

Guidance Newsletter September 7, 2007

Welcome back to Madison! I hope everyone had a relaxing summer and is ready for another exciting and productive year! This Guidance newsletter will come to you monthly.

Schedule changes- Now that school has started, **elective class changes will be honored for the first 2 weeks only** on a space available basis. Additionally, your student will not be allowed to drop either **Advanced Placement or Honors classes until 1st quarter interims have been received**. Any **level changes in foreign language** (eg. Spanish 3 to Spanish 2) need to be preceded by a conversation with your student's teacher.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our **Back to School Night** on Tuesday, September 18th from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. This is an excellent opportunity for you to follow your student's schedule and meet all of their teachers. Please put it on your calendar. We will also be collecting \$100 for Senior Dues as well as \$17 for PSAT's on that night

We will continue with our 35 minute **"Student Assistance Period (SAP)"** each day from 8:54-9:29 am. The purpose of this is to give the students' time and support if they need extra help, do research, make up tests, work, etc. Although it is not required for the students to be with their teachers unless they are failing, teachers (and parents) can require the students to attend at any time. Periodically, this could be of great benefit to them. Teachers are also available every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday after school for extra help. All students are encouraged to stay after school with their teachers if they need additional help with academics. In addition tutoring is available through various honor societies (this is usually arranged through the subject teacher).

Freshman Seminar- we have a program especially for 9th graders that will be called the "Freshman Seminar". It is a seminar/homeroom class that will meet every day for 5 weeks from September 10th through October 19th during SAP. In other words, 9th graders will be restricted to their seminar during SAP for the first 5 weeks. This is for freshmen only, BUT it does include ALL freshmen. The purpose is to ease their adjustment into high school and give them some practical tips.

Graduate student intern-We would like to welcome **Georga Margaritis**, counseling intern from George Mason. She will be working with the counselors in the student services department from September through November.

Interims will be mailed home on October 18th - To contact a teacher with a question or concern, please go to our website, www.fcps.edu/MadisonHS, and

click on "[Staff Email and Voicemail](#)"

(direct link: http://www.fcps.edu/MadisonHS/Info/staff_alpha.html.)

PSAT's will be offered to our 9, 10, and 11th graders during the school day on October 17th – this is a “practice” test that in most cases will help get them ready for the SAT. 9th and 11th graders are charged \$17 for the test. Fairfax County Public Schools pays for all 10th graders. Please try to bring that \$17 payment to “Back to School” night.

November 2 is the end of the **first quarter**. Report cards will be distributed shortly after that.

Blackboard.com- there is a wealth of academic and Guidance related information on Blackboard.com. You can access through your student's blackboard account at

<http://fcps.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>. Recently, parents have been given the ability to access blackboard and update their emergency care cards with their own personal login. Another advantage to this is that you will be able to see all of your children's blackboard accounts in one place. However, you must register to do that.

11th and 12th grade news

Senior-College Parent Night will be held on Monday, September 24th at 7:00 p.m. in Warhawk Hall. **This is a change from the previously reported date of Sept. 25th**. We look forward to seeing you then.

We will also be **meeting with seniors** through SAP on Tuesday, September 12 and Wednesday, September 13th to discuss post-graduate plans.

S.A.T.: Madison is offering it on October 6 and Nov.3. Seniors should plan to take it on one or both of those days –for more information and to sign up, visit www.collegeboard.com. Juniors will take their **first SAT** in the spring, March 1 (offered at Madison) or May 3 (not at Madison).

College Fair at Fair Oaks Mall will be held on Sunday, October 14th at 7:30 p.m. (more than 400 colleges will be represented.) For a complete listing visit www.fcps.edu/ss/collegefairnight

Please also plan to attend the College Fair with your junior. This is a wonderful way to gather information about colleges and speak to admissions counselors.

College Visits to JMHS

College representatives from a variety of schools come to visit students at JMHS. Juniors and Seniors are encouraged to meet with these representatives.

A college pass (signed by your teacher) is required to attend these information

sessions and should be picked up in the Career Center at least one day in advance of the scheduled visit.

To view the list of colleges, visit the JMHS web site www.fcps.edu/MadisonHS and click on [College Visits](#) Schedule: http://www.fcps.edu/MadisonHS/Guidance/CareerCenter/college_visits.pdf . This list may also be viewed through your student's blackboard account at <http://fcps.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

Graduation and Senior Dues

The senior class sponsors this year are Lynn Otto and Mary Ann Barton. Graduation will be on Thursday, June 12, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. at Robinson High School. Senior dues are \$100.00. This fee provides for the graduation ceremony, program for baccalaureate and graduation, cap and gown, diploma cover, two senior field trips (Washington, D.C. and a year end day trip to Kings Dominion), traditional senior gift to the school and end-of-year senior picnic and additional expenses associated with the senior year. Please make your check payable to JMHS and return to Mrs. Otto in the Career Center by December 21, 2007. You will also be able to pay at Back to School Night

Balfour Senior Announcement and Cap & Gown Ordering Information

Graduation announcements may be ordered from the Balfour Company, through our representative, Mike Foltz. He will be available on Wednesday, September 26 and Thursday, September 27 during all lunch periods in the cafeteria for cap and gown measurements and ordering of announcements. Mr. Foltz will also be available on Wednesday, September 26 from 4:00 - 7:00pm outside the small gym to take orders for announcements and get measurements for the cap and gown. A meeting for all seniors will be held in the auditorium on Tuesday, September 11 during Student Assistant Period and Balfour ordering packets will be distributed to students. Extra information packets will be available in the Career Center.

Scholarships, Local Opportunities

Local scholarships will be posted in the Madison Guidance section of Blackboard at fcps.blackboard.com in the "Scholarships/Fin. Aid" section. These scholarships will be posted as they are received. For a listing of current scholarships and a variety of related information be sure to visit www.fcps.edu/ss/CareerConnections and take a look under the "Scholarship Resources" section.

You will find the FCPS approved scholarship database at this online location along with numerous related resources about financial aid. This online scholarship database is updated weekly. Scholarship applications are also available in the Career Center.

Although I can be regarded as the "point" person at the school, the teacher is your best resource if you have a question about a specific class. All teachers have e-mail addresses that can be accessed via the JMHS website:

http://www.fcps.edu/MadisonHS/Info/staff_alpha.html . If there is additional follow up or you need to contact me about other concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Take care, everyone, and have a great year.

*Bob Gambarelli
Director of Student Services
Madison High School*