



OLD SAYBROOK HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

I cannot believe I am saying this but planning for the 2019-20 Academic Year has begun! Course selection is an essential part of the high school academic experience and our counselors and teachers work closely with students to ensure they are choosing core classes at the levels that appropriately challenges students academically. This week school counselors have been delivering instructions on choosing courses for the 2019-20 academic year to students in grades 8 – 11. Students in grades 9, 10 and 11 met during X Block to hear instructions and tips on requesting courses and our high school counselors are presenting to current 8th grade students at the middle school on Friday, March 22nd.

Students are expected to utilize the 2019-20 Program of Studies booklet which is designed to assist them in making important, academic decisions. Conversations with parents, teachers and counselors are also an essential part of determining which courses will best meet the needs and goals of each student as they plan their academic journeys. Course descriptions, prerequisite information and CT Career Clusters and coursework relationships are just a few examples of the types of helpful items found in the Program of Studies. It is available on the [Old Saybrook High School Webpage](#) under the "[Guidance and Counseling](#)" tab. Instructions for registering for courses are also found on this page. **All current high school student course requests are to be submitted through the PowerSchool Portal. Current 8th grade students will complete course request sheets received following the course selection presentations on March 22nd. The deadline for submitting course requests is Friday, March 29th.**

Here are some things to keep in mind as courses are being requested:

- Only those courses (including levels) for which students have been recommended by their teachers will be available for selection in Powerschool.
- If a student wishes to request a course for which he/she has not been recommended, he/she should have a direct conversation with his/her current teacher before moving forward with a plan to override a teacher's recommendation.
- All students must schedule at least 6.5 credits of coursework each year. The exception is for seniors who have a *pre-approved*, future-focused plan that allows them to hone in on only those credits needed for graduation combined with internships and/or work and/or volunteer experiences out in the community that support a student's exploration towards post-secondary plans.

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"The mission of the Old Saybrook Public Schools is to educate and prepare students to achieve their highest aspirations, care for others and the environment, and contribute to a global society by working in partnership with families and the community, and by engaging each learner in a rigorous, personalized, and meaningful educational program."

- When considering a desire to have a study hall, all students and parents are reminded that X- Block, which occurs every day, provides some time for homework completion and teacher assistance. Students who need extra help are also expected to stay after school, as teachers are available most days until at least 2:40pm, and often many teachers remain at school well beyond that. Students are only permitted to schedule one study hall if they feel as though they would benefit from a study period in addition to X-Block.
- In any given year courses that are not directly related to graduation requirements are only offered based on enrollment/student interest.
- Ultimately, students should select courses based on their individual needs, and in consideration of the other activities going on in their lives during the academic year.

We also want to remind everyone of our flexible pathways to credit acquisition, as listed in the [Board of Education Graduation Requirements](#) on our website. Students may request pre-approval for course credit towards meeting graduation requirements when planning to engage in robust learning opportunities outside of the school day and school year through accredited institutions. This may be in the form of online learning, as well as courses taken on-site. Students may also earn up to .5 credit for community service hours of 80 or more with some specific parameters.

Construction of the master schedule for the 2019-20 academic year will begin on April 1st so it is imperative that students have all of their course requests submitted **no later than Friday, March 29th**! In June, students, parents and guardians will be notified of the courses that fit into students' schedules based on the development of the master schedule. Additionally, we will communicate when final schedules are complete and ready to view in PowerSchool no later than mid-August. Please feel free to contact the high school guidance office for assistance with course selection or to further discuss course and program planning options.

Thank you for your attention to this information and we look forward to getting started on another fantastic year at OSHS!

Sincerely Yours,



Sheila A. Riffle