

Dolores Huerta Prep High

Guide to the School of Individualized Learning Program

Getting Started – Orientation Program

First Five Days: The first week of the Individualized Learning Program is spent becoming acclimated to the program. During this week students will have meetings with their advisors and course teachers and will be introduced to the learning model and resources at DPH. During this time students will:

- Meet with their Teacher Advisor to plan their schedule and complete review their Learning Plan.
- Meet with their Cohort. Each student will be a part of a small cohort of students which will meet periodically.
- Register for Classes. A class schedule will be created and students will meet with their course teachers to review the coursework and course materials.

The Teacher Advisor

The teacher advisor acts as a resource and point-person for everything academic. Advisors will assist students plan their studies, semester by semester and will help students pick classes that fit their individualized plan. As students plan and make these choices, the coordinator will help them keep an eye on their goals, high school graduation requirements, and college entry requirements.

At a minimum, students will meet with their advisors monthly – this is dependent upon the plan created for each student; for example graduating seniors will need to meet with their advisors more frequently.

In these regular meetings advisors check on and discuss progress as well as help track credit and activities needed to graduate. Each month advisors receive reports from the student's teachers and will have a current picture of the student's academic progress.

The advisor also serves as sounding board, advocate, and problem solver, creating a positive balance for the independence needed to succeed in the Individualized Program. The advisor will also help students make plans after high school whether it is going on to college or work. The advisor writes references and coordinates references from others. He or she also acts as a liaison for college admission officers, from answering questions about our program and the student to providing transcripts and filling out the school portions of college application forms.

The Student Cohort

Each student will belong to a cohort group consisting of 15 students. The cohort group will meet periodically to discuss student activities, program deadlines, internships, college-related deadlines, and other issues related to student life.

Freshmen Seminar

Required for all freshmen, this first semester class introduces the skills and mindset of a successful DPH Individualized Learning student. The skills learned are common to all seminars and include

developing such basic academic skills as organizing one's work, researching a topic, writing essays and research papers, making clear presentations, learning how to pace work to meet deadlines, and developing discussion skills.

Early College Opportunities

Juniors and seniors can take classes through Pueblo Community College or CSU Pueblo and receive dual credit. Students qualify for admission by passing the ACCUPLACER placement test or successfully completing the pre-requisite reading, writing, and / or math class. Taking classes at PCC or CSU Pueblo are meant to give students access to a community college experience.

Planning and Registering for Classes

Every semester students work with their advisors to review their Learning Plan, check progress toward goals, choose and register for classes. The advisor and student will review the plans the student has for after graduation and will talk about how those plans affect course selection. In a given semester the student will have a myriad of options:

- Take the standard five full classes or more
- Take one class in each discipline – one math class, one history, one science... Or to focus on just one or two disciplines, for example three language arts classes and two science classes.
- To take one or more classes as independent contracts at or outside of DHPH

The student and advisor will work together to incorporate any additional activities that need to fit into the students schedule – sports, music, and / or work.

Registering for Classes

Registration for classes usually takes place two weeks before the new semester starts. For the first semester, registration happens during the first five days of schools; for the second semester, it occurs in Bridge Week, the week between Semester I and Semester II.

Dropping Classes

A student can drop a class at any time during the term, but must inform the coordinator immediately.

Earning Credit

A standard semester long class at DHPH (as at any D60 public high school) receives 0.5 credit; a year-long class gives one credit. Students can earn 3.0 credits each semester, but a student can take up to eight classes and as many independents as he or she can effectively manage. Because of the flexibility of the program the course load can vary.

Online Learning Courses

Students enrolled in online courses will receive credit at the end of a course if they attain a grade of C or higher. Each online course has assessments built into the program – teachers monitor student progress and work with students to master competencies in each course.

Earning Credit for Independent Contracts

Students earn credit for independents when they demonstrate all of the competencies agreed upon in the contract. Because of the flexibility of independents, the amount of credit earned varies, but most independents give 0.5 credit.

How Credit is Recorded

At the end of each semester a student's credits will be entered in the school student information system and will be reflected on that student's transcript. Credit is organized into two types of documents: course histories and transcripts.

Course histories show credit earned by subject area and are used to track student progress while they attend DPHH. Transcripts document student progress toward a high school diploma.

Bridge Week

Students use Bridge Week between the first and second semesters to meet with their advisors to schedule the next semester, catch up on unfinished contracts, and receive tutoring.

Independent Contracts

Students may, with their advisor, design independent classes with a DPHH teacher or with an organization or person outside of the school.

Types of Independent Contracts

There are two types of independent contracts – those with DPHH teachers and those outside of DPHH with other organizations.

With DPHH Teachers

These are the solution for a student who wants to explore a subject not taught at DPHH – for example British Literature, fractals, or collage art. It can also be a way to accommodate a full schedule or learning style. Students work independently with the teacher to make sure the work is meaningful, engaging, and meet competency standards.

Independents Outside DPHH

Students can develop field contracts to learn something outside DPHH with their advisors. Credit is granted through DPHH. These contracts can include:

- Internships at the Museum of Art
- Joining a jazz band
- Taking a class at a community center: piano lessons, dance, martial art...

How Independent Contracts Work

The contract begins with a meeting between the student and teacher advisor. For an independent at DHPH the student, with the help of their advisor, will find a DHPH teacher who will work with them on the class specialty.

To create the contract, the student and the coordinator or teachers discuss the following:

- Curriculum – what the student wants to learn and how they will learn it
- Goals, competencies, and how the student will demonstrate completion of the contract and the learning that's taken place.
- Logistics – the length of the contract; how often the student and teacher will meet; what kind of credit and how much the student will earn.

As the contract proceeds, coordinators check regularly with the student to monitor progress. When the student has completed all work necessary for credit, two evaluations are required to complete the contract: a student self-evaluation and an evaluation of the students' work by the teacher or outside resource person. These evaluations are recorded in the contract and advisors sign off on the contract to determine completion and credit.