



# Counselor's Corner



## December Newsletter

### Introduction

I hope this letter finds you excited for the holiday season! With only a couple of weeks left before the holiday break, I hope that your son/daughter is making adequate progress to a successful 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the 2008-2009 school year.

Due to the 1<sup>st</sup> semester coming to a close, please make sure that your son/daughter is satisfied with the classes he/she is taking 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. As mentioned in previous newsletters, if an undesired class is listed the change may be appropriate. However, the counseling office will not make changes for students to be with their friends.

### Senior Students

I would like to extend my thank you to the families who attended the "How to Fill out a Scholarship" presentation on November 20, 2008. If you were unable to make the presentation and would like a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, I would be happy to email it to you.

Although I briefly touched on the Financial Aid process during the presentation, I want to remind you that you cannot start filling out the FAFSA until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. However, you may apply for a PIN at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).

Presentations of interest given by the College Planning Center include the following:

*Financial Aid Presentation:* January 8<sup>th</sup> (6:30 p.m.)

*Fill Out the FAFSA Assistance:* February 4<sup>th</sup> (12-8 p.m.)

*How to Succeed in College:* April 16<sup>th</sup> (1:20 p.m.)

If you would like to put your name on the list for the FAFSA Assistance night, please contact me as soon as possible, as times are filling up.

Check that all application materials due have been submitted by contacting each college.

This includes application forms, recommendations and any other paperwork. Check in with them early in the month, so there'll be time to take care of last-minute details as most college offices close for the holidays.

Has your son/daughter been accepted? Congratulations if he/she has. You may need to send a deposit and withdraw applications from other colleges. If he/she has been deferred, stay hopeful. He/she may be accepted later with regular decision applicants. A great emphasis may be given to the students who perform well in the first semester of their senior year. Don't lose heart if your son/daughter was denied. This doesn't mean he/she is not college material. Remember, there are other schools.

### Junior Students

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the best time for students to take the ACT or SAT is in the spring semester of their junior year. The next possible test date is February 7, 2009 followed by April 4, 2009. I would highly suggest registering for one of these two dates. Materials are available in the counseling office or online.

Since the holiday season is just around the corner and it allows plenty of down time, request information from colleges of interest. Simply call the college of interest and request information, such as application procedures, admissions requirements, and programs of interest.

Has your son/daughter taken the necessary classes to be accepted to the college of their choice? It is a good time to start thinking about those requirements.

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As you may know, your son/daughter's senior year will be full of college decisions. It may be a good time to start filling out a personal resume – a resume that contains all of the activities your son/daughter has participated or been involved in. This allows your son/daughter to fill out college or scholarship applications in a more timely matter.

### Sophomore Students

Now is the time for your student to start looking at what he/she is interested in doing after high school. Admissions requirements are adamant that students take the necessary classes. Therefore, it is important for your son/daughter to evaluate his/her college of interest in order to make the right choices when it comes to creating their schedule for their junior year. Granted scheduling will take place in the spring, but it is good idea to get a head start especially by examining what the college wants as admission requirements.

### Freshmen Students

Hopefully your son/daughter's first quarter grades were successful. Continue to encourage your child to make the best use out of his/her time. Setting a good study habit has proven to be successful for students. Does he/she sit down at a specific time to do homework?

It is important for your son/daughter to realize the importance of his/her grades especially as a freshman. It is all too common to hear a senior say, "I wish I wouldn't have slacked off when I was a freshman." I hope that these are not the words you will hear from your son/daughter.

Due to the holiday season break, consider volunteering in your neighborhood and/or community. Volunteer hours can be put towards earning your silver cords and may help when applying for scholarships as a senior. Many scholarship organizations look for volunteer service.

### Conclusion

Do you know what the ACT Readiness Benchmark Scores are? ACT says that a benchmark score is "the minimum score needed on an ACT subject area test to indicate a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing college courses." The benchmark scores are as follows: English-18, Math-22, Reading-21, Science-24. For more information on College Readiness Benchmark Scores, visit [www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/benchmarkmarks.pdf](http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/benchmarkmarks.pdf).

If at any time you have questions about your son/daughter's success, please feel free to contact me by email or phone.

Email: [jcusick@meposchools.org](mailto:jcusick@meposchools.org)  
Phone: 319-394-3101 ext. 218

Sincerely,  
Miss Jamie Cusick

### Next ACT or SAT testing:

	<u>Test Date:</u>	<u>Registration Deadline:</u>
<b>ACT:</b>	Feb 7, 2009 April 4, 2009	Jan 6, 2009 February 27, 2009
<b>SAT:</b>	Jan 24, 2009 March 14, 2009	Dec 26, 2008 February 10, 2009

### Additional information regarding testing:

ACT - [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)  
SAT - [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

\*Registration and practice materials for both tests may be retrieved from the counseling office.

