

Portage Northern Counseling Office Newsletter: SENIORS!

The Counseling Staff

Welcome back to your last
year of high school!!

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Office Hours:

7:00 am—3:30 pm

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

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On Track?

- To be on track for graduation, a student entering his/her senior year, must have a minimum of nineteen (19) credits. Many of you many have more than that already! When viewing your transcript, be sure to exclude any credit earned in middle school. Typically, CR was earned in MS for World Language and math. These credits do not count towards the 26 that students must complete while in high school in order to graduate. The MS classes counted as pre-requisites for other classes only.
- **If you are 'short credits', you would have been notified via letter and phone call home at the end of last semester. If you** have less than 19 credits, be sure to contact your counselor immediately to enroll in an online credit recovery class through Michigan Virtual High School.
- Portage Public Schools policy states that students must complete all graduation requirements within four years of enrolling in high school. Specific graduation requirements are listed on page 2.

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, Earth Science / Biology, Biology 2 and Chem 2 or Physics 2

Health / Freshmen Focus: 1 credit

Health is required and FF is strongly recommended.

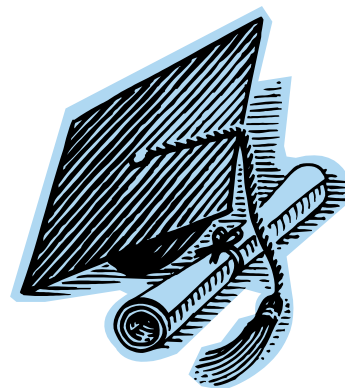
Physical Education: 1.5 credits

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 Senior Year

Counselors will give classroom presentations to all seniors the first week of school to introduce ourselves and discuss the services available. At this time, we will also discuss, in detail, the college application process (see page 4).

In the fall, counselors will meet with each student individually to ensure that a post-secondary plan is in place for after high school.

In November, we will meet with all seniors again to begin the discussion of Financial Aid and scholarships for college. At the end of the junior year, counselors completed audits to ensure that students

were on track for graduation. They will do the same at the end of the first semester. If a student fails a required course, the counselor will automatically place the student in that course the following semester.

Students would have been notified via letter and phone call if they were not on track to graduate. A credit recovery plan should be in place for those who are not on track to graduate at this point.

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.

During your senior year, our goal is to help you successfully gradu-

Helpful Hints for Your Senior Year

Tips for Students: Your senior year is the culminating year to your high school career. It is extremely important to start strong and finish strong— **and avoid “senioritis”.** **Sadly, it is very hard to raise one’s GPA this late in the high school career; however, sadly, it is very easy to lower it.** 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.

Many students will take many IB classes and exams during their senior year. It is important to be aware of test registration deadlines. Be sure to contact the IB Coordinator, Mr. Searing, for more details.

During your final academic year, monitor your grades weekly via the PIV (Parent Internet Viewer). If you do not have your access code, see Ruthie. Attend the ASSIST room after school for extra time/help and/or work with a teacher before/after school.

Avoid “Senioritis”:

- Stay Strong and Focused! Just because you were accepted into a college does not mean **that your senior year grades do not matter.** **Colleges will request your “Final Transcript”** at the end of your senior year. This transcript will reflect all of your classes and grades throughout your academic year. If grades drop significantly, many colleges will question— and possibly revoke— their previous admissions acceptance decision.
- Keep Lines of Communication Open: After you receive an acceptance letter, it can be tempting to alter your current academic schedule for 2nd semester. Before you drop a core academic class, be sure to check with your college to see what the impact may be.
- Stay Involved: Stay active in your extra curricular activities and keep a strong connection to PN. This investment will show your classmates and your future college that you honor your previous commitments.

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



Applying to College: Info for Parents

For over 90% of PN seniors, the post secondary plan includes some form of college (two-year or four-year). Counselors will give classroom presentation during the first week of school to teach them how to apply to colleges. Be sure to ask your senior for a copy of the handout and presentation. Some highlights are below:

- * Seniors should apply to all colleges online.
- * They should research their **school of choice's admissions** requirements and should know **each school's application deadline**.
- * Students will request an official transcript through the online program called **"Docufide"** (specific instructions will be given at the time of

presentation).

- * The first two transcripts will be free. Each additional transcript will be \$3.
- * Students will print the **"counselor page"** from their **school's website**. They will bring this page to the Counseling Office for the counselor to complete.
- * After students have applied **online, paid both the college's application fee and our transcript fee**, submitted the counselor page to the Counseling Office, their application will be complete.
- * Most college apps should be completed by Thanksgiving. **U of M's deadline is Nov. 1.**

Seniors should plan on meeting with college representatives when they visit Northern in the fall. All college representative visits will be posted on the daily announcements. Students must sign up for these visits one day prior to the visit. In addition, seniors should schedule college tours of the schools in which they are interested.

In April, the main office will mail out a detailed calendar of senior events, including senior class meetings, senior breakfast, academic awards and graduation!

Standardized Tests for Seniors:

All seniors were required to take the ACT as a part of the Michigan Merit Exam during their junior year. However, if you would like to re-take the ACT to improve your score, it is imperative that you do so in September or October to receive your scores in time for college applications. Most mid-West schools will require the ACT. Coastal (East and West) and Ivy League schools will require the SAT. Be sure to send your scores to your schools of interest every time you take a standardized test. Colleges only look at the highest score. It does not matter how many times you took the test.

ACT: www.actstudent.org

SAT: www.collegeboard.com

Be sure to send your scores to your schools of interest. Colleges will only look at the highest score. You will not need to re-take the ACT Plus Writing. Just the ACT (no writing).

ASVAB: Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery: A test to determine qualification for enlistment in the US Armed Forces. For more info, see your counselor.

Parents and students should attend the PN Financial Aid Workshop on Wednesday, November 2, 2011 at 6:30 pm in PN Auditorium. An invitation letter will be mailed home in October.



Have a great year!

Go Huskies!

