

BRISTOL EASTERN HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR COMMENTS

March 2015



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MONTHLY TIP:

Completing Homework

Completing homework can be hard work, but here are some ideas for making it more enjoyable and getting it done.

1. **Find a specific time and place each day where you aren't distracted.** This may be in your room, outside, or at a library . . . it is not in front of the TV during commercials.
2. **Write your homework down in one place.** This may be within your planner or the calendar on your phone. This makes it easier to remember and satisfying when you check it off.
3. **Build in breaks** if you know the homework assignment will take a lot of time. Move around, stretch, dance, do some deep breathing exercises, or get a healthy snack to keep your mind and body active.
4. **Find a study buddy.** Working with another person may help you answer questions and remember what was discussed in class. This does not mean copying each other's work.
5. **Listen to music, but don't divide your attention.** Sometimes the silence is just too much, but watching TV, texting, and multi-tasking can distract you as well and make doing homework even longer. Find some music that can even help you concentrate and stay energized.

If you have something that works for you share it with a friend and maybe it will help them too.

Upcoming Event: Junior Post Secondary Workshop

March 25, 2015

5:00 – 6:00 p.m. in the Auditorium

Parents and students are welcome to attend this event to learn about planning for postsecondary options. Counselors will discuss the process for applying to college, vocational/trade schools, entering the military and entering the world of work. We are looking forward to seeing you there!



News from the Career Center

Well, we are beginning the course request process for the upcoming school year. Students will be making choices about their subjects for next year. It's a great time to do some career exploration!

Many of us remember back in our high school days taking a course and realizing it was something we'd like to spend the rest of our lives doing. For many of us however, we didn't have a strong sense of where we fit as far as life after school. Exploring different careers is a great way to get a better sense...and helps to make better choices as far as course selection.

Right now we have many students exploring careers in health care, education, technical trades, business and even sports related careers. Many more students are going online or even shadowing a parent or other adult to see what might be a good match.

What's coming up for...

...FRESHMEN

Excerpts taken from **Get Into College**, special editors Rachel Korn, Ed.M. and Jennifer Yetwin Kabat, Ed. M
(advice from college students, admissions officers, consultants and parents)

Being college ready starts now . . .

Advice from those who have been there . . .

"I started an excel spreadsheet for each of my kids when they were freshmen in high school, and it was really helpful when applying to colleges and for scholarships. List all awards . . . community service, jobs . . . make sure to include dates, contacts, hours volunteered. That way . . . you'll have all the information asked for on forms at your fingertips, in chronological order."

"The first two questions any college bound student should ask him or herself are: Do I want to go to college? And why? If you can answer both of these questions with confidence, you will go college and will be able to make the most of the experience."

"One thing I wish I had discovered earlier: College Parents of America (www.collegeparents.org). It is a national membership organization that provides access to test-prep courses like Kaplan and Thomson Peterson's, as well as scholarship searches through FindTuition.com. They maintain a parents resource center and distribute a quarterly e-newsletter for parents, customized to a student's high school graduation year."

"The High School Transcript remains the single most important piece of information contained in the application for admission – especially at selective schools. On it, we focus not only on grades and GPA attained, but the rigor of the coursework taken."

"The best time for your child to start thinking about college is during middle school, because college is an aspiration and you have to cultivate a mentality to go to college. Students have to want to know how to do things and you have to inform them that their skills are going to support them for the rest of their lives. The earlier you do that, the easier it is for your child to get into the college-prep mode."

...SOPHOMORES

As March approaches it is very important that you take the initiative to meet with your counselor. Although graduating from high school may seem to be very far, it is very important to start planning for after high school now as you select your classes for your junior year and really start thinking about what is next for you after high school. The decisions you make now will guide the pathways that will be available to you upon graduation. Make sure you are thinking about your future and exploring your options! Important dates to be aware of this month: CAPT Science is March 12! CAPT Science is a required assessment for high school graduation so make sure you come to school ready to take the test!

...JUNIORS

First semester is coming to an end! Work hard and keep up your grades! See your counselor if you need to make any changes to your second semester schedule!

You can register for the SAT now and scratch it off your list of things to do! The 2015 test dates are March 14, May 2nd and June 6th. May and June administrations offer the subject tests which you may need to take depending on the college you are thinking of applying too. Be sure to research the admission requirements of the college you are considering and log onto your college board account at www.collegeboard.org to register. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch can see their counselor for a test fee waiver.

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! Need more help with planning? Sign up for a college planning jump start group. You can sign up in guidance or by replying to the email you received in your Naviance account.

...SENIORS

Senior Checklist:

1. **File your FAFSA online at WWW.fafsa.gov, or complete and mail your PDF FAFSA or paper FAFSA.** Do this as soon as possible after Jan. 1st. Submit the FAFSA in time to meet each college's financial aid deadline. Contact the financial aid offices at your college for more information.
2. **Confirm receipts of your information.** Check with your colleges to be sure they have received the information from your FAFSA and any revised SAT or ACT test scores.
3. **Look at your Student Aid Report (SAR) in the mail or via email, if address provided.** You should receive it within three to ten days after filing the online FAFSA, or two or three weeks after filing the paper FAFSA. Each college you included on your FAFSA will receive a copy of your SAR.
4. **Review the SAR.** Make any necessary changes and return the corrected form to Federal Student Aid as indicated on the SAR. If you filed electronically, make corrections online. Contact your college for more directions if necessary.
5. **Tie up loose ends.** If required, send any additional information to the colleges to complete the admissions and/or financial aid process.
6. **Send your midyear grades if colleges ask for them.** See your counselor.
7. **Continue researching and applying for scholarships that might be available to you.** Check Naviance often and pay attention to deadlines!



Loss of a Parent

Excerpts taken from [Helping Students Deal with the Loss of a Parent](#) by Peter DeWitt; [Helping Students Deal with Grief](#) by Margaret Conry, and [School Counselors](#) as a Resource taken from [KidsHealth.org](#).

This school year alone, more than one of the students of our Lancer family has suffered the loss a parent. Peter Dewitt states, “It is a sad subject to focus on so it is important that as educators, we understand how to help students get through this very difficult situation”... Further, Peter DeWitt cites teachers who spend ten months or more with a student, as having a huge impact on that student’s life and in that regard they also play a major role in the student’s healing process.

We as counselors, as well as our school administrators, are also in an excellent position to be a resource of support, sympathy and empathy for students who are grieving the loss of a loved one. Dewitt states, “Students will remember where they were, who they were with and how the adults around them helped them deal with the loss of a parent”... We as teachers, counselors and school administrators want you to know that we are there for those students who suffer such a tragic loss. We want students to know they are not alone and that we are all here for them as they progress through their very personal grieving process.

Margaret Conry suggests that regardless of our role in that student’s life, we all can be helpful by being patient, caring and available to talk about the death with that individual. She further suggests that we should not pressure a student to share their feeling but rather offer a safe non-judgmental setting in which to do so once that person is ready. Beyond the adults in a student’s life that are available as a resource, she further suggests that one of the most important sources of help in times of grief is “social support” since many teens are reluctant to talk to professionals about their grief. She recognizes through her essay that teens instead may turn to siblings or peers to help him/her through the grieving process and that this is not only ok but can be very meaningful especially in the context of a grief support group.

And finally, as mentioned in an excerpt from Kidshealth.org, “School counselors know how to listen and to help”. As in the case of loss and grief, it is our role as counselors to help that student deal with the myriad of emotions that ensue when someone that a student loved has died. We can provide that support by either counseling or by acting in the role of a conduit for available and appropriate community resources.

In light of the most recent and painful losses to some of the students in our BE family, we not only wish to extend our sincere condolences for their loss but to also encourage anyone who knows of a student who is experiencing grief due to the loss of a parent or loved one, or for any problem that a student is experiencing that needs support, to please contact our guidance secretary, Marie Pasqualicchio at ext 717, who will direct you to the appropriate counselor.

March on. Do not tarry. To go forward is to move toward perfection. March on, and fear not the thorns, or the sharp stones on life's path. ~ Khalil Gibran