

## What Really Works in the Counseling Program at NAHS

Presented by the Northridge Academy High School Guidance Team

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## Presenters from NAHS-- Northridge Academy High School

- Raquel Avila, Family Center Director
- Sharon Bernard, Counselor
- Alex Carmona, Counselor
- John Magaña, Counseling Assistant
- Ana Ortiz Martinez, College Counselor
- Karen M. Matsui, Principal

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## Northridge Academy High School: Who Are We?

- Opened in 2004 with 600 ninth & tenth graders
- Partnership between ESC North, LAUSD Board of Education, and California State University, Northridge (CSUN)
- Currently serving 1,050 students in grades 9-12
- Selection process—Lottery from applicants in the Monroe HS (30%), Cleveland HS (40%), Kennedy HS (15%), and Granada Hills Charter HS (15%) areas.
- 5 Academies
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Bridge Academy
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Exploratory Academy
  - AMC—Arts Media & Communications Academy
  - HHD—Health & Human Development Academy
  - L&L—Leadership & Learning Academy
- Block Schedule with Advisory Period every day for 30 minutes.

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## Who are our students?

### Ethnic Representation

- 0.76% American Indian
- 9.54% Asian
- 4.82% Black
- 65.16% Hispanic
- 19.36% White
- 0% Filipino
- 0.38% Pacific Islander
- 80.64% Comb-Minority

<b>LEP:</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>RFP:</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Gifted:</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Special Ed:</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Title I/SDS:</b>	<b>62%</b>

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## "Inspire and Achieve"

### Our Vision

*"We envision a school where all students value learning and demonstrate integrity, an innovative community recognized for its exceptional academic achievement."*

### Our Mission

*"We are a small high school community in a unique partnership with California State University, Northridge. Our mission is to inspire, support, and expect our students to achieve their fullest potential as learners and productive citizens."*

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## Challenges Faced in Guiding HS Students

"Adolescence is an exciting and challenging time, marked by dramatic changes in physical appearance, cognitive abilities, and social and emotional development. As young people move from the relative simplicity and security of childhood to the complexity and uncertainties of adulthood, they seek peers, role models, and social ideals to guide them through the process. (1) Most adolescents experience some difficulty and confusion during this transition. As a result, they are at greater risk than children for depression, anxiety, substance abuse, violence, self-injurious behavior, and academic failure."

- School Connect—Optimizing the High School Experience

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## How We Guide our Learning Community

### Set Common Goals:

#### Provide Equity and Access for All Students

- Provide critical information and resources to ALL students.
- Help ALL students learn and practice skills for success. Provide guidance and support so students are able to develop independent academic and personal-social skills in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- Encourage ALL students to set goals, plan objectives and benchmarks, and reflect on practices.
- Facilitate building of the school culture as well as individual identity while providing students with personalized advisement.

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## What are the foundational parts of our NAHS culture?

- > ESLRs—Expected School-wide Learning Results
- > LCP's—Learning Conversation Principles
  - Listen* with intent to understand, rather than respond.
  - Open your mind* to new learning and practice.
  - Invite* differences and move away from "either/or". Embrace "and".
  - Wonder* in front of each other.
  - Assume* and exhibit good will.
- Adapted from the work of Sue Miller Heerst by Cherie Barker-Reid and Karen M. Matsui, 2002
- > Character Counts!™—Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring & Citizenship
- > Advisory Program and Portfolio Development

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## Personalizing the HS Experience

### Define Roles that Personalize the Relationship with the Students

*"The Human Relationship is at the Heart of All Learning"*  
- James Cummings

- Provide a safe place where students can find the support of caring adults who serve as mentors, role models, and advocates .

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## Why is Personalization Important?



- Studies show that students who have at least one significant adult within their secondary school setting - someone who they trust enough to go to when they need help - most often stay in school and graduate.

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## Personalization: The Approach

### • Student-Centered

The "individual" comes into focus.

- All-Inclusive
- Unconditional
- Nurturing
- Data-Driven

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## And, a few more thoughts about personalization...

- A clear, consistent message is conveyed to all stakeholders about our culture: "Our focus is on learning".
- All stakeholders have high expectations, both academically and social-emotionally.
- Students and adults listen to each other and learn to care and respect each other, over time—through practice.

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## Guidance is both Process and Program

### Guidance as a Process

- (1) To learn about individuals and their needs and the effects of educational experiences on them
- (2) To facilitate improvements and changes in the learning program and environment to better meet individuals' needs efficiently and humanely.

### Guidance as a Program

- (1) Consists of activities and services that aid the individual in making choices, decisions, and problem solving as these relate to personal values and life objectives
- (2) Aimed at helping the person achieve a self-identity and personal adequacy

Guidance is the function of every member of the educational team.

*(From, "Unfocused Kids/Unfocused Counseling" by Keith Anderson)*

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## Who can contribute to the Counseling and Guidance Program?

- ALL Staff—Teachers, Administrators, Plant Mgr. and Facilities Staff, Office Staff, Paraprofessionals, Psychologist, Nurse...
- Counselors and Counseling Assistants
- Counseling Interns from CSUN and other colleges and universities
- College Counselor
- University/College Partners (Community Colleges, CSU's, UC's)
- Business Community Representatives
- Academy Lead Teachers
- ALL Students
  - Leadership Students
  - Link Crew Students
  - H.E.A.R.T.—Peer Mediators
- Family Center Director and Parents
- Speakers (Career Focused, Motivational)...And, More!

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## The Role of Our Family Center

- Help families navigate the educational system.
- Assist in parent/teacher conferences as an advocate.
- Parent representation on decision-making councils.
- Support through fundraising—Friends of NAHS
- Community partners: Law Post, Teen Court
- Targeted support for 1<sup>st</sup> Generation College students
- Guidance starts at home. Building an effective team between parents, students, teachers and support staff is critical to the academic and socio-emotional growth of our students.

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## What we do differently...

- Focus on building teams with our parents:
- Individual Conferences—12<sup>th</sup> gr. & 11R's
- Counselor-Parent Meetings (Evenings)  
i.e. Class of 2016 Graduation Requirements
- Strategy Sessions for At-Risk Students  
(Both Group meetings and Individual Conferences)
- New Parent Orientation Meetings

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## NAHS' Advisory Program

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum  
Personal Advisement from Advisors  
Reflection on Academic Process  
Academy-Focused Exploration  
CSUN Collaborative Projects  
Counselor Presentations

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## The Counselor's Presence in Advisory



### Counselor Presentations

- Develop 4-year plan and Career Pathway
- A-G graduation and college entrance requirements
- Update IGP—Individual Graduation Plan
- Program students for the upcoming school year with goals in mind<sub>SB</sub>

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## Building Resiliency

- Resiliency Research: By helping students identify their personal strengths, significant adults can help them work through pain, setbacks and challenges.

### Seven Resiliencies to Foster in Our Youth toward Adulthood

Insight	Relationships	Initiative
Independence	Creativity	Humor
Morality		

#### References:

- Drs. Sybil and Steven Wolin, Project Resilience, Washington, D.C.
- Bonnie Benard, MSW, Resiliency in Action, Nov., 2006

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## Targeted Focus and Intervention

Counselors: 12<sup>th</sup> Grade and 11R Students  
Counseling Assistant: 10R and 9R Counselees  
Counseling Interns: 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Placed At-Risk

- Intervention for Students in Crisis—Involves the collaboration of all stakeholders—counselors, teachers, parents, school psychologist, support staff and community agencies.
- Total support of each other, especially in high-pressured times of year (Opening and Closing).

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## CSUN-NAHS Mentoring Project

Collaboration with the Dept. of Educational Psychology and Counseling at CSUN

- At-Risk 12<sup>th</sup> grade and 11R students are paired up with a CSUN Mentor/Tutor from EPC 314.
- CSUN student fulfills 10-15 hours of required observation/participation helping out a struggling student, tutoring him/her and sharing best practices of successful students.
- Positive impact on NAHS' graduation rate (94%).

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## Counseling Interns Counselors-in-Training

### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Intervention Project

Data-Driven Process: Identify students with 3 or more Fails. Extensive cum record research conducted, i.e. test scores, teacher comments, previous interventions made.

#### Small Group Intervention (5-7 students):

Focus on study strategies, time management, conflict resolution with teachers and best practices for academic success. Reflection and goal setting.

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## Students as Leaders Student-Led Contributions

- Conflict Resolution—H.E.A.R.T.  
Human Efforts Aimed at Relating Together
- Anti-Bullying Assemblies
- Link Crew and Link-2-4 Connection

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## College Intern Training

- Intern Training
- Individual counseling of students
- Mastering data-driven processes on SIS and ISIS
- Programming students and verifying accuracy of student programs
- Round Table Conferences
- SST—Student Success Team Meetings
- 504 Plan Development

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## Our College Center

- A college-going culture begins from the moment our students step onto the NAHS Campus.



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## College & Career Counselor

- Participation in grade level assemblies
- Visits to each grade level advisory
- Provide individual A-G assessment completion to each student beginning in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
- College & Career Center Newsletter
- College & Career Center Blog

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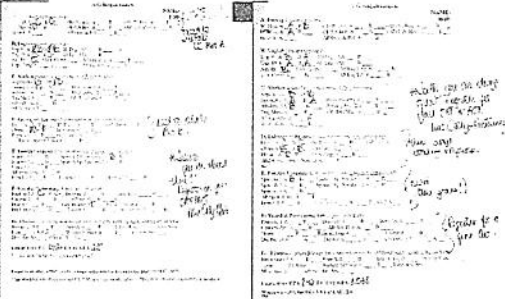
## College and Career Counselor (cont'd)

- Individual one-on-one appointments to complete both College Applications and Financial Aid Application.
- Open access to College Center, before school, Nutrition, Lunch and after school.
- Continuously scheduled college visits, field trips, and parent nights.

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## SAMPLE of individual A-G progress



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## Remember...

Building a collaborative Counseling and Guidance program in a school presents challenges, yet the rewards are many. The collaborative effort of the learning community pays off in a multitude of ways.



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## It takes a Village of Advisors...

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful  
committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed it's the only thing that ever has."  
*Margaret Mead*

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## Thank You for your Participation!

Questions?

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