Choice Academy

Let’s get moving

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# Who Are We?

## Mission Statement

Choice Academy strives to uphold our belief of specialization and application to help prepare students for an excelling future.

## About Us

Choice Academy was devised by 8 students (listed on the cover page). We each worked to our utmost abilities to create a school that would truly help students excel and enjoy school.

## Our Goal

As a public education agency, it’s essential we fit into the current system of education. We accomplish this and maintain our own principles by making sure every student has the opportunity to show their interests.

# Counseling

## Overview

At The Choice Academy, students are put first and foremost in the system. For the first two years, students will learn basic skills, such as math and reading, but also begin exploration into specialized area, such as finance, medical, etc. Once in the 11th grade students may begin to specialize into different areas, taking up the majority of their time at the Academy. Of course, our specialized team of counseling and teacher can help the student decide on the path, or if he or she is uncertain, a standard path of basic class decided by the student and the counseling team can be made to accommodate those uncertain about choosing a set path. All of this cannot be done though, without a brilliant staff of teachers, who are held to the utmost standard at the Academy.

## Standardized Testing

Students will not be required to take school standardized test except for two exams. The TSA (Test of Skills at the Academy - 10th Grade), and the FSA (Final Skills Assessment -12th Grade).

In class standardized exam amounts vary, however it is the goal of The Academy to minimize standardized exam compared to other schools and focus on learning first most.

## Rankings

In the Choice Evaluation System, Students are not ranked. No comparisons will be made between students, as the Academy is fostering an atmosphere of cooperative learning. Ranks and comparison are not needed, as the Academy is designed so that specialization of students will occur, and no comparisons are needed for the basic classes. Later on, the teachers and special staff will work so that students who are lagging behind will be brought up to the high standard the Academy expects.

## Year By Year

### 9-10 (Specialization and Discovery)

Set yourself up for your future! We recommend that you choose a specialization you feel compelled to complete by the end of tenth grade, and begin preliminary learning so that you can have a head start!

Specialization decision by end of 10th is recommended

“Specialization decision by end of 10th is recommended”

Our reasoning behind our suggestion is simple- you need time to set yourself up for success. You aren't required to choose your specialization by the end of tenth grade, but it is recommended so that you can keep up with the rest of the other students in your specialization.

### 11-12(Preparing for specialization)

Spend your time preparing for the real world in your specialization. Prepare for your life ahead of you, and get ready for the real world! Experience state of the art technology for your specialization, along with hands-on experience with the state of the art tools used in your specialization!

### End of 12th

Graduate and go to university or trade school. Your life is now set ahead for you!

Attend your graduation ceremony, and your life is set to go! With your outstanding amount of knowledge, *any* university is sure to let you in!

## Grading System

Choice Academy follows the Choice Evaluation System.

1. 90-100 Exemplary
2. 80-89   Very Good
3. 70-79   Satisfactory
4. 60-69   Sufficient
5. 0-59     Insufficient

Specific split up of grade (how much tests are worth), are determined by class. Please see the accompanying syllabus to the class to see specifics of grading policy.

## School Hours

Under the Choice Evaluation System, school hours are between: 9:00am - 3:00pm Mon-Fri

## Graduation

* Graduation is based off of two simple criteria, passing your core classes in 9th and 10th, as well as passing your specialized class that you take later on. However, it is recommended that students try to aim for good grades rather than just passing. While passing is the bare minimum, we want our students to be self-motivated and achieve great heights in their educational career.
* Passing indicates a 60% or above for the class and a 60% for any final examinations

## Students’ Coursework and Evaluation

* Homework will not be required, but recommended to all students. Credit will be rewarded for homework done, but as said above, will not be required.
* Report cards will be handed out monthly, and their parents will NOT be required to sign it - students are expected to be self-motivated

## Teacher Requirements

* Teachers here are held to the utmost standards with at least Master’s Degree required to teach here. Teachers are also paid very well in order to motivate them to be the very best in their fields
* Teachers are also given a lot of flexibility in their curriculum to tailor their class to the students
* The Academy’s student to teacher ratio is an astounding 1:15, in order to ensure that a student will be cared for and focused on during their tenure at The Academy.

## Students below Standards

* At Choice Academy, we care deeply about a student’s progress. Therefore, we at Choice Academy will do everything in our power to make sure the student learns.
* Choice Academy employs special educators, including medical staff and a psychologist, in order to help each and every student and their specific needs.
* We at Choice Academy have a “Never Give Up” attitude, and if one method does not work, The Academy will try a different one till something sticks. Our school will always try to catch the Weak Students and work with them to ensure success.

## Switching Classes

* Sometimes a student realizes that halfway through, that the specialization they choose wasn’t the one he or she really wanted. If the student wants to switch though, he or she would’ve missed essential learning. Therefore, The Academy has decided to give the student half credit, and be given special teachers and extra tutorial time to help out the student.
* The student who decides to switch classes may have to stay extra hours after the standard schedule to compensate for missed hours depending on how far along the year the students decides to switch

## Special Considerations

* We will work with students with disabilities and work out an alternate examination and class system if necessary for their needs.
* Any disadvantaged students will be provided for by The Academy. No student will go homeless or hungry at The Academy. Schools will provide medical care, food, transportation, and other necessary needs to the students

## Discipline

* There will be no discrimination when it comes to discipline
* We maintain a policy of innocent until proven guilty
* Punishments are more severe if the student lies to us
* Punishments are not given lightly, divert to counselling instead  of immediate punishment
* Extreme violence/behavior will lead to a *Police Investigation*
* Drug involvement will also lead to a *Police Investigation*

## Expectations of behavior

* Dress code is not strictly enforced, but is still present
* Students are expected to respect their teachers
* Bullying will not be tolerated (cyber or otherwise)
* Students are expected to be self-motivated
* Students are held accountable for all of their actions, and are expected to maintain a level of self-control while present at our campus

## The Incorporation of Technology

* With the help of our supportive parents and donors, we are able to give everyone Surface Pro Tablets
* Textbooks, Classwork, pretty much everything will be completed on these tablets.
* Teacher’s screen will be mirrored to a projector so the tablet may act as a high tech white board. A teacher can manipulate a document or demonstrate a technique on the tablet while students follow along on their own Surface Tablet.

# Course Catalogs

## 9th Grade - Exploration

* Math - Algebra 1
* Science - General chem, biology, and physics (can choose which class to take based on interest)
* English - literary analysis (modern literature), writing, communication
* SAT/ACT - 30 minutes, twice a week, 30 minute lunch - **Required**

## 10th Grade - Exploration

* Math - Algebra II
* Science - Chem II, Bio II, Physics II (choose class based on interest)
* English - Lit analysis II, writing II, communication II
* SAT/ACT - 30 minutes, twice a week, 30 minute lunch - **Optional**

## 11th and 12th Grade - Specialization and Theory

### Engineering

1. Science related engineering (including computer science)
2. CMI Engineering
3. Electrical Engineering
4. Mechanical Engineering
5. System Engineering

### Language Department

1. Foreign Language Studies
2. English
   1. Literature Analysis
   2. Creative Writing

### The Arts

1. Theatre
2. Realistic Art
3. Abstract Art
4. Architecture
5. Computer Design
6. Web Design
7. Graphic Design
8. Fashion Design
9. Orchestra
10. Band
11. Jazz Band
12. Choir
13. Music Theory

### Science Department

1. Chemistry Lab Studies
2. Biology Lab Studies
3. Physics
4. Astronomy

### Medicine

1. Medical research (Must have taken Principles of Health Science)
2. Anatomy
3. Clinical Rotations
4. Medical Terminology
5. Principles of Health Science

### Finance and Business

1. Statistics
2. Micro/Macroeconomics
3. Business Management

# Biology Curriculum (9th Exploratory)

“…challenges students to critically think…”

## Course Description

Biology is a lab centric class designed to teach students the basic biological processes and how they work and interact with each other. This course challenges students to critically think about and examine life in all of its form. Teachers in this course will use a variety of methods to teach students, including; lecture, group discussion, projects, labs, computer assignments, and other unique types of coursework.

## Coursework

Like much of Choice Academy, homework will be strictly optional, but extra credit will be given to each completed assignment. Work in the class will involve worksheets, occasional lectures, and weekly labs. Grading of labs will be based on following correct procedures and observing the scientific method first, while accuracy and correctness will be considered second. Furthermore, labs will test student’s understanding of the topic Worksheets will be, for the most part, completion, however it is expected that the material will be known for any examinations and labs.

## Grading

### QUIZZES 25% OF GRADE (WEIGHTED ONCE)

* Quizzes will be held every two weeks, and students are expected to review lectures and worksheets from class. Quizzes may be short answer or multiple choice.

### WORKSHEETS/HOMEWORK/DAILY WORK 25% OF GRADE

* Worksheets and daily work from the textbook will mostly be completion, but students will be responsible for fixing their errors.
* It is important that students complete their homework so that they do not fall behind

### MAJOR EXAMS/LABS - 50% OF GRADE (TESTS ARE WEIGHTED TWICE)

* Projects (both individual and group-based) will be counted as major evaluations, and will be graded based on quality, accuracy, and presentation. The grading criteria will help prepare the students for the real world, where they may be required to give a presentation in their workplace.
* ¾ of questions in unit tests will be multiple choice, and ¼ will be lab practical, where the student will be tested on identification, procedure, and results from labs done in class. Students are expected to review everything learned from classwork and labs, and should be able to apply the concepts they learned to challenging questions.
* Labs are group-based and will be graded based on the correct use of the scientific method and performance in the actual lab itself. Labs will be held once every other week, and students are expected to prepare beforehand by completing a preliminary write-up to test their understanding of the topic
* Labs are a critical part of the course as it allows for students to apply their knowledge that they learn in class. It also allows for students to gain a greater understanding of what they know. Labs also provide a more memorable and tactile experience with the material so that students will be able to retain the information for future use.

## Topics

1. To fully understand the processes that allow for life to occur
2. To understand the history of life itself and where life as we know it comes from
3. To understand the chemistry behind cell processes in animals and plants

## Subjects

* Macromolecules
* Cell Structures
* Cell Functions (signaling, division, interaction)
* Energy and Enzymes
* Photosynthesis
* Heredity and Evolution

## Textbooks

In biology, textbooks will be sparingly used, except for supplement material. Digital textbooks are permitted within the class, but copies will be provided for students who prefer a physical copy.

## Electronic Policy

Biology follows the general Choice Academy policy, which states that electronics can be freely used during classes except on examination days. It is up to the student to use technology wisely, and is up to the students whether they deem it is necessary to use electronics or not. In the end, the students are responsible for making smart decisions in class in order to ensure their success.

# Algebra II Curriculum (10th Mandatory)

## Course Description

Algebra II is a course designed to challenge students to critically think and determine how to solve difficult mathematical problems. Application problems will be kept to a minimum just so that students will see the basic applications of mathematics in everyday life, however since the majority of students won’t have to use trigonometry or find the intersection of functions those types of topics will be taught in a strictly mathematical sense so students can grasp the concepts and use them for when test day comes or to build on for other math classes. Teachers will first lecture students about how to solve certain problems with different processes, and then solve example problems along with them. Then, they will let students solve problems on their own based on the methods learned in lectures.

## Coursework

Work in the class will be done in the form of worksheets and textbook problems, and will be graded based on accuracy and work. Homework, on the other hand, is optional and will be graded for completion if done. Students are expected to practice problems went over in class to study for quizzes and tests.

## Grading

### Classwork (33% of grade)

* Classwork will be done in the form of worksheets and textbook problems, and will be graded for accuracy.
* It is important that students complete their homework so that they do not fall behind

### Quizzes (33% of grade)

* Quizzes will be held every two weeks, and students are expected to review lectures and worksheets from class. Quizzes will be short answer. Calculators may or may not be allowed, depending on the topic.

### Tests (33% of grade)

* All tests will be half multiple choice and half short answer, and calculators may or may not be used, depending on the topic.

## Big Topics

1. Concepts of Algebra II are used to make students think critically to create solutions for challenging problems.
2. Algebra II combines concepts learned in Geometry and Algebra I and utilizes them together to solve complicated problems.
3. Concepts of Algebra II can be used to develop equations and laws in the real world.

## Topics

* Manipulating and evaluating functions
* Complex numbers
* Polynomial arithmetic and functions
* Radical and rational functions
* Exponential and logarithmic functions
* Exponential growth/decay and Half-life
* Conics
* Matrices

# Art History Curriculum (Specialization)

## Course Description

Art History explores and examines different art forms and their connections throughout history and from every part of the globe. Students will learn how art was created, and how people experienced and responded to that art in a historic context. Within class, students will  learn through lecture, student presentations, primary and secondary sources (such as articles), group discussion, and other online resources.

## Big Topics

1. Art is influenced by culture, tradition, and change.
2. Art is made from artists who use different materials to create an object or event.
3. The purpose of Art changes over time and can be interpreted in many different ways

## Subjects

1st Semester: Paleolithic - Late Renaissance

2nd Semester: Late Renaissance – Postmodern

## Grading

### Daily Grades (75% of Grade)

In class quizzes: Quizzes will be given in various formats (written, identification, multiple-choice)

Homework: Given in various formats (video, articles, short essay)

Minor Projects: These consists of presentations, interpretation and recreations of different art works, student-made artworks, etc.

Special Occasions: Sometimes Guest Speakers or other out of the ordinary things (listed below) will be taken for a grade

Extensive hands on projects: Sometimes, students will be able to create artworks from the era (mosaics, architecture, etc.). Grading will not be based on artistic ability, but on historical accuracy and accompanying essays that analyze the art pieces

“…Speakers from [various] places…will come to speak and present to the class…”

### Exams (25%)

* Twice a semester exams
* Multiple Choice questions with Bonus Questions
* Identification of specific artwork (that include four of the following, title, date, artist or architect, period, location( if architectural), or medium.
* One 25 min Free Response essay on a specific topic
* Test must be made up within a week of the exam

## Presentations

From time to time, there will be large presentations about a specific artwork or a broad range of artwork. Students can also create their own piece as long it is historically accurate and pertains to the subject matter.

Tests can be made up if the proper step were taken to ensure subsequent success (e.x. Tutorials, Extra Work).

## Special Occasions

**Museum Visits** - Visits to contemporary museums such as the DMA, Nasher, and the Meadows Museum, are visited on a semester basis.

**Guest Speakers** - On a monthly basis, speakers from places such as universities, such as UTD, and museums, such as the DMA, will come to speak and present to the class on various subjects. Occasionally, artists will come to the Academy to present their particular art form, and students are encouraged to ask questions in order to learn more about their art form.

## Textbooks and Resources

* Textbooks will be provided in class, digital versions will be provided if required
* Additional articles/specific text will be posted on an Art History website provided in class

## Electronic Policy

Following CA guidelines, electronics will be allowed for all in class except during major examinations days. As mentioned in the CA guidebook, CA and the Art History Team encourages students to use their technology wisely, as they will be responsible for knowing the materials.

# Medical Research Curriculum (Specialization)

## Course Description

Medical Research is a course designed to allow students to explore a wide variety of subjects in the medical field, and apply their knowledge from Principles of Health Science to research various topics that will be presented in class. The class will be primarily self-driven with some additional teacher-guidance. Each six weeks, students will be assigned a different topic to research. Students will also learn main concepts and will be tested on the topics.

## Big Topics

1. Medical research allows people to learn about certain Health Science topics more in-depth and apply their knowledge to discover new things.
2. The purpose of medical research is to allow students to help the outside world learn about new discoveries made in medicine and help healthcare professionals through their extensive research
3. Medical research gives students the opportunity to share their research with healthcare professionals and work with them in order to learn more about the medical field and its occupations.

## Subjects

1. 1st Six Weeks - Introduction to Medical Research
2. 2nd Six Weeks - Pathology
3. 3rd Six Weeks - Genetics
4. 4th Six Weeks (Beginning of 2nd semester) - Biochemistry
5. 5th Six Weeks - Immunology
6. 6th Six Weeks - Gynecology and Obstetrics

## Grading

### Daily Grades (25% of Grade)

* Worksheets over basic knowledge of the topic will be graded for completion, but students are expected to use them to study for the General Knowledge tests
* **Weekly Reports -** during their research periods, students are required to write a weekly report about their current progress in their research. Weekly reports will be graded for completion and following instructions

### Special Occasions

* Every once in a while, students will have the chance to visit hospitals and share their research with healthcare professionals, who can help them develop their research more or even publish it.
* Guest speakers will share their own research and help students develop their research. Furthermore, they will talk to students about their own experience in the Medical Field in order to help students learn more about the Medical pathway.

### Major Grades (75% of Grade)

#### Exams

* Students will take General Knowledge tests about the topics before they start their research, and will be expected to review their notes and worksheets

#### Presentations

* Near the end of the six weeks, students will present their research to the class in a detailed manner, and will be graded based on overall quality of their presentation, accuracy, and relevance to the topic. Presentations are weighted twice, unlike the General Knowledge Tests, which are weighted once. Students will be given extra credit if their research is published.

## Textbooks and Resources

* Textbooks will be provided in class, but will not be used extensively. Textbook will only be used as guidance to students’ research and knowledge of their topics
* Computers will be used mostly for research purposes, and students are encouraged to bring their own devices. However, tablets will be provided if students are unable to bring their own devices.

## Electronic Policy

* Following CA guidelines, electronics will be allowed for all in class except during major examination/presentation days. Choice Academy’s Medical Research program encourages students to use technology wisely and solely for research purposes.

# Aesthetics Analysis

The design of the building is focused tremendously on nature. Firstly, each separate “miniature building” keeps nature as its number one priority. There are no air conditioning units. Instead, the air conditioning is replaced with large ceiling fans and ventilated with open corridors. Open corridors are very romantic because they allow for natural air to come into the building and keep the minds of the students more refreshed. In addition, the campus mini buildings is also extremely open. There are plenty of green spaces that are designed on both the first story and second story for students to let their creativity out and explore their minds. These spaces also act to save tremendous money and help the environment stay clean. Overall, the design’s air ventilation systems are designed with the prospect of nature in mind.

Emerson mentions that “Nature then becomes to him the measure of his attainments.” (Emerson) which symbolizes the need for nature to increase the potential of a scholar. The nature of our environment is what defines ourselves - “The world is nothing, the man is all;” (Emerson) and therefore the area for the scholars that are rising. Moreover the distance between buildings increases active time - something laborious opens our minds to greater endeavors.

The design of the energy consumption is also designed with nature in mind. The energy focuses on a solar panel design in which the solar panels are strategically placed about the building so that the solar panels absorb the most amount of energy. This overall design successfully incorporates the importance of nature in the design.

Next, the constructed wetland recycles used waste water back into useable gray water that can be implemented back into the building. Such a design is once again incorporated all in the interest of nature. Nature, being all powerful, is successfully reused and implemented constantly back into the lives of the students.

Finally, all the green classrooms and abundance and exposure to light allow for all individuals to experience themselves in the ultimate form. Within the building lies a multitude of classrooms designed specifically to meet the standards of each individual so that they can reach their full potential.

# Counseling Analysis

Curriculum across the United States of America has mainly focused on the academics, math, science, etc. By implementing this form of curriculum, many people are forced into subjects that they may not enjoy or be good at. Furthermore, it ignores other major areas such as art or vocational studies. In the Choice Academy, we attempted to create a system which can remedy the problems of both the curriculum, and the baggage that comes with it, such as ranking systems and overabundance of testing.

At Choice Academy, we decided to tackle the problem of overemphasis on academic by allowing the student to specialize their field of study after the 10th grade. Meaning, if a student wants to pursue a life in the arts, that student can devote the vast majority of his or her time at The Academy to that subject. Even in classes devoted to the academic nature, we attempted to reduce standardized testing and instead put an emphasis on learning enduring skills related to their subject.  This method is a drastic departure from the book heavy nature of the contemporary school system.

The method takes inspiration from Emerson’s “American Scholar” because he downplayed the importance of learning from books and simply memorizing what previous scholars have taught. Because The Academy puts great emphasis on self-learning, we allow the student to open their minds and explore their own ideas. Therefore, we eliminate one of Emerson’s greatest fears, the bookworm who creates nothing. Instead, an enlightened thinker is born, one who not only thinks for himself, but for all of mankind.

# Curriculum Analysis

A major problem in the public school system is restricting students to traditional and practical learning. Instead a system where one size fits all restricts students from studying fields that they have a true interest in. As a result many students end up spending unnecessary time developing skills that they will never use. For example a student could be an aspiring artist but instead is held back because he/she failed calculus.

This is why our system is effective: it only requires core classes to be completed by 10th. Furthermore, students will have a general interest in their future career once they have completed 10th grade. These interests allow students to then choose their own classes in the exploration program. Once students have graduated from 10th grade, they move to the program, where they are allowed to take classes based solely on their interests. Instead of continuing core classes, students are opened early to college and career-based classes; their junior and senior years act almost as a “preliminary university.”  In Choice Academy, students are expected to be responsible for their actions. In effort to avoid a one-size-fits-all disciplinary system, Choice Academy implements a case-by-case system when dealing with student violations. In this way, we assure that each action has its own consequence. The discipline system is strictly on a case-to-case basis. Students are required to respect their peers at all times.

This reflects Emerson’s view in “The American Scholar” because it allows for students to choose the path they feel is best. In this way they aren’t locked into the shackles of traditional learning and therefore are allowed to fully explore their interests and define learning for themselves. Furthermore, in the exploration program, students learn how to apply their knowledge from their freshman and sophomore years to real world problems, and not be confined to practical learning.

# Ad: Transcendentalism and Romanticism

In the ad, we presented ideas of transcendentalism and romanticism through the cinematography. Each scene presents ideas of self-discovery and inspiration, which are prominent characteristics of transcendentalism. In addition, words that follow through each transition like “live”, “learn”, and “play”, promote an air of learning that is free and liberal, almost like self-exploration in nature, or in Emerson's words, “an original relation to the universe”. Other words like “learn” and “create” strike powerful emotions that help us learn and introspect more about ourselves.

The style of the video was formatted so that an individual’s daily life at Choice Academy could be seen. As one of the most powerful Romantic traits, the celebration of the individual and importance of imagination are prized above all. The ability to discern what is good from bad, the ability to make a life which the individual wants to create, and the belief that humanity is most pure without restrictions is Choice Academy's purpose and pride.

The last words are the most simple. CHOOSE. At Choice Academy, you have the power to create, choose and design your own path - your own future. +[