

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5

HIGHLAND HIGH SCHOOL-12760 TROXLER AVENUE-HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS 62249

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Dear Parents of Juniors,

The counselors look forward to working with your child this coming year at Highland High School. We want to take this opportunity to inform parents of the counseling activities planned for the Class of 2011.

College/Career Planning. Juniors should be researching possibilities for education beyond high school. The fall regional College Fair will be held at SIUE, October 20, 2009, 6-8 p.m. Students should visit campuses during the spring of their junior year, the following summer, and the first semester of the senior year. They should return for the senior year ready to apply to several colleges. Students can access www.careercruising.com (Username: highland password: high) for college search help, along with Collegezone.com and Fastweb.com.

Dual Credit. Students have the opportunity to take high school courses and receive college credit through Southwestern Illinois College (SWIC). This is a great first step to receiving tuition free college credit while still in high school. Credit for these classes is given by SWIC at the end of the senior year. The Dual Credit Coordinator at SWIC will come to HHS in the fall to assist students in completing SWIC application and registration forms. **Public Speaking and Introduction to Marketing require the ASSET placement test for dual credit.** Students must test into English 101 to be eligible to receive college credit.

First Semester Junior Appointments. During November, each junior student will have a scheduled appointment time to meet with the counselors. Counselors will present information about high school and college/career planning. Your child should be thinking about personal interests and abilities, and how these characteristics can be matched to possible careers/college degree areas.

Parent Sessions. School counselors know how important it is to communicate with parents concerning guidance activities and our role in working with your child. On September 23, 2009 from 6:30 -8:00 p.m. counselors will present on the college admissions process. A parent panel will share personal experiences and provide tips to help parents navigate successfully through the process. Parents are invited to attend.

Financial Aid Night. A Financial Aid Night sponsored by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is November 18, 2009 (tentative) at 6:30 p.m. **This is an excellent opportunity to hear about the process of applying for the FAFSA.** An ISAC representative will be the guest speaker. A follow-up session on FAFSA completion will be January 13, 2010 (tentative) at 6:30 p.m.

PSAT/NMSQT. This is one test, but it is used for two purposes. First it is a practice SAT test for juniors (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test). The score is not used for college admission purposes. Second, this is the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which results in the selection of National Merit Commended Students, Semi-Finalists, and Finalists. We generally recommend that the top 20% of juniors take this test. The test will be given at HHS the morning of Wednesday, October 14. The cost of the PSAT/NMSQT is \$16.00. Students may sign up in September to take this test. Registration deadline is September 22.

Daily Announcements and Bulletin Boards. We remind students, particularly during their junior and senior years, to check the daily announcements through PowerSchool, Counselor Corner website, and guidance department bulletin boards. This is how we inform students about pertinent activities, such as college fairs, scholarships, open houses, etc.

PSAE. All juniors will be taking the Prairie State Achievement Examination, a graduation requirement, on April 28 and 29, 2010. **Please note the ACT Plus Writing is given to all juniors in April as a part of state mandated testing.** Registration with ACT is not necessary for this test date. ACT and/or SAT scores are important in determining the type of college to which the student will have the best chance of gaining admission. **Students must take the ACT or SAT during their junior year to be eligible to be named Illinois State Scholars.** Test dates and registration materials for these tests are available in the guidance department, or you can register on-line at www.actstudent.org and/or collegeboard.com.

Test Preparation. The best preparation for college tests is to take the strongest possible courses in high school and to read widely. It is helpful for students to read the advice provided by the test companies in the registration materials and to take the practice tests. For ACT prep go to www.actstudent.org. SWIC also offers ACT Prep Workshops. For more information call the Office of Community Education at 1-800-222-5131 or 618-235-2700, ext. 5393 or 5618.

College Fairs. College fairs are held at different locations throughout the year. The college fair at SIUE has already been mentioned. Other fairs include: National College Fair at St. Louis University, Sunday, October 18, and at Southwestern Illinois College on February 28, 2010 from 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. These are excellent resources for obtaining information from a variety of colleges. The guidance department will host college representatives. Students may visit with these representatives during their lunch period.

Registration for Next Year. At the beginning of the second semester between January and March, counselors will come into US history classes to help students understand the registration process as well as distribute curriculum and planning materials to juniors to bring home and discuss with their parents. The 2010-2011 schedule will be built from students' requests. Therefore, it is critical that your student's requests be accurate. Your signature is required on all registration and scheduling forms.

We encourage students and parents to see their counselor any time during the year for help with a particular situation or information relating to school or careers. Valuable resource information is available at www.highlandcusd5.org/hhs under Counselor Corner. Our aim is to assist students in obtaining the best education possible in high school and in becoming well prepared for what they will be doing after high school.

Remember: **The chief goal of students during their junior year should be to do well academically, to take appropriate steps in testing and educational planning for beyond high school, and to continue the consideration of possible careers in the light of interests, abilities, and employment opportunities.** Best wishes for a successful school year.

Sincerely,

HHS School Counselors (654-7131)
Mrs. Barb Heyen, Director of Guidance, Special Education Counselor
Mr. Michael Wartick, Class of 2010 and 2013 Counselor
Mrs. Staci Brown, Class of 2011 and 2012 Counselor