

SHARP LEARNING CENTER
3135 NEWTON DRIVE
COVINGTON, GA 30014
770-787-3010

STUDENT HANDBOOK
2009-2010

THIS PLANNER BELONGS TO:

Name: _____

Grade: _____ Homeroom: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Student #: _____

Principal's Message

Welcome to Sharp. You and your parents are valued team members. You are encouraged to participate in the implementation of the vision of Sharp Learning Center. The vision is to modify behavior that needs changing and to improve the academic standing of all students.

As cited in the Mission Statement of the Newton County Schools, our purpose is to prepare you with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to think independently, to make responsible decisions, to appreciate and enjoy life, and to solve problems in order to meet future challenges.

We are committed to providing core curriculum and self-discipline in a safe, nurturing, and risk-free environment. You will be asked to perform at your optimum capacity behaviorally and academically. We hope your experiences here will be meaningful and life-changing. The administration, faculty, and staff look forward to working with you and your parents.

We are glad to have you as a student. We want to assure you that with your cooperation, and the commitment of the administration, faculty, and staff, you will grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Burnette
Principal

SHARP LEARNING CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

The administration, faculty and staff of Sharp Learning Center are committed to providing opportunities that will develop skills that are essential for continued success in the learning environment. We strive to create opportunities and real life experiences that will enable students to become critical thinkers, responsible individuals, and productive citizens.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Sharp Learning Center tradition of excellence requires an academic environment that is free from all forms of academic dishonesty. Students must meet challenges with honesty and individual effort. Students earn respect for themselves and their academic work through academic integrity and ethical conduct. In all work submitted for academic credit, students are expected to represent themselves honestly. No form of student work is exempt from this policy. **Cheating** (getting or giving unauthorized help on an assignment, quiz, or test) and **plagiarism** (submitting work as your own that is someone else's) are forms of academic misconduct that will result in the following consequences:

- Student will receive a zero for the assignment with no opportunity to recover the grade*
- Parents will be notified in all cases of academic dishonesty

**The only exception occurs when a student is guilty of academic dishonesty on a benchmark test. Because these tests are used to determine the student's satisfactory academic progress, students will be required to retake the benchmark test on his or her own time. The make-up test will be scored to determine student progress; however, the student may only receive 70% credit of the scored test.*

In addition to the consequences listed above, students may lose privileges, positions, or opportunities requiring trustworthiness and responsibility.

All forms of academic dishonesty place the value of grades over learning and are in direct contrast to the mission of Sharp Learning Center.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

Constructive criticism of the schools is welcomed by the Board of Education whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program or to equip the schools to complete their tasks more effectively.

Members of the Newton County Board of Education have confidence in the professional staff and desire to support their actions in order that they are free from unnecessary, spiteful, or negative criticism and complaint. These statements do not supersede any employee's or citizen's rights to contact Board members directly. However, whenever a complaint is made directly to the Board as a whole or to a Board member as an individual, it will be referred to the administration for study and possible resolution.

The Board advises the public that the proper channeling of and most effective way to resolve complaints involving instruction, discipline, curriculum/instruction, or transportation is to contact the individual at your student's school who is designated by position in the chart below to deal with such concerns. Any issue outside of this chart's listing should be addressed to the principal. The Board will consider hearing complaints when they cannot be resolved through the use of the channels below:

Discipline	Curriculum	Transportation
Teacher	Teacher	Appropriate Assistant Principal
Appropriate Assistant Principal	Appropriate Assistant Principal	Principal
Principal	Principal	Transportation Director
Appropriate Director	Appropriate Director	Associate Superintendent
Associate Superintendent	Associate Superintendent	Superintendent
Superintendent	Superintendent	School Board Member
School Board Member	School Board Member	State Dept. of Education
State Dept. of Education	State Dept. of Education	

ADVISEMENT

The counselor will have at least one session per semester with each student to plan and monitor his/her program of study; provide information on career opportunities, colleges, and scholarships; and discuss the student's academic progress. The Graduation Coach will monitor on an on-going basis a high school student's progress toward graduation.

CAFETERIA SERVICES

Application for reduced price and free lunches may be made through the Cafeteria Manager. Students may not use another student's ID account to purchase a meal. Students may bring their lunches from home, but all consumption must occur in the cafeteria. All students on free and reduced lunch and prepaid accounts must present their student ID or pay cash. Free and reduced lunch application will be issued during the Entry Conference. **STUDENTS MAY NOT CHARGE THEIR MEALS.**

CONFERENCES

Parent conferences are scheduled through the main office. Parents and guardians are encouraged to schedule conferences on a regular basis. All conferences will be scheduled before or after the instructional day.

Parents are encouraged to meet with teachers after Progress Reports have been issued. Please call the school to schedule an appointment with your child's teachers to discuss his/her academic and behavioral progress.

COURSE LOAD FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Students will be expected to take a full course load each semester. An academic plan of study will be provided to each student so that the student and parent know the required courses for preparation toward graduation. Students who are unable to schedule a full load will not be allowed to remain on campus. Provisions must be made for transportation to leave the campus, when the scheduled day is over. **Due to staffing limitations at Sharp Learning Center, foreign language classes are not offered and CTAE offerings are limited.**

COURSE SYLLABI

At the start of each semester, teachers will distribute a course syllabus to their students. Students are asked to take the syllabus home and review it with their parents. Since the syllabus will include an outline of the course content, grading procedure, tardy policy, expectations for behavior, and other pertinent information, it is important that students and parents carefully read all syllabi.

CREDIT

Procedures for Awarding Units of Credit

The Newton County Board of Education shall award Units of Credit based on the QCC and GPS and a minimum of 135 hours of instruction in an approved block schedule

1. Either elective credit or no credit shall be awarded for courses (REMEDIAL) in which instruction is based on the QCC for grades K – 8.
2. Core area courses successfully completed may not be repeated.
3. A course shall count only once for satisfying any unit requirement for graduation. The same course cannot be used to satisfy a unit requirement in more than one core area of study.
4. The Newton County Schools shall accept the course credit and grades earned by any student from an accredited school. These schools shall have been accredited at the time credit was earned. Accredited school is defined as:
 - a. Schools accredited by or holding provisional status from the Georgia Accrediting Commission, and/or one of the accrediting agencies that is a member of the Georgia Private School Accreditation Council, and/or one of the following regional accrediting agencies: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
 - b. A standard Georgia public school as defined in Rule 160-3-2-.01 (Comprehensive Evaluation System).
 - c. A school from another state accredited by that state's accrediting agency.
 - d. Schools accredited by the accrediting Commission for Independent Study, Inc.
 - e. Other schools and home-study programs will be considered non-accredited for these purposes.
5. The Newton County School System shall verify grade placement and validate credits of any student who transfers into the district from a non-accredited school or from a home-study program. Curriculum guides or other pertinent information regarding a course may be obtained to determine whether transfer courses meet required minimum core curriculum. Placement of first time 9th graders entering from non-accredited schools will be determined by performance on the 9th Grade Placement Test to determine readiness for the ninth grade. If the student fails the 9th Grade Placement Test and is under the age of 16, the student will be assigned to 8th Grade.

Students entering school from home study programs shall provide the school with a copy of the student's birth certificate; an up-to-date immunization record; the results of any standardized tests administered while the student was in a home study program; and the annual program assessment reports in each subject area as specified by the laws establishing the home study program. All other entrance requirements apply.

Grades for courses applied to high school graduation which are awarded by a home study program or by a non-accredited school shall be recorded as Pass/Fail.

NOTE: Parents or guardians shall sign an agreement indicating their understanding of these policies.

Students who desire transfer credits for courses taken at a non-accredited school or from a home-study program will be placed at the appropriate level as indicated by the transcript of the sending school. However, credit will not be granted for transfer courses until requirements for granting credit have been met as follows:

- a. **Requirements for Granting Credit of Non-Prerequisite Courses.** To receive transfer credit for non-prerequisite course(s) taken at a non-accredited school or home-study program, the student must take and earn a passing score of 70 or above on the final exam of the course for which course transfer credit is being sought. The final exam for eight state designated courses shall be the End of Course Test (EOCT). If the student fails an EOCT, he/she must retake the course to earn credit. Credit will not be awarded for courses not offered in the Newton County School District. An exception may be made for a course found on the list of state funded courses which the Newton County High Schools do not offer. Upon determination that such transfer course meets QCC and GPS requirements, the administrator may grant credit.
- b. **Requirements for Granting Credit of Prerequisite Courses.** Credit may be granted retroactively on prerequisite courses based on acceptable student performance in the next level of a prerequisite course. Acceptable student performance is defined as meeting attendance requirements and obtaining a passing score of 70 or higher. Schools offering year-long, traditional schedules would use ONLY the end-of-the-year average (full course) as the determiner. An exception to this regulation is for a course requiring an EOCT. In such cases the EOCT shall be given for the prerequisite and a passing score of 70 or higher must be earned for granting the prerequisite credit. Placement may be changed before the end of the semester when a student is not meeting acceptable performance standards. The decision to change placement before the end of the semester must include input from the teacher, guidance counselor, and principal.
- c. **Requirements for Granting Credit for Students from Foreign Countries.** Transcripts may be translated to English by contacting the International Newcomers Center at 770-985-5200. Comparable courses will be awarded credit as described in item (a) above: To receive transfer credit for non-prerequisite course(s) taken at a non-accredited school or home-study program, the student must take and earn a passing score of 70 or above on the final exam of the course for which course transfer credit is being sought. The final exam for eight state designated courses (Algebra I, Math 1, Geometry, Physical Science, Biology, 9th Lit/Comp., American Literature, Economics and United States History) shall be the End of Course Test (EOCT). If the student fails an EOCT, he/she must retake the course to earn credit. Credit will not be awarded for courses not offered in the Newton County School District. An exception may be made for a course found on the list of state funded courses which the Newton County High Schools do not offer. Upon determination that such transfer course meets QCC/GPS requirements, the administrator may grant credit. Students transferring from a foreign country will be required to take and pass all five Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT).
- d. **Requirements for Granting Credit through Credit Recovery Programs.** Students who have failed a course and complete requirements of the NovaNet curriculum for a comparable course will be awarded credit.

A maximum of seven credits may be transferred from a non-accredited school or eight from an accredited school as defined in 7 above for each school year completed, excluding summer school credits. A maximum of two units may be transferred for summer school credit.

6. Courses may not be audited at the high schools in Newton County.
7. Schools shall not substitute courses and exempt students from the required secondary minimum core curriculum unless the student transferred from an accredited secondary school or the courses presented for credit meet criteria identified in these above outlined procedures.
8. Should the Newton County Board of Education choose to grant unit credit for learning that has occurred outside the 9 – 12 classroom, it shall use the following assessment procedures to award or exempt unit credit in lieu of class enrollment: evaluation of the student's transcript for course equivalency and/or a proficiency test and/or actual classroom performance to determine mastered prerequisite skills. Equivalency credit shall be shown on the transcript. For example, a student whose native language is not English could be awarded one or two units of credit for the foreign language of their native tongue if he/she can demonstrate competency in that language.
9. Remedial courses count as elective credit only.
10. HOPE Requirements: Beginning with the class of 2007, grades from ALL coursework in academic core attempted in high school will be calculated in the GPA. Final GPA will be calculated by the Georgia Finance Commission using a 4.0 scale. Any grade earned in high school courses taken in middle school will not be included in the HOPE calculation (i.e., Alg. I).

11. Secondary School Reports, recommendations, and information including student's rank completed by teachers, counselors, or other staff members are not released to students, but sent directly to the college or organization. Copies are not provided to the student, parent, or guardian.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES FOR SHARP LEARNING CENTER

(THESE PROCEDURES ARE IN ADDITION TO THOSE OUTLINED IN THE NEWTON COUNTY SCHOOLS' SYSTEMWIDE PORTION OF THE SECONDARY HANDBOOK ATTACHED)

SHARP LEARNING CENTER STUDENT EXPECTATIONS FOR BEHAVIOR:

1. Sharp Learning Center students will be responsible for managing their behavior at school and following **ALL** rules and procedures set forth upon their placement at Sharp Learning Center. Suspension from school may occur when a student displays extreme unacceptable behavior that interferes with the welfare of another student(s) or with the right of another student(s) to learn. Parents will be notified of the suspension and must schedule an appointment with the administration **BEFORE** the student will be allowed to return to class. Suspended students must remain off any school campus during the period of suspension. Recurring behavioral problems and repetitive suspension may result in charges being filed with the Juvenile Authorities or expulsion.
2. Sharp Learning Center has **ZERO TOLERANCE** for profanity and/or vulgarity. Violation of this rule will result in suspension and possible expulsion and legal action will be taken.
3. Sharp Learning Center students are **NOT ALLOWED** to move about the building without adult supervision.
4. Sharp Learning Center students will be required to be inspected each morning for unauthorized items and dress code violation before being allowed into the building.
5. **Parents and students of Sharp Learning Center are responsible for any academic materials (paper, pencils, etc.) needed for class each day.**
6. In an effort to provide all students at Sharp Learning Center with a safe learning environment, school officials, depending on the severity of the situation, may apply stricter measures up to and including notification of law enforcement. An administrator has the discretion to determine the offense and the appropriateness of the disposition assigned.

The following items are NOT allowed on the bus or campus of Sharp Learning Center:

1. Large amounts of money. Limit allowed: \$5.00
2. Cell phones, pagers, beepers, laser pointers, MP3's, CD players, CD's, electronic games or devices, etc. Banned items will be confiscated. The school assumes no responsibility for items confiscated or stolen but will return such confiscated item(s) to the **parent/guardian** upon request. Confiscated items will be returned on **Wednesday only** between 3:00 and 4:30 p.m.
3. Candy, gum, bottles/cans of any substance.
4. Toys, water pistols, etc.
5. Alcohol, drugs, tobacco, cigarettes, lighters (possession of these items will result in suspension/charges).
6. Firearms, knives, explosives (possession of these will result in expulsion and prosecution).
7. Anything not needed for class that could be a distraction or hazard.

DRESS CODE/UNIFORM POLICY FOR STUDENTS OF SHARP LEARNING CENTER

- A. ***ALL CLOTHING (INCLUDING SHOES) MUST BE THE APPROPRIATE SIZE FOR THE STUDENT.***
Baggy/oversized shirts, blouses, bottom wear, sweaters, sweatshirts, undershirts, jackets, coats and/or shoes are not authorized.
- B. ***Shirts and Blouses***
 1. **WHITE** (Oxford/Polo/Golf type) **SHIRT** with a collar, buttons and **NO LOGOS**.
 2. **SHIRTS MUST BE TUCKED IN AT ALL TIMES.**
 3. Undershirts must be solid white with no lettering or design. Undershirts cannot be oversized or long.
- C. ***Pants***
 1. Tan khaki full length pants (NO OTHER COLORS)
 2. Pants must fit the students' waist and leg length and must be worn at the natural waistline.
 3. Pants may not be hip huggers, stretch pants, Capri, corduroy, jean style, cargo style, or have pockets down the legs of the pants.
 4. All students must wear a plain black belt. No decorative buckles or decoration around the length of the belt is permitted.

STUDENTS may not wear "layers" of clothes underneath their uniform. This includes additional pairs of pants, shorts, socks, and any type of shirt other than a white "undershirt."
- D. ***Shoes***
 1. Shoes must be closed-toe and closed-heel. Shoelaces are required.
 2. Slippers, flip-flops, sandals or any type of slip-on shoe are not permitted.
- E. ***Outerwear***

1. Jackets/coats must be removed upon entering the building. “Hoodies” are not authorized for wear at anytime during the school day at Sharp Learning Center.
2. **Students may not wear jackets, gloves or hats in the building.**

F. Accessories

1. Head coverings, grills, hair picks, bandannas, beads and or sunglasses are not permitted.

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the student follows the school dress code everyday on campus and on the bus.

STUDENTS MUST BE PREPARED AND IN UNIFORM EACH DAY. Dress code violations will require a parent conference for each occurrence.

BUS RULES FOR STUDENTS OF SHARP LEARNING CENTER

Riding a Newton County school bus is a privilege for students, not a right. Sharp Learning Center has **ZERO TOLERANCE** for misbehavior on the bus. **ANY** misbehavior on the bus by a Sharp Learning Center student will result in suspension from the bus **FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SCHOOL YEAR**. In addition, the following requirements will be enforced:

1. All Sharp Learning Center students **MUST** display his/her picture ID before boarding the school bus. **Any false representation will result in suspension from the bus for the remainder of the school year.**
2. All Sharp Learning Center students will have assigned seats on the bus and must sit in his/her assigned seat daily. **Failure to sit in an assigned seat will result in suspension from the bus for the remainder of the school year.**

EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS

Field trips have a proper place in the educational setting; however, they must be well planned and have educational objectives.

FALSIFYING REPORTS

Falsifying reports regarding instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher or other school personnel is prohibited (08 House Bill 1321). An investigation will be held with the penalty at the discretion of the administrator which may include ISS, suspension or suspension to a formal hearing.

GRADES

Students and parents/guardians are advised to seek assistance from teachers and/or counselors early in the semester if grades are below passing. Grades are based on class participation, class work, homework, examinations, and any special project that the classroom teacher may assign. When work is missed because of absences, it is the student’s responsibility to make it up according to the guidelines established in the course syllabus. Teachers are urged to notify parents in the event a student is in danger of not passing a course. The grading scale for the Newton County School System is as follows:

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
Below 70	F
No Credit	NC
Incomplete	I

End of Course Tests (EOCT) shall be used as the final exam in courses assessed by an EOCT and shall count 15% of the final numeric grade as prescribed by State Board Policy IHA.

PASS (P) – Passing grades for students transferring from schools noted in Board Policy JBCCB will be designated “P.” No numerical grades will be given in these cases.

FAIL (F) – Failing grades for students transferring from schools noted in Board Policy JBCCB will be designated “F.”

NO CREDIT – Grade designation for withholding unit credit.

An Incomplete (I) may be given to a student at the end of the semester only upon approval of the Principal or his/her designee. Students will have up to 14 calendar days after the end of the semester to make up incomplete work. The principal reserves the right to determine the number of days given a student to make up work within the 14-day period.

Exception: Students not taking an End of Course Test during the regularly scheduled administration for that test will receive an Incomplete in the corresponding course until that test is taken. If a student receives an Incomplete due to failure to take the EOCT, the student must take the test within the first on-line make-up session following the main administration. If the student refuses, he/she will receive no credit for the course.

GRADE PROMOTION HIGH SCHOOL

Beginning with the 2009-10 school year, Alcovy High School and Newton High School are transitioning to the 4 X 4 block schedule from the traditional six-period per day schedule. Based on this move, NCSS will phase in an increase in the number of units required

by AHS/NHS students for grade placement and graduation. The following number of units is required for grade placement. Exceptions must be approved by the principal or his/her designee:

**AHS/NHS
(Students entering ninth grade in 2006-07)**

0 – 4 Carnegie Units – 9th grade
5 Carnegie Units – 10th grade
11 Carnegie Units – 11th grade
16 Carnegie Units – 12th grade
23/25 Carnegie Units to graduate*

**AHS/NHS
(Students entering ninth grade in 2007-08)**

0 – 4 Carnegie Units – 9th grade
5 Carnegie Units – 10th grade
11 Carnegie Units – 11th grade
18 Carnegie Units – 12th grade
25/27 Carnegie Units to graduate*

* The number of units required for graduation varies according to the program of study.

**AHS/NHS
(Students entering ninth grade in 2008-09)**

0 – 4 Units – 9th grade
5 Units – 10th grade
13 Units – 11th grade
20 Units – 12th grade
27/29 Units to graduate**

**AHS/NHS
(Students entering ninth grade 2009-10 and thereafter)**

0 – 6 Units – 9th grade
7 Units – 10th grade
14 Units – 11th grade
20 Units – 12th grade
28/30 Units to graduate**

** Tiered diploma options are no longer included in the graduation requirements for students entering ninth grade in 2008-2009. All students are expected to complete a common set of requirements to earn a regular diploma.

Class	Credits Required to Graduate	Credits Required to Graduate with Distinction	Possible Credit Accumulation on Block
Senior 2009-10 (Junior 08-09)	23	25	26
Senior 2010-11 (Soph. 08-09)	25	27	28
Senior 2011-12 (Fresh. 08-09)	27	29	30
Senior 2012-13 (Fresh. 09-10)	28	30	32

EHS GRADE PROMOTION

(Students entering ninth grade in 2008-09 and thereafter)

0 – 6 Units – 9th grade
7 Units – 10th grade
14 Units – 11th grade
20 Units – 12th grade
28/30 Units to graduate**

** Tiered diploma options are no longer included in the graduation requirements for students entering ninth grade in 2008-2009. All students are expected to complete a common set of requirements to earn a regular diploma.

GRADUATION CEREMONY

Graduation exercises will be held the day after the last day of second semester. Practice will be held on the day before graduation. Students must practice to be eligible to participate in the graduation exercises. The Principal must approve exceptions to this procedure.

Participation in graduation exercises is a privilege that may be revoked due to behavioral/academic issues at the discretion of the principal.

*Newton County Board Policy IHF, states that **only Seniors who have passed all portions of the Georgia High School Graduation Test (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Writing) or who have an approved waiver/variance from the State Board of Education and are within one credit of graduating will be allowed to participate in the Graduation Ceremony.** Students will not receive a diploma until all requirements are met as established by the Newton County School System and the Georgia Department of Education. **In summary, all Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT) must be passed or have an approved waiver/variance in order for students to participate in graduation exercises.**

Beginning with the graduating class of 2012 (entering ninth grade as a freshman in 2008-2009), to participate in commencement exercises a student must have earned all units required for graduation and have passed all sections of the Georgia High School Graduation Test or have a waiver/variance approved by the State Board of Education. A student not completing the requirements with their graduating class who completes the requirements in the summer or during the next school year may participate in the upcoming graduation exercises, if so desired.

Students may not return to high school after receiving a GED or diploma from another school.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The Newton County Board of Education requires that all students must meet attendance requirements, perform with a passing score on the state graduation assessments, pass a minimum number of units in an approved program of study as requirements for graduating from high school.

Students who enroll from another state must meet the graduation requirements for the graduating class they enter and the state assessment requirements as determined in Georgia Board of Education rules.

Students entering grade nine for the first time in the 2002 - 03 school year and subsequent years must meet the graduation requirements established by Rule 160-4-2-.47 and the assessment requirements established in Rule 160-3-1-.07, and in local policy IHF. Students entering grade nine for the first time in the 2008-09 school year and subsequent years must meet the graduation requirements established by Rule 160-4-2-.48 and the assessment requirements established in Rule 160-3-1-.07, and in local policy IHF.

For students entering grade nine after July 1, 1997, the HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA shall be the official document certifying completion of attendance, a minimum number of Carnegie Units for the student's approved program of study, and the Georgia High School Graduation Test.

*The HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE shall be awarded to students who are within one unit of graduating, and who have passed all sections of the Georgia High School Graduation Test and who have met all requirements for attendance. The EMPLOYMENT FOUNDATIONS DIPLOMA or LIFE SKILLS DIPLOMA will be awarded to students with disabilities who earn the required number of units and meet all of the criteria of their IEP. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who enter ninth grade in 2008-09 may graduate and receive a REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA when the student's IEP team determines that the student has completed an integrated curriculum (ACCESS) based on the Georgia Performance Standards that includes instruction in mathematics, English/language arts, science and social studies as well as career preparation, self-determination, independent living and personal care. Students receiving this diploma must have participated in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) in middle school and high school and earned a proficient score on the high school GAA, and completion of the school year the student with disabilities turns 22 or transitioned to employment/training in which the supports needed are provided by an entity other than the local school system.

*Students who are awarded a diploma or the Certificate of Performance will be eligible to participate in commencement exercises. Students who are within one (1) unit of graduation and who have passed all sections of the Georgia High School Graduation Test or have a waiver/variance approved by the State Board of Education will be allowed to participate in graduation exercises if they desire, with the complete understanding that they will not receive a diploma until the graduation units required by the state and Newton County Board of Education have been met.

*Newton County Board Policy IHF, states that **only Seniors who have passed all portions of the Georgia High School Graduation Test (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Writing) or have a waiver/variance approved by the State Board of Education and are within one credit of graduating will be allowed to participate in the Graduation Ceremony.** Students will not receive a diploma until all requirements are met as established by the Newton County School System and the Georgia Department of Education. **In summary, all Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) must be passed in order for students to participate in graduation exercises.**

Beginning with the graduating class of 2012 (entering ninth grade as a freshman in 2008-2009), to participate in commencement exercises a student must have earned ALL UNITS required for graduation AND have passed ALL SECTIONS of the Georgia High School Graduation Test or have a waiver/variance approved by the State Board of Education. A student not completing the requirements with their graduating class who completes the requirements in the summer or during the next school year may participate in the upcoming graduation exercises, if so desired.

HONOR GRADUATES

In order to be an Honor Graduate, a student must meet the following requirements:

- For students entering 9th grade for the first time in 2003/04, the student must complete either the College Preparatory Program of Study, the College Preparatory Program of Study with Distinction, the Technical/Career Program of Study, or the Technical/Career with Distinction Program of Study. Tiered diploma options are no longer included in the graduation requirements for students entering ninth grade in 2008-2009.
- Earned an overall high school grade point average of 90 or above for the first seven consecutive semesters. This average presently includes an additional 5% multiplier for all Advanced Placement, Joint Enrollment, and Dual Enrollment Courses. Grades earned in an accredited middle school for which unit credit has been awarded shall not be included in the computation of the grade point average. Beginning with the graduating class of 2012 (entering ninth grade as a freshman in 2008-2009) 10 points will be added to the student's final class average for all Advanced Placement courses and Joint Enrollment or Dual Enrollment courses in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies or Foreign Language.
- Has not received an NC (No Credit) due to absences.
- Has not been suspended for a formal hearing on more than one occasion.
- Has passed all sections of the Georgia High School Graduation Test.
- Has completed seven consecutive semesters from one or more of the following categories of schools beginning with the first semester of their freshman year:
 1. A standard Georgia public school as defined in State Board Rule 160-3-2-01.
 2. A secondary school holding accreditation or provisional status from the Georgia Accrediting Commission, and/or one of the accrediting agencies that is a member of the Georgia Private School Accreditation Council, or any other public school accredited by a state agency recognized by that state's Department of Education.
 3. A secondary school accredited by one of the following regional accrediting agencies: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
 4. A school from another state accredited by that state's accrediting agency; or
 5. Schools accredited by the accrediting Commission for Independent Study, Inc.

For the graduating classes of 2009-2011, the first honor graduate will be the student who has the highest numerical average earned for the first seven consecutive semesters during the student's high school career with the final four of the seven semesters having been completed at the school from which he/she is graduating. Middle school grades issued for unit credit will not be used to determine positions (rankings). For students entering 9th grade for the first time in 2003/2004, the first and second honor graduates must graduate with the College Preparatory or College Preparatory with Distinction Program of Study. Tiered diploma options are no longer included in the graduation requirements for students entering ninth grade in 2008-2009.

The "Top Ten" students shall be the top ten honor graduates from the College Preparatory Program of Study.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2012 (entering ninth grade as a freshman in 2008-2009) honor graduates taking a minimum of two Advanced Placement courses shall be designated as Honor Graduates with Distinction. Rank is based on the first seven consecutive semesters during the student's high school career with the final four of the seven semesters having been completed at the school from which he/she is graduating. Middle school grades issued for unit credit will not be used to determine positions (rankings). The students designated as the first and second honor graduates shall be named from the Honor Graduates with Distinction based on the highest and second highest numerical average earned. The next eight positions in rank of the Honor Graduate with Distinction shall comprise the "Top Ten" students.

HEALTH RECORDS

Georgia law requires that every student enrolled in a Georgia public school have a Certificate of Immunization on file. Students who do not provide the school with an approved certificate will not be allowed to remain in school.

INSURANCE

Accident insurance may be purchased on an optional basis. The insurance covers the student enroute to and from school and while attending school. Insurance is mandatory for each student participating in athletics, certain trades and industry courses and work-study courses. Information about insurance will be provided by the homeroom teacher.

MEDICATION

No medication will be maintained by school personnel except in special situations. Parents are requested to contact the school office concerning special medical situations. The school will not dispense aspirin or Tylenol. Failure to properly secure medication through the nurse will result in disciplinary measures being taken.

MEDIA CENTER

The Media Center is an important component of the instructional program. The Media Center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Mid-Term Reports: Reports will be issued to students every 9 weeks. Parents are encouraged to schedule a conference with their child's teacher(s) if they have concerns.

Report Cards: Report cards are issued to all students at Sharp Learning Center. Students are expected to take these reports home.

Final report cards may be mailed if the student brings a self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, report cards may be picked up seven (7) days after school has closed for the summer.

TESTING PROGRAM

As referenced in Rule 160-3-1-.07 (Testing Programs – Student Assessment) students shall meet state assessment requirements for graduation as follows:

Georgia High School Graduation Test

Students entering grade nine after July 1, 1991 will take graduation examinations beginning in the junior year as one requirement for a high school diploma. The assessments will require students to post passing scores in the following areas: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Writing. These students will have up to five opportunities to take the test, if necessary, before the end of their twelfth grade year.

NOTE: A STUDENT WHO HAS NO MEANS OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION DUE TO A SEVERE PHYSICAL DISABILITY SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE WRITING PORTION OF THE STATE ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENT AS SPECIFIED IN RULE 160-3-1-.07.

Additionally, school systems administer the GHSGT to the following students if they are enrolled in school or present themselves for testing:

- All students who are enrolled for the third year in high school (grades 9-12), have accumulated at least nine units of credit (or 12 units of credit if the school is operating on a block schedule), and either have not achieved passing scores on the graduation assessments or present themselves as first-time test takers at the main administrations only.
- Educators should work with students individually to determine the most appropriate time for their initial spring, eleventh-grade administration. For example, a third-year student may meet the minimal credit requirement, but may not be classified as an eleventh-grader and/or may lack courses important to be well-prepared for the GHSGT. It may be appropriate for this student to be counseled to take the test as an eleventh grader the following spring. The

guideline will be that the student has earned at least 2 credits in each academic area of the Georgia High School Graduation Tests.

- Students transferring into a Georgia school system from private schools, home study programs, other states or countries.
- Students who have dropped out of school without having met all of the assessment and other graduation requirements and have returned without having been enrolled in any Georgia public school for one academic year or more. Such students shall meet the graduation assessment criteria for passing in effect for the class in which they re-enroll.

Procedures for Processing GHSGT Waivers/Variations Requests

Waiver- A GHSGT/GHSWT waiver is a decision by the State Board of Education (SBOE) not to apply all or part of the requirements of the GHSGT or GHSWT to a Georgia student who meets certain basic qualifications.

A **WAIVER** may be granted to you:

- if, due to a disability, you are incapable of passing a section of the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) or Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT). This disability must be noted in your individual education plan (IEP);
- OR, if you have not had a reasonable opportunity to pass a section of the GHSGT or GHSWT due to a substantial hardship beyond your control.

Variance- A GHSGT or GHSWT variance is a decision by the State Board of Education (SBOE) to modify all or part of the literal requirements of the GHSGT/GHSWT.

A **VARIANCE** may be granted to you as an alternative means of demonstrating academic proficiency. The variance may be considered when your situation is something other than a disability or substantial hardship.

Applying for GHSGT Waiver/Variance

1. Applicants should obtain a waiver/variance checklist and follow the outlined steps.
Checklist can be obtained from:
DOE website – www.doe.k12.ga.us
High School Counselors
Newton County Testing Director
2. Applicant must provide a letter requesting consideration for a GHSGT/GHSWT variance or waiver. The letter should include the following information: (Letter from parent/guardian if applicant is under the age of 18.)
 - a. State whether applying for a variance or waiver.
 - b. Section(s) of the test for which you are requesting consideration.
 - c. Permission for Newton County School System to release records regarding the variance or waiver request to the State Board of Education.
3. Applicant must complete the checklist and provide the necessary documentation for each item. (see waiver/variance checklist)
4. Once the checklist is completed with documentation provided and letter addressed to Newton County Schools superintendent is written, this information should be submitted to the counselor of the school from which the student attended for review.
5. Once the submitted information is verified to be complete, a letter from the superintendent will accompany the applicant's GHSGT/GHSWT waiver/variance packet and be sent to the State Department of Education.
6. The Georgia Department of Education will contact each applicant as to the status of his/her application.

End-of-Course Tests

Students will be required to take an End-of-Course Test in each of the following courses: Algebra I, Geometry, Math I, Math II, Physical Science, Biology, 9th Lit/Comp., American Literature, Economics and United States History. If a student receives an Incomplete due to failure to take the EOCT, the student must take the test within the first on-line make-up session following the main administration. If the student refuses, he/she will receive no credit for the course.

In order for a student to earn unit credit for a course that is assessed by an End-of-Course Test, the following weighted calculation must be used: a student's numeric score on the End-of-Course Test shall count for 15% of the student's final numeric grade in the course assessed by the End-of-Course Test.

Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs)

This is an English language proficiency test administered annually to all English language learners (ELL) in Georgia for the purposes of determining the English language proficiency level of students; providing districts with information that will help them evaluate the effectiveness of their ESOL programs; providing information that enhances instruction and learning in programs for English language learners; assessing the annual English language proficiency gains using a standards-based assessment instrument; and providing data for meeting federal and state requirements with respect to student assessment.

Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA)

This is a portfolio assessment designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) whose IEP team has determined they are unable to reasonably participate in the regular assessment program. The purpose of the GAA is to ensure all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, are provided access to the state curriculum and given the opportunity to demonstrate progress toward achievement of the state standards.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are the property of the State of Georgia. They are issued to each student and are the student's responsibility. The student has the responsibility to take care of these books at all times. If a book is lost or damaged beyond the usual wear, the student is required to pay for the book. Lost texts will not be replaced until payment has been received. **Agendas are given to each student upon enrollment in Sharp Learning Center. Additional agendas may be obtained for a fee of \$5.**

TRANSPORTATION

Students who are not transported by the school bus must have permission from parents to travel home by other means. Students are not permitted to ride with their peers unless written communication is received from the parents/guardians of both students releasing the school from liability. Students will not be permitted to ride another bus unless there is a written request from the parents.

VISITORS

Any visitor having valid business at the school must sign in at the front office desk and obtain a visitor's pass. Only the following persons will be allowed on campus: system employees, registered students, parents checking children in or out, individuals with official school business or appointments with school officials, and guests invited by school employees.

AHS & NHS PROGRAMS OF STUDY / GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
BLOCK TRANSITION
FOR STUDENTS ENROLLING IN THE NINTH GRADE
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE:
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2009-10
2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2010-11
2009-10 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2011-12
2010-11 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2012-13

COLLEGE PREP DIPLOMA & COLLEGE PREP WITH DISTINCTION

SUBJECT	UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE 2009-2010	UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE W/DISTINCTION 2009-10	UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE 2010-2011	UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE W/DISTINCTION 2010-11
English/Language Arts	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4	4
Science	4	4	4	4
Social Studies	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Foreign Language	2	2	2	2
CTAE and/or Fine Arts	1	1	1	1
Health and Physical Education	1	1	1	1
Electives	3.5	5.5	5.5	7.5
TOTAL	23	25 (Min. Required GPA- 85)	25	27 (Min. Required GPA-85)

TECHNOLOGY/CAREER PREP DIPLOMA & TECHNOLOGY/CAREER PREP WITH DISTINCTION

SUBJECT	UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE 2009-2010	UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE W/DISTINCTION 2009-10	UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE 2010-2011	UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE W/DISTINCTION 2010-11
English/Language Arts	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	3	3	3	3
Science	3	3	3	3
Social Studies	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Foreign Language and/or Computer Technology and/or Fine Arts	1	1	1	1
CTAE with 3 Units of Concentration in Same Area	4	4	4	4
Health and Physical Education	1	1	1	1
Electives	3.5	5.5	5.5	7.5
TOTAL	23	25 (Min. Required GPA- 85)	25	27 (Min. Required GPA-85)

AHS & NHS BLOCK TRANSITION
FOR STUDENTS ENROLLING IN THE NINTH GRADE
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE:
2008 – 09 SCHOOL YEAR (SENIOR 2011-12)
2009- 20 SCHOOL YEAR (SENIOR 2012-13)

Tiered diploma options are no longer included in the graduation requirements for students entering ninth grade in 2008-2009. All students are expected to complete a common set of requirements to earn a regular diploma.

HOPE Note: Beginning with the class of 2007, grades from **ALL** coursework in the academic core attempted in high school will be calculated in the GPA. Final GPA will be calculated by the Georgia Finance Commission using a 4.0 scale. Any grade earned in high school courses taken in the middle school will not be included in the HOPE calculation.

Units marked by * are required under the new graduation rule.

SUBJECT	UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE 2011-2012	UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE 2012-2013
English/Language Arts *	4	4
Mathematics *	4	4
Science *	4	4
Social Studies *	4	4
CTAE and/or Modern Language/Latin and/or Fine Arts	3	3
Health and Physical Education *	1	1
Electives	7	8
TOTAL	27	28
UNITS REQUIRED TO GRADUATE WITH DISTINCTION- REQUIRED MINIMUM GPA- 85	29	30

EMPLOYMENT FOUNDATIONS or LIFE SKILLS DIPLOMA
BLOCK TRANSITION- AHS & NHS
FOR STUDENTS ENROLLING IN THE NINTH GRADE
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE:
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2009-10
2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2010-11
2009-10 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2011-12
2010-11 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIRO 2012-13

COURSE REQUIRED	REQUIRED UNITS SENIOR 2009-10	REQUIRED UNITS SENIOR 2010-11	REQUIRED UNITS SENIOR 2011-12	REQUIRED UNITS SENIOR 2012-13
ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS				
Language Arts/Literature I	1	1	1	1
Language Arts/Literature II	1	1	1	1
Language Arts/ Literature III	1	1	1	1
Language Arts/Literature IV	1	1	1	1
MATHEMATICS				
Math I	1	1	1	1
Math II	1	1	1	1
Math III	1	1	1	1
Math IV	1	1	1	1
SCIENCE				
Physical Science	1	1	1	1
Health (or Environmental Science)	1	1	1	1
Biology	1	1	1	1
Family & Medical Management	1	1	1	1
SOCIAL STUDIES				
Government	1	1	1	1
Job Skills	1	1	1	1
United States History	1	1	1	1
Economics			1	1
ELECTIVES				
Any fine arts, computer, CTAE, physical education, and any combination of students with disabilities electives (including work study)	8	10	11	12
TOTAL UNITS NEEDED TO GRADUATE- Students will receive the Employment Foundations Diploma upon completion of this curriculum.	23	25	27	28

**ACCESS REGULAR DIPLOMA
BLOCK TRANSITION- AHS & NHS
FOR STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES ENROLLING IN THE NINTH GRADE
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE:
2006-07 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2009-10
2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2010-11
2009-10 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2011-12
2010-11 SCHOOL YEAR- SENIOR 2012-13**

COURSE REQUIRED	REQUIRED UNITS SENIOR 2009-10	REQUIRED UNITS SENIOR 2010-11	REQUIRED UNITS SENIOR 2011-12	REQUIRED UNITS SENIOR 2012-13
ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS				
ACCESS to Literature/Composition	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to American Literature	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to World Literature	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to British Literature	1	1	1	1
MATHEMATICS				
ACCESS to Mathematics I	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to Mathematics II	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to Mathematics III	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to Mathematics IV	1	1	1	1
SCIENCE				
ACCESS to Physical Science	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to Environmental Science	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to Biology	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to Earth Systems	1	1	1	1
SOCIAL STUDIES				
ACCESS to American Govt./Civics	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to World History	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to U S History	1	1	1	1
ACCESS to Economics/Personal Finance	1	1	1	1
ELECTIVES				
Choices provided in the Program Planning Guide	7	9	11	12
TOTAL UNITS NEEDED TO GRADUATE- Students will receive the Access Regular Diploma upon completion of this curriculum * Student must pass the GAA	*23	*25	*27	*28