

Seniors and Senior Parents,

Welcome to your Senior Year! We look forward to an outstanding year working together. We will send a Senior Letter in early September outlining necessary steps and a timeline for the school year. We will also have a Senior Meeting with detailed handouts for students and parents in mid-September to discuss the college search process and scholarship processes. I wanted to get a few pieces of information to you immediately as we get started this school year.

1. As we get ready to enter your 12th grade year, I want to answer common questions that Seniors and Senior Parents have at this point in your academic lives. Students must complete 28.0 Carnegie Units in order to receive a diploma. Each semester-long course that is successfully completed is worth 0.5 Carnegie Units, so a student has to have passed 56.0 semester-long courses in order to graduate. Students can take 8.0 Carnegie Units (16.0 classes) per academic year so the majority of students complete more than what is required for graduation.

As you enter 12th grade, remember that in order to graduate, you have to have completed 8 semester long English courses, 6 semester long Math classes, 6 semester long Science classes, and the following Social Studies courses: American History semester 1 and 2, World History semester 1 and 2, Global Affairs, and Government.

I reviewed your graduation progress check sheets at the end of 11th grade, and I will review your graduation progress sheets again in September in order to ensure that you have classes necessary to obtain a diploma in your 12th grade schedule. You also have to have completed Personal Finance and Computer Applications 1 in order to graduate. Our school does not have a "community service" requirement to graduate. If you have any questions or concerns about what you still need to complete, then please reply to this email.

I often get questions related to cluster class requirements and electives. Our school board wants students to have completed course experiences in school-to-work readiness courses, personal/social health courses, or college courses. These courses are labeled as "cluster" courses. I will ensure that you have met the cluster requirements and will have conversations as needed during schedule changes if a student needs a cluster course. The vast majority of students do not have any concerns in getting enough cluster classes as we have a wide variety of classes that meet this requirement.

Elective classes are any other course that a student "elects" to take that does not count towards requirements in Math, Science, Social Studies, English, Personal Finance, or Computer Applications. For example, all music classes are electives. All Spanish classes are electives.

We are going to continue with a block schedule format for the next school year, and you will take 4 semester-long classes for 9 weeks at a time. You will not have the option of taking a study hall next year. All students will have a designated study hall time at the end of the

day. Some students will have select choir rehearsals, yearbook, and weights during that study hall period at the end of the day.

As a 12th grader, you may have 1 open block per quarter. That means you have to account for 12 total classes. An example of a possible schedule would be as follows:

1. Band-all 4 quarters. 2. Senior English-1st quarter. 3. Senior English-2nd quarter. 4. Government 3rd quarter 5. Foods 1 4th quarter. 6. Spanish 4 (1st quarter). 7. Spanish 4 (2nd quarter). 8. Fitness 3rd quarter. 9. Foods 2 4th quarter. 10. Career and Technical Math 1st quarter. 11. Career and Technical Math 2nd quarter. 12. Open Period for 3rd and 4th quarter.

Please remember, if you plan to enroll in a 4-year college, then you need to have completed Chemistry or Physics prior to graduation, foreign language through Spanish 2, and Math through Algebra 2. It is recommended that all students have completed Math through Algebra 2 in order to be college and career ready at graduation.

**If you** plan to enroll in a 4-year college, then you need to have completed the ACT Test as well prior to December, 2022. We do not give that test at Benton Community. You need to go to [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) in order to register. .

If you are currently undecided on a career field (which is normal and common for a lot of 12th graders), then continue to utilize career inventories and have discussions with your parents. Also remember, we have a college and career planning program that is designed for you to customize and use at Naviance. Students, sign into google on your chromebook, Select the 9 dots on the top right hand side and scroll down until you see the purple NA symbol on the top right hand side.

We also have several career inventories listed here: [Career – Benton Community School Counseling \(wordpress.com\)](#)

College search sites can be found here: [College – Benton Community School Counseling \(wordpress.com\)](#)

College visits are encouraged, and we encourage you to visit when classes are in session. We do not put a limit on the amount of visits. Absences are counted as excused absences and parents need to notify the office.

We look forward to working with the class of 2023. Please let me know what questions you have. Thanks!

2. If you need a transcript, email Mrs. Bear at [rbear@benton.k12.ia.us](mailto:rbear@benton.k12.ia.us). We need an electronic

request for recordkeeping purposes. It usually takes at least a week or two between when the request is made and when the college receives your document.

3. If you need class rank and cumulative GPA information for college applications, email Mr. Cretin. It is ok to start working on applications now. We recommend you have applications completed by Thanksgiving.

4. Covid19 Information-Covid continues to impact the college process in unique ways. I strongly encourage you to contact the admissions office of the colleges that you are interested in attending and start to develop a personal relationship with the admissions counselor at that institution. The admissions counselor is your best source of information about if the college has moved to test-optional (no ACT required) and how that will impact scholarship distribution. All things considered, I still recommend that you take an ACT test. I am concerned about you missing out on possible scholarship opportunities if you don't have an ACT.

5. Follow the college's social media accounts, ask them to email you, and contact them with questions.

6. The Iowa College Access Network offers free services. Their website is here: <https://www.icansucceed.org/>. Contact them for all questions related to financial aid. ICAN will also answer general questions about the college admissions process and is a great source of information.

7. I will review all senior transcripts to ensure that student's have the necessary classes in their schedule for graduation, and that process is typically completed by mid-September. Seniors, be diligent in your schedule changes and make sure you keep the required courses in your schedule.

Let me know if you have further questions. Thanks!

Aaron Cretin  
School Counselor  
10th Basketball/Assistant Varsity  
Senior Class Advisor  
Benton Community Schools  
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On Twitter @ACinIowa and @BCHSCounseling  
<https://bentonschoolcounseling.wordpress.com/>