

# POST-HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING SOPHOMORE NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2024

## 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, values, interests, perspectives and activities. Thus, 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 advisories 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 2026 Preview of Junior Year February 1, 6:30pm, (register [HERE](#))*

This student and parent webinar will introduce the New Trier post-high school planning program and services, as well as preview the upcoming timeline for sophomore and junior year. The presentation will be recorded and posted online for those unable to attend.

Topics will include:

- Overview of sophomore priorities
- Academic planning and course considerations for junior year
- Value of extracurricular involvement
- ACT/SAT testing basics
- Preview of college admissions landscape
- Timeline of program and services
- Introduction to MaiaLearning

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## STANDARDIZED TESTING

Sophomores will take the PSAT 10 on April 10, 2024, which is designed to provide familiarity with the SAT format and identify areas of strength or areas where they can improve. Junior year students can elect to take the PSAT/NMSQT in October 2024. Finally, the State of Illinois will provide a free SAT to all public high school juniors in spring of 2025.

Frequently, we are asked, "When should my student begin taking college admission tests?" The ACT and SAT are designed for students who are near the end of the junior year curriculum, so most students are advised to take those tests 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 or ACT during the junior year and even early in the senior year. For a great 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](#).

## MAIALEARNING

The post-high school counseling department is excited to announce we are transitioning to a new, web-based platform called MaiaLearning. Implementation will begin later this quarter for the Class of 2026 students and parents. Counselors will visit advisories to help students get logged on and demonstrate how to navigate through the platform. Maia includes a full suite of resources, tools and databases which will provide additional customized support to students and parents as they navigate the college, career, scholarship and financial aid research and application process. Click on the titles below to watch brief videos highlighting two key features of the platform:

- [College search features](#)
- [Career planning tools](#)

## POST-HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING ASSIGNMENTS

Below, you will see which post-high school counselor that will be working with you throughout your process. Counselors are assigned by advisory and will be introducing themselves in your advisory soon. Throughout second semester they'll be visiting to discuss course selection for junior year and to assure each student has their MaiaLearning account created. Right now a sophomore's emphasis should be on academic success, social emotional well-being, and extracurricular involvement amongst other things. For any specific questions, you are welcome to reach out to your post-high school counselor.

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

Cassandra Barca: [barcac@nth.net](mailto:barcac@nth.net) .....Branahl, Lombardi, Malia, Parks, Yang  
Jill Cervantes: [cervantj@nth.net](mailto:cervantj@nth.net) .....Lau, Shedroff, Wysocki  
Heather Ecklund: [ecklundh@nth.net](mailto:ecklundh@nth.net) .....Birazian, Chao, de Serpa, Mersch,  
Kristen Graf: [grafk@nth.net](mailto:grafk@nth.net) .....Jackson, Loris, L., Phillips, Rothschild  
Michael O'Connor: [oconnorm@nth.net](mailto:oconnorm@nth.net) .....Burns, Kenney, Landes, Salisbury  
Daniel Rogan: [rogand@nth.net](mailto:rogand@nth.net) .....Cristofani, Goodman, Loris, R., Sowa, Van Den Berg  
Thomas Shorrock: [shorroct@nth.net](mailto:shorroct@nth.net) .....Fink, Nichols, Vinson, Yoon  
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*For general questions or assistance, please email [phsc@nth.net](mailto:phsc@nth.net) or call 847-784-2234.*