

POST-HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING SOPHOMORE NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025

PHSC IN THE SOPHOMORE YEAR

Congratulations sophomores on completing your first semester at the Winnetka campus, and for making the most of your transition! Your commitment, resolve and perseverance are qualities that will serve you well throughout your time at New Trier and beyond. Post-high school counseling would like to provide further information about what to expect in the coming months and what you can do in preparation for the rest of the school year as it pertains to planning for life after New Trier.

ACADEMICS

We strongly encourage sophomores to find their individual balance between academic rigor and strong academic performance. If your intention is to pursue a college education, know that regardless of whether or not an ACT or SAT score will be required for admission, the academic merits of a student's profile as demonstrated in the transcript continue to be the foundation of admission evaluations.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We also know that when colleges review applicants, most do not simply aim to fill a class with numbers and grade point averages, but in fact, try to build a class of students with a variety of backgrounds, interests, perspectives and activities.

Post-high school counseling continues to emphasize to students the importance of finding your niche of activities and commitments that excite you, inform you, and allow you to embrace your interests outside the classroom. If there was a prescribed set of activities that was most effective to attain college admissions, everyone would have it. Rather, students should feel confident and reassured that the interests you discover and pursue throughout high school serve as a reflection of your values and the contributions you will add regardless of the post-high school path you pursue.

TAKING A LOOK AHEAD

COURSE SELECTION

Thinking ahead to junior year course selections, your counselor will be visiting adviseries to introduce themselves and discuss the individual course choices most appropriate for a successful and effective junior year. It is important to select classes that will provide challenge without overwhelming or over-extending you in light of other commitments you'll be navigating next year. Check out our **Navigating Course Selection and Course Requirement Grid** that can be accessed [HERE](#) as well as a **Course Selection FAQ** found [HERE](#). Reach out to your counselor with any additional questions you may have.

Class of 2027 PHSC Parent Night **January 22nd & 23rd, 7:00PM | Gaffney Auditorium**

Later this month, our office will be hosting a parent/guardian-only program for the class of 2027. Topics will include an overview of sophomore year priorities, planning for junior year, and the various programs and services provided through our office. Plus, we'll demonstrate features of MaiaLearning, our site for college preparation, career planning and self-exploration.

The evening will commence with a large group presentation in the Gaffney Auditorium. Afterwards, we will host short classroom breakout sessions with individual counselors based on the student's PHSC advisery assignment.

Both evening's programs will be the same. For the sake of space, we encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) whose student's last name starts with A-K to attend on Wednesday the 22nd and those whose student's last name starts with L-Z to attend on Thursday the 23rd. Lastly, there will be a recording of the main auditorium presentation posted to the PHSC Videos page by the end of January.

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STANDARDIZED TESTING

Sophomores will take the Pre ACT on April 9, 2025, which is designed to provide familiarity with the ACT format and identify areas of strength or areas where they can improve. Junior year, students can elect to take the PSAT/NMSQT in October 2025. Finally, the State of Illinois will provide a free ACT to all public high school juniors in spring of 2026.

Frequently, we are asked, "When should my student begin taking college admission tests?" The ACT and SAT are designed for students who are in the second semester of their junior year curriculum. As such, students are advised to try the test for the first time in the second semester of junior year (February – June). In fact, testing too early may yield results that undermine a student's confidence. There will be more than enough opportunities for students to take the SAT and/or ACT during the junior year, the summer thereafter, and early senior year. For a comprehensive overview of testing considerations, we encourage you to watch the program we hosted in December, Navigating College Admission Testing. To view a recording of the program, click [HERE](#).

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS MANIA

Our office is well aware of the excitement and stressors that surround the college admissions process. Each year brings new excitement and unique challenges for students and families alike. At the same time, each member of our office has counseled students for many years and has helped them discover their unique paths and strengths. We wholeheartedly believe (and data proves it as well) that the "name" of a college a student attends is far less important than how a student takes advantage of the opportunities they encounter after graduating from New Trier.

Years back, Frank Bruni from *The New York Times* came to New Trier and hosted a fantastic presentation on the craze around college admission titled "Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania." It is a great presentation that truly puts things into perspective. To watch, click [HERE](#).

POST-HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING ASSIGNMENTS

Below, please find which post-high school counselor will be working with you and your advisory throughout your time at New Trier. Counselors have already been in to your advisory room to introduce themselves. Moreover, we'll be visiting again to discuss course selection for junior year and MaiaLearning. For any specific questions, you are welcome to reach out to your post-high school counselor or make use of our Anchor Day drop-in availability.

Contact your PHSC for support. Counselors work with the following advisory groups:

Cassandra Barca: barcac@nth.net	Burnside, Hafron, Howe, Malamuth
Jill Cervantes: cervantj@nth.net	Doll, Immel, Pilewski
Heather Ecklund: ecklundh@nth.net	Hands, Rotman, Schubert, Torrisi
Kristen Graf: grafk@nth.net	Boumstein, Burns, Garneau, Lowery, Rowe
Nick Kostalek: kostalen@nth.net	Haak, J.J. Hill, Horne, Niemi, Stabinsky
Michael O'Connor: oconnorm@nth.net	Bushell, Fergus, Hillhouse, Rafferty-Flatter, Wright
Thomas Shorrock: shorroct@nth.net	Gries, Laue, Nasshan, Wininsky
Gretchen Stauder: stauderg@nth.net	Clemenz, S. Hill, Holderread, Klein
Robert Zigmund: zigmundr@nth.net	Dane, Goode, Kololoski, Kuzmanic

For general questions or assistance, please email phsc@nth.net or call 847-784-2234.