Chapter 2 – Academics

2.1 – The Curriculum

Since 1823 Foxcroft Academy's mission has been to prepare all students for "the great duties of life"; preparation for productive participation in the globalized 21st century economy will also require some form of post-secondary education for the majority of our students. To that end, the Academy's goal is to provide all students with the academic background necessary for success in post-secondary education. While some students may choose not to go to college, our commitment is to create of system of learning so that every Foxcroft Academy student will have the option to do so. Since its development in the late 1990's and implementation in 2000 for the graduating class of 2004, the Academy's standards-based curriculum and grading system has continued the tradition of preparing students for life-long learning and success.

2.1.1 – Standards

Within modern curriculum design, standards are descriptors of the core concepts and skills that students are expected to learn within a particular course or subject area. By identifying a standardized set of concepts and skills within courses, the educational experience becomes more consistent, and teachers can provide more detailed diagnostic feedback on student learning. Although it is true to some degree that schools and teachers have always had standards, they may not have always articulated them openly or consistently. Foxcroft Academy, like many other schools around the state, nation, and globe, are using standards to accomplish several goals:

- To articulate clearly and in detail our expectations on what students must learn
- To provide detailed diagnostic feedback on student learning
- To ensure a basic understanding of core concepts and skills
- To coordinate consistent and effective implementation of the curriculum

2.1.2 – Expectations

Articulated standards improve a curriculum by defining the specific content knowledge and skills that must be learned in various subject areas and courses. Another important aspect of our standards-based curriculum is to provide clear descriptions of how students will demonstrate their knowledge and what grade will be earned for different performance levels. Rubric documents are a critical component of standards-based assessment, and provide students with detailed information on what the teacher expects students to be able to do in order to earn a particular grade. Rubrics help students to reach their goals, and also help teachers to provide consistent and detailed feedback for complex assessments that measure student understanding of multiple standards.

Foxcroft Academy expects that students will demonstrate advanced understanding (B- or above) of the majority of the standards in our curriculum. Our curriculum allows for a small number of standards to be understood at the basic level (C- or above). However, because individual standards are, by definition, critical pieces of knowledge and skill, students do not receive credit for completing their coursework if any individual standard is unsatisfactorily understood (D or below). Students must meet performance expectations for standards across mandatory courses in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Fine Arts, Physical Education, Health, and Computer Science. Students must also meet performance expectations for standards in their elective courses.

2.1.3 – Flexibility

Foxcroft Academy recognizes that different students have different academic interests and skills. Mandatory courses, as well as some elective courses, are offered at various levels of study ranging from Advanced Placement to Applied / General. Students are not tracked, and may choose different levels of study for different courses depending upon their interests and skills. Our curriculum also provides support for students who, for one reason or another, find it difficult to demonstrate the expected level of understanding within a course that addresses mandatory standards. Academic support structures include opportunities for replacement assessments, scheduled study halls, the daily conference period, academic support periods, standards completion courses, and make-up courses.

2.2 – The Grading System

The Foxcroft Academy grading system uses letter grades A – F, some with "+" and "-" modifiers, to provide clear and widely understood diagnostic feedback on student learning. Grades are issued for individual standards to indicate the degree to which the student understands these core concepts and skills addressed within a course. A summary overview grade is also issued in each class to indicate the degree to which the student understands the entire set of standards involved. Individual standard grades are recorded on quarterly report cards, while summary overview grades are recorded on interim reports, report cards, and the transcript.

Table 3: The Foxcroft Academy Grading System

Grade	Definition	%	GPA
A	Superior understanding of standard(s)	95-100	4.00
A-		90-94	3.67
B+	Advanced understanding of standard(s)	87-89	3.33
B		83-86	3.00
B-		80-82	2.67
C+	Basic understanding of standard(s)	77-79	2.33
C		73-76	2.00
C-		70-72	1.67
D	Unsatisfactory understanding of standard(s)	60-69	1.00
F	No understanding of standard(s)	50-59	0.00

Table 4: Foxcroft Academy Expectations

Grade	Individual Standard	Summary Overview
A	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations
A-	Meets expectations	
B+		
B		
B-		
C+	Partially meets expectations	
C		
C-		Partially meets expectations
D	Does not meet expectations	
F		

Foxcroft Academy expects most individual standards to be understood at the B- level or above, but allows for a few standards to be understood at the C- level or above. Some specific standards must be understood at the B- level or above. The teacher of each class provides information to students regarding specific standards that must be understood at specific levels, and regarding the number of standards that must be understood at specific levels. The level of understanding of individual standards determines the summary overview grade that the student will earn for the class.

Students must understand all content and communication and reasoning standards at the B- level or above in order to achieve a summary overview grade of B- or above. If a small but acceptable number of standard grades are understood at the C- level or above, a summary overview grade of C or C+ will be reported. If a grade of D or F is earned for any individual content or communication and reasoning standard, the maximum summary overview grade is C-. Specific information is provided to students in each class about the expectations for understanding the specific standards.

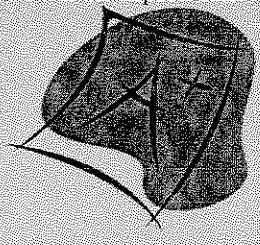
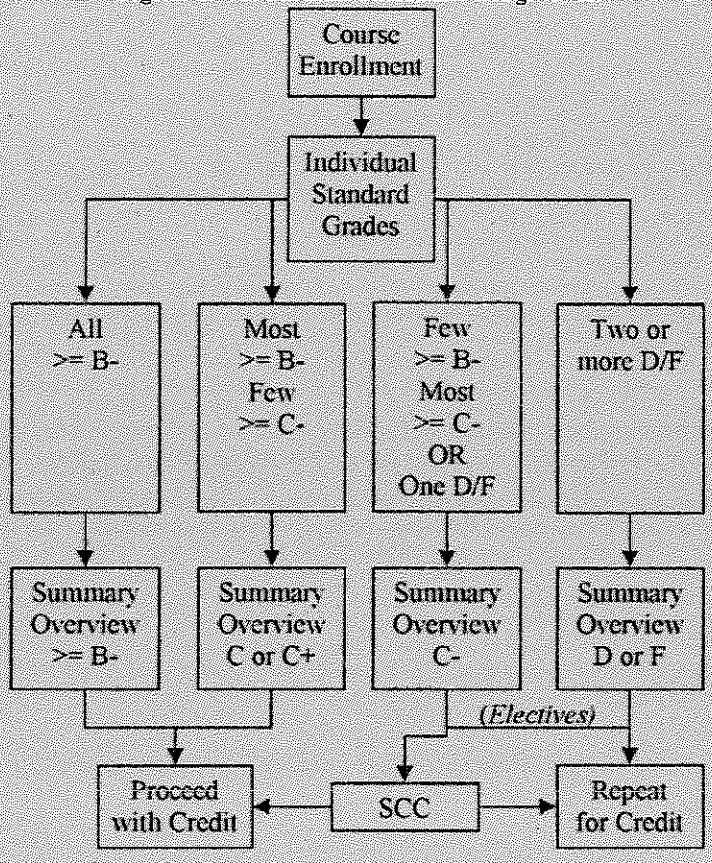


Figure 1: Grades and Curricular Progression



Credit is earned when students achieve a summary overview grade of C or above. For mandatory courses, credit may be earned with a summary overview grade of C- if the student succeeds in a subsequent standards completion class (SCC). Because SCCs are only offered for mandatory courses, students with final summary overview grades of C- or below in an elective course must repeat that course in order to earn credit. For mandatory and elective courses that take place in sequence, students must earn a summary overview grade of C- or above in order to progress to the next course in the sequence (i.e.: a student with a D in Geometry may not progress to Algebra II).

2.3 – Graduation Requirements

Foxcroft Academy has a rigorous set of requirements that must be met in order to earn a diploma, including enrollment, academic achievement, and community service. In order to graduate, students must complete four full years of attendance at the secondary level. In addition, students must earn at least 17 credits in mandatory courses and at least 3 credits in elective courses, for a total of at least 20 credits. One credit is earned when a student demonstrates understanding of standards at the level of expectation established by the Academy, resulting in a summary overview grade of C or better in a course that meets for 102 hours of instructional time. Half credit may be earned in a course that meets for 51 hours of instructional time, and 1.5 credits may be earned for a lab course that meets for 153 hours. Finally, students must complete a total of 36 hours of service to their community.

Summary of Graduation Requirements:

- At least 8 semesters of secondary school enrollment
- At least 17 credits from the following mandatory courses:
    - English I, II, III, and English IV or AP English
    - Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II
    - Biology, Chemistry, and Physics or Principles of Technology I
    - World Civilizations, American History A or B, and 2 more Social Studies courses of choice
    - Physical Education and/or Physical Management
    - Health
    - Computer Applications
    - Art and/or Music
- At least 3 credits from elective courses
- At least 36 hours of community service

2.3.1 – English Courses, Expectations, and Standards

Students must earn a minimum of four English credits through successful completion of English I, II, III, and English IV or AP English. All English courses assess all 8 of the English standards. In all courses, credit is earned by students who understand 6 of the 8 standards at the B- level or above, with the 2 remaining standards understood at the C- level or above.

- Content Standards
    - Informational Texts
        - Students will apply reading, listening, and viewing strategies to informational texts across all areas of curriculum.
    - Literature and Culture
        - Students will use reading, listening, and viewing strategies to experience, understand, and appreciate literature and culture.
    - Standard English Conventions
        - Students will write and speak correctly, using conventions of standard written and spoken English.
- Communication and Reasoning Standards
    - Process of Reading
        - Students will use the skills and strategies of the reading process to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate what they have read.
    - Language and Images
        - Students will demonstrate an understanding of how words and images communicate.
    - Processes of Writing and Speaking
        - Students will demonstrate the ability to use the skills and strategies of the writing process.
    - Stylistic and Rhetorical Aspects of Writing and Speaking
        - Students will use stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing and speaking to explore ideas, to present lines of thought, to represent and reflect on human experience, and to communicate feelings, knowledge, and opinions.
    - Research-related Writing and Speaking
        - Students will work, write, and speak effectively in connection with research in all content areas.

2.3.2 – Mathematics Courses, Expectations, and Standards

Students must earn a minimum of three Mathematics credits through successful completion of Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. These courses assess 11 standards; students must understand 9 of the 11 Mathematics standards at the B- level or above, with the remaining 2 standards understood at the C- level or above.

- Content Standards
    - Computation
        - Students will understand and demonstrate computation skills.
    - Geometry
        - Students will understand and apply concepts from geometry.
    - Measurement
        - Students will understand and demonstrate measurement skills.
    - Numbers and Number Sense
        - Students will understand and demonstrate a sense of what numbers mean and how they are used.
    - Data Analysis and Statistics
        - Students will understand and apply concepts of data analysis.
    - Probability
        - Students will understand and apply concepts of probability.
    - Patterns, Relations, Functions
        - Students will understand that mathematics is the science of patterns, relationships, and functions. Relationships are central to mathematical understanding.
    - Algebra Concepts
        - Students will understand and apply algebraic concepts.
    - Discrete Mathematics
        - Students will understand and apply concepts in discrete mathematics.
- Communication and Reasoning Standards
    - Mathematical Reasoning
        - Students will understand and apply concepts of mathematical reasoning.
    - Mathematical Communication
        - Students will reflect upon and clarify their understanding of mathematical ideas and relationships.

2.3.3 – Science Courses, Expectations, and Standards

Students must earn a minimum of three Science credits through successful completion of Biology, Chemistry, and Physics or Principles of Technology I. These courses assess 11 standards, and expectations for understanding the standards vary from course to course. In Biology, students must understand 3 of the 4 standards at the B- level or above, with the remaining standard understood at the C- level or above. In Chemistry, students must understand the Structure of Matter standard at the B- level or above. In Physics / Principles of Technology I, students must understand the Motion standard and 4 of the 5 other standards at the B- level or above, with the remaining standard understood at the C- level or above.

- Content Standards
    - Classifying Life Forms
        - Students will understand that there are similarities within the diversity of all living things.
    - Ecology
        - Students will understand how living things depend on one another and on non-living aspects of the environment.
    - Cells
        - Students will understand that cells are the basic units of life.
    - Continuity and Change
        - Students will understand the basis for all life and that all living things change over time.
    - Structure of Matter
        - Students will understand the structure of matter and the changes it can undergo.

    - Motion
        - Students will understand the motion of objects and how forces can change that motion.
    - Energy
        - Students will understand concepts of energy.
- Communication and Reasoning Standards
    - Implications of Science and Technology
        - Students will understand the historical, social, economic, environmental, and ethical implications of science and technology.
    - Inquiry and Problem Solving
        - Students will apply inquiry and problem-solving approaches in science and technology.
    - Scientific Reasoning
        - Students will learn to formulate and justify ideas and to make informed decisions.
    - Communication
        - Students will communicate effectively in the applications of science and technology.

2.3.4 – Social Studies Courses, Standards, and Expectations

Students must earn a minimum of four Social Studies credits through successful completion of World Civilizations, American History A or B, and two other courses of choice. These courses assess 13 standards; students must understand 11 of the 13 standards at the B- level or above, with the remaining 2 standards understood at the C- level or above.

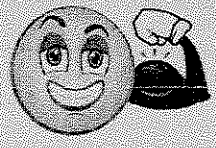
- Content Standards
    - Purpose and Types of Government
        - Students will understand the types and purposes of governments, their evolution, and their relationships with the governed.
    - Fundamental Principles of Government and Constitutions
        - Students will understand the constitutional principles and the democratic foundations of the political institutions of the United States.
    - Rights, Responsibilities, and Participation
        - Students will understand the rights and responsibilities of civic life and employ the skills of effective civic participation.
    - International Relations
        - Students will understand the political relationships among the United States and other nations.
    - Chronology
        - Students will use the chronology of history and major eras to demonstrate the relationships of events and people.
    - Historical Knowledge, Concepts, and Patterns
        - Students will develop historical knowledge of major events, people, and enduring themes in the United States, in Maine, and throughout world history.
    - Skills and Tools
        - Students will know how to construct and interpret maps and use globes and other geographic tools to locate and derive information about people, places, regions, and environments.
    - Human Interaction with Environments
        - Students will understand and analyze the relationships among people and their physical environments.
    - Comparative Systems
        - Students will analyze how different economic systems function and change over time.
    - International Trade and Global Interdependence
        - Students will understand the patterns and results of international trade.
    - Personal and Consumer Economics
        - Students will understand that economic decisions are based on the availability of resources and the costs and benefits of choices.

- Economic Systems of the United States
  - Students will understand the economic system of the United States, including its principles, development, and institutions.
- Communication and Reasoning Standards
  - Historical Inquiry, Analysis, and Interpretation
    - Students will learn to evaluate resource material such as documents, artifacts, maps, artworks, and literature, and to make judgments about the perspectives of the authors and their credibility when interpreting current historical events.

2.3.5 – Physical Education/Management Courses, Expectations and Standards

Students must earn a minimum of 1 Physical Education/Management credit through successful completion of two 0.5 credit courses in either or both Physical Education or Physical Management. These courses assess 3 standards; Physical Fitness must be understood at the B- level or above along with one of the other two standards, with the remaining standard understood at the C- level or above.

- Content Standards
  - Physical Fitness
    - Students will acquire the knowledge needed to be physically fit and take part in healthful physical activity on a regular basis.
  - Motor Skills
    - Students will develop motor skills and apply these to enhance their movement and physical performance.
  - Personal and Social Behavior
    - Students will demonstrate responsible personal and social behaviors in physical activity settings.



2.3.6 – Health Expectations and Standards

Students must earn a minimum of 0.5 Health credit through successful completion of Health. The Health course assesses 6 standards, 3 of which must be understood at the B- level or above: Health Information, Services, and Products; Health Promotion and Risk Reduction; Decision Making and Goal Setting. The remaining three standards must be understood at the C- level or above.

- Content Standards
  - Health Concepts
    - Students will understand health promotion and disease prevention concepts.
  - Health Information, Services, and Products
    - Students will know how to acquire valid information about health issues, services, and products.
  - Health Promotion and Risk Reduction
    - Students will understand how to reduce their health risks through the practice of healthy behaviors.
  - Influences on Health
    - Students will understand how media techniques, cultural perspectives, technology, peers, and family influence behaviors that affect health.
  - Decision-Making and Goal Setting
    - Students will learn how to set personal goals and make decisions that lead to better health.
- Communication and Reasoning Standards
  - Communication Skills
    - Students will understand that skillful communication can contribute to better health for them, their families, and the community.

2.3.7 – Computer Applications Expectations and Standards

Students must earn a minimum of 0.5 Computer Applications credit through successful completion of Computer Applications. The Computer Applications course assesses 3 standards, 2 of which must be understood at the B- level or above: Technical Skills; Technical Integration. The remaining standard must be understood at the C- level or above.

- Content Standards
    - Technical Skills
        - Students will learn how to perform functions in a variety of computer software applications.
    - Technical Integration
        - Students will learn when to use specific applications and functions within those applications when completing tasks that utilize computer software applications.
- Communication and Reasoning Standards
    - Creative Expression
        - Students will create and/or perform to express ideas and feelings. Students communicate through their works, revise and problem-solve, use a variety of processes, and integrate their works with other disciplines.

2.3.8 – Fine Arts Courses, Expectations, and Standards

Students must earn a minimum of one Fine Arts credit. A variety of one credit and half credit courses are available in the visual and performing arts and are listed in the Program of Studies. Standards and expectations for understanding those standards vary from course to course.

2.3.9 – Community Service

Faculty and administration alike agree that a community service requirement as part of a high school education is a valuable experience and integral to the fulfillment of the school's mission for its students. Varied experiences in community service teaches and models giving to others, at the same time it demonstrates the concept of community stewardship. Students develop altruism, learn the benefits of hard work, and have an opportunity to demonstrate selfless behavior. They may become familiar with the agencies and services in their region and may be exposed to a variety of career and professional role models. Many times, community service work has been the deciding factor for gaining employment or admission to college. Many scholarships require community service as a part of their criteria.

Foxcroft Academy requires all students in all grades to perform a minimum number of hours of community service each year totaling 36 hours by graduation. Students will be responsible for contacting service sites and submitting proof of service performed to their advisors who oversee the program. Students will receive a list of possible service sites and advisors may also help their advisees by providing assistance in suggesting service sites and discussing appropriate service site behaviors.

Students are expected to perform a minimum number of community service hours each year, which must total to at least 36 hours in order to meet graduation requirements. The suggested amounts of community service per year are:

- Grade 9: 6 hours
- Grade 10: 8 hours
- Grade 11: 10 hours
- Grade 12: 12 hours

2.4 – Levels of Study

Levels of study are not rigid and may be intertwined in a student's individualized educational experience at Foxcroft Academy. Because we do not "track" students, a student may enroll in courses at a variety of levels based upon their confidence in the subject and desire to achieve. In order to ensure the greatest number of options in the future, students are encouraged to enroll in the most challenging courses they can successfully complete that match their interests, abilities, and plans for life after the Academy. A student may change their level of study for a course beyond the add/drop period. The standards assessed in courses offered at different levels of study are the same. However, the pace, quantity of work, level of responsibility for independent effort, and degree of complexity of the activities increases in the higher levels of study.