

BRISTOL EASTERN HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR COMMENTS

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MONTHLY TIP: A FRESH START

The new semester can be a fresh start for everyone. It is the chance to reflect on what you have been doing and see if anything needs to change. If something does, here are a few ways that you can help stay on the right track:

1. Utilize the resources around you.
 - a. There are National Honor Society tutors in the library almost every block to help you understand your classes.
2. Check in with your counselor.
 - a. Sometimes you just need a motivational talk or someone to help create a plan on how to achieve the goals you have.
3. Meet with your teachers.
 - a. The best person who can help is the one who teaches the material. If you have questions ask. If you can make up a test - do it!
4. Homework and Studying.
 - a. Teachers don't just give homework to give homework or study packets. They know that what you need to complete if valuable to your learning experience. Make sure you take the time to complete it.
5. Plan in your student handbook.
 - a. Sometimes it just feels like there is too much work to complete or know because you are procrastinating. Use your handbook in order to keep up on your work so you do not feel like you are falling behind.

Finally, if you feel like you are in the trenches and you are so far behind that you can't get out...

Summer school is always a possibility, but there is a perk if you pass one of the semesters for the class, you will only need to make up the semester you have failed. So that means that if you can't see yourself passing for the year because you got a 50 for example, you still earn a half credit for summer school if you pass semester 2 with a 65. Hopefully though, the fresh start is a jumping ground to bring up your overall grade.

NEWS FROM THE CAREER CENTER!

There are many opportunities coming up for students to explore various career interests. Upcoming field trips include a health and medical job fair at UConn Health Center, a non-clinical job fair at Bristol Hospital, and a sports career day at the new Hartford Yard Goats stadium. In addition, there are numerous career speakers who will visit Bristol Eastern in February. I will also offer seminars in networking your way to a job, resume preparation and interview skills. Please encourage your child to take advantage of as many of these opportunities as she or he is interested in.

What's coming up for...

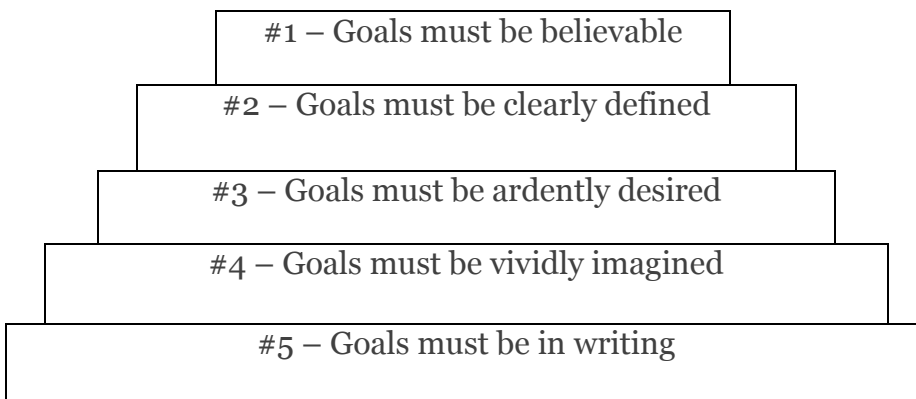
...FRESHMEN

It has been said that **a failure to plan is a plan to fail**. By this time in your education you have undoubtedly been told about the value of setting goals. In fact, you have probably been provided with specific instruction, more than once, on writing **S.M.A.R.T.** goals for yourself. Well, it is a message that cannot be overstated. Below are some guidelines that you can use in setting goals to help you create a plan for success in school and in life.

The first guideline states that your “goals must be believable.” They must especially be believable to you. Setting your own goals and identifying what is important to you helps to make the work you are doing to achieve those goals more meaningful. The second guideline states that your “goals must be clearly defined.” It is essential that you are specific. Specifying not only what you want to achieve, but how you intend to go about achieving it will give you the focus you need to move forward. The third guideline states that your “goals must be ardently desired.” In other words, you have to have a burning passion. You have to be willing to go to any lengths to achieve your goals, to work hard and to make certain sacrifices. For example, there will be times that you may have to choose homework over going out with friends to make your dreams a reality. The fourth guideline states that your “goals must be vividly imagined.” This means that you need to picture yourself having actually achieved your goal. Imagery can be a powerful source of motivation. The fifth and final guideline states that your “goals must be in writing.” We all have dreams and dreams are a great starting point, but dreams can be elusive. **Putting your goals in writing makes** them more tangible, more real, and gives you more direction. If you don't put your goals in writing they remain nothing more than elusive dreams and you may find yourself stuck at the starting gate.

Follow your dream and create a plan to make that dream reality. Make a commitment to yourself by making a plan for success.

5 Goal Setting Guidelines



...SOPHOMORES

PSAT information is coming out in the mail. If you need any help interpreting the data please stop by the school counseling office to understand what it means. Additionally, you can also practice for the next PSAT or SAT by going onto Khan Academy and completing the practice quizzes linked to the CollegeBoard organization.

Also, course selection is almost here. It is time to start thinking about what classes you want to take. Explore courses you are interested in for your future. If you want to go into engineering, think about taking Physics or a tech course. If you want to be a musician, look at what the music program has to offer. You can find out more about what courses are available by going to the BEHS website, click on the “Academics” link, and then looking for the “Program of Studies.” This PDF details all the courses and descriptions provided at Eastern. If you have any questions talk with a teacher about what the course requires or see your counselor.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

...JUNIORS

First semester is behind you and second semester will be a busy time for you! Please be sure your schedule reflects the classes you need for graduation and that you are on track with your credits. If you have any questions see your counselor! The course selection process will begin soon. Your teachers will be making recommendations for your classes and levels for next year so it is important for you to talk with them about your thoughts on what you want to sign up for. As always, work hard and keep up your grades!

Most of you have received e-mails from the CollegeBoard that your PSAT scores are available and can be accessed through your CollegeBoard account. If you did not get an e-mail, you can still log onto your account and see your scores. If you don't remember how to log on use the "Forgot" link and the original email you used. If that does not work, call CollegeBoard customer service to assist you. DO NOT make another account. You can also link your account to Khan Academy and take advantage of the personalized practice available. All juniors will be taking the SAT in school on March 2nd.

Spend the second semester researching and making your post secondary plans. Develop your list of schools, research college websites and plan your visits! Most colleges have spring open houses. If you are not planning on college you should still be making your plans for visiting a technical school or community college or talking to military recruiters if that is your plan. Talk to your counselor and start early! We will also be offering post secondary planning workshops later in the spring so keep your eyes and ears open so you don't miss it!

The Capitol Region Interdistrict Leadership Academy, also known as CRILA, invites you to apply for one of 30 positions in the 2016-2017 Academy, which includes:

- A seven day, all expenses paid, Outward Bound experience in Colorado from June 21st- through June 28th;
- The chance to develop community service projects throughout the Hartford area; and
- An experience that will help your leadership skills show and grow.

This is an amazing opportunity and experience. Check out their website www.crec.org/crila for more information. If you believe you are a good candidate for CRILA, you can pick up an application in the Guidance Office or download one on their website. These are due by March 15th!

...SENIORS

SENIORS!!! MAKE SURE YOUR COUNSELOR IS AWARE OF ALL YOUR POST SECONDARY PLANS. Also, please let your counselor know college application outcomes e.g., accepted, denied, deferred, waitlisted. We need this information for our data base.

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Where to find scholarships through BEHS:

1. Local scholarships can be found in Naviance. To access scholarship applications please go to: <http://connection.naviance.com/bristoleast> and log on. Click on the "Colleges" tab then scroll down to "Scholarship List". Click on the title of the scholarship. You will see the application instructions and eligibility requirements. Once the scholarship application is complete, it must be given to your counselor. **PAY ATTENTION TO THE DUE IN GUIDANCE DEADLINE DATES!!!!** Check Naviance often as more scholarships are added each week.
2. The same scholarships are located in the guidance office. The list is on the wall and is updated every Friday. Hard copies are available in the file organizer against the wall.

Common materials required for scholarship applications are (but not limited to): TRANSCRIPT, RESUME, ONE OR MORE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (you can use your college letters) AN ESSAY (may be required) YOUR EFC (Estimated Family Contribution) from the FAFSA.

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...SENIORS (continued)

Applying for college scholarships can be overwhelming. The sheer number of scholarships out there makes the process even more confusing. Be prepared to invest time researching or you may waste time applying for awards. Scholarships are like a part-time job. It takes a lot of work. Try to set aside some time every week to search and complete as many scholarships you are eligible for.

OTHER SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH ENGINES:

<https://www.scholarships.com>

<https://www.fastweb.com>

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship>

<https://www.studentscholarship.org>

HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

Step 1:

Check with each college's financial aid office to determine which forms you need to file. Don't wait to be accepted to a college before filing an application for financial aid. File early to ensure that you're considered for all available funding. The most important forms are:

- Your **pin** is your key to online financial aid. Get your pin now at www.pin.ed.gov
- FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) – Everyone applying for federal and most other financial aid must complete this form. File online at www.fafsa.ed.gov or by mail. Last year, more than 93% of all FAFSA applicants were online.
- PROFILE – some colleges may ask you to file this form to be considered for college-funded aid (the college's own grants and scholarships.) There is a fee for filing this form. The website is <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>
- College-Specific Financial Aid Application – some colleges may ask you to complete their own financial aid application to be considered for their own college-funded grants, scholarships and loans.
- The FAFSA form and PROFILE is available online. Request the college's own financial aid application, if required.

Step 2:

Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible **after January 1st** of your high school senior year. If your family hasn't completed their 2015 income tax returns yet, estimate your family's income as accurately as possible. You'll have the opportunity to make corrections later in the process. Complete any other financial aid forms required by the colleges.

Meet all deadlines. Keep a copy of all the forms you file.

By filing the FAFSA, you will be considered for:

- Grants and scholarships from private colleges and universities (some colleges may require an additional form)
- Federal Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Federal Work-Study (FWS)
- Job programs from private colleges and universities
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Stafford Loan or Federal Direct Loan
- Loan programs from private colleges and universities

Step 3:

You'll receive your federal Student Aid Report (SAR) approximately 30 days after submitting your FAFSA. Review your SAR information carefully. Follow directions to correct any errors.

Step 4:

In the spring (usually March or April), you'll receive financial aid awards or packages from the colleges that have offered you admission, each with a different combination of grants, scholarships, work-study and loans to help you meet college expenses.

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Determine your net cost by subtracting from tuition and fees and room and board (if you're living on campus) all grants and scholarships plus the total amount of your loans.

Step 5:

Review your financial aid award letters and compare your net costs. Follow the college's instructions to accept or reject the offers of admission and financial aid, usually by May 1. Then follow up with the chosen college on all your financial aid. In particular, **follow up on your loans**. Check with your college financial aid office for their student and parent loan application procedures. Know what you are borrowing and the repayment terms.



(Excerpts taken from tinybudda.com/blog (Author- Kavetha Sundaramoorthy))

“Love and compassion are necessities not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.” Dalai Lama
There could not be a better time to hear that quote than as we approach St. Valentine’s Day, a time when we express our love to others in a variety of heart-shaped ways; but the experience of watching 60 minutes last evening where a young boy was fighting for his life with a rare form of leukemia, showing his town rallying around him moved me deeply. It was through their love and compassion that their fundraising efforts made his wish of visiting Australia where he hugged a koala bear, swam in the sea, and frolicked in the sand with his family became a reality. There is a sad end to his story in that it turned out to be his dying wish, but the lessons of love and compassion that can be learned from the town that supported him will endure forever.

Truth be told, “True compassion is hard work but it is worthwhile...and it is more than being nice to someone for a few minutes or hours.” Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote of compassion that, “It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”

With that said, I found an article entitled [6 Ways to Deepen Your Compassion to Help Other People](http://tinybudda.com/blog) on tinybudda.com/blog extremely meaningful so I thought I would pass the highlights on to our readers.

1. **Listen** – Suspend all judgment and give the person your undivided attention. Truly hear what is being said to you without formulating a reply in your mind.
2. **Respond to the emotion, not the actual words** – Try not to respond to the literal words but the underlying emotion. Once you do, trust and openness can occur from the speaker.
3. **Get your own support system** – the writer states that she is a firm believer in that we can only give unconditional love when we can receive it too. She recommends that we continue to experience life and be with the people we love.
4. **Remember the whole person** – When someone is spiraling into a negative path, don't lose sight of their positive qualities even if you have to remind yourself at that moment in time that they do, in fact, have particular strengths.
5. **Put yourself in that situation mentally** – Suffering is universal. We all have felt joy and pain, the particular details may be unique but the themes are universal so remind yourself of a time when you went through something related and how much you may have longed for empathy and compassion. When you do this often, it will become second nature.
6. **You will fail sometimes, so forgive yourself** – Have compassion for yourself too. No one is perfect. Give yourself a break if you come up short sometimes. Remember that you are just as human as anyone else and as long as your intentions and efforts are in the right place that is all that matters.

As this writer experienced, once she followed these tenets, she noticed that compassion is now flowing more from her heart than just from her mind. What a beautiful intention to not only visualize but to actualize in our own lives, not only on St. Valentine’s Day but every day.