



# THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL for SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



## Prospective Student Pipeline Newsletter #8 *February 1, 2022*

The Prospective Student Pipeline is a virtual community for families who want to learn more about The Governor's School for Science and Technology (GSST). By subscribing to this newsletter, you'll get information about what's happening at GSST plus notifications of upcoming events for prospective students.

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### Director's Notes: Ms. Vikki Wismer

#### **The Prospective Student Pipeline Explained**

Many of you have recently joined our Prospective Student Pipeline (PSP). Welcome! Our program for prospective students has evolved over the past year, so I wanted to take this opportunity to explain it.

The Prospective Student Pipeline for Governor's School has two possible entry routes. The first of these is through *school referral*. Every year we ask our

participating school divisions to identify 8th and 9th graders who meet certain academic benchmarks, and parents of these students are then invited to fill out an online "application" for the PreAdmission Program. The application is actually more of a registration of interest, as no student who applies is turned away. By registering for the PreAdmission Program, you will be subscribed to this PSP Newsletter - our main information portal. In addition, your child's school counselor will be alerted to your interest in Governor's School so that he/she can help you select appropriate math and science courses. If you have been invited to join the PreAdmission Program and have not already done so, [click here](#) to access the online "application/registration" form.



The second route of entry to our Prospective Student Pipeline is *self-referral*. Anyone who is interested in receiving this newsletter can subscribe by [clicking here](#). In addition, you are welcome to notify your school counselor of your interest in Governor's School so he/she will be aware of your interest when you are selecting courses.

### **How Will You Get Information About The Governor's School?**

We will be utilizing three types of resources, all of which will be available online.

- PSP Newsletter, sent once or twice a month
- Virtual Parent Information Session for each division in January
- Videos, tours, and documents on The Governor's School website. Examples include the following:

[Top Five Reasons to Attend Governor's School](#)

[3D Tour of the School](#): go inside each of the classrooms

[School profile](#): the document that tells colleges about GSST

## **College Planning Corner with Dr. Ellen Fithian**



### **Advanced Course Options: A Primer**

It will soon be time for students to choose their courses for next year, and parents are sometimes perplexed by the options. For example, if a mother tells me that her 9th grader is taking Advanced Placement geometry, it signals to me that she's confused. There is no Advanced Placement geometry course, so what she probably means is advanced geometry. What's the difference, anyway?

Let's begin at the beginning. The first thing you need to understand is that advanced high school courses fall into two general categories; those that cover high school level content and those that cover college level content.

### **High School Level Courses**

Advanced courses that are comprised of high school level content are often labeled honors or advanced. Their curricula cover much the same territory as is dealt with in a regular high school course, but the honors course treats the material in a more



challenging way. For example, honors or advanced geometry will usually cover the topics contained in general geometry, but may ask students to solve more difficult problems in those topics or possibly add extra topics.

### **College Level Courses**

These courses cover academic content that's comparable to what's offered in college. They provide an opportunity for students to begin college work – and potentially earn college credit - while still in high school. The three most common examples are Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual enrollment.

### **Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Courses**

The term Advanced Placement is not a general term for any college level course taught in high school; it refers specifically to those courses developed by a nonprofit organization, The College Board. The curriculum of each AP course is intended to cover the material found in a typical introductory college class. In May, a standardized exam is administered to students at their home high school and then sent to The College Board for grading on a scale of 1 to 5. While the College Board considers that a student who earns a grade of 3 or higher is qualified to receive college credit, the determination of whether a student will *actually* receive credit – and how much – rests with the college he ultimately attends. In general, the more competitive the college, the higher the qualifying score required to earn credit.

International Baccalaureate (IB) courses work in a similar fashion - students can earn college credit by scoring well on an end-of-course standardized exam. However, the courses and final exam are developed by the International Baccalaureate Organization rather than the College Board.

### **Dual Enrollment courses**

As we've discussed, an AP or IB course covers a college curriculum, but a student's ability to earn college credit depends on his getting a high score on the standardized exam. A dual enrollment course, by contrast, is an actual college course – i.e. one that's been accredited by a college - for which a student gets both high school and college credit. Sometimes students take such a course at a community college (or less frequently at a four year college), but in many cases they take the course at their high school. Dual enrollment courses are generally accepted as transfer credits if a student goes on to attend a Virginia college, but they are not guaranteed to be accepted by out-of-state colleges. I do not have hard data to substantiate this, but it's my impression that the more competitive the college, the less likely they are to accept dual enrollment credits.

### **Where Do Governor's School Courses Fit In?**

Governor's School courses cover college level material and are taught by faculty with an advanced degree (masters or Ph.D.) in a STEM field. Some courses are dual enrolled, if their curricula happen to align with the curriculum of a community college course. However, our signature courses differ from standard introductory college courses by drawing from emerging STEM disciplines (e.g. modeling and data science) and including significant interdisciplinary and project-based components. It's not our goal to duplicate courses that students can already access at their home high school or the local community college. Rather, it's to prepare motivated, high-achieving students to be leaders and innovators by equipping them with the foundational knowledge to succeed in future STEM endeavors.

We hope parents and students will seriously consider applying to Governor's School,

but we recognize that no program is right for everyone. Fortunately, all of our participating high schools offer a range of challenging options; we encourage you to explore them and make the choices that are best for your student.



## CNU Math Competition

**Who:** 9th to 12th graders

**When:** Saturday, February 12th

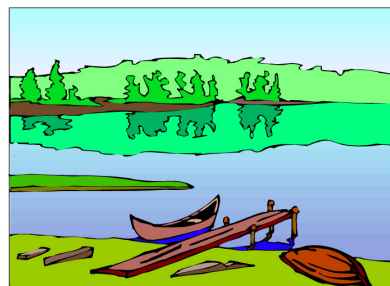
**Where:** CNU - Scheduled to be an in-person competition for now, but could change to virtual

Students can compete as individuals and in teams of 2 - 4 students, so they're encouraged to bring friends. If they register alone, however, they'll be placed on a team at the contest.

[Click here](#) for information.

## Looking for Summer Programs?

There are a lot of appealing options, and deadlines for some are approaching. [Click here](#) to learn how to find summer programs - and what questions you need to ask.



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## Tell a Friend About the PSP! Everyone is Welcome!

If you know someone who might be interested in learning about The Governor's School, or who would benefit from any of the more general information provided here, please encourage him/her to subscribe by signing up on the [Prospective Student Pipeline](#) tab of our website.

**The Governor's School For Science & Technology**  
(757) 766-1100



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