Morris Knolls High School
School Counseling Staff



Supervisor of School Counseling
Mrs. Alyssa Radigan
973-664-2211
aradigan@mhrd.org

School Counselors and SAC

Michele DePascale
973-664-2217
mdepascale@mhrd.org

Olivia Dunnigan (Allie Otto)
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Maddie Gill
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Tori Palanker
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Rebecca Rock
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Christopher Roman
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Alloison Ryan
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Ryan Shaffer
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Shari Russo, SAC
973-664-2218
srusso@mhrd.org

Morris Knolls High School
Child Study Team Staff

District Director of Special Services
Ms. Sonya Boyer
973-664-2324
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Supervisor of Special Education
Mr. Kevin Kelly
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kkelly@mhrd.org

Maria Callanan
School Psychologist
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School Social Worker
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Jovanna Ossa
School Psychologist
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Bianca DiFulco
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Lindsey Kaplan
School Psychologist
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Robyn Vetter
L.D.T.C
973-664-2227
rvetter@mhrd.org

"Everybody thinks their kid is beyond taking drugs...nobody's beyond it".
- A Mom in Troy, Missouri

Student Assistance Counselor

★ Work in conjunction with the families and students experiencing difficulties with substance abuse issues by connecting them to available community resources
  - Provide services in schools such as: prevention, education, identification, referral, and in-school support

★ Provide support to families, administration, and staff for students struggling academically, due to social-emotional/mental health issues (peer pressure, relationship difficulties, family problems, depression, self-esteem, etc.)

★ Works with the student following strict confidentiality rules unless student is a danger to self or another person(s)

★ Serves as a member of the high school support teams, assisting with staff development

★ Serves as the Anti-Bullying Specialist and Case Manager for Medical 504 plans for Morris Knolls High School

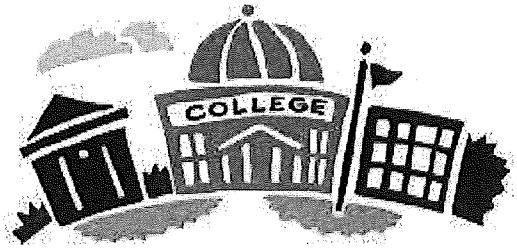
S A P
STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



College Planning Goals

FRESHMAN YEAR

- Enjoy school! Not only as a prelude to college, but as a place where you are developing as a student and as a person.
- Establish strong study habits and time management techniques.
- Develop a reading plan that includes newspapers, magazines, and books.
- Work to enhance your reading and writing abilities and vocabulary proficiency.
- Learn how to utilize library, computer, and internet resources.
- Keep your grades up and use your planner!
- Seek help when faced with academic challenges, talk with teachers and counselors. Take advantage of extra help sessions or peer tutoring services available through the school and School Counseling Department.
- Become involved in extracurricular and community service activities. Make an honest commitment to your activities.
- Think about your interests and how those interests might translate into major and/or career options. Keep your options open by investigating many possibilities.
- Plan your sophomore year schedule with care. Take classes appropriate for you. Push yourself, but know your limits. Colleges look carefully at your courses, not just your grades. A strong college preparatory program balanced with English, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, and elective courses is important.
- Pay attention to what friends and others are saying about their college experiences. Think about your own goals for college.
- Consider an interesting summer job, travel, summer study, or volunteer experience.



TOP 6 STRENGTHS AND EXPERIENCES COLLEGES LOOK FOR IN A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

1. *A high school curriculum that challenges the student.*
   Academically successful transcripts should include several Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.

2. *Grades that represent strong effort and an upward trend.*
   Grades should show an upward trend over four years. Slightly lower grades in rigorous courses are preferred to all A's in less challenging coursework.

3. *Solid scores on standardized tests.*
   Test scores should be consistent with high school performance.

4. *Passionate involvement in a few activities, demonstrating leadership and initiative.*
   Depth, not breadth of experiences is most important.

5. *Community service showing evidence of being a "contributor."*
   Activities should demonstrate concern for other people and a global view.

6. *Work or out-of-school experiences (including summer activities) that exemplify responsibility, dedication, and development of areas of interest.*
   Work or other meaningful use of free time can demonstrate maturity.

Colleges are looking for a well-rounded student body consisting of unique students who can bring diversity to the campus.

Freshman Parent to Counselor
"Getting Acquainted"

Please take a moment to share with us any information that you believe might be helpful in working with your student over the next four years.

Student Name:_____ **Counselor Name:**_____

Parent/Guardian Name:_____ **Parent/Guardian Email:**_____

Parent/Guardian Name:_____ **Parent/Guardian Email:**_____

Upperclassmen Sibling(s): _____

Welcome to Morris Knolls

Freshman Parent Night

August 27, 2026

Please complete the Getting Acquainted Form while you wait. Thank you!

Follow the MK School Counseling Dept. on Instagram!

SCAN ME



Please welcome

Alyssa Radigan, Supervisor of School Counseling

Ryan MacNaughton, Principal

Home of the GOLDEN EAGLES

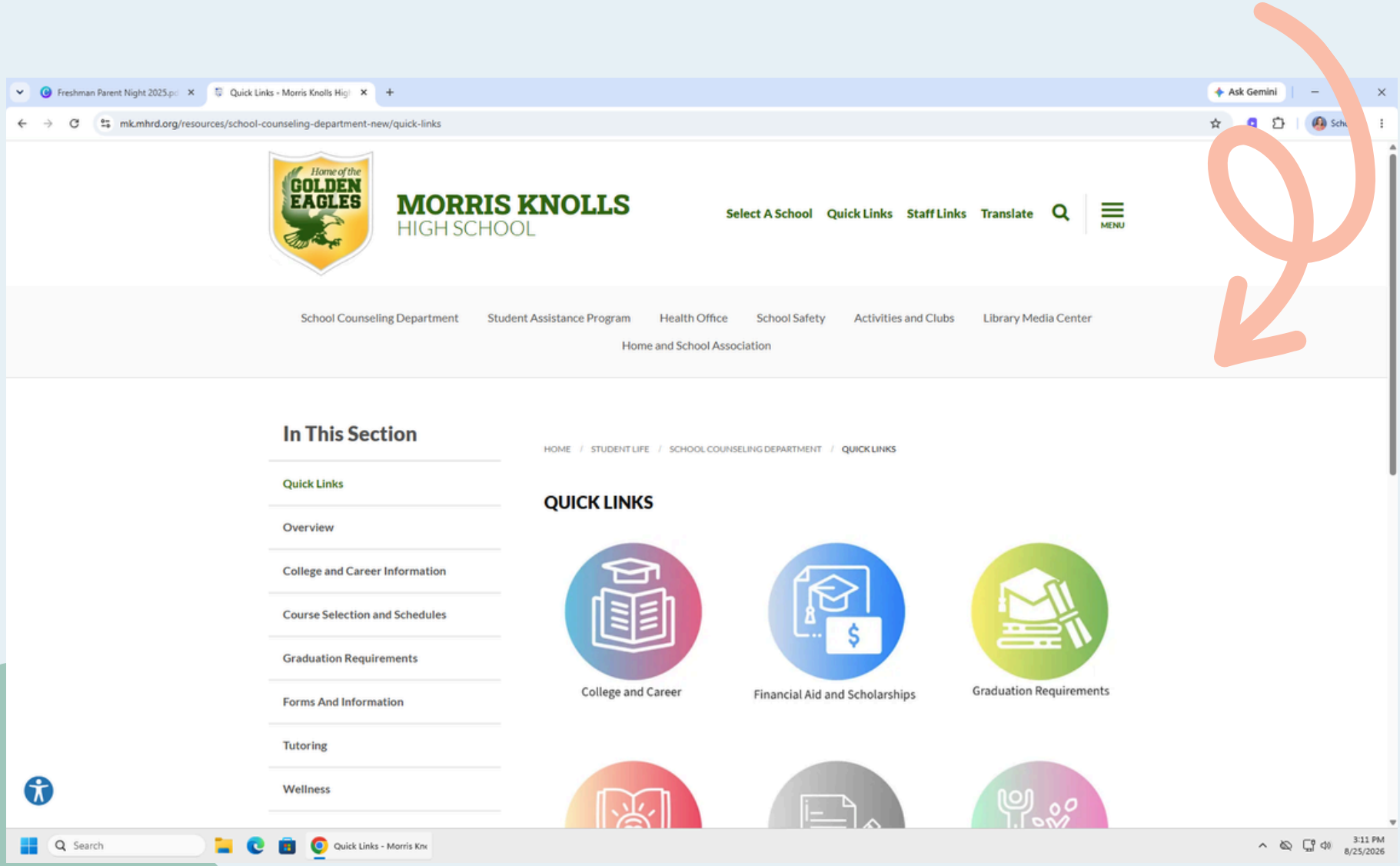
Please welcome

Christie D'Asti, Morris Knolls
Home and School Association President



School Counseling Department Home Page

MK School Counseling Homepage



Morris Knolls School Counseling Department

The Role of the School Counselor

The School Counseling Department is a comprehensive and innovative office which provides students in grades 9-12 with academic, personal, social, career, and post secondary counseling. The department consists of our Supervisor of School Counseling, 8 School Counselors, our Student Assistance Counselor, and 2 Secretaries.



CONTACT THE SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

To reach the School Counseling Office you may call 973-664-2223 or 973-664-2211

WHO'S WHO

Name	Title	Last 4 digits	Email
Alyssa Radigan	Supervisor of School Counseling	2211	aradigan@mhrd.org
Shari Russo	Student Assistance Counselor	2218	srusso@mhrd.org
Tori Palanker	School Counselor	2214	tpalanker@mhrd.org
Maddie Gill	School Counselor	2215	mgill@mhrd.org
Christopher Roman	School Counselor	2216	croman@mhrd.org
Michele DePascale	School Counselor	2217	mdepascale@mhrd.org
Allison Ryan	School Counselor	2213	aryan@mhrd.org
Ryan Shaffer	School Counselor	2219	rshaffer@mhrd.org
Rebecca Rock	School Counselor	2220	rrock@mhrd.org
Alexandra Otto	School Counselor Leave Replacement	2255	aotto@mhrd.org

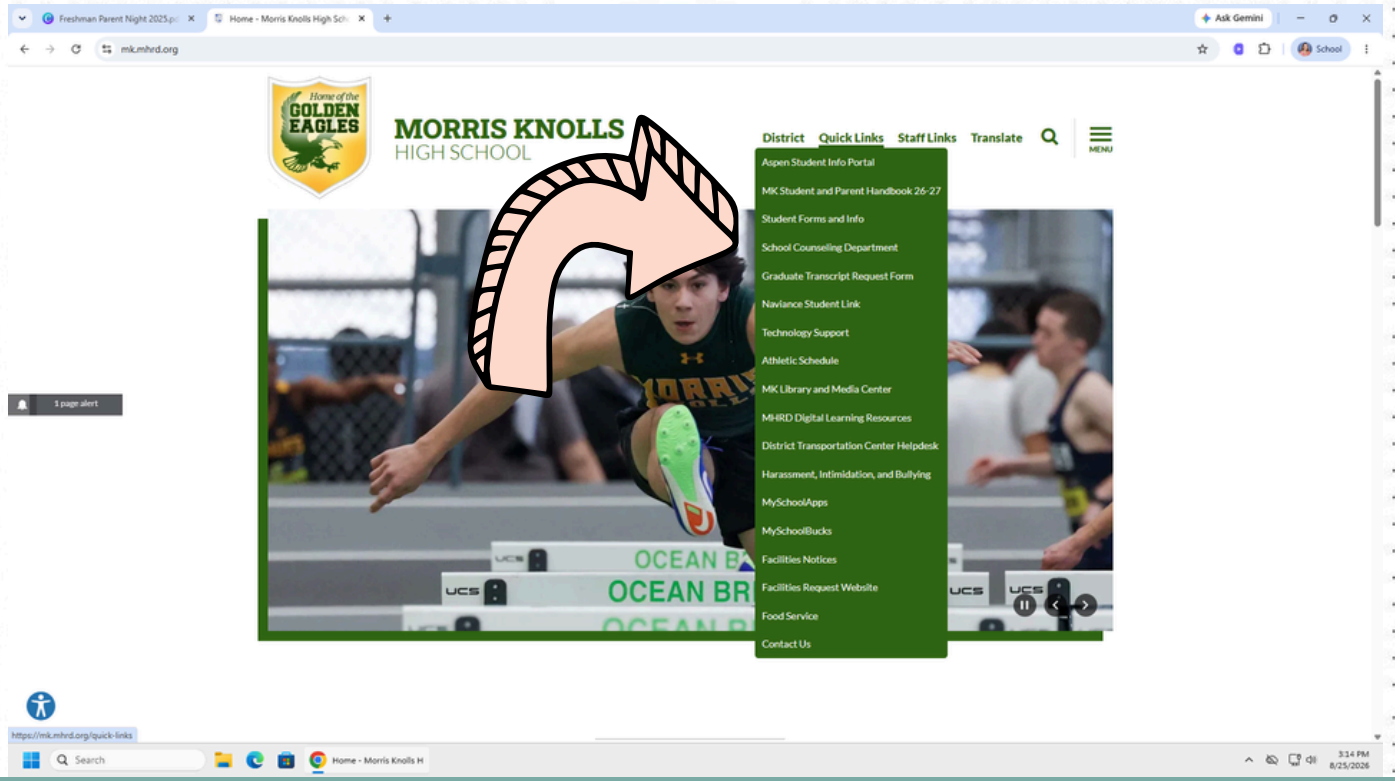
Student/Parent Handbook



Please become familiar with the informaiton in the handbook available online:

[Student Parent Handbook]

- School Contact Information
- Graduation Requirements
- Dress Code
- Attendance and Academic Policies
- Marking Period Dates and Exams



Morris Knolls Attendance Policy

Unexcused Absences

Too many unexcused absences may result in a loss of credit in class. The maximum allowable number of absences per class, before loss of credit:

- *2 unexcused absences in Health
- *4 unexcused absences in a half year course
- *6 unexcused absences in PE
- *8 unexcused absences for a full year course

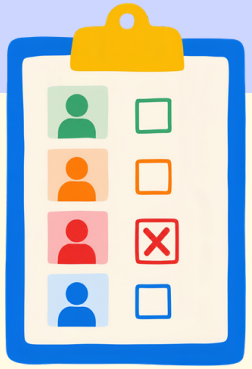
Tardy Policy

Student Violation	Consequence
5 lates to the same class	The student receives a Central Detention held after school
10 lates to the same class	The student receives a Saturday Detention, and Seniors lose both Senior Privilege and Senior Parking for one month
15 lates to the same class	The student continues to lose both Senior Privilege and Senior Parking, and, in addition, 3 absences will be added to the student's attendance record. Students may lose credit at this point

Morris Knolls Attendance Policy

Attendance Notes

- If a student is not feeling well enough to attend school parent/guardian should notify the Attendance Office at 973-664-2229 or email attendancemk@mhrd.org
- Any documentation related to an absence should be emailed to attendancemk@mhrd.org
- Teachers are taking attendance each block and may be sent to the attendance office depending upon arrival time



Graduation Requirements

In 4 years, students must earn 140 credits in order to graduate; APA students must earn 150 credits in order to graduate; and Magnet students must earn 155 credits to graduate

Full Year courses earn 5.00 credits / Semester courses earn 2.50 credits

Required Subject	Credits Needed
English	20 credits
World History	5 Credits
US History I & US History II	10 Credits
Mathematics	15 Credits (Alg 1, Geometry, course that builds on Alg 1)
Science	15 Credits (Bio + Chem, Enviro Science, or Physics + 5 credits of additional lab science
PE / Health	20 Credits

Required Subject	Credits Needed
World Language	5 Credits
Personal & Financial Literacy	2.5 Credits
Visual / Performing Arts	5 Credits
21st Century Life & Careers or Career / Tech Ed	5 Credits
Additional Electives	37.5 Credits

Study Skills - Homework

All students are encouraged to use an organization tool!

- Become familiar with Google Classroom to ensure you are aware of all assignments posted
  - Each teacher manages Google Classroom in their own way
  - Join the 2026-27 Freshman School Counseling Google Classroom - Join code for students: kxvxa6oc
- Manage your time - design a realistic, yet productive schedule
- Secure a "buddy" in each class and get contact info to reach out for missed assignments
- Try to complete homework assignments the day the homework is assigned
  - A day homework A day night, B day homework B day night
- Communicate with teachers - self advocate! If absent, it is up to the student to contact teachers for what was missed
- Utilize peer tutoring, Math Club tutoring, and Tutor.com



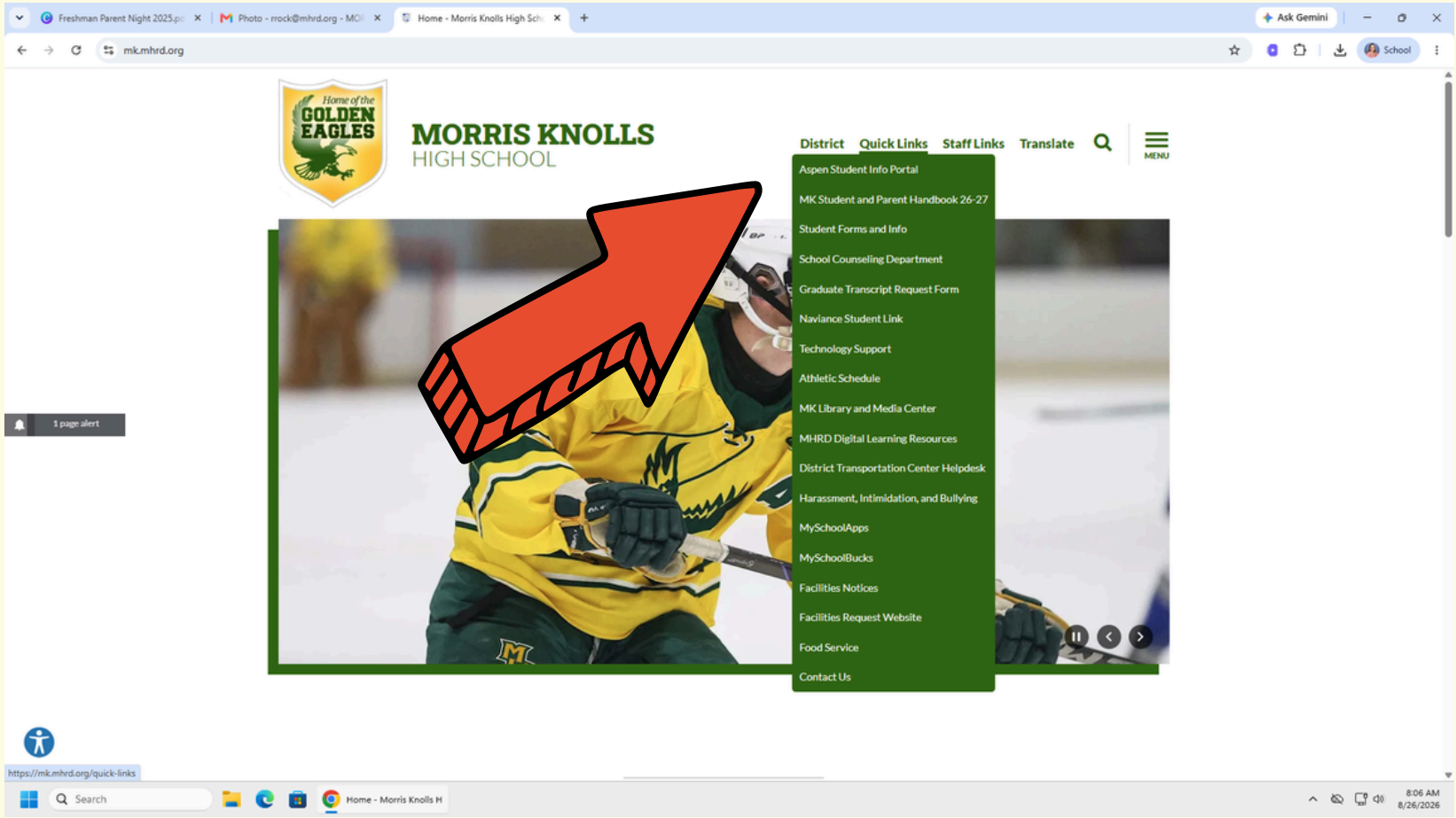


Academic Monitoring

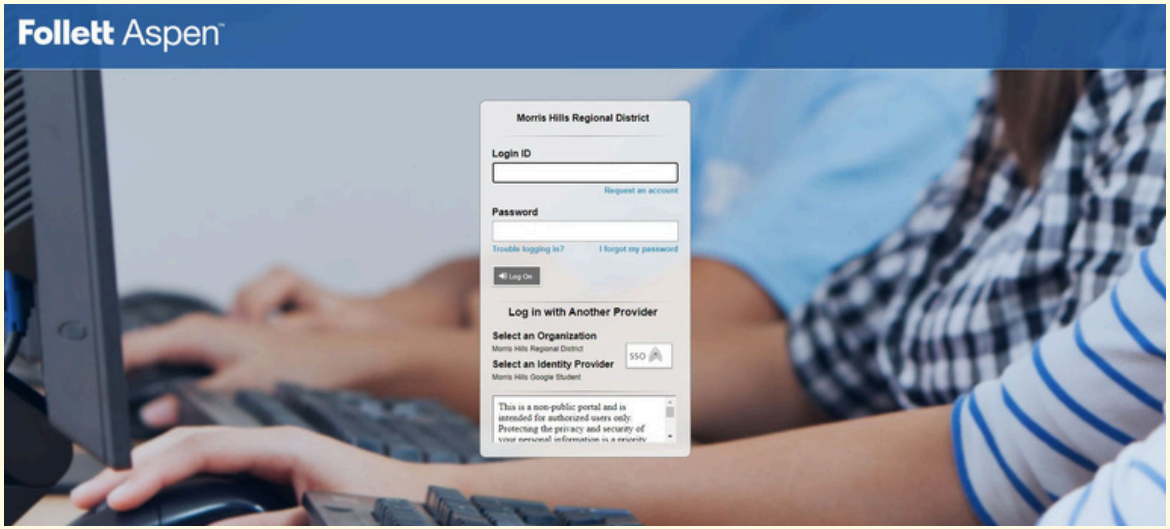
- Online student information system - ASPEN
- Report Cards - posted in Aspen
- Academic Counseling
- Strategies to improve performance
- Parent-student-teacher conferences
- Peer tutor coordination
- Attendance warning letters
- School Counseling warning letters

ACADEMIC
SUCCESS

HOW TO ACCESS ASPEN



UTILIZING ASPEN



- **Parent login ID and passwords were created during online regristration**
- **Student login ID and temporary passwords are printed on student schedules**
- **Family Tab - Grade Point Summary (transcript), Schedule, Notifications**
- **Academic Tab - View Current Grades, Email Teachers, Specific Class Links with Assignments**
- **Calendar Tab - Day/Week/Monthly View**
- **Published reports - Report Cards and Attendance Warning Letters**

Testing

Freshmen Testing

- **PSAT 8/9**
- **New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) in Math, Reading, and Writing**



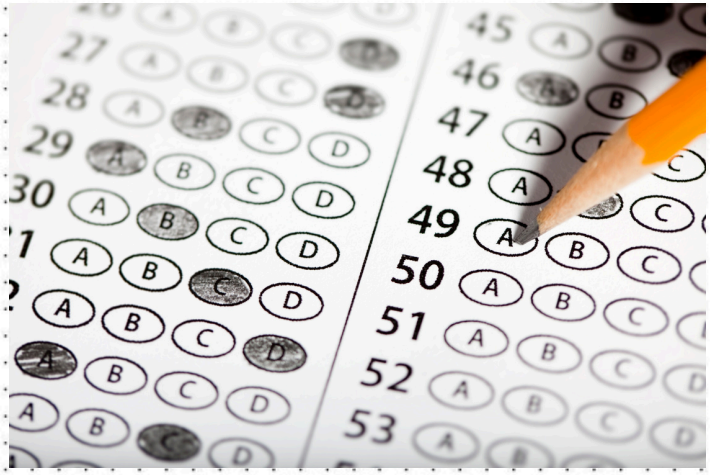
Important Dates

PSAT 8/9:

10/21/26

NJSLA: Math, Reading, Writing:

4/19/26 - 4/21/26



Testing

Optional testing for Juniors/Seniors:

ACT

SAT

AP Exams

ASVAB









SCHEDULE

- Scheduling will begin in Janurary and conclude in March (11th Grade, 10th Grade, then 9th Grade)
- Students will meet individually with School Counselor
- Next year course requests based upon:
  - Teacher Recommendation
  - Student Performance
  - Post-Secondary Goals
  - Realistic & Challenging Expectations
- Parent support and awareness is crucial
- Please view course requests in ASPEN
- Parent Waiver Forms must be completed by June 1



Get Involved!

[Link to a list of all Clubs and Activities at Morris Knolls]













Eligibility

All 9th grade students are eligible for fall and winter sports and clubs/activities





To be eligible for spring sports and activities, students must be passing at least 30 credits at the end of their first semester

NAVIANCE
Family Connection
powered by NAVIANCE

Naviance

What is Naviance?

- An interactive link between school and home opening avenues of communication
- Requires student and parent participation in each year of high school
- Aides students significally during Junior and Senior year for college planning
- Useful tools that identify student strengths and areas of improvement for study habits

Parent Access to Naviance

Please complete the yellow "Get Acquainted" form tonight with parent/guardian email address.

It is essential that parents and students have separate email addresses.

If you have two or more students in our building we will link the accounts.

MK Students Naviance Link

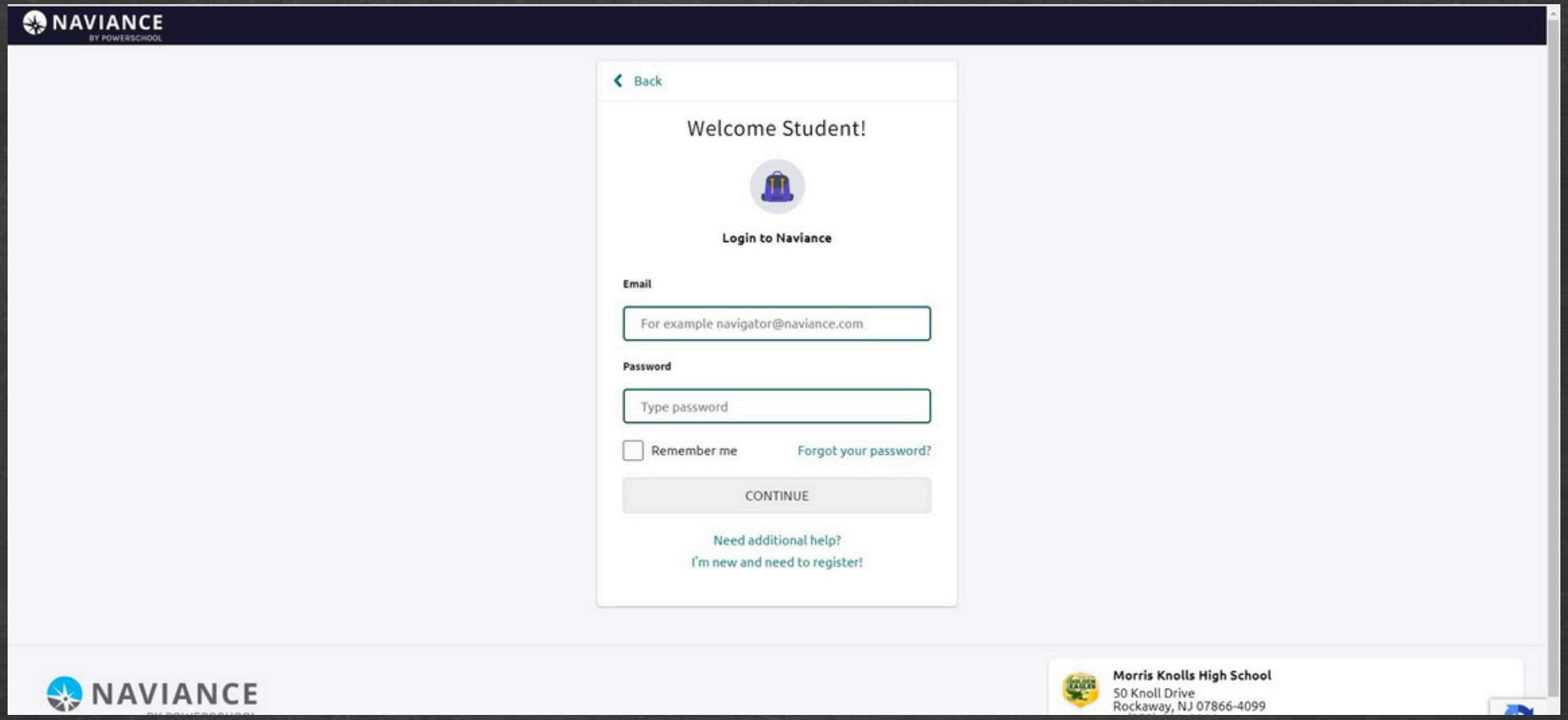
APA Students Naviance Link

NAVIANCE
Family Connection
powered by NAVIANCE

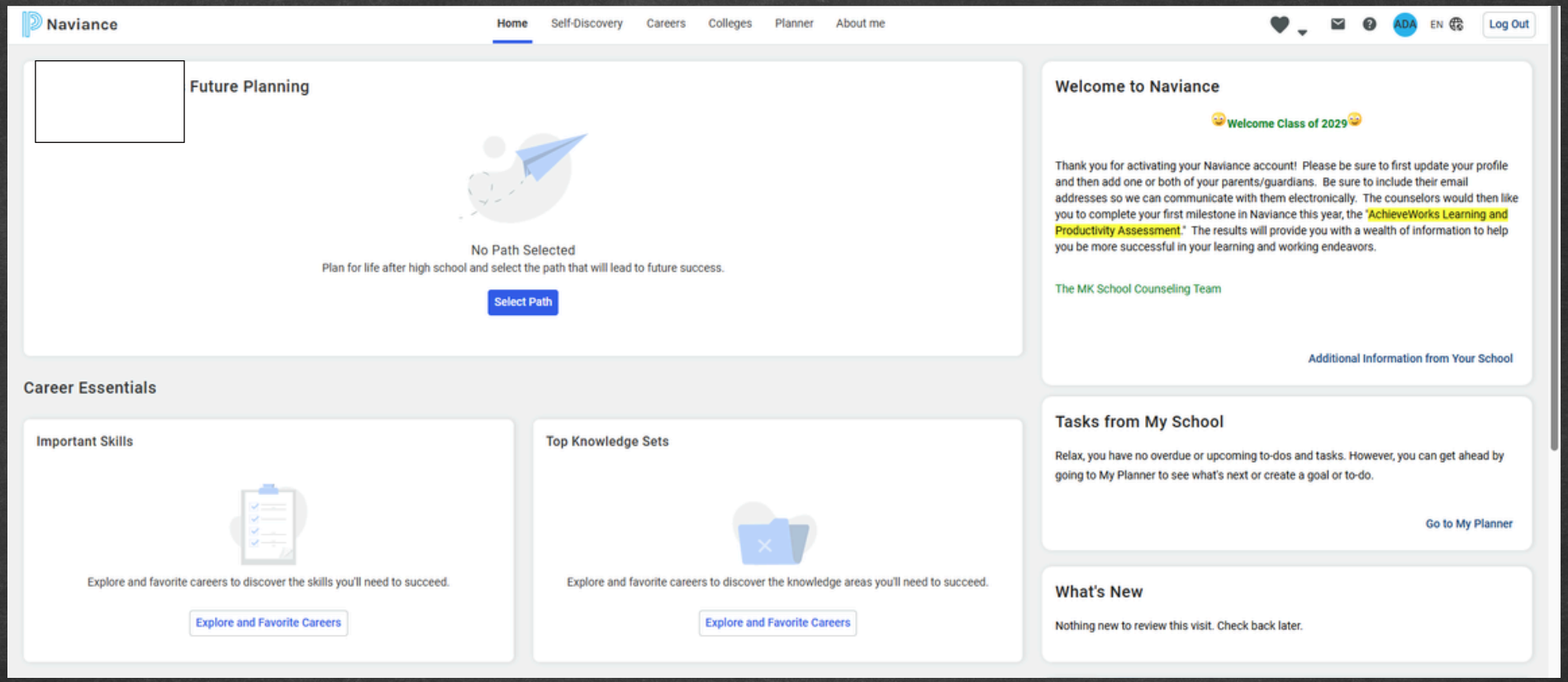
You will receive an email with a temporary password included. Please use this to login and then change your password.

Accessing Naviance

9th grade students will receive their Naviance password when they meet with their school counselor

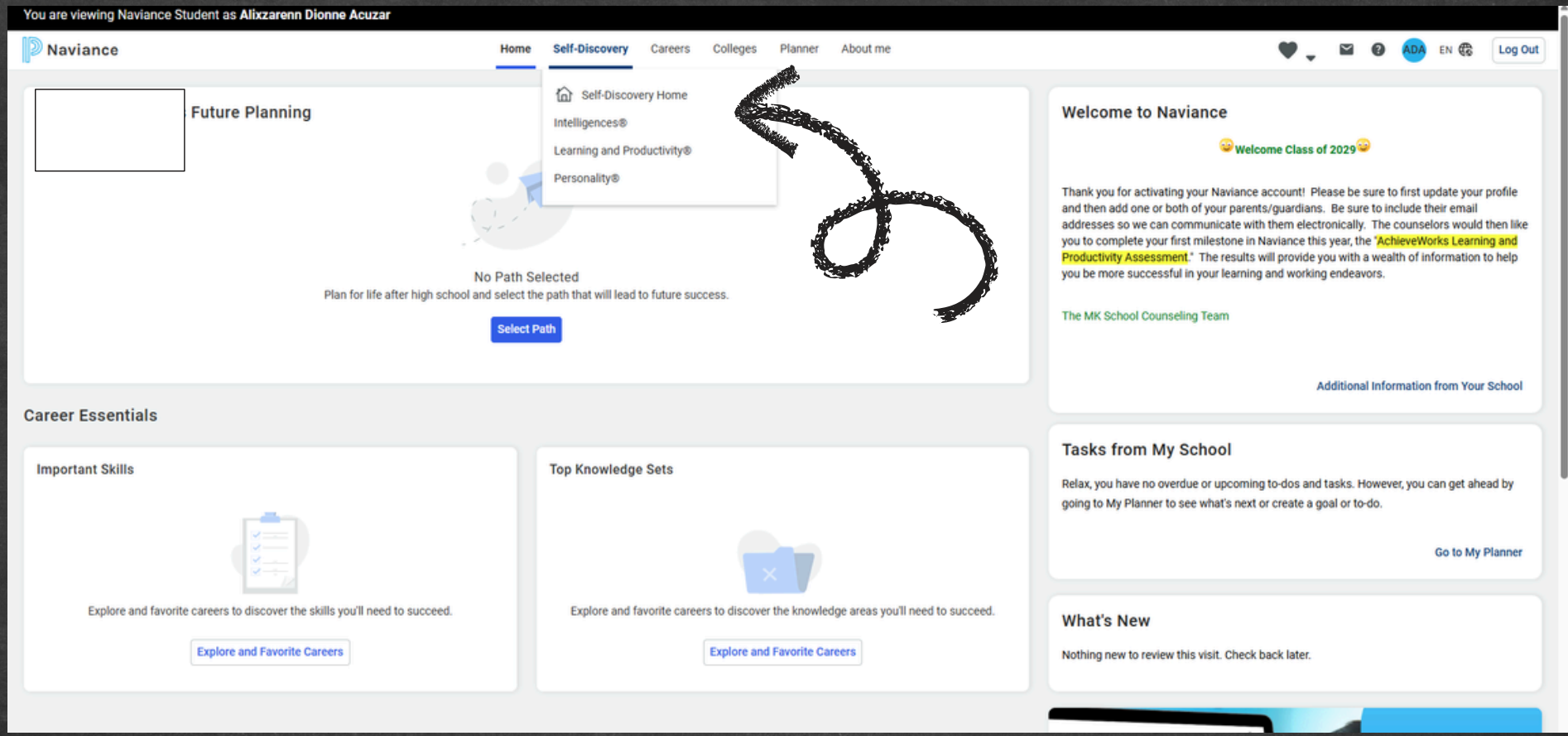


Naviance Home Page Welcome Screen

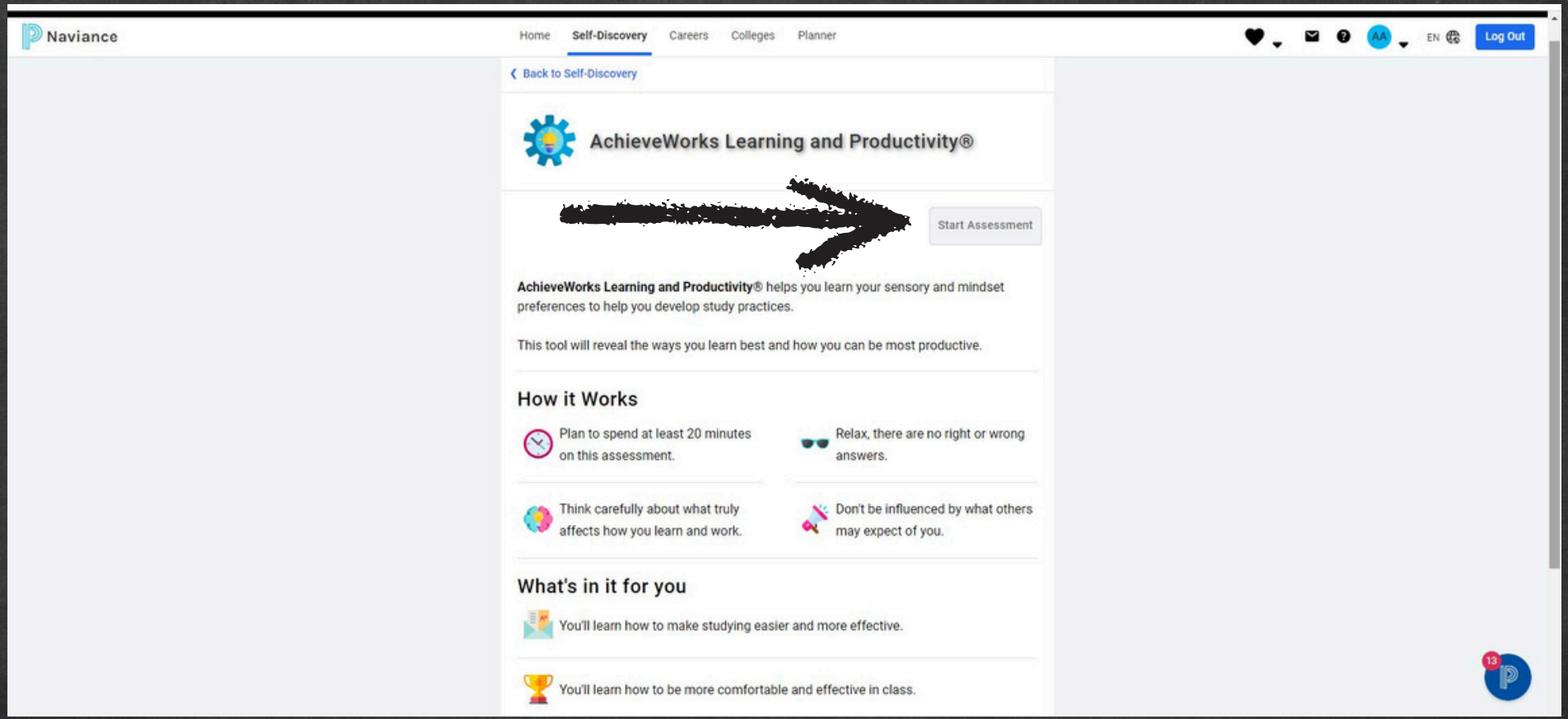


Naviance Survey for Freshman

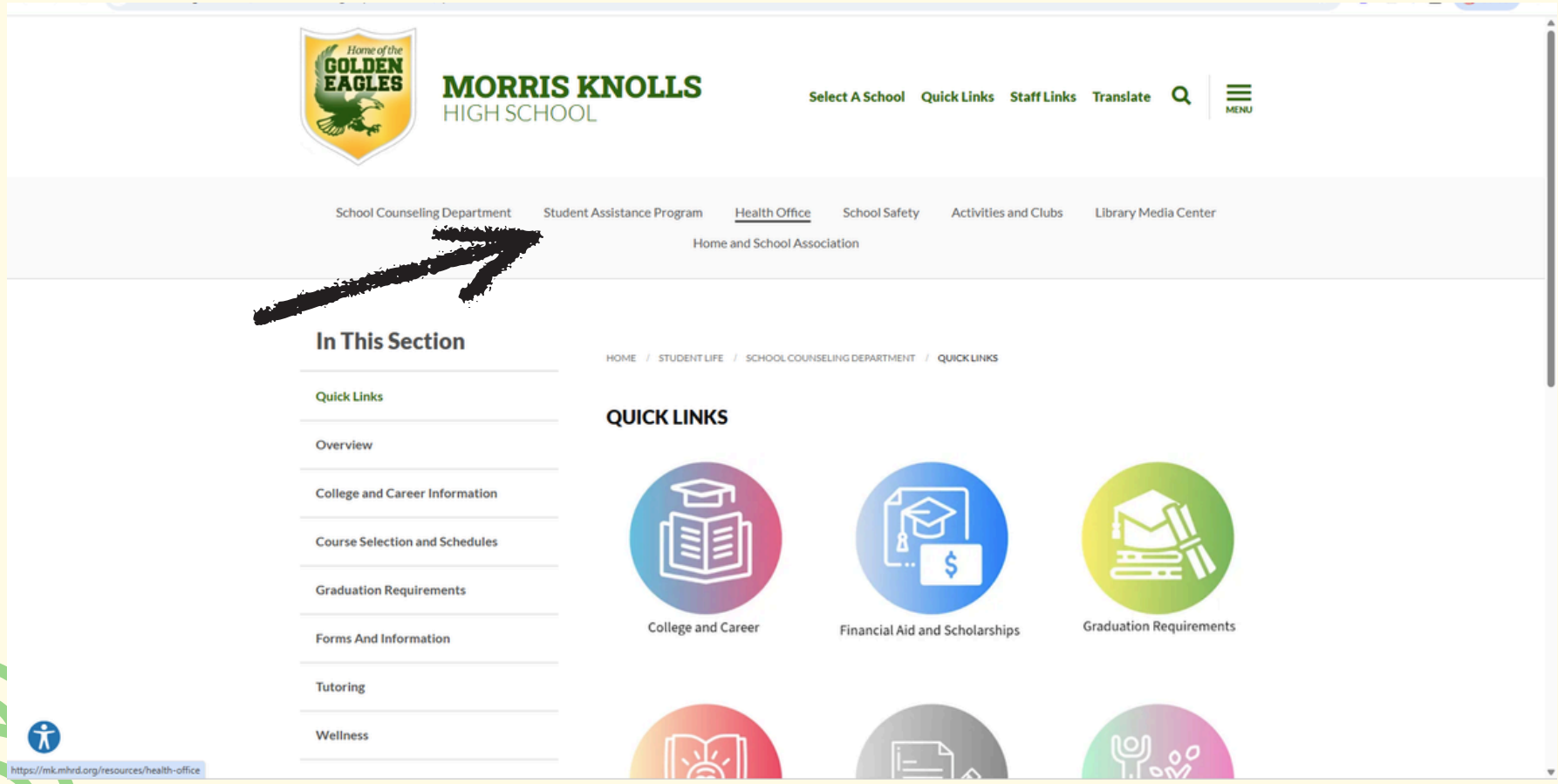
Achieveworks - Learning & Productivity



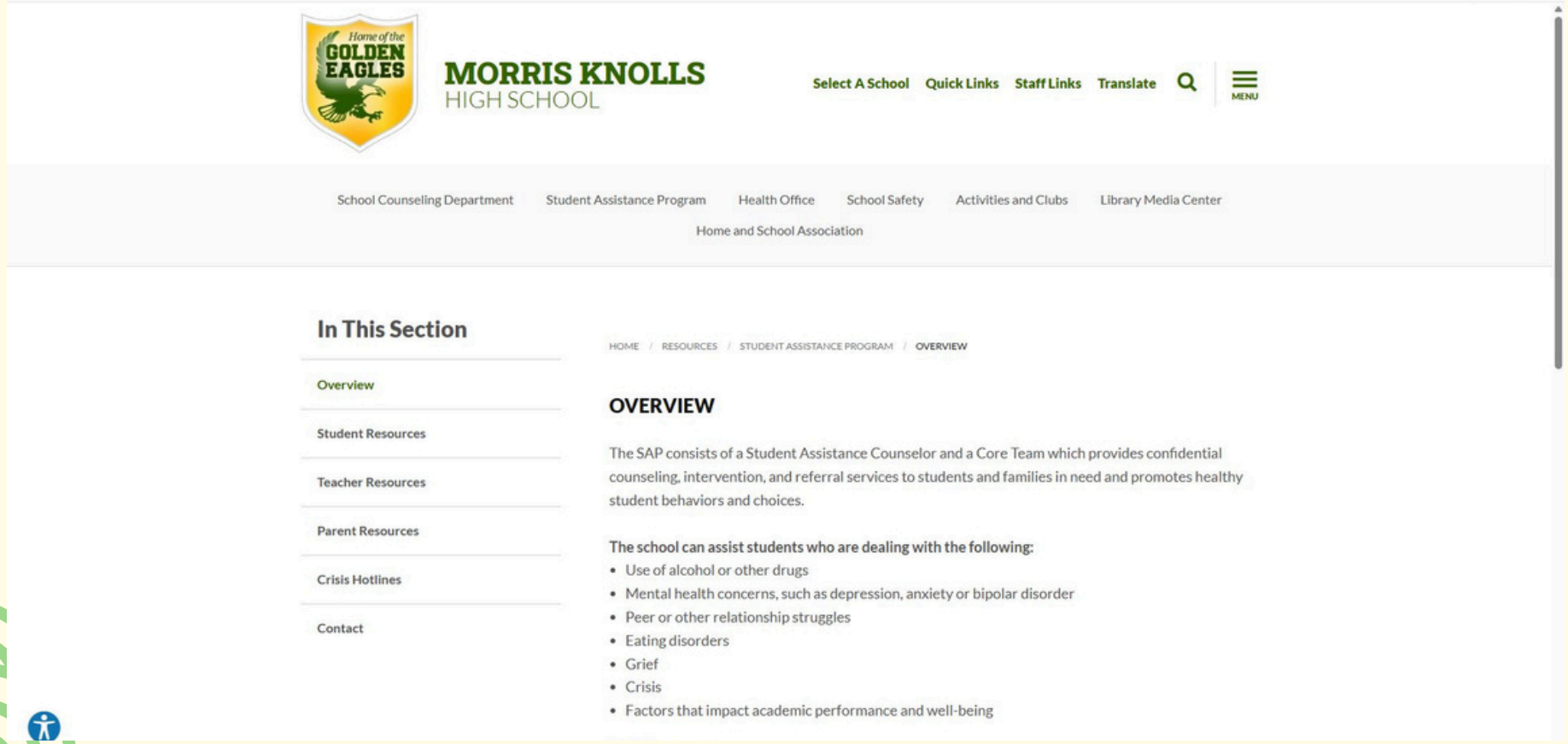
Naviance Survey for Freshman



Student Assistance Program Website



Student Assistance Program Website



Student Assistance Program

Reasons to see Mrs. Russo:

- Drugs & alcohol issues
- Memorandum of Agreement
- Emotional issues
- Conflict with friends
- Problems with family
- Addiction in family
- Crisis counseling
- Mental health counseling
- Eating disorder counseling
- Grief counseling

Roles of a SAC:

- Meet with student individually or in a small group setting
- Refer to outside provider
- Provide resources for students and parents
- Speak with parents
- Mediate problems with others
- Classes/Seminars
- Community Outreach
- Anti-Bullying Specialist
- Medical/Mental Health 504 Plans

Random Drug Testing

Who is in the Random Drug Testing Pool?

- Athletes
- Club Members
- Students who park on campus
- Volunteers

What happens if a student tests positive?

- Drug & alcohol assessment
- Meetings with the SAC
- No discipline if student complies with above two conditions
- Confidential

MK SAC Website

Thank you

for Attending Morris Knolls Freshman Parent Night

SCAN ME

Freshman Parent Slides Presentation

SCAN ME

Freshman Parent Night Handouts

@MK_SCHOOLCOUNSELING

Follow MK School Counseling on Instagram

www.mhrd.org

