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Parent PORTAL

Get the latest information about your student's academic progress by connecting to our student information system. Find out how here:

<http://portalso.pcsb.org/>

Pinellas County Schools
301 4th Street South West
Largo, Florida Postal 33779



Freshman Flash

Welcome to High School!

Rita M. Vasquez, Executive Director

The freshman year is probably the most important of the four years your student will spend in high school. During the freshman year, your student will make decisions, purposefully or by default, that will set the path toward a successful graduation or if not supported, many freshmen experience struggles that are often difficult to overcome. Every course your freshman student takes beginning with first semester counts toward graduation in some important way. All courses count in your student's grade point average (GPA), several courses are specifically required for graduation, and earning a C or better in all courses help students pass the required state graduation assessments. In other words, there is no time to waste in ensuring your student has a great freshman year setting up for graduation followed by college or technical school, as well as entry into a promising career!

Keys to Freshman Success

- Attendance: Your freshman student must come to school every day and attend every class! Falling behind because of absences is a prime cause of the struggles too many freshmen experience. The work and activities that high school students engage in can be very difficult to make-up as the workload in high school is often greater than what students have experienced in middle school. Unless your freshman student is ill, developing the habit and work ethic that school attendance is a must is

critical for success. When your freshman student is ill, please contact your school to notify them of your student's absence and please ensure your student arranges to make-up all the work missed.



- Set Goals for Success: Working with your freshman student to decide what they wish to achieve while in high school and then helping them set goals to obtain those things is very important for their success in school. Goals can be personal like making new friends or joining a club or sports team to ensure they are connected to school and develop school pride. Setting academic goals help students stay focused on why they attend school. School is preparation for success in college, career and life. Earning a high school diploma is a critical step for success in the future. Ensure your freshman student sets goals and then set aside time with them after every grading period to review their progress toward those goals.
- Seek Assistance Early: If your freshman student does begin to experience difficulty in school, academic or personal, the sooner you reach out to school personnel, the better the final results will be for your student. Your student's counselor, teachers, and school principal are all available to help you and your student overcome

obstacles that they will encounter during their freshman year. Time is of the essence here- reach out early and be persistent about the help your student needs until you see that the issues are being addressed and your student is getting back on track. There is no time to waste during this first important year of high school!

Graduation Requirements

The State of Florida sets the high school graduation requirements for all students seeking to earn a high school diploma. The link below provides greater details about each graduation requirement listed briefly in the bulleted list below:

www.fldoe.org/graduationrequirements

- Earn a minimum of 24 course credits (use link for specific courses required)
- Earn a minimum 2.0 cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Earn a passing score on the state’s Algebra End-of Course (EOC) Assessment
- Earn a passing score on the state’s Florida Standards Writing and Reading Assessments

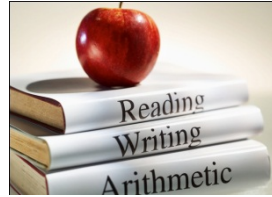
Additionally, your freshman student can qualify for three Diploma Designations that can celebrate your student’s distinguished high school career. The link below provides greater details about each of Diploma Designation your student can earn:

<http://pcsb.schoolwires.net/Page/1690>

- Pinellas Advanced Scholar
- Scholar
- Merit

Literacy Success

In high school English and reading classes, your student will learn to become skilled at gathering information from text, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately. It will be important that your student learns to convey clearly what he or she understands about what he or she has read. Speaking clearly and appropriately, listening attentively when discussing findings and evidence, and building on others’ good ideas while expressing his or her own ideas persuasively are all part of building college and career ready literacy skills.



Supporting Literacy at Home

Part of the literacy progress is learning how to think as you read. Asking questions supports learning how to think. Examples of some questions you might ask your student before, during, or after they read might be:

- *What was the most significant concept from the text?*
- *Why did the author write the passage?*
- *Which words are not familiar to you?*
- *What do you think will happen next?*
- *Did you learn about anything that impacts your life?*
- *What was your favorite part of the story? Why?*
- *How did the characters change over time?*
- *Does this text remind you of something that you’ve read before? How?*

Mathematics Success

By the time your child enters high school, ideally he or she will be self-motivated and confident enough in his or her math skills to be able to tackle courses like algebra and geometry as a 9th grader. But for many teenagers, a lifelong fear of numbers, lack of motivation, and a weak foundation can make high school math a struggle.

Encourage your child to use math every day. At a

restaurant, have your child calculate the tip. At the mall, have her figure out the cost of a sweater that’s 35 percent off. When you’re driving, ask him how long it will take you to drive a certain distance at a certain speed. Parents are often reluctant to help their kids with math because they don’t have confidence in their own abilities. Regardless of your skills, it’s a worthwhile investment of your time and effort to help your child get comfortable with math.

Supporting Math at Home

The links provided below are great places for your student to find additional math practice for high school and they can be reached from a home computer with internet access or at a local library or recreation center that allows internet access for students.

www.carnegielearning.com/

www.algebration.com/

www.artofproblemsolving.com/index.php?

www.easycalculation.com/

www.math.hmc.edu/funfacts/

www.mathforum.org

www.coolmath.com

www.brightstorm.com

Exceptional Student Education

Freshman year is the time to begin focusing on graduation! For students receiving exceptional student education services and their parents/guardians, this includes being well informed about diploma options and building self-advocacy skills.

There are 4 diploma options for students receiving exceptional student education services.

Diploma Options:

- Standard Diploma (24 credits)
- Standard Diploma w/ Employment Courses (24 credits)
- Standard Diploma ACCEL (Academically Challenging

Curriculum to Enhance Learning) (18 credits)

- Standard Diploma FAA w/ Access Courses (24 credits)

Any change to the high school graduation option specified in a student's IEP must be approved by the parent and is subject to verification for appropriateness by an independent reviewer selected by the parent as provided in s.1003.572. Students can receive a standard diploma via access courses in any appropriate educational setting as determined by the IEP team. Please visit the following website for more information regarding diploma options: <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/graduation-requirements>

Self-Advocacy

It is important that students are active participants in their IEP meetings, sharing their interests, ideas, and goals for their future. This self-advocacy is an essential part of a student's development. Encouraging your child to attend their IEP meetings will help them to become college and career ready! Your child's guidance counselor and case manager are great resourced for more information about post-secondary planning, diploma options, and more.

In the next issue:

Information regarding utilizing accommodations during state and district assessments.

English Language Learners

Dear Parents of English Language Learners (ELL),

Your ELL student needs high quality instruction focused on advanced literacy skills and not just on language acquisition. In Pinellas County, our principles and practices support improved achievement for our high school ELLs. These are some things you can expect for your student within our schools:

- A school-wide, team-based support network: all school educators must assume shared responsibility for the achievement of ELLs
- A dual curriculum that promotes the language development of ELLs as well as their general academic needs
- Global community classrooms that find a middle ground between integrating ELLs who are recent immigrants with the general school population and segregating them in self-contained classrooms for language learning
- All available time in ELLs' school day should be used for effective instruction
- Individual progress records: maintenance of records of individual ELLs' linguistic and academic history and ongoing progress
- A program providing full access to challenging curriculum
- High quality instruction and materials
- Inclusive and affirming school climate
- Valid, comprehensive, and useful assessments
- Strong family and community partnerships
- Schools structured to meet the particular needs of English learners.

If you have any questions and/or need assistance in your native language, please call the ESOL Office at 588-6068 and we will support you and your ELL student to ensure a successful school year!

Welcome to Pinellas Park High School



Upcoming Dates

September 7- Labor Day, No School
September 9- Club/Interest Day

9th Grade Math

Algebra 1 is the single most important mathematics class students will take. Not only is passing the Algebra EOC a graduation requirement, but mastery of algebra skills will enable students to better understand the concepts presented in more advanced mathematics. Mathematics is a sequential subject and laying a strong foundation is critical for future academic success.

9th Grade Literacy

Our Language Arts classes use a variety of resources and strategies to support literacy in the 9th grade. Along with a new textbook that promotes online resources and interactive activities in the classroom, the text offers an integrated approach to performance assessment by including literary pieces, poetry and informational/social science and science pieces to enrich students with a broad arena for reading and writing. Our selection of novels is extensive, and teachers use portfolios, projects and formative/summative assessment along with collaboration to ensure literacy success. Students also have the opportunity to practice writing skills using the WriteScore program that provides immediate feedback. In our Reading I course, the series of Teengagement engages students in current issues requiring deep reading with high level thinking and writing skills. Introduction to Technology helps students understand and use technology as an integral component for success.

Letter From the Principal

Welcome to Pinellas Park High School!

I am excited to welcome you as a new member of the Patriot family. You will find many opportunities at Pinellas Park High School to stay active and involved in your school. There are programs during and after school for music, athletics, drama, technology, auto collision repair, printing and many others. My goal is to help support you at school so you can be your best each and every day. Making the transition from middle school to high school is a big change. Staying organized and on top of your studies will ensure your success and enable your participation in all the extra events as you work toward graduation.

Pinellas Park High School is a special place with great students and staff. Coming to PPHS provides you the opportunity to excel as a student and person and meet caring and dedicated individuals that will only ask for your best each day. We are here to show you how successful you can be! Be proud of who you are and what you can do.

Go Patriots!

Mr. Patterson
Principal

Strategies for Success During Freshman Year

Grades

Ninth grade is the beginning of grades being calculated and used for satisfying state graduation requirements, college admission, scholarships, etc. Students should be logging into Focus on a daily basis to check assignments and grades.

The best way to monitor student attendance and/or grades is by logging on to the PCS Portal/Focus system. This is also how you can contact your student's teachers should you have any specific questions regarding his/her grades or attendance. Students will receive report cards every 9 weeks. Report cards will be available on or before the following dates:

- Wednesday, October 28th, 2015
- Wednesday, January 13th, 2016
- Wednesday, March 30th, 2016
- Wednesday, June 15th, 2016

Absences

In order to excuse your child's absence, you must report the absence within 48 hours of the absence occurrence. The best way to report an absence is by calling the school or sending a note with your student the day following the absence. Students can submit notes in the baskets for each administrator which can be found in the Admin A office.

