

Course Selection Tips (for parents, by parents)

- 1) Attend the Course Selection Presentation by Guidance for great tips, overview, grade specific advice, and navigational help for selecting courses. Links are in Adam's bulletin.
- 2) Have your student go to the Course Fair with questions. Know what they want to ask about because it's very busy. Have your student ask their teacher about their interests and planning.
- 3) Email your current teacher to get feedback on how your student is doing and what they recommend for next year. They know your student and have lots of experience to add context and help guide.
- 4) Talk about course selection/pathways in the parent-teacher interviews so you get a sense of how each course or area of interest can develop.
- 5) Explore as many course descriptions on the Northern website as you can. They can help you discover new directions and Northern's specific way of teaching that course (as opposed to the generic TDSB My Blueprint description).
- 6) Ask the department heads about courses in their department if you don't know a teacher. Ask the department head (ACL) who usually teaches that course and you can ask them directly who is the kind of student who enjoys their class, what does it lead to, what skills does it need and build, etc.
- 7) Electives are very helpful for exploring diverse interests as well as building in mental health breaks. There are SO many in this school - make the most of the opportunity!
- 8) Make appointments with your guidance counsellor to discuss your child's needs and goals (by yourself or with your student). There may be options and strategies you may not be aware of.
- 9) Summer School is a great way to get compulsory options out of the way, to lighten the load for during the year, to explore other options that don't fit during the year (like coop), or work on one thing at a time. Students can get credits from TDSB, TCDSB, or private schools.
- 10) Look ahead at courses for all grades to imagine how things might fit together overall to make sure there is room for your top priorities and balance. Be mindful of prerequisites for Grade 11/12 when planning Grade 10.
- 11) Use every opportunity you can to talk to other parents - School Council Socials, Parent/Teacher Interviews while waiting, SC meetings, Presentations - and you will gain so much from the knowledge, community, and experience that you will find to help you make your own choices. Ask about their course paths, post-secondary planning, extra-curriculars, family life — most are very happy to share, and we are always better together.

Tried and True Parent Hacks:

- 1) Consider taking Civics and Careers in Summer school (TDSB or TCDSB) or as a travel course (Edutrapel) between Grade 9 and 10 so your student can have space for a second elective in Grade 10. It makes for more room to explore, get ahead, or have a spare if needed.
- 2) For the student interested in sciences, take Grade 11 Biology in Grade 10 in tandem with the regular compulsory Grade 10 science. Then in Grade 11 take Physics and Chemistry. This way by the end of Grade 11 the student will have tried all three sciences and can make informed choices for Grade 12. Biology is the course to take in Grade 10 for two reasons: 1) Grade 10 science covers the biology unit first knowing that students take this path and 2) Grade 11 Biology doesn't require any higher level math that Physics needs or the foundational Chemistry that will be covered later in the year in Grade 10 science.

Real Parents' Experience:

- 1) If a student is interested in science and strong at, they could do the tri-sci option for Grade 11 (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) to help determine which ones they want to continue in Grade 12. It is possible to manage all three in Grade 12 as well if a student loves them.
- 2) My student loved the breaks that ceramics and weight fit gave him to balance the more strenuous class loads. It reminded me of the need to build life-long skills and interests as well as plan for post-secondary. High school is such a great opportunity to try things in a more personal environment. I highly doubt he would pursue those for the first time as a young adult in the working world.