



February 11, 2011

Dear Parents/Guardians of the Class of 2015:

I am happy to welcome you and your child to the Wahco High School registration process. Beginning the week of February 14th, I meet with 8th graders in Mr. Harris' 8th grade classes where I will talk about the importance of studying; getting good grades in high school; taking difficult classes to do well on college entrance exams; looking at the information found on high school transcripts, and registering for high school.

In the weeks ahead, look for your child's formal registration (pink) form; two Personal Learning Plans: one pink with handwritten information, and the other a white, typed copy with a place for you to sign; and, a *Curriculum Guide 2011-2012* (packet with a **blue** cover). On the reverse side of this letter, I have included the most commonly asked questions Freshmen and their parents ask me along with my response.

On the registration form (pink sheet) on the side with your child's label on it, you and your child need to select courses to fill 8 periods for both semesters. Some of the required courses are already typed in.

Listed first are *Required Courses*. For example, English 9, General Science, and World Geography, which are already written in, are year-long courses – courses taken both first (S1) and second semester (S2) that everyone takes in 9th grade. Each semester is worth five credits.

Your child's middle school math teacher will make an *initial* recommendation for the high school math class your child should register for. However, both Middle School and High School teachers will review student Math scores in late spring, at which time teachers may update their math placement recommendation, which will then be changed on your child's schedule.

Next, determine which *Other Required or Elective Courses* your child should take. Some of these classes are only one semester in length, (e.g., Life Skills, Speech) classes; or, courses requiring 10 credits to meet graduation requirements in: PE 1, Business/Technology and Fine Arts.

Since most freshmen take either *Required Courses* or *Other Courses Required for Graduation*, few freshmen register for *Elective* classes in 9th grade. Generally, these students take Band and Choir at the same time, which means the Fine Arts credit for one of these classes, will drop into the *Elective* category. Another common exception is for students who register to take Spanish. Spanish is an *Elective* class.

You will need to sign the pink registration form and return it along with both Personal Learning Plans to Mr. Harris, or me, **by February 24, 2011**. Remember to also sign the white Personal Learning Plan; your child will give you.

I will be available during Parent/Teacher Conferences to help answer any individual registration questions you may have. However, please feel free to contact me any time if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Kopish
High School Counselor

Commonly Asked Registration Questions

1. What does that little sign (^) in front of a class mean? The little sign (^) in front of a class is my way of letting you know that the class requires a prerequisite.

2. What does prerequisite mean (and how do you say it)? A prerequisite (pre-reck-qwi-zit) means that before your child can take this particular class, s/he must have a certain class to prepare for the prerequisite class, or have a certain grade in a previous class, or have a certain percentile in a previous class, or have the permission of the teacher who will be teaching the class, in order to register for the class. For example, to take Woods 2, students have to take Woods 1, first.

3. What is a core class? Core classes are English, Math, Science, and Social Studies courses. Graduation requirements include these core courses. Our education system expects all students to have basic information in these general areas so they can function well in the real world, on the job, and in college or other post graduate schools.

4. What are required classes needed for graduation? In addition to taking, and passing, core classes, Wahoo High School graduation requirements include classes from other areas like Fine Arts, Business & Industrial Technology, Life Skills and PE. Some of these classes are required because of guidelines set by the Nebraska Department of Education. Other classes are required in order to ensure students receive a balanced, well-rounded education prior to graduating from high school that will aid them in their post-graduate work, training or college planning.

5. What are Elective classes? Electives are optional classes offered to students. Students choose electives because: 1) they need the class to prepare for college; 2) they are interested in the class; 3) because they want to develop a skill; or, 4) they want to explore something new. For example, a lot of Senior girls take Woods 1, so they can learn how to make shelves and other wood products, and learn to handle tools.

6. What is the difference between a technical school and 2-year college? A technical school provides a hands-on type of occupation like auto mechanic, veterinary aide, welding, carpentry, plumbing, cosmetology, hairstyling, massage therapy, computer tech., etc. A 2-year college is similar, but includes required classes in core areas like English and Math. For example, occupations like accounting, business, dental hygiene, criminal justice, journalism, and pre-pharmacy would be courses of study at a 2-year college.

7. Which math class should my child sign up for? Freshmen will take either: Algebra 1, Geometry, or Honors Geometry in 9th grade. Algebra 1 students, who have difficulty in math, will also be enrolled in *Algebra Lab* for additional teacher support. If your child took Algebra 1 in 8th grade, his/her grade will be included on the high school transcript and it will affect his/her high school grade point average (GPA) and class rank. Students who took 8th grade Algebra 1 and excelled may be recommended by math teachers for Honors Geometry. If not, then s/he would take Geometry. Math teachers will review spring testing and student grades and make a final recommendation for math placement in May.

8. Is my child eligible to take Honors Geometry in 9th grade? Math teachers in Middle School and High School will review student test scores in late May to determine what is the best placement for students for high school math.

9. What type of science class should my child sign up for? Students have to take three years of Science in order to graduate. Starting with the Class of 2013, students are required to take General Science, Biology and Chemistry, in that order. Students need to think about what type of post-graduate training they plan to do after graduating high school. Students, who plan to get a Bachelor's degree through a 4-year college program, generally may be required to have 4 years of lab sciences while WHS requires only three years to meet high school graduation requirements. Chemistry involves math problems, so requires a math prerequisite of Algebra 2. This means students have to have already taken Algebra 2 BEFORE they are allowed to take Chemistry. Some students may have to wait until senior year to take Chemistry and complete their science requirement for graduation. This makes it very important for passing Chemistry both first and second semester senior year, or not being eligible to graduate with their class.

10. Should my child take a Foreign Language class in high school? Students planning to get a Bachelor's degree at a 4-year college generally need a minimum of 2 years of the same foreign language class to be **admitted** to the college – taking and passing Spanish 2 and Spanish 3 meets this 2-year entry requirement. Some 4-year colleges require the equivalent of four years of the same high school foreign language to meet the **college's graduation requirement**. This means students need to take four years of high school Spanish, regardless of starting at the Spanish 1 or Spanish 2 level in 9th grade. Currently, WHS does NOT have a foreign language requirement.