



Welcome to New Tech Academy @ J. L. Mann High School

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What is New Tech @ Mann?

New Tech @ Mann is a “school within a school” on the campus of J. L. Mann High School that offers students project-based learning, student-led culture, and one-on-one technology. New Tech @ Mann will open in August of 2014 with 150 freshmen students and will add 150 students each year until 9th through 12th grades are represented. A new building wing is being planned to house the New Tech @ Mann students beginning in 2017.

Several core content areas will be taught as a combined class in order to support cross-disciplinary learning. For example, in the freshman year a student can expect to take English 1 with World Geography or English 2 with AP Human Geography. In addition to the core content areas of English, mathematics, science and social studies, New Tech @ Mann offers support courses which will enable a student to pursue Adobe certification. New Tech students will also be able to take college level Dual Course Credit courses their senior year.

Project-based learning (PBL), student-led culture, and one-on-one technology make New Tech @ Mann very different from the traditional learning model.

Project-Based Learning.

PBL emphasizes learning activities that are long-term, interdisciplinary and student-centered. Unlike traditional, teacher-led classroom activities, students (learners) often must organize their own work and manage their own time in a project-based class. Learners follow a PBL plan for every project using these steps: the project is introduced through a driving question; learners determine what they need to know; teachers (facilitators) organize needed activities for learning; facilitator-led and peer-led assessments are conducted to determine learner understanding; content-oriented workshops are provided by facilitators; learners formally present their conclusions; learner conclusions are peer- and facilitator-reviewed. Learners spend most of their working time researching, discussing, attending workshops held by facilitators at the school, and presenting to real people. It’s not about just turning in an assignment, but rather about showing what a learner can do.

Student-Led Culture.

The students at New Tech @ Mann will create a school-wide social contract based on respect, responsibility, and trust. The students determine which student behaviors are acceptable and which are not and determine consequences for students who violate the social contract. Greenville County Schools’ disciplinary code is also implemented through the social contract. Input for the social contract is received from every Advisory group and a New Tech Student Council oversees implementation of the social contract. The New Tech Director works directly with the New Tech Student Council.

Student-Led Culture *(continued)*

When a student is accepted into New Tech @ Mann they are placed in an Advisory group, where they will stay until graduation. This group will get to know each other well and will create their own identity, supporting and encouraging each other as they work through school and prepare for the future. The Advisory group is led by a facilitator.

In the classroom each group project is governed by a contract created by students in the group. These are written agreements between group members that outline how the group will operate, who will be responsible for each task, and what will happen when someone doesn't do their share of the work.

One-On-One Technology.

Every New Tech learner will be issued a technology device and access to ECHO. ECHO is the digital home for all of the student's class projects, activities, grades, and Internet resources. It allows students to submit coursework, review assignments, and discuss class content online with teachers and other students. Students and staff have access to ECHO at all times, which means there is no more scrambling to look for a copy of a worksheet that was lost because everything is available and can be submitted online.

When students first come to class, they log in to ECHO and see the class agenda right away, along with the day's activities and the resources tied to them. Students can start learning for the day without waiting for everybody else to get ready.

When parents use ECHO, they can see their student's course information in real time. When the teacher enters a grade or assignment, it's available for them to see immediately. Parents can choose to receive email notifications when assignments are submitted, grades are posted, or even if an assignment is turned in late.

Course agendas and class activities are posted for each class, so even if students are out of school they can remain aware of coursework they may be missing.

Differences between Instructional Models

All students attending J. L. Mann High School and New Tech @ Mann are considered students of J. L. Mann High School. New Tech @ Mann is a school-within-a-school located on J. L. Mann High School's campus. Both are public four-year high schools that teach state standards and follow Greenville County Schools' policies and protocols. However, the learning models used by each school differ significantly. It is important that a family considering New Tech have a serious discussion about which model is better for their student over the next four years. Upon acceptance at New Tech @ Mann Academy every student and their parents will meet individually with the New Tech Director to review the student's academic records, discuss what a New Tech classroom looks like, and determine the best New Tech curriculum pathway for the student.

Selecting New Tech @ Mann is a four-year commitment. Once students become accustomed to the New Tech learning model it is difficult for those students to move back to the traditional model employed by J. L. Mann High School; the New Tech and traditional curriculum pathways are also significantly different and it is difficult for a student to remain on track to graduate on time and still satisfy diploma requirements if they change programs. Mid-year transfers into New Tech will not be permitted. Transfers from New Tech @ Mann to J. L. Mann High School are significantly restricted and require approval from both the New Tech Director and the J. L. Mann High School Principal.

Listed below are some characteristics that define some of the differences between the two programs.

New Tech @ Mann	J. L. Mann High School
Project-based Learning Model.	Traditional Instructional Model.
Single credit pathway; projects are differentiated for student ability and effort. College-preparatory and honors credits are available depending upon project outcome; AP and Dual Credit courses are also available in those designated courses.	Triple credit pathway; college-preparatory, honors, or AP credit can be earned according to the class designation.
Integrated scheduling; the student is assigned a curriculum pathway that is followed for four years. Students may choose two electives each year.	Individualized scheduling; the student selects seven courses each year.
Small student population; 150 students per grade level with 600 students total.	Large student population; 1,700 students total.
One to one computer ratio; students will be issued individual devices.	Computer labs are available for student and class use.
Working in teams on long, complex tasks.	Working alone on shorter tasks.
Accountable to peers and teacher.	Accountable to teacher.
Teachers collaborate to create multi-subject projects.	Single subjects taught separate from each other.

Characteristics of a Successful New Tech Student

The New Tech project-based learning approach changes the role of teacher and student. Teachers become the expert consultant in their field and act as facilitators to learning who guide students. Students become learners who take charge of their own learning, create solutions to problems, and develop self-management techniques in order to become a team worker as they work in their groups.

A successful New Tech student is one who is ...

- *A Critical Thinker* – a student who is curious about the world and desires opportunities to analyze, explore, and solve real-world issues.
- *A Self-Starter* – a student who takes the initiative for his or her own learning and is motivated to research, discuss, and understand new ideas.
- *An Independent Learner* – a student who is an active participant in learning; one who can set goals, maintain focus on those goals, and see the goals through to completion.
- *A Collaborator* – a student who enjoys learning through interaction with others by researching information, sharing knowledge, and presenting outcomes alongside fellow students.
- *A Respectful Citizen* – a student who demonstrates social responsibility through respect for themselves and others.
- *College and Career Centered* – a student who desires an active and rigorous learning environment and realizes the importance of gaining necessary skills to prepare for both college and a career after high school.

New Tech Courses and Schedule: Framework for Success

New Tech @ Mann does not follow a traditional class schedule. Students in New Tech will take two combined PBL (project-based learning) classes and two stand-alone PBL classes. While bells will ring to dismiss the traditional J. L. Mann classes, New Tech @ Mann will run on a separate schedule without bells. Learners will be expected to work closely with their teachers and their project groups to move from class to class without travel time built into the schedule. Because of this structure, New Tech learners have the opportunity to earn eight credits each school year as opposed to the seven credits earned by the traditional classes.

New Tech classes will be held between 9:40 a.m. and 2:50 p.m. each day which allows New Tech learners to attend traditional classes during J. L. Mann High School's 1st and 7th periods. New Tech learners will be able to take classes not offered in PBL classes during those periods, such as Fine Arts or Foreign Language. New Tech learners will have access to all other services (such as bus transportation) and extracurricular activities (such as athletics or clubs) offered by J. L. Mann High School.

New Tech learners can earn college preparatory (CP) credit or honors (H) credit in each New Tech class depending upon the level of the learner's participation and rigor within each project. New Tech facilitator will prepare a rubric for each project clearly defining how to earn the type of credit a student is seeking. Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Credit courses in New Tech offer the opportunity to only earn AP or dual credit. CP and H credits are not available in AP or Dual Credit courses.

Sample Freshman Schedule:

Period	Class
J. L. Mann 1 st Period	Spanish or other elective
New Tech 1 st Period	Algebra 1/ PLTW
New Tech 2 nd Period	Combined Class
New Tech 3 rd Period	Digital Art
New Tech Lunch	Lunch
New Tech 4 th Period	Environmental Science
New Tech 5 th Period	English 1/ World History Combined Class
New Tech 6 th Period	
J. L. Mann 7 th Period	PE or other elective

New Tech Curriculum: Preparing for Graduation and Beyond

Knowing what courses are required to earn a high school diploma through New Tech and when learners should take those courses is essential to be successful at New Tech @ Mann. New Tech students will take two combined PBL classes, two single PBL classes, and two J. L. Mann electives each year for their first three years in high school. Their senior year will be spent taking up to four Dual Credit courses (which allow them to earn college credit), two single PBL courses and two J. L. Mann electives.

The single PBL courses are designed to build on each other as the students work through them and students will have the opportunity to earn Adobe Certification once the courses are completed. Adobe Certification is a credential that shows the student is proficient in several types of software that businesses find useful, making the student marketable for some types of work upon graduation.

Sample Four Year Curriculum Pathway for students entering New Tech with no high school credit:

	Combined PBL Class	Combined PBL Class	Single PBL Class	Single PBL Class	Traditional Class
9th Grade	English 1 / World Geography	Algebra 1 / PLTW IED	Digital Art	Environmental Science	2 electives
10th Grade	English 2 / World History	Geometry / PLTW POE	Application Development	Biology	2 electives
11th Grade	English 3 / US History	Algebra 2 / Chemistry	Digital Media	Senior Project	2 electives
	Dual Credit Class	Dual Credit Class			
12th Grade	English 101	Probability & Statistics 101	AP Computer Science	Internship	2 electives
	Government / Economics	Biology 101			

Sample Four Year Pathway for students entering New Tech with English 1 and Algebra 1 credits:

	Combined PBL Class	Combined PBL Class	Single PBL Class	Single PBL Class	Traditional Class
9th Grade	English 2 / AP Human Geography	Geometry / PLTW POE	Digital Art	Environmental Science	2 electives
10th Grade	English 3 / AP World History	Algebra 2 / Chemistry	Application Development	Biology	2 electives
11th Grade	English 4 / AP US History	Precalculus / Physics	Digital Media	Senior Project	2 electives
	Dual Credit Class	Dual Credit Class			
12th Grade	English 101	Probability & Statistics 101	AP Computer Science	Internship	2 electives
	Government / Economics	Biology 101			

New Tech @ Mann Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if New Tech @ Mann is a good fit for my student?

Review the characteristics of a successful New Tech student: critical thinker, self-starter, independent learner, collaborator, respectful citizen, and college- or career-focused. Also, a successful New Tech student should be Algebra-ready by their freshman year. If this sounds like your student, your family should put serious consideration to New Tech @ Mann.

Does New Tech @ Mann prepare students for college and other post high school opportunities?

Yes, for both college-bound and career-bound students. New Tech emphasizes learning how to solve real-life problems with a team and the skills students learn at New Tech will help them succeed in any environment they choose to pursue.

Do New Tech @ Mann students have the opportunity to participate in sports, clubs, or other extracurricular activities?

Yes. New Tech students are eligible to participate in any J. L. Mann High School activity as an attendance area student or accepted magnet student. J. L. Mann High School course electives are also available to New Tech students during 1st and 7th periods, allowing New Tech students to pursue Fine Arts courses or extra AP coursework they may have an interest in.

Are there any costs to attending New Tech @ Mann?

There is a cost for the New Tech device issued to students. Details of this cost to families will be released as soon as an agreement is reached with the computer vendor. Other fees that all J. L. Mann High School students pay include their class dues each year.

How is a New Tech @ Mann classroom different from a traditional high school classroom?

To facilitate the project-based learning model (PBL) the students are physically grouped in the classroom as opposed to sitting in rows. Students (learners) follow a PBL plan for every project which follows this general progression: the project is introduced through a driving question; learners determine what they need to know; teachers (facilitators) organize needed activities for learning; facilitator-led and peer-led assessments are conducted to determine learner understanding; content-oriented workshops are provided by facilitators; learners formally present their conclusions; learner conclusions are peer- and facilitator-reviewed.

My student has an IEP or 504 Plan. Can the student still attend New Tech @ Mann?

Any attendance area student or accepted magnet student may be considered for attendance at New Tech @ Mann, including students with an IEP or 504 Plan. Freshmen students entering New Tech should be ready to study Algebra 1; it is difficult for students recommended to take Algebra 1A in their freshmen year to manage all Algebra 1 concepts in the New Tech model. Annual IEP meetings will be conducted for New Tech students, just as they are for J. L. Mann High School IEP students. Students needing a Resource class will be scheduled in Resource during 1st or 7th periods. Students with disabilities will be assigned to the New Tech program according to the lottery selection process, just like any other student applicant.

Does New Tech @ Mann cover the same state standards as J. L. Mann High School and other high schools in South Carolina?

Yes. New Tech @ Mann is a public school that meets as a school-within-a-school on J. L. Mann High School's campus. New Tech is required to meet all state standards as part of J. L. Mann High School. The New Tech teachers spend considerable time developing relevant projects that align with the state standards. Students are individually evaluated on their mastery of these standards as part of each project they complete or problem they solve.

Are there tests and quizzes in New Tech @ Mann?

Yes. While most of the learning in New Tech schools occurs within the context of group collaboration, students are still held accountable for their own understanding of the content taught in each course. Assessment of individual understanding can take many forms, including traditional tests and quizzes.

Do New Tech @ Mann students have homework?

Yes. Whether it is a portion of a project that needs to be completed for an upcoming milestone, a reading assignment, or practice problems, students at New Tech @ Mann have to complete work outside of the classroom.

If someone in my group doesn't do his part of a project will it hurt my grade?

Possibly, but it shouldn't. Most projects and problems are assessed using a variety of measures including group evaluation. For this reason, we start all projects and problems with group contracts. These are written agreements between group members that outline how the group will operate, who will be responsible for each task, and what will happen when someone doesn't do their share of the work. While the goal is always to have every member of a group do his or her part, these contracts allow groups to "fire" reluctant learners. Students who get fired have to complete all work for their project on their own.

Will New Tech @ Mann students graduate with J. L. Mann High School students?

Yes. Our first New Tech @ Mann class will graduate in June, 2018, with the J. L. Mann High School Class of 2018.

Can New Tech @ Mann students take elective classes like band or JROTC at J. L. Mann High School?

Yes. Students may choose any elective available at J. L. Mann High School during 1st and 7th periods.

Can New Tech @ Mann students take AP and Dual Course Credit courses?

Yes. AP and Dual Credit courses are built into the New Tech curriculum pathways and New Tech seniors will be required to take some Dual Credit courses. New Tech students may also take additional J. L. Mann High School AP courses as electives during 1st or 7th periods.

Can students transfer out of New Tech @ Mann once school starts?

Yes, after the first year. Transfers from New Tech @ Mann to J. L. Mann High School are significantly restricted and required the approval of both the New Tech Director and the J. L. Mann High School Principal. Students are asked to make a four-year commitment to New Tech because once students become accustomed to the New Tech learning model it is difficult for those students to move back to the traditional model employed by J. L. Mann High School; the curriculum pathways are also significantly different and it is difficult for a student to remain on track to graduate on time and still satisfy diploma requirements if they change programs. However if, after completing the first year, the family, the Director, and the Principal determine that the student is better placed in a traditional learning model it is possible to transfer to J. L. Mann High School.

We respect that some people may find that project-based learning is not their preferred learning style, but we require that all students, once accepted into New Tech, spend a full year working in it before deciding to leave. We require this for three primary reasons: 1) the beginning of the first year can be stressful for some students and we don't want anyone to make a rash decision they come to regret later; 2) our program is unique in the way courses are integrated and sequenced and it is very difficult to translate those courses to a traditional transcript; and 3) we believe there is value in teaching students to keep a commitment. There is nothing quite like the pride and self-confidence a student gains when they have accomplished something that was truly difficult or different for them.

How are business and community partners involved with New Tech @ Mann?

New Tech is always seeking business partners to work with our students. Business partners are integral to assisting students with solving real-world problems, completing internships, and assessing final projects. If you know of a local business or community organization interested in working with students in this manner please refer them to the New Tech Director. Current partners include Young Office, Koyo Bearings North America, United Way, Women in Engineering and others.