

Northern Highlands Regional High School 9th Handbook



Updated 10/25/2019

Freshman Year

Build a strong foundation, get involved and keep balanced.

Create a four-year high school plan. Once you are settled into ninth grade, start making an overall plan for high school that relates to your goals.

- ✓ Make sure you understand the difference between basic graduation requirements and more rigorous and challenging courses which will enhance your transcript for college admission. Make sure you do what is best for you.
- ✓ Map out **when** courses should be taken, with your counselor.
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the various courses offered through our Curriculum Guide, which can be found on the school's web site.

Start thinking about careers. Develop a tentative career goal. Of course it will change – often – but it is the thought process that counts.

- ✓ Identify interests – likes and dislikes – not just in academics, but in all areas. This will help focus on goals.
- ✓ Discuss career options with others, such as teachers, recent college graduates who are working, or professionals in the community.

Join extracurricular activities. Actively take part in a sport, school club, music or drama group, or community volunteer activity.

- ✓ It's all about showing passion.
- ✓ Meet new friends with common interests.
- ✓ Explore new interests.
- ✓ If you think want to play a sport in college, research the National College Athletic Associations (NCAA) eligibility requirements. The NCAA requires completion of certain core courses; you can find more information on the NCAA portion of the guidance web page.

Discuss the possibility of taking the PSAT/NMSQT with your counselor. While this test is normed for eleventh graders, it is given as a practice test in the tenth grade (October). Registration will begin in the Spring of 9th grade. The PSAT provides invaluable feedback on the student score report; tenth graders can then work on any academic weaknesses, since there is still ample time to improve. Also, discuss taking the Pre-ACT in the spring of 10th grade. This is a practice ACT test that is normed for 10th graders and provides valuable feedback on who well one can expect to do on the ACT.

Meet with your school counselor. The school counselor knows how to help you get the most out of high school. During the school year, your counselor will meet with you to discuss several topics, including the four-year plan and post-secondary planning.

Focus on being in 9th grade and enjoying your time! Choose courses and activities that make you happy!

Sophomore Year

When you meet with your school counselor for your scheduling meeting, look again at your four-year plan to ensure that you are on track. Discuss ways to challenge yourself academically while still having a balanced schedule.

Again, discuss the possibility of taking the PSAT/NMSQT with your counselor. While this test is normed for eleventh graders, it is given as a practice test in the tenth grade (October). Registration will take place in the Spring of 10th grade for the 11th grade PSAT. The PSAT provides invaluable feedback on the student score report; tenth graders can then work on any academic weaknesses, since there is still ample time to improve.

Register for and take the Pre-ACT – the practice ACT test. You will receive information about registration in advance. The Pre-ACT provides invaluable feedback for you, on both score predictability and a personalized view of interests with college and career alignment. Northern Highlands offers this test in the Spring for 10th graders only.

Tenth grade is a great time to plan out your testing timeline for either the ACTs or SATs.

Stay involved in extracurricular activities to help you develop time-management skills and enrich your school experience.

Tour college campuses. If possible, take advantage of vacation or other family travel opportunities to visit colleges.

Focus on being in 10th grade and enjoying your time! Choose courses and activities that make you happy!

Pre-ACT (Practice ACT)

What is the Pre-ACT?

The Pre-ACT provides students with a structured testing environment similar to what they will experience when taking the ACT, ACT test quality questions, and predictive scores on the familiar 1-36 scale. This helps students get comfortable with the test and understand how they are doing in core subjects. It also helps parents and educators identify areas where additional support might be necessary.

Why should students take the Pre-ACT?

Pre-ACT simulates the ACT testing experience within a shorter test window on all four ACT test subjects: English, math, reading and science.

Results predict future success on the ACT test, and provide both current achievement and projected future ACT test scores on the familiar 1-36 ACT score scale.

Pre-ACT scores are not reported to college.

Who takes the Pre-ACT?

Sophomores should take the Pre-ACT when it is offered at the high school. Registration and administration information will be sent home prior to the test. Northern Highlands offers this test every Spring.

For more information, you can visit the following web site:

www.act.org

PSAT/NMSQT (Practice SAT)

What is the PSAT/NMSQT?

The PSAT/NMSQT stands for the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. It is a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test. It also gives students a chance to enter the National Merit Scholarship Corporation scholarship programs in their junior year. The PSAT/NMSQT measures critical reading, math problem-solving and writing skills.

Why should a student take the PSAT?

The test is similar in nature to the SAT and is useful as test practice. It is also an indicator of a student's expected SAT score. It is recommended that students sit for this exam in October.

How is the PSAT different than the SAT?

The PSAT scale is 20-80 in each subject; the SAT scale is 200-800. If a student takes the PSAT as a sophomore, he/she should be aware that his/her score will most likely improve when taken as a junior, since the PSAT is designed with juniors as intended test-takers. A disappointing PSAT score should not be a reason to give up on achieving an acceptable SAT score. Many students improve dramatically between the PSAT and SAT. Test preparation can aid that learning process. The PSAT scores are not reported to college.

Who takes the PSAT?

All juniors should take the PSAT in October of their junior year. Registration and administration information will be sent home in advance of the test. Sophomores can take the PSAT for practice and exposure.

For more information, you can visit the following web site:

<http://www.collegeboard.com>