

# BRISTOL EASTERN HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR COMMENTS

January 2016



## 10 Skills for High School Students

Sometimes natural ability and talent can get us to where we need to go. However, it is often the things we have needed to learn that make the most difference in our life. Skills are something that we learn through training, experience, or practice. FamilyEducation.com has selected these 10 skills that are learned in school, but rewarding the learner once they leave high school.

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1. **Time Management**: Being able to complete homework and study, join an activity, and be a part of the community can feel overwhelming at times. Recognizing what is important and what can wait is hard to learn. Try using a daily planner or calendar on your phone to prioritize your time and not overbook yourself.

2. **Good Study Habits**: Good habits lead to being able to stress less about tests and quizzes. Often, students who do not study spend just as much time, if not more, after the quiz re-learning the material and re-taking the quiz or test they failed. Be prepared, complete homework, review notes, and study everyday—even when there isn't homework.

3. **The Ability to Set Attainable Goals**: Goals can include anything long-term that a person desires to achieve; like an A or B by the end of the quarter. A task is a short term responsibility that needs to be completed in order to attain that goal (i.e. Homework, studying, projects, etc.). Often students set high goals without making a checklist of tasks they need in order to attain it.

4. **Concentration**: As students grow up the class periods become longer and the work assignments become harder. Paying attention to the teacher helps the student understand what is happening and keeps the brain engaged. "Be sure that you understand the lesson. If you don't understand something, *ask questions!*"

5. **Good Note Taking**: Taking your own notes is KEY to remembering what is happening in the classroom. Create your own short hand so that you are able to follow the key points. Review your notes if there is time at the end of the period and ask the teacher to clarify where you don't understand.

6. **Completion of Assignments**: Often students think "It's only one homework assignment, what's the big deal?" In the world after high school, if an employer asks you to complete something, it needs to get completed—no ifs, ands, or buts.

7. **Review of Daily Notes**: By looking over your notes, you reinforce the material that you learned previously. You know what you last did in class and aren't lost at the start trying to recall everything you already went over.

8. **Organizational Skills**: Knowing where your materials are and adding dates to your notes can help you stay on top of your work. Utilize a binder or

- folder system where all essential information is held, this way notes are not lost when you go to start studying.
9. Motivation: This can be the hardest part. Around this time of year, we lose steam. Remember to find a positive learning experience in every class and see if you can create a personal challenge to make it fun and engaging.
  10. Commitment: Sometimes we just feel like giving up. The words the teachers are saying sound like something from Charlie Brown and you can't even figure out where to start. Stick with it! Talk with a teacher, counselor, friend or parent to help you get organized and complete the work. There's still hope.

## What's Coming up for . . . Freshmen

<p><b>BEHS</b></p> <p><b>Freshmen</b></p>	<p><b>TOPIC:</b> <i>FRESHMEN SEMINAR UPDATE</i></p> <p><b>DATE:</b> <i>January 2016</i></p>
<p><i>What is Freshmen Seminar?</i></p>	<p><i>The Freshmen Seminar is a new initiative this year being piloted by our Freshmen Counselors - Mr. Larry Hochman and Mrs. Michelle Kalfayan. The program is intended to help meet the transitional needs of our 9<sup>th</sup> graders and to provide them with the information they need to empower them in taking an active role in their education and support them in developing a four-year plan to make the most their high school experience.</i></p>
<p><i>Freshmen Seminar: An Overview</i></p>	<p><i>The seminars take place during students' study halls. There are six sessions which meet for approximately 40 minutes each, allowing students to still have "study" time during that period. The topics include the following: High School Expectations, High School Graduation Requirements, Goal Setting, Time Management, Decision-Making, Navigating Naviance (a program designed to assist students in college and career decision-making), and The College Board Connection (assisting students in setting up their College Board and Khan Academy accounts for use throughout high school).</i></p>
<p><i>Freshmen Seminar: A Progress Report</i></p>	<p><i>Some of our Freshmen have already finished our seminar series and we are pleased to report the feedback has been positive. According to the surveys completed by students, they found the information they received to be helpful. Knowing what they needed to prepare for their future, understanding new concepts like GPAs and transcripts, discovering how their interests and abilities connect to a variety of different career options, and learning about the educational opportunities available to them were all among the "most helpful things learned" on the survey.</i></p>
<p><i>Summary</i></p>	<p><i>I believe that the best decisions are informed decisions. It is our intention to provide our students with the information and resources they need to assist them in reaching their full potential. It is our hope that this program will open up a world of possibilities for them.</i></p>



## News from the Career Center

Happy 2016!

We are rapidly coming up on Course Selection time at BEHS. Many of the courses students take are graduation requirements. However, there are also a large number of electives available.

One thing we ask students to consider is that for many, this will be the final time they are being offered the chance to take courses for free. We would like for them to give real thought to their elective choices. Questions to ask...

1. Will I enjoy spending 84 minutes every other day learning about this material?
2. Is there a possible career path for me related to this course?
3. What basic skills can I learn in this course that might transfer to other careers or hobbies in which I may be interested?

Truly, electives are an opportunity to find a passion, as well as gain information about a great career path. We invite all students to discuss elective courses in detail, with their counselors, teachers of those courses and even students who are currently taking them, or have taken them in the past.

## ...Sophomores

It's January and we are in the second half of the year! You are about halfway on your way to being an upper classmen! Now is a good time to start thinking, (if you haven't already) about what you would like to do after high school. Important things to be doing as a Sophomore in January include reviewing your academic progress through the year so far. Are your grades what you want them to be? What are you doing after school? Are you involved in any sports or clubs? Now is a good time to get involved if you are not already. Finally, it is almost time for course enrollment, so start thinking about what classes you would like to take next year. Always consider challenging yourself! If you have not met with your guidance counselor, schedule a meeting! Guidance counselors are a great resource for you and down the line you may be asking them for college recommendation letters, make sure they know you!

## ...Juniors

You will receive your PSAT scores this month. Counselors will be coming into your classes to go over the report and show you how to read and understand it. During this presentation, counselors will also be showing you how you can get more personalized practice on the SAT through Khan Academy. This is important because all Juniors will be taking the redesigned SAT during school on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. If you would like to learn more about the redesigned SAT you can visit:

[www.collegereadiness.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegereadiness.collegeboard.org) . This is replacing the Smarter Balanced Assessment that Juniors took last year. You can also use this score for college admission if you are applying to a college that requires SAT scores as part of their admission process. If you would like to take the SAT again after the March test you can register by logging into your College Board account at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) . The 2016 test dates after the school day administration are March 5<sup>th</sup>, May 7<sup>th</sup> and June 4<sup>th</sup>. May and June administrations offer the subject tests which you may need to take depending on the college you are thinking of applying to. Be sure to research the admission requirements of the college you are considering. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch can see their counselor for a test fee waiver.

Please 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. Stay tuned for upcoming Junior workshops to help you with your planning.

## ...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.

## ...SENIORS continued

### GET FREE HELP FILLING OUT THE FAFSA!

#### COLLEGE GOAL SUNDAY CT

At College Goal Sunday, students and parents can talk to experts and get in-depth help filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In addition to receiving assistance in filling out the FAFSA, participants will receive general information regarding state and federal financial aid programs. Our 2016 Connecticut College Goal Sunday events will be held at **1 p.m. to 4 p.m.** on the following dates at [many sites throughout the state](#):

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**Saturday, January 23, 2016**

Housatonic Community College

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**Sunday, January 24, 2016**

East Hartford High School

Windsor High School

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**Saturday, January 30, 2016**

Gateway Community College & New Haven Promise

Manchester Community College

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**Sunday, January 31, 2016**

Eastern Connecticut State University

Hall High School (Snow Date: 2/6/15)

Middlesex Community College

Naugatuck Valley Community College (Snow Date: 2/6/15)

New Britain High School & American Savings Foundation (Snow Date: 2/6/15)

Western Connecticut State University

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**Other events with dates and locations to be announced will be held at:**

Hartford Public Schools

#### FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid form (FAFSA) must be completed online by all who are seeking financial aid. This form determines eligibility for all federal monies. The FAFSA must be submitted online after January 1, 2015 at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). After it is processed the student will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR). Students and parents can visit the website in advance of filing the FAFSA to request a PIN, a personal identification number that allows you to sign in to your FAFSA account electronically.

#### SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Local scholarships can be found in **NAVIANCE** and in **THE GUIDANCE OFFICE**. To access the scholarship applications in Naviance, 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 DATE IN GUIDANCE DEADLINES!!** Check Naviance or Guidance often as more scholarships are added each week. As the Lottery commercial states, “You can’t win if you don’t play!”

**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.



It is so hard to believe that we have approached a new year! Time flies from month to month. It truly feels as if we just started school and now here we are at the mid-point of the school year with summer just months away. That said, the winter months and holiday season can cause the blues for many. So often I meet with tearful students who present with an issue and once we dig deeper realize that the issue they present with is not the underlying cause of their sadness. Fractured relationships with family and friends often are at the heart of concerns that students face and yet they are expected to come to school and perform at optimum level. We as a guidance staff are here for your students. We care; and in that regard offer some tips for them to shake the blues away even if we cannot alter the circumstances that are creating them.

(Excerpts below are taken from “Shaking the Holiday Blues Away” by Richard Warshak)

“- Feeling sad, lonely or melancholy is normal, especially during the holiday season. Accept those feelings without berating yourself realizing that those feelings will pass.”

“- Practice good health habits, eat right, get plenty of rest and exercise regularly as staying healthy reduces the intensity of the blues and its impact on your daily activities.”

“- Don’t dwell on the past or focus on what is missing in your life. Helping others to find joy, not only in the holidays, but in life, can take the focus away from your own sadness.”

“-Spend time with people, even if you feel lonely in a crowd. Reach out to someone you have lost touch with or treat yourself better which will evoke more confidence to get through this tough period.”

“- Avoid overdoing eating foods high in sugar and fat or spending money you don’t have.”

**“Most importantly if in spite of your best efforts the blues becomes too severe; do not hesitate to get professional help.”**