

Academic Boosters Program Notes - November 10th 2016
Ms. Heather Saylor, Department Chair – York Counseling
“Planning Four Years at York”

This presentation was enhanced by many questions and much dialogue between Ms. Saylor and the attendees, which are included in the body of these program notes.

Academic Boosters recommends supplementing these notes with the chapter on *Planning Four Years at York* in the [Making the Most of York – A Parent to Parent Guide](#), found by clicking [this link](#) or visiting the Academic Boosters web site.

Links & Attachments

1. “Sandbox” [Planning Spreadsheet](#)
2. [Sophomore Classes by Career Cluster](#)

Tips for making a 4-year plan with your student

- Above all, consider the goals of your student.
 - Goals of a 4-year plan might vary – one type of plan might allow a student to go deep in a subject they are already passionate about (i.e. music or social studies), while another 4 year plan is designed to let a student experiment (try computer programming, CAD, and Mandarin)
- As you look to make a 4-year plan, always consider the possibility that your student may not always be successful in getting into his/her first-choice elective class; planning should include plan A and plan B, because sometimes classes don't run or are [singletons](#) (meaning that they only run one period per day and that one class may conflict with another singleton class your student wants to enroll in – i.e., Concert Band and Medical Careers); there may be tough choices to make and sometimes things just aren't possible
- Classes like band especially marching band and orchestra and chorus can sometimes be difficult to schedule around because they only meet at specific times
- Freshmen have less flexibility for elective courses than upperclassmen, who have priority
- Upperclassmen typically have more room for electives but it is possible to get electives in earlier (but admittedly more difficult for students in the performing arts). While York requires 3 years of Math and 3 years of Science for graduation, some students continue with Math, Science and Language in their senior year.
- Excess credits over graduation requirements count toward elective credits.

What is the Master Schedule and how does it impact 4-year planning?

- The Master Schedule is the computer generated schedule of all York classes offered during a year including number of sections for each course, available times, instructor assignments, class sizes, etc. Once York knows when classes can run, student schedule requests are run against the master. Conflicts then are resolved.
 - Once the master schedule is run, due to volume and need to prioritize, counselors work first with seniors and juniors, then sophomores, and then freshman to fix schedule issues
- The Master Schedule for the coming school year occurs in mid- late-April/early May.

- Students may want to check in with counselors over the late spring or early summer, especially if your student is planning to take “singleton” classes (*[Singletons](#) are courses that are only offered one period of the day, due to limited enrollment. If your student enrolls in one or more singleton course, it may affect other course requests. Talk with counselors in making 4-year plan and thinking ahead about how to layer courses into junior and senior years to avoid scheduling difficulties*)
- Incoming freshmen (8th graders), are not in the York building or on the same PowerSchool, so they are not as easily visible to the counseling department
- Don't let your student get overly attached to the idea of one specific elective. You should always have a Plan B in case a class doesn't work out

What should we consider in a decision about summer school?

- Summer school can be a way for students to make room in their school year schedule for electives. However, summer school is not a must.
 - Many students successfully fulfill all graduation requirements without ever taking summer school
 - Perception of 8th grade parents is that you have to take summer school. For the general population, this is a misconception. However, band, orchestra, and choir students may have to consider summer school as a means to ease scheduling conflicts.
- Your student may take a summer school class to open up schedule space for them to have a study hall, so they can manage their time for homework and sports
- Your student may take summer school to satisfy credit requirements and open up space for an elective during the school year.
- Only one core course per department may be taken during summer school
- Parents should have conversations with 8th graders about summer school, family priorities for student work, vacations, free time
- Classes offered over the summer are dependent on availability of teachers; student interest; master schedule considerations; etc.

How does York support freshmen in making 4-year plan?

- Freshman get some exposure to planning through the [Freshman Orientation and Guidance \(FOG\)](#) program
- 4-year planning is offered as part of Freshman Orientation and Guidance (FOG) for all freshmen
- Counselors are introducing a new 4-year [planning template](#) (in the form of a Google spreadsheet) for freshmen and their counselors to develop together, through a Counselor Google Classroom that is comprised of all freshmen (just as your student's Biology class, for example, has a Biology Google Classroom)
- Parents may be able to log in to view this planner (parent tip - early indications are that Google's “Guardian login” still has technical issues, so parents may want to access the planner directly with the student)
- This planner does not take the place of registering for classes!
- Freshmen in FOG participate in “elective rotations”, whereby they take internal field trips to different elective departments where teachers and students talk about their experience in that area.

Thinking about College

- For college planning purposes, colleges like to see students taking progressively more difficult course work over time, so even though your student may have been placed in a regular class as a freshman, it is worth exploring moving into honors and AP classes in the sophomore, junior and senior years.
- Once students enroll in a high level of rigor, colleges may prefer to see sustained levels of rigor – for instance, if your student has been in Honors classes and then does not progress to AP classes, this may be viewed unfavorably by certain colleges (especially those that are more selective).
 - Colleges want to know... if you had the opportunity to challenge yourself, did you take it?
- The goal of high schools in offering college-level classes such as AP, dual enrollment, and ACP is to help students be prepared for success in college and careers. It is not really the purpose of high schools to ensure that students also earn credit at the college of their choice for these dual credit, ACP and AP classes.
 - Parents have found that many colleges do not allow credits from AP, dual enrollment, and ACP classes to transfer or be credited toward specific graduation requirements. Colleges are often preferring students to earn these credits in a college setting
- AP test scores may be submitted as part of a student's college application but most schools do not require AP scores for admission (they are only needed for credit). The most highly selective schools may want to see your AP test scores on your application if your student took an AP course.

Questions:

Does my student need World Language to get into college?

- It very much depends on the college your student wants to attend. Not all colleges require World Language, some only require 2 years, while highly selective colleges may require or recommend at least 3 years
- TIP: If your 8th grader wants to join one of the [World Language Honor Societies](#), they may need to start with Honors language as a freshman, if they have the opportunity (see individual language requirements at this [link](#))

What is Naviance?

- [Naviance](#) is an online software program that allows parents and students to access college and career information. Students can perform college searches, track college applications, transcripts, interest inventories, research scholarships, and document your 4 years in high school (similar to a resume)
- A [Naviance login](#) is provided to all freshmen in the first semester
- Naviance offers interesting features such as graphs that mine college acceptance statistics (e.g. ACT/SAT scores, GPA) and overall school profiles
- Parents can get a parent code from their student's counselor so they can access Naviance features

Suggestions

- Can York involve students, counselors, *and* parents in FOG? Some schools do this.

- Can York continue to enhance Parent Nights to assist with planning at each grade level?
- Meeting attendees suggested that York replace the planning page in the front of the course book with a snapshot of the [planning spreadsheet](#), accompanied by a URL to a “sandbox” version of the spreadsheet for parents to experiment with.