

## Prioritizing Semester Electives for the Ninth and Tenth Grades

**Overview:** In addition to the five core subjects that all 9th and 10th graders will take (Science, English, Math<sup>+</sup>, History, & World Language), each student can choose 2 to 4 semester-based electives including up to 2 study halls—one each semester. We recommend that all 9th grade students take at least one semester of Fine Arts and either a health course or a computational thinking course.

### **Computational Thinking Requirement (1 Sem)**

Entry-level courses that meet this requirement include Mobile Apps Development and Honors Computer Science. Students can also meet this requirement by taking the semester course Principles of Engineering & Robotics\* followed by either Robotics Projects\* or Engineering Projects\*. Students who take journalism should postpone this requirement unless they are equally interested in computational thinking courses.

### **Fine Arts Requirement (2 Sems)**

All 9th graders should take at least one introductory fine arts course and may take two introductory courses in two different media. Students who are considering an art emphasis should postpone taking a computer class unless they are equally interested in such courses. ESD offers the 14 entry-level performing and visual arts courses, listed to the right, to all students.

Band <sup>+</sup> Beginning Acting Beginning Tech Theater Concert Choir <sup>+</sup> Dance Film Studies I Intro to Handbuilding	Intro to Photography Intro to Sculpture Intro to Studio Art Intro to Wheel Throwing Speech Communications Speech & Debate Strings <sup>+</sup>
---	---

### **Health Requirement (1 Sem)**

ESD offers three science-based health courses: the Health and Wellness\* for students of all grades, and Food Science\* and Anatomy & Physiology\* for juniors and seniors. Students should plan to fulfill this requirement prior to their junior year unless they prefer one of the two more specialized classes.

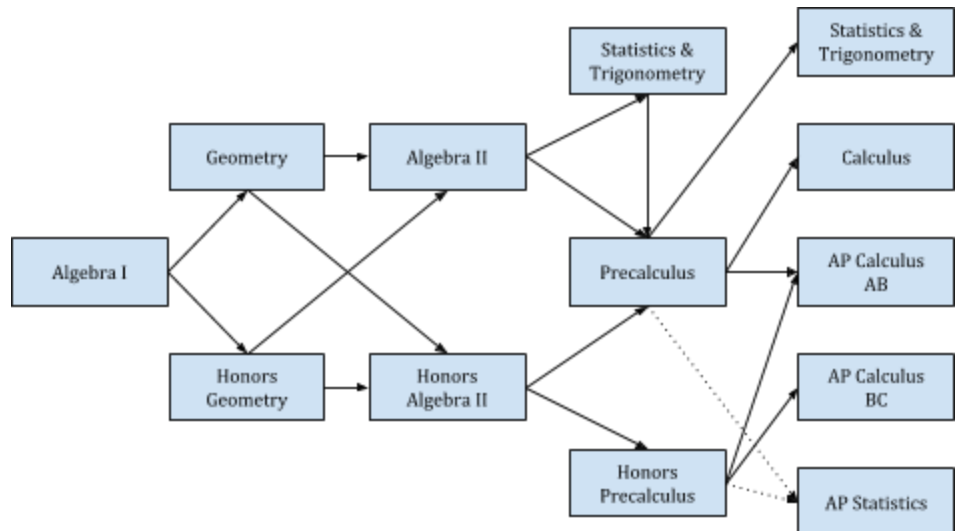
### **World Languages**

ESD offers a choice of Chinese, French, Latin, or Spanish to all 9th graders. Students place into US language classes based on their prior experience and mastery of the language. All students must take at least two years of the same language in Upper School, ending at level III or higher.

<sup>+</sup>See flowchart below. \*These courses are considered science courses in the state of Texas for consideration at state universities like UT and Texas A&M. <sup>+</sup>Yearlong course.

### **<sup>+</sup>Mathematical Pathways**

The flowchart to the right shows the paths that students can take as they progress through the Upper School. Sophomores can take geometry over the summer or double up with geometry and Algebra II if they want to advance themselves.



## Graduation Requirements

### English – 4 credits

### Mathematics – 3 credits

Three years in the Upper School are required, including Algebra I, geometry, and Algebra II or beyond.

### History – 3 credits

World cultures (½ credit in history and ½ credit in religion), world history, US history, and a government class (½ credit) are required.

### Science – 3 credits

Biology, chemistry, and physics are required in the Upper School.

### Classical and Modern Languages – 3 credits

Students must take at least two years of the same language in Upper School and attain at least level III in that language. One year's worth of study in Middle School can contribute to the level requirement.

### Fine Arts – 1 credit

Two semesters of fine arts are required. The two semesters may be independent of each other.

### Religion – 1 credit

One credit (two semesters) is required. One-half credit will be earned in the freshman World Cultures class. The other one-half credit should be taken in the junior or senior year.

### Computer Science – ½ credit

One semester of a course that involves computational and algorithmic thinking is required for graduation. Students can also meet this requirement by taking Principles of Engineering followed by either Engineering I or Robotics I, all of which are considered science electives.

### Health Science – ½ credit

One semester of a science-based health course is required for graduation. Health & Wealth is open to all 9th and 10th graders while Food Science and Anatomy & Physiology are open to juniors and seniors.

### Physical Education – 6 activity credits

Six activity credits (Physical Education and Athletics) are required for graduation. Two activity credits are required each year during the freshman and sophomore years; juniors and seniors are required to complete at least one activity credit each year. All activity credits are graded as Pass (P) / Fail (F) and are recorded as the individual activities on the transcript with the appropriate number of partial credits.

## Scheduling Notes

All juniors and seniors should consult college and university admission websites or their ESD college counselors before deciding to drop core classes after meeting ESD graduation requirements. Many colleges and universities require or highly recommend additional credits of these types of classes. Students should also consider their own expectations for majors. The successful completion of more advanced coursework can often benefit a student when applying to specific majors or departments. Students who are interested in attending a state university in Texas should seriously consider enrolling in an economics course and will need four science credits.

**Computer** – Students interested in pursuing a college degree in mathematics or science should take Honors Computer Science and consider AP Computer Science.

Yearbook and Journalism do not count as computer or fine art credit, but a student who remains committed through senior year may be eligible to waive 1 full credit.

**Health Science** - Health Science courses, including Health & Wellness, will receive a one-half credit recorded on the transcript and a semester letter grade, which is included in the student's cumulative grade point average.

**Physical Education** – All activities (Physical Education and Athletics) are recorded on the transcript as Pass (P) / Fail (F) and are awarded partial credits. Students joining or leaving any physical education class, athletic team, or outdoor education class are to adhere to the same drop/add policy as in all other courses. A student withdrawing from a physical education class, athletic team, or outdoor education class will receive a WP or WF notation on the transcript. Physical Education and Athletics are trimester courses. Dance is a semester class and may be taken as a PE or Fine Arts credit. Designation must be made at the beginning of the course.

### Community Service

Students must achieve a minimum of 50 hours of community service prior to graduation: 25 during the freshman and sophomore years and 25 additional hours during the junior and senior years. Students may begin accumulating hours during the summer before their freshman year.