

ADVOCATE

SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING OFFICE
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March 2014

2014-15 Course Scheduling

A new perspective on an old process

Course scheduling is one of the most well-known responsibilities of school counselors, but the process will look quite different at SHS this spring. With the help of Alicia Holden, the district's new Power School administrator, the functions of our online information system

Power School. Those individual meetings will continue with 11th graders, as the Counseling Department sees tremendous benefit in an early jump-start to the college and career planning process, but 9th and 10th graders will move through a

"Students entering their own course requests does two things: 1) It offers an appropriate increase in student responsibility, and 2) It puts them in direct contact with their courses, increasing their awareness of next year's schedule and the 'bigger picture' of their educational experience at SHS!"

-Jason Touchette, School Counselor

are growing and the counselors were hopeful that course registrations could be part of this technological upgrade. In previous years, counselors met individually with every 9th, 10th and 11th grade student, walked through the course selection process, and then worked with the registrar to enter every course request into

new method. In February in advisory groups, the counselors offered guidance about graduation requirements and scheduling and gave each underclass(wo)man a course sign-up sheet with their required classes pre-selected. The students were then able to bring these sheets and the 2014-15

School-wide News & Events



SAT Testing offered at SHS on Sat. May 3rd. The deadline for online registration is April 4th. (sat.collegeboard.org/register)

Students hoping to take RVTC courses next year: be sure to hand in the RVTC application as soon as possible as seats fill up fast! Parent/ guardian and school counselor signatures are required.

Quarter 3 ends on April 3rd. We encourage students and families to check Power School regularly and connect with teachers about missing assignments or grading concerns.

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"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." -Nelson Mandela

Program of Studies home to speak with their parents/guardians about course offerings. After conversations with their families, students were called to the MAC lab during the week of March 10th and the school counselors steered them through the pilot online

registration process. Aside from wanting to take greater advantage of Power School's course registration features, the counselors were also hopeful that this process would be less disruptive to classroom teachers and would encourage students to take more ownership of these

important decisions. Although we have yet to see how the online process will fuse with the building of the 2014-15 master schedule, students and staff have provided positive feedback about the shift.

College Week

Getting students excited about life after SHS

During the week of April 7th, the Counseling Department will be hosting a week-long celebration of the college experience. With hopes of encouraging more and more of our student body to explore post-secondary education, we will kick-off the week with an Alma mater t-shirt day. Every SHS staff member will sport a t-shirt, or another article of clothing, from the school where they earned their degree. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday during FLEX, SHS and district

staff members will be assigned to a classroom where they will meet with small groups of students in grades 9-12. With access to a list of all staff Alma maters and with a chance to consider their post-secondary interests, students will have the opportunity to select three classrooms to visit. During these visits, staff will serve as an informal panel of college representatives, helping students to learn more about their academic experience, offering online virtual tours of

their former campuses, or having candid conversations about college life. Throughout the week, SHS students will also use the intercom system to share statistics about the benefits of attending college and about the lifestyles and experiences college students across the country. The week will conclude with a Friday "Spring Fling" assembly presented by our Student Council.

12th Grade

Community Service

Many families are aware that community service is now an integral graduation requirement for an SHS diploma. Following the

example of high schools throughout the nation, SHS believes that positive connections and contributions to the local community are a

vital part of the high school experience. Last year's graduates were the first class to be held to this standard and each member of the Class of

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2014 will also need to meet the 40-hour requirement. However, we still have many 12th graders who have a significant number of hours left to finish. The good news is that there is plenty of time for students to earn hours over the next few months. We are encouraging all 12th grade families to check-in with their student about their community service status. Mrs. Wasyliko, our school librarian, took on the role of Community Service Coordinator this year and has been working hard to keep students up-to-date on their progress. In addition to creating a clear tracking system, she has also been advertising many service opportunities through flyers and announcements. Feel free to reach out to Mrs. Wasyliko with any questions or concerns (885-5204 -- jwasyliko@ssdvt.org).

11th Grade College Visits

The spring months are a time that our students love to get outdoors and start enjoying the warmer weather. For 11th graders and their families, visiting college campuses is a great way to combine that

leisure with an exciting and valuable activity. With senior year on the horizon, the counselors encourage all juniors to explore some regional colleges over April vacation and during weekends this spring. We understand that the summer months might be the easiest time for families to travel, but there is an advantage to visiting a college when classes are in session and the campus is in full-swing. One of the benefits of living in New England (in addition to this lovely March weather) is that we have hundreds of colleges "in our backyard". A day-trip to Boston or Portland or Albany can give families access to many public and private schools and schools of every size, demographic make-up, and academic rigor. Sometimes families call ahead and reserve spots on guided tours or in lectures, but it is always acceptable to spend time on a campus unannounced, getting an honest feel for daily campus life. If you are interested in more tips about college visits, check out this resource: <http://www.princetonreview.com/college/college-visit.aspx> In addition to these personal visits, the counselors are

sponsoring a college fair field trip on April 9th to Castleton State College. 11th graders will be given preference for this trip (permission forms are available in the counseling office) and students will be able to gather information and talk to admissions representatives from over 120 schools across the country.

10th Grade RVTC Applications

Following interactive presentations from River Valley Tech student ambassadors and visits to various RVTC programs, many 10th graders are planning to enroll in a tech center program for the 2014-15 academic year. RVTC currently offers Level I programs in Audio/Visual Production, Business & Financial Services, Carpentry, Criminal Justice, Culinary Arts, Health Careers, Horticulture & Natural Resources, Human Services, Industrial Trades, Information Technology, and Mechanical Design & Innovation. RVTC is an ideal option for many of our students, especially those who excel with hands-on learning and who can see concrete connections between

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an RVTC program and their post-secondary goals. The application process is simple: students must have achieved 10th grade credit status (6.0 credits) and complete a short form with parent approval and contact information, a student signature, and a school counselor signature. These forms are available in the counseling office and in the Student Services office at RVTC. Although many 10th graders are excited about the opportunities at RVTC, many of the programs fill up quickly and the SHS counselors are urging students to submit their application form before April 1st. If families are interested in learning more about RVTC, check out their website at:

<http://www.rvtc.org/>

9th Grade

A World of Difference

For the past few years, school climate has been a central focus for the administrators, teachers and counselors at SHS. As part of that mission, 9th grade advisory groups are being paired up with teams of 10th and 11th graders who have been trained as peer leaders in the *A World of Difference* (AWOD) program. This

nationally-renowned program, sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League, is a provider of anti-bias education; it recognizes that "attitudes and beliefs affect actions, each of us can have impact on others, and ultimately, on the world in which we live." Guided by their peer leaders, 9th graders will be participating in interactive discussions and hands-on activities that address issues of diversity, inclusive language, bullying, and prejudice. Many high schools throughout the state have adopted this peer-led program and have seen noticeable changes in incidents of bullying and in disciplinary referrals. The counseling office is hopeful that SHS will experience similar changes and that many of the 9th graders who work with peer leaders this year will be interested in training to become an AWOD peer leader in the future. If you have any questions or concerns about AWOD, please contact Jade Dunn Costello or Sara Zaino (szaino@ssdvt.org).

*We look forward to seeing all families and students at **Parent-Teacher Conferences this Thursday evening (5-8:30PM) and this Friday morning (8AM-12PM)**. Counselors will be stationed outside the cafeteria – we hope to see you all there!*