

**WEBSTER GROVES SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION ITEM OF CONSIDERATION**

DATE: November 9, 2015

TOPIC/PROPOSAL:

Approval of revised high school course offerings for 2016-2017.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

DESE requires that high school course offerings be approved annually. Attached is a listing of the proposed changes in the course offerings for the 2016-2017 school year. Rationales for the changes of the specific courses are also included where applicable. These changes will enable WGHS to better meet the diverse needs of their student population and will enable them to continue to improve the programming provided for our students.

Included in the changes are:

- The addition of 2 AP courses: *AP Music Theory* and *AP World History*.
- The addition of *Radio Broadcasting* which will coincide with the district's airtime on the new local radio station.
- Students may either choose *Basic Art* or *Studio Art* at WGHS. Thus, a portfolio of a child's work is no longer needed as a prerequisite to take Studio Art.
- The addition of *Business Innovation Service Center* which will provide high school students with the opportunity to collaborate with local businesses in a mutually supportive way.

See attached course descriptions for additional information.

INSTRUCTIONAL IMPACT/RATIONALE:

These revised high school courses will provide a wider selection of courses and better support WGHS in meeting the learning needs of its students.

CSIP/DISTRICT GOAL ADDRESSED:

*Cultivate globally-minded pedagogies, curriculum, and practices.

*Expand experiential learning opportunities.

FISCAL NOTE:

N/A

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

- **Action Requested:** X
- **Information:** _____
- **Proposed Motion for Approval (if applicable):**

I move that the Board of Education adopt the revised High School Course Offerings for the 2016-2017 school year.

PREPARED BY: John Simpson

Motion: _____ **Second:** _____ **Board Vote:** ___(yes) ___(no)
___(abstain) ___(Consent Agenda)

New courses:

- *Radio Broadcasting*

Credit: ½ English Credit

Prerequisite: None

Open to Grades: 9-12

- Description: In this class the students will explore the business and the fundamentals of radio. Each student will be responsible for creating content and script for radio spots that could be used for the Webster Radio station. The course will allow the students to perfect their “On-Air” skills by preparing pre-recorded interviews, creating opinion spots, covering upcoming local events, and by writing stories. The class will also perform pieces that would be included in all of the state level radio broadcasting tournament events (local news, national news, international news, weather, sports, and entertainment news).
- Rationale: With the addition of a new local radio station, we wanted to create the time and space for students to gain experience from working with and for the station to learn the skills of broadcasting.

- *AP World History*

Credit: 1 Social Studies Credit

Prerequisite: Teacher Recommendation

Open to Grades: 10

- Description: AP World History is a rigorous course that focuses on developing students’ abilities to think conceptually about world history and apply historical thinking skills. The course explores five major themes: (1) the interaction between humans and the environment, (2) the development and interaction of cultures, (3) state-building, expansion, and conflict, (4) the creation and expansion of economic systems, and (5) the development and transformation of social structures. The course will require students to craft plausible arguments from historical evidence, demonstrate chronological thinking skills, and synthesize and interpret historical evidence. Students will be required to construct various forms of essays (document-based, point of view, and continuity and change over time), analyze various forms of documents, and participate in Socratic discussions. Students who enroll in this course must receive a recommendation from their freshmen Social Studies teacher. To receive a recommendation, students must have demonstrated a strong work ethic, independent study skills, strong writing skills, and the ability to analyze content with a high level of critical thinking. Students should expect a substantial amount of out-of-class work. They are encouraged to take the AP exam, though it is not required. This course will count as a weighted grade.
- Rationale: We do not currently offer an advanced placement course for sophomores within our social studies department. By adding AP World History to our curriculum students will be given the opportunity to take more challenging course work earlier than junior year. Students will also learn important skill sets that will provide a strong foundation for junior and senior advanced placement courses. Rockwood, Clayton, Ladue, Kirkwood, and Parkway West currently offer AP World History to sophomores and all have successful programs. Adding AP World History will allow Webster Groves School District to remain one of the top districts in our state and continue on the path of excellence as we prepare our students for outstanding futures.

- *Fundamentals of English I-IV*

Credit: 1 English Credit (each course)

Prerequisite: IEP teams determine placement in these courses

Open to Grades: IEP teams determine placement in these courses

- *Funds of English I* is a one-year course incorporating the study of language skills and writing with an introduction to various literary genres. This course consists of instruction in composition, reading fiction and informational text, grammar, speaking/listening, research and vocabulary development. Students will learn reading and vocabulary strategies that will enable them to decode and comprehend fiction. Explicit instruction in both comprehension strategies for fiction and informational text will be included. Vocabulary study draws from the literature or from word lists appropriate for this grade level. Writing skills move from strengthening the paragraph into careful building of a well-developed essay. Mechanics and usage, vocabulary, spelling, and oral communication are emphasized.
- *Funds of English II* consists of instruction in composition, reading fiction and informational text, grammar, speaking/listening, research and vocabulary development in world literature. Strategies for improving comprehension of fiction and informational texts will be stressed. Vocabulary study is an integral part of the course and is aligned with the literature or from word lists appropriate for this grade level. Students improve their linguistic and analytical skills by interpreting literature in terms of such elements as theme, characterization, structure, symbolism, irony, and figurative language. Equal emphasis is placed on the writing process, particularly sentence structure, paragraph organization and development, diction, and mechanics.
- *Funds of English III* continues to expand and reinforce the student's skills of analysis and evaluation of literature, writing, vocabulary, research, and speaking and listening. Through reading fiction, informational text, drama, and poetry, the student will examine the changing nature of the American Dream and how it pervades American literature. Key writing concepts include thorough knowledge of the writing process, organizational structure, and grammatical conventions. Students will use literary criticism to write argumentative essays. In addition, students will complete narrative and informative pieces.
- *Funds of English IV* prepares students for college and other post-secondary opportunities. Students strengthen their critical thinking skills by exploring contemporary readings, composing formal papers, and practicing revisions and rewriting. Key texts for this class include college-level reading selections along with focused exercises in editing, refining sentence structure, and drafting coherent paragraphs and essays. Weekly vocabulary study involves learning Latin, Greek and French word parts with English derivations.
- Rationale(all courses): The SSD department wants all students to experience similar learning opportunities as their grade-level peers and these courses align closely to Freshman Literature, World Literature, American Literature, and senior level English. Placement will be decided by the IEP team.

- *Music History 1: Antiquity-Classical Periods*

Credit: ½ Fine Art (Music) Credit

Prerequisite: None

Open to Grades: 9-12

- Description: Music History 1 is the first in a series of two semester-long courses, detailing the history of music. Music History 1 begins with the earliest music of Antiquity, and will conclude with the Classical Period of music history. Students will learn the chronology of the development of Western music, important musical developments from each time period, leading composers and pieces from each time period, as well as gaining a perspective of what was taking place in the world around these musicians. Students may take this course first or second, order does not matter.
- Rationale: Several music students (from band, choir, and orchestra) have expressed the desire for a Music History course. When a student decides to become a music major at the collegiate level, there are several courses required by every music school in some form: Music Theory (we offer), Piano/Keyboarding (we offer), Ear Training (often taught with Keyboarding, and I think our keyboarding class touches on this), and Music History (we do NOT offer). It would be wonderful for WGHS to be able to send our music students off to college with some knowledge of all of these areas.

- *Music History 2: Classical-Modern Periods*

Credit: ½ Fine Art (Music) Credit

Open to Grades: 9-12

- Description: Music History 2 is the second course in a series of two semester-long courses, detailing the history of music. Music History 2 will begin with the end of the Classical Period, and will conclude with the most current composers' styles and techniques. Students will learn the chronology of the development of Western music, important musical developments from each time period, leading composers and pieces from each time period, as well as gaining a perspective of what was taking place in the world around these musicians. Students may take this course first or second—order does not matter.
- Rationale: (See above for Music Theory 1)

- *AP Music Theory*

Credit: ½ Fine Art (Music) Credit

Prerequisite: Music Theory I

Open to Grades: 9-12

- Description: A continuation of Music Theory I, AP Music Theory will emphasize analysis and composition with continued work in ear training and sight singing. This course is designed for music students planning to major or minor in some form of music. The ultimate goal of the course is to prepare students to take the AP Theory exam that is offered toward the end of the year. Students who pass may earn college credit at a number of colleges and universities. While not all students will likely attain this level of success, the instruction and practice in this course will serve to greatly enhance and improve a student's ability to recognize, understand, analyze, and describe the aspects and processes of music that is heard or seen on a score. Students will engage in a variety of written, singing, and compositional exercises that teach them the many aspects of musical composition and analysis. This course is only available to students who have passed Music Theory 1. It is

strongly recommended that students take Music Theory 1 and AP Music Theory consecutively. *Note: An application for an Honors grade may be requested in this course.*

- Rationale: Successful completion of this course will allow students who want to major or minor in any form of music an opportunity to receive credit for a class that ALL music majors or minors are required to take. At most universities, you are required to take at least 4 semesters of this class. Many area high schools are offering this course and we want our students to have the same opportunities as other high school students in the St Louis area. Parkway, Rockwood, Lindbergh, Kirkwood and Clayton offer it, to name a few. Having this course on the transcript will show that students are not only good performers, but also have a good understanding of structures in music.

- *Symphonic Orchestra*
 Credit: 1 Fine Art (Music) Credit
 Prerequisite: Audition
 Open to Grades: 9-12
 - Description: This course is an auditioned performing ensemble that focuses on advancing each student's string technique, including shifting to higher positions, vibrato, and advanced bowing techniques, while emphasizing the importance of group performance. By observing and listening to others, students will develop their analysis and critical thinking skills. This class will perform music literature from a variety of historical periods, as well as study music theory. Members are expected to attend all rehearsals, concerts, festivals, and contests.

 - Rationale: The rationale for this new hour/group is a space and numbers issue. Our orchestra program is still considered fairly "young," and is still growing each year. This year, there are 89 students enrolled in the two existing groups, which comes out to an average of 45 per class. With these numbers and given the nature of string playing (room for bows to move back and forth), we cannot get more than 45 students comfortably in our room.

- *Art Exploration*
 Credit: ½ Fine Art (Visual Art) Credit
 Prerequisite: None
 Open to Grades: 9-12
 - Description: Art Exploration is an experiential class where students create, explore and design artistic projects using different mediums and materials. Projects include scherenschnitte, origami, papier mache, macramé, weaving, scrapbooking, fabric manipulation and fimo clay beads, additional projects will be explored on a weekly basis. Students should have had some experience using xacto blades, a hot glue gun and simple hand sewing.

 - Rationale: we were looking for a course that would support students' Fine Art credit requirement. This course will still support the basic visual art fundamentals, through creative and student-centered activities that can be transferred through other facets of life.

- *Business Innovation Service Center*
Credit: ½ Elective Credit
Prerequisite: None
Open to Grades: 10-12
 - Description: This course will be designed for students to collaborate with local business owners and employees of local businesses for the purpose of providing them (businesses) with the services and support they currently need. In addition, high school students will get experience applying their knowledge and skills in meaningful ways while also learning from the businesses they're supporting.
 - Rationale: The students will have an opportunity to transfer their skills and knowledge in meaningful and relevant ways while also making a valuable contribution to the community in which they live. Local businesses owners and employees will get the opportunity to help students learn about the aspects of their businesses of relevance and interest to students.

Dropped courses:

- *Pre-Algebra*
 - Rationale: We now offer a 2 year Algebra course that is more supportive and rigorous for students.
- *African American History ACC*
 - Rationale: As stated in the executive summer when the new social studies curriculum was approved: "The decision was made to discontinue offering the courses, African-American Studies and The African American Experience, at this time in of explicitly embedding the history of African-Americans into courses that all students take such as US History. While implicitly embedded in the former curriculum, the team wanted to be certain it was explicitly included in the current. A secondary factor influencing the decision was the fact that the courses hadn't generated enough student interest in recent history 'to make.' It has been eight years since the African-American Studies had enough students to hold the class and four years since The African-American Experience course had enough."
- *Fundamentals of Reading II-IV*
 - Rationale: These courses are recommended to be discontinued in favor of *Fundamentals of English I-IV* (listed as new above) as they are more challenging and align closely to Freshman Literature, World Literature, American Literature, and senior level English.
- *Music Theory 2*
 - Rationale: *Music Theory 2 is being replaced by AP Music Theory.*
- *Japanese*
 - Rationale: *This course consistently has low enrollment numbers.*
- *Children's Literature*
 - Rationale: *This course consistently has low enrollment numbers.*
- *College Reading*
 - Rationale: *This course consistently has low enrollment numbers.*
- *Rapid Reading*
 - Rationale: *This course consistently has low enrollment numbers.*

Other changes:

- UMSL dual credit may no longer be offered for Advanced Chemistry or AP Chemistry.
 - Rationale: The current teacher doesn't have a masters' degree in this content area.

- *We changed the course name from Simplified Auto Maintenance to Modern Automotive Maintenance*
 - *Rationale: The new title better reflects the content of the course and the staff believe the new name will help attract more students.*
- *Studio Art will now open to any freshman.*
- *Basic Art is no longer a required first course for students wanting to take art.*
- *Current Drafting course to be split into two semester long courses:*
 - *Engineering Drawing and Computer Aided Drafting (level I and II)*
 - *Architectural Drawing and Computer Aided Drafting (level I and II)*
 - *Rationale: Dividing these courses into semester long courses will provide students with more flexibility in their schedules and provide them with an opportunity to try a class without a year-long commitment.*