



HIGH SCHOOL 101

WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS

**How to keep small
problems
from becoming big ones.**

Travis Hattan + Tracey Ritzel
Milburn School Counseling





What does a School Counselor actually do?

Schedule changes are only one small part of the job.



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ACADEMIC PROBLEM-SOLVING

Patterns across classes, falling behind, and connecting to support.



COURSE SELECTION + PLANNING Choosing courses that fit interests, readiness, and goals.



TRANSITION

Adjusting to Milburn and preparing for Smiley.



PERSONAL SUPPORT

When personal situations are affecting school.



COORDINATION

Connecting students, teachers, families, and resources.

You do not have to wait for a crisis to make an appointment.



What has been harder than you expected?

Hold up 1–4 fingers. No explanation required.

1



KEEPING TRACK

Assignments, deadlines,
and what is due

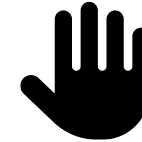
2



MANAGING TIME

School, sleep, activities,
and everything else

3



ASKING FOR HELP

Speaking up before a
problem grows

4



FINDING YOUR PLACE

People, activities, and
where you fit

Most freshmen experience more than one of these.

ONE PERSON. ONE PLACE.



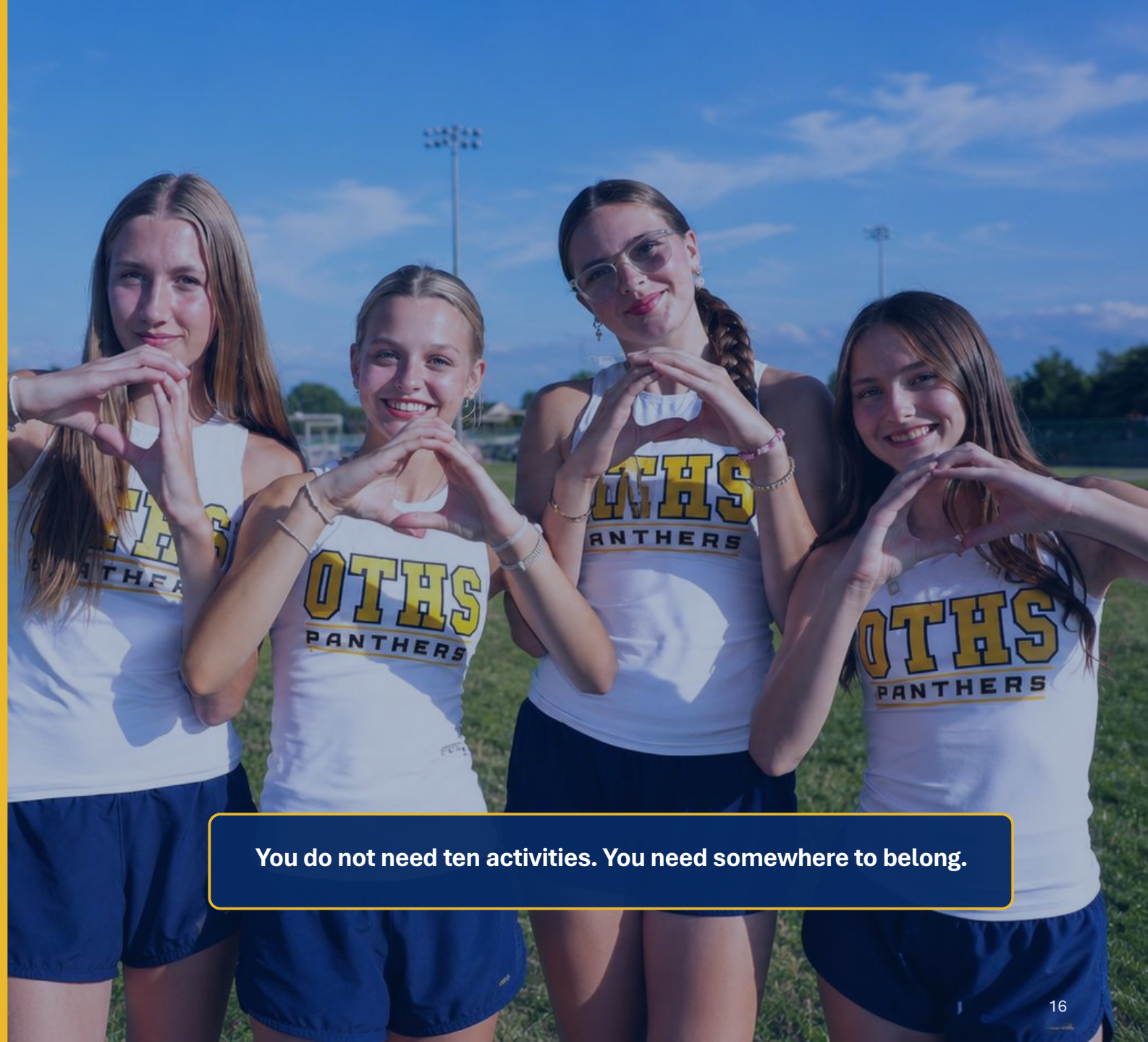
ONE PERSON

An adult at OTHS you could approach.



ONE PLACE

A class, team, club, lunch table, or school space that feels comfortable.



You do not need ten activities. You need somewhere to belong.

Become a Panther Ambassador

Help students feel more connected at OTHS

NOW RECRUITING



Welcome new students



Support students who may feel disconnected



Help build a more connected OTHS community



Interested? Email Mr. Hattan at hattant@oths.us

He will send you a form and follow up with next steps.



THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL

High school has more moving parts.



MORE FREEDOM

You make more decisions.



MORE MOVING PARTS

More teachers, classes, deadlines, and messages.



LESS CHASING

Adults will help—but they may not manage every step for you.

Independence is knowing what to handle yourself—and when to ask.



Freshman year counts. It does not have to be perfect.

The transcript begins now—but growth is expected.



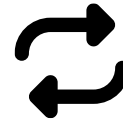
CREDITS

Pass semester courses to earn credit.



GRADES

Your first high-school GPA begins this year.



HABITS

What you repeat becomes your routine.

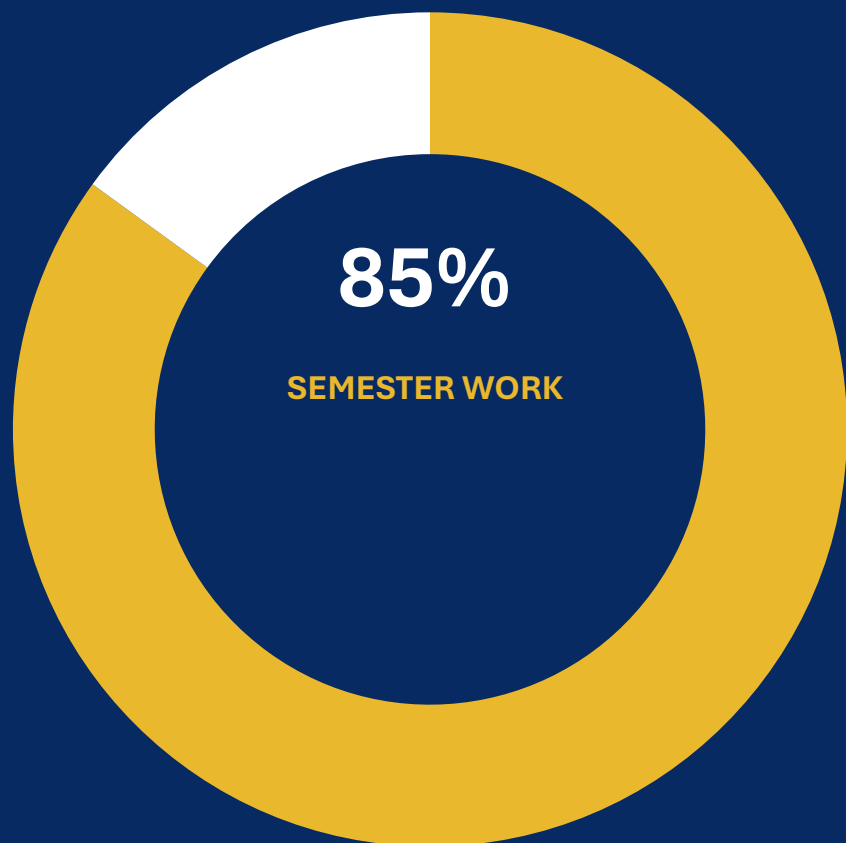


The question is not whether you will struggle.

The question is what you do next.

A bad grade is information. It is not your identity.

Most of the grade is the work you do all semester.



15%

SEMESTER EXAM

The exam matters—but it is not the whole semester.

PASS

EARN THE CREDIT

Credits for passing grades are issued at the end of each semester.

PATTERN

WHAT REALLY ADDS UP

Repeated missing work is harder to overcome than one bad quiz.

You do not need to calculate your GPA every night. You do need to know whether you are doing the work and learning the material.



Attendance has a multiplier effect.

Missing one day creates more than one thing to catch up.



1 DAY

can mean up to

7 PERIODS

to untangle



INSTRUCTION



EXAMPLES



ANNOUNCEMENTS



DIRECTIONS



QUESTIONS



1 COME BACK

2 CHECK

3 COMMUNICATE

4 PRIORITIZE

Do not wait until you feel completely caught up before coming back.



Avoid surprises.

Use three simple systems instead of trying to remember everything.



OTHS EMAIL

CHECK IT EVERY SCHOOL DAY

Official school communication is sent there.



SKYWARD

CHECK IT CONSISTENTLY

Know what is missing, changing, or becoming a pattern.



ONE PLANNING SYSTEM

USE THE SAME PLACE

Calendar, planner, assignment list, or notes app.

**MONDAY
LOOK AHEAD**

**THURSDAY
CATCH PROBLEMS BEFORE
THE WEEKEND**

There is no prize for keeping every deadline in your head.



Use Skyward to make a decision—not just to feel bad.

Check. Identify. Act.

GRADEBOOK

ENGLISH	B
MATH	C-
SCIENCE	B+
CIVICS	D+

Checking is not the action.
The next step is the action.



ONE MISSING ASSIGNMENT

Find the exact task and directions.



GRADE DROPPED

Open the class and identify what changed.



CODE OR GRADE UNCLEAR

Ask the teacher instead of assuming.



SEVERAL CLASSES

Contact your School Counselor.

Skyward should confirm what you know—not introduce you to a problem.



Which message gets a better answer?

Both students need help. Only one message makes the problem clear.

MESSAGE A

yo what did i miss

No class. No date. No specific question.



STATE THE PROBLEM

MESSAGE B

Subject: Question About Monday's Assignment

Hi Mr. Muniz,

I was absent Monday and saw that I missed the Chapter 2 assignment. I checked Canvas but am still unsure which problems to complete. Could you please let me know what I should do?

Thank you,
Jordan Lee, 3rd Hour



SAY WHAT YOU TRIED



ASK A CLEAR QUESTION



Know where to start.

You do not have to choose the perfect person. Start somewhere.



ONE CLASS OR ASSIGNMENT

TEACHER

Best first academic resource.



MORE ACADEMIC HELP

TEACHER + AAC

AAC: Mon–Thu • 2:30–3:30 • Room 1508



SEVERAL CLASSES / PLANNING

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Patterns, course planning, or not knowing where to begin.



STRESS / PEERS / FAMILY

SOCIAL WORKER OR SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Personal concerns affecting school.



HEALTH / MEDICATION

NURSE

Health concerns, medication, or medical support.



SOMEONE MAY BE UNSAFE

ANY ADULT IMMEDIATELY

Safety concerns should never stay between students.

Start with someone. We will help you get to the right place.

WHERE WOULD YOU START? — ROUND ONE

1 TEACHER

2 AAC

3 SCHOOL COUNSELOR

4 SOCIAL WORKER

 **ANY ADULT NOW**

1

You understand almost nothing from today's math lesson, and the homework makes no sense.

2

You missed school yesterday. Work is listed in three classes, and you do not know what needs to happen first.

There may be more than one reasonable first step. The goal is to start.

WHERE WOULD YOU START? — ROUND TWO

1 **TEACHER**

2 **AAC**

3 **SCHOOL COUNSELOR**

4 **SOCIAL WORKER**

 **ANY ADULT NOW**

3 You have missing work in three classes. Every time you think about checking Skyward, you avoid it.

4 Your grades are okay, but something happening with friends or at home is making it hard to concentrate.

5 A student says something that makes you believe they may hurt themselves or someone else.

Serious safety concerns should never stay between students.



When you are behind.

The goal is not to fix everything at once. The goal is the next useful action.



STOP AVOIDING IT



CHECK THE FACTS



CHOOSE WHAT COMES FIRST



CONTACT SOMEONE



SHOW UP TOMORROW



THURSDAY
8:17 PM

- 2 missing assignments
- Test tomorrow
- Practice after school

20-SECOND DECISION

WHAT HAPPENS FIRST?

You cannot fix everything at once. Choose the first useful action.



Turn to one person near you. You have 20 seconds.

Do not disappear when you are behind.

Important Upcoming Dates:

9th Grade Advisory

OCT 6

Tuesday

Next Advisory Presentation – Location Milburn Auditorium

Guide to 10th grade course selection

OCT 9

Friday

Course Selection Handouts

Distributed in all advisory classes

OCT 13

Tuesday

Counselor Course Selection Meetings Begin

9th grade course selection meetings with school counselors