

INSTRUCTION

Special Programs

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST)

This regulation supersedes Regulation 3355.14.

I. PURPOSE

To establish TJHSST as a Fairfax County public school and as one of the academic-year regional governor's schools for science and technology.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

A. Section V.A.1.b has been revised for clarity.

III. DESIGNATION AS A FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL

TJHSST is a Fairfax County public school, having opened in 1985 under the sole direction and control of the Fairfax County School Board. As a Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) institution, all policies and regulations governing FCPS are applicable to TJHSST, with exceptions listed in this regulation and in annual notices issued in connection with this regulation.

IV. DESIGNATION AS AN ACADEMIC-YEAR GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

TJHSST is annually designated by the Virginia Department of Education as an academic-year regional governor's school for science and technology. Such designation:

- A. Provides certain state funding for the operation of the school.
- B. Requires that the school be available to eligible students whose parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) is a full-time resident(s) of, and meets all the residency requirements of, the counties and cities of Northern Virginia under the following provisions:
 - 1. That each of the school divisions decide annually whether or not to participate in the regional school. School divisions choosing to participate are designated as cooperating school divisions.
 - 2. That eligible students from each cooperating school division may apply and be

considered for admission to the school. The Division Superintendent may return a student to the cooperating jurisdiction with a prorated share of the tuition reimbursed.

- C. Requires a cooperative agreement regarding such control and operation of the school, which includes, but is not restricted to, provisions that:
1. The school is a FCPS institution under the sole direction and control of the Fairfax County School Board.
 2. Superintendents or their respective designees from cooperating school divisions may, at their discretion, serve as an advisory group to the Superintendent of FCPS.
 3. FCPS will call and conduct meetings of the advisory group defined in Section IV.C.2. above.
 4. Each cooperating school division must pay a per student tuition charge that will be fixed annually by the cooperative agreement.
 5. The nonrefundable tuition paid by cooperating school divisions will be due December 1 of each year for the students from that school division who are enrolled in the school on September 30 of that year.
 6. Transportation for students attending TJHSST is the responsibility of, and is at the discretion of, the cooperating school division in which the student resides.
 7. FCPS will provide the necessary forms and materials and staff orientation, as required, and will schedule and conduct requisite examinations, scoring, and reporting of admissions results.

V. STUDENT SELECTION AND ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

Each year TJHSST will admit approximately 550 ninth-grade students who have committed to an intensive program focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. No twelfth-grade students will be admitted; however, tenth or eleventh-grade students may be admitted by a placement process. See Section IV.B.

A. Selection of Ninth-Grade Students

1. Eligibility Requirements

- a. **Residency.** To be eligible for consideration, all applicants for admission to the school must reside with a parent and/or legal guardian who is a full-time resident of, and meets all of the residency requirements of, one of the cooperating school divisions throughout the application and decision process. Applicants enrolled in private school or homeschooled will be required to submit proof of residency in one of the cooperating school divisions at the time of application. Applicants must be enrolled in

grade 8 in any private, homeschool or public school in the academic year preceding the year for which admission is sought. A student may not apply twice as an eighth grader into the ninth grade except in the case of extenuating circumstances.

- b. Course Prerequisites. To be eligible for consideration, applicants must:
 - (1) have completed a full-year course of Algebra 1, or be currently enrolled in a full-year course of honors-level Algebra 1; applicants attending schools whose curricular programs do not include “honors” Algebra 1 courses must have completed or be enrolled in a full-year course of the highest level of Algebra 1 available at their school;
 - (2) be enrolled in honors science; applicants attending schools whose curricular programs do not include “honors” science must be enrolled in the highest level of 8th grade science available at their school;
 - (3) be enrolled in honors course in social studies or English/language arts, or identified as a “Young Scholar”; applicants attending schools whose curricular programs do not include “honors” courses in social studies or English/language arts must be enrolled in the highest level course available at their school in either social studies or English/language arts or identified as Young Scholar or identified as having advanced academic potential through a similar program designed to nurture such potential in students from underserved or disadvantaged backgrounds;
 - and (4) have a 3.5 or higher GPA in all core academic courses (math, science, social studies, English/language arts, and if taken for high school credit, world language) at the time of application.

2. Selection Criteria

Applicants will be selected using criteria that consider only the following:

- a. Aptitude for successful study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- b. Record of exceptional academic achievement.
- c. Commitment, intellectual curiosity, passion, and creativity in the study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- d. Background, skills, or experiences that promote 21st Century Skills and develop future leaders; demonstrate the outstanding attributes of a communicator, collaborator, an ethical and global citizen, a creative and critical thinker, and a goal-directed and resilient individual; and qualities that enrich and cultivate diversity to enhance the learning experience for all students.

3. Methods and Instruments of Measurement

(a) In addition to each applicant's academic record, including GPA and coursework, admissions evaluators will consider:

- (1) Applicant responses to one problem-solving essay question.
- (2) Applicant responses on a student portrait sheet.
- (3) Background of educational challenges, specifically whether students are (or were) identified as English language learners, economically disadvantaged, eligible for special education services or attending a historically under-represented public middle school.

A public school is considered historically “underrepresented” if its average number of attending students offered admission to TJHSST based on the previous five years is at least three standard deviations below the school with the highest average number during the same period. For example, based on 9th grade admissions for the five years comprising the Classes of 2019 through 2024, the middle school with the highest five-year average of admitted students averaged 44 admission offers per year. Among all FCPS middle schools, the standard deviation of these five-year averages during the same period was 13. Based on this data, for Class of 2025 admissions, a middle school will be considered “underrepresented” if its average number of students offered admission to the Classes of 2019 through 2024 was five students or less per year (highest average minus three standard deviations, i.e., $44 - (3 \times 13)$). This same approach will be applied to other sending school divisions to identify underrepresented public schools in all participating jurisdictions, except Falls Church City, which has only one middle school. Underrepresented public schools will be identified each year based on the last five years of admissions data. The schools that are considered “underrepresented public middle schools” for that admissions cycle will be identified on the TJHSST admissions site and updated annually.

(b) In accordance with the policy directive of the School Board, the admission process must use only race-neutral methods that do not seek to achieve any specific racial or ethnic mix, balance, or targets. Candidate name, race, ethnicity, or sex collected on the application form will not be provided to admissions evaluators. Each applicant will be identified to the evaluators only by an applicant number (student ID number for FCPS students; applicant ID number for non-FCPS students).

4. Admissions Calendar

The application deadline dates will be set each year and published in Notice 3355, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Admissions Procedures. Starting with applicants for the Class of 2026, the application deadline for all eligible students seeking admission to the ninth grade will be no later than December 15 of the year preceding the year for which admission is

sought. See Section V.A.6.

5. Ninth-Grade Admissions Process—Winter Round

The admissions process will be conducted by the admissions office of TJHSST. The admissions process will be completely independent of the TJHSST staff, except that the principal or designated school staff members will provide each year for the admissions office a profile of the last class of ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade successful applicants. This profile, along with other related data, will provide information and recommendations for improvement and refinement of the admissions process.

(a) Admissions Process

- (1) Students are assisted in making application by a local school counselor designated as that school's official contact with the admissions office.
- (2) Applications are screened for eligibility by admissions staff (See section V.A.1.a & b).
- (3) Students who meet the eligibility criteria are administered short answer and essay exams in a proctored environment (See Notice 3355) [See section V.3.a.(1) & (2)].
- (4) Complete application packets are provided to admissions evaluators. Admissions evaluators are appointed by the Division Superintendent or his or her designee. Evaluators will include school-based and central-administration personnel, such as teachers, counselors, or administrators (retired or active), from FCPS or from the cooperating school divisions.
- (5) Starting with the Class of 2026, Applicant notification of the decisions regarding admissions will be no later than April 30 each year.

(b) Seat Allocation Process. Each public school within Fairfax County and each cooperating school division will be presumptively allocated a number of seats equal to 1.5% of that school's 8th grade student population ("Allocated Seats"). The remainder of seats will not be allocated to any specific public school ("Unallocated Seats"). In the event a school has fewer eligible applicants than its number of Allocated Seats, the difference will be treated as Unallocated Seats.

- (1) Allocated Seats. Applicants attending public school will be first evaluated against other applicants from the same school, and students with the strongest evaluated applications from that school will be offered admission.
- (2) Unallocated Seats. All remaining public school applicants and applicants who do not attend public school in Fairfax County or in a

cooperating division will be considered for the Unallocated Seats, which will be offered to the highest evaluated applicants in that group.

(c) Admissions Decisions. All applicants will receive a decision on their application; Offer, Waitpool or No Offer.

- (i) **Offer:** Applicants offered admission for the upcoming Fall (9th grade) year must accept or decline by the stated deadline. Accepting the offer means the applicant is choosing to attend TJHSST the next school year. No deferrals are permitted. Students who accept the offer will go through the registration process. Declining the offer means the applicant has decided not to attend TJHSST. The decision to decline the offer is final, and applicants will not be provided with an option to receive the offer at a later date.
- (ii) **Waitpool:** A waitpool of students will be created to offer additional students an opportunity to attend TJHSST when admitted applicants decline the offer of admission. Offers of admissions to students who have accepted to stay in the waitpool will be provided to the highest evaluated students remaining in the waitpool. Waitpool offers will continue to be made until all seats have been filled or until the beginning of the school year, which occurs first.
- (iii) **No Offer:** Some applicants will not receive an offer to attend or be included in the waitpool. No Offer applicants are eligible to re-apply for the Sophomore Round of Admissions the following year contingent they maintain eligibility.

B. Placement of Tenth and Eleventh-Grade Students

Eligible ninth and tenth-grade students may be considered for admission as tenth or eleventh grade students respectively at TJHSST, if space is available. Spaces available will be determined by the admissions office and the principal, taking into account attrition rates. Applications for admission to the tenth or eleventh grades will not be considered midyear.

1. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants for admission to the school must reside with a parent and/or legal guardian who is a full-time resident of, and meets all the residency requirements of, one of the cooperating school divisions throughout the application and decision process. Proof of residency in one of the cooperating school divisions will be required at the time of application for students enrolled in private schools or homeschooled. Applicants to grade 10 must be enrolled in grade 9 in any private or public school during the academic year preceding the year for which admission is requested. Applicants to the eleventh grade must be enrolled in grade 10 in any private or public school during the academic year preceding the year for which admission is requested. Eligible tenth graders applying to the eleventh grade are those who have not applied previously to TJHSST or those who have just moved to

a cooperating school division.

2. Evaluation of Sophomore and Junior Applications

Sophomore and junior applicants are evaluated on the basis of:

- a. Aptitude, achievement, and interest in the study of science, mathematics, computer science, and related technological fields evidenced by:

- (1) A student-authored information and data sheet and essays.
- (2) Marks in mathematics, science, computer science, English, social studies, foreign language, and technology-related courses.
- (3) Recommendations from current mathematics teacher, current science teacher, and one other adult chosen by the applicant.
- (4) Test scores, as deemed appropriate (optional for Sophomore applicants).

- b. Readiness for research, experimentation, or independent study in one of the school's technology laboratories, evidenced by successful science fair projects and/or other experiences, activities, or projects (in or out of school) in science, engineering, computer science, and other areas of technology.

The admissions committee will consider the entire application, including all these factors, as part of an individualized and holistic review designed to identify a talented, committed, and diverse student body consistent with the school's mission.

- c. The evaluation process will use only race-neutral methods that do not seek to achieve any specific racial or ethnic mix, balance, or targets.

3. Credits Required for Grade 10 Application

Completion of the following specified graduation credits prior to the beginning of the sophomore year is required for those requesting placement into the tenth grade:

English 9	1 credit
World Language	1 credit
Mathematics (Algebra 1, Geometry)	2 credits
Biology	1 credit
Health and Physical Education	1 credit
Elective (Technology preferred)	1 credit

4. Credits Required for Grade 11 Application

Completion of the following specified graduation credits prior to the beginning of the junior year is required for those requesting placement into the eleventh grade:

English 9 and 10	2 credits
Biology	1 credit
Chemistry	1 credit
World Language	1 credit (2 recommended)
Mathematics (Alg. 1, Geom., Alg. 2)	3 credits
Health and Physical Education	2 credits
World History and Geography 2	1 credit
Elective (Technology preferred)	1 credit

Students accepted into the eleventh grade with all the above credits would still need to take at least 13 additional credits to complete the graduation requirements for the TJHSST diploma. (See Section IX, Graduation Requirements.)

5. Tenth and Eleventh Grade Admission Process

The admissions process for tenth and eleventh grade students will be conducted by the admissions office of TJHSST.

a. Application Calendar

An application deadline for eligible ninth and tenth grade students will be set each year and published in Notice 3355. The application deadline for all eligible students seeking admission to the tenth or eleventh grade will be no later than June 15 immediately preceding the academic year for which admission is sought.

b. Admissions Process

Eligible students are assisted in making request for placement by the admissions office or by a local school counselor designated as that school's official contact with the admissions office.

c. Selection Procedure

- (1) Students' records are reviewed by the admissions office and by a committee of faculty and staff members of TJHSST to determine which students have met all prerequisite courses and educational experience requirements.
- (2) All students requesting placement will be notified of decisions by the admissions office no later than July 15 of each year.

VI. Appeals

A. Exceptional Circumstances Appeal

1. An Exceptional Circumstances Appeal form must be submitted within 10 business days after receiving official notice of the admissions decision. The Appeal form will ask the parent and/or guardian to provide a written explanation of the exceptional

circumstance that the Appeals Committee should consider.

2. The Appeal form must be submitted to the TJHSST Admissions Office. The TJHSST Admissions Office will ensure that all appeal documents are submitted to the Appeals Committee. The parent and/or guardian is not allowed to submit additional credentials, documents, or letters of recommendation.
3. The Appeals Committee will review the appeal.
4. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be communicated to the parent and/or guardian in writing and the Appeals Committee decision is final.

VII. RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

A. Continuing Residency Requirement

1. A parent and/or legal guardian of an admitted student must complete a residency verification form in order to register the student at TJHSST.
2. A student who is admitted to TJHSST must at all times continue to reside with a parent and/or guardian who is a full-time resident and meets the residency requirements.

B. Change of Address Within Cooperating School Divisions

1. All changes of address from the time of application through graduation must be reported to the student services office immediately upon change of address. If there is a change of address, a parent and/or legal guardian must complete a new Residency Verification form with the school student services department.
2. If a student and his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) change their domicile to a location in another cooperating school division, the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) must verify the cooperating school division's percentage has not been exceeded for the student's class at TJHSST before any change of domicile. Note: This requirement will end with the Class of 2024 (selection process changed for Class of 2025).
3. A student who changes his or her domicile to a cooperating school division that has exceeded its percentage for the student's class at TJHSST may not continue to attend TJHSST. Note: This requirement will end with the Class of 2024 (selection process changed for Class of 2025).

VIII. STUDENT WITHDRAWAL, REENTRY AND DEFERMENT

A. Permanent Withdrawal

A student who is enrolled in TJHSST may at any time, with parental permission, voluntarily withdraw from the school and enroll in the public high school that serves the student's residential location or in the private school of his or her choice. A student who voluntarily withdraws from TJHSST during grade 9 is eligible to

reapply for admission to grade 10 at TJHSST, but readmission is not guaranteed. A student who voluntarily withdraws after grade 9 is not eligible to reapply to TJHSST.

B. Temporary Withdrawal

A student enrolled for at least one full academic year in TJHSST may withdraw for only one full academic year and be guaranteed automatic reentry provided all three following conditions are met:

1. The student and parents change their domicile to a location outside the boundaries of the cooperating jurisdictions for one full academic year but return to a cooperating school division whose percentage has not been exceeded for the class that the student seeks to reenter prior to reentry.
2. The student obtains (prior to the temporary withdrawal date), from the principal, written approval of the plan for the student's academic program during the withdrawal period.
3. The student successfully completes the proposed academic program and can meet the graduation requirements of TJHSST at the expected time of graduation for the class in which the student was originally enrolled.

B. Deferment of Admissions

1. Students who are offered admissions are not permitted to defer the offer. The selection process will continue to offer any open seat to students in the waitpool. Therefore, students who do not accept admission would be required to reapply (if eligible) for the Sophomore Round.

IX. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. The requirements for a student to earn a diploma are those in effect when the student enters the 9th grade for the first time. The following applies to 9th grade students who enter high school in 2013-14 and beyond.

To graduate from high school with an Advanced Studies Diploma, students must meet the minimum requirements as outlined below, which include 26 credits, 9 of which must be verified credits. A **standard** credit is earned when a student passes a course. A **verified** credit is earned when a student passes a course and the associated end-of-course SOL test. In some cases, students may utilize substitute tests or certifications to earn verified credits. State guidelines prescribe the number of verified credits required for graduation for students entering a Virginia public high school for the first time during tenth grade or after. Consult your school counselor for specific information.

Students receive credit toward graduation for high school courses taken and passed in middle school. These courses count toward credits in the required sequences as well as toward the total number of credits required for graduation and calculation of the grade point average (GPA). **Middle school parents may request that grades for any high school credit-bearing course taken in the middle school be removed from the**

student's high school transcript, any removed grades will not earn high school credit for the course. In addition, the student will not be eligible for a verified credit in any course that has been removed from the transcript. The request to remove a course from the transcript must be made in writing to the middle or high school that the student will attend in the next school year no later than nine weeks after that school year begins.

Advanced Studies Diploma Course Requirements (8 VAC 20-131-50)			
Subject Area	Standard Credits	Verified Credits	Jefferson Diploma ¹
English	4	2	4
Mathematics ¹	4	2	4 ⁷
Laboratory Science ²	4	2	4
History and Social Science ³	4	2	4 ⁸
*World Language ⁴	3		3 ⁹
Health and Physical Education	2		2
Fine Arts or Career and Technical Ed.	1		1 ¹⁰
Economics and Personal Finance	1		1
Electives	3		3 ¹¹
Student Selected Test ⁵		1	
Total Credits ⁶	26	9	26

*Foreign Language is designated World Language in FCPS.

1 Courses completed to satisfy this requirement will include at least three different course selections from among: algebra I, geometry, algebra II, or other mathematics courses above the level of algebra II. The Board of Education shall approve courses to satisfy this requirement.

2 Courses completed to satisfy this requirement will include course selections from at least three different science disciplines from among: earth sciences, biology, chemistry, or physics or completion of the sequence of science courses required for the International Baccalaureate Diploma. The Board will approve courses to satisfy this requirement. Biology, chemistry, physics, and geosystems are required courses for all students.

3 Courses completed to satisfy this requirement will include U.S. and Virginia history, U.S. and Virginia government, and world history/geography I and world history/geography II. AP world history satisfies the requirement for world history/geography II.

4 Courses completed to satisfy this requirement will include three years of one language or two years of two languages.

5 A student may utilize additional tests for earning verified credit in computer science, technology, career or technical education, economics, or other areas as prescribed by the Board in 8 VAC 20-131-110.

6 Students must successfully complete one virtual course, which may be a noncredit-bearing course, or may be a course required to earn this diploma that is offered online.

7 Does not include algebra I, which is required for application and/or admission. Math sequence must terminate in at least AP calculus (AB or BC)

8 World history & geography 2, US/VA history, US/VA government. The fourth social studies requirement may be acquired by any non-AP social studies credit available at TJHSST.

9 Must have three consecutive years of the same language – Footnote #4 does not apply for the TJ Diploma.

10 The credit is earned via design & technology required for all matriculating students.

11 Computer science, senior research/mentorship, and an additional credit in math, science, technology, fine arts, or a fourth consecutive credit in world language must be taken to fulfill these 'elective' credits.

B. Exemption from the TJHSST Diploma Requirement

An enrolled student in the senior year may be granted an exemption, under exceptional circumstances, by the director of student services and the principal, from meeting the requirements for graduation from TJHSST if the student meets local and state requirements for graduation. A student who is granted an exemption from the TJHSST diploma may receive a generic diploma from FCPS and may participate in the TJHSST graduation ceremony.

C. Graduation Credit by Alternate Methods

Alternate methods of earning credit for graduation from TJHSST require approvals, before beginning any study or program, of the director of student services and the principal. Alternate methods must be ones sanctioned by the Virginia Board of Education and Fairfax County School Board directives.

X. ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

A. Academic Standards

An enrolled student must maintain a cumulative B average (unweighted 3.0 grade point average) at the end of each school year to remain a student in good standing at TJHSST.

B. Academic Standards Procedure

1. For any student who is experiencing academic difficulty during the school year, TJHSST teachers and staff members will develop and document intervention strategies to help the student be academically successful at TJHSST.
2. At the end of the school year, if the student does not maintain the needed course of studies or fails to maintain a cumulative B average (unweighted 3.0 grade point average), the student may return to his or her base school. When there are exceptional circumstances, the parent may request an exception from the director of student services, the principal, and the regional assistant superintendent or his or her designee.

XI. CURRICULUM

The curriculum for TJHSST includes selected courses prescribed in the FCPS Program of Studies, as well as courses designed to explore new structures and methods in the sciences, technology, mathematics, humanities, and the arts. The curriculum for TJHSST must meet state governor's high school and FCPS academic requirements.

XII. PROGRAM

The eight-period day consists of seven academic classes and one required activity period. Students do not attend each course every day. Flexible scheduling allows all classes to meet for two double periods and one single period each week.

XIII. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The extracurricular activities program for TJHSST is the same comprehensive extracurricular activities program, including athletics, as that approved for other high schools in FCPS. Any approved activity will be provided if sufficient student interest and participation exist.

Any student who transfers from TJHSST with no legal change in domicile will be ineligible, according to the Virginia High School League transfer rules, to participate for one semester in Virginia High School League-sanctioned activities of any Virginia high school.

XIV. PERSONNEL AND STAFFING

Staffing and personnel policies for TJHSST that differ from staffing and personnel policies for other Fairfax County public schools include the following:

- A. All instructional staff members will be employed for at least eight hours each working day.
- B. All instructional staff members will receive a salary scale adjustment.
- C. Criteria by which instructional staff members are selected will be determined by the Department of Human Resources with assistance from the administrative staff of TJHSST.

Legal reference: 8 VAC 20-131-110

See also the current version of:

- Notice 3355, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
Admissions Procedures
- Notice 5922, Student Fees
- Policy 3355, High School for Science and Technology
- Regulation 2430, Secondary Teacher's Guide: Grading and Reporting to
Parents
- Regulation 2460, Requirements for Graduation and Graduation Seals of
Achievement