

Mountain Vista Governor's School

Handbook for

Students and Parents

Summer 2009

Welcome to Mountain Vista Regional Governor's School. Students together with our outstanding faculty will determine the course of this school. Parent support will be critical as we start and grow throughout the year. We are creating a unique learning opportunity as well as a legacy for others to follow. It is an exciting venture.

Please visit the MVGS website (www.mvgshome.org) for updates of news and information. Newsletters will be published quarterly with frequent email updates to parents and students. Additional questions can be directed to Dr. Rosanne Williamson, Director, Mountain Vista faculty members or your school division's Gifted and Talented Education Coordinator.

I. MVGS BASICS

- Regional program for academically talented and highly motivated 11th and 12th grade students from seven school divisions.
- Offering a program of courses in science, mathematics, humanities, and research that are uniquely integrated to provide a college-level, project-based learning environment.
- Half-day program offered at two campus sites: Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) in Middletown and Lord Fairfax Community College in Warrenton. These sites are connected for instruction via compressed video equipment.
- MVGS instructional day will be 4.5 hours: 3.5 hours at an LFCC campus site and 1 hour of web-based instruction.
- Provides for the opportunity to earn up to 32 college credits through a dual enrollment program on a college campus, as well as the option to take appropriate Advanced Placement Examinations.
- Opened in August 2006 with 115 student slots.
- Students wishing to enroll must submit an application and be accepted by the local school division selection committee. Each school division has established the number of participation slots for its students.

II. MVGS CURRICULUM

Mission Statement: The mission of the Mountain Vista Governor's School is to present a research-based, technology-enhanced, integrated program in mathematics, science, and the humanities. The program will challenge students to reach their full potential as independent thinkers capable of assuming leadership roles in a constantly changing global society.

Curriculum Overview: The interdisciplinary curriculum design of Mountain Vista Governor's School challenges students to construct a highly integrated understanding of mathematics and designated sciences. The development of technology and research skills supports students in solving authentic problems in a scholarly and professional manner. The humanities component requires students to analyze the relationship between the arts and sciences and to construct a personal philosophical basis for ethical leadership in applying scientific knowledge to challenging real-world issues.

Goals: The learning environment of Mountain Vista Governor’s School is designed to provide students rigorous educational experiences to reach their fullest potential by:

- Cultivating a collaborative, supportive regional community of academically talented and highly motivated learners that celebrates intellectual diversity.
- Providing investigative learning experiences that integrate disciplines.
- Engaging students in research and extended learning through a discovery approach patterned after activities of scholars and professionals.
- Developing producers of knowledge as well as consumers of knowledge.
- Preparing self-reliant, critical thinkers who excel at advanced levels of education and apply knowledge to real world challenges.
- Creating opportunities for service and leadership in both school and community.
- Establishing community partnerships to enhance learning opportunities.

Vision: The Mountain Vista Governor’s School community of learners will engage in the investigation of scholarly knowledge through an active, constructive learning environment. Students will be expected to become fluent in the processes of mathematics and science, reinforced by a deep understanding of the humanities.

- Through research, students will learn to use standard technological tools for data analysis and authentic problem solving.
- Through personal investigation and reflection, students will be challenged to derive meaning from learning.
- Through practical application, students will strive to reach their fullest potential.
- Through collaboration with peers, teachers, and mentors, students will generate and communicate useful solutions to problems of the local and global community.

Interdisciplinary Connectivity: The faculty of Mountain Vista Governor’s School will collaborate to integrate knowledge and skills from all disciplines in the following ways:

- Scientific and mathematical knowledge will be examined in historical and cultural contexts.
- The mathematics courses and the science courses will be taught collaboratively.
- Environmental science will be a component of the physics and biology courses.
- Students will be challenged to see how the process of science and the knowledge gained through science impacts the cultures and politics of the world.
- Students will analyze and critique scientific thought against the background of Western philosophy, literature, and the arts.
- Students will utilize their technical writing skills while conducting scientific investigations and presenting their findings.
- Students will be challenged through research to see that all knowledge crosses multiple disciplines.

Technology Integration: The faculty of Mountain Vista Governor’s School will integrate technology into all courses in the following ways:

- Students will carry out investigations using computer-aided, data-collecting probes and sensors.
- Students will use graphing software to manipulate and analyze data collected during laboratory investigations.
- Students will utilize Internet resources to gather background information throughout the courses.

- Students will engage in distance learning via multi-site video conferencing and/or on-line instruction.
- Students will use technology to develop and deliver presentations of their research findings in a publishable format.
- Faculty will use technology in instructional presentations.
- Faculty will utilize web-communication systems for off-site instruction, and students will utilize it to prepare and submit assignments. (e.g., weather-related or other scheduling issues negatively impacting on-site instruction)

An Alternative Learning Program Option: The Mountain Vista Governor’s School provides an alternate learning opportunity that is differentiated from the regular high school program by:

- Providing a college-level program designed to meet the unique needs of academically talented and highly motivated learners.
- Creating a regional community of learners.
- Providing a uniquely designed integrated science, mathematics, humanities, and research curriculum.
- Providing extensive research and real-world application opportunities.
- Using technology-enhanced instruction for delivery of instruction, data collection/analysis/processing, and effective communication of information/solutions.
- Focusing on community-based instruction through the themes of engineering, medicine, environment, agribusiness, and animal sciences.
- Providing an especially designed Dual Enrollment **program** (*versus a course*) that enables college-bound students to:
 - be challenged with college-level content;
 - experience college-level research expectations, language, and procedures;
 - develop learner-centered skills needed by a self-reliant, life-long learner;
 - earn college credits in math, science, humanities, and research;
 - develop a two-year portfolio for the college application process;
 - relate core knowledge to real-world application skills;
 - interact with experts in the career area of their choice.
- Developing leadership potential by exploring and applying intellectual ideas through research and public action.
- Providing a half-day program that enables students to continue to be involved in the academic, social, and extracurricular opportunities of their base schools.

III. MVGS 2009-10 PROGRAM OF STUDY

	Math	Science	Humanities	Research
First Year	MVGS Math Analysis/Pre-Calculus or MVGS First Year Calculus	MVGS Physics I: Mechanics or MVGS Environmental Science	MVGS Humanities I: The Power of Thought/English 11	MVGS Research I: Fundamentals
Second Year	MVGS First Year Calculus or MVGS Second Year Calculus with Topics in Multivariable or MVGS Statistics	MVGS Physics II: Electricity and Magnetism or MVGS Environmental Science	MVGS Humanities II: Applying the Power of Persuasion to World Issues/ US Government	MVGS Research II: Application

MVGS Course Names	Course Number	Graduation Credit	Dual Enrollment Credits Option	AP Exam Option	Teacher at LFCC Middletown Campus*	Teacher at LFCC Warrenton Campus*
MVGS Physics I	457019	Science	X	X	Burton	LaMonica
MVGS Physics II	457029	Science	X	X	Burton	LaMonica
MVGS Environmental Science	427009	Science		X	Dietrich	LaMonica
MVGS Math Analysis	316209	Math	X		Hess	Online
MVGS First Year Calculus	317719	Math	X	X	Hess	Reinbold
MVGS Second Year Calculus with Topics in Multivariable	317729	Math	X	X	Hess	Reinbold
MVGS Statistics	319209	Math	X	X	Online	Online
MVGS Humanities I/ English 11	119609	English 11	X	X	Harrington	Hayes
MVGS Humanities II/ Government	244509	Government 12 or Elective	X	X	Harrington Kopp	Hayes Kopp
MVGS Research I	151509	Elective	X		Burton Dietrich	Felts
MVGS Research II	461009	Elective	X		Dietrich	Dietrich

MVGS Academic Advisory Board recommendation is that courses, except MVGS Math Analysis, earn weighted High School credit based on local division weighting policy/procedures.

IV. ENROLLING A STUDENT IN MVGS

- A student must have submitted an application and been accepted into MVGS by the school division before a he/she can be enrolled in MVGS courses.
- Upon successful completion of MVGS Humanities I, a student will earn the required English 11 credit. Upon successful completion of MVGS Humanities II, a student will earn the required US Government credit or an elective credit.
- A student will earn elective credits through Research I in the junior year and through Research II in the senior year.
- MVGS courses are offered from Monday-Friday, 7:30 AM to 10:50AM.

- A student should be enrolled in courses according to base high school policy during PM blocks/periods. Students will need to be enrolled in foreign language, fine arts, United States History, English 12, as well as other elective choices at the base school.
- The MVGS curriculum is designed to be congruent with the Virginia's Early Scholar's Program. An MVGS senior may register and maintain acceptable status as a Virginia Early Scholar.

V. ENROLLING A STUDENT FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT CREDIT Through Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC)

- Dual enrollment credit will be an option for students enrolled in any MVGS course that has an LFCC approved dual enrollment teacher. Payment of dual enrollment credit tuition is dependent on the local school board decision.
- A student wishing to be enrolled in an MVGS course for dual enrollment credit must meet the dual enrollment course qualifications for placement and any course prerequisites as required by the college.
- A student is expected to take the LFCC placement test or provide documentation for the SAT. Students will need to provide a copy of their SAT scores to the college along with the enrollment form. The student **is responsible for taking the placement test or providing documentation of the SAT scores.**
- A student will complete the LFCC dual enrollment registration and enrollment forms through MVGS.

VI. ATTENDANCE

Since the academic pace at the Governor's School is accelerated, it is very important that student absences be kept to a minimum. If a student knows in advance that he/she will be absent from Governor's School for personal reasons or a home school academic activity, it is the student's responsibility to obtain assignments prior to the absence.

Absences, tardies, and early dismissals will be reported daily to the base school. School division attendance policies will be in effect. A parent/guardian should contact the MVGS Director immediately if a student will be absent for an extended medical situation. A doctor's excuse will be required. Guidance counselors are encouraged to contact the student's MVGS teachers for assignments as soon as parents advise them that a student will be absent for an extended period of time.

VII. MVGS ACADEMIC-YEAR CALENDAR

The MVGS Governing Board has approved an academic-year calendar for MVGS. This academic-year calendar is consistent with, but may not exactly reflect, the students' local school division calendars. If a school division is open and MVGS is closed, a student is responsible for web-based instruction. If a school division is closed and MVGS is open, a student is NOT required to attend MVGS. A student may choose to attend MVGS. When a school division is closed, that school division will not provide transportation. A senior's final exam schedule and last day of attendance will depend on the school division's graduation date.

VIII. MVGS TRANSPORTATION

MVGS students will be expected to follow the transportation expectations of their school divisions. The base schools will handle all transportation issues. School divisions provide

transportation to MVGS. Local school division policy will determine whether permission will be granted for students to drive to MVGS at LFCC or to be passengers in other students' cars. School division or charter buses shall be contracted for field experiences and school division transportation expectations will be in effect.

IX. STUDENT GRADES, REPORT CARDS, TRANSCRIPTS, TESTING and OTHER GUIDANCE SERVICES

MVGS students will be on a nine-week grading period. Report cards will be issued from their base schools. The MVGS 2009-10 Academic-Year Calendar indicates the dates on which each of the MVGS nine week grading periods will conclude. The MVGS Governing Board approved this grading schedule with the understanding that it will be consistent with, but may not exactly reflect, each school division's grading schedules.

MVGS will report grades to school divisions.

A student who graduates while enrolled in MVGS will receive the base high school's diploma. The Virginia Department of Education Governor's School Seal will be affixed to the diploma.

An MVGS student's high school transcript will come from the base school. Students must request transcripts showing dual enrollment college credit from LFCC.

VA SOL and other standardized testing services will be provided at the student's base school. Students enrolled in Humanities I will be required to take the VA SOL English 11 Tests. MVGS course semester and final examinations will be administered at LFCC-MVGS. Students may register for Advanced Placement Exams, which will be administered at the base schools according to local school division policy.

The students' base school counselor will be responsible for the students' counseling services. LFCC counselors will be available for career counseling and emergency support during MVGS school hours.

X. STUDENT BEHAVIOR RESPONSIBILITY

All Virginia Governor's School students undergo an eligibility screening process that includes references to responsible conduct. Mountain Vista Governor's School (MVGS) students are expected to be committed to:

- embodying high standards of quality in pursuit of excellence,
- conducting themselves in a manner that positively affects the learning community's pursuit of its educational objectives, and
- being exemplary role models of responsible citizenship and decision making.

Technology is an important instructional tool of MVGS. A student's participation in MVGS is contingent upon the ethical and appropriate use of the LFCC teleconferencing, networking, and web-based systems as well as responsible use of laptop computers issued by the school divisions. See the *Acceptable Computer Use Agreement and Laptop Guide*.

A student is accountable for the student codes of conduct for the local school division, Lord Fairfax Community College *Code of Student Rights, Responsibility and Conduct*, Lord Fairfax Community College *Technology Use Agreement*, and MVGS *Expectations for Behavior and Accountability*. MVGS students are responsible for their actions traveling to campus, on-

campus, and on community field experiences. Infractions of codes of conduct will be referred to the student's base high school administration for disciplinary action as designated by the local school division. Students and parents/guardians are asked to sign an acceptable behavior form indicating that they have read and understand the MVGS student responsibility of good citizenship as well as their due process rights.

XI. MVGS FIELD EXPERIENCE POLICY/PROCEDURES

The MVGS program is designed to be community-based. A main objective is to provide for authentic learning opportunities beyond the classroom environment. An MVGS field experience is a school-sponsored and school-chaperoned activity, which provides an effective means of accomplishing a stated instructional activity with specific objectives and learning activities defined in advance. These field experiences must be approved by the MVGS Director and may be during regular or extended school time. MVGS staff members will supervise. School vehicles and commercially licensed carriers will provide transportation for field experiences. A student will not be approved as a driver for a field experience.

XII. GOVERNANCE AND FISCAL AGENT

Supervision for the MVGS program is by a regional Governing Board with recommendations from an Academic Advisory Board. The Governing Board is made up of school board members and superintendents from each of the participating school divisions as authorized by Section 22.1-26 of the Code of Virginia. (See Appendix H) *An Agreement to Establish and Operate a Regional Academic-Year Governor's School* was approved by the Governing Board on November 21, 2005. This document provides an operational agreement with a three-year funding commitment from each participating division.

The fiscal agent for the MVGS is Fauquier County Public Schools.

XIII. MOUNTAIN VISTA PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The mission of the Mountain Vista PTO is to:

- a. Support the education of students at Mountain Vista Governor's School
- b. Support the growth and expansion of the Governor's School program in Clarke County, Culpeper County, Fauquier County, Frederick County, Rappahannock County, Warren County, and Winchester City.
- c. Provide financial support to MVGS.

Parents/guardians of MVGS students are considered members of the MVPTO. MVPTO meetings are held monthly at alternating campuses. Please contact the MVGS office (dwilmore@lfcc.edu) if you would like further information.

XIV. FACULTY

Listed below are the preferred qualifications for an MVGS instructor:

- Virginia Teaching License, Master’s Degree and three (3) years of teaching experience
- 18 hours of graduate credit in specific subject area
- Endorsement in gifted education
- Knowledge of a variety of instructional models
- Knowledge of technology-enhanced instruction
- Leadership qualities with strong analytical and assessment skills
- Ability to balance an interdisciplinary knowledge-based curriculum with a learner-centered philosophy
- Effective oral and written communication skills
- Ability to design, develop and implement a differentiated curriculum
- Ability to plan, organize and direct learning activities utilizing technology within a team-teaching environment
- Ability to work effectively with school personnel, students, parents and the community
- Possession of the following personal characteristics: innovation, flexibility, organization, enthusiasm, confidence, dependability, cooperation, reflection, self-motivation and the desire to be a life-long learner.

The MVGS instructors for 2009-10 are listed below.

Instructor	Subject	Middletown Site	Warrenton Site
Mr. Allen Burton	Physics Research	X	
Mr. John Dietrich	Environmental Science Research	X	X
Mrs. Amanda Harrington	Humanities	X	
Ms. Lindsay Hayes	Humanities		X
Mr. Benjamin Hess	Math	X	
Mrs. Harriet Kopp	Humanities	X	X
Mrs. Clelia LaMonica	Physics Environmental Science		X
Mrs. Angelyn Reinbold	Math		X
Dr. Alice Felts	Research		X

XV. MVGS STUDENT WITHDRAWAL POLICY/PROCEDURES

A student wishing to withdraw from MVGS should adhere to the MVGS Withdrawal Policy/Procedures. Criteria for withdrawing a student from MVGS should be based on what is in the best interest of the student and the school. There are two time periods designated for a student to withdraw from the MVGS program:

- At the end of the first semester
- At the end of the school year

The MVGS director has the authority to recommend that a student be withdrawn due to continual failing grades or inappropriate behavior.

XVI. PLAN FOR SUCCESS

The faculty at MVGS seeks to ensure that every student excels at advanced levels of learning and succeeds socially and emotionally as well as academically.

If a teacher, student, or parent notices a progressive decline in an individual's academic performance or social success at MVGS, the director should be notified immediately. This notification may take place at any time, but should be monitored upon the completion of each interim and advisory. Actions from the following list should take place:

1. The teacher should talk with the student to clarify and address concerns, missing assignments, changes in performances, etc.
2. The student's team of teachers should be consulted.
3. Parents, if unaware, should be contacted.
4. A team meeting to review the student's performance and to discuss what action is best for the student may be held. This assessment may result in the development of an individualized MVGS plan for success that contains specific objectives, strategies for improvement, outcomes, and a designated time period for reassessment. Team members must include the student, parents, MVGS teachers, and director. If deemed appropriate, base school teachers, the guidance counselor, the local GT coordinator, and/or the base school administrator may be invited.
5. MVGS instructors shall serve as communication liaisons among the student, parent, and base school.
6. MVGS staff will provide follow-up.

XVII. CONCLUSION

As MVGS is an evolving program, this is an evolving document. It is designed to provide a helpful tool for students and parents. The MVGS website (www.mvgshome.org) is continually updated with the most current news and information. Further questions can be directed to Dr. Rosanne Williamson, MVGS Director at rwilliamson@lfcc.edu or to your school division Gifted and Talented Coordinator.