



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL

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Action By:
Information Only

TO: Secondary School Principals
FROM: Edward C. Tierney / Deputy Superintendent/Chief of Schools
SUBJECT: **FY26 SUGGESTED GRADES 6-12 SCIENCE PATHWAYS**

The Department of Secondary Education recognizes the importance of providing appropriate and rigorous courses for all students. To assist schools with making scheduling decisions, the attached recommended progressions in science provide recommended course sequences for students of varying needs while maintaining high standards and rigorous expectations. As always, student placement should be based on several factors including teacher input, multiple sources of assessment data, and parent/student requests.

Essential Notes for Middle School Principals:

- All Grade 8 students, **regardless of course enrollment**, must take the Statewide Science Assessment.
- When enrolling students in Physical Science Honors, please consider the following:
 - Students who have **not** taken both Grade 6 and Grade 7 Accelerated/Honors have **not** received instruction in the Grade 8 Science Standards, which are assessed on the Statewide Science Assessment. These students will need additional support. This may be a separate support class (such as Grade 8 Science) or the support may be embedded into the Physical Science Honors class.
- Physical Science Honors taken in middle school will count towards the Physical Science graduation requirement but these students will still need to take Biology and two additional Equally Rigorous (EQ) Science courses in Grades 9-12.

Essential Notes for High School Principals:

- All Palm Beach County students must earn three Science credits for graduation. One credit must be in Biology, one credit must be an Equally Rigorous (EQ) course in the physical sciences, and the third credit must be an EQ science course. At least three credits must be earned while in Grades 9-12.

- Courses that meet the physical science requirement include Astronomy (Honors), Earth & Space Science (R & H), Physics 1 (R & H), Chemistry 1 (R & H), and Physical Science (R & H)
- Equally Rigorous (EQ) Science Courses at the Regular & Honors (R & H) levels offered in Palm Beach County Schools include Anatomy & Physiology (R & H), Astronomy (Honors), Biology 1 (R & H), Chemistry 1 (R & H), Earth/Space Science (R & H), Environmental Science (R & H), Genetics (Honors), Marine Science 1 (R & H), Physical Science (R & H), and Physics 1 (R & H).
- It is expected that students enrolled in the AP/AICE Biology, Chemistry, or Physics have already taken the respective HS course at either the Regular or Honors level. The content in the HS course is foundational to the content in the AP/AICE course and should be mastered first in order to maximize student success in the AP/AICE course.
- If schools wish to accelerate students directly into AP/AICE Biology/Chemistry/Physics without prior enrollment in HS courses, the following criteria are suggested:
 - Teacher completes all required AP/AICE training.
 - Teacher participates in ongoing AP/AICE professional development.
 - Biology and Chemistry: Student scores 4 or higher on most recent ELA, Mathematics, and Science State Assessments.
 - Physics: Student passes Algebra 2 with 3.0 or higher.
- For Marine Science or Environmental Science (at any level), it is recommended that students complete both Biology and Chemistry (at any level) before enrolling. A foundational understanding of both Biology and Chemistry will maximize the success of these rigorous courses.

Links:

[Middle School Recommended Progression Visual](#)

[High School Recommended Progression Visual](#)

Approved: 

Michael J. Burke, Superintendent