Anticipated Ninth Grade Questions

1) How do I earn credits and how many are needed to graduate?  
   A: Each semester class is worth .5 credits. You are required to take six classes per semester. Thus, if you pass all of your classes, you will earn 3.0 credits each semester, 6.0 credits per year, and 24 credits over the four years of high school. A total of 22 credits, 16.5 of which are in designated classes, are needed to graduate.

2) What classes do I have to take?  
   A: During ninth grade, you are required to take year long classes in PE, English, Science, and Math.

3) What is an elective and how many can I select?  
   A: Electives are any class which is not specifically required for graduation. Over the course of four years, you will be able to select 5.5 elective credits (as many as 11 classes).

4) How should I choose my elective classes?  
   A: You’re encouraged to select classes which hold particular interest for you. Often, elective classes are selected based on your career pathway.

5) What if I don’t know my career pathway?  
   A: While you’ll be asked to pick a pathway, many ninth graders aren’t certain of their career interests when entering high school. Elective classes represent opportunities to explore areas of interest. You can always change your mind on career pathways, as you gain more insight into the things you’re good at and enjoy. You may also use “Career Cruising” on-line and take the interest inventory to give you guidance.

6) Must I obtain my math teacher’s permission before selecting a math class?  
   A: Yes. Your math placement will be based on your current math teacher’s recommendation.

7) Do I have to take 9th grade lab science?  
   A: Roughly 90% of ninth graders take this lab course, which covers Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, and Physics. This full year lab course fulfills one year of the university entrance requirements for science. A small percentage of 9th graders move directly into an upper division Biology. Since this course relies extensively on scientific methods and math applications, only those students placed in advanced math classes (Geometry or above) are eligible to forego 9th grade lab science. An application is required and should be completed and submitted to your counselor.

8) How do I change my schedule if I don’t like the classes I get?  
   A: Schedule corrections are granted on a limited basis. There is a specific criterion that needs to be met to grant a correction. It’s very important that you include alternative choices for any optional classes selected, as it’s common for students to not get their first choice in some subjects. Do not list an alternate course more than once on the registration form. Corrections to your schedule can only occur through your counselor. You will need to fill out a “Student Initiated Schedule Correction” form and turn it into the counseling office. Schedule corrections will only be considered during the first* six days of a semester. (*Subject to change)
9) When will I get my actual schedule of classes?  A: Freshman can go on-line and print out their schedule as soon as August 18th (*Subject to change). If there is an issue with your classes such as academic misplacement or less than six classes fill out the “Student Initiated Schedule Correction” form either on-line or at the GHHS counseling office.

10) Do I need my parents’ permission to register for classes?  A: Yes. Involving your parents in class selections is very important. The registration form requires parent permission as well. In some instances, changes in a freshman’s schedule can occur without parent permission.

11) Do I have to take a world language?  A: No. World language is not required to earn a high school diploma. However, two to three years of instruction in one world language is required for admission to most four year colleges. These university or “HEC” admission requirements are more rigorous than those needed to graduate from high school and also include a minimum of 3 years of high school math, and 4 years of English.

12) How can I enroll in “honors” classes?  A: To enroll in English 9 Honors entering ninth graders must receive high marks on a writing test (administered each spring to interested students) as well as the EXPLORE test given in the 8th grade year. You will register for regular English 9 and those who qualify will automatically be enrolled into honors. To enroll in World Cultures Honors students must have a “B” average in his/her social studies class in middle school.

13) How do I make sure that I have the same class or lunch with my friends?  A: You don’t. No student can select a class based on teacher preference or friend’s schedules. Lunch schedules and teacher assignments are not determined until mid to late August, and won’t be reflected on a student’s schedule. You will learn of your lunch assignment from your 4th period teacher on the first day of school.

14) My friend said that if a student fails a class, they have to retake it. Is that true?  A: If it’s required for graduation, your friend’s right. However, you don’t have to repeat an elective class; although you may wish to for other reasons.

15) Does Gig Harbor have a dress code?  Yes. It’s probably similar to the one at your middle school although you are allowed to wear hats as long as these do not cover your eyes or ears (e.g. hoods are not allowed.) You also must choose clothing which does not disrupt learning (e.g. excessive cleavage, exposed boxers, and bare mid drift are not allowed,) or promote illegal substances.

16) I completed Algebra (or Geometry, or Spanish) in eighth grade. How do I insure that this class is reflected on my high school transcript?  A: It’s important for you to realize that both the grade and credit will be reflected on your high school transcript should you choose to do this. Please check with your high school counselor for guidance first. They will review your grade in this class and provide you with the necessary forms.