

Northern Valley

Regional High School District



Geoffrey N. Gordon, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

June 21, 2017

To All Parents/Guardians, Staff and Students,

As you may be aware, the Northern Valley administration has been addressing our curriculum and course level designations. The Northern Valley acceptances for the Class of 2017 have been outstanding with our students doing a terrific job and our new curriculum reforms working beautifully. However, some specific concerns include the indication of the level of rigor on student transcripts for the course levels we currently refer to as *College Prep Enriched* and *College Prep*.

Prior to 2013, the course levels in these areas were locally referred to as *College Prep* and *Scholastic*. These different course levels have always shared the same curriculum and content standards. While *Scholastic* courses met the District's content standards and rigor expectations, *College Prep* courses were designed to move at a faster pace with more in depth content than the *Scholastic* courses.

During the 2012-13 school year, with input from a District-wide Ad Hoc committee, the District revised its references to these levels as *College Prep Enriched* and *College Prep* (or *CPE* and *CP*). This was done for two reasons: to reflect the reality that students in both course levels are being prepared for college; and to use common terminology when discussing courses, scheduling students and assessing progress.

While neither the previous, nor the revised terminology, was actually reflected on transcripts or in the program of studies, the Ad Hoc committee in 2012-2013 recommended revisiting whether such reference was appropriate in the future. The committee advised that we make such distinctions only if we felt confident that we could treat all student populations fairly. In those regards, the district carefully monitored student progress to ensure fairness to all students. The district also monitored both secondary and post-secondary best practices.

As a result, consistent with the district philosophy, the District researched possible approaches to transcript designations. It should be noted that as CP and CPE had been designed to meet the same standards and were only differentiated by pace and depth, reforms were more focused on new courses and increasing opportunities for all students. Using research from various sources: New Jersey Department of Education course level data, National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), NCAA regulations, neighboring high school Districts, college admissions personnel, input from various stakeholder groups, and in consultation with legal counsel, the following adjustments will be made moving forward:

1. Beginning immediately for the 2016-2017 school year and going forward, all classes with the enriched designation will be noted on transcripts with an (E) symbol. The (E) will correspond with Enriched in the transcript legend area, similar to the way the District indicates Dual Enrollment courses. This designation

is consistent with the NCES and NCAA guidelines. According to the NCES, an enriched course is one that augments the content and/or rigor of a general course, but does not carry an honors designation. This (E) designation will be indicated next to the course title for classes that are deemed by the District to be enriched. All other course identifications, such as Advanced Placement, Honors, Dual Enrollment, will remain intact. Below is an example of how this modification will appear on transcripts:

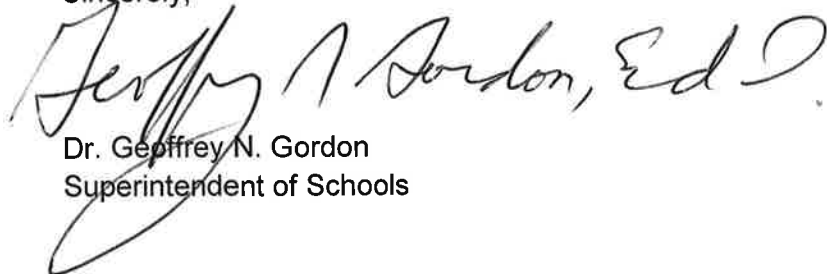
- a. For students enrolled in regular college preparatory courses: English 1
- b. For students enrolled in enriched college preparatory courses: English 1 (E)

2. During the 2017-2018 school year, District personnel will evaluate this change and determine if further adjustments to our program and/or transcript designations are required. The aforementioned modification is consistent with the District implementation/expansion of the Dual Enrollment designation on transcripts during the 2016-2017 school year.

Please note that there may be another letter addressing some other reforms for the 2017-2018 school year that will be sent later in the summer. In that regard, to help all students, the District is carefully reviewing expanded choices in both our regular and special education programs which will provide another platform for students to take off and excel.

Should you have any questions related to your child's course requests for the 2017-2018 school year, please contact your child's Guidance Counselor and/or Case Manager.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Geoffrey N. Gordon, Ed D." The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Geoffrey" being the most prominent part.

Dr. Geoffrey N. Gordon
Superintendent of Schools