

Counselors' Corner

PSAT

10th and 11th grade students should have received their PSAT scores by the middle of January. Our morning announcements included an information session on how to understand and use these test results, and the counselors provided some mini-sessions for students and parents about interpreting results. The College Board offers a wonderful tool on-line to help students and parents use these results in many ways. We encourage everyone to take a look at the www.collegeboard.com/quickstart website to take full advantage of this opportunity.

COURSE SELECTION AND SCHEDULING FOR 2008-2009

➤ **NEW DISTRICT SCHEDULING GUIDELINES**

Due to new district timelines, all pre-registration for high school courses will take place in the month of February this year. Bowie counselors will meet with all 9-11th graders during the last two weeks of January to talk about course selection, to complete an Individual Academic and Career Plan, and to help students understand how their course selections are related to their future aspirations. The new timeline also means that Bowie 9th-11th graders will receive their course contracts through their advisories on February 13.

➤ **HIGH SCHOOL PARENT INFORMATION OPPORTUNITIES**

We will host a parent information night to discuss graduation requirements on February 19, and the Bowie Course Fair for grades 9-11 will take place on February 20. Students will be expected to have made their final course selections and present their signed contracts to their math teachers on Friday, February 22. The following week will include a day in which counselors will assist students in entering their course selections into the programming system.

➤ **8TH GRADE ORIENTATION TO HIGH SCHOOL**

This new timeline also means that 8th graders and their parents will be coming to Bowie on February 11th for an orientation program. The program will begin at 6:00 and will include a course fair; break-out sessions for orchestra, band, athletics, dance, theatre, and choir; a general session; and alpha group sessions with presentations by counselors, assistant principals, and teachers where we will discuss making wise choices. Counselors will do follow up meetings at the three largest feeder schools during the following week.

TESTING

➤ **TAKS**

The TAKS English/Language Arts and Reading tests will be administered on March 4. This test will involve all 9-11th grade students and any 12th graders who are re-testing. Re-testing will continue for 12th graders throughout this week. The social studies, science, and math portions of this exam will be given April 20 through May 2.

➤ **ASSET/THEA**

Seniors who did not meet the Higher Education Readiness Component (HERC) based on their Exit Level TAKS or SAT or ACT scores are required by **Texas Public Schools** to take another assessment prior to enrolling for classes. ACC will administer this

assessment for FREE on March 4th at Bowie. This test is called the ASSET test and can be used in place of the THEA. Austin Partners in Education is sponsoring free tutorial sessions to help seniors prepare for this exam. These sessions are being hosted through Shannon Duffy in the College and Career Center. Only students who meet one of the following sets of standards are exempt:

Exit Level TAKS: 2200 on English/Language Arts + 3 on Essay + 2200 on Mathematics

SAT: Critical Reading 500 + Math 500 + CR and M combined 1070

ACT: Composite 23 + English 19 + Math 19

➤ **AP TESTING**

AP Testing Fees will be collected during the week prior to spring break. AP students will receive information about this through their AP instructors. All AP exams will be given during the 2nd and 3rd weeks in May. In order to register for exams, students must complete a registration form in the counseling office and receive a receipt. Students who do not follow the proper procedure will not be guaranteed a test. No student should simply “drop off” a registration form without receiving the appropriate paperwork in return.

SENIOR PARENTS

➤ **APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID**

It is now time to start preparing for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In order to submit the application online, you and your student will need a pin number. The web site for a pin is www.pin.ed.gov. Once you have received your pin and are mostly finished with your taxes, you can begin the FAFSA (www.fafsa.ed.gov). We will be offering a Financial Aid Saturday at Akins High School on Saturday, February 2nd to assist you with the FAFSA. Feel free to contact Shannon Duffy at 841-4107 should you have additional questions about this complicated process!

➤ **THE ACC COLLEGE CONNECTION**

Our ADVANCE specialist, Shannon Duffy, and the counselors are working with the ACC admissions office to make sure that every senior who wants to, has submitted an application for admission to ACC. AISD and ACC have joined forces to ensure that all seniors are accepted to ACC to continue their education. This is also beneficial to those seniors who will attend college out of town or out of state, as many students take courses at ACC while at home for the summer.

UPCOMING PARENT MEETINGS AT BOWIE:

Financial Aid Night	January 22	6:30	11 th and 12 th Grade Parents
Financial Aid Brownbag	January 24	12:00	11 th and 12 th Grade Parents
Scholarship Workshop	January 30	Both lunches	12 th Graders
8 th Grade Orientation	February 11	6:00	8 th Graders and Parents
Course Contract Night	February 19	6:30	9 th -11 th Grade Parents
Course Fair	February 20	9-4	9 th -11 th & Parents Welcome
Private Versus Public	March 20	12:00	11 th Graders and Parents
Rising Senior Meeting	April 8	6:30	11 th Graders and Parents
Junior Parents Workshop	April 10	12:00	11 th Graders and Parents

9TH-11TH GRADE PARENTS PLEASE READ:
IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT COURSE SELECTION FOR NEXT YEAR:

It is very important that you and your student select courses for next year with careful consideration. The master schedule of classes is developed during the month of June based on the courses students have selected. Textbooks are purchased and teachers are hired or transferred elsewhere based on these course selections. As budgetary constraints get tighter, we have to schedule as efficiently as possible adhering to strict District and Board mandates for class sizes. **Therefore, we ask that you carefully read the AP and Pre-AP contracts that will be posted on the www.jbhs.org website, that you carefully select courses after gathering information from the Course Fair and from appropriate teachers, and that you make a commitment to stay in those classes.**

The following **deadlines** will be strictly adhered to:

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| February 29 | Students complete data entry of their selected courses and turn in signed course contracts. |
| May | Verification forms showing the courses scheduled for each student will be distributed. Changes/corrections may be made at this time. |
| JUNE 11 | Deadline for any student/parent to make changes in course selections. Notification should be in writing and delivered to the Bowie Data Processing Office. |
| August | Prior to school starting, students will be mailed a listing of the courses that are being scheduled for them. A letter will detail the process for students or parents to request a CORRECTION—NOT A “CHANGE OF MIND” in the schedule (i.e.: a course taken in summer school is still on the fall schedule). All requests must be made in writing.
<i>All students who have pre-registered for Pre-AP or AP courses which have summer projects should have these projects COMPLETED prior to the first day of school. Please see the Bowie website to review the summer requirements which are a part of the contract for these courses.</i> |
| Early Sept. | All students will be expected to be in their scheduled classes for a minimum of two weeks before requesting a change of level. Only errors will be corrected at the beginning of school. Requests for level change (AP to academic) will go to committee for approval. |

We encourage all students to take a rigorous schedule of classes by including AP, Pre-AP, and honors courses in order to be best prepared for the rigor of college. However, it is important to have a “balance” of academic courses which are also college preparatory. AP and Pre-AP courses take considerable time outside the classroom and thus, students who are involved in extracurricular activities that require numerous hours outside of the school day should give careful consideration to the number of the AP and Pre-AP courses for which they contract.