



VAN BUREN SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE PLANNING GUIDE



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The courses outlined in this brochure are subject to changes without notice and are not guaranteed to be current after the 2022-2023 school year. Please contact Myron Heckman, VBSD Director of Secondary Education, at myron.heckman@vbsd.us with any questions or concerns regarding this brochure.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Preparing for graduation and beyond takes careful planning. To help students strategize and select the appropriate courses, the Van Buren School District (VBSD) has plotted a number of pathways that outline the necessary steps to graduation. These emphasize areas of strong interest or career focus. Other programs offer unique skills training and opportunities to earn college credit or certifications. Each program seeks to develop young people so they are well-prepared for college, career, and citizenship.

The purpose of this guide is to help students make informed choices in the class registration process. It outlines courses available to VBSD secondary students pursuing a particular career pathway and the potential certifications they can earn. Students may select a pathway as early as their freshman year.

The guide also details graduation requirements and various types of classes offered, including concurrent credit, honors, and advanced placement options. Courses are scheduled based on enrollment. Detailed information about course offerings and curriculum requirements is available using the catalog links below.

VBSD's high-quality curriculum is designed to help students reach their fullest potential. The goal is to equip young men and women with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in life. Programs of study emphasize both academics and character development. Graduation and diploma requirements are intended to ensure students develop a well-formed understanding of the world and a sense of responsibility for themselves and others.

VBSD Course Catalog

View current lists and descriptions of all courses offered at Van Buren Freshman Academy and Van Buren High School using these QR codes.



Van Buren
Freshman
Academy
Course Catalog



Van Buren
High School
Course Catalog

WHAT COURSES SHOULD I TAKE?

The Van Buren School District provides multiple opportunities for students to advance their college or career goals while still in high school. This guide showcases the various options from which students can choose in planning their futures. Taking into account their long-term career aspirations, students should also factor in the type of diploma they want to earn – General, Honors, or High Honors. A snapshot of the available academic programs is provided below. Detailed descriptions of each listing are also provided in the pages of the brochure.

Career Pathways

- Pathways are based on 16 “Career Clusters.”
- Students gain real-world skills and experience, applicable to future careers.
- Students can receive certifications and specialized training within a specified career path that will give them an employment and earnings advantage.
- Pathways Include:
 - Agriculture
 - Business
 - Family & Consumer Sciences
 - Teaching & Learning
 - PLTW-Biomedical
 - PLTW-Robot Automation
 - PLTW-Engineering

Concurrent Credit

- Students receive college-level instruction for high school courses through partnerships with Arkansas Tech University and the University of Arkansas Fort Smith.
- In addition to meeting high school graduation requirements, students receive college credit hours upon completing class with a grade of “C” or higher. This saves families and their families time and tuition dollars

Advanced Placement

- Advanced Placement (AP) courses are more rigorous than standard classes and demonstrate to potential colleges and employers that participants are motivated and willing to learn at the next level. Successful completion of AP classes is often viewed favorably by higher ed institutions in scholarship and admission considerations.
- Students who complete AP courses have the opportunity to take the AP exam in that subject area during spring semester. Participants can earn college credit hours for passing the College Board AP Exam.
- AP courses are weighted heavier than general or honors classes. Students can earn up to 5.0 toward their grade point average (GPA) for successfully completing AP courses. This can potentially improve a student’s overall academic class ranking.



JROTC

- Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps or JROTC is a valuable training program that focuses on good citizenship and leadership development. Curriculum includes lessons in health and wellness, first aid, American history, government, communications, emotional intelligence, physical fitness, and more.
- JROTC instructors are proven leaders who have retired from active or reserve duty, or National Guard Army service.
- Cadets participate in a myriad of co-curricular activities to demonstrate their attainment of lesson outcomes, including programs such as Drill Team.
- While cadets are not required to join the military, participation in JROTC may improve ranking if they choose to enlist.

WATC

- The Western Arkansas Training Center (WATC) is a partnership with the University of Arkansas Fort Smith (UAFS) that enables students to receive specialized, technical training while in high school. It is based on student interests and aptitudes.
- WATC participants can earn professional certifications, certificates of proficiency, or technical certifications through UAFS.
- Students who complete UAFS courses through WATC are credited at both the high school and collegiate levels. WATC participants can finish their technical program with as many as 40 hours toward a degree or advanced certification program.
- Students gain practical experience during apprenticeships which are modeled to provide real-world learning.

VBSD CAREER PATHWAYS



A Career Pathway is a series of structured and connected education programs and support services that enable students to advance over time to better jobs and higher levels of education and training.

Each step on a career pathway is designed explicitly to prepare students to progress to the next level of education, leading to employment in their desired career field. Pathways target jobs in industries of importance to local and regional economies and fields that are in high demand.

In an effort to give students a career advantage, VBSD proudly offers courses in seven of the 16 defined “career clusters.” High schoolers who declare their intent to pursue a career in one of the fields offered are provided an outline of what courses they need to take each year to fulfill the pathway requirements and earn potential certifications. Students gain real-world knowledge and skills, while also receiving industry-recognized credentials and work-based learning experiences applicable to their future.

AGRICULTURE

BUSINESS

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES

TEACHING & LEARNING

PLTW-BIOMEDICAL

PLTW-ROBOT AUTOMATION

PLTW-ENGINEERING

**PLTW = Project Lead The Way*

AGRICULTURE

PATHWAY

As Arkansas' largest industry, agriculture contributes \$16 billion to the state's annual economy. With this in mind, VBSD has developed curriculum and programs to help secondary students prepare for a range of careers in the thriving industry.

Van Buren High School's Agriculture courses and FFA (Future Farmers of America) program focus on preparing students for agriculture-related jobs, while also educating them about how their food, clothing, and shelter are made. All students choosing this pathway begin with the introductory course, Survey of Agriculture. In the following years, students choose between Plant Systems

and Natural Resources Systems pathways, allowing participants to study applicable content more in-depth.

Throughout the agricultural program, students have opportunities to obtain industry-recognized certifications and participate in hands-on learning that will teach them skills necessary for the local agricultural industry.

Students in this pathway are also members of the National FFA organization, which provides additional opportunities to learn outside the classroom. Such experiences contribute to leadership development, personal growth, and career success.

Plant System Courses

- Year 1..... Survey of Agriculture
- Year 2..... CASE Principles of Agriscience - Plant
Option to be counted as third-year science credit and/or 5.0 weighted credit.
- Year 3..... Advanced Plant Science

Natural Resources Systems Courses

- Year 1..... Survey of Agriculture
- Year 2..... CASE Natural Resources & Ecology
Option to be counted as third-year science credit and/or 5.0 weighted credit.
- Year 3..... Forestry & Wildlife Ecosystems

Certifications

- Survey of Agriculture: Arkansas Hunters Education; Arkansas Boaters Education
- CASE Plant Science and CASE Natural Resources & Ecology: OSHA 10

Jobs in Agriculture

Plant Systems

- Greenhouse Operator
- Floral Distributors
- Florist
- County Extension Agent

Natural Resources Systems

- Game and Fish Warden
- Forestry Ranger
- Wildlife Officer
- Soil Conservationist



BUSINESS

PATHWAY



Business-related areas of study are among today's most popular college majors. And all of them are based on the language of business – accounting.

This pathway prepares students for college business and accounting courses, as well as careers in the finance or business industry. Students are required to take Survey of Business; Accounting I; and Accounting II. Students who complete the pathway courses will be awarded an honor cord to wear at graduation.

Those in the business program will also have the opportunity to obtain Microsoft Office Specialist certifications in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and more. Completing the Accounting II course fulfills students' fourth math credit and Survey of Business counts as a technology credit. The Business Pathway is an ideal course of study for students who not only want to pursue finance-related careers, but also for those who simply want to be well-prepared for college, career, the military, and life in general.

Accounting Courses

Year 1..... Survey of Business
May be taken concurrently with Accounting I.

Year 2..... Accounting I

Year 3..... Accounting II

Year 4..... Recommended Economics/Financial Literacy

Certifications

- Microsoft Office Specialist - Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access
- Microsoft Office Expert - Word, Excel
- Microsoft Office Master

Jobs in Business

- Accountant
- Financial Planner
- Business Owner/Manager
- Insurance Agent
- Banker
- Human Resource Manager
- Payroll Specialist
- Accounts Receivable/Payable Clerk

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES PATHWAYS

The Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) Pathways prepare students to make informed choices regarding consumer education, food and nutrition, relationships, housing, and textiles. They provide skills for careers in the Hospitality and Tourism, Education and Training, and Human Services career clusters.

FACS courses are beneficial for career training, and also applicable to everyday life. Curriculum focuses on subjects that are useful to all students as they prepare for adulthood, and make decisions regarding finances, family, and other future endeavors.

Students have the opportunity to take part in additional leadership training and competitive events through the FACS organization, FCCLA (Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America). This program is designed to enhance learning and provides students access to additional resources and experiences that support pathways supported by the FACS field.

Family & Consumer Sciences Courses

Clothing & Housing Design

- FACS
- Fashion & Interior Design
- Advanced Fashion & Interior Design

Consumer Services

- FACS
- Consumer Services
- Advanced Consumer Services

Culinary

- Food Safety & Nutrition
- Food Production
- Culinary II



Certifications

- ServSafe Food Handlers Certification
- ServSafe Manager Certification

Jobs in Family & Consumer Sciences

- Chef
- Food Photographer
- Fashion Designer
- Nutritionist
- Architect
- Social Worker
- Hospitality Manager
- Family Counselor

TEACHING & LEARNING PATHWAY

Students interested in teaching, coaching, or pursuing careers in education will have an academic advantage by taking part in the Teaching and Learning Pathway. Curriculum focuses on helping students develop what it takes to become a teacher or coach.

Aspiring educators can earn their Completer Certification by taking all three courses in the Teaching and Learning Pathway. Students can also earn concurrent college credit through Arkansas Tech University or by taking the Teacher Cadet Class. The coursework and experiences help set future educators up for success in a field that is both ever-growing and highly in-demand.



Teaching & Learning Courses

Year 1..... Life Span Development

Year 2..... Foundations of Teaching or Teacher Cadet Concurrent Credit

Year 3..... Methods of Teacher Instruction or Teacher Cadet Concurrent Credit

Certifications

- Students can earn a Certified Teacher Assistant certificate upon completing the pathway and earning a satisfactory score on the ParaPro Praxis.

Jobs in Teaching

- Teacher
- School Counselor
- Coach
- Band Director
- Principal
- Administrator
- Education Specialist
- School Media Specialist

PLTW-BIOMEDICAL

PATHWAY

The PLTW-Biomedical Pathway allows for career exploration within the medical field. Throughout courses, students learn about the human body and medical treatments by simulating various roles in the healthcare profession. Students learn about DNA and genetics while working as analysts and lab technicians to help solve crimes. They also serve as forensic anthropologists by studying bones and anatomy to determine the identity of a skeleton.

Hands-on learning extends to the laboratory, as participants are given opportunities to develop essential diagnostic skills and work collaboratively to solve real-world problems and treat fictional patients. Students learn about taking blood pressure, EKGs, micro-pipetting, bacteria cultures, dissections, and more.

Students with a keen interest in the medical field will gain valuable knowledge and a wealth of experience that will parlay well into undergraduate and graduate studies in medicine.

Biomedical Courses

Year 1..... Principles of Biomedical Science (PBS)

Year 3..... Medical Interventions (MI)

Year 2..... Human Body Systems (HBS)

Year 4..... Biomedical Innovations (BI)

Additional Information:

- Human Body Systems counts as a third-year science credit.
- The Medical Intervention Course is weighted on a 5.0 scale.

Certifications

- OSHA approved First Aid Certification in Medical Interventions

Jobs in Biomed

- Physician
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Medical Assistant
- Phlebotomist
- DNA Analyst
- Pharmacist
- Researcher
- Physician Assistant
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Registered Nurse (RN)
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

PLTW-ROBOT AUTOMATION

PATHWAY

Robot Automation provides students with a wealth of opportunities to be creative and utilize critical thinking. During the first year, students learn how to program one of four real-world industrial robotic arms. They follow instructions and use videos to learn programming basics and build upon automation concepts. Students will progress from programming basic commands, such as moving robotic arms, to learning how to manipulate and move items using a claw and vacuum suction cup. At the next level, participants write programming for the arm to draw a picture or perform a sequential task using all the available tools, such as fixing a cup of coffee, making a smoothie, or playing Jenga.

The hands-on work continues into later semesters with students learning how to solder. They will employ three different soldering kits such as “My Place,” “Awesome USA,” and “The Awesome Cube.”

Students who complete all three years of the Robot Automation Pathway receive a Completer cord to wear at graduation. They also are invited to be part of the Completer ceremony in the spring of their senior year.

Robot Automation Courses

Year 1.....Fundamentals of Electricity / Introduction to Electronics Technology & Robots

Year 2.....Electrical Circuits & Components / Robot Operations & Maintenance

Year 3.....Industrial Electricity / PLC Applications

Additional Information:

- Each semester is worth three hours of college credit toward a two-year associate of applied science in electronics technology degree. (Total of 18 hours for all three years)
- Students need to receive credit in all three years to be a completer and receive their cord.

Certifications

- Certificate of Proficiency in Electronics Technology
- Technical Certificate in Industrial Electricity and Electronics Maintenance
- OSHA 10-Hour Safety Training Certificate

Jobs in Robot Automation

- Electronics Technician
- Data Processing Equipment Technician
- Medical Electronics Specialist
- Computer Service Technician
- Communication Electronics Technician
- Engineering Technician
- Industrial Automation Technician
- Energy Auditor
- Solar Photovoltaic Technician
- Wind Technician

PLTW-ENGINEERING

PATHWAY

The PLTW-Engineering Pathway enables students to learn first-hand how to craft designs that have real-world applications. Students will create objects and assemble them on a computer using CAD (Computer-aided design) software. They will also build physical prototypes, such as puzzle cubes, model cars, and model trains. Projects will include providing teams of students with a designated set of materials and tasking them with designing various items. Examples include a filing machine, paper bridges, cable car, and contraptions capable of launching objects across the room.

Students who complete the required coursework for the Engineering Pathway will receive a Completer cord to be worn at graduation. They will also have the opportunity to take part in the Completer ceremony during spring of their senior year.

Engineering Courses

- Year 1.....Introduction to Engineering Design (IED)
- Year 2.....Principles of Engineering (POE)
- Year 3.....Computer-Integrated Manufacturing (CIM)
- Year 4.....Engineering Design & Development (EDD)

Additional Information:

- To be a completer, students must receive credit for three out of the four years in the Engineering Pathway.

Certifications

- CAD - Autodesk Fusion 360



- ### Jobs in Engineering
- Industrial Engineer
 - Mechanical Engineer
 - Chemical Engineer
 - Petroleum Engineer
 - Electrical Engineer
 - Civil Engineer
 - Biomedical Engineer
 - Aerospace Engineer
 - Safety Engineer

CONCURRENT

CREDIT



Students who seek to challenge themselves and maximize their resources can benefit greatly from VBSD's concurrent credit courses.

The Van Buren School District proudly partners with regional universities to help students get a jumpstart on their college and career. VBSD students can earn as many as 31 hours of college credit through the District's partnership with Arkansas Tech University (ATU) and a total of 18 hours through concurrent credit options with the University of Arkansas Fort Smith (UAFS). Concurrent classes are offered at no charge to the student, giving them both an academic and financial advantage toward their degree.

For more information about concurrent credit options for ATU & UAFS, scan the QR codes below or contact VBHS teacher, Dr. Joe McLean.

ATU Courses

- English Composition I & II
- Algebra
- Algebra/Trigonometry
- World Civilization
- American History
- Government & Politics
- Speech/Oral Communications (Virtual)
- Elementary Spanish I & II (Virtual)
- Art Appreciation (Virtual)
- Teacher Cadet
- Fine Arts Music
- Physical Education
- Health

Scan for
ATU Courses



UAFS Courses

- Government & Politics
- Introduction to Robots
- Introduction to Electronics Technology
- Fundamentals of Electricity
- Electrical Circuits & Components
- Industrial Electricity
- PLC Applications

Scan for
UAFS Courses



ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are key to helping students prepare for learning at the next level. AP courses are taught on a college level and stress critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills. Students who complete the course can take the College Board AP exam. Upon passing, students receive college credit for the subject area. VBSD students who pass both semesters of the AP class and take the correlating AP exam will receive weighted 5.0 credit, which can help bolster their grade point average. Weighting for an AP course will be reduced to a 4.0 scale.

VBSD Honors classes are more rigorous than standard, on-level courses. In honors subjects, students are introduced to higher-order thinking skills, which helps prepare them for AP classes.

Honors Courses

- Geometry
- English 9, 10, & 11
- Algebra II & III
- Spanish II & III
- World History

AP Courses

- Language & Composition
- Calculus AB & BC
- Statistics
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Biology
- Computer Science A & B
- Psychology
- Studio Art Drawing
- Studio Art 3-D Design
- Spanish Literature
- Spanish Language
- World History
- U.S. History
- European History
- Government & Politics



JROTC

PROGRAM

Van Buren High School's Junior Reserves Officer Training Corps (JROTC) is a four-year program that focuses on leadership and character development. JROTC is designed to prepare students for their future, be it in the military, pursuing a college degree, or starting a career.

JROTC students are known as cadets. They take classes in a range of subjects, including leadership, winning colors, learning styles, and more. Cadets also have the opportunity to compete in a number of military-style contests, including Drill and Physical Training Team. While cadets are not required to join the military, participation in JROTC may improve ranking if they choose to enlist.

Participation in JROTC allows students to fulfill their required health and physical education credits during the first year of the program. Cadets also learn how to properly manage their finances through the JROTC Financial Planning Program, which is taught by army instructors. Such skills provide students with a solid foundation for their personal and professional lives.



JROTC Courses

- Year 1..... Army JROTC Leadership Education and Training (LET) 1 year
- Year 2..... Army JROTC LET 2 year
- Year 3..... Army JROTC LET 3 year
- Year 4..... Army JROTC LET 4 year

Additional Information:

- Must complete four full LET years to receive the JROTC cord for High School Graduation.
- The first semester of LET 1 Year fulfills the Health credit requirement for graduation.
- The second semester of LET 1 counts as the Physical Education (PE) credit. Once completed, LET year will count as one extracurricular credit.

WATC

PROGRAM

The Western Arkansas Technical Center (WATC) is offered through the University of Arkansas Fort Smith (UAFS) and is geared toward students seeking a hands-on learning experience. WATC participants learn trades and skills that can potentially earn them a job immediately after high school graduation with a highly-competitive salary.

WATC courses also give students a jump-start toward a college degree. All courses easily transfer to UAFS, saving participants time and expenses in earning their certification or degree.

Van Buren students can take part in WATC's career-focused programming that is designed in conjunction with some of the nation's leading manufacturers. Students learn from experienced industry leaders and UAFS faculty and have access to state-of-the-art technology in their courses.

Through participation in WATC, students meet business leaders who can promptly put them to work and help them establish successful, enduring careers in their field of choice. VBSD's long-standing partnership with WATC has resulted in a countless number of connections and careers in our regional workforce.

View the complete WATC brochure by scanning the QR code to the right.



WATC Courses

- Automotive Technology
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
- Computer Aided Design
- Computer Integrated Manufacturing
- Electronics Technology
- Emergency Medical Responder
- Medical Office Assistant
- Network Engineering
- Practical Nursing
- Unmanned Aerial Systems
- Welding Technology



VBSD GRADUATION

REQUIREMENTS

Subject	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
English (4 credits)	English 9	English 10	English 11	English 12
Math (4 credits)	Algebra I or Geometry	Geometry or Algebra II	Algebra II or 4th Math	4th Math or 5th Math or Other
Science (3 credits)	Physical Science Integrated	Biology Integrated	3rd Science	4th Science or Other
History (3 credits)	Civics/Prof. Comm & Keystone	World History	U.S./American History	
Elective	0.5 Unit of Economics & Personal Finance	0.5 Unit of Health	0.5 Unit of PE	0.5 Unit of Fine Arts
Elective	1 Unit of Computer Science (Beginning with Class of 2026)			
Career Focus Pathways	Intro. to Engineering Design	Principles of Engineering*	Computer Integrated Manufacturing*	Engineering Design & Development^
	Programming I~	Programming II~	AP Computer Science~	Cyber Security I & II~
	xxx Engineering or Programming can lead to these CONC CLASSES --> xxx	Intro. to Robotics* & Intro. to Electronics Technology	Fundamentals of Electricity & Circuits & Components	Industrial Electricity & PLC Applications
	Principles of Biomedical Sciences	Human Body Systems*	Medical Interventions	Biomed. Innovations
	Survey of Business	Medical Office Administration	Business Law I & II	Intern/Apprenticeship
		Accounting I	Accounting II	
	Survey of Agriculture Systems	CASE Principles of Agri Science (Plant)*	Advanced Plant Science	
		-OR- Natural Resources & Ecology*	-OR- Forestry & Wildlife Ecosystems	
	Family & Consumer Sciences	Food Safety & Nutrition	Food Production	Culinary II
		Consumer Services	Advanced Consumer Services	Clothing & Textiles
Life Span Development	Foundations of Teaching I	Foundations of Teaching II	AP Psychology	
Army ROTC Health/PE	ROTC 2	ROTC 3	ROTC 4	

Career Focus Pathways Key	
Highlighted	These credits are weighted scale, as are AP classes. These count as a 5.0 toward GPA.
*	These classes can take the place of a third year science requirement.
^	These classes can take the place of a fourth year math requirement.
~	These classes can take the place of a third year science OR fourth year math.

MY FOUR-YEAR PLAN

I'm Interested in:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career Pathway | <input type="checkbox"/> JROTC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Placement/Honors Classes | <input type="checkbox"/> WATC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concurrent Credit Classes | |

Electives I'm Interested in:

-
-
-
-
-

Completed Graduation Requirements

4 Units of English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Units of Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Units of Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3 Units of History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1 Unit of Computer Science (Beginning with Class of 2026)	<input type="checkbox"/>			
0.5 Unit of Health	<input type="checkbox"/>			
0.5 Unit of PE	<input type="checkbox"/>			
0.5 Unit of Fine Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>			
0.5 Unit of Economics & Personal Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>			



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