

COUNSELOR CORNER—FOR JUNIORS



NEMAHA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL



SEPTEMBER 2009

Items Needed: attendance (32), newsletter, PSAT information, booklets, & sign-up, ACT information, transcripts, credit checks

FROM MRS. EVANS...

Your junior year has finally arrived! Some of you are probably thinking, “Wow! I’m half-way there!” while others of you are wondering, “These final years will go fast—what will I do then?” Regardless of your position, many of you are most-likely putting *some* thought into what will follow high school. I encourage you to continue thinking, planning, researching, etc.—these activities will help prepare you for post-secondary life. While YOU are ultimately in charge of YOUR future, I want to play an active role in making it become reality. At this time I want you to be aware of the following resources:

- **SOCS website** www.usd442.org. Mrs. Baker’s Web-Publishing class (a special thanks to Tara Grauer!) has been diligently working to keep the Counselor Corner current. Please visit the site or stop by my office for information related to testing, post-secondary schools, scholarships, etc.
- The **wall** around my office, the **bulletin board** on the west side of the library, and the **daily announcements** contain a wealth of information.
- **If you know of local scholarship providers who would like to speak at Financial Aid/Scholarship Night (scheduled for 12/7/09) or that would like me to speak on their behalf, please contact me at 785.336.3557 or bevans@nvschools.org.**
- **YOU**...base your decisions on what fulfills your needs. Remember, “You are the author of your own life story!” Make it a classic!

REVIEW YOUR HIGH SCHOOL PLAN

Are you striving for a high school diploma? the Qualified Admissions curriculum? Kansas Scholars curriculum? the NCAA curriculum? Whatever your focus, be sure to select your classes accordingly. Students planning to enroll in one of the Kansas Board of Regents Universities (Kansas State, Emporia State, Pittsburg State, Fort Hays State, Wichita State, or the University of Kansas) immediately after high school must **qualify for admission**. To qualify, a student must 1. earn an ACT composite score of 21 or higher, **OR** 2. rank in the top third of their graduating class, **OR** 3. complete the Qualified Admissions curriculum in high school with at least a 2.0 grade point average, **OR** 4. apply for the 10% exceptions window, **OR** 5. complete 24 credit hours with a GPA of 2.0 or better at a community college or non-Regents university. This requirement applies only to these six universities. Details are listed in the NVHS Enrollment Handbook. **NOTE: The Qualified Admissions criteria has recommended changes; see attached.**

Any student planning to participate in athletics at an **NCAA Division I or II school** must meet eligibility standards. He/She must complete core courses and earn a minimum GPA in the NCAA Core Curriculum while in high school. The specific ACT score that must be attained is tied to the student’s GPA. The NCAA uses the sum of the individual ACT subtests (English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning), rather than the Composite score to determine eligibility. Students should see Mrs. Evans if they have questions about their status.

VALEDICTORIAN / SALUTATORIAN REQUIREMENTS

Valedictorian and salutatorian status will be determined based on a student's overall GPA and whether he/she completed the Kansas Scholars Curriculum. In the event there is only one or no KSC completers, the Qualified Admissions Curriculum would be used to recognize valedictorian/salutatorian. In the event there is only one or no QA completers, the Nemaha Valley High School curriculum requirements and class rank would be used to recognize the valedictorian/salutatorian. Ties will not be broken for either the valedictorian/salutatorian honors.

CAREER EXPLORATION

Hopefully, you are using your junior year to continue the career exploration process you started in Career & Life Planning as a sophomore. Since serious decisions have to be made during your senior year (what career field to enter, what type of school to attend, where to go to school, etc), the junior year is the ideal time to gather information and explore options.

THE PSAT

The PSAT is great practice for the SAT; however, keep in mind, the PSAT is shorter. The PSAT will take 2 hours and 10 minutes (total time: about 3 hours) and includes math, critical reading, and writing questions. Additionally, it is the qualifying test for National Merit Scholarships. The 09-10 PSAT test date is **Wednesday, October 14, 2009**. The fee for taking the test is **\$13** (make checks payable to NVHS). The deadline for signing up and paying the fee is **Wednesday, September 16, 2009**.

THE ACT (NV School Code— 172-747)→USE the CODE!

Who and why? Most college-bound students will need to take the ACT (other assessment tests [such as the COMPASS or ASSET] can be used for those entering community colleges or technical schools). ACT scores are important because most colleges and scholarship programs require them. The ACT includes tests in the following areas: English, Math, Reading, Science, and Writing (the writing portion is optional; this score will not affect your Composite).

Test Date Registration Deadline

September 12, 2009	August 7, 2009 (*this is a new test date; don't know if local testing centers will have it available)
October 24, 2009	September 18, 2009
December 12, 2009	November 6, 2009
February 6, 2010	January 5, 2010
April 10, 2010	March 5, 2010
June 12, 2010	May 7, 2010

February, April, and June of the junior year are good times to take the ACT because a great deal of material that may appear on the test will have been covered in the classroom by that time. Additionally, there will still be time to retake the test if necessary. Taking the ACT later than October or December of the senior year may mean that the test scores will not be available in time to apply for some scholarships. Also note that athletic competitions occasionally interfere with the October test date, so athletes should plan accordingly. Area ACT test locations for most test dates include Sabetha, Marysville, Topeka, and Manhattan. The SAT test is also given in October, November, December, January, March, May, and June each year.

About the ACT Writing... An optional Writing test is available on the ACT, in addition to the standard tests in English, Math, Reading, and Science. During the Writing test, students will have 30 minutes to write an essay on a specific topic. Students will receive two scores on the Writing test, which

will NOT affect their scores on the other subtests or their Composite score. In the future, some colleges and scholarship programs WILL REQUIRE students to submit Writing test scores. Check out your post-secondary institutions to see if the Writing portion is a requirement for Fall 2011 admissions. (This is a common requirement for out-of-state admissions.)

How do I prepare? Test preparation does help!

- ACT Preparation booklet •www.actstudent.org •www.number2.com or www.March2Success.com
- Enroll in upper level English, math, and science courses •Practice, practice, practice!

How do I register? Registration packets or online registration information for the ACT (and SAT) is available in Mrs. Evans's office. (Note application deadlines.) The ACT test fee for 09-10 is \$32 or \$47 if you also take the Writing test. There will be a \$21 late fee if you miss the application deadline but apply by the late registration deadline, which extends for about two weeks beyond the regular deadline.

Additional reasons to take the ACT... Students who plan to enroll in dual credit (meaning that it counts for both high school and college credit) College English or College Calculus (offered through Highland Community College) during their senior year **NEED TO QUALIFY** to enroll in these classes. To enroll in **College English**, you must score an 18 or higher on the English section of the ACT **AND** a 17 or higher on the Reading section. OR you must achieve a certain score on the ASSET test. (The ASSET is made by the same company that produces the ACT. It consists of 25 minute tests in areas such as math, English, and reading and is administered by HCC personnel at no charge. The ASSET is scored immediately [in most cases]. The test is typically taken in May, August, or January at the regional office in Sabetha or at NVHS in special circumstances. ASSET scores cannot be used for any purpose other than qualifying for college courses or admission to certain schools, though they typically administer the entrance exam.) A student can earn up to six credits (three credits a semester) through HCC by enrolling in College English. **REMEMBER THIS!**

To enroll in **College Calculus**, you must score at least a 22 on the Math section of the ACT **AND** a 17 or higher on the Reading section. OR you must achieve a certain score on the ASSET test. Many of our seniors take College Calculus for dual credit during the school day. Students take the course for the entire school year but only pay the Highland fees and earn college credit during the *second semester*. The College Calculus credits can then be transferred to the college being attended after high school, thereby *potentially eliminating* the need to take College Algebra or Calculus I. (**NOTE:** Even if you pass Highland's College Calculus class, if you have not taken College Algebra, some colleges may require that you take College Algebra once you get to college, since College Algebra is considered to be a prerequisite course for College Calculus.) Students will not be able to enroll in College Calculus unless they have completed College Algebra, since it is a prerequisite for College Calculus. In the past, though, a very limited number of seniors who have not taken College Algebra have been allowed to enroll in Calculus if they have the instructor's permission **AND** have a very high ACT math score. However, most students wanting to take College Calculus concurrently should plan to complete College Algebra before the second semester of their senior year. Also, be aware that some departments at some universities insist that students take Calculus on campus rather than through Highland, so check with the college you will be attending.

Although **College Algebra** is not offered as a dual credit class, many of our students prefer to take it as an evening class or during the summer through Highland before entering college. Students can qualify to enroll in College Algebra in one of three ways: 1. they can earn at least a 22 on the Math section of the ACT test, or 2. they can earn a certain score on the ASSET test, or 3. take Intermediate Algebra before taking College Algebra. Only students who have not taken high school Algebra I & II (or who cannot earn the required ACT or ASSET test scores) will want to use this option since the course lasts an entire semester, costs nearly \$300, and does not count as a college math class.

NOTE: Stay posted on the status of College Algebra; it *may* hit the NVHS schedule!

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE COURSES FOR DUAL CREDIT...again, you need to qualify for them. If you can't find time to take the ACT or your ACT

scores are not where they should be, take action NOW! The ASSET test is free and can be scheduled at any time convenient for you and Krista Bruggeman, HCC administrator. Call her at 785.284.3777.

ADDITIONAL INFO...

Applying for college or technical school...Most juniors do not need to worry about submitting applications for admission—this is a chore for your senior year. The exception involves Kansas technical schools, since space in each program is limited and some programs fill quickly. For example, the Licensed Practical Nursing and the Electric Power and Distribution (Lineman) programs at Manhattan Area Technical College have two-year waiting lists. Additionally, the new wind energy technology program at Cloud County Community College has a waiting list. Thus, you may need to apply early in your junior year in order to start school immediately after high school.

Technical training is great, if you're sure of the career area you want to enter. The training is very specific to the job, so if you change your mind after a few months, the courses you've taken most likely will not apply to a different program and will probably not transfer to a college. Students who are serious about enrolling in a technical school will be allowed to go on school visits during their junior year, since some programs fill so quickly. Juniors who are seeking post-secondary education outside of a technical school are also encouraged to make a campus visit, most especially in the springtime. While school visits need to be arranged by you, Mrs. Evans has the paperwork (Visit Form; pre-absentee from office) to make the visit happen. **APRIL 20, 2010, IS THE DEADLINE FOR COLLEGE VISITS!**

College Enrollment...Colleges continue to move up their application and scholarship deadlines. Please explore these prior to your senior year just so you are aware of the expectations.

Scholarships & Financial Aid...Scholarships generally become increasingly available throughout the senior year. Many of them rely heavily on ACT scores in the selection process. Again, explore what is available to current seniors to see possibilities for you.

While nearly every student can qualify for some type of financial aid from the federal government (which provides financial aid through grants, work study, and several loan programs), the government believes that it is primarily the responsibility of the student and his/her parents to pay for college or technical school. Federal programs are simply designed to equalize the opportunity for students to attend school and to "fill in the financial gaps."

Job Shadowing...Job Shadowing may be one of the best ways to gain in-depth information about a career. The student selects a career field of interest and then typically spends a full day following someone in that area. Job Shadowing is an excellent way to explore a career field and can help you determine whether or not you have a strong interest in a particular field. If possible, students should contact individuals they know to Job Shadow. Students must also file a report with the counselor after the visit.

Information availability...A wealth of information is available all around you, from internet sites to college catalogs to scholarship applications to the FAFSA. You are encouraged to explore it all!

DON'T FORGET...

The most important thing at this point in your junior year is to **DO SOMETHING!** You're going to have to make choices and decisions about your future very soon, so now is the time to be gathering information and checking out your options. If you wait until the last minute, you'll still have to make the same decisions, but you'll have less time and information on which to make them, so start the process NOW. Reviewing the resources listed at the beginning of this newsletter is a start. Best of luck...and involve me in the process when you can.