

2009–10: Our School At-a-Glance

School Administration

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Superintendent: | Dennis Tulli | Counseling Staff: | Cheryl Handwerker, Manager of Counseling Services |
| Principals: | Gary Madden (grade 9) | | Stacey Roman, School Counselor |
| | Greg Gettle (grades 10–12) | | Emily Kreiger, Advisory Teacher |
| Assistant Principals: | Frank August (grade 9) | | Mary Cote, Advisory Teacher |
| | Adam Fraser (grades 10–12) | | |

Community

Our History

Commonwealth Connections Academy (CCA) is an accredited, public school serving students in grades K–12 from across the state of Pennsylvania. Our students come from urban, suburban, and rural communities. The school was founded during the 2003–04 school year as a K–8 school. The school served 9th graders for the first time in 2005–06, and has added one grade level per year since then. Commonwealth Connections Academy's first 12th grade class graduated in June 2009.

Our Mission

Connections Academy schools have an important mission: to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program.

Our Program

Commonwealth Connections Academy has an enrollment of 3,974 students in grades K–12, and includes a four-year comprehensive high school program. Here are some important facts about Commonwealth Connections Academy:

- The school is fully accredited by the Middle States Association.
- Commonwealth Connections Academy has 151 certified/licensed professional staff. Of those, 70 have earned advanced degrees.
- School is in session 180 days between the months of August and June.
- Students are able to earn up to eight (8) credits during the school year.
- Two sessions of summer school are offered to our students in a variety of subject areas for credit recovery and enrichment.
- Commonwealth Connections Academy competed against 28 teams and finished as state finalists in the Real World Design Challenge 2008–2009.
- Several Commonwealth Connections Academy high school students were winners of the 2009–2010 Discus Awards, which was offered nationally.

Programs of Study

Commonwealth Connections Academy offers a diverse and comprehensive curriculum, with courses in a wide range of disciplines. The core curriculum is geared toward preparing students for college and beyond. All science courses include hands-on laboratory units. Commonwealth Connections Academy provides opportunities for students who qualify to take college courses during their junior and senior years of high school. Students have access to AP, Honors, College Preparatory, and Basic programs.

- **AP course offerings** include: Art History, Biology, Calculus, Computer Science, English Language, English Literature, Environmental Science, French, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Physics, Psychology, Spanish, Statistics, U.S. Government, U.S. History, and World History.
- **Honors course offerings** include: Algebra 1 and 2, American Government, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, English 9–12, Geometry, Physics Science, Precalculus, U.S. History, and World History.

Commonwealth Connections Academy operates on a semester system utilizing Carnegie units. One semester class equals one-half of a high school credit. Students who have taken high school level courses while in middle school may have been granted high school credit. The typical course load is six classes per semester. Please feel free to view all of our high school courses at <http://www.connectionsacademy.com/curriculum/high-school/high-school-classes.aspx>.

Graduation Requirements and Grade Reporting

Twenty-four (24) Carnegie units of credits are required for graduation. Specific requirements include:

| Area/Subject | # Units for Graduation |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Language Arts | 4 |
| Math (including Algebra and Geometry) | 3 |
| Science (including Physical Science and Biology) | 3 |
| Social Studies (including U.S. History and Government) | 3 |
| Health | 1 |
| Physical Education | 1 |
| Technology | 1 |
| Humanities and Arts | 2 |
| Other Electives | 6 |
| Total | 24 |

Grading Scale

Student transcripts reflect weighted grades if the student took Honors or Advanced Placement courses. High school students will be awarded credit only for courses in which they have earned a grade of C- or better. This applies both to courses taken at Connections Academy and at other schools. Previous courses taken at other schools in which the student earned a grade below a C- will not be awarded with transfer credit, but will appear on student records and will be included in a student's grade point average (G. P.A.). Courses required for graduation will need to be re-taken by the student if a grade of C- or higher was not earned. The numerical grading scale is as follows:

| Grade | Numerical Percentage | Non-Weighted | Weighted (honors) | Weighted (AP) |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| A+ | 97-100 | 4.00 | 4.50 | 5.00 |
| A | 94-96 | 4.00 | 4.50 | 5.00 |
| A- | 90-93 | 3.67 | 4.17 | 4.67 |
| B+ | 87-89 | 3.33 | 3.83 | 4.33 |
| B | 84-86 | 3.00 | 3.50 | 4.00 |
| B- | 80-83 | 2.67 | 3.17 | 3.67 |
| C+ | 77-79 | 2.33 | 2.83 | 3.33 |
| C | 74-76 | 2.00 | 2.50 | 3.00 |
| C- | 70-73 | 1.67 | 2.17 | 2.67 |
| D+ | 67-69 | 1.33 | 1.33 | 1.33 |
| D | 64-66 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| D- | 60-63 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.67 |
| F | 0-59 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Class Rank Policy

Commonwealth Connections Academy will calculate the class rank for each high school student two times per year, shortly after the conclusion of each semester. Students who have not yet successfully completed any high school courses for credit directly from Connections Academy will be excluded from the class rank calculation.

For the purposes of calculating the class rank, the student's cumulative Grade Point Average (G.P.A.) will be used, which may include weighted grades for Honors or Advanced Placement courses. Courses transferred in from other accredited institutions will also be included in the class rank as long as there are grades assigned for those courses.

The cumulative G.P.A. is calculated to the thousandth of a point. Students whose class rank rounds off to the same thousandth of a point will be considered tied and will receive the same class rank. The ranking will compare students within the same grade level at the same school. The class rank is included on the student's official high school transcript

School Test Information and State Test Scores

Students attending Commonwealth Connections Academy will be administered the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), as required by the state of Pennsylvania. The PSSA is a standards-based criterion-referenced assessment used to measure a student's attainment of the academic standards while also determining the degree to which school programs enable students to attain proficiency of the standards. Every 11th grade Pennsylvania student is assessed in reading, writing, math, and science.

State Testing for 2008–09

Commonwealth Connections Academy made AYP in 26 out of the 29 categories defined by the state.

Commonwealth Connections Academy increased our percentage of Proficient and Advanced students in Writing from 29% to 42.8% in only two years.

College Testing for 2008–09

The following averages are based on the scores which were reported to Commonwealth Connections Academy:

- ACT school average: 21
- SAT school writing average: 475
- SAT school verbal average: 510
- SAT school math average: 488

Post-Graduation Plans for the Class of 2009

Commonwealth Connections Academy's first 12th grade class graduated in June 2009.

| <u>Plans</u> | <u>% of Students</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Four-year colleges | 28 |
| Two-year colleges | 25 |
| Vocational Training | 7 |
| Military | 2 |
| Employment | 32 |
| Undecided | 3 |

High School Virtual Visitation

College and university representatives are cordially invited to connect with our students through Web-conferencing technology. Two weeks' notice is greatly appreciated so that we have time to notify students. For more information about setting up a Web-conference session, please contact **Emily Kreiger** at ekreiger@connectionsacademy.com.