 or better on AP Exam(s) related to each Keystone content area in which less than Proficient Attainment of 4 or better on IB Exam(s) related to each Keystone content area in which less than Proficient Successful completion of concurrent enrollment course(s) related to each Keystone content area in which less than Proficient Successful completion of a pre-apprenticeship program Acceptance into accredited, non-profit Institution of Higher Education (IHE) 4yr program for college-level coursework	Section 1 Attainment of 630 or better on any SAT Subject Test Attainment of Silver Level or better on ACT WorkKeys Attainment of 3 or better on any AP Exam Attainment of 3 or better on any IB Exam Successful completion of any concurrent enrollment or postsecondary course Industry-recognized credentialization Acceptance into accredited, non-profit Institution of Higher Education (IHE) for college-level coursework in an other-than-4yr program Section 2 Attainment of Proficient or Advanced on any Keystone Exam Successful completion of a service-learning project Letter guaranteeing full-time employment or military enlistment Completion of an internship, externship, or cooperative education program Compliance with NCAA Division II academic requirements

Understanding Our Gradeless Competency-Based Education System

At our school, we believe that learning is about growth, not just grades. That's why we use a Competency-Based Education (CBE) model instead of traditional letter grades. In this approach, the focus is on what students know and can do—and how we can support each learner on their journey to success.

What is Competency-Based Education?

Competency-Based Education is a system that:

- Focuses on mastering skills and concepts (called competencies),
- Allows students to learn at their own pace,
- Provides meaningful feedback for improvement,
- Celebrates progress over time.

Instead of A–F letter grades, we use four performance levels to describe where students are in their learning:

Mastery	
What it means:	The student demonstrates a deep understanding of the skill or concept and can apply it independently and accurately.
Student view:	“I’ve got it! I can explain it, use it, and even teach it to someone else.”
What families might see:	Student consistently exceeds expectations and demonstrates strong, independent performance.

Meeting	
What it means:	The student meets the expectations for the skill or concept. They understand it and can apply it with minimal support.
Student view:	“I understand it and can do it on my own.”
What families might see:	Student is on track and performing well at grade-level expectations.

Developing	
What it means:	The student is beginning to understand the skill or concept but still needs some support or practice to reach independence.
Student view:	“I’m getting there. I need a bit more time and help.”
What families might see:	Student shows growth and progress but needs continued support.

Emerging	
What it means:	The student is just starting to learn the skill or concept and needs significant support.
Student view:	“This is new for me. I’m starting to learn it.”
What families might see:	Student is building foundational understanding and working closely with teachers to improve.

Why This Matters

We believe that every student learns in their own way and at their own pace. Our goal is not just to pass a test, but to truly understand and apply what is learned. This system helps:

- Students take ownership of their learning
- Teachers personalize instruction
- Families understand progress with more clarity and detail

Together, we support a learning environment where growth is the goal—and every student is seen, supported, and celebrated.

Post Secondary Testing Information

ACT

The American College Testing (ACT) is an entrance exam used by colleges/universities for the purpose of admission decisions. It is administered in September, October, December, February, April, and June of each year. High school students typically take the ACT during their junior year and can take it as late as the fall of senior year. Students who choose to take the ACT Assessment must register to do so and assume the related costs. Registration materials are available at www.act.org.

PreACT

The PreACT is a test consisting of multiple-choice sections in English, Math, Reading, and Science. The PreACT provides valuable practice, including questions and scores similar to those on the ACT test. It also provides career suggestions based upon answers to the PreACT Interest Inventory. After testing, students will receive an estimated ACT score based on their performance, as well as data that they can use to help them understand their performance and prepare for the official exam. This exam is offered annually to 10th grade students. Information for this exam can be accessed through the school counseling office.

PSAT and the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT)

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) is an assessment that is aligned to the SAT. It measures reading, writing and language, and mathematical abilities important for academic success in college. The test is useful as a practice test for the SAT. The PSAT is offered in October for juniors and serves as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test in a nationwide competition for recognition, awards, and scholarships.

Tenth grade students may elect to take the PSAT for practice; however, their scores are not applicable to the NMSQT. Grade 10 students interested in taking the exam will assume all related costs. Registration information and details for grade 10 students will be available in the School Counseling Office.

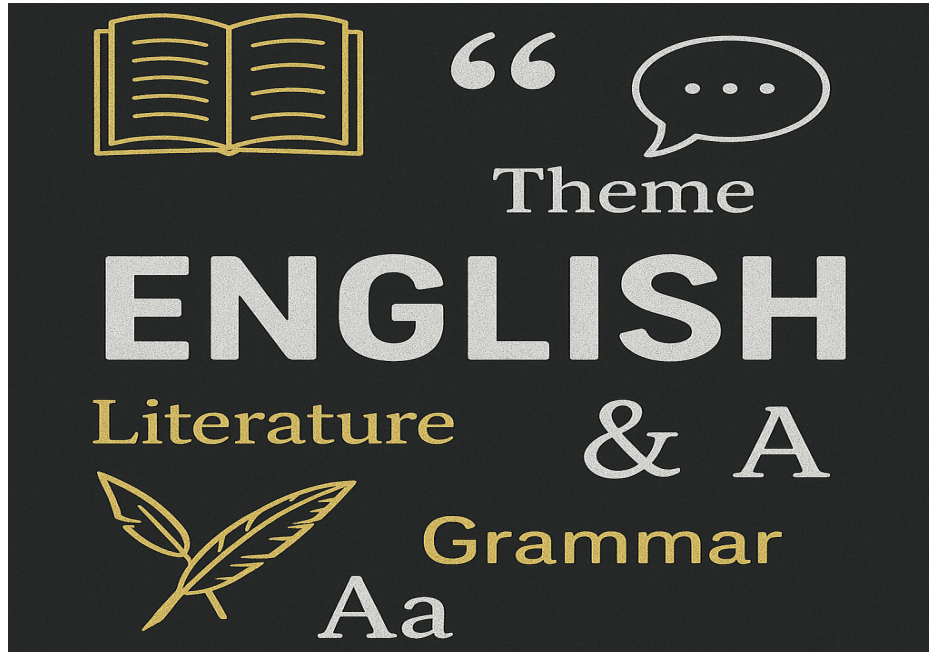
SAT

The SAT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities. It is typically taken by juniors in the spring and seniors in the fall. It is offered in October, November, December, March, May, and June. Students who choose to take the exam must register to do so and assume the related costs. Registration materials are available at www.collegeboard.com.

ASVAB

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a multiple-aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military. It is administered annually to more than one million military applicants, high school, and post-secondary students. Visit the official ASVAB website to learn more: www.officialasvab.com.

English Language Arts



Course Title: English 1	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9	
Prerequisites: Completion of English Language Arts 8	
In this course, students develop essential reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking skills. Vocabulary growth is supported through words encountered in a variety of reading assignments. Grammar, usage, and mechanics are integrated into both reading and writing activities. Students read and analyze fiction, non-fiction, poetry, novels, and drama. They follow the writing process to complete core writing assignments and timed writing prompts. The course units focus on narrative, persuasive, and informational writing styles. Additionally, students apply their knowledge of library resources and technology through hands-on workshops.	

Course Title: English 2	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 10	
Prerequisites: Completion of English Language Arts 9	
In this course, students continue to develop their reading, writing, listening, speaking, and critical thinking skills. Grammar, usage, and mechanics are integrated within reading and composition activities. Students read and analyze fiction, non-fiction, poetry, novels, and drama. They follow the writing process while composing core writing assignments and timed writing prompts. This course covers the same rigorous academic content as the Academic English 2 curriculum, with additional support provided to help students succeed.	

Course Title: English 3	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 11	
Prerequisites: Completion of English Language Arts 10	
English 3 centers on American Literature, encouraging students to explore its connections to their own experiences and to American culture as a whole. Students enhance their reading comprehension through close reading, comparison, and reflection. A key focus of the course is strengthening fundamental writing skills, including grammar, organization, and content development. Through literary analysis, writing practice, grammar instruction, and vocabulary growth, students will become proficient readers and writers, well prepared for a variety of paths after graduation.	

Course Title: English 4	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 12	
Prerequisites: Completion of English Language Arts 11	
English 4 focuses on literature that highlights diverse perspectives and cultures throughout the world. Students will study literature in a way that connects them historically and personally in order to enhance them academically and eventually, professionally. Students will improve their research and writing skills through a variety of different writing modes that reinforce grammar, sentence structure, and style.	

Course Title: Creative Writing	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9, 10, 11, and 12	
Prerequisites: None	
Creative Writing is a course designed to inspire and develop students' original voices through writing fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and dramatic scripts. Students will explore a variety of literary forms and styles while honing their skills in description, dialogue, character development, and narrative structure. Through writing workshops, peer feedback, and reading contemporary and classic works, students will gain a deeper understanding of the creative process and the elements of effective storytelling. Emphasis is placed on revision, self-expression, and cultivating a personal writing style.	

Course Title: Speech and Debate 1	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9, 10, 11, and 12	
Prerequisites: None	
This course develops students' communication, critical thinking, and argumentation skills through the art of public speaking and formal debate. Students will learn how to research current issues, construct persuasive arguments, and present ideas with confidence and clarity. Emphasis is placed on speech composition, delivery techniques, active listening, and respectful discourse. Students will participate in a variety of speaking formats, including persuasive and informative speeches, impromptu speaking, and structured debates such as Lincoln-Douglas and Public Forum. The course fosters civic engagement, collaboration, and self-confidence, preparing students for academic, professional, and real-world communication.	

Course Title: Digital Media	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9, 10, 11, and 12	
Prerequisites: None	
Digital Media is a dynamic, project-based course that introduces students to the principles and tools of digital communication in today's media-driven world. Students will explore topics such as graphic design, photography, audio editing, and digital storytelling. Throughout the course, students will learn to analyze and create media messages, understand visual and audio composition, and produce content for various digital platforms. This course also encourages critical thinking about the impact of media in society and prepares students for further study or careers in digital arts, marketing, broadcasting, or communications. Key Topics May Include: ● Graphic design fundamentals (using tools like Canva, Adobe Photoshop, or Illustrator) ● Photography and image editing ● Video production and editing (using tools like iMovie, Adobe Premiere, or WeVideo) ● Audio recording and podcast creation ● Storyboarding and scripting ● Media ethics and digital citizenship Assessments: Projects, portfolios, presentations, peer reviews, and reflective writing.	

Health & Physical Education

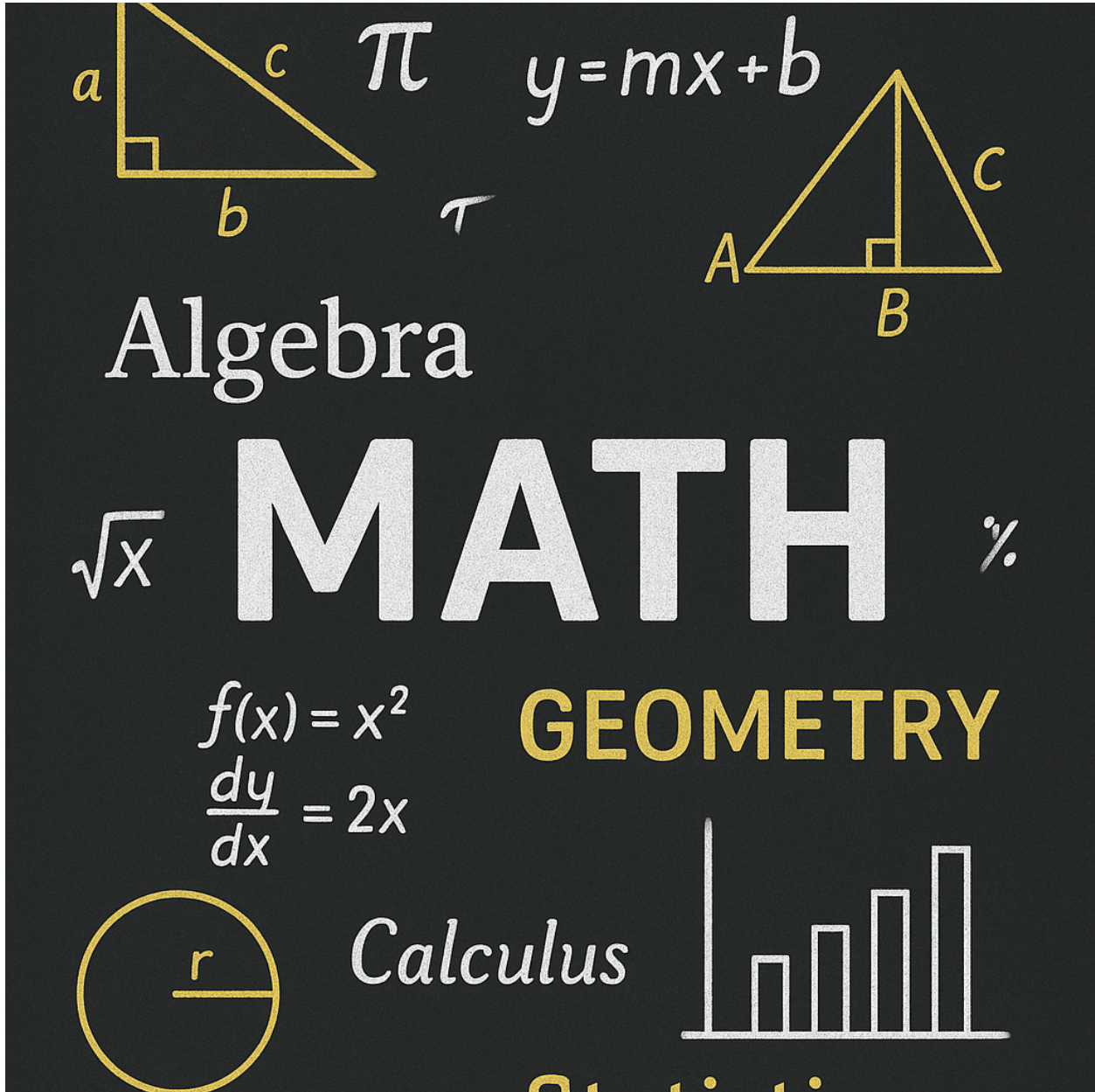


HEALTH & PE



Course Title: Health & Physical Education	Credit Value: 0.5
Open to Grade(s): 9, 10, 11, and 12	
Prerequisites: None	
The goal of Physical Education is to facilitate students in improving their quality of life through promotion of life-long, health-enhancing physical activity. Physical activity is not only a leisure time luxury – it is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle for all individuals. At California Academy of Learning Charter School, students will learn why regular planned physical activity is important, how to develop a personal plan for being physically active, and concepts necessary for successful participation in regular physical activity. The course will emphasize each student working throughout the course to reach their personal fitness and activity goals while integrating health information relating to; nutrition, mental health, analyzing influences, goal setting, interpersonal communication.	

Mathematics



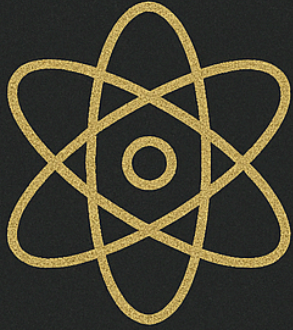
Course Title: Pre-Algebra	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9	
Prerequisites:	
This course provides a foundational understanding of essential algebraic concepts and skills aligned with Pennsylvania state standards. Students will explore topics such as integers, rational numbers, expressions, equations, inequalities, ratios, proportions, and basic functions. Emphasis is placed on developing problem-solving strategies, critical thinking, and mathematical reasoning. Through hands-on activities and real-world applications, students build the skills necessary to succeed in Algebra 1 and higher-level math courses. This course also integrates the use of technology and collaborative learning to support diverse learning styles.	

Course Title: Algebra 1	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9	
Prerequisites: This course is reserved for students who completed Math 8	
This course represents the first year of the Algebra 1 sequence and follows the Algebra 1 curriculum aligned with Pennsylvania Core Standards. Instruction combines research-based methods, including both inquiry-based learning and direct teaching, to build a strong foundation in Algebra 1 concepts. Designed for students who need additional support, this course is offered in a smaller class setting to allow for more personalized instruction and targeted remediation. Extra focus is placed on helping students grasp more abstract concepts. The curriculum is organized around families of functions, emphasizing linear, exponential, polynomial, quadratic, radical, and rational functions. Students will learn to represent these functions in multiple ways and apply them to model and solve real-world problems.	

Course Title: Geometry	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9,10, and 11	
Prerequisites: Completion of Algebra 1	
This course is the second year in the Algebra 1/Geometry/Algebra 2 sequence and follows the Geometry curriculum aligned with Pennsylvania Core Standards. Instruction combines research-based methods, including inquiry-based learning and direct instruction, to build a strong understanding of geometric and trigonometric concepts. Offered in a smaller class setting, the course provides individualized instruction and targeted remediation to support students who need additional assistance, particularly with more abstract topics. The Geometry content covers parallel and perpendicular lines, triangles, quadrilaterals, similarity, polygons, transformations, area, surface area, and volume. The Trigonometry strand includes square roots, special right triangle relationships, trigonometric ratios, and circles.	

Course Title: Algebra 2	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 10, 11, and 12	
Prerequisites: Completion of Geometry	
This course is the third in the Algebra 1/Geometry/Algebra 2 sequence and follows the Algebra 2 curriculum aligned with Pennsylvania Core Standards. Instruction incorporates research-based strategies, including both inquiry-based learning and direct instruction, to establish a strong foundation in Algebra 2 concepts. The course is offered in a smaller class setting to provide individualized instruction and targeted remediation, designed to support students needing additional assistance. The Algebra 2 curriculum focuses on families of functions, with emphasis on expressions, equations and inequalities, graphs, matrices, and sequences and series. Students will also learn to model real-world situations using functions to solve relevant problems.	

Science



SCIENCE



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Science

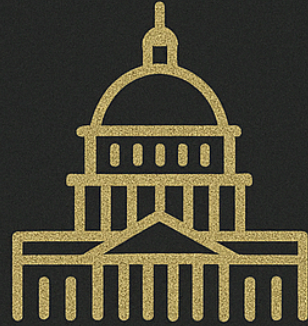
Course Title: Biology	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9	
Prerequisites: Competition of Science 8	
This course offers a dual microscopic and macroscopic approach to exploring life at all levels of biological organization. Students examine both the commonalities among different organisms and their interactions within ecosystems. Learning is enhanced through classroom discussions, investigations, demonstrations, and laboratory activities that promote collaboration and critical thinking skills. Key topics include cells, biochemistry, heredity, evolution, and ecology, with practical applications for each. This class meets five periods each week.	

Course Title: Chemistry	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 10 and 11	
Prerequisites: Competition of Biology	
This course introduces students to the fundamental principles of chemistry, exploring the composition, structure, properties, and changes of matter. Students engage in hands-on laboratory experiments, discussions, and problem-solving activities to develop a deep understanding of atomic theory, chemical bonding, the periodic table, chemical reactions, stoichiometry, and states of matter. Emphasis is placed on scientific inquiry, critical thinking, and real-world applications of chemistry concepts. This course prepares students for advanced science studies and helps them develop skills essential for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).	

Course Title: Sustainability	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9, 10, 11, and 12	
Prerequisites: Competition of Science 8	
This course explores the concept of sustainability through the lens of environmental science, economics, and social responsibility. Students will examine the challenges facing our planet—including climate change, resource depletion, and pollution—and investigate innovative solutions for building a more sustainable future. Through project-based learning, critical thinking, and collaboration, students will analyze real-world case studies, engage with local environmental issues, and develop actionable plans to promote sustainability at school and in their communities. Topics include renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste reduction, green building, and environmental justice. This course empowers students to become informed global citizens and proactive stewards of the environment.	

Course Title: Dendrology	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9, 10, 11, and 12	
Prerequisites: Competition of Science 8	
Dendrology is the study of trees, shrubs, and other woody plants. In this high school course, students will learn to identify a wide variety of tree species by examining their leaves, bark, buds, and overall structure. The class emphasizes hands-on learning through fieldwork, where students will observe trees in natural settings and practice using identification keys. Topics include tree biology, forest ecosystems, plant classification, and the role of trees in the environment and conservation efforts. No prior experience is required — just a willingness to explore the natural world.	

Social Studies



SOCIAL STUDIES



Course Title: US History 1	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9 and 10	
Prerequisites: Competition of Social Studies 8	
The focus of this course covers the time period from 1890-1945. After a brief review of Reconstruction and Westward Expansion the course traces our history from Industrialization, Immigration, Progressivism, Imperialism, WWI, the Roaring Twenties, and The Great Depression & New Deal, concluding with a study of the events surrounding WWII. The course connects students with issues in contemporary society by studying their parallels within history. Examples of local and Pennsylvania history are embedded in this course to further enhance this connection.	

Course Title: World Cultures	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9, 10, and 11	
Prerequisites: Competition of Social Studies 8	
This course utilizes the five themes of geography to provide a framework for a comparative study of culture around the world. Geography, mapping skills, and economic principles are emphasized throughout the course. The areas of Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Latin America are explored through a multi-disciplinary approach. Students will advance their critical thinking skills through the analysis of primary documents and articles relating to contemporary and global issues and their impact.	

Course Title: Psychology	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9, 10, 11, and 12	
Prerequisites: None	
This course offers students a foundational understanding of human behavior and mental processes through the lens of psychological science. Students will explore psychological theories while examining topics such as brain function, learning and memory, personality, emotion, development, mental health, and social behavior. Emphasis is placed on applying psychological concepts to everyday life and fostering self-awareness, empathy, and critical thinking. Students will engage in discussions, case studies, experiments, and reflection activities to better understand themselves and others.	

Course Title: US Politics	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 11 and 12	
Prerequisites: Completion of US History	
This course emphasizes civic responsibility and the role of individuals in a democratic society. Covering the period from 1945 to the present, the course examines key domestic and foreign policies of each presidential administration and their impact on both the United States and the global community. A central focus of the course is understanding the American political system—its history, core values, and institutional structure. Students will develop essential civic skills through the analysis of public opinion, political parties, elections, voting behavior, and interest groups. Using case studies, current events, and primary source documents, students will explore how government decisions are made and how citizens can effectively engage in the political process. This interdisciplinary course strengthens critical thinking, communication, reading, and writing skills, while preparing students to be informed, responsible participants in civic life.	

Course Title: Law and Justice	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 10, 11, and 12	
Prerequisites: At least Sophomore status	
This course equips students with essential knowledge and practical skills for navigating today's legal system. Through engaging activities like films, role-plays, mock trials, and collaborative group work, students explore key aspects of criminal and civil law.	

Languages



LANGUAGES



Course Title: American Sign Language 1	Credit Value: 1.0
Open to Grade(s): 9, 10, 11, and 12	
Prerequisites: None	
American Sign Language I introduces students to the visual-gestural language used by the Deaf community in the United States. Students will learn foundational vocabulary, grammar, and fingerspelling, along with expressive and receptive signing skills through interactive practice and conversation. In addition to developing language proficiency, students will explore Deaf culture, history, and the rich contributions of the Deaf community. Emphasis is placed on visual communication, cultural respect, and linguistic accuracy. This course fulfills the foreign language requirement and prepares students for continued study in ASL II and beyond.	