



October: The Guidance Column: Next Steps & Fall Momentum

October is officially here! With the first few weeks of school behind us, autumn brings a shift into steady academic momentum. October is a pivotal month across all grade levels—from midterm preparations to college readiness testing, post-secondary exploration, and financial aid planning.

Your Student Advising & Counseling Department is here to ensure you stay on track, manage your workload, and take your next steps with confidence. Reach out or swing by our office anytime!



OCTOBER NEXT STEPS BY GRADE LEVEL



FRESHMEN (CLASS OF 2030): CHECKING YOUR PROGRESS

- Conduct a First-Quarter Grade Check: Review your portal grades. If you notice any struggling subjects, connect with your teachers now for tutoring or office hours before midterm grading locks in.
- Build Your High School Resume: Keep a list of all extracurriculars, volunteering, and sports you've joined this fall. You'll build on this throughout high school!
- Focus on Study Strategies: Experiment with active learning techniques like flashcards, study groups, or the Pomodoro technique to prepare for upcoming unit tests.



SOPHOMORES (CLASS OF 2029): BUILDING YOUR PROFILE

- Practice Testing Readiness: Prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT offered this month. Use Khan Academy or BigFuture for free practice.
- Dual Enrollment Research: Make an appointment with your student advisor if you plan to enroll in college courses for next year.
- Deepen Career Interests: Log into Michigan Career Pathfinder to take an interest assessment and explore high-demand career pathways in our state.

JUNIORS (CLASS OF 2028): THE MIDPOINT PUSH

- **PSAT/NMSQT Testing:** Take the PSAT/NMSQT seriously—it serves as key practice for spring standardized testing and enters you into National Merit Scholarship consideration.
- **Dual Enrollment Course Selection:** Your student advisor will meet with you if you are preparing your Dual Enrollment application and course approvals for the spring college semester.
- **Post-Secondary Exploration:** Use BigFuture to filter colleges by size, location, major, and cost. Create a initial list of 5–10 schools or training programs.
- **Attend Campus Rep Visits:** Check our calendar for visiting college admissions reps, military recruiters, and trade partners stopping by the counseling office this month.

SENIORS (CLASS OF 2027): APPLICATION & FINANCIAL AID LAUNCH

- **Senior Advisor Meetings:** Complete and bring your Senior Meeting Prep Checklist to your individual graduation check meeting with your student advisor.
- **College & Program Applications:** Early Action and Early Decision deadlines (often Nov 1 or Nov 15) are fast approaching. Finalize your essays and application forms.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Confirm that teachers/advisors have all necessary details and forms for any requested recommendation letters (remember to give them 2–3 weeks' notice!).
- **FAFSA & Financial Aid Prep:** Gather required documents for financial aid applications. Look out for local scholarship postings on our counseling board and via email from your student advisor.

THE GUIDANCE COLUMN: MIDTERM STRESS RELIEF & WELLNESS

1. **Break Tasks Into Micro-Steps:** Large projects or multi-page applications feel overwhelming until you break them into 15-minute daily tasks.
2. **Protect Your Sleep Schedule:** Midterm prep can tempt you to pull late nights, but adequate sleep drastically improves memory recall and exam performance.

3. Utilize Campus Resources: Remember that school counselors, student advisors, tutors, and teachers are all part of your advocacy network.
4. Ask for help early!



IMPORTANT DATES THIS MONTH

- [October 14, 2026] – PSAT/NMSQT Test
- [October 26, 2026] – Dual Enrollment Spring Registration Opens (ACC)
- [November 6, 2026] – End of 1st Marking Period / Quarter
- [October 1, 2026] – Financial Aid & FAFSA Night for Senior Families or by appointment
- [October 22 & 23, 2026] – Parent-Teacher Conferences / Half Day Oct. 23

"do not wait until the conditions are perfect to begin. Beginning makes the conditions perfect."

— Alan Cohen