

January 2008 Guidance Newsletter

Dear parents,

Hope the winter break was a restful time and you were able to spend some time with your families! Things are heating up for the second half of the year here at Madison.

College Planning Night for Juniors and Parents

Wednesday, January 9, 2008, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. JMHS Auditorium

Admissions representatives from James Madison University, Radford University, the University of Virginia and the University of Mary Washington will serve on a panel to discuss a variety of college related topics and the admissions process in general. The Junior class dinner will precede this event at 5:30 pm in the cafeteria. Signup is needed for the junior dinner, but not for the college program.

Junior College/Career Units

During the month of January, the Junior Class will have the opportunity to become familiar with the resources that are available in the College/Career Center, get a counselor's overview about the college process, take an in depth Personality Profiler and begin to research colleges and careers. To help you assist your students in the post-secondary planning process, there is a Junior/Senior Handbook that is available in the Madison Guidance Section on Blackboard at fcps.blackboard.com under the "Career Center Info" button.

Our **Curriculum Night** will be held on **January 31, 2008** from 7:00 P.M. until 9:00 P.M (Snow date 2.5.08). This program will provide parents and students, grades 8 – 11, an opportunity to learn about academic classes, elective classes, and course requirements that are available to your student. Teachers and departments from Madison, as well as the FCPS Academies, will have displays and information throughout the building (maps will be provided) to provide you and your student with an excellent opportunity to find out about the different curricular offerings and requirements, and to ask questions about course sequence, course content, and activities. Counselors will be available to provide information about guidance services and SOL test requirements. The Career Center will also be open.

AP CLASSES: During this program, there will be special presentations for students (and parents) who are considering enrolling in an AP class for the 2008-09 school year. Students and parents have had difficulty in the past understanding the rigorous nature of AP classes and the **TIME** required in these classes. Teachers will present the expectations and curriculum of the classes, so that students and parents can weigh the demands of the course against the rest of the student's obligations, both academic and extracurricular. We expect those who sign up for AP/Honors classes to attempt them for the entire year. Therefore, we want you to choose these classes wisely.

An **Elective Fair** will be held for all students on Feb.1 during the school day. Students will have an opportunity to visit three elective presentations to help them with their choices. This opportunity does **not** substitute for the information received at the evening curriculum program, but will supplement it. This will give students a chance to explore the entire range of elective courses that will be offered at Madison next year.

Academy Open Houses- Marshall Academy will be holding a parent/student open house on January 16 from 7:00-8:30 pm. Fairfax Academy will be holding a similar open house on February 26, from 7:30-9:00 pm. These programs will give you a chance to see what type of classes these Academies offer.

Interims were given out on December 19. Be sure to ask to see them! If you have any questions or concerns, please email the teacher by going to our website, www.fcps.edu/MadisonHS/ and scroll down to the bottom of the page to "staff, by last name" and then click on the teacher you wish to contact.

Remember that our "Student Assistance Period" of 30 minutes each day is an excellent opportunity for getting assistance from your teacher, preparing for upcoming tests, and for making up missed work.

College Applications- as of Jan.1, the Counseling office has sent out over 2100 college applications. This is the most we have ever sent out (the next highest total was 1850 in 2006-07), and the college application season still has about 1/3 of the way to go. Students are applying to more schools on average than they did 5 years ago, and the counselors treat each application as if it were that student's first choice.

Blackboard.com- there is a wealth of Guidance related information on Blackboard.com. In the future, we will be putting more guidance information on Blackboard and less on Madison's website, so please login and begin surfing.

Stay warm!