

What is open campus?

What is a block schedule?

How many years of PE class must my student take (or, what should I know about Athletics)?

What kinds of academic help are available for my student?

What does the College and Career Center offer?

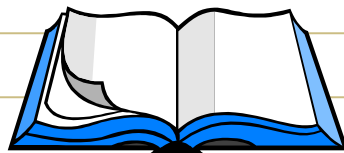
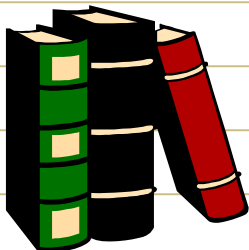
How can parents help out at High School?

What is the difference between AP and Honors classes?

What are weighted grades?

What are the "a-g" courses?

How can students pursue their individual interests in high school?



## FAQ's (continued)



### What is open campus?

Open campus means that students are free to come and go anytime they are not assigned to be in class. Students must still be signed in/out by a parent for doctor appointments, etc. The caveat is that the attendance policy is very strict for absences and for tardies. A student going off campus for lunch, for example, needs to be careful to return to the next period without being tardy. High school has a cafeteria, and students often still bring their own lunches from home.

### What is a block schedule?

The daily schedule has zero through 7th period, although most students go to school for fewer periods during the day. Wednesdays and Thursdays have block scheduling: Wednesdays students have only their even (odd) periods and Thursdays their odd (even) periods. This block scheduling allows for longer class sessions on those days, ideal for science labs, etc. Check the school home page (**Daily Bell Schedule**) for the exact schedule and to coordinate carpools or public bus schedules.

## FAQ's (continued)



**How many years of PE class must my student take (or, what should I know about Athletics)?**

Both MVHS and LAHS require 20 units (2 years) of PE.

Health is not integrated with PE.

Students must wear a PE uniform, which can be purchased from the bookkeeper at the beginning of the school year. If your student wants to enroll in PE for every quarter of his/her freshman and sophomore years, he or she is "golden."

Check out the online School PE pages and Parent / Student Handbook about the availability of PE alternatives or options.

**What kinds of academic help are available for my student?**

The high school offers free services at its on-site tutorial center. Many dedicated volunteer tutors (student and adult) assist students throughout the day and after school. Make sure your student is aware of this resource and uses it as needed. In addition, each student is assigned a guidance counselor (the same one for all 4 years) who can help him/her with course selection, progress towards graduation, summer opportunities and more. All students meet with their counselor at least one time per year and parents are encouraged to attend. Additional meetings may be set up if needed.

## FAQ's (continued)



### **What does the College and Career Center offer?**

#### *College Library & Meeting Room*

- Contains college guides, catalogs, videos, scholarship information
- Hosts College Admission representatives visiting MVHS and LAHS (listed in the online Naviance - Family Connection pages)
- Holds College Open Houses and on-campus Admissions events;

#### *PSAT, SAT & ACT Info*

- Registration info; flyers for test prep courses; practice SAT/ACT booklets and prep books

#### *Financial Aid Info*

#### *Job Info and Volunteer Opportunities*

#### *California Scholarship Federation (honor society) applications*

#### *Summer college programs and internships*

Refer to the online Curriculum Handbook for course descriptions, graduation requirements, UC and CSU entrance requirements, and information about special programs such as ROP, AVID, Special Education, and ELD.

The School website has a wealth of information under the **Counseling** link.

## FAQ's (continued)

### How can parents help out at High School?

Parents have the opportunity to help our kids in many different ways. Here are some of the ways you can get involved:

If you want to see your kid in action, help out with the marching band, drama, or choir. Some sports teams rely on volunteers (for example, the track team needs lots of people to run home meets).

Offer to chaperone a field trip if a class is taking one.

The Tutorial Center is always looking for adults willing to tutor students in a wide variety of subjects. If you have a college degree you probably have what it takes to be of assistance. In addition, tutors introduce/reinforce successful study habits as well as being positive role models.

If you prefer to work behind-the-scenes, there are other things you can do that are tremendously meaningful for the students. For example, you can sign up to work in the College and Career Center (CCC), the school library, or the attendance office.

In most cases, the way to sign up to help is through the E-list page on the High school website. On the home page, click on **Elists** in the left hand navigation menu. This will take you to a registration page where you enter your name and e-mail address.

Then simply check the box next to each e-list you are interested in joining. The staff person or volunteer in charge of the activity will use the e-list to contact members and get things organized.

## FAQ's (continued)

### What is the difference between AP and Honors classes?

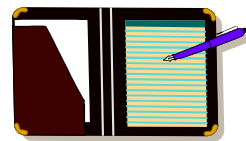
*AP (Advanced Placement) Courses* - College level courses offered in a high school setting using a national curriculum. An AP exam is given in the spring. Students who score 3 or higher (out of 5) pass the exam and may be eligible for college credit. (Colleges have individual policies for awarding full, partial, or no credit for AP courses taken in high school.) AP classes receive weighted credit in a student's weighted GPA.

*Honors (H) Courses* - Courses that are taught at the high school level but move at a faster pace, cover more material, and require more homework. New in 2008, all Honors classes receive weighted credit in a student's weighted GPA.

MVHS and LAHS have an open enrollment policy for taking AP or Honors classes, meaning that there are no specific grade requirements that students must meet to take Honors/AP classes. Students **may** transfer out of an Honors /AP class if they discover that it is more work than expected, however the window of time to make the transition is limited to a few weeks after the start of the school year, and there are no guarantees that there will be room in the regular college-prep level classes for a given subject. (Students may withdraw from the course later in the year, but the withdrawal will show on their transcript.) Students are encouraged to think carefully about the amount of academic challenge and homework they're prepared to handle before signing up for multiple Honors/AP classes.

Freshmen have limited options in advanced coursework. They can take *Geometry Honors, Chemistry Honors, and Spanish II Honors*. No AP classes are offered to freshmen.

## FAQ's (continued)



### What are weighted grades?

MVHS and LAHS calculate a student's GPA in two ways: unweighted and weighted. Both GPAs appear on the student's official transcript. Weighted classes receive an extra point in the weighted GPA calculation. For example, a "B" in AP English would be worth 3.0 unweighted, 4.0 weighted. UC's consider weighted grades for the sophomore and junior years. Other colleges have their own policies regarding weighted versus unweighted GPAs. Weighted grades do not appear on a student's report card, and they do not alter the actual letter grade earned in a class.

### What are the "a-g" courses?

This refers to the course requirements for the freshman admission to University of California (UC) & California State University (CSU). The University maintains a searchable website that lists certified "a-g" courses for all California public high school: [www.ucop.edu/doorways](http://www.ucop.edu/doorways).

MVHS and LAHS offer full pre-collegiate programs approved by the above UC requirements. Besides talking to school counselors and College / Career Center at the High school, students and parents can check out the following websites: [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu) and [www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/) for additional information.

## FAQ's (continued)

How can students pursue their individual interests in high school?

MVHS and LAHS offer many different ways for kids to explore their interests and get involved in a variety of activities.

**Classes:** If your student loves science, s/he can plunge right into Chemistry Honors in Freshman year. Physics students create contraptions to "walk on water" across the school pool. Bio AP offers the opportunity to perform an optional research project, working with a mentor outside the school. For example, one student worked with a physician at Stanford Hospital researching prostate cancer. Classes offered to young artists include Ceramics, Photography, and Painting. Music aficionados can participate in three levels of choir, Marching Band, Orchestra, or several select instrumental groups. Dancers can join the Color Guard, or take Jazz Dance. There's something for everyone, and a lot to choose from, so encourage your student to spend some time reading the *Course Selection Guide (Worksheet)*, which is available online on the MVHS and LAHS website under the **Counseling => Course Selection** page.

**Athletics:** MVHS and LAHS offer a variety of sports for active students. See the "How many years of PE class must my student take (or, what should I know about Athletics)?" section of this page. You can also look on the web site under **Athletics** for a listing of the sports and for more information.

## FAQ's (continued)

How can students pursue their individual interests in high school? (continued)

**Clubs:** Dozens of extra-curricular clubs complement classes and athletics. There are clubs dedicated to academic interests like French Club and Book Club. There are clubs devoted to sports that are not offered through the athletic program, like Ultimate Frisbee and Dragon Boating. There are community service clubs like the Key Club (linked to the Kiwanis), the Leos (linked to the Lion's Club), and Unidos (tutoring children whose first language is Spanish). There are some just-for-fun clubs like the Harry Potter club. It is relatively easy to start a club at MVHS and LAHS, so if your student's passion is not addressed by an existing club, s/he can start his own. Students are given more information about clubs at the beginning of the school year.

Meanwhile, you and your student can look on the web site (click on **Student Activities**, then click on **Clubs**) for a listing of the current year's clubs, since there is some turnover from year to year. You can also look on the e-list page, since many clubs communicate via e-lists.





## FAQ's (continued)

### How can students pursue their individual interests in high school? (continued)

While students are encouraged to participate, they should be aware of the time commitment associated with the activities they choose. Some classes, notably Honors and AP classes, entail a heavy homework load.

Sports and music take on more intensity at the high school level. Try-outs, camps, practices and other mandatory activities for participation can span weekends, later into school nights and also into holiday and vacation periods. Clubs vary widely in the amount of time students spend on them. Some clubs meet during class periods as well as after school. Some students may be happy joining just one club, others with good time management skills thrive in multiple activities. Keeping these things in mind, students can take advantage of the many opportunities offered by MVHS and LAHS to get involved, meet new people, and have a wonderful high school experience.

