

Electives at the Secondary Level



North Shore Central School District
Presentation to the Board of Education
November 6, 2025

Questions Informing Review

PURPOSE

AVAILABILITY

SELECTION

TRENDS

**STUDENT
PERCEPTIONS**

**TYPE OF
INSTRUCTION**

STRENGTHS

CHALLENGES

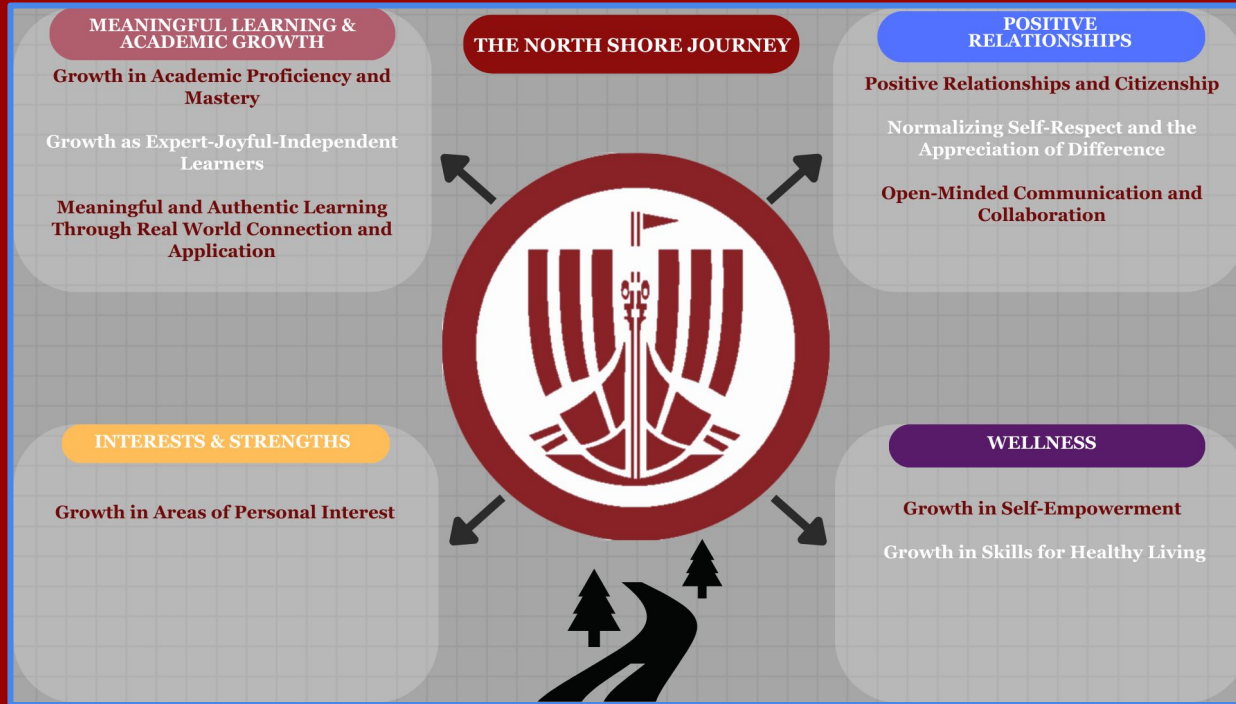
RECOMMENDATIONS

Elective

A **non-required** course in areas such as arts, technology, computer science, journalism, business, and physical education.

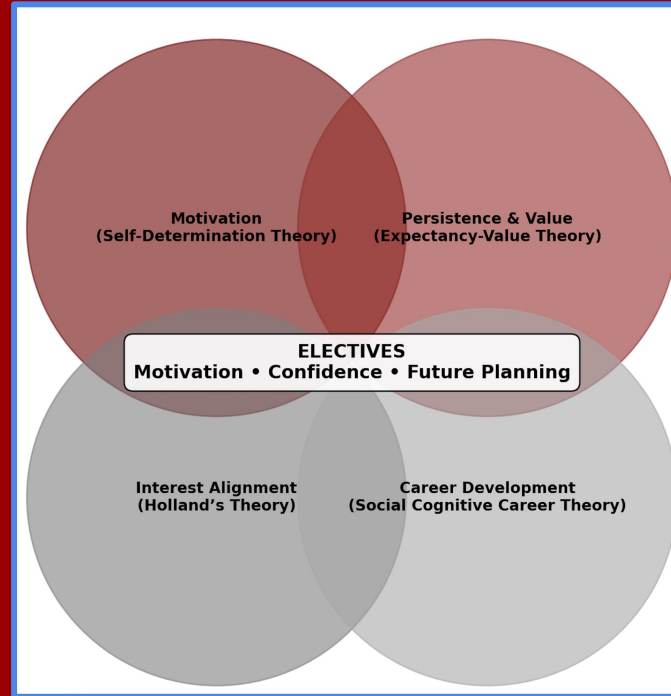


Why Electives Matter ~ North Shore Journey



Electives are uniquely positioned to foster growth with respect to the skills and dispositions of our North Shore Shared Valued Outcomes.

Why Electives Matter ~ Theory



Electives are core learning environments where motivation, confidence, and future planning converge.

Why Electives Matter ~ Empirical Research

- **Developmental Role**
 - Middle school = exploration; High school = pathways
- **Engagement and Attendance**
 - Arts and CTE improve climate and reduce absenteeism
- **Academic Achievement**
 - CTE, music, and arts boost GPA and persistence
 - Technology and computer science build critical thinking and STEM interest
- **Postsecondary Success**
 - Dual Enrollment, AP, IB → higher college outcomes
 - Some electives prepare students for college and career



Electives foster engagement, achievement, and readiness.

Electives at North Shore Middle School

Sixth Grade ~ 11 Electives Including:

- Creative Writing
- LEGO Robotics
- Organic Gardening
- Project Adventure

Seventh Grade ~ 11 Electives Including:

- American Secrets: Spies, Espionage and Treason
- Math Enrichment
- Public Speaking & Debate
- Renewable Revolution

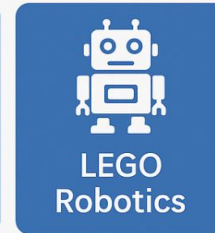
Eighth Grade ~ 22 Electives Including:

- Advanced Physical Education
- Ceramics
- Science Research
- Viking Explorers

Meeting the CTE Requirement



and among



Electives at North Shore High School

Singular Experiences and Pathways

Business

10 Electives Including
Marketing
College Real Estate



English

5 Electives Including
Intro to Film
Journalism



Family and Consumer Science

9 Electives Including
Fashion and Sewing
Culinary Arts



Fine and Performing Arts

26 Electives Including
Orchestra
Photography



Mathematics

2 Electives Including
Math Research
AP Statistics



Physical Education

2 Electives Including
Intro to Sports Medicine
Sports Medicine



Science

5 Electives Including
Intro to Science Research
SUPA Forensics



Social Studies

8 Electives Including
AP Psychology
Theory of Knowledge



Technology

10 Electives Including
AP/IB Computer Science
Advanced Woodworking



World Languages

4 Electives Including
ASL
Heritage Spanish



Elective Processes

Design of Electives

- Collaborative design to meet student needs



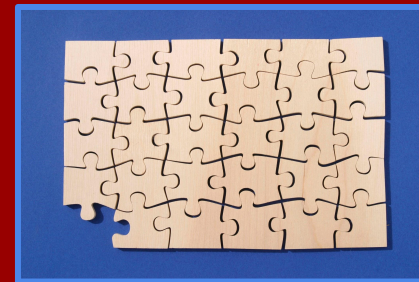
Selection of Electives

- Communication of information
- Support in decision making



Scheduling of Electives

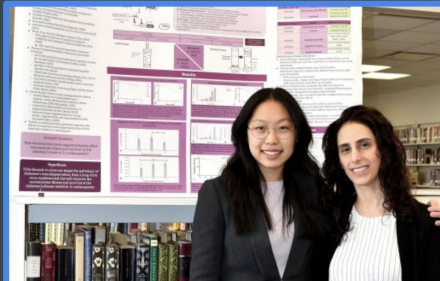
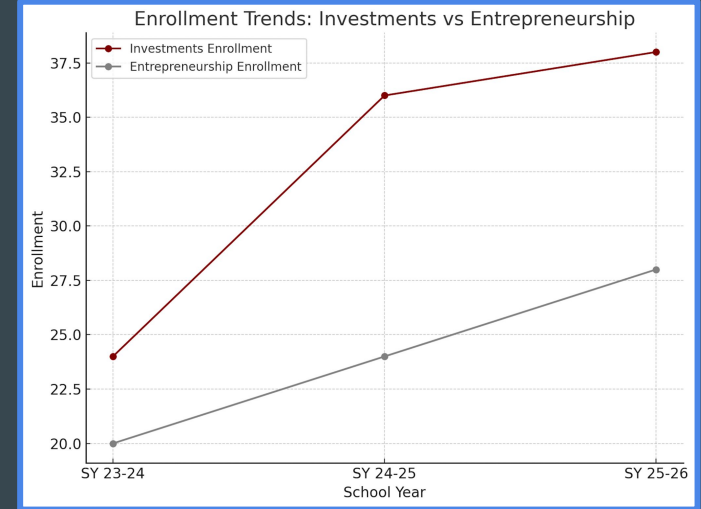
- Decision making about electives
- Design of master schedule



Trends in Enrollment

Growth Areas

- Business
- Music
- Dance
- Photography
- Math and Science Research
- Sports Medicine
- AP Psychology
- ASL



Student Perspectives

Factors Influencing Elective Choices

Middle School

	Frequency	Percentage
Interest in topic	439	84.26
Interest in building a foundation for future career or job	99	19.00
Satisfying a requirement	51	9.79
Wanting to take a course with a particular teacher	36	6.91
Other: Being with friends	7	1.34

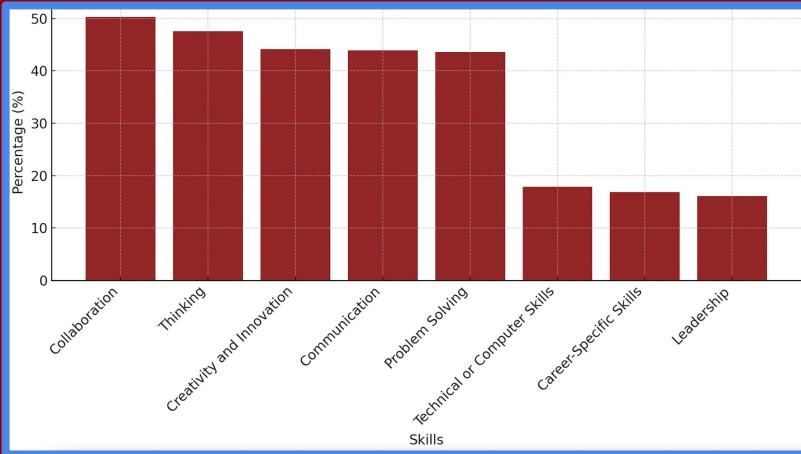
High School

	Frequency	Percentage
Interest in topic	358	83.06
Interest in building a foundation for future career or job	186	43.16
Interest in taking AP, IB, or dual-enrollment courses	116	26.91
Satisfying a requirement for graduation	102	23.67
Wanting to take a course with a particular teacher	64	14.85

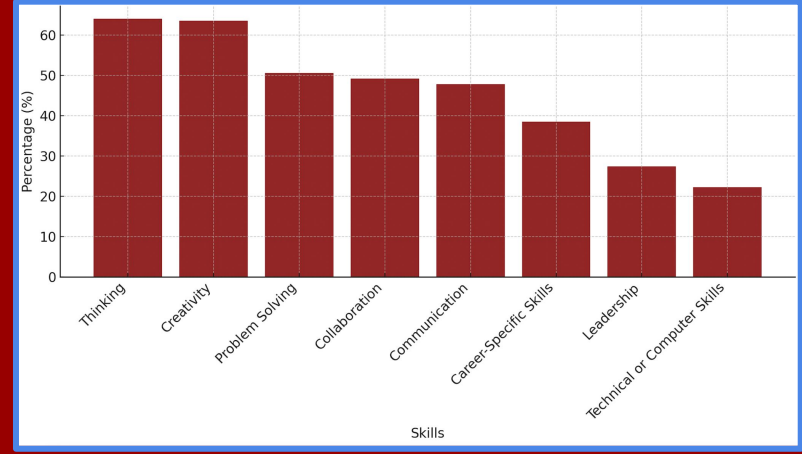
Student Perspectives

Skills Developed

Middle School



High School



Student Perspectives

Middle School

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
In general, I enjoy my elective classes.	0	14 (2.74%)	75 (14.68%)	216 (42.27%)	206 (40.31%)
In general, I am very engaged in my learning during my elective classes.	0	10 (1.94%)	100 (14.92%)	242 (46.99%)	163 (31.65%)
Taking electives has increased my engagement in school overall.	0	20 (3.89%)	134 (26.07%)	229 (44.55%)	130 (25.29%)
Taking electives has helped me discover a new passion or potential career pathway.	4 (0.78%)	73 (14.17%)	206 (40.00%)	152 (29.51%)	80 (15.53%)

High School

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
In general, I enjoy my elective classes.	2 (0.46%)	6 (1.39%)	44 (10.21%)	198 (45.94%)	188 (43.62%)
In general, I am very engaged in my learning during my elective classes.	2 (0.46%)	6 (1.39%)	48 (11.14%)	186 (43.16%)	186 (43.16%)
Taking electives has increased my engagement in school overall.	2 (0.46%)	16 (3.71%)	94 (21.81%)	150 (34.80%)	166 (38.52%)
Taking electives has helped me discover a new passion or potential career pathway.	12 (2.78%)	46 (10.67%)	102 (23.67%)	140 (32.48%)	128 (29.70%)

Student Perspectives

Advice

Middle School

- Create more elective options
- Create more hands-on and outdoor experiences
- Find more time for electives



High School

- Create more elective options, particularly AP courses
- Provide additional access to electives in ninth and tenth grades
- Address scheduling and availability issues
- Address inability to take electives due to support periods

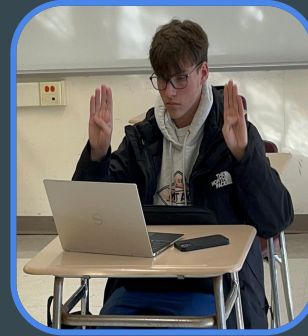
Learning Experiences ~ Journalism



Learning Experiences ~ ASL

Academic Achievement and Growth

- Language Proficiency
- World Language Competitions
- National ASL Honor Society
- Digital Portfolios



Learning Experiences ~ ASL

Real-World Connection and Cultural Engagement

- Cultural field trips to see notable Deaf comedians, entertainers, and storytellers
- Authentic interaction with Deaf individuals in community settings
- Senior Final Projects focused on teaching ASL, raising Deaf awareness and advocating for inclusion



Learning Experiences ~ ASL

Cultural Visibility and School-Wide Impact

- Monthly hallway displays
- Seasonal “Signs of the Month” banners
- Deaf Awareness Month & Deaf History Month
- International Day of Sign Languages
- ASL Day
- Teaching our Kindergartners ASL
- Signing of Pledge of Allegiance at each Board of Education meeting



Learning Experiences ~ ASL

Student Voice

- One of the most welcoming and joyful parts of their day.
- The elective not only challenges them academically, but also supports their personal growth and well-being.

North Shore Journey

- Meaningful learning
- Student well-being
- Cultural inclusivity
- Deeper understanding of communication, identity, and empathy



Learning Experiences ~ Dance

The goal of the North Shore Central School District's Dance Program is to foster a **love of movement** , **creativity** , and **cultural expression** .

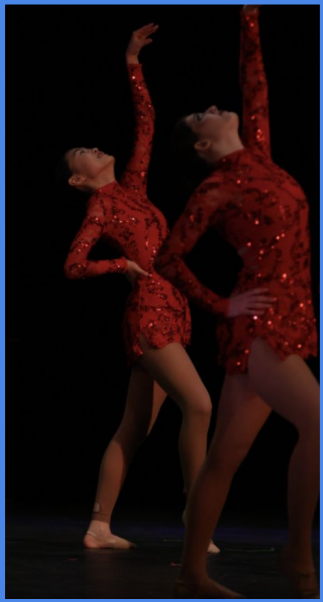
The mission of the department is to inspire students to use dance as a means of self-expression, to develop social and emotional well-being, and to foster an appreciation for the art form. We believe that through meaningful participation in dance, students gain the confidence, resilience, and creativity needed to fully engage with the world around them.



Learning Experiences ~ Dance

The Choreographic Journey: From Foundations to Artistry

PROGRESSION IN CREATIVE VOICE, TECHNIQUE, AND REFLECTION GRADES 8-12



8

Grade 8 - Dance Explorations: *Foundations of Movement and Expression*

Students explore ballet and creative movement through Laban Movement Analysis (Body, Space, Time, Effort and Relationships) to understand how movement conveys meaning.

They grow as *Thinkers* and *Communicators*, embodying *meaningful learning* and student voice through creative exploration.

9

Grade 9 – Conditioning for Dance: *The Science of Movement*

Students connect ballet and modern technique with anatomy and kinesiology, creating choreography based on the kinetic chain and functional body mechanics.

They become *Problem Solvers* and *Innovators*, linking *academic growth* with artistic application in movement creation.

10

Grade 10 – Studio in Dance: *Technique, History, and Interpretation*

Students study ballet's evolution from Classical to Contemporary and Lyrical dance, analyzing master works and re-imagining them in original compositions.

They develop as *Thinkers* and *Collaborators*, engaging in both positive relationships and independent interpretation through historical context and style.

11-12

Grades 11–12 – Advanced Dance: *Artistry, Voice, and Leadership*

Students draw on their cumulative knowledge of creative movement, ballet, modern, jazz, and tap techniques, as well as Laban Movement Analysis, anatomy, and choreographic structure, to design and perform original works that express personal artistry and thematic intent. They apply the technical, creative, and reflective skills developed throughout their dance education to craft pieces for the Senior Portfolio and Showcase, demonstrating growth, authenticity, and expressive voice. As *Committed Individuals*, *Communicators*, and *Innovators*, they embody student well-being, independence, and creative leadership through choreography that transforms learning into performance.

Learning Experiences ~ Dance

Dance Choreography Creation



“In earlier years, we explored choreography through Laban Movement Analysis, using actions like collapse, fall, reach, and recover to express the cycle of creation and destruction. Through experimenting with body shape, weight, and flow, I learned how effort qualities, such as bound versus free or sustained versus sudden, can communicate emotional tension and release. That foundation shaped my understanding of how movement conveys intention and meaning. My senior piece, “The Weight of Trying”, will build upon these concepts, showing transformation through effort, fatigue, and resilience, while using grounded, sustained movement that rises, contracts, and expands to reflect persistence and growth.”

Giada Settino, Grade 12



“Choreographing for the Select Dance Ensemble has taught me how to balance multiple roles, creating and performing pieces, and leading with genuine heart and passion in every piece.

Through classwork, I’ve deepened my understanding of choreography by studying master works, exploring anatomy and kinesiology, and using that knowledge to create movement that is both expressive and structurally strong. These experiences have helped me grow as both an artist and a collaborator.”

Eva Dominguez, Grade 11



“When I start creating a dance, I pull ideas from ballet, jazz, and world dance that we learned in class. Each style gives me a different lens. Ballet teaches control, jazz gives energy and flow, and world dance connects me to culture and emotion. Putting them together helps me create choreography that feels both technical and expressive.”

Olivia Volz, Grade 10

Strengths and Challenges

- Breadth and depth of offerings
- Student-centered design
- CTE alignment
- Real-world relevance
- Advanced courses provide college-level rigor and credit
- Collaborative course design
- Teacher and counselor support
- Careful scheduling

- Limitations imposed by requirements
- Scheduling constraints
- Availability of advanced options
- Upperclassmen engagement
- Systematic review of electives and incorporation of student voice



Recommendations

- Refine and communicate pathways
- Develop systematic review process and incorporate student voice
- Expand access to electives
- Increase access to advanced courses
- Address scheduling challenges
- Innovate through electives



Questions?

Link to Report and High School Course Catalog

[Report](#)

[High School Course Catalog](#)