



ACCREDITED BY THE WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
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JOHN F. KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL
331 N. Marine Corps Drive
Tamuning, GU 96931
(671) 642-2100

*The mission of JFKHS is to develop our island students to
become globally primed high achievers.*

FRESHMAN ACADEMY

HANDBOOK

SY 2018-2019

Updated Jan. 9, 2019

Administrative Team

Dr. Barbara Adamos, Principal

Ms. Catherine Diniega, Assistant Principal – Curriculum, Instruction &
Assessment and Student Activities

Mr. Jonathan Pilarca, Assistant Principal – Attendance & Freshman Academy

Mrs. Patricia Leigh T.R. Anub, Assistant Principal – Special Programs & ESL

Mr. Jay Antonio, Assistant Principal – Student Support Services – Discipline &
Interscholastic Sports Program

Ms. Tessie Cruz, Administrative Officer – Finance, Operations and
Administrative Services (FOAS)

GDOE Vision- "Every student: Responsible, Respectful and Ready for Life"

GDOE Mission – Our Educational Community . . . prepares all students for life, promotes excellence, and provides support

FRESHMAN ACADEMY

The Freshman Academy was implemented to assist the incoming 9th graders with making a smooth transition into high school, meeting the rigorous high school standards, and becoming self-sufficient high school students. In addition, John F. Kennedy High School (JFKHS) faculty and administrators endeavor to provide freshmen with a caring environment and individualized attention.

The Academy teams (CHELU, GADAO, TAGA) work with parents and students to focus on the transition to high school, while providing intensive support throughout the school year.

Incoming freshmen are connected to a select team of caring Academy Team teachers who use research-based best practices to teach the curriculum and address students' needs more personally. The freshman year focuses on developing and honing the personal and academic skills of these students, while connecting them to their academic and career pathways that will define their next four years of high school.

Students and their parents should know that there are no acceptable excuses for poor attendance, incomplete schoolwork, or inappropriate behavior. Those attitudes are not tolerated in the workplace, and therefore cannot be tolerated at JFKHS. The Academy allows for more support for those students who need extra assistance in specific areas. Teachers work in a collaborative environment (Professional Learning Communities) and are committed to helping students achieve in as many areas as possible.

Freshman Academy Goal: To provide a personalized learning environment to address the unique needs of freshmen

Objective 1: By end of the first year in high school, the percentage of students losing credit and/or failing one or more courses during the freshman year will decline by 5 percentage points when comparing 1st quarter marks to 1st semester marks and 3rd quarter marks to 2nd semester marks.

Objective 2: By end of the first year in high school, the attendance rate will increase by 5 percentage points when comparing 1st semester attendance data marks to 2nd semester attendance data marks.

Objective 3: By end of each school year in high school, the percentage of students promoting to the next grade level will increase by 2 percentage points when compared to the previous cohort year.

Objective 4: By end of the cohort's graduation year, the percentage of students graduating will increase by 6 percentage points compared to the previous graduating cohort year.

ACADEMY FEATURES

- Engaging and challenging curriculum with an integrated interdisciplinary approach that uses academic content and skills to address real-world projects and problems
- Academically rigorous education that maintains high expectations for each student
- Careful monitoring of student performance and attendance
- Implementation of Standard Based Grading
- Data-driven decision making
- Structured system for providing appropriate extra help and interventions
- Modified Block Schedule
- Intensive math and literacy instruction delivered to students who are two grades or more below 9th grade level
- Personal Adult Advocate program with teachers acting as education advisors and mentors
- Implementation of Choices 360 Portfolio
- Frequent contact between school and parents
- Literacy infusion into all content areas
- Ongoing recognition of accomplishments

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

- Increases academic achievement
- Reduces discrepancies in the achievement gap
- Increases student attendance and works to improve attitudes and behavior
- Reduces isolation
- Promotes positive feelings about self and others
- Provides skills needed to succeed at the next grade level
- Promotes extracurricular participation
- Helps develop student awareness of academic/career options
- Provides student-teacher relationships
- Sets the framework to prepare and guide students to become globally primed high achievers
- Enhances student ability to apply academic content and the skills with emphasis on JFKHS's School-Wide Learning Outcomes (SLOs): responsible citizens, problem solving, effective communication, and technologically literate
- Integrates of academic and technical skills
- Involves each student, along with his parent/guardian, in a guidance and advisory system
- Freshman students are accountable for their learning by reflecting on their performance and assessing their learning to be shared by them.

ACADEMY ORGANIZATION

- All incoming first-time freshmen are assigned to a “Team” which is an organizational arrangement that assigns students and teachers to teams.
- Each team consists of cross-curricular teams of Language Arts (English), Math, Science, and Social Studies. Air Force JROTC and selected electives may be scheduled at the student’s request.
- Freshman Academy teachers have a common planning period based on content area to ensure that a guaranteed and viable curriculum is in place.
- Course offerings cater to varying abilities, i.e. honors, special needs, ESL, math readiness and English development courses.
- Ninth grade students are scheduled in “all freshmen” core classes.

STUDENT SUPPORT EFFORTS

- Team Tutoring
- Parent Shadowing
- Child-Study Teams
- Counseling
- At-risk Interventions

COLLABORATIVE TEAM COMPONENTS

- Each Freshman Academy team of teachers meets weekly during lunch or after school to standardize expectations, develop possible cross-curriculum assignments, and—when necessary—conference with students and/or parents.
- Each student has the same classes with the same teachers, but not necessarily in the same order, ensuing that the student’s peer interactions are varied from class to class.
- The team has established a common system of class rules, procedures, and expectations.
- The team works to identify common problems and to discuss solutions. Such problems include, but are not limited to, classroom discipline and meeting the special needs of individual students.
- General meetings of all teachers of ninth grade students may be held to share ideas and strategies that could benefit all freshmen.
- The team strives for continuous improvement. Faculty members conduct research, participate in workshops, and visit other schools, bringing valuable insights and in-service to ninth grade faculty.
- Program Planning: The student, his or her parents, and the guidance counselor will meet for planning conference, whereby the student has the opportunity to discuss his or her hobbies and interests, as well as goals for high school, post high school education and for a career. The counselor will share this information with the Academy team.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLCs)

- One of the major principles of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in a school setting involves the collaboration among professional educators sharing responsibilities in an effort to address challenges targeting student learning.
- Common planning time is designed to allow teachers a team of teachers to collaborate in PLC-work environment.
- PLCs are a vital component to assess and improve student achievement. Freshman Academy Teachers will meet with their respective teachers in their team or grade level to facilitate PLCs at least once a week. Focus of the PLC should be on students' academic performance; attendance and discipline profiles; discuss and implement innovative and successful strategies, best practices, common assessment, and SMART goals.
 - ✓ Identify essential learning standards.
 - ✓ Hold student/parent conferences, interdisciplinary instructional planning, team events such as team field-trips, traditions, celebrations, and contests, etc.

GOAL-ORIENTED TEAMS

- Teachers take part in on-going coordination and implementation of effective intervention and teaching strategies
- Goals are reviewed annually based on past successes and projected needs.
- Goals are a part of the information that is made available to parents, students, visitors, and other schools. Past successes have fueled the need for continuous improvement

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

- All teachers have email access and phones in their classrooms.
- Parents are encouraged to email/call teachers regularly for updates on their child's progress.
- Teachers are encouraged to communicate with parents regularly and early – for praise worthy things and for areas of concern (i.e. attendance, behavior, grades, and homework).
- Teachers and Counselors will collaborate to set up conferences to deal with academic and behavioral issues; the Freshman Academy Assistant Principal may be invited, if needed.
- The parent conference during 2nd quarter provides insight to the parents regarding their child's progress.
- Each freshman is given a daily planner to help keep track of course assignments, project deadlines, etc. Parents are requested to sign-off having reviewed the planner on a daily basis.

STUDENT ADVOCACY

- The needs of the student come first.
- Teachers are willing to work with students; however, students need to show their commitment as well.
- Conferences help develop the most appropriate plan to allow a student to become successful.
- Freshman students create portfolios that reflect their performance and accurately assess their learning; they are accountable for their learning and share their progress during conferences.
- Freshman students will also have access to Choices 360 to build their career portfolios that will be carried over to their 10th grade and so on.

INTENSIVE SUPPORT

- One goal is getting 100% of our students promoted to tenth grade.
- Success is due to teachers' repeated contact with students and parents.
- Counselors and administrators are involved with at-risk students regularly.

PERSONAL ADULT ADVOCATE (PAA) PROGRAM

- The Teacher/Counselor Advisor is intended to serve as an adult contact that provides support, encouragement, and personal guidance to the students in their teams.
- The Advisor serves as a mentor.
- The Advisor assists in the development of portfolios, including Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and the personal essay.
- The Advisor monitors the progress of the classes.
- The Team provides opportunities for peer tutoring, study hall, and advisement day.
- The Advisor communicates the progress of students to parents.
- The Teacher Advisor assists the student as he or she prepares for the student-sed conference.
- The Advisor plans and provides mini-lessons on the following:
 - ✓ School culture
 - ✓ Academic survival
 - ✓ Communication
 - ✓ Self-concept
 - ✓ Relationships
 - ✓ Problem solving
 - ✓ Decision making

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN

An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a document which provides an ongoing record of a pupil's learning progress. Key features of the ILPs include:

- An assessment of every pupil soon after entry into JFKHS, forming the starting point of the plan
- An agreed program, including targets for attainment and achievement
- The involvement of the pupil, who will take more responsibility for the plan as he or she moves through school
- The pupil's evaluation of the curriculum and community learning opportunities
- A focus on promoting learning in the school, home, and community
- A focus on personal, social, and health education
- A focus on learning about the world of work
- The promotion of study skills and independent learning
- An outline of the main responsibilities of the school, the parents, and the pupil
- Use of information and communication technology

Choices360: Building Portfolio

The XAP Choices360 system is an online portfolio available for career and college planning. The system includes the following features:

(1) Career Planning

Find best fit careers, explore careers, create a resume, and practice a job interview

(2) High School Planning

Create a high school plan of study and locate a helpful high school planning timeline

(3) College Planning

Get help with test prep for the ACT or SAT, explore colleges and apply to college

(4) Financial Aid Planning

Learn about grants and loans, use financial aid calculators and search for scholarships

(5) Your Portfolio

Comprehensive portfolio which reflects the activities completed on the Choices program. Students may use this area to track their progress and complete steps towards an Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Choices360 is a benefit to students, parents, counselors, and other school staff. It provide students the tools to build meaningful education and life plans, and create powerful reports to track student outcomes through Individual Learning Plans (ILP).

EXPLORE- With your Portfolio. College plans, course plans, experiences, careers, accomplishments... they're all captured in a real-time portfolio for students to keep – and for you to track.

CONNECT- With the Professional Center. Increase accountability by generating powerful reports to ensure students are on the right track.

SUCCEED- With the Plan of Study. Meet 4-6 year course plan mandates and ensure students are on track for graduation. You can easily access, update and monitor progress, while parents can review and approve the plan.

ENVISION- With Validated, Research- Based Assessments. Help students generate connections between who they are and who they can become.

ACHIEVE- With Individual Learning Plans. Support student planning using Choices360's flexible ILP activities, which can be tailored to meet district outcomes and reporting needs

Guam Department of Education

Standards-Based Grading Initiative:

“moving towards a more fair, accurate, and informative grading system”

General Information Sheet

What is Standards-Based Grading (SBG)? Standards-Based Grading (SBG) is a system of grading and reporting that measures student achievement of identified standards, skills and topics at each grade level and course. The goal of SBG is to better assess, monitor and communicate what each student knows and is able to do according to a clear and prescribed set of academic expectations. Many in the field of education view SBG as the natural next step in the implementation of content standards and a standards-based education system. On Guam, the first iteration of the Guam Content Standards and Performance Indicators was adopted in the spring of 1999. The revised content standards were adopted in 2010 and the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Math were adopted in 2012. The grading system, however, was never changed to reflect these adoptions and thus the direct reporting of student performance based on these standards was never achieved.

What is a Standard? A standard is an established expectation of what a student should know, understand and be able to do for a particular subject. Here are a couple of examples from two content areas:

- ✓ **English** – *Interpret figures of speech in context and analyze their role in the text.*
- ✓ **Mathematics** – *Measure the length of an object by selecting and using appropriate tools such as rulers, yardsticks, meter sticks, and measuring tapes.*

What are the main differences between SBG and traditional grading? Traditional grading has the potential to be standards-based, but that would all depend on the individual teacher. Unfortunately, with no clear guidance or training provided to teachers and with no process in place to align grading practices, no one really knows what’s supposed to go into a particular grade, leaving each teacher to come up with a system on their own. It is because of this fact that traditional grading provides no real consistency or common meaning to the grades students earn. In contrast, with Standards-Based Grading:

- ✓ **Students will be assessed on a specific set of Standards, Skills and Topics** determined collaboratively by the teachers of that course that reflect and align to the GDOE content standards of that specific course (or national standards if a course does not have a currently adopted set of local standards) as well as any other set of expectations identified by individual or group of teachers.
- ✓ **Student achievement will be assessed and reported using a four-point proficiency scale instead of the current percentage grade.** The simplified scale gives students, teachers, and parents a quicker and clearer reference to easily determine which standards have been mastered and which need further study. These levels of proficiency will then be translated or converted to an easily recognizable letter grade.

Sample/Proposed scale (Important note: this is just one of several scales being discussed.)

4 = Exceeds expectations (advanced performance)	= A+
3.5 meets all of level 3 and approaching level 4	= A
3 = Meets expectations of standard	= B+
2.5 meets all of level 2 and approaching level 3	= B
2 = Approaching expectations of standard (prerequisites)	= C+
1.5 approaching level 2 prerequisites	= C
1 = Shows some foundational knowledge, skills or perquisites	= D
0 = Shows no foundation knowledge, skills or perquisites	= F

Note: with this particular scale, it is being proposed that either a C or C+ be the minimum passing grade. Not a D.

- ✓ **Students’ proficiency levels are assessed and based on a pattern of achievement and then ultimately reported in a formative manner with more recent achievement having more weight:** In traditional grading, a student’s performance for the whole quarter is typically averaged, including lower scores earned early in the grading period. In SBG, a student who reaches proficiency would be reported proficient and the grade would reflect **their current performance level**. This method is more accurate as it reflects what the student’s current level of achievement is

rather than having the grade pulled down by performance earlier in the learning period. Grading a student using this method recognizes and emphasizes the progress and learning the student has achieved over the course of the learning period.

- ✓ **Academics and behavior are assessed and reported separately:** Traditional grading often includes other subjective or behavioral factors like attendance, effort, and attitude, which may influence the grade positively or negatively. In SBG, **academic performance and work habits are reported separately** in order to give a more accurate report of student academic progress. At this time, there are discussions and plans to have a separate grade for character education/behavior and work readiness skills that will be reported along with the academic grade. This would be similar to, but more detailed than the current citizenship grade.

Does this mean that every teacher will have to follow a script and conduct their lessons exactly the same way? No, the system does not go into that much detail. Teachers will still have the flexibility to develop their own unit/lesson plans and determine their classroom activities and assessments that will be used to measure student learning. What will be needed is a consistent set of **Standards, Skills and Topics** for every course taught in the GDOE that are clear and easily understandable for both the teachers and students. **Proficiency Scales** like the one described earlier will be developed collaboratively by teachers based on each of these **Standards, Skills and Topics**. With these guiding documents teachers will now be better able to align all lessons, classroom activities and assessments to a common set of expectations for all students in the course and will thus, be better able to report out student levels of achievement to students and parents.

How will Standards-Based Grading improve student learning? The foundation of Standards-Based Grading is set in the practice of Formative Assessment, namely the process of regularly assessing and monitoring student achievement and modifying instructional strategies and approaches to support student learning. SBG encourages a shift in focus away from the accumulation of points needed to earn a certain grade to instead an awareness of what students know, understand and are able to do in reference to each specific **Standard, Skill or Topic**. Course expectations are more specific and clear, assessed and monitored closely, and will now be directly reflected in the grades students earn.

How will this affect students with special needs or English learners? Students with an IEP, 504, or English language learners will continue to receive accommodations they are eligible to receive as well as the appropriate supports and/or interventions. What is especially helpful for students with special needs and English learners is the fact that course expectations and the levels of those expectations are collaboratively developed and defined by the teachers of that course. This process naturally results in a clearer, more consistent understanding of those expectations by teachers, students, parents and any support personnel. Because of the increased focus on learning the academic content and providing appropriate supports/interventions for all, standards-based grading supports and promotes improved student achievement for all students.

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW: More information will be provided to parents and students over the next few months. During SY2018-19, a select group of teachers in all schools will be piloting SBGs in their classrooms and opportunities to provide input into policy changes will be offered to all stakeholders, particularly students, parents and teachers.

For more information on the Standards-Based Grading Initiative (SBGI), please contact Ms. Christie Blas (cblas@gdoe.net) or Mr. Joe Sanchez (jsanchez@gdoe.net) via email or at the Division of Curriculum and Instruction at 300-1635/1247.

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