



St. Joseph High School

Guidance Newsletter

December, 2011

Counselors

Jim Berry (A—G)
Tracy Wagner (H—P)
Mitzi Tompkins (Q—Z)

Allison Koch, Guidance Secretary

EVENING HOURS

January 12 Wagner
January 19 Berry
February 2 Tompkins
February 16 Wagner
February 23 Berry
March 1 Tompkins
March 8 Berry
March 15 Wagner
March 22 Tompkins

Michigan Merit Exam (MME) for Juniors

The Michigan Merit Examination (MME) assesses students in grade 11 (and eligible students in grade 12) based on Michigan high school standards. The MME is administered over three days, March 6, 7 & 8, and includes the following:

- ACT Plus Writing (college entrance exam)
- WorkKeys (job skills assessments in reading, mathematics, and “locating information”)
- Michigan-developed assessments (mathematics, science, and social studies)

A student may not take the MME more than once, pursuant to new Michigan Law.

For more information go to: <http://www.michigan.gov>

Goodbye, Mr. Berry. Hello, Mr. Berry!



As many of you know by now, Mr. Berry, former CTE Drafting & Design Teacher at our high school, is now a Counselor in our Guidance Department. The vacancy, made available with the departure of Mrs. Schweir, had the administration looking for just the right fit, and with his 11 years of teaching experience, an excel-

lent teaching record and a newly minted Master’s Degree in School Counseling from GVSU, Mr. Berry was just what we needed. Mr. Berry has been a NCA School Improvement co-coach, JV Golf coach, ice-hockey coach, and a FIRST Robotics co-chair prior to joining our team. Mr. Berry also holds a Master’s Degree in Career & Technical Education, focusing in Leadership.

Mr. Berry sought the Counselor position eager for some new challenges. Currently, he is settling into this role and is really enjoying the different position, and is excited about

working with students on his caseload and the other Guidance Office staff.

With his familiarity in technology, and a flair for implementing innovative ideas, he is bringing the Department into a new era of high tech, to help maximum efficiency in serving our students.

If your last name begins with an A-G, he is your student’s counselor, and feel free to contact him at any time. Students, he welcomes you to drop in any time to see him.

TESTING INFORMATION

SAT

January 28, 2012
March 10, 2012
May 5, 2012
June 2, 2012

Check registration deadline, on registration packet, or go online to www.collegeboard.com

ACT

February 11, 2012
April 14, 2012
June 9, 2012

Check registration deadlines on packet, or go online to www.act.org

Like us on Facebook—SJHS Guidance Department

The SJHS Guidance Department is excited to announce that we have a Facebook page. We encourage students and parents to search “SJHS Guidance Department” while logged in to Face-

book. Once you reach our Facebook page, please click on the ‘Like’ button/icon. This will enable you to receive automatic updates from the guidance department when you login to Facebook. The

Guidance Department plans to post information that is beneficial to our SJHS students. Information could include: scholarships, college visits, Lake Michigan College Direct Credit, volunteer experi-

ences, and much more. So, please join us...we already have over 100 people that are following our news feeds!



Scholarship Information

When scholarship information or applications arrive in the Guidance Office, the information is displayed with a “green” cover sheet and made available in the Guidance Office. They are also listed on the St. Joseph High School Guidance website:

www.sjschools.org/highschool

Or our new facebook page

Additional scholarships may be found at: www.finaid.org
www.fastweb.com



Interested students are to come to the Guidance Office to get the schol-

arship applications or check our Guidance website under scholarships.

Scholarship SCAMS – Students/parents who think they may have been approached by a fraudulent “scholarship organization” or would like more information about scholarships scams may obtain useful information on the Federal Trade Commission’s scholarship scam Website:

www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams

Seniors Submit Applications in Timely Fashion!

Amid all the rest of high school fall activities, seniors have the added burden of college applications. Over 400 applications have been processed this year which indicates most seniors have already applied to at least one college or post-high school institution for the fall of 2012, and are now nervously racing to the mailbox (or check-

ing their email) to see if there is a decision waiting. Parents, be sure to enthusiastically congratulate your student on any admission he/she receives, and likewise help him/her through any disappointment that might occur as a result of an admission denial.



Scheduling for Next Year’s Classes

In February, we will begin the scheduling process for the next school year. Here are a few things to remember when helping your student choose classes: The Michigan Merit Curriculum requires all students to take four years of English, four years of Math, three years of Science and three years of Social Studies, along with several other required courses. Be sure to

look over your students scheduling materials carefully before signing the course selection form in February. Please note that starting with next year’s incoming freshman (class of 2016) must take two years of languages.

IMPORTANT:

For the past several years, students

have had the opportunity to enter their own course selections into our database. Please remind your student that it is very important to enter the correct courses. The master schedule is built around your student’s course requests, and accuracy is extremely important for your student to have a place in the desired courses.

“Be A Rock Star Student” Series

Need Help With Organization & Time Management? — Dec. 15, 6-7:30 p.m., Room 174

How to Ace Your Midterms — Jan. 12, 6-7:30 p.m., Room 154

The Scoop on Taking Good Notes — March 20, 6-7:30 p.m.

How to Ace Your Exams & Tips for Test Anxiety — May 17, 6-7:30 p.m., Room 154

\$10 per session & includes a booklet “How to Get Good Grades”. Sign up in the Guidance Office. (Fee waivers available.)

End of Semester Schedule

January 9—School resumes

January 20—End of 2nd mark pd.

January 16—No School

January 23—Review Day

January 24-26—Exams (1/2 days)

January 27—No School, Teacher Record Day

January 30—Begin 2nd Semester

PSAT and PLAN

PSAT/NMSQT: An optional test administered to interested 10th and 11th graders as a pre-SAT test. Scores received make it possible for students to compare themselves to other college bound students. For juniors, it is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship. This year's test was administered on October 15. Test results and interpretive

reports arrived mid-December. Your student should bring his or her report home before winter break.

PLAN: Administered to all 10th graders during the school day on November 3. The PLAN test is a pre-ACT test and is a powerful predictor of success on the ACT, which is broadly used for college entrance and placement decisions. Additional benefits of the PLAN

are the career preparation and planning components, as well as academic guidelines which help students develop a coursework plan for the remaining years in high school. It is also used for course placement at the high school. Results will arrive after the new year and be distributed to students in their English classes.

Need a Tutor?

A list of NHS tutors is available in the Guidance Office. The tutors are listed by subject area.



**NHS Tutoring Available
Every Thursday
3:15—4:00 p.m.
Room 258**

SJHS Students to Complete New Educational Development Plans

An educational development plan is required by law for all students in grades 7-12. It is designed to help students identify both career goals

and a plan of action to achieve them. The EDP includes the following elements: Career Goal, Educational Training Goal, Assessment Results,

Plan of Action. Students will be working on various sections of the EDP throughout the year, and can access their own EDP from home.

FREE ACT PREP—ONLINE

1. Go to sjschools.org
2. Select High School
3. Click on Guidance
4. Click on Testing
5. Click on ACT Preparation website
6. Log in (click on "register" if new user)
7. College Prep
8. ACT Prep

ACT Prep Class Registration

St. Joseph High School will offer an ACT Prep class in January and February. The class will consist of four evenings and cover the major content areas of the ACT. Registration details will be mailed to junior students sometime in early December.



Free FAFSA Workshop Scheduled for Senior Parents February 9, 2012

The Guidance Department is offering a free FAFSA Workshop where parents and students can receive help completing their FAFSA online. Financial Aid Officers from Lake Michigan College will assist in our computer labs. The date is February 9, from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. in the

high school media center. You must bring your W-2's, any completed tax documentation and a PIN for both the parent and student.

See the box to the right to get a PIN.

FAFSA

Financial Aid

For College Bound Seniors

GET YOUR PIN NOW!

www.fafsa.org

SUBMIT FAFSA

JAN. 1 - FEB. 29

Paying for College

Probably one of the most overwhelming concerns of sending a student to college is the enormous cost of many four year institutions. Because parents are primarily responsible for covering a student's cost for a college education, most rely on some kind of **financial aid** to help offset the expenses associated with higher education.

All financial aid begins with the **FAFSA**, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The FAFSA must be filed between January 1 and March 1 of the student's senior year in high school and every subsequent year the student is in college. The FAFSA is used to calculate an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and determines if there is "need" when compared to the cost of attendance at the student's schools of choice.

There is no fee to file the FAFSA, and although the paper form can still be used, the online application is faster and skip-logic allows parents and students to surpass unnecessary questions. Although some schools may require other financial aid forms, like the CSS Profile, the FAFSA is the core document and the initial step in the financial aid process.

Both the student and the parent must obtain a PIN (personal identifi-

cation number) that allows them to "sign" the online forms. The student fills out his/her own form and the parents fill out their own form disclosing important income information, similar to a tax form. PINs can be obtained ahead of time and kept in a safe place. The website to register for a pin is www.pin.ed.gov, and the website to start the FAFSA process is www.fafsa.ed.gov. Again, this is a free service, and if you are asked to submit any payment to file the form, you are at the wrong website.

Once the colleges receive the EFC, students receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) explaining how each college plans to help the student meet the demonstrated need. Need can be met through: federal loans, grants and work-study, state grants including the Michigan Competitive Scholarship, private scholarships (foundations, clubs, and corporations), college and university merit scholarships and private loans. Many private scholarships do not require a FAFSA because they are not based on financial need, and most merit scholarships are based on grades and test scores alone. Need based aid (as determined from the FAFSA) is in addition to private and merit scholarships.

Again, all need-based financial aid starts with the FAFSA and the March 1 deadline is very important if a student hopes to receive all eligible funding. Sunday, **February 12th is College Goal Sunday**. On this particular Sunday, there are many venues open in our state where parents and high school seniors can receive expert help filling out the FAFSA. Information about College Goal Sunday can be found at <http://micollegegoal.org>, and Lake Michigan College is a participating college. Also, on **February 9, the financial aid counselors from Lake Michigan College will be at SJHS** available to help students and parents complete this important form. These experts are available to help any student, not just those attending SMC. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend at least one of these important events. Families can save valuable time by completing the FAFSA on the Web Worksheet (FOTW) ahead of time. These worksheets should be available in the guidance office shortly before Winter Break.

Good luck as you enter the world of higher education financial aid. Please contact your student's counselor if you have further questions.

"Ultimate Money Skills-College Funding" Seminar

January 26, 2012 from 6-7 p.m. in the high school auditorium: Designed to help parents of 9-12 grade students gain an understanding of how the college financing process works, including options available to develop a college funding strategy, how to plan for and manage all col-

lege costs and different types of financial aid available. Parents will learn how to send their child to college without risking their financial future.



ACT and SAT – What’s the Difference?

Preparing for college is a trying time for students, and the emphasis on standardized testing does not make this time any easier. All Michigan students take the ACT in the spring of their junior year as part of the MME, but some students wonder whether to also take the SAT. All colleges now accept EITHER OR, so being aware of some of the differences might be helpful in making a decision. Listed below is a concise description of ten major differences between the SAT and ACT, which may help your student in making their test-taking decisions:

- 1) ACT includes trigonometry (typically 4 questions); SAT does not.
 - 1a) ACT has occasional questions on Matrices, Logarithms, Radians, and unreal numbers; SAT does not.
- 2) ACT includes “science reasoning”, which is logical reasoning based on data and scientific terms, but not based on classroom science.
- 3) SAT deducts points for wrong answers. However with coaching, students can actually use this to their ADVANTAGE.
- 4) SAT Math demands scrutinizing the English aspect of math questions. ACT is more straightforward, making it a more comfortable test, but not necessarily easier.
- 5) SAT directly tests high level vocabulary. This rewards students who are big readers or are good vocabulary absorbers.
- 6) SAT Critical Reading relies more on inference; ACT Reading asks questions that rely more on retrieving information from the text.
- 7) SAT Writing includes a written 25 minute essay. The ACT essay (30 min.) is optional, though most colleges require it.
- 8) The SAT Essay is more likely to ask about abstract topics; the ACT Essay will ask a practical question usually relating to high school life.
- 9) The ACT is more fast-paced; there are more questions to be done in a

shorter amount of time. Pacing is everything!

10) The ACT tests English grammar; the SAT does not.

One other difference that could be considered “major” is the SAT’s emphasis on math. Since one-third of the SAT is math, and only one fifth of the ACT is math, a strong math student might do better on the SAT.

Generally, the ACT is a content-based test, whereas the SAT tends to test more critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Bottom Line: the tests are similar. ACT remains a bit broader in content.

Portions from the above are taken from CollegeView.

Stress Management Support Group

The American Institute of Stress states: Because people react differently to stress, the effects of stress can be different for each of us. A good illustration of the important effects of stress can be seen from surveys showing that 75 to 90 percent of visits to primary care physicians are for stress-related complaints.

The counseling and social work staff are providing a much needed resource for our high school students in learning ways to manage stress. Groups meet once a week for a total of eight weeks during the school day.

By participating in the small group, students are taking steps to improve and develop skills to enhance their learning and success in school and in life. Students are taught a variety of coping skills to deal with anger, stress and anxiety. Hands-on projects accompany each skill, ranging from stress balls, journals, relaxation CD’s and metaphor bracelets.

An added benefit for students is the opportunity to create relationships with peers and counseling staff, which provides further support and resources.

If you are interested in having your student participate in a group, please contact your guidance counselor.



Common Myths on Parenting Teens

Parenting Teens is often a tough and thankless job. The stakes are higher than at any other stage in their development. Many factors affect outcomes in teenagers, including the child's characteristics, stress within the family and from outside sources, and how much support the teen gets at home, at school, and within the community.

There are many myths regarding parenting teenagers that need to be dispelled. Teens don't suddenly "go bad". The following myths will hopefully help bring parents and teens together, and take a closer look at the misconceptions that get in the way of understanding each other (Parenting Teens).

1. Once a bad kid, always a bad kid. One of the worst things a parent can do is stick the "bad kid" label on their teen. The parent is reinforcing the idea that the teen is bad, therefore eventually the teen will believe they are bad and act out in destructive ways.

2. You can fix your teenager. If your relationship with your child is not working, you can only work on yourself and your behaviors. In doing so, you can search for the best ways to deal with your teen. You may not be able to control your teens emotional and volatile nature at all times, but you are in control of how you respond to it.

3. A good relationship is a peaceful one. Many parents fail to give

their teen guidelines and boundaries because they are afraid of a confrontation. A parent cannot afford to shirk their responsibilities as a parent just for the sake of keeping the peace.

4. Share everything with your teen. Being honest with the teen does not mean being totally open. A parent is the primary role model in the teen's life and often times teens feel that it's OK to do something their parent did (Myths Parents Believe about Teens).

5. Teens prefer their friends to their parents. As children begin school, they spend less time with their family, and their friends take on a greater importance in their lives. Adolescents begin to create their own identity through where they go, what they do, and who they spend their time with. Unfortunately, teens with high anxiety or low self-esteem will seek the approval from a peer group. However, if they have been given strategies and tools early in life to deal with tough decisions, they will be able to face these challenges with good results.

6. My teenager won't talk to me. I can't get him to open up. Teenagers like to talk. But they must have a willing listener. There should be a balance between routine chatter and meaningful talks. Time and effort needs to be taken to find a quiet place to really talk to the teen about what is going on in their daily lives, and the challenges they

are facing. Try to keep an open mind and really listen to what the teen is trying to communicate.

Another common myth is that peer pressure is at its worst during adolescent and teen years. Peer pressure is a positive force but it is also overrated. Generally, adolescents choose friends with similar tastes and values to theirs. However, parents still retain the major influence over the teen's life. Research has shown that parents who monitor their teens can help curb or prevent many risky behaviors. Monitoring also serves to give teens the message that with increased privileges comes increased responsibility and above all that the parent cares enough to set and enforce boundaries (Parenting Teens).

Works Cited

- "Parenting Teens" NNCC Parents: Parenting Teens. 1999. 02Apr.2005
<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/human/pubs/parteens.html>
- "Myths Parents Believe about Teens" Dr.Phil.Com-Advice. 2005. 02Apr.2005
<http://www.drphil.com/advice/advice.jhtm>



Spotlight on College

University of Michigan

- Located in Ann Arbor. In 1837 the campus occupied a total of 40 acres. In 2010, it now occupies a total of 712 acres.
- Total student population in 2010 is 41,028
Undergraduates: 25,994
Graduates: 12,391
Males: 12,587
Females: 12,515
- The University is on a Trimester Calendar
- The 2010 Freshmen class had a GPA of 3.8
- Middle 50% of admitted high school students in 2010 for the ACT was a 28-32 and for the SAT was a 1960-2200
- School Colors—Maize and Blue
- Mascot—Wolverines



www.umich.edu

Ferris State University

- Located in Big Rapids just a few miles east of the Manistee National Forest. Ferris occupies over 880 acres.
- Ferris State University is the 9th largest University in the state and admitted 13,134 students for the 2010 school year. 49.6% being male students and 50.4% being female students.
- First year students must have a minimum 2.7 high school GPA and an ACT reading subtest score of 17 or better.
- School Color—Ferris Red and Ferris Gold
- Mascot—Bulldog



www.ferris.edu

This is the last Guidance Newsletter produced from the Guidance Office. From January forward, all information may be found on our SJHS Guidance Department Facebook page or on the Guidance Web Page at:

www.sjschools.org/highschool

St. Joseph High School

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