



Cougar Tails



December 2014

N O R T H P U T N A M H I G H S C H O O L

FINALS WEEK IS UPON US!

As easy as it may be to quickly turn our eyes upon a two week winter break, we must encourage our students to finish this semester strong. With Final Exams beginning on Tuesday, students will need to be well rested and prepared for the final five days of school. Attached to this newsletter you will find a copy of the final exam schedule as well as tips to help prepare for Final Exams.

N P H S L I S T E N S

Earlier this semester we asked for your feedback regarding North Putnam High School's Safe and Collaborative Culture. This survey was one component we use in an effort to continually improve our school. Your responses are important and help us identify areas that our parents and our community see as areas of needed improvement.

The survey that was administered was from Robert Marzano's Handbook for High Reliability Schools, The Next Step in School Reform. North Putnam High School is using this handbook as a reference and a guide as we strive to be the best school in the state. If you would like to learn more about this handbook we encourage you to contact us, and we can guide you in the right direction.

Attached you will find a summary of the parents results on this survey. The school improvement team at North Putnam High School has analyzed this data and are working on how best to implement changes that we believe need to occur based upon the responses we received.

As you may note it was clear that parents and community members rated that they felt as though they had no formal way to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school. In an attempt to quickly address this area of weakness, the committee developed an online space where parents and community members may go to give such feedback. This is step one, as we will be working on providing other means for parents and community members. The link to this online space is at: <http://goo.gl/forms/Rd2GM6z3m8>

Students and Staff had fun at the first Ugly Christmas Sweater Competition on Thursday, December 11th. This was a fun SRT competition that allowed provided some students with some much needed laughter! Thanks to all the teachers and staff members who made this possible, and congratulations to the class winners and overall winner.



Principal
Mr. Jason A. Chew

Assistant Principal
Mr. Levi Yowell

Athletic Director
Mr. John Danaher

Guidance Counselor
Mrs. Lauren Alspaugh

Guidance Counselor
Mr. Jesse Winger

IMPORTANT DATES

December

- 16 Finals Begin
- 19 End of 1st Semester
- 20 Winter Break Begins

January

- 6 2nd Semester Begins
- 7

PROM: May 9
9:00-12:00
Hendricks County
Fairgrounds

Graduation: May 30
11:00 AM



Tuesday, December 16th
Exam 5

1 8:15 - 9:02 47
2 9:07 - 9:54 47
3 9:59 - 10:46 47
4 10:51-12:16
Lunch A 10:46-11:16
Class: 10:51-11:16
Class: 10:51-11:46
6 12:21- 12:59 38
5 1:04- 2:34 90
7 2:39- 3:17 38

Class: 11:21-12:16
Lunch B 11:16-11:46

Class: 11:48-12:16
Lunch C 11:46-12:16

Exam

Wednesday, December 17th
Exams 1 and 4

2 8:15- 9:15 60
1 9:20-10:50 90
3 10:55-12:20
Lunch A 10:50-11:20
Class: 10:55-11:20
Class 10:55-11:50
6 12:25- 12:59 34
4 1:04- 2:34 90
7 2:39- 3:17 38

Exam

Class: 11:23-12:20
Lunch B 11:20-11:50

Class: 11:53-12:20 (57)
Class: 11:53-12:20 (52)
Lunch C 11:50-12:20 (55)

Exam

Thursday, December 18th
Exams 2 and 6

3 8:15- 9:15 60
2 9:20-10:50 90
1 10:55-12:20
Lunch A 10:50-11:20
Class: 10:55-11:20
Class 10:55-11:50
5 12:25- 12:59 34
6 1:04- 2:34 90
7 2:39- 3:17 38

Exam

Class: 11:23-12:20
Lunch B 11:20-11:50

Class: 11:53-12:20 (57)
Class: 11:53-12:20 (52)
Lunch C 11:50-12:20 (55)

Exam

Friday, December 19th
Exams 3 and 7

1 8:15- 9:15 60
3 9:20-10:50 90
2 10:55-12:20
Lunch A 10:50-11:20
Class: 10:55-11:20
Class 10:55-11:50
4 12:25- 12:59 34
7 1:04- 2:34 90
6 2:39- 3:17 38

Exam

Class: 11:23-12:20
Lunch B 11:20-11:50

Class: 11:53-12:20 (57)
Class: 11:53-12:20 (52)
Lunch C 11:50-12:20 (55)

Exam

10 Essential Study Tips for Final Exams

Learn how to create an effective study plan so that you can walk into your tests stress-free and confident.

by *Sierra Tishgart*

There's no sugarcoating it: studying for final exams is extremely painful. These monstrous tests are standing in the way between you and your summer break, but that doesn't mean that you can slack off and sip iced tea by the pool. Now is the time to focus, as these test grades reflect the hard work that you've put in throughout the entire school year. We asked academic experts for their advice on when to begin studying, how to know when it's time to stop, and what to do the morning of an exam.

Understand your goals.

"Students follow a series of requirements, and it becomes very easy to feel like you're simply jumping through a series of hoops as opposed to understanding why that class and that test are relevant to you," says Colin Gruenwald of Kaplan Test Prep. "You have to ask why you're going to invest the time and energy to do well on a test. Why do you intend to be the student who gets an A?"

Prioritize the tests that matter the most.

"It's a mistake to consider all of your finals equal if you're materially better at one subject than another," says Gruenwald. "Some students think that they should commit equal time to studying for each test. They're taking away from their opportunity to really commit time where they need it."

Clarify the content and format of your exams.

"Find out what the test is going to cover," says Ted Dorsey, author of *Tutor Ted's Guide to the SAT*. "Ask what the format is—multiple choice, essay, or both. Once you begin studying, bring any questions you have to your teachers. Most teachers will be happy to help you."

Aim to begin studying at least one month in advance.

"Everyone knows that studying a little bit over a long period of time is absolutely, undeniably the right way to study, and yet we are all terrible at actually putting this plan into effect," says Gruenwald. "The best time to start studying is at the beginning of the class. Set aside a little time each week to sit down and organize your notes and think about what's going well and what's

going badly. Three to four weeks ahead of time is the latest that you want to create a study plan for yourself. Cramming is toxic."

Learn how *you* study best.

"Everyone learns differently," says Dorsey. "Just because your friend makes color-coded outlines, it doesn't mean that's the best way for you to study too. Change the lyrics of a song you know to help you memorize the countries of Africa. Write a funny story about the characters in *The Scarlet Letter*. Any studying is good studying, so do it the way that works best for you."

Take snack breaks.

"When you study, your brain consumes glucose," says Dorsey. "Take a five-minute break every hour to let your body produce more fuel for your studying. Take a walk, have a healthy snack (almonds, fruit, and yogurt are good choices), and stretch. Taking breaks will actually improve your studying."

Know when to stop studying.

"Within 12 to 24 hours of the test, it's time to stop studying," says Gruenwald. "You're not going to learn a lot of new content. The likelihood is much higher that you're going to stress yourself out and confuse yourself. For the last minute studier, flashcards can be a good resource. They can earn you a few more points on test day, and it's a much healthier thing to do than starting on page one of the textbook."

Get a good night's sleep.

"Eight hours is ideal for the night before an exam," says Dorsey. "It may be tempting to stay up late studying, but remember: you're going to need energy and focus while you're taking your exam."

Naturally energize yourself the morning of the test.

"Do something stimulating the morning of the test," says Gruenwald. "Don't sit down and watch a back-to-back marathon of *American Idol*; that's just going to zap your energy level. Instead, read a book, do a crossword puzzle, take your dog for a walk, or get some exercise. Do something that's going to make you feel alive and positive, and will build up your energy level and confidence in the 24 hours before the test. Please, stay away from caffeine and energy drinks! Your hand will shake so that you can't write coherent words, and you may crash in the middle of the test."

Relax.

"You've survived final exams before, and you'll survive them this time too," says Dorsey. "If you're feeling nervous when you sit down to take the test, take three slow, steady breaths. Remind yourself that you've been getting ready for these tests all year long."

High Reliability Schools

A Summary of Parent Perceptions Regarding Leading Indicators for Level 1

Introduction

School parents/guardians at North Putnam High School were asked to respond to an online survey designed to gauge their school's initial status on the first level of the High Reliability Schools (HRS) framework. Level 1 has eight leading indicators which address factors considered to be foundational to any substantive change within a school:

Leading Indicator 1.1: The faculty and staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.

Leading Indicator 1.2: Students, parents, and the community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.

Leading Indicator 1.3: Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.

Leading Indicator 1.4: Teacher teams and collaborative groups meet regularly to interact and address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of all students.

Leading Indicator 1.5: Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.

Leading Indicator 1.6: Students, parents, and the community have formal ways to provide input regarding optimal functioning of our school.

Leading Indicator 1.7: The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.

Leading Indicator 1.8: The fiscal, operational, and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers..

These eight leading indicators provide guidelines for schools wishing to work on the first level of the HRS framework and which are progressing through that level. (For a more thorough discussion of HRS, see Marzano, Warrick, & Simms, 2014)

School Parents/Guardians were asked to anonymously rate their level of agreement with statements related to each leading indicator. The survey had five response choices ordered from greatest disagreement to greatest agreement (numeric values noted in parentheses): strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neither disagree nor agree (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). Personnel were allowed to respond to any statement with a rating of *no knowledge*.

To provide an aggregate summary of respondents' ratings of agreement, three descriptive statistics were calculated from the numeric values: (1) mean, (2) mode, and (3) standard deviation. The mean is the arithmetic average of the numeric values of the respondents' ratings, the mode is the most common value(s) selected by respondents, and standard deviation is a measure of the amount of variation among the numeric values. (For a more detailed discussion, see Technical Note.) It should be noted that ratings of no knowledge were treated as missing and excluded from the descriptive statistics.

Summary

Leading Indicator	Parent/Guardian	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.1: The faculty and staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	4.01	0.12
1.2: Students, parents, and the community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.	3.90	0.27
1.3: Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.	3.68	0.04
1.4: Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of all students.	3.04	0.60
1.5: Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	3.37	0.09
1.6: Students, parents, and the community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.	2.73	0.49
1.7: The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.	3.44	0.10
1.8: The fiscal, operational, and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers.	3.27	0.12

Note. *M* = arithmetic mean; *SD* = standard deviation.



Setting Goals

The middle of the school year is a great time for families to check in with students on goals. Setting academic and personal goals helps motivate, energize, and focus students, and it is a valuable skill that will benefit learners throughout their lives. Parents can help students set and achieve these goals.

Goal-setting can be tedious, even intimidating, for some students. Parents can support students in this process by following these steps: pick it, map it, do it, own it, and celebrate it.

Pick it. Encourage your child to consider his or her dreams and passions and pick goals that are important and meaningful. Guide your child to think about, “What motivates me? What would inspire me to give my best effort? What would make me feel good while I’m doing it? What achievement would make me feel proud?”

Map it. After your child picks a goal, help map the path from where he or she is now to where the child wants to be. Offer the following analogy: If we want to drive across the country from New York to California, we don’t just get in our car and start driving—we get a map, pick a route, and follow it until we get to California.

With your child, analyze different approaches and define clear steps to reach their goal. For instance, if the goal is to get a higher test grade in a tough subject, each quiz or project is a step on the path to the higher goal: earning an A.

Do it. Once you and your child have mapped a path to their goal, encourage him or her to take action, focus on the first step and give it his or her best effort. Remind your child that no goal is ever reached without focused action.

Own it. As your child makes progress toward their goal, help him or her to take responsibility for making it happen. Teach the mantra, “If it’s to be, it’s up to me!” Reflect with your child. Ask, “How are you doing? What’s

working? What’s not working? What can you or your family change to get to this goal?” From there, analyze the map, and make changes to the plan if necessary.



Help your child keep a positive attitude and own mistakes as well as successes. Remind your child that if something comes along that holds him or her back temporarily, to look at the experience as feedback. Failures, or bumps in the road, can provide us with information we need to succeed. Reinforce the message that we can learn from our mistakes and move on with new, valuable knowledge.

Celebrate it. Acknowledgment and celebration are huge parts of achieving goals. Acknowledge every effort and celebrate your child’s mini-successes along the way to achieving a goal. This builds his or her confidence and motivation. Your child will feel good and understand that perseverance will result in another mini-success and finally goal achievement.

Try going through the goal-setting process as a family. Pick a family goal (perhaps a charitable activity) and work together to achieve it. After the family experience, have each family member pick a personal goal. Support and acknowledge one another as you move through the above steps.

Success is assured when students believe in themselves and in their ability to achieve. Parents are key to helping them believe and succeed.

This Report to Parents was written by Bobbi DePorter of Quantum Learning Network.