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MVTHS FRESHMAN ACADEMY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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What is the Freshman Academy?

The Freshman Academy is a smaller learning community with special features proven to help students successfully transition from middle school to high school.

- Freshmen are taught by a team of teachers who work in collaboration to link the lessons of individual courses, making them more relevant.
- The Freshman Academy is divided into four teams. Each student takes four core classes with their team.
- Extra support is provided for students who need academic assistance or face challenging life situations.
- A counselor has been assigned to the Freshman Academy to deal with scheduling, assistance to students, and to help students stay on track with classes.
- Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships are stressed.

What is meant by Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships?

At Mt. Vernon Township High School, the “3R’s” of education no longer mean just reading, writing, and arithmetic. The R’s stand for **Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships**—three words on which Mt. Vernon High School is building academic and social success for its students.

- MVTHS stresses Rigor by providing the opportunity and encouraging all students to take classes that are more challenging.
- MVTHS stresses Relevance by developing and delivering curriculum that shows the connection between school courses and future careers.
- MVTHS stresses Relationships on many levels:
 - ⇒ Teachers and students
 - ⇒ Peer relationships
 - ⇒ Parents in partnership with teachers
 - ⇒ Parents in partnership with their children and other students
 - ⇒ A caring community that provides opportunities for students.

What are the basic courses, and what about electives?

Core Classes

All freshmen are enrolled in the following core classes with a choice in Math:

- Freshman English
- Biology I
- Civics/Geography
- Comprehensive Algebra, Algebra I, or Geometry

In addition, per the Illinois State Board of Education:

- PE/Health

Electives

Freshmen have the opportunity to take two electives, which may include a support class.

What support is provided for the students in Freshman Academy?

Support is available for freshmen through the following:

- Freshmen Counselor
- Math support classes (Projects in Algebra)
- Literacy support classes (Freshman Literacy classes)
- After-School Tutoring
- Social workers (focus on students with attendance and truancy issues)
- Administrator to help with students who are absent
- Teachers provide extra help for students after school, if needed
- PBIS interventions

How are students identified for support classes?

Students are identified for math and literacy support classes based on their performance on the EXPLORE test taken by all eighth grade students, past performance, and on recommendation from the eighth grade teachers and school counselor.

Do Freshman Academy students have a different schedule?

The only difference is that Freshmen will have a closed and different lunch than the other students.

How does the Freshman Academy benefit our students?

Through the years, research has proven that the strongest programs are the programs that start out with a strong foundation. The foundation that we are giving the freshmen will allow them to be successful not only this year, but the next three years as well. Consider the following benefits to our students:

- Improved graduation rates
- The opportunity to earn more credits
- Increased engagement in classes
- Stronger connection to teachers
- Greater success in post-secondary endeavors
- Decrease drop-out rates
- Integrated curriculum and high expectations
- Increase student achievement

