

# ADVOCATE

SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING OFFICE ~ 885-7914

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March 2015

## 2015-16 Course Scheduling

### *Recommendations, requests and online registration*

The initial phase of course scheduling for the 2015-16 academic year is well underway at SHS. In mid-February, classroom teachers began making recommendations to the school counselors about which classes would be most appropriate and beneficial for which students; counselors used these recommendations, along with the SHS graduation requirements, to create course scheduling worksheets for every student. Students received these worksheets from their advisors the week after February vacation; with the guidance of their advisors, through conversations with their current teachers, and referencing the new Program of Studies, students worked diligently to complete the scheduling worksheets and map out their courses for next year. Counselors have strongly encouraged the

students to bring the worksheets home. Ideally, students will share their work and plans with their parents/guardians and will be sure to get a parent/ guardian signature in approval of the worksheet.



New registrar, Susan Haskins, joined us in February after the retirement of long-time registrar Deb Snide. She is already a valued member of our team and will be integral in the scheduling process. She can be reached at [shaskin@ssdvt.org](mailto:shaskin@ssdvt.org) or 885-7913.

The next phase of the scheduling process will begin the week of March 9<sup>th</sup>. For the second year in a row, students will be called to the MAC lab (by grade level and last name)

### School-wide News & Events



#### ACT Exam at SHS

Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> in the SHS cafeteria – sign-up online at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

#### SAT Exam at SHS

Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> in the SHS cafeteria – sign-up online at [SAT.collegeboard.org](http://SAT.collegeboard.org)

#### College Fair at Castleton

Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to attend on a first-come first-serve basis (40 students max). Field trip forms are available in the Counseling Office and need to be handed in by March 25<sup>th</sup>

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and the school counselors will steer them through the online PowerSchool registration process. This online process has proven to be less disruptive to classroom teachers and it also allows students to have more agency and take more ownership of these important academic decisions. After all of our students have entered their

course requests into PowerSchool, the administrators, registrar, and counselors will use this data to drive the build of our master schedule. Once the master schedule is complete, we will begin to build student schedules and those schedules will be sent to students and families in the early summer. However, counselors will

carefully review the schedules this spring and will connect with those students who have course conflicts and/or empty blocks to be sure that they have a complete and manageable schedule for next fall.

## Junior Privileges

### *Rewarding students for academic success and steady attendance*

For a number of years, Mr. Thibault has been awarding "Senior Privileges" to 11<sup>th</sup> graders based on their distinguished performance on the state NECAP tests. However, this year the NECAPs have been replaced with SBAC testing and the timing of these new state exams will not allow for deserving juniors to reap the benefits of an "open campus" during the spring lunch

periods. In light of this testing change, the SHS Management Team (made up of administrators, teachers, counselors and students) decided it was only fair to offer the current juniors another path to earn this coveted freedom. At the conclusion of the third quarter marking period, which runs from late January through early April, all 11<sup>th</sup> graders who have maintained at least

a 3.3 GPA for the year, who have 4 or less unexcused absences and/or tardies for the third quarter, and who have earned a minimum of 25 hours of community service will be award the privileges. Students will be notified of their eligibility at the start of the fourth quarter and will be required to get parent permission before taking advantage of the open campus lunch policy.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

### *Community Service*

2015 marks the third year that 40-hours of community service has been a mandatory graduation requirement. Following the example of high schools throughout the

nation, SHS believes that positive connections and contributions to the local community are an essential part of the high school experience. Although

students and families receive many reminders about this requirement, we still have many 12<sup>th</sup> graders who have a significant number of hours left to finish. The good news

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is that there is still plenty of time for students to earn hours over the next few months. We are encouraging all 12<sup>th</sup> grade families to check-in with their student about their community service status. Mrs. Wasyliko, our school librarian and Community Service Coordinator, has been working hard to keep students up-to-date on their progress. In addition to creating a clear tracking system that she shares with students, counselors and administrators, she has also been doing one-on-one check-ins with seniors who are behind on their hours. Mrs. Wasyliko is also diligent about advertising service opportunities through flyers and announcements and is always willing to work with students to find opportunities that interest them or fit with their schedule. Families should feel free to connect with Mrs. Wasyliko with any questions or concerns (885-5204 - [jwasyliko@ssdvt.org](mailto:jwasyliko@ssdvt.org)). We also want to remind students and families that seniors MUST complete their 40-hours by mid-May in order to attend prom on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

## 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

### *College Visits*

The spring months are a time that our students love to get outdoors and start enjoying the warmer weather. For 11<sup>th</sup> 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 is that we have hundreds of colleges "in our backyard". A day-trip to Boston or Portland or Albany or Northern Vermont can give families access to many public and private schools and schools of every size, demographic make-up, and academic rigor. Sometimes families choose to call ahead and reserve spots on guided tours or information sessions

with admissions personnel, 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 1<sup>st</sup> to Castleton State College. 11<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

### *RVTC Applications*

Following an interactive presentation from River Valley Tech student ambassadors and teachers on February 27<sup>th</sup>, many 10<sup>th</sup> graders are excited to enroll in a tech center program for the 2015-16 academic year. RVTC currently offers Level I programs in Audio/Visual Production, Business & Financial Services, Carpentry, Criminal Justice, Culinary

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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 an RVTC program and their post-secondary goals. The application process is simple: students must have achieved 10<sup>th</sup> grade credit status by the end of this academic year (6.0 credits) and complete a short online application form:

<http://rvtc.org/index.php/inquire>

Although many 10<sup>th</sup> graders are excited about the opportunities at RVTC, many of the programs fill up quickly and the SHS counselors urge prospective students to submit their application before April 1<sup>st</sup>. If families are interested in learning more general information about RVTC, check out their website at: <http://www.rvtc.org/>

## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Seeking Student and Family Input

With the fourth (and final)

academic quarter quickly approaching, Mr. Touchette has been thinking a lot about how to provide more support and incentives for 9<sup>th</sup> graders to: keep up with homework and assignments, focus on earning enough credits to move on to sophomore standing, and earn a portion of their 40-hour community service requirement. Each of these goals is essential in helping our 9<sup>th</sup> graders to stay on track towards graduation (extensive education data has shown that the majority of students who drop out of high school are those that slip behind their cohort during their first year). Thus, the SHS Counseling Department wants to implement a more hands-on system to keep our students from failing behind as freshmen. Although Mr. Touchette has some initial thoughts about how to incentivize and celebrate the success and progression of 9<sup>th</sup> graders, he would also like to hear from students and families. The students themselves can speak most candidly about what types of supports and incentives motivate them to stay on track, and parents can also provide a different angle on how best to help and

encourage their children. If you would like to contribute to this action plan, please feel free to reach out to Mr. Touchette directly at:

[jtouchette@ssdvt.org](mailto:jtouchette@ssdvt.org)  
or 802-885-7910

*We look forward to seeing all families and students at*  
**Parent-Teacher Conferences on Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-8PM (teachers will eat dinner from 5-5:30) and on Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup> from 8AM-12PM.**

*Counselors will be stationed outside the cafeteria – we hope to visit with you all there!*