New Tech Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is project-based learning?

    –Project-based learning (PBL) uses inquiry and technology to engage students with issues and problems that relate to their lives and the real world. Students become active learners and doers who take responsibility in completing projects. Learning goes from guided inquiry to open inquiry, where students are the drivers and take on the responsibility of their learning the material at a more in-depth level.

2. What does it mean when it's said that courses are integrated?

    - Integrated courses are two or more content subjects being taught together, to strengthen the relationship between the subjects, allowing students to make deeper connections with the content and see the application, relevance, and authenticity to problems, issues, or scenarios in the real world. Today's work environment requires employees to integrate multiple skills and information to complete tasks, and this model will help better prepare our students for those environments.

3.   New Tech = hands on, in depth computer based research with a team of your peers. How will this style of learning benefit a student that attends a large university and is 1 of 375 students setting in an auditorium listening to a lecture and taking notes in the process?

    – With the PBL setting, you are taught in many different styles and are able to adjust to any teaching style in college. Students will still take notes and listen to instruction, but they will also apply and use what they are learning through a hands-on learning environment, solving relevant and real world issues/scenarios.

4.   Are grades given individually or as a team based on the final outcome of the project?

    – Individual grades are given throughout the project, allowing for teachers to check student understanding and mastery of the content. In addition to individual grades, students may also be graded as a group for various parts of the project such as the final presentation. There are protocols and procedures that will be in place to address any student who is not doing his/her fair share of the work so that other group members' grades will not be adversely affected.

5.   Will basic tests still be given to students such as vocabulary tests or is everything project based?

    – Yes, students will still take various types of assessments and tests in each of their courses, in addition to all state required tests.

6.   The New Tech projects sound like they will require a lot of research. What is the average time given to the students to complete projects?

    - Project length will vary in each course as they depend on the complexity and rigor of the standards being taught through the projects. Projects can range anywhere from two to six weeks as they completely vary from teacher to teacher and course to course.

7. Will the New Tech students be offered dual enrollment or college courses?
    - Yes, the modified block schedule allows for students to take part in SMC or LMC courses, as well as attend the Van Buren Tech Center each day either in the morning or afternoon. Students will work with their counselor to properly schedule their course needs. *Students who take an English Course at SMC or LMC, can have that course count as their English credit at Ross Beatty

8. Will there be honors courses?
    - Yes honors ELA at Ross Beatty will be "stand alone" courses. Students enrolled in the honors ELA courses will also have their social studies courses as "stand alones". There will be an Honors Humanities course. This is a hybrid course for students who were in 8th grade this year, and already took 9th grade ELA. This hybrid course is a 10th grade ELA, with U.S. History (the 9th grade Social Studies course). One of the goals of the honors courses is to prepare students for dual credit or EMC courses.

9. How long are class periods?
    –90 minutes

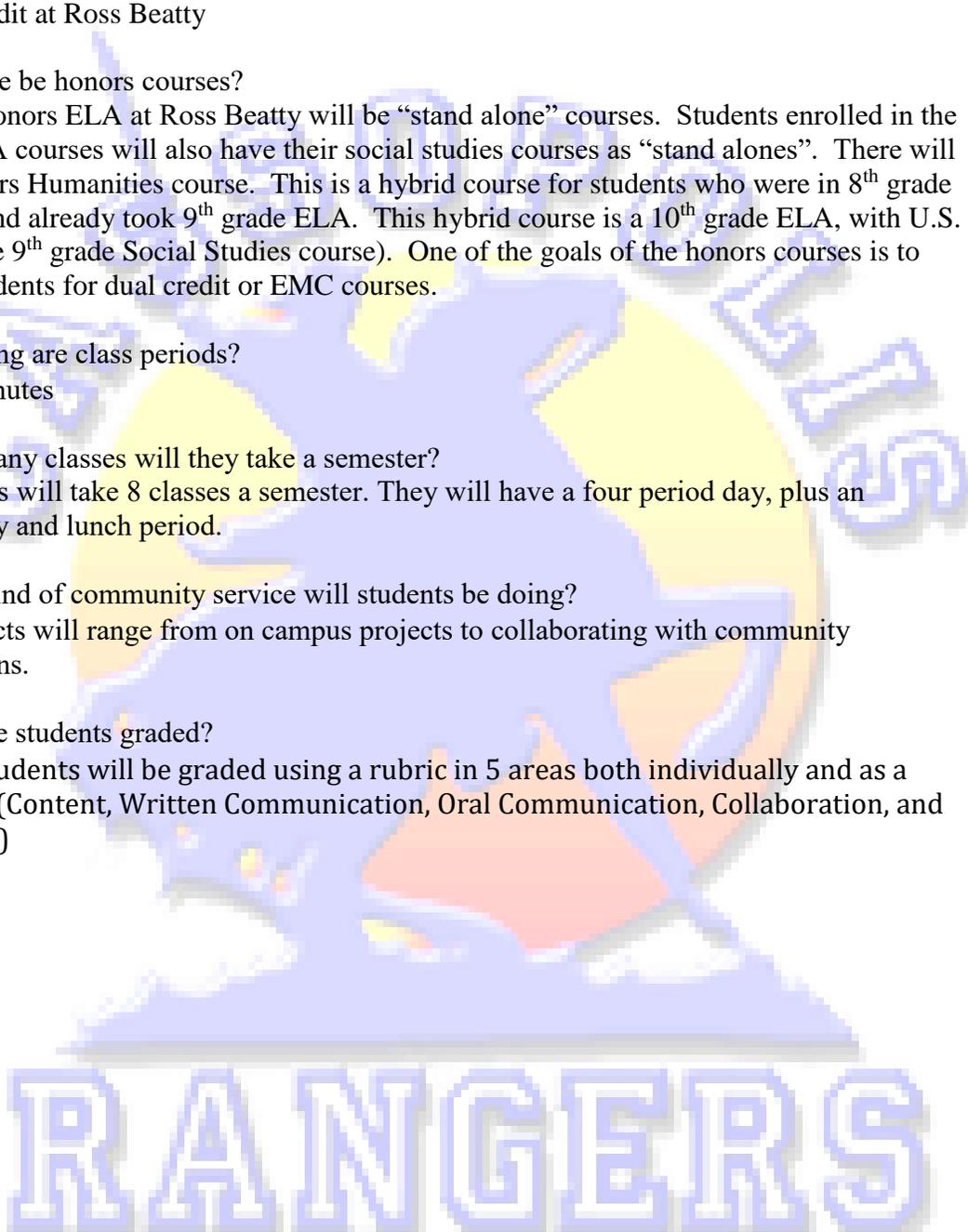10. How many classes will they take a semester?
    Students will take 8 classes a semester. They will have a four period day, plus an advisory and lunch period.

11. What kind of community service will students be doing?
    – Projects will range from on campus projects to collaborating with community organizations.

12. How are students graded?
    – All students will be graded using a rubric in 5 areas both individually and as a group. (Content, Written Communication, Oral Communication, Collaboration, and Agency)