

Portage Northern Counseling Office Newsletter: Welcome, Freshmen!

The Counseling Staff

Welcome to PNHS !

Students are assigned to a counselor based on the student's last name:

Mrs. Shari Smith: A-D

ssmith@portageps.org

323-5527

Mrs. Krista Hovestadt: E-K

khovestadt@portageps.org

323-5420

Ms. Amy DiMaggio: L-Q

Director of Counseling

adimaggio@portageps.org

323-5472

Mrs. Cindy Figueroa: R-Z

cfigueroa@portageps.org

323-5424

Administrative Assistants:

Ms. Ruthie Connaughty

Registrar / Enrollment / Ap-
pointments

rconnaughty@portageps.org

323-5475

Mrs. Deb Beverly

Transcripts / Scholarships /
College Visits

dbeverly@portageps.org

323-5464

Office Hours:

7:00 am—3:30 pm

**Located on east end of
second floor.**

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New Student Orientation

In order to help students get off to a positive start in the school year, the PN Student Senate will offer a **"New Student Orientation" on Thursday, Sept. 1st at 1:00 pm in the PN auditorium.** Students will be able to take a tour of the (new!) building, learn about school policies and programs and meet the counselors and grade level principals. Mr. French, PN Principal, will be there as well. Students will receive a new class **schedule complete with teachers' names and room numbers.** Students will be able to follow their

schedule to find their classrooms and their lockers. Student Senate members will also be there to answer any questions. Typically, this event is for students only; however, parents are welcome to attend. The orientation lasts about one hour.

Unfortunately, if you are unable to make this date, there will not be a make-up date. Students will receive their schedules on the first official day of school, Tuesday, Sept. 6, 2011. Thank you.

Counseling Services

A staff of four full time counselors are here to provide:

Academic Planning: Counselors will work with students to create a 4 year Educational Development Plan (EDP); they will monitor and audit students to remain on track for graduation and will help students with academic issues.

Individual / Personal Counseling: Counselors are always here to help with any questions or concerns that students might have. We are here to listen and provide support. We also help students seek additional counseling or community resources, if needed. We're here to talk

about anything: friends, family, school, stress, goals...anything.

College Preparation: Students will be advised as to which classes best prepare them for their future college choices. Counselors will guide students to prepare themselves to be well-rounded, academically strong candidates for college admissions. Students should become active quickly in extra-curricular activities and in volunteering outside of school.

Post-Secondary Plan: Counselors are also here to discuss many other options for life after high school: the armed forces, a trade or tech school, the Peace Corps or travel.



Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) PNHS Graduation Requirements

English: 4 credits

Math: 4 credits

Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2 and a Senior Year Math Related Course

Social Studies: 3 credits

American History, Government / Economics, World History

Science: 3 credits

Chemistry / Physics, Biology (all year), Earth Science and Chem 2 or Physics 2

Health / Freshmen Focus: 1 credit

Health is required and FF is strongly recommended.

Physical Education: 1.5 credits

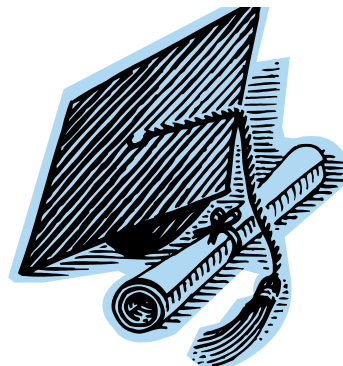
3 one semester courses. All 1.5 credits can be "waived" by participating in PN sports or marching band. For individual plans, contact your counselor.

Fine Arts: 1 credit

Recommended to be completed in grades 9 or 10. Some examples: music, art, Forensics, Drama, Woodworking, many business classes and more....

World Language: At this point, World Language is not a PPS graduation requirement; however it is strongly advised that students take at least two years of the same language to be considered "competitive" for college admissions.

Students must earn 26 credits to graduate from Portage Public Schools. They must also meet the minimum core requirements as outlined by the MMC.



The only schedule changes that will be allowed in the fall are those that are missing a class or have a doubled-up hour. Unfortunately, we can not honor teacher requests or lunch change requests. Thank you.

What to Expect From Your Counselor During Your Freshman Year

Counselors will give classroom presentations to all freshmen the first week of school to introduce ourselves and discuss the services available. We will meet with all students to create a 4 year EDP. In February, we will meet with each student one on one to create the academic schedule for the following academic year. Counselors will complete semester audits to ensure that students are on track for graduation. If a student fails a required course, the counselor will automatically place the student in that course the following year. Counselors are here

to be a liaison between home and school. We are here to facilitate discussions, to help when a concern or problem is not resolved and to be an advocate for students. Our main goal is to provide students and parents with information regarding the academic and social-emotional components of high school life.

Please do not hesitate to contact your counselor at any time.

Standardized Tests: All freshmen will be required to complete the **"9th Grade Social Studies MEAPs"** sometime in the fall. **A new testing series called "Performance Series" will be given to assess all students** in math and reading in the fall.

There are no other required or suggested standardized tests during the freshman year.

Future Standardized Tests:

10th grade: ACT Plan (strongly suggested).

11th grade: PSAT (optional), ACT/SAT (optional), MME (required).

Helpful Hints for Freshman Year

Tips for Students: The freshman year is the most important year to establish a solid GPA. Grade Point Average is one factor for colleges admissions. Additional factors for college admissions are class rank, ACT/SAT test scores, strength of core curriculum, personal essays, letters of recommendation, extra-curricular activities and volunteer work. Be sure to start freshman year strong! Seek academic help/support, if needed. Contact a teacher immediately if there is a concern about content, grading or policies.

Monitor grades weekly via the PIV (Parent Internet Viewer). If students do not have access codes, see Ruthie. Attend the ASSIST room after school for extra time/help and/or work with a teacher before/after school. Get involved! Begin participating in extra-curricular activities. We have over 60 clubs and activities here at PN. Search our PN website for more details.

Be sure to stay connected by reading the Huskie Tracks, reading our daily announcements online and monitoring our PN website at www.portageps.org.

Tips for Parents: Stay in touch. Monitor daily announcements and keep up to date on **our website**. **Monitor students' grades on the PIV**. **Contact teachers immediately** if there is concern. Encourage your student to seek academic support from the classroom teacher or the ASSIST room. The ASSIST room is open Mondays-Thursdays from 3 to 5 pm. It is located on the 3rd floor, east end. There will be a teacher and tutors available daily to help students.



Suggestions for Students

- ◇ Be active in your education. Take responsibility for your learning, homework, grades and communication with teachers.
- ◇ Ask questions and participate in class.
- ◇ Be respectful to all teachers, staff and students.
- ◇ Follow all instructions in your classes and know the rules in your student handbook.
- ◇ Monitor your grades on the PIV and ask the teacher if you have a concern.

Suggestions for Parents

- ◇ **Be active in your student's** education. Be sure that your phone numbers and email addresses are updated in the grade/counseling offices.
- ◇ Contact the teacher first regarding concerns about content, grades or policies.
- ◇ Communicate with counselors regarding changes in home environment or other personal concerns regarding your student.
- ◇ **Know your teachers' class-**room policies and be familiar with the student handbook.

- ◆ Get involved! Check out PN clubs and activities. **Extra-curricular activities look great on college applications...** and they are a great way to meet friends and to try new things!
- ◆ Volunteer in your school and community. Again, volunteer work looks great for college admissions. It also helps you to be a more well rounded person. In addition, if you hope to become eligible to apply to the National Honor Society during your junior and senior years, you will need to have a full resume of volunteer work.
- ◆ Advocate for yourself and seek help when needed.



Have a great year!

Go Huskies!