

NAVIGATING COURSE SELECTION

INSIGHTS FROM THE POST-HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Preparing for specific personal, vocational, or college interests requires careful planning of your course of study. Most colleges require more than the minimum high school graduation requirements for admission. Generally, colleges prefer a traditional college preparatory curriculum that includes the following areas: English (literature and composition courses), mathematics, science, social studies, modern/classical languages. Additionally, all colleges look favorably on elective courses when they supplement a strong academic program. Courses in art, business education, music, applied arts, speech, and theatre offer elective opportunities for New Trier students who wish to enhance the traditional course of study.

Your high school curriculum is crucial as you focus on finding the best match in a college. It is also key to college admission departments when they evaluate candidates. Criteria for college admission vary greatly; however, all colleges focus on the rigor and quality of your high school curriculum.

College admissions research shows that your high school transcript (i.e. grades earned and strength of curriculum) is the most important factor in college admissions decisions. While other elements such as test scores (when required), application essays, letters of recommendation (when required), extracurricular activities and other items play a role in decisions, your transcript will hold the most weight. Accordingly, the effort you put into your classes and the course choices you make matter greatly. Moreover, most colleges and universities examine senior year grades as a part of their admissions process.

Considerations to deliberate when registering for New Trier classes:

- Your schedule should contain a solid foundation of academic courses (English, social studies, math, lab science, foreign language). Colleges check for the volume of traditional academic core along with elective course options pursued.
- The level system is designed to meet the individual needs of students within each discipline. Most common is a four-year academic program that includes a combination of levels. 92.4% of our students take courses at different levels over the course of four years. ([Source](#))
- It's not about fulfilling minimum requirements you need to graduate or get into college - it's about making sure you continue to prepare yourself for the increased challenges ahead.
- 2-3 years of the same foreign language may be required for admission. Language courses completed before 9th grade are not included on your transcript, but colleges assume you completed them. For instance, if you took "French 2," in 9th grade, it is assumed that French 1 occurred in 8th grade.
- Public universities in California (i.e. the UC and CalState campuses) as well as some other state schools require one credit/year of the same visual or performing art. Disciplines that qualify include art, art history, dance, music & theater. Design-based applied arts courses might meet this requirement.

NEW TRIER PHSC

COURSE GUIDELINES

The following are general examples; consult individual college websites for exact details

	NT Grad Requirements	Public Universities	Private 4-Year Colleges & Universities	Highly Selective Colleges
ENGLISH	4 YEARS	4 YEARS	4 YEARS	4 YEARS
MATH	3 YEARS junior high courses do <u>not</u> count	3 - 4 YEARS including junior high courses not on transcript	3 - 4 YEARS including junior high courses not on transcript	4-5 YEARS including jr high courses & enrollment thru senior year
LAB SCIENCE	1 YEAR biology & 1 YEAR physical science	3-4 YEARS	3-4 YEARS	4 YEARS
SOCIAL STUDIES	1 YEAR US history & 1 YEAR global/world history & 1 SEMESTER Civics	3 YEARS	3-4 YEARS	3-4 YEARS
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	NONE	2 YEARS of the same language	2 YEARS of the same language	3-5 YEARS of the same language including jr high courses
ELECTIVES	2 SEMESTERS fine or practical art	IF REQUIRED, 1 YEAR of the same arts course	NONE	NONE
OTHER REQUIREMENTS	Consumer Education & 4 YEARS of KW/Health	1-2 YEARS	2 YEARS	NONE