

# BRISTOL EASTERN HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR COMMENTS

March 2017



## MONTHLY TIP:

### Homework Tips

Need some tips to help you create a better routine to complete homework assignments? Here are some ideas to make it easier for you:

1. Find a specific time and place where you are not distracted
    - Work at an organized space that is distraction free to get homework finished faster. Working on your homework at a specific time each day also creates a routine and good habits
  2. Write down your homework
    - Write down your homework in your planner so that you remember what you have to complete each day
  3. Start your work in school
    - Use study hall and free time in school wisely! You'll be able to get most of your homework done in school rather than having to finish it all at home
  4. Find someone to help you
    - If you find yourself struggling with an assignment or need extra help, find someone who can help you understand the material
  5. Turn off your phone
    - Phones are distracting and takes away time from getting your homework completed. Turning it off or putting it away ensures you get your assignments done efficiently
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## CONTACT US!

860-584-7876

Michelle Kalfayan x731

Guidance Chairperson

[michellekalfayan@ci.bristol.ct.us](mailto:michellekalfayan@ci.bristol.ct.us)

Lawrence Hochman x190

[lawrencehochman@ci.bristol.ct.us](mailto:lawrencehochman@ci.bristol.ct.us)

Elizabeth Lefrancois x729

[elizabethlefrancois@ci.bristol.ct.us](mailto:elizabethlefrancois@ci.bristol.ct.us)

Cynthia Lombardo x732

[cindylombardo@ci.bristol.ct.us](mailto:cindylombardo@ci.bristol.ct.us)

Laura Stabile x727

[laurastabile@ci.bristol.ct.us](mailto:laurastabile@ci.bristol.ct.us)

Jennifer Tulacro x728

[jennifertulacro@ci.bristol.ct.us](mailto:jennifertulacro@ci.bristol.ct.us)

Erin Winger x263

[erinwinger@ci.bristol.ct.us](mailto:erinwinger@ci.bristol.ct.us)

Marie Pasqualicchio x717

Guidance Secretary

[mariepasqualicchio@ci.bristol.ct.us](mailto:mariepasqualicchio@ci.bristol.ct.us)

## What's coming up for...

### ...FRESHMEN

Lots of exciting goings-on in both our freshmen teams and in our career program at Bristol Eastern!

First, we have very pleased with the academic progress of most of our freshmen. For the most part, they have acquired the habits of successful students. Homework is being done thoughtfully and completely. And most are engaged and alert during class. If this describes your child, make sure they know it! If not, we encourage you to have some important discussions about how success in school translates to success in other areas of life.

Second, it has been a real pleasure to see so many of our students volunteering at Bristol Eastern and the community beyond. A large number of students assist in our building, and an equally impressive number are donating time and energy in our local elementary schools, primarily Stafford School. There is abundant research that shows students who are engaged in extracurricular activities tend to perform higher than those who are not. And of course, the assistance they provide to others is very much appreciated.

If your child is interested in volunteering, please have them stop by my office.

### ...Sophomores

It's time to start digging deep into what you know about you. The more you know now about yourself; the more opportunities there are for you to dream for your future.

Think about some of the strengths you possess. Strengths are “the ability to consistently provide near perfect performance in a specific activity” (Gallup). This does not always come just because you are good at something. Strength is developed by combining knowledge, skills, and talents. Knowledge can be gained from experience, books, or people. Skills can be developed with training and practice. Talents are something we are naturally “wired” to do. Some people are problem solvers while others are creative thinkers. When you add all three together it develops a “strength.” For example a some people are musically inclined (talent), however for it to develop into a strength the person will often take classes or maybe even teach themselves how to read music (knowledge) and practice every day (skill). My doing this consistently you develop a strength.

When you think about your future do you want to do something hands on? Start looking at BTEC and see if you can start practicing for a certification before you even finish high school. Planning to go to college? Start developing your skills by taking accelerated or AP classes. Thinking about the military? Stay active with afterschool athletics. Start training for your goals now to develop the strengths needed to be employed in your dream career. See your counselor for more information.

### ...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. You should all have made your course requests for next year by now. If you did not, please see your counselor as soon as possible. The schedules will be built over the next couple months. You will need to see your counselor to make any changes to your requests. As always, if you have any questions see your counselor.

You have all received for PSAT scores in the mail and in the meetings with your counselor during Midterms. Please continue to work on Khan academy and take advantage of the personalized practice available. As required by the state, all juniors will be taking the SAT in school on April 5th. In most cases, your score can be used for college admissions and will be important in helping you meet your graduation requirements. After the April test, the remaining 2017 test dates are May 6th and June 3th. 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](http://www.collegeboard.org) to register. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch can see their counselor for a test fee waiver. If you are a student who is eligible to take the SAT with extended time or with other accommodations be sure to see your counselor to ensure this is approved by college board.

Continue to 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!

**The Capitol Region Interdistrict Leadership Academy, also known as CRILA, invites you to apply for one of 30 positions in the 2017-2018 Academy, which includes:**

- Attending a seven day Outward Bound experience in Colorado from June 17 to June 24, 2017
- Developing and participating in a community service project which will benefit the Hartford area
- Meeting with successful leaders in business, education, politics, health, and the military
- Being challenged with rigorous discussion and course work on becoming a great leader
- Building your student resume as you prepare for College

This is an amazing opportunity and experience. Check out their website [www.crec.org/crila](http://www.crec.org/crila) for more info. 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 need to be postmarked by March 17th!

## **...SENIORS**

### **SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER**

Seniors are reminded to check the local scholarship board in the counseling office or Naviance weekly as many new applications continue to arrive! Don't miss out on an opportunity to gain some financial assistance for college.

### **Comparing Financial Aid Award Letters**

You may receive award letters from different colleges. Keep the following in mind when making your final decision:

**Look carefully at your award letters:** Letters from different schools will probably have their figures and costs in different formats. Compare award letters to see how their offers measure up. Ask if outside scholarships will affect your aid.

**Compare loan offers:** Interest rates, how interest compounds, repayment terms and cancellation provisions can vary widely from loan to loan.

**Compare affordability of aid offers over time:** Ask how your financial aid package will change over time. The aid package made available to you in your senior year may look very different from the one you were offered freshman year.

**Look beyond the "sticker price":** The school with the lowest cost of attendance may not be the most affordable. The amount and type of aid offered will influence affordability.

**Don't accept an offer just because it has the lowest "unmet need":** You may save more by accepting an offer with a higher unmet need, if the aid package offers scholarships, grants and work-study instead of loans.

**Compare like terms:** How do the schools determine cost of attendance? Do they all include direct costs as well as indirect costs? How do they handle outside scholarships? What work-study options are available? What are wages like? Can you substitute work for a loan?

## **... Career Center**



## Parents Corner March Edition

I would like to share with you the summary of “Drum Dream Girl” a children’s book written by Margarita Engle. “Girls cannot be drummers. Long ago on an island filled with music, no one questioned that rule until drum dream girl. In her city of drum beats, she dreamed of pounding tall congas and tapping small bongos. She had to keep quiet. She had to practice in secret. But when at last her dream bright music was heard, everyone sang and danced and decided that both boys and girls should be free to drum and dream.” “Inspired by the childhood of Milla Castro Zaldarriaga a Chinese African Cuban girl who broke Cuba’s traditional taboo against female drummers, “Drum Dream Girl” tells an inspiring true story for dreamers everywhere.”

Why was I so moved by this inspirational story of courage and determination of this young girl? It was the powerful message that one should never give up on their dreams. I may never have known about this book if it weren’t for the fact that I was talking to my 31 year old son this morning who is a passionate and loving first grade special education teacher in the Bronx. He told me he was going to read it to his class today while one of his students softly plays a single bongo drum beat as each page of the book is turned.

The message he will give to his young charges? He will urge them to always listen to the drum beat of their heart and to never let anyone tell them that their dreams cannot become a reality. I was very moved by this message of hope and by my beautiful son who cares so deeply for the children that he teaches.

It is a message that we are never too young or too old to hear. As parents, it is our duty...our responsibility, as with dream girl’s dad, to encourage and nurture those dreams. There is no limit to what can be accomplished with a fire in one’s heart, the support of a loving family and the exceptional and inspirational teachers that we are so grateful come into our lives.