Summit School

Ninth Grade Academy

2013-2014
The Ninth Grade Academy at Summit School

Ninth Grade, simultaneously the last year of our Upper School and the first year of high school, introduces students to their first high school year in an environment that capitalizes on the Ninth Graders' position as the oldest students on our campus. The Summit experience includes honors courses in our wide variety of Ninth Grade options. In addition, we emphasize new ways of thinking, time management, positive relationships and increased responsibility for leadership. Ninth Grade experiences develop greater self-confidence in students and, by year's end, produce students who are ready to continue developing their talents and academic potential while contributing significantly to their next school environment. We plan this foundational year to:

Develop leadership roles on the school campus and within the Upper School community through:

- Service project leadership
- Morning work across campus often in early grades classrooms
- Speech to Upper School audience on term paper topic
- Executive Council leadership
- Introduction of speakers at leadership luncheons
- Leadership positions on sports teams
- Leadership positions in arts activities
- Leadership Summit: observing community leaders

Build community with classmates and teachers through:

- Camp High Rocks experience
- Daily advisory sessions
- Goal-setting each term
- Conferences led by students
- Service project planning with adult sponsor

Develop academic potential through:

- Honors level classes
- Optional high school credit courses offered in the Arts and Sciences
- Small classes (average class size 12)
- Teacher support
- Thinking skills sharpened through cross-curricular goals
- Reading and writing skills reinforced through cross-curricular goals and expectations
Develop **time management skills** to balance academic, sports and leadership opportunities through:

- Use of academic planner
- Advisory focus on time management
- Conference focus each semester on time management
- Time management exercises built into Ninth grade curriculum

**Participate in planned activities to enhance beginning preparations for college:**

- Tour a local college campus to hear admissions information
- Participate in an admissions activity led by an area college admissions representative

**Build a beginning high school portfolio to include:**

- Suggested timeline for 10th, 11th and 12th grades
- School and community service documentation
- Service learning leadership plan and evaluation
- Myers-Briggs Type Inventory
- Values and Interests Survey
- Career internship research and reflection
- Leadership luncheon reflections
- Summary of Ninth Grade service and leadership
- Course descriptions of offerings in most high school settings

**Improve interpersonal skills as students:**

- Lead or participate in service learning opportunities
- Lead or participate in sports opportunities
- Participate in discussions with advisory groups on topics related to teen perspectives and Ninth Grade themes of accepting and including others
- Participate in end-of-year leadership and time management discussions related to the transition to larger and more diverse groups for rest of high school

**Celebrate the culmination of students’ years on Summit campus through:**

- Trip to Washington DC
- Graduation week activities
  - Life/SCALE Breakfast and student presentations
  - Class picnic
  - Graduation Dinner/Dance
  - Autograph party and slide show
  - Exhibit of student work in A&T building
  - Graduation Ceremony
Biology

Biology is taught at an honors level and is organized around eight essential units: the nature of life, ecology, cells, genetics, evolution, from microorganisms to plants, animals, and the human body.

English I

Ninth Grade English is taught at an honors level. A term paper is the major writing assignment of the Ninth Grade year. After writing the paper, students distill it into a seven-minute speech. Students write introductions, support their views, and create PowerPoint presentations to accompany their speeches.

World History

Students learn world history through an honors level course that includes news reports, textbook readings, a variety of supplemental materials, research opportunities, and units that target the histories of specific areas of the world. World History students also produce a weekly news broadcast for the school.

Mathematics

Students are placed in one of the following courses: Algebra I-B, Honors Geometry or Honors Algebra II.

Online Earth/Environmental Science (Optional)

Online Earth/Environmental Science is a honors level course for Ninth Graders. Students do their lesson investigations independently in their free time at home or in study hall. Students may begin this course as early as July 1 to get a head start. Students have until May to complete all lessons and the final exam.

World Languages

Students have the choice of studying French, Latin, Mandarin Chinese or Spanish. The year includes opportunities for an off-campus immersion experience as well as optional overseas trips.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math-Optional)

STEAM is designed to give students the opportunity to use and develop skills to solve real world problems and become critical thinkers. This hands-on class will teach students how to create, fail, and learn from their failures to make a final product or solution. (This class transfers as an elective credit).

Life/SCALE

All Ninth Graders participate in the Life/SCALE course. They take the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), study life management skills, donate 15 hours of school and community service, attend three Leadership Luncheons to hear from community leaders, and experience one-day career internships and a four-day team-building trip to Camp High Rocks. The Leadership Summit focus takes them off campus to learn about our community, its programs and its needs and to observe community leaders in action.
DIGITAL ARTS

Computer and Digital Studios
Classes and special activities facilitate students’ use of research resources, industry standard digital media software and common practices for the development of media based projects. Students explore graphic arts, video editing, music composition and recording, 3D design, animation, and application/game development. The digital media and digital music studios encourage students to take advantage of these resources and apply skills learned in their curricular work in all classes.

Television Production
Students have an opportunity to create, write and film their own television productions. Students learn how to write effective scripts, use professional camera equipment and produce a variety of shows for Summit’s in-house television station. Goals also include developing public speaking skills, an understanding of broadcast journalism and the history of radio and television. World View is a weekly news broadcast produced by World History classes and Summit TV6.

PERFORMING ARTS

Theater I (Optional)
Students may earn one high school credit by participating in the Upper School drama or comedy and musical productions as well as activities related to scene and monologue work, technical theater and design.

Music
Students explore singing technique, musical theater, music theory and handbell technique during the Ninth Grade year, and may participate in an honors chorus ensemble. They have the option of participating in a musical performance where they do both solo and ensemble singing and sing in two- and three-part harmony. Ninth Grade Commencement features both choral singing and handbell performances.

VISUAL ARTS

Art I (Optional)
This one high school credit course includes drawing, acrylic painting, photographic silkscreen painting and art history. Students extend experiences through independent portfolio work. They also view art exhibitions and write reflections, all under the supervision of our visual arts staff.

Photography
Using digital photography, students produce a documentary in PowerPoint about their last year at Summit. They also create PowerPoint illustrations for their Ninth Grade speeches.

Pottery
Students use a conscious approach to making pottery by choosing a preferred learned method or technique to develop a challenging, useful and functional project that can be taken home or given to the school.
Ninth Grade Highlights

Trip to Costa Rica

Ninth graders travel to Costa Rica in January as a curriculum complement to the earth and life science, Spanish, the Life/SCALE program, and service. Students have the opportunity to explore the rainforests, two volcanos, and a beautiful country. Students get to connect with young children from a local school where they will see first hand the importance of serving others. They also have the opportunity to donate school supplies and will plant rainforest trees as part of a conservation effort. In addition, Spanish students are able to practice speaking Spanish while in Costa Rica. Global awareness is more essential than ever for our children, and the best way to become globally aware is by traveling abroad. Experiencing new cultures not only opens students’ eyes to the world, it also prepares them for the future. More and more colleges and universities are looking for international experience on students’ applications to set them apart. Travel isn’t just educational; it’s an investment that gives your child an advantage in a competitive world.

Guidance

RAP (Reflections and Perceptions) includes small group discussions on topics related to growing up in today’s world; advisory groups discuss goal setting, time management and other topics relevant to Ninth Graders.

Advisory Groups

Students continue to work closely with an adult advisor who encourages academic goals, time management strategies and discusses topics of concern or interest to Ninth Graders. The spring term focuses on ideas related to the transition to a larger, more diverse school. Advisors collaborate with and support Ninth Graders in their leadership roles for on-campus work and service learning projects.

Exploravision/Toshiba Projects

Students apply their science skills and knowledge of concepts to an optional independent study project sponsored by Exploravision and Toshiba.

Sports

Ninth Graders can participate in three seasons of team sports (Fall, Winter, Spring) or physical education classes. Off-campus sports options can be considered for their physical education credit.

Social Studies

Students experience a four-day trip to Washington, D.C. that includes visits to museums, monuments and government offices.
**HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT FOR NINTH GRADE COURSES**

English *..........................................................1 credit
Math (Geometry or Algebra II) *............................1 credit
Math (Algebra I- B)..............................................½ credit
World Language..................................................1 credit
World History *..................................................1 credit
Biology *............................................................1 credit
Online Earth/Environmental Science (optional) *......1 credit
Physical Education.............................................1 credit
Life/SCALE ......................................................½ credit
Art I (optional).....................................................1 credit
Theater I (optional)..............................................1 credit
STEAM (optional)...............................................1 credit
Online Health (optional)....................................½ credit

* designates an Honors credit course

A Summit Ninth Grader can earn as many as nine high school credits during the Ninth Grade year; it currently takes 22 credits to earn a high school diploma in North Carolina.

Most core courses transfer to WS/FC public high schools with an honors designation. The public schools do not give honors credit until Level III of a world language, and most of our students leave our Ninth Grade ready to take Level III language classes in their sophomore year. The honors designation allows the student to earn a higher QPA (Quality Point Average), a weighted GPA used in determining class rank at some schools.

Occasionally, if a student is not a good fit for the honors level, the requirements and tests are modified to a regular level, and the student receives regular credit.
Frequently Asked Questions about Ninth Grade

When did Summit start a ninth grade and why?

In 1956, a ninth grade began with nine students, and the ninth grade has been a vital part of Summit's program ever since. The ninth grade was started to meet the developmental needs of students.

What is the advantage of having a ninth grade?

Our ninth graders never have to be lowly freshmen in a four-year setting. Instead, as the oldest students in the school, they wear the mantle of student leadership, which enhances their confidence. They can focus on the challenging curriculum described earlier without the social and emotional pressures of trying to fit in with tenth through twelfth graders. Having no student drivers on campus allows us to keep our campus focused on young students and early adolescents.

Isn't it hard for students to enter schools where most students have begun a year earlier?

Alums tell us that after a few weeks, they feel quite comfortable in their new schools. Counselors and admissions personnel report that our students frequently earn academic honors and are chosen for leadership positions in service clubs, academic clubs, student government and other extracurricular activities. Our students do well wherever they go - local independent or faith-based schools, public schools, and boarding schools.

What about sports?

Most Summit ninth graders participate on a sports team. Their leadership is important to the younger students who follow their examples. Our strongest athletes are able to earn spots on competitive teams in schools after Summit. Others enjoy the fact that they were able to play varsity sports in at least one high school year, and they have tales to tell forever.

Isn't it better to move on from a more protected environment and experience the "real world?"

Current brain research informs us that the brains of early adolescents are still growing and vulnerable, especially those parts of the brain that control judgment. Parents may have known that, but now the research is clear and supportive of common wisdom. Keeping students in a familiar environment where adults are in close contact with students and where older adolescents are not exerting pressure to conform increases the chances for sound judgments. In fact, public schools in some states are now promoting ninth grade academies designed just for their ninth graders since they realize ninth graders fare better apart from older students.

Is it unusual to have a school that goes from pre-kindergarten through ninth grade?

Though unusual in our area, many schools in the Northeast and elsewhere enjoy that configuration. Summit's ninth grade is considered large in number (our ten-year average is 35) since many of our peer schools have ninth grades with 15-20 students enrolled.
“The sense of accomplishment that I feel after finishing a tough project, leading a sports team, and making it to the weekend is all the better knowing that this is our first year of high school yet we are still at Summit. It is the perfect situation.”

“Our experience has been so different from any other year just because we have so much newfound responsibility. Our ninth grade teachers care so much about how well we do; I can’t imagine having any other teachers. High Rocks was a great way to get closer, face fears and have fun. Our ninth grade class is made up of great people; I think we can get really close. I am learning, but I hope I can get organized before it is over. The last year is here!”

“Ninth grade has been the hardest school year of my life, but I also think I have learned and developed more than any other year so far. I have learned more about leadership, organization and time management so far than ever before.”

“The way that the ninth grade teachers treat us is different than we have ever experienced. They expect more from us and under those expectations, we are able to flourish. Through the Life/SCALE program, I’m finding leadership qualities within myself that I never even knew I possessed.”

“Ninth grade has been my favorite year at Summit. I really look forward to the speech and have enjoyed the debates about the election. Summit allows us and encourages us to state our opinions and back them up with fact. This has been invaluable. Leaving first from assembly is great as well!”

“This year has been my best year at Summit. If I didn’t stay I wouldn’t have known what to do. Staying was the best thing I ever did. The leadership experience is fantastic, and all of the activities we participate in.”

“I’m glad I stayed for 9th grade. This year has probably been my favorite year at Summit; the people, the classes, the teachers. So far 9th grade has been great.”

“I have learned so much about myself and about the world around me. I feel so prepared for the life ahead of me.”
**WHERE DO OUR GRADUATES GO?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School Selected</th>
<th>2010-2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Public High Schools</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Independent/Faith-Based Schools</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boarding School</td>
<td>11%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Boarding Schools our students chose (2010-2013):**

- Andover
- Asheville School
- Episcopal High School
- Lawrenceville
- Loomis Chaffee
- Maderia
- McCallie
- Salem Academy
- St. Mary’s
- St. Paul’s
- The Hotchkiss School
- Virginia Episcopal School
- Woodberry Forest
Alumni/ae College Directory

Appalachian State University
Bard College
Baylor University
Boston College
Boston University
Brevard College
Brown University
Bucknell University
Campbell University
Carnegie Mellon University
Carson Newman College
Clemson University
College of Charleston
Columbia University
Columbus State University
Cornell College
Davidson College
Duke University
East Carolina University
Elon University
Emory University
Ferrum College
Furman University
Georgetown University
Georgia Institute of Technology
Guilford College
Hampton College
Hampton-Sydney College
Haverford College
High Point University
Howard University
James Madison University
Johns Hopkins University
London Academy of Music &
Dramatic Arts
Louisiana State University
Maryland Institute College of Art
McPherson College
Meredith College
Middlebury College
Montana State University
New York University
North Carolina State University
Northwestern University
Notre Dame
Ohio State University
Pace University
Princeton University
Radford University
Rhodes College
Rice University
Roanoke College
Rochester Institute of Technology
Salem College
Savannah College of Art & Design
Sewanee University
Spelman College
Sweetbriar College
Texas Christian University
Tulane University
UNC - Asheville
UNC- Chapel Hill
UNC- Charlotte
UNC- Greensboro
UNC - Pembroke
UNC- Wilmington
University of Alabama
University of Arizona
University of Georgia
University of Iowa
University of Mississippi
University of Pennsylvania
University of Puget Sound
University of South Carolina
University of Tennessee
University of Texas
University of the South
University of Virginia
U. S. Naval Academy
Vanderbilt University
Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia Tech
Wake Forest University
Warren Wilson College
Washington and Lee University
Wesleyan University
Western Carolina University
William and Mary College
Wofford College