



## **McDowell** Honors College of Leadership & Service

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the McDowell Honors College is to identify, support, nurture, and recognize a cohort of ambitious and high achieving students who are dedicated to “whole person development” through a commitment to the following: the pursuit of rigorous and challenging coursework, a commitment to physical and mental health through exercise and maintenance of a drug-free lifestyle, and participation in a variety of school and community-based activities.



**LEADERSHIP**

**ACADEMICS**

**MOTIVATION**





# McDowell Honors College of Leadership & Service

If you are a student who...

- pursues rigorous and challenging coursework
- is committed to physical and mental health
- values school and community service

You are a **PERFECT** candidate for the McDowell Honors College!

The mission of the McDowell Honors College of Leadership and Service is to provide our most dedicated high achieving students with a small learning community that provides a structure for superior academic performance, leadership experiences, and community service opportunities.

The foundation of the program is rooted in the Six Pillars of Character.

- The pillars are:
- ✓ Trustworthiness
  - ✓ Respect
  - ✓ Responsibility
  - ✓ Fairness
  - ✓ Caring
  - ✓ Citizenship



Applicants must demonstrate these traits through their involvement both in school and in the local community. Additionally, all applicants should demonstrate organizational skills and the ability to participate in class.

# McDowell Honors College of Leadership & Service

## APPLICATION

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Middle School \_\_\_\_\_

### Activities

Please use the spaces provided to list any activities in which you participate. These may include any community service activities.

School Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Out of School Activities: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Honors/Awards: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Special Instructions

The following items should be submitted along with this application form:

1. 7th and 8th-grade transcripts
2. 7th and 8th-grade attendance/tardy records
3. Most recent standardized test scores
4. Student’s typed essay
5. Letter of documentation in a sealed envelope

**Current Millcreek students:** Submit this form, your essay, and your letter of documentation to your guidance counselor by the date he/she has chosen. Your guidance counselor will then include transcripts, test scores, and attendance records.

**Private and parochial students:** Return application, essay, letter of documentation, transcripts, test scores, and attendance records (obtained by your guidance counselor) to:

**McDowell High School, 3580 West 38th St., Erie, PA 16506;**

**Attention: Honors College Coordinators**

## APPLICATION

### ESSAY DIRECTIONS

Please complete a 250-word essay using the prompt provided below. Include your name on the front of the paper. The essay should be typed using double-spacing and 12-point font. Points will be awarded based on the overall quality of your writing as well as on how well you follow the directions and address each statement.

Describe a community service activity in which you have been involved, using the following points to guide your writing.

- Describe your responsibilities while working for the organization/group.
- Explain what you liked best about your duties.
- Describe skills you acquired while volunteering.
- Explain what you learned about others while volunteering.
- Describe what you learned about the organization.
- Explain skills you witnessed that help an individual lead others.
- Explain what about the experience made you most proud.
- Describe what you would change if you were to volunteer again.
- Explain how you truly made a difference because you served.

### LETTER OF DOCUMENTATION

The application essay should be based on a community service experience in which you participated within the last two years. Please provide a letter of documentation from the organization with which you volunteered. The letter should include the day or days of the event, the number of hours you served, what you did, and the quality of your work. Please ask the person writing the letter to include his/her name, address, and telephone number or email so that we may contact him/her to verify your service record. The documentation letter should be placed in a sealed envelope and included with your application.



### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Students are admitted to the Honors College by completing an application for admission. Applications are screened using the following criteria: transcripts, an essay, a letter of documentation from the community service experience described in the essay, activities (inside & outside school), community service experiences, high school course recommendations, standardized test scores, and attendance/tardy records.
- Students are required to enroll in honors level courses. Freshmen and sophomores are required to take three honors-level courses. Juniors and seniors are required to be enrolled in four honors and/or AP courses.
- All students must take at least three (3) AP courses by graduation. This is a new requirement for the class of 2026.
- Students are required to complete three (3) credits of a world language.
- Students in 9th grade are required to maintain a weighted 3.6 GPA.
- Students in 10th-12th grade are required to maintain a weighted 3.7 GPA.
- Students must complete a minimum of twenty (20) service hours. It is required that fifteen (15) hours are with one organization and an additional five (5) hours are with a specific service area assigned by grade level.
- Students must complete additional academic, school, and community service activities.
- Students are expected to follow the Six Pillars of Character and the discipline code outlined in the student handbook. Disciplinary cases (school code or Six Pillars) will be reviewed on an individual basis by the Honors College Team. Removal from the program may result.

#### what parents are saying...

Having the Honors College at McDowell helped us to make the final decision to send our daughter to high school at McDowell. It has been a rewarding experience for her."

"My son has benefitted in many ways from the Honors College program. I feel the small learning community has aided his progress."

"Both of our children have gone through the Honors College program at McDowell. One graduated and went on to an Ivy League school. The other is succeeding at a high level and will eventually be ready to apply to those high end universities."

#### what students are saying...

My time in Honors College has helped me succeed and get into a top college. Being able to study with my friends and having an advisor to help has been a big advantage!

"It is nice to be with students who have a passion for learning."

"As a member of Honors College, you have opportunities to volunteer and lead."



## SELECTION PROCESS

Students are selected for the program on the basis of their application. The application form is included in this booklet or can be obtained from the middle school Guidance office or the McDowell Intermediate Student Support office.

Applications are screened by a committee of teachers, counselors, and administrators using a numerical scoring sheet.

The scoring sheet is mathematically weighted. The following are screening criteria items:

- 7th and 8th-grade transcripts
- Standardized test scores in math and reading
- Application Essay
- Documentation letter
- School and outside activities
- Attendance/tardy records

## PRIORITY SCHEDULING

Honors College students receive priority scheduling status through our student management system to ensure they are first enrolled at each grade level in order to meet Honors College course requirements.

## FIELD TRIPS

Honors College students attend field trips arranged by advisors and students. Trips vary but may include the Pittsburgh College Fair, Behrend Outreach, the Manufacturing Day Event, college visits, and cultural experiences.

## GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Students in 9th grade are required to maintain an overall weighted 3.6 GPA. Students in 10th through 12th grade are required to maintain an overall weighted 3.7 GPA. Students who fall below this GPA requirement will be placed on probation. If the standard is not then met upon the next review, the student will be removed from Honors College.

## RECOGNITION

The comments section of the transcript will carry notations of a student's participation in the Honors College program. If a student applies to an out-of-state school, he/she may request a letter of confirmation explaining the McDowell Honors College of Leadership and Service to submit with his/her college application.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

During the school year, students in the program are required to complete at least twenty (20) hours of community service. The service project is completed under the guidance and direction of the Honors College Advisors. In addition, students are expected to participate in additional community and school service opportunities during the school year.

## HONORS COLLEGE ADVISOR

The Honors College Advisor is a mentor to the students assigned to his/her homeroom. The advisor eases the student transition into McDowell and the new demands of high school. By chaperoning special events, guiding the homeroom through the students' independent service projects, monitoring their accumulation of community service hours, and ensuring proper completion of Honors College program requirements, the mentor fosters a bond with the student that lasts throughout the high school experience. This mentoring relationship assists the student in making decisions about choosing a college and about setting goals for professional careers of interest. The advisor serves as a role model for the student and does so by taking part in community service and by embracing lifelong learning. Additionally, the advisor is a person of trust for the student to come to for help.



## REASONS TO CHOOSE THE MCDOWELL HONORS COLLEGE

1. Attract scholarship offers to prestigious post-secondary institutions
2. Access to priority scheduling
3. Receive special recognition on high school transcript and McDowell graduation ceremony
4. Experience Honors College as a School-Within-A-School
5. Establish friendships with like-minded students who value academic success & excellence
6. Promote personal growth through service to others