



Navigating Sophomore and Junior Year



Ardsley School Counseling
Department



Welcome Back!

A WARM WELCOME

It is great to see you all!

GROWTH & OPPORTUNITY

Sophomore and Junior years are valuable times for students to develop behaviors and habits that keep future opportunities open.

LOOKING AHEAD

There is still time to create the high school experience that our students want and hope for!



Things to cover:



01 Starting the year on a good note

02 AP selection

03 Extracurriculars

04 Course Selection and Timeline

05 Things we do and our roles as counselors

06 Getting involved outside of school

07 What is in the GPA and how it is calculated

We are here to help!

Here are some of the ways:



Individual Student Meetings



Academic Consultation



Career & College Readiness
Conversations



Classroom Presentations



Emotional Support: Individual
and Group



Naviance



Course Selection and Planning Ahead

Uniquely You: Personal Factors



Interests

Topics, subjects, or activities that spark genuine excitement and engagement.



Character

Integrity, leadership qualities, resilience, and core personal values.



Is Growth Evident?

Demonstrated progress, academic maturity, and positive personal trajectory.



Strengths

Key abilities, core skills, and areas where natural capability shines.



Intellectual Curiosity

Eagerness to explore ideas and learning beyond standard requirements.



Special Talent

Unique gifts in arts, athletics, technology, or creative pursuits.



Special Circumstances

Personal background, unique experiences, or overcoming challenges.



Building Your Scholastic Record



Course Selection



Appropriate Academic Courses



Demanding Course Load



Course Progression



Quality Trend

GPA Guidelines

- **Yearly Visibility:** Each year, students will see their yearly GPA for each specific year
- **College Reporting:** Cumulative GPA of the first six semesters is sent to colleges
- **Senior Year Grades:** Sent directly to colleges and not factored into cumulative GPA
- **PE Exclusion:** Physical Education grades are not included into the GPA

Course Selection

Overview & Timeline



Winter Course Catalog

During the Winter, students will be provided the Course Catalog listing all projected course offerings.

Explore Pathways

Students and families should get familiar with the pathways available to students.

Early February Course Requests

We will meet with students in early February to complete their Course Requests for the following year.

Planning Ahead

Having prior knowledge of courses can help make the planning process easier.

Bell Schedule & Day Rotation

	Time	A Day	B Day	C Day	D Day	E Day	F Day	G Day	H Day
Period 1	7:55 - 8:52	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2
Period 2	8:58 - 9:55	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3
Period 3	9:58 - 10:55	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4
Lunch	10:56 - 11:54	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Period 5	11:55 - 12:52	5	8	7	6	5	8	7	6
Period 6	12:55 - 1:52	6	5	8	7	6	5	8	7
Period 7	1:55 - 2:52	7	6	5	8	7	6	5	8
Dropped		4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
Dropped		8	7	6	5	8	7	6	5

Pathway To Access

Waiver Process & Guidelines



Teacher Recommendations

Students are recommended for courses each year by their current teachers.



Waiver Option

Students have the ability to waive into a course through the Pathway to Access provided they have the prerequisite courses to take them.



Family Meeting (3+ Courses)

Students who waive into 3 more courses need to schedule a family meeting with administration to be granted access into courses.



Prerequisite Requirements

This waiver does not bypass required courses.

Understanding APs, Honors, and Pathways

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AP Courses Offered

Offerings span both core academic classes and elective courses to support diverse academic goals.



Initial Eligibility Requirements

Core Honors and AP courses have established eligibility requirements to ensure student readiness.



Prerequisites & Grade Benchmarks

Many courses require specific prerequisite coursework and grade performance to determine eligibility.



Pathway to Access (Waiver Process)

Students have the ability to "waive" themselves into certain courses on a probationary basis.

Get Involved



Out of Classroom

Experiential learning and hands-on growth beyond the desk.



Duration / Commitment

Flexible time commitments tailored to fit your schedule.



School Related

Clubs, sports, and campus activities to build connection.



Community Related

Local service and civic engagement opportunities.



Summer Opportunities

Enrichment programs, internships, and camps.



Quality over Quantity

Focus on meaningful engagement rather than count.

Some Good Ideas for Self-Exploration

Great Starts



YES Office

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Enroll in a summer enrichment program/camp



Find a part-time job



Participate in sports or performing arts



On-campus college tours & programs



Travel and cultural exploration

Some Alternatives We Have Seen...



Get Creative & Connect

Many of our students in the community have found unique, creative ways to connect to others.



Online & Virtual Programs

Take advantage of online enrichment opportunities and year-round virtual college offerings.



Student Initiatives & Ventures

Students have started their own independent initiatives and entrepreneurial endeavors outside of school.

BOCES Program Overview



Career & Technical Education

Southern Westchester BOCES collaborates with local school districts offering career and technical education opportunities.



Afternoon Programs

Afternoon programs are available to Junior and Senior students.



Training & Certification

BOCES provides career and vocational training alongside professional certification.



Graduation Credit

Students will earn valuable credit toward high school graduation.



Next Steps

Reach out to your School Counselor for more information and application steps.

PSAT

- Practice Exam for All Students Taking the SAT
- Total Testing Time is about 2 hours and 15 minutes and done **digitally**
- All Juniors Should Consider! This will qualify them for the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test
- Diagnostic Exam with Detailed Score Report
- Evidence Based Reading, Writing and Language, and Math Sections

SAT/ACT Timeline & Information

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- Students should devise a timeline and plan to prepare and take SAT and/or ACT exams
 - Note that while AHS students register for PSAT's via our school, students register for the SAT's and/or ACT's independently via their corresponding websites (collegeboard.org for SAT & act.org for ACT)
 - It is suggested for students to take advantage of diagnostic testing via free options on the companies' websites or at tutoring centers
 - Allow time to prep and take multiple rounds of these exams. Keep in consideration that AP exams are in May in addition to other involvements during junior year
 - Most colleges will superscore your results (combine section scores from different exams)
 - While a lot of colleges have remained test-optional, many are going back to requiring test scores

Getting to know Naviance

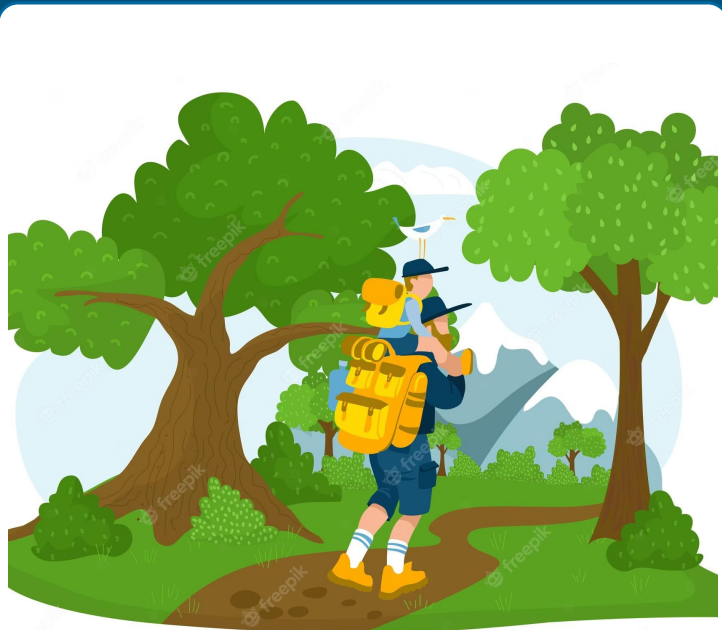
Naviance is a helpful tool and platform for students to begin exploring their interests for life after high school in addition to conducting college research

This includes:

- **Career Interest Inventories**
- **Strengths Explorer/RoadTrip Nation**
- **College Admission Scattergrams**
- **Major/Minor Search Engines**



Takeaways



Open Conversation

Have an open and honest conversation with your children about their passions and thoughts for the future.



Encourage Exploration

Find opportunities for your children to explore who they are.



Collaborative Support

Always feel free to reach out. This is a collaborative effort, and we are always a phone call or email away.

Meet the Staff

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