



# Organizing a Counseling Department

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## Purpose

The Network for College Success believes that Counselors and College & Career Coaches are school leaders and, therefore, are pivotal to student success. Counseling Departments are responsible for a variety of schoolwide projects and events within the three counseling domains: academic, social-emotional learning, and postsecondary. Developing strong teams requires careful consideration and intentional planning so that Counselors have the capacity to organize around the three domains of work.

## How & When to Use

Tool Set A provides Counselors and other educators with resources to establish effective school Counseling Departments. The Counseling Department Retreat Facilitator's Guide is a sample full-day retreat for team members to reflect on their work from the past school year. The retreat's various activities and protocols can be beneficial for Counseling Departments in any stage of development. Counselors and other educators can also utilize the following presentations and organizing tools to socialize the importance of the counseling work schoolwide as well as set clear roles and responsibilities.



## Organizing a Counseling Department

# Counseling Department Retreat Facilitator's Guide

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The activities in this sample Kelly High School facilitator's guide allowed the team to reflect on the past school year, focus on team dynamics, and set the stage for next year's programming.

# Counseling Department Retreat Facilitator's Guide

Sample from Kelly High School

Topic	Facilitator Notes/Materials & Prep
<b>Part I – 8:30 to 9:00</b>	
<p><b>Welcome and Overview (15 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continental Breakfast</li> <li>• Review Agenda               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Opening Moves</li> <li>◦ Mission/Vision</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Outcomes for the Meeting:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Participate in Team-building Activities</li> <li>◦ Review Community Agreements</li> <li>◦ Reflect on Our Work Conditions- Individually &amp; Collectively</li> <li>◦ Identify Next Steps as a Group</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Group Juggle Protocol from School Reform Initiative (15 minutes)</b></p> <p><b>Purpose</b> To provide a playful opportunity to reflect on group dynamics and collaborative skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiding PowerPoint</li> <li>• Facilitator Agenda</li> <li>• Meeting Agenda</li> <li>• Poster of Agreements</li> <li>• Group Juggle Materials</li> </ul> <p>Ask all participants to write down a student's name and to keep him or her in mind throughout the day.</p> <p>Counseling Department Chair will set the tone, which includes setting purpose for the retreat and intended outcomes. Essentially: Why are we here and what do we hope to achieve at the end of the day?</p> <p><b>Directions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form a circle.</li> <li>• Create a pattern tossing the ball as a team.</li> <li>• One person throws the ball and calls out the name of the receiver. Remember: The thrower will toss the ball to the same person each time.</li> <li>• The group keeps going until everyone has thrown and received the ball once.</li> <li>• The group completes one practice round, throwing the ball in the same order and to the same people.</li> <li>• Ask the group to remember the pattern!</li> <li>• Now, the group completes the round again and the facilitator will continue to add an object each round (until each person has his/her own object to throw).</li> <li>• The goal is for everyone's object to enter all rounds.</li> <li>• When the facilitator counts out loud, "1, 2, 3, STOP," the group needs to stop and see how many objects they have in play. This may happen more than once.</li> </ul>

- After 2 or 3 rounds, ask the group to set a goal of how many objects they can toss (what they believe they can accomplish) and invite them to try again!

**Rules**

- Establish a pattern. Each person must throw to the same person and receive from the same person throughout the activity.
- A toss has a low and high point. A toss is different than a pass or a hand off.
- Objects that fall can be left alone or brought back into play.

**Debrief the Protocol**

- How would you describe your feelings about the Group Juggle from the beginning, middle, and end?
- How would you describe the group's effectiveness at the beginning, middle, and end?
- What did it take for us to be successful as a group?
- As we work to strengthen our learning community, what should we keep in mind?
- What might we do differently with our students as a result of this experiment? What problems were we trying to solve with this activity?
- How did we solve the problems we faced?
- Are there connections between group success in this activity and our work in our school?

**Part II – 9:00 to 9:50**

**Compass Points from the  
School Reform Initiative  
(50 minutes)**

**Purpose:**

Similar to the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory, this exercise uses a set of preferences which relate not to the individual, but to group behaviors. This will help us understand how preferences affect our group work.

**Process**

- The room is set up with four signs on each wall — North, South, East, and West.
- After [reading the description of each direction](#), participants are invited to go to the direction of their choice. No one is only one direction, but everyone should choose one as their predominant one. (5 minutes)
- Each direction group answers the 5 questions on a sheet of newsprint. (10 minutes)
  1. What are the strengths of your style? (4 adjectives)
  2. What are the limitations of your style? (4 adjectives)
  3. What style do you find most difficult to work with and why?
  4. What do people from the other directions or styles need to know about you so you can work together effectively?
  5. What do you value about the other three styles?

- When complete, report back to the whole group. (20 minutes)
- Processing can include (10 minutes):
  - Note the distribution of participants among the directions: what might it mean?
  - What is the best combination for a group to have? Does it matter?
  - How can you avoid being frustrated by another direction?
  - How might you use this exercise with others? Students?

**BREAK – 9:50 to 10:00**

**Part III – 10:00 to 10:20**

**Tarp Protocol (20 minutes)**

**Purpose:**

As a team, participants must stand on the tarp and flip it over without touching the ground. The activity will promote team building and help participants think outside the box when solving issues. The activity will also give diverse voices the opportunity to lead and support the team.

**Setup/Preparation**

- The facilitator explains to participants that the goal of the activity is to identify challenges they are facing and, as a team, symbolically “flip” them over to solutions.
- The facilitator asks each participant to think of one to two challenges. The challenges must be words or phrases, not sentences. Participants will then write down the challenges on strips of masking tape with markers.
- The facilitator asks each participant to write possible solutions on separate pieces of masking tape. The solutions can be specific to the challenge or general problem-solving tactics.
- The facilitator labels one side of the tarp “challenge” and the other side “solution.”
- Participants will tape their strips to the appropriate side.
- The facilitator gives them the opportunity to collectively read both sides. Then, he/she asks them to stand on the challenge side.

	<p><b>Rules</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They need to problem solve together to flip the tarp onto the “solution” side</li> <li>• They can use their hands.</li> <li>• Once they are on the tarp, no one can stand on the floor. Their feet must never leave the tarp. If someone touches the ground, the team starts over.</li> <li>• If you aren’t leading, you have to support and cheer your team on.</li> <li>• You can allocate an open window of time (5-15 minutes) or set the challenge by assigning a specific amount of time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Debriefing</b></p> <p>This activity lends itself well to discussions on achieving success despite the obstacles in our lives. Lifelong success is rarely achieved through chance – instead, the successful make a plan, continually evaluate, then change the plan as needed. When everyone on the team is committed to the plan, success is much more likely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strategies did you apply here to experience success and are any of these strategies applicable to real life situations?</li> <li>• How is this activity just like real life? How is it unlike real life?</li> <li>• How did you like the activity? Would you use it again?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Part IV – 10:20 to 11:50</b></p>	
<p><b>Team Assessment (90 minutes)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each participant completes The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: Team Assessment</li> <li>• Refer to Patrick Lencioni’s <a href="#">website</a></li> <li>• Facilitator tallies assessment results while group watches <a href="#">YouTube video of 5 Dysfunctions of a Team</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>LUNCH – 11:50 to 12:20</b></p>	

## Part V – 12:20 to 12:40

**Change Activity  
(20 minutes)****Purpose:**

To build community among participants and provide context for a discussion about change.

- Invite participants to stand together in a circle.
- Once the circle is formed, invite them to divide into pairs around the circle.
- Partners turn to face and greet each other.
- Invite each pair to turn their bodies and stand back-to-back with one another. Partners then move 2-3 steps apart, remaining back-to-back. Ask partners to be sure that they cannot see one another.
- Once pairs are back-to-back and a few steps apart, say, “*Change 3 things about your appearance. No peeking.*” (Or something that lets the pairs know that they should not look at each other.)
- When everyone has made their three changes, invite pairs to turn back around to face each other so they can identify the 3 changes each partner made.
- Once each pair has done this (and the the giggling has stopped), begin a quick debrief.
- Debriefing questions might include:
  - How was that?
  - What did you notice?
  - How many changes could you identify?

## Part VI – 12:40 to 1:25

**Norms Construction  
(45 Minutes)****Purpose:**

Community agreements, or norms, are more than rules. They are the expectations that hold a team together and create the conditions for effective work.

This is a consensus-building process that uses a series of negotiations to construct norms for a learning community.

- Group reviews current Norms and Agreement:
  - Speak your truth as you know it
  - Stories stay/ practices leave (confidentiality)
  - Suspend judgement
  - Remain solution-focused
  - Everyone’s perspectives and contributions are valued
- Group engages in [Norms Construction Protocol](#)

## BREAK – 1:25 to 1:35

**Part VIII – 1:35 to 1:55**

**YouTube - Dear Young Man  
of Color: Spoken Word  
(20 minutes)**

**Purpose:**

Increase awareness and consciousness of personal interactions with least-reached students. Increase awareness of the population that is being served at Kelly High School. How do we have high expectations for minority students?

After [watching the video](#), ask the group:

- What opportunities does the Counseling Department provide to young men of color to be heard?
- How does the video reflect the voice of the young men at Kelly High School?

**Part IX – 1:55 to 2:10**

**Closing Moves (15 minutes)**

- Closing Connections
- Action Items Review
- Evaluation/Reflection

**Notes:**

**Counseling Department Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Kelly High School Counseling Department is to foster positive school culture through guidance and student development initiatives that will create a positive learning environment for our learners. The Counseling Department supports all individuals through a comprehensive program that will enhance student development and engage each pupil through academic, career, and personal-social domains. Our program is implemented in collaboration with all faculty and staff while complementing the mission of Kelly High School in promoting student achievement.





## Organizing a Counseling Department

# RACI Matrix for a Counseling Department

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A responsibility assignment matrix, also known as a RACI matrix, from Kelly High School that describes the roles and responsibilities of each member of the Counseling Department.

## RACI Matrix for a Counseling Department

Sample from Kelly High School

ASCA DOMAIN	PROJECTS	RESPONSIBLE	ACCOUNTABLE	CONSULTED	INFORMED
ACADEMIC	Freshman	Vonesh	Resendiz/Argyelan	ALL Counselors	Staff
ACADEMIC	Sophomore	Preciado	Moore	ALL Counselors	Staff
ACADEMIC	Junior	Vonesh	Taylor	ALL Counselors	Staff
ACADEMIC	Senior	Preciado	O'Connor/ Argyelan	ALL Counselors	Staff
ACADEMIC	Programming Course Selection	Sokolowska	Argyelan	ALL Counselors	Staff
ACADEMIC	Credit Recovery	ALL Counselors	Taylor	Administration	Staff
ACADEMIC	National ACT Testing	O'Connor	Argyelan	Administration	ALL Counselors
ACADEMIC	AP Testing	Morrison	Buniak	Argyelan	ALL Counselors
<b>SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL</b>					
SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL	Behavioral Health Team	All Counselors	Bejar	ALL Counselors	Administration
SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL	Social and Academ- ic Supports Team	O'Connor/Preciado	Jackson	ALL Counselors	Administration
SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL	Bilingual Supports	Preciado	Torres/Lane	Administration	ALL Counselors
PERSONAL/ SOCIAL	Parent Community Outreach Committee	Vonesh	Bejar/Pui	ALL Counselors	ALL Counselors
<b>COLLEGE/CAREER</b>					
COLLEGE/ CAREER	Naviance Site Manager	Argyelan/O'Con- nor	Flores-Garcia	ALL Counselors	PLT
COLLEGE/ CAREER	Summer Transition	Flores-Garcia	Argyelan	ICAC Advisor	ALL Counselors

ASCA DOMAIN	PROJECTS	RESPONSIBLE	ACCOUNTABLE	CONSULTED	INFORMED
COLLEGE/ CAREER	Postsecondary Leadership Team	Preciado	Flores-Garcia	ALL Counselors	Administration
COLLEGE/ CAREER	FAFSA	Flores-Garcia	College Advisor	ALL Counselors	PLT
COLLEGE/ CAREER	College Applica- tions	ALL Counselors	Flores-Garcia	PLT	Administration
COLLEGE/ CAREER	Scholarships	ICAC Advisor	Flores-Garcia	PLT	ALL Counselors
COLLEGE/ CAREER	College Tours	Gear Up	Flores-Garcia	ALL Counselors	Administration
COLLEGE/ CAREER	Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment	Gear Up	Moore	Administration	ALL Counselors

*PLT = Postsecondary Leadership Team*

*ASCA = American School Counselor Association*



## Organizing a Counseling Department

# Care Team Presentation

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A presentation from North-Grand High School on how to develop a Care Team.

# Care Team Presentation

Sample from North-Grand High School

## Why have a Care Team?

- Organized referral system from teachers
  - No more emails
  - No more on-the-fly teacher discussions
  - Access to better information about student functioning in class
- Systems and structures for handling Social/Emotional domain
  - More proactive, less reactive
  - Less students fall through the cracks
  - Shared responsibility for tough student situations
  - More collaboration and holistic approach
- Organize the Social/Emotional resources within the building
  - Counselors
  - Social Worker and Psychologist
  - Community Agencies
  - Chicago Public Schools Contract Workers

## Who is on the team?

- All Counselors (who handle their own caseload)
- A representative from Administration
- Any community partner offering Tier III services to students in the building
- The Diverse Learning Team
  - Case Manager, Social Worker, and Psychologist

## How does it work?

1. Student is referred
2. Student is screened by his/her Counselor
3. Counselor brings student's info to the meeting for a discussion
4. Student is assigned an intervention
5. Student is checked on periodically
6. Staff is informed of intervention student is receiving

## What about crises?

- Students should be directed to a Counselor, Social Worker, or School Nurse immediately if they:
  - Express suicidal thoughts
  - Express violent or homicidal thoughts towards others
  - Experience abuse of any kind (from parent, significant other, peer, etc.)
  - Have no place to sleep tonight
  - Exhibit signs of serious illness or injury

## The Referral

- Student seems to fit into one of the following situations:
  - Experiencing social/emotional problems that may or may not affect his/her behavior and academic performance
  - Experiencing homelessness
  - Experiencing traumatic life events (such as divorce, death of a parent, or pregnancy)
  - Suffering from substance abuse
- Teacher becomes aware of the situation and wishes to refer them to Care Team
- They fill out the Care Team Referral Form

## Sample Care Team Referral Form Questions

- Primary Presenting Issue
- Secondary Presenting Issue
- Explanation of the Problem
- Student Strengths
- Current Interventions Being Used

## The Referral (cont.)

- This form populates a spreadsheet controlled by the Counselors and is checked every week at the Care Team meeting
- Each Counselor sees which (if any) students on his/her caseload have been referred and then begins the screening process
- All Diverse Learners are screened by the Social Worker or Psychologist
- The person who screens the student becomes his/her Care Team Gatekeeper



## The Screeners

- Counselors meet with students to discuss the reason for referral and screen them for eligibility into one of the counseling groups
- Students are screened for three things during the meeting with the Counselor:
  - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (using the Trauma Symptom Inventory)

## The Screeners (cont.)

- Reactive Aggression (using the Multidimensional School Anger Inventory)
- Substance Abuse (using the CRAFFT Screening)
- **CRAFFT** stands for the six keywords in the second section of the assessment (**C**ar, **R**elax, **A**lone, **F**orget, **F**riends, **T**rouble)

## The Screeners (cont.)

- After sitting with the student and filling out the Screener forms, the answers are scored using a website called SharePoint
- These scores are then put into a form used during the discussion process (described below)
- The scores guide, but don't decide, which intervention a student is given
- Each screening form has been provided by Lurie Children's Hospital

## The Discussion at the Care Team Meeting

- Care Team Gatekeeper prepares the Student Discussion Template before the meeting
- The Student Discussion Template is used to guide the discussion and helps the team get the whole picture of how the student is doing

## The Discussion at the Care Team Meeting (cont.)

- The Care Team Gatekeeper presents his/her student and then the group decides the most appropriate intervention
- This step may be quick because the Gatekeeper comes with an intervention ready
- Sometimes, it may take longer if the Gatekeeper is not sure of the best intervention and needs to ask for input from the whole group

## The Discussion at the Care Team Meeting (cont.)

- Once the Care Team has discussed the student, he/she is put into one of the following interventions:
  - Individual Counseling with an outside agency (provided in school)
  - Anger Management or Trauma Group
  - Mentor Group with an outside agency (provided in school)
  - Individual check-in with the Counselor
  - Substance Abuse Group with an outside agency (provided in school)



## Organizing a Counseling Department

# Building a Social and Academic Supports Team

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A presentation from Kelly High School on how to develop a Social and Academic Supports (SAS) Team.

# Building a Social and Academic Supports Team

Sample from Kelly High School

## Social and Academic Supports (SAS) Team

- Collaborative
- Implements Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process
- Builds staff capacity
- Supports a restorative discipline process
- Analyzes and shares schoolwide behavior data



TOOL SET

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Organizing a Counseling Team

### The SAS Team should not:

- Address individual student behavior or social/emotional issues. Individual students should be directed to:
  - Behavioral Health Team
  - Attendance Intervention
  - Dean Support
- Operate as a top-down approach

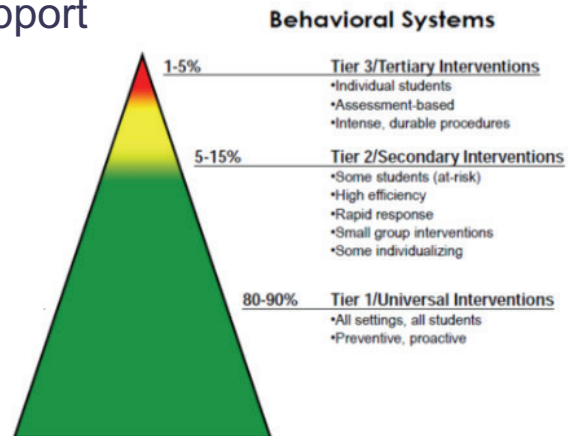
TOOL SET

A

Organizing a Counseling Team

### Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

- Universal Examples
  - Clear Expectations
  - Restorative Practice
  - Tardy Policy



TOOL SET

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Organizing a  
Counseling Team

## Who is on the Team?

- Administrator (at least one)
- Teachers\*
- Diverse Learner Teachers\*
- Dean
- Support Staff (security, main office, lunchroom, etc.)
- Attendance Dean or Monitor
- Social Worker (someone with clinical expertise)
- Data Manager

*\*variety of specialties and levels represented*

TOOL SET

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Organizing a  
Counseling Team

## Team Procedures

- Set year-round goals and plans
- Establish regular meeting rhythm: two times per month
- Provide professional development on how to integrate Social and Academic Supports into schoolwide:
  - Policy
  - Procedures
  - Practice

## Team Procedures (cont.)

- Create, distribute, and assist with universal supports to students
  - Example: Start On-Time Intervention

## The SAS Team and the Behavioral Health Team in Collaboration

- **Social and Academic Supports** – universal support
- **Behavioral Health Team** – secondary team
  - Individualized
  - Targeted

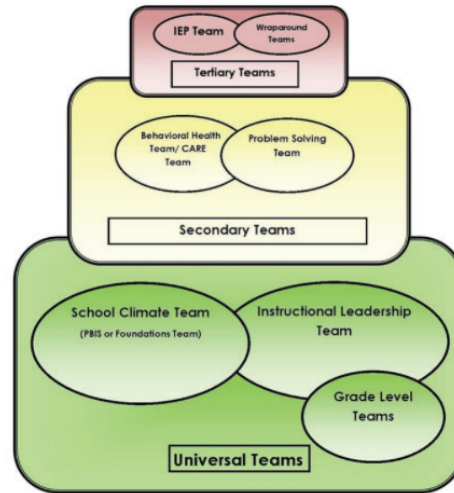


TOOL SET

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### Organizing a Counseling Team

## The SAS Team and the Behavioral Health Team in Collaboration (cont.)



Building School Teams  
POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS TOOLKIT

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## Organizing a Counseling Department

# Course Programming Timeline

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A sample protocol and timeline from Westinghouse College Prep's Counseling Department for programming students for class schedules.

## Course Programming Timeline

### Sample from Westinghouse College Prep

#### Protocol:

##### One Month before Programming

Computer labs should be scheduled by grade level for 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students. One day will be allotted per grade level. Students will take part in programming during their Physical Education classes (9th and 10th grade) and Social Studies classes (11th grade). Teachers should be notified in advance regarding the programming schedule.

##### One Week before Programming

Students should review the graduation requirements in Advisory.

##### During Programming Sessions

1. Counselors review the course options by grade level and then program (schedule) with the class. Each student should create a schedule for the next school year.
2. Once students have completed schedules, they should see their respective Counselor or any available Counselor to review the selections. Counselors should make sure that students have all necessary classes by checking the student transcripts.
3. Once the Counselor has reviewed the program and the transcript together, he/she should double check graduation requirements are being met.

#### Student Prerequisites by Grade:

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##### Rising 10th Grade Students

- Elective courses are not available for 10th grade students
- Each student must take the following courses:
  - English II (unless previous English credits have been earned)
  - Chemistry and Intro to Engineering Design
  - Advanced Placement (AP) World History or World Studies
  - Geometry and/or Algebra/Trigonometry (for accelerated math students only)
  - Physical Education II/Driver's Education or JROTC

### Selective Enrollment:

- Students should continue their World Language course.
- Students should take their first or second year of Fine Arts.
- AP Environmental Science may be available to a small number of Selective Enrollment students who will take the course in addition to Chemistry in lieu of Fine Arts (with teacher permission only).

### College-To-Career:

- College-To-Career students (non-Medical) will begin their College-To-Career Program in 10th grade and must sign up for the corresponding course.
- Medical students will continue the second year of their program and must continue their World Language course.

### Rising 11th Grade Students

- Elective courses are available to Selective Enrollment juniors
- Each student must take the following courses:
  - English III or Advanced Placement Language and Composition
  - Physics (Any additional AP Science or Engineering courses must be taken in conjunction with Physics.)
  - United States History
  - Advanced Algebra/Trigonometry or Pre-Calculus (for accelerated math students or students enrolling in Pre-Calculus over the summer only)
- If students are not enrolled in AP, College-To-Career, JROTC, Anatomy & Physiology, or on a varsity athletic team for one full season: Encourage them to take a 3rd year of a Physical Education course (including dance or weight lifting).

### Selective Enrollment:

- Students are strongly encouraged to continue their World Language course.
- Students should complete the Fine Arts requirement, if possible.
- Students can select one or two elective courses depending on whether the Fine Arts requirement is complete.
- Students cannot sign up for College-To-Career courses.

### College-To-Career:

- Students must make sure to either start their World Language course or start their Fine Arts course.
- Accounting students should take Accounting I and Economics.
- Broadcast students should take Broadcast II and Graphic Arts.
- Information Technology students should take Relational Database I.
- Medical students should take Medical Health I and World Language.

### Rising 12th Grade Students

- Multiple elective courses are available to Selective Enrollment and College-To-Career seniors.
- Each student must take, or is encouraged to take, the following courses:
  - English IV or AP Literature and Composition
  - Pre-Calculus, AP Statistics, or AP Calculus
  - Any of the 12th-grade science courses (recommended to be competitive with other high school graduates)
  - Any of the 12th-grade Social Studies options (recommended to be competitive with other high school graduates)
- If students are not enrolled in AP, College-To-Career, JROTC, Anatomy & Physiology, or on a varsity athletic team for one full season: encourage them to take a 4th year of a Physical Education course (including dance or weight lifting)

### Selective Enrollment:

- Students are encouraged to take a 4th year of a Language course.
- Students must be sure to complete all Chicago Public Schools graduation requirements.

### College-To-Career:

- Students must finish their World Language or Fine Arts requirement.
- Students will take a double period course to fulfill their College-To-Career senior year requirement.
- Medical students may need to take two Fine Arts courses as a senior.
- Students can sign up for additional advanced courses by opting out of a 4th year of Science, Social Studies or Math course.