



Tim Forson
Superintendent of Schools

40 Orange Street
St. Augustine, Florida 32084
(904) 547-7500
www.stjohns.k12.fl.us

August 10, 2017

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Dear Middle/High School Parent or Guardian,

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year! I hope you had a wonderful summer spent with loved ones and friends. As we look forward to a new school year filled with success and a continued focus on the high achievement of our students, I want to ensure that you are aware of the many programs of choice and acceleration options St. Johns County Schools have to offer. Programs of choice include Career Academies at each of our high schools, advanced academic programs such as International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), St. Johns Virtual School (SJVS), Florida Virtual School (FLVS) and Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC).

There is a process to register and/or apply to many of these programs, especially if a student plans to attend a school other than their zoned school. The timelines and requirements can be found on the district website. Parents and students are encouraged to consult with their school counselor when considering a program of choice. More information about Career Academy programs is available at <http://academies.stjohns.k12.fl.us/info/>. It is never too early to talk to your child and plan educational goals.

School and district based communications including scheduled informational meetings, newsletters, automated phone messaging and direct emailing may be used to ensure that students and parents understand their options, deadlines for application, and other vital information needed for academic planning. For most programs the application process will start January 18, 2018 and end February 8, 2018 for the 2018-2019 school year.

Part-time virtual school options are available either during the regular school day or after school and in the summer. The next open enrollment periods to apply for SJVS as a full-time student are November 18, 2017 to January 3, 2018, and in the spring, April 12 to July 11, 2018; exceptions can be made for good cause.

After school begins, requests for part-time virtual courses taken within the regular school day will be addressed through the normal drop/add policy of a school with the principal having final authority for all schedule changes. All virtual course requests must be reviewed and approved by a guidance counselor to ensure the course is an appropriate placement for the student. To learn about all virtual options, please go to <http://www-sjvs.stjohns.k12.fl.us> or call 904-547-8080.

Regular high school graduation requirements now include the successful completion of one high school level online course. This course could be taken at any time during the student's academic career as long as the student successfully completes the entire course prior to graduation. Many high schools are offering blended courses that meet this requirement. In a blended course, instruction is delivered by both digital resources and the classroom teacher. St. Johns Virtual School and FLVS courses also meet this requirement. The online course requirement may also be met by earning a nationally recognized industry certification in information technology that is identified by the state.

*The St. Johns County School District will inspire good character and a passion for lifelong learning
in all students, creating educated and caring contributors to the world.*

In addition to programs of choice and virtual courses, all St. Johns County schools offer Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) options, which looks different at each level. Options include but are not limited to:

- Middle – take high school courses in middle school; virtual instruction in a higher grade-level course; ACCEL options do not supersede the core course requirements for promotion to high school (three English language arts, three math, three science, and three social studies) but courses taken in middle school may earn high school credit
- High – earn college credit by completing the coursework and passing the examination for Advanced Placement (AP), and/or IB/AICE courses; earn college credit by completing a Dual Enrollment course (your child can take a free St. Johns River State College course that meets high school graduation requirements and earns college credit at the same time); earn high school credit without taking the course by passing the state End-of-Course (EOC) assessment; virtual instruction in advanced courses; early graduation; earn college credit by passing the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) assessment for a college course or an AP exam without actually being enrolled in the course

Finally, there are also several diploma options with different requirements that are associated with a specific program of choice. Even the standard diploma has designations that are dependent upon a student's course of study. For example, a student may qualify for the Scholar, Merit and/or Florida Seal of Biliteracy designation along with their standard diploma depending upon the courses and assessments they completed. Details regarding the criteria for each option and graduation requirements by cohort year can be found at <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/cs/> or <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/graduation-requirements>.

I am proud that our schools offer so many academic choices for our students. With so many good options to consider, I hope that you will work with your school's guidance department to develop the best customized learning path for your child.

After high school, your child may qualify for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, which has helped more than 725,000 Florida students attend a postsecondary institution. Go to <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/bf/> to find out how your child can qualify for a Bright Futures Scholarship.

Admission into Florida's State University System is competitive so prospective students should complete a rigorous curriculum in middle and high school. Eligibility requirements are available at <http://www.flbog.edu/forstudents/planning/>.

The Florida College System includes 28 state colleges. These institutions offer career-related certificates and two-year associate degrees that prepare students to transfer to a bachelor's degree program or to enter jobs requiring specific skills. More information is available at <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/index.stml>.

Florida also offers students 46 accredited career and technical centers throughout the state, which provide the education and certification necessary to work in a particular career or technical field. More information is available at <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/>.

Thank you for your consideration of this information and my best wishes to you and your family for an outstanding school year!

Sincerely,



Tim Forson
Superintendent of Schools