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Guidance Newsletter

Fall, 2010

Counselors

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Sue Patzer, Guidance
Secretary

Happy Fall from the Guidance Department!

Welcome back to school! We have had a few changes since we left for summer break. As most of you know by now, Mr. Greg Blomgren has joined our administrative

staff as the new Dean of Students. He is a welcome addition to our staff, and we are excited that he is a part of our school. Mrs. Gaideski, who was new to SJHS

last year, is the new Assistant Principal and has accepted even more responsibility with that role. We're very happy she is back!

Testing Information

9TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES MEAP:

Administered on October 20. It is very important that all 9th graders be in attendance on that day.

ACT and SAT: Administered here at the high school on various dates throughout the fall and winter. These are national test dates. Please see side bar for more information.

PSAT/NMSQT: An optional test administered

to interested 10th and 11th graders as a pre-SAT test. Test results allow students to compare themselves to other college bound students. For juniors, it is also the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship. This year's test will be administered on October 16. Test results and interpretive reports should arrive mid-December.

10TH GRADE PLAN:

Administered during the school day on November 10. The PLAN test is a

pre-ACT test and a powerful predictor of success on the ACT, which is broadly used for college entrance and placement decisions. Additional benefits of the PLAN include a career preparation and planning component, as well as academic guidelines which help students develop a coursework plan for their remaining years in high school. Results will arrive after the new year and be distributed to students in their English classes.

Financial Aid Night at SJHS, December 2 @ 7 PM

As students begin thinking about their after high school plans and hopefully considering the investment of a college education, parents begin to wonder how to navigate the financial aid process.

On December 2, a representative from Grand Valley State University's Financial Aid Department will present important financial aid information for parents and students. The presentation will begin at 7 PM in the high school audi-

torium. Although the presentation will primarily address the concerns of junior and senior parents, all are welcome to attend. It's never too early to start planning for your student's college education. Hope to see you there!

EVENING HOURS

4:00-7:00 p.m.

October 14 Wagner
October 21 Schweir
October 28 Tompkins
November 4 Wagner
November 18 Schweir
December 2 Tompkins
December 9 Wagner

TESTING INFORMATION

SAT

*October 9, 2010
November 6, 2010
December 4, 2010
*January 22, 2011
March 12, 2011
May 7, 2011
*June 4, 2011

ACT

September 11, 2010
*October 24, 2010
December 11, 2010
*February 12, 2011
April 9, 2011
*June 11, 2011
*Administered at SJHS

PSAT

October 16, 2010

MME—All Juniors

March 1, 2, 3, 2011

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individually with each senior to discuss future plans—whether it is college, trade school, military

work. Should you and your student have questions or need assistance, please contact the Guidance Office at 926-3210. Our goal

is that every senior have a “plan of action” upon graduation.

Scholarship Information

When scholarship information or applications arrive in the Guidance Office, the information is displayed in the Guidance Office. They are also displayed on the scrolling news and listed on the St. Joseph High School Website:

www.sjschools.org/highschool

Although scholarship information is

received throughout the year, many of our local/community scholarship applications arrive after Winter Break. Please remind your student to come to the Guidance Office to get these scholarship applications.

Scholarship SCAMS – Students/parents who think they may have

been approached by a fraudulent “scholarship organization” or would like more information about scholarships scams may obtain useful information on the Federal Trade Commission’s scholarship scam Website:

www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams

College Application Procedures

The following steps are taken with each college application received in the Guidance Office:

1. Student completes his/her part of the application either paper form or online.
2. If application is completed online, student must print off the “counselor form” to be given to counselor.
3. Student places completed application (either entire paper application or just the counselor form) in college application en-

velope and turns into their counselor.

4. The counselor completes necessary paperwork, includes a copy of the student’s transcript of grades and test scores and mails the materials to the designated college.
5. Please aware of your colleges’ policies regarding ACT/SAT test scores. Some colleges require test scores to be sent directly from the testing company.

Students must allow a minimum of

one week for the application to be processed.

We encourage students to have all college applications in the Guidance Office before Thanksgiving Break in order to be submitted before Winter Break. It is crucial that students be aware of individual college deadlines.

Important reminder: If your student needs a letter of recommendation from a counselor and/or teacher, be sure he/she allows at least one week for the person to write the recommendation.

Need a Tutor?

A list of NHS tutors is available in the Guidance Office. The tutors are listed by subject area.



**NHS Tutoring Available
Every Thursday
3:15—4:00 p.m.
Room 258**

College Reps Visit St. Joseph High School

College admission representatives visit our high school throughout the fall and winter, and juniors and seniors are urged to attend one or several (limit of three) of

these informational meetings for the various colleges. Sign up in the Guidance Office prior to the visit date. Minimum GPA is sometimes a requirement. Check the sign-up

book. Students must pick up their college visit pass before school on the day of the college visit.



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6:30 PM, Choir Room #310 SJHS

excited to present the 2nd Annual College Panel Discussion. As high school counselors, we have questions daily from both parents and students on everything from filling out applications to financial aid and housing. Although we try to provide useful and helpful information, we know hearing from recent graduates and their parents can offer a differ-

active and additional insights.

On Tuesday, January 4, please join us for an informal panel discussion in the Choir Room (#310). After each panelist is introduced, each will answer questions about some important but often not discussed issues surrounding the transition to college—roommates and study-

ing, cars on campus, how often to come home, homesickness, partying—the kinds of questions and answers that students and their parents want to know but sometimes don't ask.

Our hope is that the evening will provide information to help make this transition a little less scary and a lot less bumpy. Hope to see you there.

FAFSA Night, February 10, 6:00—7:30 PM, Room #230 SJHS

On February 10 in Room 230 (computer lab), Lake Michigan College Financial Aid Representatives will assist senior students and their parents with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is the basis for all need based financial aid and the single most important step in securing any federal and state dollars. FAFSA Night is a great opportunity to fill out the sometimes-confusing forms. LMC representatives will be available to answer questions and assist with the application.

Prior to the evening, every student and the primary parent must register for a personal identification number (pin). Please visit www.fafsa.ed.gov to receive your pin number. This number is used every year that a student applies for need based student aid. The online form must be filled out every year between January 1 and March 1.

Please bring tax information with you that evening so you and your student are prepared to fill out and submit the FAFSA application.

There are FAFSA worksheets available online to assist parents and students gather the correct information prior to attending on February 10.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend with your senior. Please contact the guidance office and let us know you are planning to attend so we are sure to have enough computer stations available.

Need Help Studying? Join us for the Rock Star Student Series

\$10 per session & includes a booklet "How to Get Good Grades"

November 16	How to Study Smart 6-7:30 p.m. Room 160
January 27	Need Help With Organization & Time Management? 6-7:30 p.m. Room 253
March 15	The Scoop on Taking Good Notes 6-7:30 p.m. Room 202
May 17	How to Ace Your Exams & Tips for Test Anxiety 6-7:30 p.m. Room 152

Please see your counselor if financial hardship will prevent you from taking a course. Fee waivers are available. Must have at least 15 students to run a session. Class size is limited to 30. Register in the guidance office, checks made payable to St. Joseph High School.

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...you know any appointments or meet some in your classes, get them talking about their experiences in the high school.

2) Prepare yourself for more work. It's time to accept that starting high school means a larger workload. Don't panic: you're building on skills you already have, but you'll be expected to work more independently and you'll have more assignments to tackle.

Start to High School

...ess your study habits. Once received your class requirements, you can take some time at home to figure out when and how much you'll need to study. You may already have great study habits and won't have to adjust all that much, or you may have to cut out some down time to make room for your increased workload.

4) Starting high school marks a new time in your life and there will be many more extracurricular opportu-

nities to choose from. Round out your education by joining a new sport or club to nurture your interests and to make new friends.

5) Ask for help when necessary. If you've done everything you can to start your freshman year the right way and still find that you're having trouble with your grades or adjusting socially, see your guidance counselor. We can help you get you on track or give you additional help for a great freshman year.

Student Ambassadors

Adjusting to a new school can be a stressful event in a student's life. The goal of Student Ambassadors is to help alleviate some of this stress and help new students successfully adjust to St. Joseph High School.

Students serve as Ambassadors, with half being new to St. Joe themselves in the past few years. These students understand what it's like to be the "new kid" and how to make the most out of the high school experience.

Students consistently agree that some of the main fears of a new student include: making new friends, finding their way around the building, understanding how to get involved in sports and clubs, where to go for fun outside of school and what resources are available if they need help, academically, socially or emotionally.

This fall Student Ambassadors personally invited each new student for a walking tour of downtown St. Joe

and then for a tour of the high school building, enjoying refreshments together and planning for additional get-togethers.

Research suggests that the first month of attending a new school is the most difficult. We will be working hard to make sure all students feel welcome to the Bear family and are made aware of the many great activities they can be a part of at our school.

Freshmen Seminars

Counselors recently visited all Freshman English classes and provided general information designed to make the transition to high school easier. Our presentations

included everything from graduation requirements and audit forms to how to handle a stubborn locker that won't open. Students were provided a small packet to take

home with study tips and pointers on how to get the most out of high school. We always enjoy getting into the classrooms and having a chance to interact with out students.

Lory's Place at the High School

We are very fortunate to have facilitators Mary Andres and Amy Peterson from Lory's Place in our high school once a month providing grief support and education to our students.

The group is designed for anyone who has experienced the loss of a parent, friend, family member or

significant other. The students participating in the group come with questions, hurts and hopes, and together they work toward healing. Many of our students who have participated over the past few years express appreciation to have a place where they can share their feelings with people who are going through similar experiences.

Studies suggest that extra support following a loss can help students function better at home and at school. If you know a student who has experienced the loss from the death of a loved one, please call one of the counselors and we will make sure the student is offered the opportunity to join this group.