

# **GUIDANCE GOALS AND SERVICES**

The Guidance Department programs focus on the whole student: emotional, social, physical, vocational and academic. Programs guide students in developing decision-making and leadership skills that will: help them grow into responsible school and community citizens; maximize their academic potential; and assist them with personal, emotional and academic concerns.

As information specialists in career and educational planning, the Guidance Counselors at MHS utilize various formats for disseminating key information and coordinating postsecondary plans with the high school scheduling process. Students receive guidance services beginning in 8th grade when the designated high school counselor makes large group presentations on graduation requirements and high school policies. Group presentations continue over the next four years as counselors visit classrooms at each grade level to update and review pertinent vocational and academic information. The scheduling process also follows a sequence which begins in 8th grade when the counselor meets with each student individually for a brief conference concerning the 9th grade schedule. During the 9th grade year, all students (and interested parents) participate in a two hour small group session designed to explain options for student 4-year plans and to schedule appropriate course choices in accordance with identified postsecondary goals. Similar two-hour group sessions occur in 10th grade where revisions in long-term goals, curriculum adjustments, and selections for the 11th grade year are a major focus. Juniors and seniors meet individually with their counselor as they finalize plans for their last year of high school and prepare for further education or employment following graduation. Many other services and opportunities are offered to students on an ongoing basis throughout their four years. Upon request, counselors supply students with information on colleges, careers, scholarships, awards, summer programs, standardized testing, and college admission testing. Additionally, counselors are available to students for personal counseling, crisis intervention, and referral to community resources.

Merrillville High School's Guidance Department provides its students with a myriad of programs and opportunities for education and career development. State-of-the-art technology and regularly updated "search" software are available for students to utilize at their convenience, as is a comprehensive scholarship file, which is updated every week. The Guidance Department complements these research services by organizing and/or hosting a college fair in the autumn, Financial Aid Night each December, annual career center tours, and regularly scheduled small group student sessions with representatives from numerous colleges and vocational education programs, as well as career seminars featuring community speakers. Also, Merrillville High School is a College Board test site, so the Guidance Department administers a minimum of seven major college admissions exams each school year and participates in the national AP testing program every spring. In addition to the scheduling formats described earlier; a ninety-minute televised scheduling program is aired each year for the entire student body to view during extended homeroom; this format assures universal awareness of the course selection and registration process conducted each spring for all students in grades 9-11.

The Guidance Department deems self-actualization the ultimate goal for each student at Merrillville High School and attempts to acknowledge in various ways those whose efforts are meeting with success. Development of an expanded Honor Roll System, the Student of the Month Program, the annual Awards Night Ceremony, and the awarding of prestigious Academic Honor medals are some of the ways in which Merrillville's Guidance Department salutes individual achievements of the many students they serve.

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