

DOINGWHATWORKS



Audio

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Assigning Students to the Right Classes

Crossland High School, Maryland • March 2010

Topic: Helping Students Navigate the Path to College
Practice: Prepare Students Academically

Highlights

- The counselor at Crossland High School explains the importance of registering students for the right classes to prepare them for college.
- The school uses student credit sheets to track students' progress with courses taken and other requirements for graduation. Each year counselors sit down individually with students to plan their academic program for that year.
- Crossland High School communicates to parents and students that the school expects every student to go to college.
- Students that are performing at grade level take honors classes in ninth and tenth grades. In eleventh grade all students take an SAT prep class. In the senior year, the school expects all students to take an Advanced Placement class.

About the Site

Crossland High School

Temple Hills, MD

Demographics

89% Black

8% Hispanic

2% Asian

1% White

66% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

7% English Language Learners

8% Special Education

Crossland High School is a comprehensive public school that serves predominantly African American students and students from low-income families. Several key components drive the school's success, including:

- Offering a rigorous, traditional comprehensive program along with a technical academy;
- Collecting and reviewing achievement data to make student-level decisions;
- Communicating frequently with students, parents, and staff;
- Providing students with a disciplined and safe learning environment;
- Implementing a college-going culture and providing supports to help students attend and succeed in college; and
- Providing direct assistance to students and their families in applying, being accepted, and transitioning to college.

Full Transcript

My name is Brenda Harmon. I am the Counseling Department chair at Crossland High School.

When the students enter in ninth grade, the counselor is responsible to go to the eighth grade before they even come through the door and have articulation meetings with the parents and the teachers and the students. We do evening visitations, and then we go back and register the students. We make it very clear at that time that Crossland High School expects you to go to college.

Every year a counselor sits down individually with the student to review their grade point average, the credits that they have already earned, the course options for that year, whether or not they need to make any behavioral or academic changes such as tutoring, improve their attendance. And then we go ahead and look at the course work that they will be scheduled in for the next year.

We do have an individual learning plan form that we use with every student; we review it every year. That form asks the student: What would you like to study in college? What would you like to be when you grow up? Let's talk about what you need to do in school to attain that goal and what you need to do outside of school, just general interest, to attain that goal and how you can do that.

We use student credit sheets. One is devised for each student when they enter the school, and we use the same sheet throughout their high school career. The counselor is responsible for filling in courses taken, service learning hours met, and any other information that is necessary for graduation requirements.

In the ninth grade, we do not offer any Advanced Placement (AP) courses. We look at the students' test scores and their grade point averages from eighth grade. If they are performing at grade level, they can go ahead into the regular general ed ninth-grade class. If they are performing below grade level in reading or math, they will get an extra reading or math enhancement class as their elective for ninth grade. If they are performing above grade level, then they can be in the honors program. In the tenth grade, we offer our first Advanced Placement class in local, state, and national government [class]. Again, students that are performing below grade level can get some resource classes and some extra help, and students performing above grade level can go into the Advanced Placement class. When we sit down with students in the eleventh grade, they are automatically scheduled into an SAT prep course, one semester of English and one semester of math. That way they work on the content curriculum that is necessary to do well with the SAT as well as talking about how to register for, how to pay for, how to sign, and what the testing environment is like. That is a mandated course by the principal, and all eleventh graders take that. Senior year, senior students are mandated to take a college-prep course where they learn a variety of skills and some information about college. They also can take a lot of AP courses. It is our expectation that every senior be enrolled in at least one AP course before they graduate.

After the counselor has scheduled them in the courses they need for graduation, then if there are any spaces left in their schedule they may choose electives. That's the standard here. We think that the counselors and the staff at Crossland are the academic experts. We will give you all of the information that you need. We are charged with assigning each of the correct classes, and we take that charge very seriously.