



## High School Options 101 – Glossary of Terms

**Academies** – Theme-based learning communities within a larger school setting. There are now a total of eight high school-based academies across PUSD’s high school campuses. The Academies, including partnerships with local business and industry partners providing internships, are overseen by PUSD’s College & Career Pathways office (<https://www.pusd.us/Page/119>). The terms “academy” and “pathway” are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to individual academies. Students in academies often take core courses as well as academy-specific CTE electives together as a cohort. However, there is flexibility in scheduling so that students enrolled in an academy can take more advanced core courses, such as AP classes. (See end of this document for academy listing by school.) Learn more: <https://padlet.com/turleykristina/gpyfgx4z5ji4b7m7>

**A-G Requirements** – Course completion units in seven (A-G) categories required for admissions by the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU) and other public and private 4-year colleges. Students must pass their A-G required courses **with a C or better** to qualify for 4-year college acceptance.

**AP – Advanced Placement** – high-level courses in a wide range of core and elective subjects. Students taking AP courses take College Board-administered subject tests at the end of the year. These tests are graded on a 1-5 scale; a score of 3 or better is considered “passing” and may qualify the student for college credit. Both the number of AP courses taken and test scores received are part of the student’s high school transcript and may be given consideration in college applications.

**CAP – College Access Plan** – Nonprofit organization offering students on all PUSD high school campuses additional guidance and support for exploring college options and financial aid opportunities, test preparation and for completing successful college applications. Programs also offered for middle school students.

**CCGI** - The California College Guidance Initiative manages CaliforniaColleges.edu, the state of California’s official college and career planning platform, which is free to all California educators, students, and families. CCGI partners with K-12 school districts to support students, counselors, parents, and community-based organizations with technological tools that help guide the college and career planning and preparation process. (The platform can be used to explore private and public college options outside of California as well as in-state.)

**College & Career Pathways** – District-level initiative to ensure that PUSD’s Secondary Education prepares students for both college and careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The term “pathway” suggests that students receive the academic content, skills, and exposure to real-world work and career applications of those skills to “find their way” to post-secondary education and life in the working world following graduation. (See “Academies” above.)

**Core Courses** – Core courses are common academic subjects in the areas of Math, English Language Arts (ELA), Social Studies, and Science. To graduate, high school students must take a certain number of units in both core and non-core subject areas, such as PE, World Languages, and the Arts. (See graduation requirements chart.)

**CTE** – Career Technical Education – There is an increasing emphasis in 21<sup>st</sup> century education to prepare students not just for a traditional liberal arts college or the existing workforce, but for careers that do not yet exist. The theme-based academies incorporate CTE into their electives, introducing students to content, concepts, and skills with applications in related career fields.

**Concurrent enrollment** – High school students can earn college credits by concurrently enrolling at Pasadena City College (PCC) or other community colleges. PCC is partnering with Muir High School (now Muir Early College Magnet) to offer college courses on the Muir campus; this PCC satellite offers courses to full-time PCC students and the community, but Muir students have preferential enrollment. (<https://www.pusd.us/Page/5396>)

**Dual enrollment** – PUSD and Pasadena City College (PCC) have piloted a dual enrollment program, allowing qualified PUSD teachers to teach courses on the high school campuses for which students can get both high school and college credit. Dual enrollment courses are offered on the high school campus and are part of the student’s instructional day. Students earn college credits while also meeting high school graduation requirements and working towards an AA degree while still enrolled in high school. (<https://www.pusd.us/Page/5394>)

**General Education** – About 60% of PUSD high school students are *not* enrolled in a theme-based academy, but are pursuing their high school graduation (and A-G requirements) within the traditional “general” education format.

**Graduation Requirements** – Students must pass a certain number of units within specific core and elective course categories to receive a high school diploma. (See chart for details; see also **Senior Portfolio/Defense**, below.) Students receive 5 units for a semester-long course, 10 units for a year-long course. Most of our high schools are on a six-period day, so the typical student would complete 30 units of coursework each semester, and 240 units over four years of high school. (A “passing” grade is a D or better.) The “Classic” PUSD diploma requires 220 units and meets the most of the requirements to apply to the University of California, Cal State Universities, or other four-year colleges, provided student passes with a C or better grade. Students in the college/career-themed academies must earn the same number of credits, but with a slightly different distribution of requirements (emphasizing a sequence of theme-related CTE courses). Other variations on the “Classic” diploma emphasize a concentration of electives in specific areas, such as math/science, visual and performing arts, and humanities.

**Honors courses** – Most core courses may be taken at the “regular” or “honors” level. As in middle school, honors-level courses cover the same basic material but may incorporate a more accelerated approach and more challenging assignments.

**International Baccalaureate (IB)** – The IB Diploma Program is a rigorous, internationally benchmarked program of studies for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. (The IB Primary Years program corresponds to elementary school, K-5, the IB Middle Years program covers grades 6-10.) High school students must pass three Standard Level (SL) and three High Level (HL) courses to obtain the IB Diploma. However, students can also get certification and in many cases college credit for passing any one or more of the courses required for the IB Diploma.

**PSAT, SAT, ACT** - Many colleges require or recommend that students submit test results as part of the admission application process. There are two major national tests used for this purpose: the ACT and the SAT. The ACT (American College Testing) includes multiple-choice tests in four subject areas—English, mathematics, reading, and science. The SAT (and Pre-SAT, or PSAT), given by the College Board, tests reading, writing and math skills. Students can also take SAT subject-specific tests. The PSAT, taken in the junior year, is used to qualify students for the National Merit Scholarship Program. Students can choose the test (ACT or SAT) that best suits their strengths, and can take the test more than once. Counselors and College Access Plan staff can help advise a student on this.

**Senior Portfolio/Defense** – Beginning with the Class of 2019, high school students are required to develop a portfolio of their best work throughout high school, culminating in a 6-8 page research paper which the student presents and “defends” (answers questions about) before a panel made up of teachers. The portfolio and research/final project work are integrated into the student’s existing coursework, and teachers have received training in the requirements of the project and how to support and guide students in completing it successfully.

**Transcript** – This is the student’s academic record, and includes the courses taken as well as number of units completed, grades received, overall GPA, and any additional test scores (APs, IB diploma course exams, PSAT, SAT and SAT subject tests, ACT, etc.) and honors received.