



District Counseling Newsletter

Bayport -Blue Point School District

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A Letter from the Counseling Dep't...

Dear Community

We hope you are all surviving this most snowy and cold winter.....burrrrrrrrrrr.

With all of us being coup up in our homes and staying warm, it is an ideal time to spend quality time with our children. Sharing stories, reading stories and just enjoying each other's company, creates a bond with our children that lasts throughout the year. I guess you would say it is like bears hibernating for the winter. They store up their nutrients and recharge their batteries for what lies ahead.

With that said, and considering the time of the academic year, it is a good time to speak with your children about their academic schedule for the following year. Whether it be elementary, middle or high school, important decisions are there to ponder.

Let's say, our elementary student is lagging behind in reading or math, you may want to mention a summer program, not summer school, for remediation. There are commercial companies that

can help or many universities have summer programs. In addition, you may want to hire a private tutor. In any case, the problem should not go unnoticed and should be discuss with your child, as well as the Elementary School Counselor, Mr. Birdsall. Middle school, although not many choices, should consist of a challenging schedule that will prepare the student for academic challenges that lie ahead. If warranted, you should accelerate your child in the areas offered and make sure that their placement is one that they can handle. Of course, Middle School presents many other challenges that are not academic. Social/emotional learning and nurturing is paramount at that level. It is absolutely necessary for you to become very involved in your child's day to day life. Make time to discuss confusing matters that your child is experiencing. Whether it is a social situation or something you may feel insignificant, it should be heard and discussed. Behaviors and patterns are formulated during these middle years, make sure that they are

noticed and corrected with sound advice that you and your child understand. High School is full of challenges. Getting ready for a career or college takes work, patience and perseverance. High School is not the same high school we attended. With the age of technology, the work is more in depth and there is much more to do. College readiness and success depends on your child's success in high school, academically and socially.

Yes, parenting has not become any easier now than it was for our parents. Our only salvation, is that we have so many more resources to utilize. Failing to use them only hurt our children grow. Please contact the Counseling Center in any school if we can be of assistance.

The Counseling Center

Counseling Dep' t:
Robert E. Haas,
Assistant Principal

Elem. School Counselors:
Matt Birdsall

Middle School Counselors:
James Hughes
Heather Woods

High School Counselors:
Ronald Bard
Dan Harrington
Susan Mullins
Judy Wolkowitz (Intern)



KEEPING YOUR KIDS ACTIVE THIS WINTER...

Winter is here! And with winter come cold, rainy, dark days. What is a parent to do with kids who have a lot of unspent energy? Exercise!



Getting kids to exercise in wintertime can be a struggle, but with 17 percent of U.S. youth between the ages of 2 and 19 being obese, it is more important than ever to get kids active. Here are a few ways to get your kids up and moving this winter.

- Create a game or competition between siblings or friends:
- Who can do the most jumping jacks without stopping?
- Who can do the longest wall squat? (Wall squat: Lean against wall, and then slide back down wall. Legs, wall and floor

should create a square.)

- Make cleaning a competition—who can gather the most dirty laundry or dishes in three minutes?
- Visit your local pool! Winter is a great time to take swim lessons, or let your kids play during open swim time.
- During your next family game night, switch out your traditional board games for activities that require movement, such as Twister, charades or follow-the-leader.
- Hold a family dance night. Have your kids put together a dance to perform for you, and for loads of laughs, show your kids how you used to dance when you were younger.
- Check out nearby bowling alley and skating rinks for family time.
- And don't forget your local community centers. They often have family time in

their gyms for running, playing, basketball, volleyball and much more.

- Turn your den, guest bedroom, basement or garage into a temporary wintertime gym with space for hopscotch, an indoor basketball hoop or just room to run.
- Even though it is cold outside, bundle up and get outdoors:
- Make yard work a game. Who can make the biggest leaf pile in five minutes?

While you are bundling up and getting outside, it is important to remember to:
Wear a hat for warmth.
Keep you feet dry with rain boots.
Bring water with you.
Eat lots of fruit and vegetables.
Get plenty of sleep.
And visit your pediatrician or family medicine physician for well-child check-ups, vaccinations, and school and sports physicals

Tips for TV Use...

- ♦ **For babies:**
Avoid TV for babies younger than age 2. Choose activities that promote language development and brain growth, such as talking, playing, reading, singing and enjoying music.
- ♦ **For children older than 2:**
If you allow TV time, choose age-appropriate programs. Involve older children in setting guidelines for what to watch. Use guides and ratings to help, but beware of unproven claims that programs or DVDs are educational. Even cartoons produced for children can be violent or overstimulating.
- ♦ Limit TV time to no more than two hours per day. Less is better.
- ♦ Keep TV turned off during meals.
- ♦ Set "media-free" days and plan other fun things to do instead.
- ♦ Avoid using TV as a reward.
- ♦ Turn off TV when a chosen program is over. When no one is actively watching, turn the television off.

8 Ways to Prepare Middle Schoolers For College...

Spring is coming, and with it, the most angst-ridden part of the college application cycle. High-schoolers will be logging on to university Web sites, trembling at the prospect of rejection. Parents will look at the costs of schools that accept their kids and wonder whether they can afford it.

Many mothers and fathers with children too young for this ordeal will count themselves lucky.

But they might consider ways to get their kids ready for it anyway. Even middle-schoolers will be exposed to the paranoia of the college search....

1. Notice what they enjoy doing, and help them do more of it. Take your hiker on the Appalachian Trail. Have the kid who is addicted to the Food Network bake something for the county fair. Arrange for the singer in your family to audition for a local choir.

"It doesn't matter whether the activity is athletic, service, spirit, leadership, journalistic or academic," said Potomac-based educational consultant Shelley Levine. "Anything will do, as long as they enjoy the activity. If it is history, there are many local places to explore and discuss. If it is nature and/or geology, enjoy an outing to Great Falls Park. . . . A student of mine, now at Barnard, had a book club with her father over many years."

Embracing a hobby or pastime is the key to career success and life satisfaction, said Zac Bissonnette, author of the recent college admission guide "Debt-Free U." He advises middle-school parents not to "let yourself or your kid get caught up in the rat race of mindless achievement. Take time to think, and take time to play."

2. Make sure your child knows that B's are fine in middle school and that fun is important. Denise Pope, senior lecturer at the Stanford Univ School of Education and an expert on student stress, said each student needs a somewhat different message. The over-achiever should be told, "You don't need to do three different extracurricular activities in middle school to get into college," she said. The less-motivated child needs to hear, "Yes, you can go to college, but first that means passing your courses in middle school."

3. Enroll them in Algebra I in the eighth grade. Middle-schoolers must apply themselves to high-school-level courses, such as Algebra I. Many colleges count them as part of the high school grade-point average even though they are taken in middle school. Parents should also ensure that their children have finished Algebra I by the end of eighth grade. "I've known dozens of kids who would have been up to the challenge of high school level algebra/geometry in eighth grade," said Philadelphia-based educational consultant David Ginsburg, but they "didn't have the chance to take it."

4. Insist they develop some practical housework skills. This won't seem to them to have much to do with college, which is good. You can say that's the way you were brought up (warn Grandma to cover for you if this isn't true) and that is the way it is going to be.

[Kathy Kuhl](#), a home-school consultant based in Herndon, said, "We taught and re-taught our children time-management skills and life skills: washing clothes, cooking dinner and managing money." Her kids were self-sufficient enough to juggle a college workload while doing all the other necessary chores of life.

5. Flavor family trips with a bit of college atmosphere. "On the way to summer vacation at the

the Hamptons, have lunch at Stony Brook Univ's student center,.

6. Encourage children who are curious about the world to take a foreign language. This can be with CDs or at school. Most middle schools do not require a foreign language but nearly all offer some classes. "Chinese or Arabic would be two to consider," Bloomquist said. "Colleges are increasingly international in nature. Twenty years ago, Yale had one in 50 international students. Today it is one in 11."

7. Character counts. Encourage its development. "The college admissions process doesn't necessarily screen for this," Pope said, "but parents should be fostering good character traits along with health and engagement." sullen tweens and teens is not always clear

8. Do everything you can to encourage reading. The common denominator among the very best test-takers is a strong background with books. This is usually a habit that starts at a very early age. . . . The problem that many students face is that they are only reading assigned books from school, which can be less than inspiring.

So, he said, give books to kids that suit their individual interests. "Do not pressure them to read it," he said. "Just give it to them

INTRO TO SUNY SUFFOLK COMMUNITY COLLEGES



Type: Co-ed two-year public community college

Setting: Suburban/rural

Founded: 1959

Sponsors: State of New York, County of Suffolk

Campuses

Ammerman at Selden

Michael J. Grant at Brentwood

Eastern at Riverhead

Accreditations

Middle States Commission on Higher Education
National Automotive Education Technical Foundation

American Occupational Therapy Association
Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics
And Information Management Education (CAHITM)
National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission

Commission on Accrediting in Physical Therapy
Education

American Bar Association

American Dietetic Association

American Veterinary Medical Association

Estimated Annual Expenses

Tuition and Fees (residents): \$4,196

Books/Supplies: \$1,400

Financial Aid

Suffolk County Community College awards more than \$45 million in federal and state financial aid to more than 13,000 students annually.

A tuition payment plan is available.

Approximately 425 SCCC Scholarships totaling more than \$450,000

Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP)

New York State Grants:

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

Aid for Part-Time Study (APTS)

Federal Grants and Loans:

PELL Grants

Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG)

College Work Study

State Aid to Native Americans

Other Sources of Aid:

Vocational and Education Services for Individuals with Disabilities

(VESID)

Veterans GI Bill Benefits

DMNA Educational Incentive Program

New York State Department of Labor/ Department of Social Svcs

Employer Tuition Reimbursement Programs

Athletics

Soccer, cross country, tennis, volleyball, basketball, bowling, cheerleading, baseball, softball, golf, men's lacrosse, swimming, track.

Student Services/Student Life

Educational, Career and Personal Counseling

Services to Students with Disabilities

Career Planning and Job Placement

Child Care Facilities

Student Newspaper and Literary Publications

Theatre Productions, Musical Performances, Art Exhibits

Films, Lectures, Concerts, Trips

90 clubs

Academic Support Services

Learning Labs for Mathematics, Computers, Reading, Writing

Tutorial Services

Student Success Program

Library Open 7 Days a Week

And More...

Small Class Size Averaging 23 Students

Low Student/Faculty Ratio of 18:1

Accessible Faculty

Honors College

Special Programs for Returning Adult Students

English as a Second Language (ESL) Program

Transfer Opportunities

Joint Admission Agreements

Co-op/Internship Programs

What is an Elementary School Counselor?

At the elementary level, a School Guidance Counselor interacts with children in the classroom setting to evaluate their academic and developmental needs.

The Elementary School Guidance Counselor will work with the students, the parents and the teacher to address any special needs or developmental concerns.

Through interviews, aptitude tests, observation and counseling sessions, the Guidance Counselor identifies a student's abilities and helps the student develop appropriate academic goals or life skills. Elementary School Guidance Counselors may also conduct special programs, such as substance abuse education or conflict resolution training, for the entire student body.

Elementary School Counselors Implement the Counseling Program by Providing:

School Guidance Curriculum

Academic support, including organizational, study and test-taking skills
Goal setting and decision-making
Career awareness, exploration and planning
Education on understanding self and others
Peer relationships, coping strategies and effective social skills
Communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution
Substance abuse education
Multicultural/diversity awareness

Individual Student Planning

Academic planning
Goal setting/decision-making
Education on understanding of self, including strengths and weaknesses
Transition plans

Responsive Services

Individual and small-group counseling
Individual/family/school crisis intervention
Conflict resolution
Consultation/collaboration
Referrals

System Support

Professional development
Consultation, collaboration and teaming
Program management and operation

If you haven't already, meet Matthew Birdsall, Elementary School Counselor, Bayport Blue Point School District

Elementary School Counselors Collaborate with:

Parents

Parent education
Communication/networking
Academic planning
College/career awareness programs
One-on-one parent conferencing
Interpretation of assessment results

Teachers

Classroom guidance activities
Academic support, including learning style assessment and education to help students succeed academically
Classroom speakers
At-risk student identification and implementation of interventions to enhance success

Administrators

School climate
Behavioral management plans
School-wide needs assessments
Student data and results
Student assistance team building

Students

Peer education
Peer support
Academic support
School climate
Leadership development
Community
Job shadowing, service learning
Crisis interventions
Referrals
Parenting classes
Support groups
Career education