

COUNSELOR'S UPDATE

National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists for the Class of 2010

The National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists for the Class of 2010 are Paige Doyle, Jonathan Hung, Philip Lai, Katherine Long, and Derek Zhao. Their PSAT scores from October 2008 were in the top one-half of one percent of this state's participants in the exam. As the next step in the scholarship process, these students completed a lengthy application and are now waiting to hear if they will move to the "finalist" phase of the scholarship program. Congratulations to you all!!

Credit retrieval program

Registration for Bellevue School District's credit retrieval is now available; this program allows high school students who have received D's or F's in specific core classes to retake the class in a self-paced program after school at Robinswood High School during spring semester. Classes begin on Monday, February 1st and students can start class the day after they register. Classes run through June 3rd, with registration available until Friday, April 16th.

Summer school information will be posted on our district's website (www.bsd405.org) after spring break. See your counselor for a registration form, starting on April 12th.

Support Services are available!

Tutorial: Although the day's instruction ends at 2:30 pm, all teachers stay in their classrooms until 3:05 pm every day (except Wednesdays) to answer questions that students may have about upcoming assignments. For struggling students, teachers also welcome questions on how to be more successful in the class and can explore study skills and strategies with students during this time.

Extended Tutorial: The library is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:15 – 5:00 for students to complete homework and have the use of the library and the assistance of a teacher. Extended tutorial is also a great time to work with a study group or get upcoming work done before heading home for the evening.

Mentor Program: VIBES mentors are community volunteers who are screened and trained through the Bellevue School District to work with our students. The goal of the mentor program is to help students reach their potential through the extra nurturing inherent in a one-on-one relationship with a mentor. If interested please contact the counseling secretary, Julie Anderson, at andersonj@bsd405.org.

Drug/Alcohol Intervention: Are you concerned that your son or daughter may be using drugs or alcohol? We have an intervention program (called Project Ready) available to help; please contact your student's counselor or email the interventionist team directly at harrij10@spu.edu.

Counselors: We are always available to help students with any academic, social or personal concerns and questions. Counselor assignments (by last name) and contact information:

Mitch Smoller	A-F (seniors A-Gi)	smollerm@bsd405.org
Jerry Bennett	G-Jo (seniors Jo-L)	bennettg@bsd405.org
Debra Miller	Ju-Pa (seniors M-R + Go-He)	millerd@bsd405.org
Maureen Travaille	Pe-Z (seniors S-Z + Hi-Ji)	travaillem@bsd405.org

Update on Class of 2010

Throughout the fall, counselors worked with seniors in classrooms and individually to help them finalize their post-secondary plans. Seniors planning to attend a four year college should be nearing completion of the application process. Seniors planning to attend two year colleges can register for courses once they turn 18 or in June after graduation. Classes at community colleges fill fast, so don't delay! If students are still unsure of what to do after high school, counselors would be happy to explore options – just send us an email.

The next step in the college planning process is to search for and finalize financial aid and apply for scholarships. An introduction to **financial aid** is given in the *Junior College Planning Workbook*, (go to our school's website at <http://schools.bsd405.org/bhs/homepage/>, then click "Counselors" at the top of the page, and then "College Corner" to find the workbook). College specific scholarships are described on each college website; in our office, we have a binder of many other **scholarship** applications that are available to seniors and the scholarship information is duplicated on our website as well (follow the link described above and then, "scholarship list").

To apply for financial aid consideration (and many scholarships), the student and parents must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This application is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. **A free workshop is available to help families fill out the FAFSA and will take place at Interlake High School on January 31st from 2:00 – 4:00 pm.** All seniors will be coming home with a flyer that describes the workshop but more information can be found at www.collegegoalsundaywa.org. For a brief but informative Q+A on the FAFSA, see a 1/16/10 Seattle Times article at http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/businesstechnology/2010797296_pffasfa17.html.

Counselors will be sending midyear reports for students applying to private colleges once first semester grades are posted on transcripts. Public and private colleges will then review and evaluate all applications over the course of the next several months. Seniors are notified of college decisions by April 1 and will be required to commit to a college and send in a deposit by May 1. It is important that all seniors keep up their studying so that they finish the year with strong grades as final transcripts will be sent to the college of their choice!

Community service is a graduation requirement! Paperwork documenting forty hours of community service should be turned in to the Counseling Center as soon as possible. Still trying to complete the forty hours? Go to www.volunteermatch.org to find community service opportunities near you.

Update on Class of 2011

Counselors recently visited junior history classes and distributed the PSAT results as well as a college planning workbook. The workbook is available on our website at <http://schools.bsd405.org/bhs/homepage/>, then click "Counselors" at the top of the page, and then "College Corner" to find the workbook). We gave juniors an overview of the college search and application timeline and provided resources that juniors can use to find colleges that are the "right fit". Students were asked to fill out a college planning questionnaire and the results of that survey will be used to gather students into small groups for more college planning discussions.

Parents and students should refer to the workbook for important information on standardized test dates and upcoming college planning activities and timelines. Highlights of the workbook:

- The recommended time to take the SAT and ACT is spring of the junior year. Registration, payment and test site selection takes place for the SAT at www.collegeboard.com and the ACT at www.act.org. Some of the more selective colleges also require the SAT subject tests and the best time to take these tests is near the completion of the course (e.g., if you are taking AP US History this year, then register for the May or June SAT subject test date). How to study for the SAT? The College Board has designed an individualized study plan for each junior, based on his/her PSAT scores. This study plan can be found at www.collegeboard.com/quickstart (the code to access the plan is printed on each student's score report).
- There are many excellent websites for researching colleges and majors. If you are considering a college visit, all colleges offer admission tours – just call the admissions office ahead of time to register for a tour and/or visitation program. College admission representatives will also be visiting Bellevue High before and after school and during lunch later this spring and next fall; students should check our school's website for the current schedule. Another excellent resource for learning more about specific colleges is the annual spring college fair. This year the fair will be held at Seattle University's Connelly Center on March 6th from 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm. Over 100 colleges from around the country will be represented at the fair.
- Junior year is an important year! Colleges like to see an upward trend in grades and academic rigor throughout high school. Junior year is also a good time to delve into leadership positions with extracurricular activities or become involved in meaningful volunteer programs. Not happy with grades from earlier semesters? Our credit retrieval program runs throughout the spring (see your counselor for more information) and registration for summer school classes will be available after spring break.
- Students may receive high school credit for some middle school courses and spring of junior year is the perfect time to determine whether or not to "bring up" these middle school classes. To do so, students need to complete a form and get the necessary signatures before the end of junior year. **Class rank for seniors is calculated on October 1, 2010** so all middle school-to-high school credit must be completed prior to that date.

Update on Class of 2012

In early December, counselors distributed the PLAN (practice ACT) results to sophomores and explained how to interpret the scores and the interest inventory. We also reviewed graduation requirements and gave an overview of what students can do to be college-ready in two years. The classroom presentation is available on our website at <http://schools.bsd405.org/bhs/homepage/>, then click "Counselors" at the top of the page, and then "Presentations (by grade level)" to find the powerpoint).

It's hard to believe but sophomores are almost half way done with high school! Now is a great time to do a midpoint check: is your student happy with his/her academic progress and grades or does s/he need to practice better study habits? Is your student prepared for the rigors of junior and senior year? Teachers and counselors can help with study skills and strategies – just email us and we can recommend some specific strategies for your student. On another note, colleges and employers appreciate students who are constructively engaged outside the classroom (particularly if it is in a leadership capacity); sophomore year is the perfect time to get involved in a meaningful outside activity, whether it is with one of our school's clubs, our drama or music programs, or a school sport. There are many volunteer opportunities available in our community as well (see www.volunteermatch.org for some ideas). Check out the many extracurricular choices on our school's website or talk with your counselor for more information.

Update on Class of 2013

Freshmen are nearing the half way mark of their first high school year! By now, most students are settled into a good routine but the transition may still be hard for a few students – please let us know if we can help. Several weeks ago, we met with freshmen in their PE classes and explained the support services that are available to students in high school. We talked about the transition experiences of the freshmen year and discussed the importance of finding a healthy balance with school, friends and activities. We also distributed the EXPLORE (practice ACT) results and explained how to interpret the scores and the interest inventory. We reviewed graduation requirements and gave an overview of what students can do to be college-ready in three short years! The classroom presentation is available on our website at <http://schools.bsd405.org/bhs/homepage/>, then click “Counselors” at the top of the page, and then “Presentations (by grade level)” to find the powerpoint).

Second semester is a perfect time for freshmen to explore our school’s club and activity offerings. The drama department has an “all call” musical in the spring (students can stop by room 119 for more information) while Track and Field is a “no cut” spring sport open to all grade and skill levels (pick up a sports registration packet in the Activities Office). We also have many different clubs that meet after school or during lunch and they offer an informal, low key way of getting involved in something new. Check the school bulletin for announcements of upcoming activities and ask your student to stop by the counseling center and pick up a flyer that lists clubs and meeting times/locations. And finally ... for a little quiet study time, encourage your student to check out extended tutorial in the library on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:15 – 5:00 pm. It is the perfect time to get homework help from a teacher or rendezvous with a study buddy or study group!