

Beaver Country Day School

Honors Recommendation Policy

Beaver offers students varying levels in which to engage with course material and concepts. Each spring, the Math, and Science departments meet to discuss placement for the following year's courses. Most of our courses have Standards and Honors levels. In our efforts to place each student in the section where she/he will have the most success, we consider the following factors:

- Organizational skills: Does the student manage materials well? Does the student have habits that help her/him avoid careless errors? Do the student's organizational skills allow her/him to manage complicated concepts with many steps?
- Communication skills: Is the student able to convey her/his thoughts clearly? Is the student comfortable with the language of the discipline? Is the student able to absorb new ideas?
- Demonstrated understanding of prior concepts: Has the student shown an ability to comprehend and retain knowledge from previous classes? Is the student successful when synthesizing prior concepts with new material?
- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively: Is the student able to find ways to resolve her/his own questions without being overly reliant on the teacher? Can the student manage group dynamics productively? Does the student play a leadership role in discussion and activities?
- Willingness to grapple with difficult material: Does the student show an interest in exploring complicated problems? Is the student willing to try new approaches when faced with unfamiliar content?

Students who show strengths in the above areas are typically strong candidates for Honors level classes. When making placement recommendations, each department also considers the unique skill sets demanded by particular courses. We make every effort to determine the appropriate placement for each student, and we re-evaluate each student's needs each year (i.e., while we do have "sectioning," we do not have "tracking"). Students commonly shift from one level to another during their time at Beaver, and we take pride in developing students' abilities at individualized paces, providing support and challenge at the appropriate times.

In the English, Global History, and Modern Language departments, ninth grade classes (only Level 1 in Modern Language) are all offered at the Standard (S1) level only, giving students a year to accustom themselves to the demands of the upper school curriculum. In the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades, students may elect to take their English and Global History courses at the Honors level. Students in Foundations, Intermediate, or Advanced Modern Language courses may take courses at the Honors level at any grade level, after approval from their previous and/or current teachers. Elections are made in the first week of the term. Specific expectations for honors students are outlined in the course syllabus provided to students on the first day of the class. While the departments are committed to providing every student with a challenging curriculum, the Honors option is open to any student who wishes to engage with either subject at a more sophisticated, complex, and demanding level. In making their decisions, students should consult their current English, Global History, and Modern Language teachers and/or the head of the department. Decisions should take into account level of interest as well as skill.