



START WITH A DREAM...*FINISH WITH A FUTURE*

GRADE 9

May 2021

From School Counselors:

This school year has been challenging on so many levels, and we recognize how deeply COVID-19 has impacted our community. We remain focused on supporting our students and families through this tough time, while keeping our eye on helping students think ahead towards their future. We have all learned to be flexible and to focus on the positive and believe that we will come out of this year stronger than before. We appreciate your flexibility and dedication to your student and recognize how your hard work has helped your student succeed.

Check out this podcast on Parenting Teens, edgerety.com/education/podcast/, and keep a lookout for summer opportunities to help students thrive and stay on track. A big heartfelt thanks from the counseling team,

Ry Hoffman, Head of School Counseling

Conversations at Home

It is important to be transparent about family finances to help your student understand early on your family's financial situation and to help them build financial literacy skills. Here are some ways you can start building these skills:

- Include your student in everyday conversations around family finances. These conversations don't need to feel serious but perhaps your student can be involved in some way. Perhaps your family keeps a calendar of events and you work together to include dates when utilities, rent/mortgage, and other bills are due each month.
- Bring your student to the grocery store and let them know that you are trying to not spend over a certain amount, and they can help you find the best prices for items on your list.
- Talk openly with your student about your family's budget and how your family manages their budget.
- Begin having honest conversations around your family's personal journey with savings and using credit.

Events & Announcements

The School Counseling/Guidance Office has drop-in time available after class for any student. If students would like more of a mental health check-in/support, please reach out to Haleigh, to schedule an appointment at hwestshs@buusd.org. Your student should also feel free to set up individual appointments through Calendly with their counselor as well.

Students should be receiving their 21-22' schedule soon and should reach out to counselors with any questions.

Paying for College and Postsecondary Education

Education after high school can create many opportunities for your student to be successful. Perhaps your student is interested in college or postsecondary education and paying for this education can seem overwhelming and daunting to both you and your student. Start doing research together around the cost of college at some local colleges and training programs. The "sticker price" which is the listed cost is often not the same price as what you will need to pay. The difference between sticker price and what you pay is the financial aid you receive. Financial aid is money that helps you pay for college and is granted based on need and merit.

- Sticker Price = Tuition & Fees + Room & Board + Books + Personal Expenses + Transportation
- Financial Aid = Grants + Scholarships + Loans + Work-Study

If your student and family is interested in saving for college now, you can open a 529 education savings plan which helps families save for postsecondary education costs with tax advantages that make saving easier.

You can learn more about the VHEIP 529 Savings Plan here: vheip.org/college-planning-resources/

Utilize the financial calculator in Scoir to help your family navigate paying for postsecondary education. To sign into your Scoir account go to: app.scoir.com/signin

There are many options available to your student to make the cost of college and postsecondary education more affordable. So be sure to think about dual enrollment and early college as they approach their junior and senior years. These options offer your student free credits for college while also working towards their graduation requirements for high school.

Sources: America's Promise Alliance, VHEIP

Summer Break

Summer break is a great time to relax, gain experience, and learn new skills. Summer is also a great time to start thinking about life after high school. Interest surveys can help your student start thinking about their interests in connection to possible careers. Take **career interest surveys** on Scoir including the **YouScience Assessment** that you can do with your student by logging into their Scoir account: app.scoir.com/signin

If you are unfamiliar with Scoir, check out this helpful slide show: tinyurl.com/ywx8bd3a

The class of 2024 needs to complete 40 hours of community service and the summer can be a great time to **volunteer** one's time. If you would like more information about community service hours, check out the Community Service Handbook here: tinyurl.com/ymjrneju

Another great option for summer is summer camps and Norwich University and Vermont Tech has a lot to offer:

Norwich Summer Camps: tinyurl.com/ysy83bzu

Vermont Tech Summer Camps: tinyurl.com/t5skuh2y

Also, check out the **list of great summer opportunities** that will also be up in the hall near the guidance office here: tinyurl.com/2a4448md

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