

Honors Science in Davis School District

Purpose

The purpose of creating district wide expectations for honors courses in science is to help students and parents be better informed when making scheduling decisions, to create consistency in honors experiences across the district, increase the depth and rigor to which students are exposed in science, and to better prepare students for AP and college experiences. It is strongly encouraged that students, parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators familiarize themselves with the expectations outlined in the honors science curriculum in order to make the best decisions for the school and student.

Definition

Honors courses should be more challenging than standard level courses in order to foster growth for advanced learners. These courses will have some additional content in their course of study as well as more strenuous cognitive tasks and skills. Often these tasks will include independent scientific research in order to provide students with an authentic scientific experience.

Inherently honors courses are those with standards written in a progressive nature and build upon prior knowledge and experiences. Please be judicious and realistic when setting expectations for yourself and your student.

Vertical Alignment

The alignment provided is to help inform teachers about the skills students should master by the end of their honors experience in that grade level. It is expected that students going into an honors experience have mastered the skills described in previous years. The vertical alignment was designed to prepare students to be successful in Advanced Placement or collegiate level courses. Teachers will treat the vertical alignment as performance standards for students.

Roles and Expectations

Teacher's Role (includes but is not limited to)

Teachers of an honors level course will:

1. Possess the skills, knowledge and dispositions to facilitate an honors level course with advanced curriculum content.
2. Have the capacity to develop and implement a differentiated curriculum based on and above standard curriculum to support the growth of advanced learners
3. Use a variety of instructional strategies to engage advanced learners

4. Use the vertical alignment to plan and implement engaging science experiences for students
5. Plan the scope and sequence of the course in a manner that will ensure that students meet the standards outlined in the honors curriculum and vertical alignment

Student's Role (includes but is not limited to)

Students enrolled in honors level courses will:

1. Be willing to take greater responsibility for their own learning
2. Develop their interest, ability, and motivation to meet the challenges of an honors level course
3. Aspire to an advanced level of learning through high quality work
4. Be aware of and complete any prerequisite course(s) or standards leading to the honors level course
5. Maintain a high level of engagement while in the classroom
6. Dedicate adequate time to course work outside of school time
7. Be willing to fully engage in independent scientific research experiences

Parent's Role (includes but is not limited to)

Parents/Guardians of the advanced learner will:

1. Be aware of the requirements and expectations of an Honors Level Course
2. Support their student to perform at an advanced level of learning through high quality work
3. Expect student to dedicate adequate time to course work outside of school time
4. Support your student in independent science research

School/Administrator's Role (includes but not limited to)

To support honors level instruction, principals will:

1. Assign honors level courses to teachers who possess the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to facilitate an honors level course with advanced curriculum content
2. Ensure teachers are using the honors level course rubric, Honors curriculum and skills vertical alignment to define honors level instruction

Facility Requirements

Facilities for honors level courses will:

1. Support the implementation of curriculum standards
2. Provide a lab area with any special equipment, technology, or materials that are necessary to facilitate the honors level course