



Counselor's Corner



February Newsletter

Introduction

Welcome to February! Hopefully you are just as excited as I am about the start of a new year. Many things will be happening in the counseling office during the spring semester including course registration, graduation preparation, awards ceremonies, etc.

The major task is course registration for the 2012-2013 school year. In the next couple of months, your son/daughter will sign up for the classes he/she wishes to take next year. As a parent/guardian, I encourage you to talk about these options. The 2012-2013 Course Guide will be located on the counseling web page soon. This guide will help you understand what classes are offered along with a brief description of the class. Also located in the Course Guide is a 5-year plan to help you map out what classes are necessary to take. Please remember the college entrance requirements when completing the plan.

Senior Students

Many families think that they will not qualify for financial aid; however, there is no cut-off to qualify for federal student aid. Many factors besides income—from size of family to the age of the oldest parent—are taken into account. The eligibility is determined by a mathematical formula, not by the parents' income alone. Also, when you fill out the FAFSA, you're automatically applying for funds from the state, and possibly from the school. After submitting the FAFSA, expect to receive the Student Aid Report (SAR) within a few weeks. If you missed the financial aid presentation and/or would like assistance in completing the FAFSA, there is a financial aid assistance day at SCC on Saturday, February 18 from 9:00 am

to 3:00 p.m. Stop in during those times for free and confidential help.

Around this time of the year, many families begin to ask about scholarships. All scholarship announcements can be found on the counseling web page or counseling office. The local scholarships will be available on April 1st.

Junior Students

Has your son/daughter completed the ACT or SAT test? The next opportunity for ACT testing is April 14th (deadline: March 9th). I highly suggest your son/daughter registering for this date.

Is your son/daughter interested in taking the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)? This test will be given on February 9th, 2012 and it is a great opportunity for your child to explore his/her career options. It can also be used as a pretest for the ACT, which may calm some the nerves associated with the actual ACT. Students must sign up with me in the counseling office if interested.

As mentioned previously, course registration is right around the corner. Please make sure to check with colleges of interest for entrance requirements. This is the last year for your son/daughter to meet those guidelines. Many students feel an easier schedule is necessary as a senior. However, this is not the case. College admissions encourage students to take more rigorous courses as a senior. Taking a less rigorous load does not prepare students for the next level. Colleges are interested in students who are preparing themselves for the next level.

Encourage your child to continue to research colleges and ask these questions: what

financial aid is available? What percentage of students graduate? What percentage transfer to other schools? What are the job placement rates for recent graduates? A great way to narrow down the college search is by visiting colleges. Juniors are allowed to go on a campus visit. I highly suggest making a visit. Talk about financial aid options with your child including loans (required to pay back) and grants or scholarships (not required to pay back).

Sophomore Students

As course registration is right around the corner, your to-be-junior will have a greater opportunity to enroll in more rigorous classes. He/she will also be able to choose from a larger variety of classes. Although the college years for your child seem far off, but the reality is it is right around the corner. Therefore, I suggest checking out the entrance requirements for college admissions. Most colleges will require students to have 4 years of English, 3 years of Math, Science, and Social Studies. As a result of this requirement, I highly suggest your son/daughter continue to enroll in those core classes of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. It may be helpful to look at the RAI, which is located in the Course Guide or visit

<http://www.regents.iowa.gov/RAI/index.html> for a description of admissions requirements.

Also during course registration, your child will continue to update the four-year plan and research careers. I encourage you to talk with your child about their career interests. Have they changed their mind? If so, are they taking the necessary classes?

Freshmen Students

Now that your son/daughter is well into his/her freshman year, it is time to start thinking about the 4-year plans which were completed almost a year ago. It's amazing how fast time flies. During registration last year, all students created a 4-year plan using a web-based program. All students will access this plan again during course registration to update and add this year's information. Your son or

daughter will also complete a 9th grade guideway to further research careers and update any changes within the past year.

I encourage you to talk with your child about the classes he/she plans to take. Students will be encouraged to follow their career pathway that was set from last year. However, sometimes students' interests change and the career pathway may be different than last year.

Conclusion

Remember to check out the counseling web page. In order to equip you with the information you or your son/daughter may need, the website is updated weekly. You may find information pertaining to scholarships, important dates, newsletters, resources, scheduling, frequently asked questions, etc. You may access this web page by going to www.meposchools.org, programs, and then high school guidance.

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

Email: cusickj@mepoedu.org

Phone: 319-394-3101 ext. 218

Sincerely,
Miss Jamie Cusick

Next ACT or SAT testing:

<u>Test Date:</u>	<u>Registration Deadline:</u>
ACT: April 14, 2012	March 9, 2012
June 9, 2012	May 4, 2012

Additional information regarding testing:

ACT - www.actstudent.org

SAT - www.collegeboard.org

*Registration and practice materials may be retrieved from the counseling office.

