

# Things I Wish I Knew

The following is a collection of information shared by parents, current students and NFMHS alumni that details issues and knowledge that they “wished they knew”. If you have more questions or have information to add, please contact the North Fort Myers SAC Chair, Leslie Varsogea. [nfmhssac@gmail.com](mailto:nfmhssac@gmail.com)

## COURSE SELECTION

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The main goals of attending high school include graduating and getting prepared for the path to be taken after high school graduation. Many students will go onto college as well as vocational schools, the military or go directly to work.

TALK TO YOUR COUNSELOR! They are there to help you!

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Registration for classes is conducted in the spring of the previous year. Academic class placements are based on student performance and teacher recommendation. School staffing and teacher assignments are set based upon student requests. Students are asked to indicate elective choices and 3 alternate classes. Students are allowed three weeks prior to the opening of school to review schedules and contact counselors for elective changes. Look for correspondence throughout the summer to minimize schedule changes after classes have begun.

### North Scheduling Requirements

- NFMHS requires Freshman who are not enrolled in the AICE program to take one of the following classes
  - Freshman Leadership
  - JROTC 1
- All NFMHS students are required to take *Intro to Info Tech*. This satisfies the DOE online course requirement and can be used to meet the DOE’s 1.0 credit Practical Art/Fine Art requirement.
- HOPE (Health Opportunities Through Physical Education) or Hope Waiver

### HOPE Course Waivers

HOPE - Health Opportunities through Physical Education

There are several waiver opportunities for the HOPE requirement:

1. JROTC—Two years in a JROTC class satisfies the full one-credit physical education (HOPE) requirement and the full one-credit performing arts requirement.
2. Junior Varsity/Varsity Athletes—Two full seasons of an interscholastic sport at the junior varsity or varsity level waives the full one-credit physical education (HOPE) requirement.
3. Marching Band—One semester of marching band with a grade of “C” or better waives the .5 credit requirement of a physical education activity elective. The student must still take the .5 credit Personal Fitness class to complete the requirement.
4. Dance—One semester of a dance class waives the .5 credit requirement of a physical education activity elective. The student must still take the .5 credit Personal Fitness class to complete the requirement.
5. AICE — A student who completes 7 AICE classes and completes the corresponding AICE exams will receive a HOPE waiver. This is called “completing an AICE curriculum”. The seven AICE classes must include one math/science class, one humanities class, one Language class (usually AICE English Language), Global Perspectives, and any other 3 AICE classes. The student must take the AICE class for the entire year, and complete the attached AICE exam (passing the exam is NOT required).

## **Graduation Requirements**

The School District of Lee County’s Student Progression Plan delineates the rules, processes and procedures which affect student promotion, retention and graduation. It outlines what students must know and be able to do in order to meet the requirements for promotion and graduation from a Lee County school.

[Lee Schools Progression Plan](#)

## **Online Courses**

- Good preparation for college courses which can have major online components or full offerings
- Taking online summer classes can allow students to get ahead in math or science, language arts and open up their schedule to classes they might not otherwise be able to take
- Take classes at your own pace
- Allow for a later start or earlier ending time

## **Highest Level Math Classes**

Guidance counselors can help students identified as candidates for accelerated math and science programs and wish to complete the highest level math and science courses offered at NFMHS. Example, Calculus BC.

Super Blocking (taking more than one math and/or science course)math is a tricky proposition that is not meant for every student. The high school math sequence is SEQUENTIAL and DEVELOPMENTAL. “Super Block” math at NFMHS is carefully screened ahead of time.

## **JROTC**

The Army Junior Officer Training Corps (JROTC) is a program that teaches students character education, student achievement, wellness, leadership, and diversity. It is a cooperative effort between the Army and North Fort Myers High School to produce successful students and citizens, while fostering in our school a more constructive and disciplined learning environment.

[NFMHS JROTC Webpage](#)

**This JROTC/Leadership Education program is a sequenced, 4 year program that provides increased opportunities for college scholarships, advanced rank if enlisting into any service branch, and real world work experience through the volunteer efforts.**

There are four levels of Army Leadership Education and Training classes led by 2012 Golden Apple teacher Command Sergeant Major Billy Lansberry.

Two years in a JROTC class satisfies the full one credit physical education requirement AND the full one-credit performing arts requirement.

Students also have the opportunity to participate in Drill, Raiders, Academic, Color Guard, Exhibition, Leadership and Marksmanship teams as extra-curricular activities.

## **Certification Classes**

NFMHS offers classes that provide Microsoft and Google certifications. These certifications are advantageous for a resume. These certifications can cost over \$100 when offered in a public setting.

- Any certification gained in HS generally expires in 3 years... watch so you can renew if needed

[Industry Certifications at NFMHS](#)

## **College Credit**

If your student is college bound, college credits earned in high school can reduce the amount of years a student goes to school or reduce the load taken each semester so that a student has more time to work or participate in other activities while in college. North Fort Myers High School offers many options for earning college credit while in high school.

Some students earn enough credits (60) during their four years of high school to earn their AA degree. There are three different programs that provide students the opportunity to get college credit prior to high school graduation

## **Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)**

The Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) is an academically rigorous, internationally used, specialized curriculum offered to students in the higher levels of secondary school intended to prepare them for an honors program during tertiary education. The

curriculum is overseen by Cambridge International Examinations which is a branch of Cambridge Assessment and operates globally.

[North Fort Myers High School Cambridge AICE Program](#)

- Watch for expiration deadlines... Ex. If not completed Junior year your Freshman year AICE courses may have to be retaken ( course exams are valid for 26 months)
- There are websites that provide historical tests and grading schemas to help prepare for exams
- Completion of the AICE curriculum requires students to complete a minimum of 7 AICE courses and sit and pass seven exams.
- Although recommended, it is not necessary to take all courses to take an exam which makes it possible for transfer students to earn an AICE diploma in two years.
- AICE exam schedule extends past the last day of school into the middle of June. Be aware of the schedule and make vacation plans accordingly.

### **Advanced Placement (AP)**

Advanced Placement (AP) is a program in the United States and Canada created by the College Board (the makers of the SAT) which offers college-level courses and examinations to high school students. American colleges and universities may grant placement and course credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations. Common AP courses include Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Calculus, Human Geography

### **DUAL ENROLLMENT (DE)**

Dual Enrollment students can take one or more college classes either at North, on the FSW campus, or online. Dual Enrollment saves money because tuition, lab fees, and textbooks are free to high school students. Dual Enrollment offers challenging courses that are guaranteed to transfer to any public Florida College or University and most out-of-state universities.

For more information about eligibility and required PERT/SAT/ACT test scores and GPA for Dual Enrollment please see the FSW website.

## AP, AICE, Dual Enrollment PROs and CONS

Program	Pros	Cons
AP	College credit accepted for many courses dependent on exam grade and particular college requirements	
AICE	AICE diploma adds an additional pathway to earn Bright Futures scholarship in addition to SAT/ACT  Recognized by college admissions as an excellent academic program	College credits may not necessarily apply to a particular program
DE	Classes transfer with relative ease	Some admission officers have stated that AICE and AP classes are often more highly regarded for college admission decisions than DE classes.

## Florida Public Universities and AP/AICE/DE transfer credits

### AA Degree

When earning an AA degree during high school, a student applies as a transfer student and is considered a college junior.

### Entering College as “Freshman”

As a general rule, you may transfer up to 45-60 credits from public/state colleges as part of the credits earned for your college degree from a public Florida university, but it is the prerogative of each college to determine how these transferred credits satisfy a specific degree’s course requirements.

Courses from Florida public community colleges and State University System schools generally adhere to the Statewide Course Numbering System. If the prefix (first three letters) and the last three digits of the course number are the same, then the course is considered equivalent. All AICE/AP/DE courses will transfer as college credit, however, not all courses will necessarily apply toward a General Education or degree requirement.

Even if courses do not count for degree requirements, these credits will still increase one’s standing for course selection, parking passes and other college registration-related activities. Below are links from the University of Florida offering more information about how different courses will transfer. Check with individual colleges for more details.

Exam Credit

[UF Exam Credit](#)

Dual Enrollment Credit

[UF Dual Enrollment Credit](#)

## PARENTS IN THE KNOW

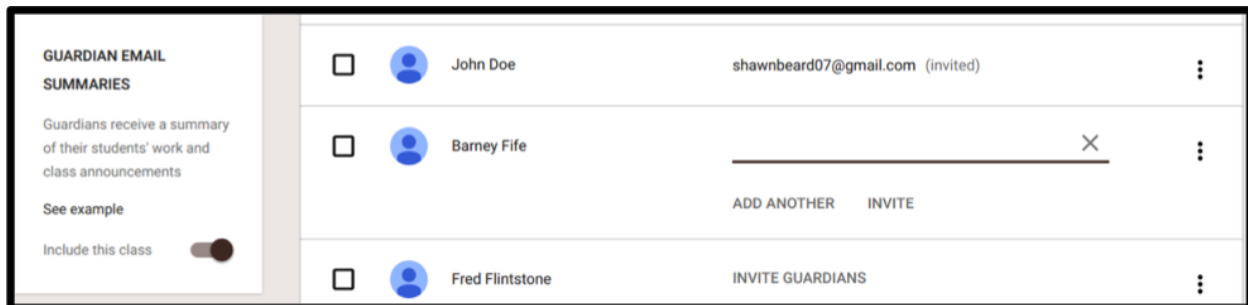
### FOCUS Parent Portal App (SIS - Student Information System)

Focus is the software program Lee County uses for purposes of scheduling, attendance and grade reporting. Lee County's FOCUS Parent Portal provides parents/guardians a real-time view of their child's assignment grades, attendance information, current grade averages in all classes, as well as progress monitoring results. For the protection of your child's confidential information, we have created the following secure procedures for parents/guardians to register for a Focus Parent Portal account online. The link below includes directions to create an account and a link to the Focus Portal.

[Lee County Schools FOCUS Parent Portal](#)

### Google Classroom Parent Notifications

A teacher uses Google Classroom to assign work, and provide feedback to students through Google Classroom, but it is also possible to include parents in the loop. By going to the Students menu on Google Classroom, and clicking the "Invite Guardians" link next to any student's name to add their parent/guardian. Any email address will do—a Gmail account is not required.



Once added, parents/guardians will begin receiving email summaries outlining class activity, including missing work for their student, as well as upcoming work. Parents can choose to receive Daily or Weekly summaries. Once a parent/guardian email address is linked to a student, it is linked for the entire domain/district.

## Peachjar Parent Notifications

A variety of education and youth-related information comes to the district with the request that it be distributed through the schools. The district is committed to increasing engagement throughout the district by notifying students, families and staff of these opportunities. As part of the effort to be more environmentally friendly, embrace innovative technology, and maintain fiscal responsibility, there is a transition from paper to electronic flyer (eflyer) delivery using Peachjar. To ensure smooth delivery of this communication to your inbox, we suggest you add [school@peachjar.com](mailto:school@peachjar.com) to your email contacts. When you receive your first digital flyer, be sure to click “always display images.”

## School Messenger

Shares information about school and district events, student absences and emergency notifications. If you have not yet created an account for SchoolMessenger Communicate, please do so at <https://go.schoolmessenger.com/> **Creating an account will allow North to send you emails and phone calls.**

There is also a way to receive text messages, however under a rule by the Federal Communications Commission you must opt in. The process is simple and only takes a few seconds to complete. Simply text any one of the following words to the number 67587: subscribe, optin, yes

You will know you were successful if you receive the following reply message: You are registered 4 School Messenger notifications. Reply STOP to cancel, HELP for help. Msg&data rates may apply. Msg freq. varies. [schoolmessenger.com/txt](http://schoolmessenger.com/txt)

You will want to repeat the opt-in process for any wireless numbers you wish to include. Please note, although the district does not charge you for this service, it does not pay for text message charges that may be incurred by you for sending or receiving text messages. Check with your wireless carrier for possible charges.

# COLLEGE APPLICATIONS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

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## College Night

If you are interested in going to college, plan to go to college night. This is a special night when several colleges are represented in one place! The district should send out information. Use this link to find helpful information [Lee County Schools College Night](#)

## The College Essay

Your college essay is a personal essay. It is your opportunity to “talk” to the admissions officers. For some colleges it is very heavily weighted and can be the difference between being accepted with a less than perfect academic record or denied with stellar credentials. It needs to be personal and provide examples. For example, if you say something made you mature, you need to give specific examples of how that happened. Remember that admission officers read hundreds, if not thousands of these essays. You need to get their attention in the very first sentence. Your grammar needs to be good, but this is not an English literature paper. Show examples of your perseverance, HOW you came back from adversity. Don’t repeat yourself. Demonstrate how it ties in with the goals of the school.

## Financial Aid Checklist

College is usually more affordable than many families think, thanks to financial aid. The checklists below offer a step-by-step guide to help you navigate the financial aid process and get the most money possible for college. [College Board Financial Aid Checklist](#)

## Financial Aid Night

The district holds a financial aid night in different zones each year. Look for information on this night Junior and Senior year of high school. The following is the link for the district information on Financial Aid Night [Lee County Schools Financial Aid Night](#)

Information Regarding:

- Financial aid timeline
- Types of financial aid available
- FAFSA application process
- Helpful FAFSA hints and tips
- Actions to take after applying
- And more!



## Bright Futures Scholarship

The Bright Futures Merit scholarship is available to all students who meet its academic and volunteer requirements. You can earn as much as 100% tuition and a book allowance at any Florida Public college or university. There are several paths that a student can take to earn Bright Futures at North Fort Myers High School.

Obtain one of the following:

- The AICE Diploma automatically qualifies you for the FAS
- FAS (Pays - 19-20 graduates 1290 SAT Score/29 ACT Score (superscored)  
20-21 graduates 1330 SAT Score/29 ACT Score (superscored)  
With a 3.5 GPA - Weighted High School GPA (4 Eng., 4 Math, 3 Natural Science, 3 Social Science, 2 World Lang. )  
With 100 Sanctioned Volunteer Hours (Hours must be pre approved by school counselor prior to starting them by utilizing the Bright Futures Scholarship Volunteer Form)
- FMS - 19-20 graduates 1170 SAT Score/26 ACT Score (superscored)  
20-21 graduates 1210 SAT Score/25 ACT Score (superscored)  
With a 3.0 GPA - Weighted High School GPA (4 Eng., 4 Math, 3 Natural Science, 3 Social Science, 2 World Lang. )  
With 75 Sanctioned Volunteer Hours (Hours must be pre approved by school counselor prior to starting them by utilizing the Bright Futures Scholarship Volunteer Form)

Students must APPLY for the scholarship by submitting the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) no later than August 31 after high school graduation. If a student does not apply for the scholarship by the deadline, a student cannot receive the scholarship! All eligibility requirements must be met by high school graduation; however, scores of ACT®/SAT®/P.E.R.T. tests taken through June 30 are accepted for evaluation purposes.

For more specific information and award amounts visit the 2019-20 handbook [Bright future Handbook](#)

## FAFSA

**FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and is available on October 1st each year.** In order to be eligible to receive any federal financial aid, all high school seniors planning on pursuing college or career school must file their FAFSA. It is the **ONLY** way to apply for federal student aid. Each year, the federal government provides more than \$150 billion in financial aid, which includes grants, work-study and loans for

college or career school. Many colleges and career schools also use the FAFSA to determine additional financial aid awards, such as state grants and private scholarships. **Filing for FAFSA is essential for students planning on attending college or career school.** For more information and helpful resources visit [FAFSA info and link to complete online](#) To link to the districts FAFSA information visit [Lee Schools FAFSA info](#)

## **Additional Scholarships**

North Fort Myers counseling department puts out a monthly newsletter that will list many scholarships that are available. Use this resource, it is extremely helpful and lists deadlines for each scholarship. Here is the link for this resource [North Fort Myers High School Scholarship and Financial Aid Newsletters](#)

For more information on scholarships visit Scholarships 101. [Lee County Schools Checklist and info 9th-12th grades](#) Please remember, you can start looking at scholarships as early as freshman year!

UCF has a Top 10 Program and NFMHS is an eligible high school. If you are in the top 10% of your class, and meet other basic test scoring and eligibility requirements, you are guaranteed admission and other perks. [Top 10 Knights](#)

Talented 20 program - Students eligible for the Talented Twenty Program have proven academic success in their respective K12 public schools and are guaranteed admission, within space and fiscal limitations, to one of the twelve state universities although it will not necessarily be their school of choice. [Talented 20 Program](#)

## **Advice from Red Knight High School Seniors for Parents and Students**

- Not doing your best during FRESHMAN year can really impact the GPA you have at graduation
- Pay close attention to attendance policy. Missing too many classes will result in lost credit.
- Join a club! You can join most clubs anytime throughout the school year  
To qualify for National Honor Society you will need:
  - Three clubs
  - Three different sources of community service from NONPROFIT organizations
  - 3.0 unweighted GPA

- Pre-order yearbook at the beginning of the year. Announcements will come up throughout the year for it. The earlier you get your yearbook, the cheaper it will be. Follow the Yearbook's Instagram to get updates as well : nfmhs\_yrbk
- If you are interested in sports, contact the head coaches. A list can be found on the school's website. [https://nfm.leeschools.net/our\\_students/AthleticTeams](https://nfm.leeschools.net/our_students/AthleticTeams)  
YOU NEED A SPORTS PHYSICAL TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY SPORTS. Go to your local doctor, clinic, etc. and make sure you get a clearing to do High School sports. [Physical Forms](#)
- Decide if you would like to have credits going into college... AP, AICE, DE
- If you are interested in an Ivy League make sure you look at requirements right away (Ex. Need 3 consecutive years in foreign language)
- JUNIOR YEAR IS MOST IMPORTANT; it is the last year colleges will see on your transcripts.
- Look into Bright Futures requirements and don't wait to earn volunteer hours!
- Start your community service volunteer hours early in your high school career!  
Community Service Hours are required for a number of different things:  
National Honor Society  
Bright Futures Scholarship  
College Resume  
Contact your local organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, boys and girls club, etc. in order to make your community service hours. Some school clubs are able to give you hours. TO HAVE HOURS COUNT -make sure that you get it approved ahead of time and make sure that you are able to receive that credit. To do this fill out community service hour forms from the counselor **before** you do the service activity. [Lee County Schools Requirements and Service Forms](#)
- Start taking the SAT and ACT in Junior year! STUDY! Use Khan Academy
- Formulate a college resume and begin deciding which teachers to get recommendations from
- Apply for FAFSA (Free Application Federal Student Aid) senior year : typically opens Oct. 1
- Complete the FFAA (Florida Financial Aid Application) opens Oct 1. This is a simple application required for Bright Futures.
- Attend College Night put on by the district
- Make a list of potential colleges you are looking at Junior year!  
Look at SAT/ACT/GPA requirements for the schools  
Look to see if recommendations are required  
Look for deadlines (EARLY ADMISSIONS)
- Recommend signing up for the Coalition or Common App- These allow you to complete one application for several schools you apply to. Check the schools you plan to attend to see if they accept either of these applications. For more information on the Common App visit [Common Application](#) For more information on the Coalition App visit [Coalition Application](#)
- Look to see if you qualify for waivers for ACT/SAT/ Admission fees

ACT Eligibility info [ACT Fee Waiver Eligibility Requirements](#)

SAT Eligibility info [SAT Fee Waiver Eligibility Requirements](#)

- Complete a great essay
- Have fun! Join in on some of the following events:

\*Attend sporting events and look for the student section. Sports passes are available throughout the year and are sold for home games. They are not able to be used for entry at away games. There is a website and an app, called GoFan, where you can buy sports tickets online before the game. Instead of waiting in the big ticket line, you can go through a much shorter line and get right in the game.

\*Attend some of the numerous art performances (Prism, Winter concert, Knight on Broadway, One Acts, Junior Musical, Spring Musical, Fall and Spring dance shows, Orchestra shows, Band shows)

\*Wear red on Fridays to show your spirit

\*Get loud at pep rallies to help your class win the spirit stick

\*Help decorate for pep rallies

