



2026 High School Information Night

September 28, 2026

From Middle School to High School

Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- High School in Portland - Key Priorities & Strategies
- 9th Grade Experience
- School Presentations
- Enrollment Process
- Q & A



Panelists

- Aris Ayala Cruz, Principal, DHS
- Priya Natarajan, Principal, CBHS
- Sarah Obare, Principal, PHS
- Kevin Stilphen, Director, PATHS
- Colby Senior, Community Outreach Specialist
- Tremain Holloway, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools
- Pamela Otunnu, Director of Secondary Innovation & Outcomes



High School in Portland



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Portland Public Schools strives to ensure every learner receives a challenging, relevant, and joyful education.

Empowering students through relationships and community

Prepared and Empowered

PPS Mission:

The Portland Public Schools are responsible for ensuring a challenging, relevant, and joyful education that empowers every learner to make a difference in the world. We build relationships among families, educators, and the community to promote the healthy development and academic achievement of every learner.



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
prepared & empowered

The Portrait of a Graduate reflects the skills and dispositions we aspire all of our students to attain.

Portland Public Schools' Portrait of a Graduate



SELF ADVOCATE

I understand and take care of myself. That means I...

- Know myself deeply: my passions, my strengths, my challenges, and my goals.
- Act on my self-knowledge in educational and career work and planning.
- Understand how I learn best.
- Use my voice to advocate for myself.
- Manage my mental and physical health.



COMMUNITY BUILDER

I collaborate with and advocate for others. That means I...

- Am an active, collaborative, and creative member of the communities to which I belong.
- Embrace diversity in my school and the community.
- Show empathy for others and foster healthy relationships.
- Make informed decisions to serve the common good.
- Make the world a healthier and more just place.



LIFELONG LEARNER

I am a lifelong learner. That means I...

- Master fundamental academic skills.
- Make meaning when new information presents itself.
- Take risks and persevere when things are hard.
- Identify, develop and achieve the knowledge necessary for life and career goals.



SKILLED COMMUNICATOR

I am an effective and culturally responsive communicator. That means I...

- Meaningfully connect and collaborate across communities.
- Successfully express my ideas in multiple formats and to multiple audiences.
- Empathize to gain a better understanding of others.
- Research issues, raise questions, and objectively consider diverse perspectives.



PROBLEM SOLVER

I am a creative problem solver. That means I...

- Stay curious and ask questions.
- Look at problems from different perspectives.
- Brainstorm collaboratively, without judgment.
- Apply knowledge and skills in new situations.



PREPARED FOR SUCCESS

I am prepared to be successful. That means I...

- Can access resources.
- Make informed financial decisions, manage my time, and develop plans to achieve my goals.
- Recognize that there are multiple pathways to achieve goals.
- Succeed in post-secondary/career experiences.
- Persist and persevere.

- Self-advocate
- Community builder
- Lifelong learner
- Skilled communicator
- Problem solver
- Prepared for success

[Link to PoG & PoSC](#)



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The Portrait of a School Community reflects the conditions that need to be in place for student success.

Portland Public Schools' Portrait of a School Community



RICH AND NUMEROUS OPPORTUNITIES

We create rich and numerous opportunities for student agency, wellness, and empowerment. That means We...

- Guide students to take ownership of their learning, with opportunities for rigor and joy.
- Encourage students to set goals, challenge themselves, seek feedback, and try again as needed.
- Offer robust sports, clubs, and co-curriculars.
- Connect students to learning and wellness opportunities in our community.



FOCUS ON BUILDING COMMUNITY

We adopt an intentional focus on building community. That means We...

- Build school structures (e.g., teaming, advisory) and staffing that support all students in belonging and being known well.
- Learn about and celebrate the diverse identities represented in the community.
- Prioritize student leadership and fellowship in and out of the classroom.
- Create equitable outcomes and experiences for our students and families.
- Employ restorative practices when harm occurs.



CHALLENGING AND MEANINGFUL CURRICULUM

We ensure a challenging and meaningful curriculum for each student, wherever learning can happen. That means We...

- Emphasize graduation content standards in each school subject.
- Teach key life skills, from financial literacy to time management.
- Provide opportunities for all students to learn both about their own and others' culture(s) and history(ies).
- Encourage students to do as much work and learning in the community as in our classrooms.
- Make learning opportunities available at our local colleges and adult education.



INSTRUCTION THAT SUPPORTS EACH STUDENT

We implement instruction that supports each student in meeting their learning goals. That means We...

- Guarantee access to challenging coursework.
- Assess each student's progress towards learning goals and use assessments to inform instruction.
- Focus on real-world inquiry and problem-solving.
- Embrace interdisciplinary opportunities and project-based learning tied to vital learning standards.
- Support each student to do excellent work each year.
- Facilitate student collaboration on work that is relevant to their lives and community.



SUPPORT FOR EACH STUDENT'S FUTURE PLAN

We ensure every student has the support to plan their future path. That means We...

- Support each student in completing a post-secondary plan (e.g., applications, licensure, college credits, resumes, interview skills, credentialing).
- Provide in-school time, credit and support for community engagement, independent learning, and career exploration (e.g., internships).
- Honor PATHS courses as part of core graduation requirements.



ADEQUATE STAFFING, STRUCTURES, AND RESOURCES

We ensure adequate staffing, structures, and resources to support each student's path to the Portrait. That means We...

- Prioritize staffing that supports our special education and multilingual students.
- Ensure adequate support for each student's social and emotional needs.
- Design structures and assign staffing so that students who need differentiated support may achieve academic growth that meets standards.
- Ensure staffing to adequately support each student's post-secondary plan.



THRIVING STAFF

We support staff to grow and thrive. That means We...

- Utilize best practices for staff development and growth.
- Provide differentiated training and coaching that is relevant to each staff member and their roles.
- Create regular, substantial time for teachers to collaborate.
- Provide regular meaningful opportunities for staff to receive actionable feedback from supervisors and peers.
- Make time to support and cultivate staff wellness and joy.



QUALITY FACILITIES

We provide quality facilities that reflect the Portland Promise and inspire our students and staff. That means We...

- Ensure universal and ready access to current technology.
- Provide spaces that can be used flexibly and are conducive to both independent and collaborative projects.
- Include spaces that invite and cultivate community, spaces where Portland's communities gather to do meaningful work.
- Provide quality and equitable athletic and arts facilities.
- Reflect our commitment to be environmental stewards and meet the highest earth-friendly standards.
- Reflect our commitment to equity and meet the highest building accessibility standards.
- Have facilities that inspire our students and staff, and send a clear message that their work is important and that all are welcome.

- Rich and numerous opportunities
- Focus on building community
- Challenging and meaningful curriculum
- Instruction that supports each student
- Support for each student's future plan
- Adequate staffing, structures, and resources
- Thriving staff
- Quality facilities



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Our strategic plan has five priorities. Each priority has 5-7 initiatives that cascade over the next five years.

Equity: Keeping Equity at the Center

Portland Public Schools strives to be an anti-racist, inclusive district by vigilantly supporting each student to achieve their potential and rooting out systemic inequities.

Achievement: Enhancing Academic Excellence and Equity

Implement a universally accessible, rigorous, and equitable curriculum that prepares students academically and ignites a joy of learning, through consistent, high-quality instruction and engaging, grade-level tasks that challenge and inspire students.

Whole Student, Connected Community: Cultivating Inclusivity and Belonging

Nurture supportive, inclusive school communities that promote belonging and engagement among all students, their families, and the broader community.

People: Developing Staff, Leaders, and Organizational Culture

Elevate recruitment, retention, and staff development practices focused on ensuring instructional excellence and cultivating an inclusive work environment that supports collaboration and staff well-being.

Systems: Streamlining Operations for Equity, Efficiency, and Accountability

Develop and implement consistent and clear operational procedures and systems that enhance equity, efficacy, and accountability across Portland Public Schools.

Design

Pilot

Launch

Monitor

This year, we begin our design phase to align the curriculum of our high schools. We are starting with Math.

Strategic Initiative 2.3



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- Emphasize graduation content standards in each school subject
- Assess each student's progress towards learning goals and use assessments to inform instruction
- Support each student to do excellent work



Strengthening Grade 9 Academies advances key conditions for success in the Portrait of a School Community.

Conditions that drive success in grade 9

**RICH AND
NUMEROUS
OPPORTUNITIES**



**FOCUS ON
BUILDING
COMMUNITY**



**CHALLENGING AND
MEANINGFUL
CURRICULUM**



**INSTRUCTION
THAT SUPPORTS
EACH STUDENT**



**SUPPORT FOR
EACH STUDENT'S
FUTURE PLAN**



**ADEQUATE STAFFING,
STRUCTURES, AND
RESOURCES**



THRIVING STAFF



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Our school community is committed to supporting every student in developing and achieving their future plan.

Driving improvement through learning and collaboration



SUPPORT FOR EACH STUDENT'S FUTURE PLAN

We ensure every student has the support to plan their future path. That means We...

- Support each student in completing a post-secondary plan (e.g., applications, licensure, college credits, resumes, interview skills, credentialing)
- Provide in-school time, credit and support for community engagement, independent learning, and career exploration (e.g., internships)
- Honor PATHS courses as part of core graduation requirements

Support each student in completing a post-secondary plan (e.g., applications, licensure, college credits, resumes, interview skills, credentialing)



Advisory supports our Portrait of a School Community.

Creating nested learning communities within the larger community



FOCUS ON BUILDING COMMUNITY

***We adopt an intentional focus
on building community.***

That means We...

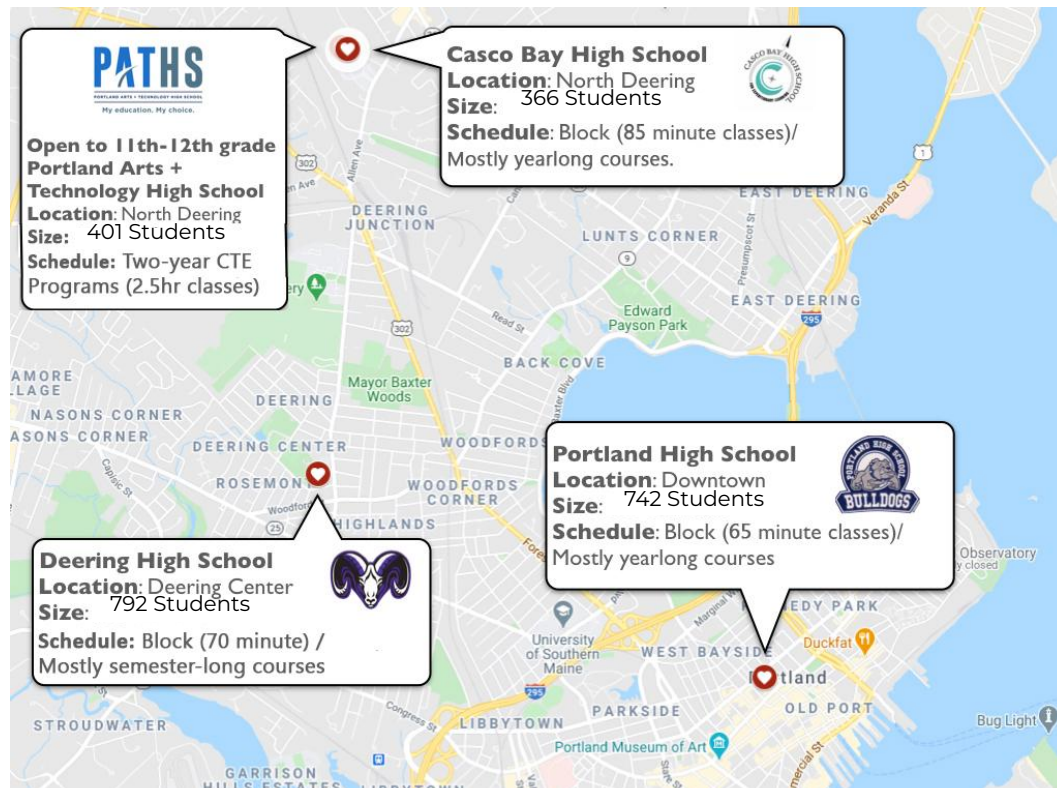
- Build school structures (e.g., teaming, advisory) and staffing that support all students in belonging and being known well.
- Learn about and celebrate the diverse identities represented in the community.
- Prioritize student leadership and followership in and out of the classroom.
- Create equitable outcomes and experiences for our students and families.
- Employ restorative practices when harm occurs.

Build school structures (e.g. teaming, advisory) and staffing that support all students in belonging and being known well. Specifically, our well-designed advisory provides the "how," acting as the primary structure for personalizing learning and nurturing the whole student. Advisory serves as the entry point for students to access their school's unique experience



We have three high schools and a career and technology education school.

High School Options



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Students meet graduation requirements in order to graduate prepared for their future.

Getting to Graduation

1. Maine Learning Results
2. Maine Guiding Principles
3. Capstone Project
4. Post-Secondary Success Plan



Students take required and elective classes across subject areas to meet graduation requirements.

Getting to Graduation: Units of Proficiency

Total for Graduation: 21 Units of Proficiency

Required units of proficiency are as follows:

- English 4 UPs
- Social Studies and History 3 UPs
- Mathematics 3 UPs
- Science and Technology 3 UPs
- Health 1 UP
- Physical Education 1 UP
- Fine Arts 1 UP
- Electives 5 UPs



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High schools provide a wide range of academic programs, supports, and opportunities to help every student succeed.

Common Features and Opportunities

All PPS high schools offer:

- Seal of Biliteracy and STEM Endorsement
- English Learner and special education programs
- Guidance and other social emotional supports
- Early college, dual enrollment and AP classes
- Multiple world languages
- Job readiness and internship opportunities
- PATHS programming
- Sports, clubs and other co-curriculars
- Parent Teacher conferences and regular newsletters
- Access via Metro
- 1:1 Technology



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District program placements are available to provide specialized support for students.

District Program Placement

- Beach (at Portland High School)
- Functional Life Skills (at Deering High School)



9th Grade Experience



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Ninth grade is a critical year that sets students up for success through and beyond high school.

The Importance of 9th Grade

1. Academic and social changes for students
2. School/family partnerships are essential
3. Attendance is the greatest factor in students' success in 9th grade
4. Students who pass all of their core classes are 4 times more likely to graduate on time than students who do not
5. Students are more likely to fail a class in 9th grade than any other grade

Source: Chicago Consortium on School Research

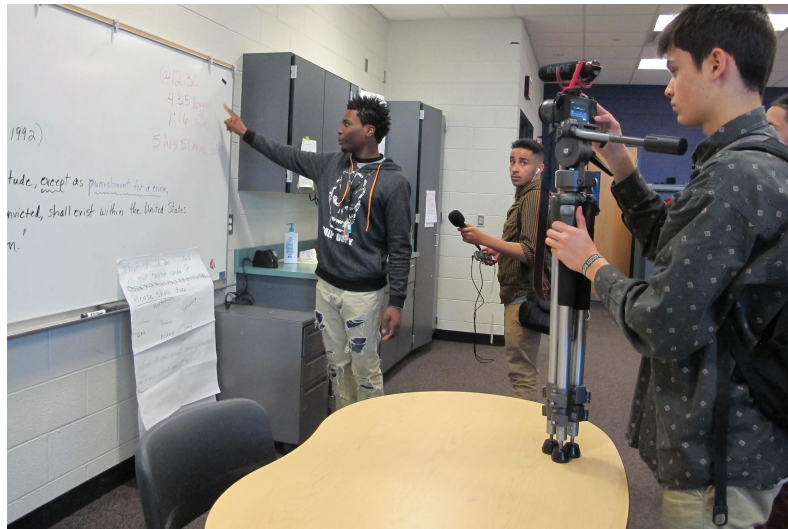


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Ninth-grade students have a range of courses and electives.

9th Grade Classes

- English
- Social Studies
- Math
- Science
- Electives
 - World Language
 - Fine Arts/Music/Drama
 - PE/Health
 - Freshman Seminar (PHS)



All schools offer honors options. Course placement is based on collaboration between 8th grade teachers, family input, and high school staff.



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The 9th grade team provides support to help students thrive through team connections, advisory, and extra help with learning.

Transition Supports

- Freshman Teams
- Social Emotional Supports
 - Crew
 - Advisory
 - Seminar
- Academic Supports
 - Academic Support Block/Block 7/INC Period (CBHS)
 - RAM Block (DHS)
 - WINN (What I Need Now) (PHS)



School Presentations



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Casco Bay High School



Get Smart to
Do Good



Who Are We?

- 390-400 students
- A reflection of Portland
- 30+ teachers and staff, 100% Dedicated
- Rigor, Relevance and Relationships
- Deep connections to community partners, early college and PATHS



Highlights!

- Crew
- Expeditionary Learning
- Intensives
- Rigorous Academics with Choice
- Parent & Student Engagement
- Clubs, Activities, X-Block!



Our Community = Your Success!



Traditions:

- Quest & Junior Journey
- Spirit Week & Carnival
- Winter Solstice
- Final Word

Future Planning:

- 9-12 Postsecondary Curriculum for every student
- March to the Post Office
- College Visits & Early College Enrollment

Community Involvement:

- 80% of students involved in at least 1 cocurricular last year
- Athletics, Arts, Academic Clubs & Leadership
- Focus on 9th grade (Senior buddies, mentorship, advising)

DEERING HIGH SCHOOL



ALL ONE SCHOOL

A diverse school where every student belongs



- ★ One of the **most diverse** high schools north of Boston with over 45 languages spoken
- ★ We shape the **Global and Civics Learner**

- ★ More than **25 athletic teams** and **40 co-curricular activities**
- ★ Students learn in a community where **belonging** and **community** is taught, practiced, and reinforced

- ★ Advisory provides each student with a designated support system, ensuring they always have an adult they can rely on and trust

LEARNING TOGETHER

Academic opportunities with real-world relevance



- ★ Our 4x4 schedule give students the flexibility to be challenged by choice, yet focus on 4 classes at a time

- ★ 30 honors courses and 18 AP courses
- ★ 340 students in AP Courses
- ★ 141 students enrolled in USM and SMCC classes
- ★ 3 World Languages: Arabic, French, and Spanish

- ★ 9th Grade programming
 - AP Human Geography Class
 - Year-long algebra or accelerated math
 - English 1 & Environmental Science (Honors option embedded)

LEAVING A LEGACY

Graduates leave with momentum



★ Members of the Class of 2025 were accepted to institutions including Brown, Bowdoin, Bates, Boston College, Columbia, Cornell, MIT, NYU, Yale and many public universities and colleges

★ Postsecondary plans included

- 45% attending four-year institutions
- 23% attending two-year institutions
- 13% entering the workforce
- 2% entering the military

★ Students can earn distinctive credentials, including:

- Seal of Biliteracy
- STEM Endorsement

Portland High School

Diverse Student Body ♦ Historic Location ♦ Innovative Staff



[Video](#)

Freshman Academy

**Teaching
Teams**

**Freshman
Seminar
Course**

**Dedicated
Grade 9
Leader**



**Promoting
Academic &
Personal
Growth for
High School
Success and
Beyond**

Where will YOUR PHS story take you?

Internships ~ Jr. & Sr. Planning ~ College Credit- Over 50 Clubs & Sports ~ Year Long Classes



Bulldogs Show Up! ~ For Yourself, For Each Other, For Our Community

PHS students will.....

Find Their Place



Explore Their Interests



Graduate Prepared



PATHS is Portland's Career and Technical Education (CTE) school. CTE provides students with the academic and technical skills, knowledge and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners.

PORTLAND ARTS + TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL

PATHS Short Overview

1. Students attend PATHS and their selected high school (Deering, Portland and CBHS)
 - a. ½ day at PATHS
 - b. ½ day at their high school
2. PATHS students attend their program for two years.
3. Open to sophomores, juniors and seniors
4. No cost
 - a. State of the art equipment
 - b. Certifications exams
5. Recruitment
 - a. Presentations and Visit



What's in it for Students

1. National Certifications
 - a. Certified Nurse Aide
 - b. CompTIA Security+
2. College Credit
 - a. SMCC
 - b. UMaine Augusta
3. Hands on learning
4. Career Education

College and Career Ready through CTE



When **APPLIED TECHNICAL LEARNING** is integrated with **RIGOROUS ACADEMICS**, students develop the **SKILLS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS**.

The technical, academic and employability skills that students gain in CTE programs, through CTE courses, work-based learning, career and technical student organizations and dual/concurrent enrollment, are essential for college and career success.

CTE programs prepare students for college and careers:¹



CTE students demonstrate the academic, technical and employability skills needed for postsecondary and workplace success:



¹ Southern Regional Education Board, High Schools That Work 2012 Assessment

² Hoxby et al., The Academic Impact of Career and Technical Schools: A Case Study of a Large Urban School District, 2013

³ Laves et al., CTE Pathway Programs, Academic Performance and the Transition to College and Career, National Research Center for CTE, 2007

⁴ Lindmark and Marlow, Focus Study of Career and Technical Education, 2011, as cited in the 2013 National Assessment of CTE Final Report

⁵ Laves et al., CTE Pathway Programs, Academic Performance and the Transition to College and Career, National Research Center for CTE, 2007

PATHS Programs

- Auto Collision
- Auto Technology I&II
- Carpentry
- HVAC & Plumbing
- Marine Systems
- Masonry
- Woodworking
- Welding
- Biomedical Health Sciences
- Commercial & Advertising Art
- Culinary Arts
- Cybersecurity
- Dance
- Early Childhood Occupations
- Food Services
- Music
- New Media
- Landscape & Design



High School Preference Process



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Our high school transition events follow a timeline.

Key dates for families and students

Open House Timeline:

- Monday, October 5 – Casco Bay High School (CBHS) **(6–7:30 pm)**
- Thursday, October 8 – Deering High School (DHS) **(6–7:30 pm)**
- Thursday, October 15 – Portland High School (PHS) **(6–7:30 pm)**
- Tuesday, October 20 – Multilingual HS Information Night **(6–8 pm)**
- Thursday, October 22 – PATHS **(5:30-6:30 pm)**



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Families choose their preferred high school, and 9th-grade assignments are finalized.

High School Preference Timeline and Process

- **HS Preference Forms Distributed:** Tuesday, October 20, 2026
(also open on district website for non-PPS students)
- **HS Preference Forms Due:** Monday, November 16, 2026
- **Letters Sent to Families:** Friday, December 16, 2026
- ❖ PPS analyzes all preferences and makes any necessary adjustments to balance enrollment and diversity to determine high school assignments.
- ❖ Assignments for 9th grade will be final. Transfers will not be considered until after the completion of 9th grade.



We invite you to share your questions.

Questions?



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