RIDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Competency Based Learning

Information Guide

At Ridgewood High School, we believe that all students can learn, achieve and succeed. The competency-based structure is first and foremost designed to ensure students are successfully learning. By focusing on competency-based practices, such as prioritizing the most essential knowledge and skills, providing rigorous and engaging learning experiences aligned to clear outcomes, and ensuring that all students have access and supports to reach those standards, Ridgewood graduates students better prepared for college, career, and life.

This handbook is to serve as a tool for effectively and efficiently communicating information to all stakeholder groups. The goal is to provide cohesive communication structures across our district so that families receive consistent communication at all grade levels as their child progresses through our school.

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Mission Statement

The mission of Ridgewood High School is to focus on learning:

- *Students will become adaptable life-long learners and responsible, ethical citizens, with the ability to make informed decisions in a changing global society.*
- *Students will demonstrate learning in multiple settings and in multiple ways.*
- *Members of the Ridgewood High School community will collaborate to ensure that every student learns.*

Vision Statement

The vision of Ridgewood High School is to create an inviting environment.

> *The Ridgewood High School Community creates a stimulating and respectful learning environment, which ensures individual students become autonomous leaders in their pursuit of a well-rounded, multi-faceted education grounded by innovation, aspiration and imagination*

Our Learning Model
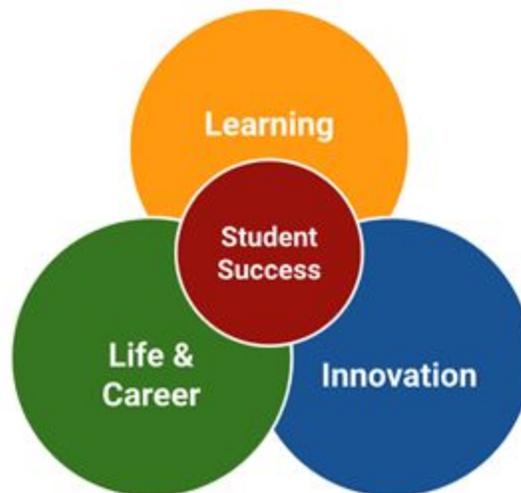
Students at Ridgewood High School demonstrate their learning through multiple opportunities and through varied forms of assessment. Students actively learn and apply critical-thinking and problem-solving skills along with the critical skills of communication, collaboration and cultural responsiveness to help them work in ever-changing, diverse workplaces. In addition to being graded on academic performance, students receive grades related to meeting deadlines, participation, effort, and other skills critical to academic and life success.

Competency Based Grading

In a competency based system, students advance at their own pace and are evaluated on their performance and application of skills. Teachers use the Ridgewood competency rubrics to assess skills or concepts in multiple contexts and multiple ways. Assessment rubrics are explicit in what students must be able to know and do to progress to the next level of proficiency. Our rubrics were designed around student needs, life experiences, and the skills needed for them to be college & career ready. Unlike a traditional grading system, competency based grading does not focus on "points." Rather, students move along a learning continuum and advance at their own pace.

How is a Student's Grade Determined?

At Ridgewood High School, we understand that a quality *grading system* communicates student learning and provides an opportunity for reflection. In a competency based model, attention is on student growth in learning not student grades. Students move from one level of learning to the next based on the evidence given for each competency. This level system describes a student's current status with regards to their learning. RHS uses 6 levels to describe a student's proficiency.

Throughout the semester, performance assessments are given to students to assess their learning. These performance assessments are linked to the competencies they are designed to assess. A traditional letter grade is assigned at the end of each semester. This grade is based on a collection of student evidence (including performance assessments).

A student's final grade is a reflection of the level of proficiency that a student has reached toward each of the competencies in the following categories: Learning (40%), Innovation (40%), and Life & Career (20%).

Pacing & Reassessment

Ridgewood High School does not see grading as a terminal event. We understand that students learn at different rates and may need multiple chances to demonstrate proficiency in a competency. A significant difference between traditional grading and competency based grading is that students have multiple opportunities to show proficiency of a competency before the grade is final. This helps struggling learners really grasp the material before moving forward and allows high achieving students the opportunity to move ahead in their learning.

Students complete performance assessments after they have demonstrated readiness. This makes formative assessments (classwork, homework, learning tasks) an important step in their learning. Not every assessment or task will be available for reassessment. Assignments that are designed as practice may or may not be required to be re-done. In most instances, assessments

and tasks are ongoing, so students will have several opportunities to show growth and improve their scores.

Any student who is issued a Not Met is allowed additional time, practice, and/or instruction to ensure the student has learned the necessary skills. Students are not penalized by the averaging of assignment or assessment scores over time if additional interventions, including but not limited to additional time, practice, and/or instruction, are needed.

Grading Scale

A   90-100%

B   80-89%

C   70-79%

NM (Not Met) 0-69%

Freshman Year

Ridgewood High School views ninth grade as both a transitional and foundational year. The Freshman Program helps connect student learning to real world experiences. It is the first step in expanding students' vision of possibilities after high school.

The freshman team consists of a group of teachers representing the following core subjects: English, Math, Social Studies, Science, Special Education, and Wellness. This team works closely with elective teachers to round out the program.

Core courses for Freshman Year:

- English 1 *OR* English 1 Honors *OR* PEERS English
- Integrated Math 1 *OR* Honors Integrated Math *OR* PEERS Math
- Introduction to Computer Programming (.5 credits)
- World Cultures (.5 credits)
- Health (.5 credits)
- PE (.5 credits)
- Project Lead the Way (PLTW)
- Elective Choice (Language/ Band/ Strategic Study Skills)

All freshmen are assigned an advisor that meets with them daily to help track progress and keep students on the path to college and career readiness.

The freshman schedule also allows for early dismissal every day as long as a student is on track in their coursework. This means freshmen will attend school periods 1-7 and be dismissed after 7th period. If a student is not on track with his/ her coursework (per their advisor) then they will receive an intervention period at the end of the day and be dismissed at 3 p.m. (after 8th period). Intervention placements will change on an as- needed basis.

Sophomore Year

Similar to freshman year, students entering 10th grade work with a team of teachers representing the following core subjects: English, Math, Social Studies, Science, Computer Science, Special Education, and Wellness. This team works closely with a variety of elective teachers in the building to add to each student's program.

With the foundational year behind them, the sophomore experience is all about Career Exploration and discovering career pathways. At RHS, we want students to explore career possibilities that build on their talents and interests. To do this, we have designed the sophomore experience.

Ridgewood High School has adopted two broad Career Pathways: Arts & Sciences and Business & Technology.
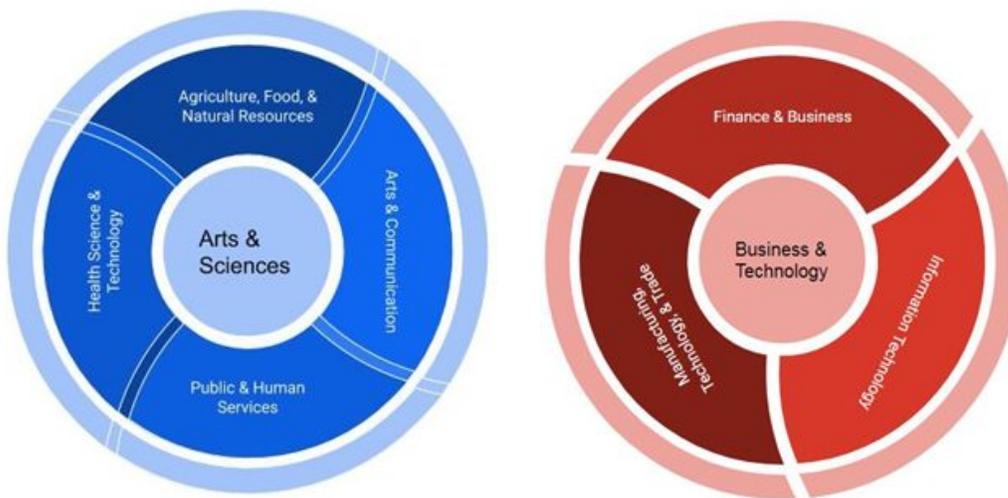
These pathways allow students the opportunity to explore individual Career Clusters through their elective choices.

Sophomore year continues with the advisory program. Each student meets with an individual advisor daily to help track progress and keep students on the path to college and career readiness. Sophomores have the opportunity to choose either a late start (school begins start time is 8:45 versus 8 a.m.) or early release (school end time is 2:15 versus 3 p.m.) at the time of registration. An intervention period will be assigned in lieu of early release or late start if a student is not meeting course expectations.

Junior & Senior Year

Junior and Senior year offers a robust mix of learning experiences.   All students are expected to meet the same core competencies, but flexibility is given regarding specific content, how to engage with the content, and how to demonstrate their learning. Students take ownership in managing their learning, including co-designing units of learning based on which competencies they need to meet and participating in experiences outside our building. Students are not only empowered to be self-advocates, but actually have a voice in decisions that are being made.

Junior and Senior year programs of study include:

- Advanced Placement Courses
- Workplace Learning Experiences
- Career Activities
- Pathway Elective Courses
- Industry Certifications
- Career Endorsements
- Dual Credit

Graduation Competencies & Requirements

Competencies are student learning targets that represent specific concepts, skills, and knowledge applied within or across courses at Ridgewood High School. Graduation competencies are those needed for a student to be college and career ready when they leave our District. This includes core academic course competencies as well as knowledge, skills, and work-study practices.

Graduation Competencies		
Life & Career	**Innovation**	**Learning**
Professionalism	Project Quality	Reading
	Presentation	Writing
	Research	Problem Solving
	Collaborative Discussion	Financial Literacy
		Globally Informed Citizen
		Design Process
		Wellness

Students will meet their graduation competencies through a variety of courses and experiences throughout their time at Ridgewood. Certain courses are required for graduation. The number of credits in specific areas is listed below. Students must earn a total of 23 credits in order to graduate RHS.

Credits Required	Core Area
4	English
3	Math
3	Science
2	Social Studies (Civics & U.S. History)
3.5	Physical Education
.5	Health
2	World Language, Business, Vocational, Computer Science
1	Fine & Applied Arts

**Ridgewood High School Students must demonstrate proficiency in the U.S. and Illinois Constitutions which can be demonstrated in designated Social Studies courses. Students will also demonstrate proficiency in consumer education by taking the consumer education proficiency test offered throughout a variety of business and math courses.

Educational Technology

Canvas

Canvas is a learning management system that houses courses. The courses are designed to be self-directed so students have the opportunity to work through the course at an accelerated pace if they so choose. Pacing will be flexible based on student learning styles and needs. Teachers will use Canvas for communication, grades, discussion boards, assignments, etc. Canvas serves as a "one stop shop" for all of your RHS needs. It is accessible via an app or the district website www.d234.org.

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Administrative Contact

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