

# Academic Advising Monthly

From the desk of Paula Osborn, Secondary Academic Advisor

## STAY INFORMED via WEBSITE

Our website is a good source of DMCS information regarding all things academic and beyond. Please follow this [link](#) and spend time becoming familiar with all that is available there. From the Secondary section pay special attention to:

- **ACADEMICS** for Course Descriptions and Course Guides
- **DAILY ANNOUNCEMENTS** to keep up on information being shared with your students at the beginning of 2<sup>nd</sup> period.
- **STUDENT HANDBOOK** for any questions you may have regarding policies, procedures, etc... The handbook is reviewed and updated annually. Families are asked to confirm at registration that they've kept up on any changes made.

## JUNIOR HIGH EXPLORATORIES

Did you know that JH students cycle through quarterly **exploratory** classes? These courses are designed as brief exposure to different areas of study:

- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Art, Discovery, Keyboarding and Music
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Careers, Leadership and Spanish (2 quarters)
- TAG students will spend two quarters in TAG in place of two of their grade-specific exploratories.

## 4-YEAR PLANS

8th grade students during their Careers exploratory will complete an assignment called the "4-year Plan". This is an opportunity for them to become familiar with graduation requirements and available courses for high school. The plan they layout will be shared with their parents. It's a good way to begin thinking about the high school years but is not meant to be inflexible. Different variables can come in to play that may affect actual enrollment, like scheduling changes, course offerings, grade considerations and change in interests. Copies of these 4-year plans are kept on record in the Academic Advising office for future reference.

NOVEMBER 2014

## Standardized Testing at DMCS



DMCS offers the following opportunities:

### Iowa Assessments

*Grades 3-11*

Administered each spring to measure student growth, assess academic programs, and guide professional development.

### PSAT/NMSQT

*Grade 11*

Great practice for SAT or other timed college admissions tests. Entry into the National Merit Scholarship competition. Assesses students' potential success in Advanced Placement courses.

### ACT

Promoted as the college admissions test of choice. Registration instructions, practice opportunities, testing dates and locations are available on DMCS's website or at [ACT](#) and communicated to our 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students.



## ENROLLING FOR 14-15 COURSES

The master schedule is created late winter/early spring with the goal of having online course requesting open in early April. Detailed instructions on how to select courses will be communicated via email to parents and students. Workshops will be scheduled for parents/students desiring more hands-on assistance. Details on workshop dates and times will be communicated as soon as available.

## HOMESCHOOL COURSES

A Request to Homeschool a Course form must be submitted prior to the start of a semester for curriculum to be approved for credit. The deadline for Semester 2 homeschooling is *December 19*. The forms can be picked up from the Secondary Office.

Logs showing 1<sup>st</sup> semester work for a P.E. credit should be submitted to Mrs. Osborn prior to leaving for Christmas break. The following language is taken from the Homeschool Guidelines:

- **Homeschooled PE classes:** An accurate log of activity type and hours spent each day. The log must be verified with a parents/instructors signature before submitting.
  - **40.5 hours** = .5 credit p/semester (equivalent to Early Bird PE)
  - **67.5 hours** = 1 credit p/semester (equivalent to daily High School PE)

*\*Per Iowa Administrative Code, time spent participating/practicing in a school-sponsored sport or activity cannot be counted towards PE credits.*

## SEMESTER 2 SCHEDULES

Now would be a great time for students to check their Netclassroom accounts and verify that their Semester 2 schedules look accurate and complete. For any changes please note the following deadlines:

- **Add** a class .. by Friday, January 9
- **Drop** a class .. by Friday, January 16

## SENIOR YEAR PLANNING SESSIONS

Each junior with their parents will have opportunity to sign up for a one-on-one appointment with the Academic Advisor to plan for their senior year. This will include information on dual-credit off-campus classes and a review of their credits needed for graduation. Keep track of any additional questions you may have and watch for details on scheduling your planning session after Christmas break.

### *Mrs. Prewitt's Top 5 Favorite Study Tips:*

1. Get organized. Use a daily planner and check it at the end of each day. You then know what to take home for homework.
2. Have a notebook for each subject. Maybe even color coordinate it with your textbook.
3. Write vocabulary on notecards (word on one side and definition on the other) and review them each evening.
4. Find a study buddy for each class.
5. Realize the effort you put into studying will be reflected in your grades.