

February 27, 2020

Dear 8th Grade Families,

March 3 – Conversations That Count

Please remember that Conversations That Count, an annual program for 8th graders and their parents around prevention of underage drinking, is on Tuesday, March 3, from 7 to 8:30 pm in the field house. After a brief presentation on the science of the effects of alcohol and other drugs on the teenage brain, there will be guided small group discussions facilitated by Burroughs faculty members. Attendance and participation by both students and families are essential for the success of this event. Therefore, we strongly encourage each student to come with at least one parent or adult family member. Please [e-mail](#) or call Debbie Drummond (314.993.4045, ext. 222) to let her know the names of your family members who will attend. If you have questions about the evening, please contact [Sally Kilbride](#).

March 4 – Grade-Specific Programming

On Wednesday, March 4, we will have a half-day of school during which students will participate in specific programs designed for their grade level. On that day, the 7th and 8th graders will begin with assembly at 8:15 am in Haertter Hall, and then they will proceed to a diversity activity, which will be facilitated by our Middle School Diversity Group's student leaders. Following the diversity activity, the 8th graders, through active engagement and hands-on activities, will participate in a design thinking experience. The design thinking process gives students the steps and scaffolding to solve complex problems by practicing empathy first, and then brainstorming and prototyping solutions. A team of Burroughs faculty members will lead the 8th graders in this dynamic and creative process, which will include an opportunity for students to share their solutions, "Shark Tank" style, to a panel of adults. Lunch will be served; dismissal will be at 1 pm.

2020 – 2021 Course Selection

During our March 5th advisory period, all students will receive the Curriculum Guide for 2020-2021. This guide contains a description of every course that will be offered next year and will be a valuable resource for students as they begin thinking about courses for 9th grade. The week following spring break, the course selection process will begin, so you and your child may want to spend some time looking through this guide before school resumes. As rising 9th graders, students will get to choose their elective courses, so they may want to begin familiarizing themselves with the offerings.

Curriculum Meeting for 8th Grade Families

Speaking of course selection, you are invited to a curriculum meeting at 7 pm on Tuesday, March 31 in Haertter Hall. During the program, you will hear detailed presentations from Maggie Ervin (the incoming 7th and 8th grade principal), the athletic director, the director of academics, and the chairs of the Math, Modern Language, Classics and Science departments; these are the academic departments that have different offerings for your child to consider. (English and History each have just one offering for 9th graders.) Following the presentations, you will have an opportunity to speak in smaller groups with the chairs of most departments. All 8th grade families (not students – they may sit this one out!) are encouraged to attend.

Spring Mailings

Over spring break, you can expect to receive lots of mail from us.

- To give you a snapshot of your child's progress so far this semester, you will receive a spring update report. This report will be similar to the preliminary reports you received during your conference in the fall and will provide information that should be useful to you and your child during the final stretch of the school year. Shortly after returning from spring break, you can expect your child's advisor to call you to discuss both the spring update report and the course selection process as it relates to your 8th grader.
- You will receive a letter that provides a course recommendation from each academic department. During the March 31 curriculum night, the academic department chairs will talk about the recommendation process and will provide insight into the different course offerings for 9th graders.

- Finally, you will receive a letter informing you about your child's study hall status for the period from spring break through the end of the year. Depending on such things as academic performance, effort and focus during classes, and demonstrated level of responsibility, students will be released from all, some, or none of their assigned study halls after spring break.

If for some reason you don't receive one or more of these mailings, please contact [Maggie Ervin](#).

Wishing you a relaxing spring break and a wonderful end to the school year!

[Julie Harris](#)

Principal, Grades 7 & 8

314.993.4045 ext. 219