

# College Credit Options

## Handbook

### Pine Island High School

SY 2011-12

This handbook has been produced as a resource for parents and students who would like to have the opportunity to earn college credit concurrently while completing their high school diploma. We encourage students to try some form of college credit option and take advantage of the experience while opening doors for their future. Pine Island High School has done much to create opportunities within our building with the hopes that students will stay in Pine Island High School and not leave the high school experience behind. We do not want students to try to take all the offerings we have, but try the ones that are truly of interest to you and will give you a good experience while establishing a feeling for the level of rigor required in college courses. If you have questions, please contact me or my counselor to discuss the opportunities for college credits further.

Kevin Cardille

#### Table of Contents:

College Now	2
College Level Exam Program (CLEP)	2
Advanced Placement Courses (AP)	3
Post Secondary Education Options (PSEO)	3
Articulation Agreements – Vocational	4

Attachment A: CLEP tests available  
Attachment B: Articulated classes

**College Now:**

The College Now program is a college credit option for students in Pine Island High School. The College Now program is a cooperative arrangement with SouthWest Minnesota State University in Marshall. The Pine Island staff that teach these courses are adjunct professors for South-West Minnesota State University, we offer Speech, Literature, Spanish (3 – 4), and Calculus as college courses. Spanish and Calculus are full year courses and the two English classes are semester courses. These courses are transferable to most colleges and universities. There currently is no credit cost to the student. This credit is currently paid for by the district.

**Grading:**

The semester long courses give grades of “P” for passing at the first mid-quarter and first quarter. There is usually not enough feedback from the college to give an appropriate grade. The English courses, semester courses, require that a college professor also check the student work. The time that it takes to mail papers etc. to and from the college is the reason for the P / F grade. For this reason, it is important that students understand that most of the course work is graded in the second quarter of the class and a significant change in grade could come about because of this fact. The year long classes do not have as much college input as to grade and therefore students are given A – F grades each quarter and mid-quarter. Grades are not weighted for GPA sake.

**Transcripts:**

Students are in charge of getting their own transcript from the SW-MN-State. It is important that students keep in touch with the records office and order their transcript from SW-MN-State to be sent to the college of their choice after graduation. This can be done online through the student access to the college.

**College Level Exam Program (CLEP):**

The CLEP option is a process whereby students can take computerized tests to obtain credit for subjects in which they have completed coursework. The testing takes place at the Rochester Community and Technical College. Students may take the tests that are listed in attachment A.

Colleges have the right to set the pass number as they determine. As you can see on the next page, the College Board says that 50 is a passing score. This most often will be the acceptable score for Community Colleges and State Universities. Please check with the college of your choice to determine your target score.

Currently the student is responsible for the cost of the test, which is about \$80.00. Pine Island High School will not receive a copy of the result of the test, that will be given directly to the student after completion of the test. The student will need an official copy sent to their college if they plan to request credit for the test they took. Pine Island High School cannot request or provide verification that a student passed a CLEP test. This must be done through the College Board and requested direct from the student.

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

The Advanced Placement program is a course specific program in which student may test out of college level courses. A school must get pre-approval to list a course as Advanced Placement. Pine Island High School currently has Statistics, Environmental Science, and Biology as approved AP courses.

The curriculum for the AP courses is determined by the AP / College Board. The expectations are high and work load is rigorous. After completion of the coursework we will give the students the opportunity to take the course exam which will give the students college credit if the required score is met. Typically a score of 3, 4 or 5 on 1 – 5 scale is necessary to get credit. The tests are taken in May and the results come back to the school and student in late July.

#### **Grades / Transcripts:**

Students are graded on their daily work by the teacher as in any other class. The course is not weighted for GPA purposes. It is important to note that these courses are more rigorous than other high school courses. Test result transcripts are the responsibility of the student to order and have sent to the college of their choice after graduation.

### **Post Secondary Education Option (PSEO):**

The Post Secondary Education Option is an option for students in Minnesota to take courses at a college or university if they choose. The idea was established for students who attend a smaller school which may not be able to offer some classes that larger schools would be able to offer, physics, calculus, etc. As it is, the opportunity is there for all students to take college courses for any reason they choose. Students need to qualify for the college by GPA and passing pre-screening or placement tests required by the college or university they want to attend. The criteria to enroll in a vocational school are less rigid than a college or university. Some students with not so favorable GPA's do consider a vocational program for PSEO, but those programs often fill up quickly.

#### **PSEO Credits / Transcripts:**

Students can take a maximum of 18 credits from a college or university per semester. Students who take credits from both Pine Island High School and a post secondary school cannot be more than 100% enrolled. For example, juniors and seniors are expected to take 6.5 credits each year. If a student takes 2 credits from PIHS, that would be 31% enrolled at PIHS, they could take the remaining 69% of their credits from the post secondary institution, with 12 credits being a full time PSEO student, they could take 8.5 credits each semester.

*(Note; a three credit college course is equivalent to a .75 high school credits; a four credit college course is equivalent to 1 high school credit.)*

Transcripts from the PSEO college are the responsibility of the student to obtain upon deciding to attend a different college after graduation. Information necessary to order them can usually be found on the college web site and there is typically a fee for the transcript ranging from \$5 - \$10. An official transcript must be mailed to you or the college of your choice from your PSEO college so make sure you plan ahead.

**PSEO sign up:**

It is important that students meet the deadlines for PSEO established by the colleges they choose. Choosing to go PSEO is an agreement between the student (parent) and the college. Pine Island High School does not have a right to college information unless the student signs a waiver for the college to share information with us. Often times students struggle with college because they are not self-motivated and they mistake time without class as free time, not study time. It is important that a student is responsible if they are going to attend college concurrently with high school.

**Semester Overlap:**

Second semester PSEO students who have taken some PIHS classes need to know that they are responsible for completing our first semester classes before going to college. Our semester calendar does not match up with most college calendars, leaving an overlap and a predicament for the student to manage. Usually PIHS staff are willing to allow the student to complete their first semester course as independent study the last week, but it is important that they complete the work in that weeks time. A grade of “0” will be given for work not completed and this will impact the final course grade.

**Required State Tests:**

The State of Minnesota currently requires students to pass a written composition, reading, and math GRAD test to graduate from a Minnesota public school. These tests are given in the spring (April) at the high school. It is important that the PSEO student watches the announcements and daily bulletin online to find out when and plan to attend the test on the day that it is given. It is the duty of the student to inform their college professors if they need to miss their class to take the test. This absence should be excused, but needs to be cleared prior to the test day.

**Articulation Agreements:**

Students may take some classes from Pine Island Vocational subjects and get vocational school credit that can be transferred to the vocational school they choose. A complete list of vocational courses that could provide vocational school credit is provided in Attachment B.