Method of Education

In recognition that some students can learn best in settings other than conventional classrooms, the Amador County Unified School District (ACUSD) offers a program of independent and flexible study arrangements through North Star Academy. Established in August 1994, North Star Academy administrative offices are located on the District’s Alternative Education Campus at Independence High School. However, student meetings are held at Amador and Argonaut comprehensive high school campuses. All courses are taught via the independent study method, which may be taught via in-person meetings with a supervising teacher or via online direct instruction labs for math and science, or through Edgenuity, our online learning program.

Students do not attend daily classes, however, each student meets with their assigned supervising instructor one-to-one, or in a small group during their prearranged time and place each week. Their instructor assigns course work, which is to be completed by the student on his/her own time. The completed work is evaluated by the instructor at the next meeting. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to ensure the student attends their appointment and completes all of his/her work.

The purpose of the school is:

1. To offer students who cannot attend the comprehensive junior or senior high schools the opportunity to complete their junior or senior high school education.
2. To offer students a program of personalized instruction to meet their varying needs and ability levels.
3. To offer students classes and activities which will enable them to increase their general knowledge and assist them in the development of self-discipline and self-confidence.
4. To help students set and attain personal, academic, and career goals.
5. To enrich the lives of the individual students served, and thereby enrich the community life as well.

School Philosophy, Mission, Goals, and Student Learning Expectations

Philosophy
We believe that every student can learn. We foster hope in our students for a successful future and empower each student to reach his or her academic potential.

Mission Statement
North Star inspires students by meeting them where they are and empowering them to move along their learning path.
North Star Academy exists to ENGAGE and INSPIRE students to achieve their highest potential through a SAFE, CHALLENGING, and INDIVIDUALIZED learning environment.

Vision Statement
In a rapidly changing world, North Star is the school that guides each student with a rigorous
and relevant Individualized Learning Plan. Students acquire essential skills, knowledge, and fluencies reflective of a 21st-century citizen.

North Star Academy
SCHOOL-WIDE LEARNER OUTCOMES

The North Star Academy’s Schoolwide Learner Outcomes provide the framework for student success. The combination of challenging, standards-based curriculum, the ability to take Dual Enrollment college courses, and effective rigorous teaching strategies prepare graduates for life after high school.

North Star Academy High School Graduates Will Be:

Critical Thinkers Who:
- Problem solve and adapt to change.
- Access and analyze new information from many different sources.
- Analyze mistakes and make improvements
- Take learned skills and apply them to new situations.

MEASURABLE INDICATORS:
- Standardized test scores
- Demonstration of mastery of course requirements

Effective Communicators Who:
- Write and speak coherently in various social & educational situations.
- Use technology to enhance one's position in society by synthesizing and reporting information in formats that are written, oral and digital.
- Present information in formal and informal settings by utilizing writing skills through reports, letters, essays, and multimedia presentations.

MEASURABLE INDICATORS:
- Participation in weekly meetings with supervising teacher to assess academic progress
- Survey data, benchmarks/common assessments
- Number of students in online learning programs

Independent Adult Citizens Who:
- Are socially and globally aware of others.
- Contribute to society.
- Conduct themselves in a responsible and socially appropriate manner.
- Have an appreciation of various religions, beliefs, and cultures.
- Develop a plan for life beyond high school

MEASURABLE INDICATORS:
- Positive consistent attendance
- Completion of work in a timely manner
- Successful completion of coursework to high acceptable standards
→ Enrollment in ROP, Columbia College, or college courses
→ Complete the required Community Service Hours
→ Develop a plan to achieve post-graduation goal

**Enrollment**

To enroll in North Star Academy, a student must first contact their current school’s administrator or counselor. The administrator or counselor will advise the student of the appropriate steps to take to apply for admission to the Academy. A referral committee reviews all applications. Students with an IEP must begin the enrollment process by meeting with their case manager before the school counselor or administrator. Students who attend a school other than in the Amador County Unified School District need to contact the North Star Academy Principal on the Independence campus. The Independent Study Counselor or Administrative Assistant will contact students accepted for enrollment.

**Attendance**

The California Education Code 48200 states:

“Each person between the ages of 6 and 18 years is subject to compulsory full-time education. Each person subject to compulsory full-time education and each person subject to compulsory continuation education…shall attend the public full-time day school or continuation school or classes for the full-time designated as the length of the school day by the governing board of the school district in which the residency of either the parent or legal guardian (resides).”

At North Star Academy, each student will meet once a week with his or her supervising teacher. However, the teacher may require the student to meet more than once a week, depending upon the student’s needs and program design. If a student is unable to make an appointment, it is his/her responsibility to contact the teacher or program coordinator so that an alternate time can be arranged. It is not recommended that a student miss a weekly appointment, except in the case of extreme situations.

North Star Academy students who do not complete their assignments or who miss appointments will be placed in the Academic & Attendance Re-engagement Protocol. Placement into this protocol could lead to the student being dropped from the school in order to make room for students awaiting enrollment.

**Adverse Weather Conditions**

Winter weather conditions, especially heavy snow and/or ice, sometimes cause the district to close school or postpone the start of the instructional day. Listen to your local radio station [https://kvgcradio.com/](https://kvgcradio.com/) or receive a district notification via Parent or Student Square to get up-to-the-minute details about school closures or delays.

Students impacted by adverse weather conditions will still be expected to meet virtually with their supervision teacher unless the entire district is closed for the day.

**Drops**

Students are expected to keep all appointments except in cases of extreme illness or emergencies.

- **Students who miss two appointments in succession will receive a letter reporting that they have been placed into the Academic & Attendance Re-engagement Protocol and that they are in danger of being dropped from the program.**
If a student misses more than three appointments in a semester, that student is subject to being dropped from North Star Academy.

The decision to drop a student from the Academy is made by the North Star Principal after considering the teacher’s recommendation and having 2 meetings which include the parents and student. Students under the age of 18 who are dropped from the Academy will be transferred to another district school or program. Students over the age of 18 who are dropped will be referred to either Amador Adult Education School or Columbia College.

North Star Academy Graduation Requirements

Upon entrance to North Star, students fill out a four-year plan to determine their path through high school. This allows students to see what courses they have already fulfilled for graduation and what classes remain. This process allows master teachers and students to discuss the post-secondary pathway to a 4-year college, community college, or vocational training. This empowers students to make choices that will affect future choices. It also worked to increase student understanding regarding early graduation from North Star, or credit recovery responsibilities for graduation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>2022-2023 = 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Must pass Algebra 1)</td>
<td>2024 = 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2022-2024 = 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2025 = 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Technical Education</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>2022-2023 = 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2024 = 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2025 = 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Requirement: Complete 10 hours of community service their senior year.
Grades and Credits
Most grading is on an academic scale. (See below.) The student and parent should talk with the supervising instructor to understand exactly how he/she will be graded. Usually, the grade is determined by the quality of the completed schoolwork, the percentage completed of the semester’s required schoolwork, and scores on tests or quizzes.

90% - 100% = A
80% - 89% = B
70% - 79% = C
60% - 69% = D
0% - 59% = F
Pass (60%+) or Fail

Evaluation of the student’s work will be based on:
Completed assignments
Correctness of assignments
Written assessments
Discussions
Oral presentations
Demonstration of skills
Other projects/work products
Written/oral quizzes or tests
Written reports and essays
Demonstration of skills/competencies

A student must earn at least 65 hours per class of schoolwork to qualify for a 5-credit course and at least 33 hours per class of schoolwork for a 2.5-credit course.

Credit
In most cases, a maximum of 30 credits can be earned during a semester. Credits are granted upon the successful completion of 65 hours/credit and all contracted coursework for a class. Students must participate in a minimum of four assigned classes per quarter for the student to be considered a full-time student. Students needing to enroll in four courses may accelerate their course completion by concurrently taking 2 periods of the same course.

If a student wishes to “makeup” or add an extra class, he/she must prove the ability to be successful. This is done by first passing 30 credits of schoolwork. Then, if time permits, the student can attempt to make up or add a class.

Additional credits may be earned through employment experience, college courses, and other off-campus programs.

Behavior Guidelines
Students are responsible for their behavior and they will be held accountable for their actions. School rules and regulations encourage students to be active learners; provide an atmosphere whereby teaching and learning can flourish; and maintain order, health, and safety.

The students at North Star Academy can expect to be treated in a fair and consistent manner by all staff members who will also explain the consequences of persistent refusal to comply with school rules.

Visiting Other District Schools and Campuses
North Star Academy students may be on one of the three district campuses for their
weekly hour-long appointment, during their 3-hour block appointment, for any other study sessions previously arranged with their supervising teacher, to quickly drop off homework or to take a blended class. Other than that, North Star students may not be on or near the school campuses between 7:30 am and 4:00 pm unless they have permission and a guest pass from the appropriate administrator.

**Harassment**
Harassment of students or staff in any form, including bullying, cyber-bullying, intimidation, hazing or initiation activity, ridicule, extortion, or any other verbal, written, or physical conduct that causes or threatens to cause bodily harm or emotional suffering will result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to suspension and/or expulsion.

**Cyberbullying**
Cyber-bullying includes the transmission of communications, posting of harassing messages, direct threats, social cruelty, or other harmful texts, sounds, images on the Internet, social networking sites, or other digital technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another student’s electronic account and assuming that person’s identity in order to damage that person’s reputation or friendships.

Any student who engages in cyberbullying using district-owned equipment, on school premises, or off-campus in a manner that impacts school activity or school attendance, shall be subject to discipline in accordance with district policies and regulations.

Students are encouraged to save and print any messages sent to them that they feel constitute cyberbullying and to notify a teacher, counselor, principal, or any other employees so that the matter may be investigated.

**District High School Dances, Events, and Activities**
Students from North Star Academy are allowed guest privileges at any dance held on the comprehensive high school campuses. The student must be in good standing academically and behaviorally to attend.

For the Winter Formal and the Prom, students at North Star Academy may apply for guest status and attend the dance(s) providing they follow these procedures:

★ The request to attend the Fall Formal or the Prom must be approved at least one full day ahead of the event by the Academy Principal and the High School Site Administration where the dance is being held.
★ The student(s) requesting to attend may not be on suspension.
★ A non-ACUSD student attending as a guest must be under 21 and must secure a guest pass from the administration of the high school where the dance is being held.
★ The North Star Academy student is responsible for his/her guest’s behavior.

North Star Academy student(s) and any guests must follow the same rules and regulations that apply to ACUSD HS students attending dances, including the following:

★ Students must have a current school ID with a picture.
★ Students and guests suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs will be referred to an administrator and/or the police.
★ Students who endanger the safety of themselves or others will be referred to an administrator.
★ Students must refrain from sexually explicit dancing or inappropriate displays of affection.
★ Students asked to leave a dance for any reason will not be allowed at any dances for the remainder of the year.
★ Once students have entered the dance, they may not leave and re-enter. The doors will be closed one hour after the dance begins, and students may not leave until the last hour of the dance. Students will not be allowed to leave early without a parent's note or call.

**District Athletic Participation**

North Star Academy students are able to try out for and, if selected, participate on athletic teams at the district comprehensive high schools and in the Motherlode League. All sports are governed by the CIF Sac-Joaquin Section and thereby subject to all bylaws.

To be eligible for athletics a student must:
❖ Complete a minimum of 20 credits
❖ Continue attending weekly meetings and completing assigned work
❖ Not have more than 1 F on their 1st and 2nd quarter report cards
❖ Maintain a grade point average of 2.0
❖ Communicate with the site athletic director
❖ Complete all paperwork and physical which are required by the high school site

**Work Permits**

Students under 18 must have a Work Permit to hold a job during the school year. Work Permits may be obtained from Aleasha Gough in the North Star Academy Office or on the North Star website [https://independencehs.amadorcoe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Work-Permit.pdf](https://independencehs.amadorcoe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Work-Permit.pdf). Students may earn up to ten (10) credits of Employment Experience each semester depending on the number of hours they work.

**Graduation Cap and Gown**

The Educational Options schools purchased Graduation Caps & Gowns to be used as rentals for years to come so there is no need to pre-order caps & gowns. We ask for a payment of $20.00 to cover the costs of the tassels and diploma covers. If finances are an issue, please come to the office and discuss this with Aleasha Gough. Tassels are optional and not a required purchase.

**Scholarships**

- Mid February:
  ■ Scholarship Packets are available. See your teacher and/or academic counselor for details.
- Mid-April:
  ■ Scholarship Application due in the Alternative Education Office.

**PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR TEACHER FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOLARSHIPS**
North Star Academy
Community College Enrollment  Dual Enrollment

Independent Study students may enroll concurrently at any California Community College and earn high school and college credits at the same time.

To participate in this program, students must:

- Apply to North Star Academy (see form in Appendix A)
- Be registered in one or more college classes while enrolled at North Star Academy
- Complete a concurrent release form each semester
- Students in this program will have their Community College registration fees waived (unless the college requires a health fee, this is usually less than $20).
- ACUSD will purchase the required textbooks.
- If the college course(s) are passed there are no financial aid implications!

Students interested in this program should contact

North Star Principal, Kelly Hunkins (209-257-5154)

or the North Star Academy Office (209-257-5152)

---

North Star Academy Staff Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Kelly Hunkins</td>
<td><a href="mailto:khunkins@acusd.org">khunkins@acusd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary/Registrar</td>
<td>Aleasha Gough</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aleasha.gough@acusd.org">aleasha.gough@acusd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising Teachers</td>
<td>Donna Hirschfelt</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dhirschfelt@acusd.org">dhirschfelt@acusd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mari Lowes</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mari.lowes@acusd.org">mari.lowes@acusd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tracy Peterson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tracy.peterson@acusd.org">tracy.peterson@acusd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cathy Snyder</td>
<td><a href="mailto:csnyder@acusd.org">csnyder@acusd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Teacher</td>
<td>Megan Gascon</td>
<td><a href="mailto:megan.gascon@acusd.org">megan.gascon@acusd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Counselor</td>
<td>Lori Martinez</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lmartinez@acusd.org">lmartinez@acusd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Emotional Counselor</td>
<td>Anabel Camargo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:anabel.camargo@acusd.org">anabel.camargo@acusd.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# North Star Academy

## Independent Study Course List

+ Core Curriculum  
* Edgenuity Online Platform

### North Star Academy Courses

**A-G course list**  
**Elective List**  
**List of Core Courses**

### English

- + English 7-8  
- +*English 9 A/B  
- +*English 10 A/B  
- +*English 11 A/B  
- +*English 12 A/B

### Mathematics

- + *Algebra 1  
- + *Algebra 1A/B  
- *Geometry  
- *Algebra 2  
- + *Financial Literacy

### Science

- + *The Living Earth  
- + *Biology  
- + *Earth Science

### Social Studies

- *Social Study Elective  
  - - Sociology  
  - - Psychology  
  - - Geography  
  - - Ethnic Studies  
  - - Ethics  
- + *World History 1-2  
- + *U.S. History 1-2  
- + *American Government  
- + *Economics

### Art

- + Basic Drawing 1-2  
- + Painting 1-2

### Physical Education/Health

- *Health  
  - P.E. 9/10  
  - P.E. 11/12

### Electives & Career Technical Education (all *)

- + Employment Experience  
- + Alternative Elective/Life Skills  
* Edgenuity Course Catalog