

*Accessing The Counseling Center*What is the role of a counselor?

*To help with personal issues

*To help students with school success

*To give information to students so that they can plan their classes to meet all graduation requirements and to meet goals such as preparing for college or careers

*To offer guidance for students in goal setting, support personal growth, and in many other areas

How to contact a counselor?

E-mail is the best way to contact a counselor— please see the PHS web site and go to the Counseling Center link for e-mail addresses and counselor assignments (www.prairiehighschool.org). For those who do not have computer access, please call 885-5002. Counselors are normally available from 7:30-8:00 and 2:30-3:00 and during STAT (10:45-11:45). For other times, many questions can be answered by our support staff. When help needs to be provided by a counselor, it will be

addressed by the designated “Counselor of the Day” (please see the schedule on the Counseling Center web site).

How can I get information?

This newsletter is an attempt to give regular, important information. Most topics are addressed in detail on the Counseling Center web site. After reading the appropriate item on that site, parents and students are requested to e-mail (or phone) their counselor with any additional questions.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- ◆ Financial Aid Applications should be submitted in January, 2012 (seniors)
- ◆ Culminating Project should be completed by January 27th. (seniors)
- ◆ EOC make-up tests for Algebra and Geometry are on February 7.
- ◆ College Applications should be completed by winter break (seniors)
- ◆ The 8th grade open house is on February 28th, from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

The Intervention Specialist

Sharice Lee is the intervention specialist at PHS. Many parents don't know what an intervention specialist does. In explanation, an intervention specialist works in conjunction with the counseling department to provide assistance to students who are experiencing stress or personal issues that are getting in the way of their academic success. Issues such as stress, drug use, depression, bullying, and self-esteem are not uncommon during the teen years. As an intervention specialist, she provides individual support and assistance to students. Sharice also facilitates support groups for students that take place during STAT. Another aspect of her job is to provide information to parents about these issues. If, for example, a parent needs information about how to answer their student's questions about marijuana, she can be of help. The Counseling Center staff can also be of help in providing additional sources of reliable information, as well as referrals to additional services in our community.

Sharice's background is in the field of mental health and she has experience working with a variety of specialized populations of teens. Her Bachelor's degree is in psychology from University of Portland and her Masters is in counseling psychology from Lewis and Clark. Sharice's areas of specialization are in substance abuse and assisting survivors of trauma; particularly sexual abuse and exploitation.

Sharice's office is located in the counseling center and she can be reached via the Counseling Center's phone number which is 885-5002. Her hours vary as she works in more than one school, but she is most often available at Prairie between the hours of 8:30 and 3:00 PM. E-mail is another convenient way to reach her and her e-mail address is lee.sharice@bgsd.k12.wa.us.



The 8th Grade Visit

Middle school students from Pleasant Valley Middle School, Laurin Middle School, and Maple Grove Middle School (only students living in PHS designated areas) will be spending a day at Prairie High School during March 2012. The visit will include lunch, will help 8th grade students understand the importance of their 8th grade classes to better prepare for high school, and will provide an opportunity for students to explore high school course options in relation to their future goals and career interests.

Students will be provided an overview of high school graduation requirements, meet counselors and administrators, and meet current ASB officers. While on a tour of PHS, students will attend Career and Technical Education class rooms to see firsthand what students experience in these classes. While attending the CTE Fair as part of the visit, students will learn about clubs, activities, sports, core and elective classes. PHS students and staff will be available to give information and answer questions.

A key component to the visit will be the introduction of Career Cruising. With the help of PHS staff and counselors, students will explore their future goals and career interests while planning out their high school courses for 2012/2013 school year. Students will be given their Career Cruising password and have the opportunity to look at options of classes prior to their visit to PHS. The final forecasting of classes for 2012/2013 will take place at the middle schools in early April. Parents are encouraged to go on the website www.careercruising.com and help their students explore class options prior to April forecasting. Please watch for a parent permission form that your student will be bringing home in February.

* Parents will learn how to use Career Cruising and Family Access at the PHS Open House on February 28, 2012. Please plan to attend!

The Counseling Calendar

A feature to be added soon to the Counseling Center web site is a calendar which includes such things as:

- * SAT/ACT/PSAT/ASVAB/HSPE/EOC test dates and registration deadlines
- * Financial Aid help sessions
- * Scholarship Workshops
- * When students are working on the HS & Beyond plan and Forecasting
- * Important senior deadlines
- * 8th grade open house
- * Parent/Teacher conference dates and times

Look for the link around winter break

How A Parent Can Help Their Student Succeed

- * Be informed—use Family Access to check grade, detailed coursework information and attendance
- * Be in communication—e-mail teachers to learn how your student is performing and why
- * Help your student make good decisions
 - Have a regular time and place to study daily (study even if no assignments are due)
 - Have a specific study area (such as a table somewhere parents can see them)
 - To attend regularly (students should attend when tired or not feeling well—and only miss when sick)
 - How to balance social time and school time
 - How to communicate effectively with teachers and access resources listed on the “Helping Your Student Succeed” link on the Counseling Center web site.
 - Use STAT to get help from their teachers or see their counselor.

One thing counselors often hear from parents is “I’ve already taken everything away—What else can I do?” It’s tricky—No question about it, and there is no one-size-fits-all answer. However, there are some things to consider:

A student is likely to give up if they feel they can never earn back a privilege.

Many students don’t want to be “told what to do”—at the high school age, they will often rebel if they aren’t a part of the process in deciding their goals.

Students need (and want) limits and boundaries—even when they act like they don’t.

Students struggle for many reasons. For example: death of a family member or poor study skills. For additional assistance, please contact your counselor (see the Counseling Center web site for counseling assignments).

Consider Taking An AP (Advanced Placement) Class

An option to add rigor to the class schedule and possibly earn college credit while at high school is to take an AP class. PHS offers AP classes in US History, US Government & Politics, Calculus, Statistics, English Language & Composition, English Literature, and Biology (please see the Course Guide on the Counseling Center web site for more information). To earn college credit, a student must take a test in May and earn a qualifying score.

How To Access Running Start

To access Running Start (current 10th and 11th graders), log on to the Clark College web site (www.clark.edu), go to the academics link, and go to the Running Start link. Read and follow directions for “Application and Testing Instructions” and “Sample Compass Test Questions”. Consider attending a Running Start Information Meeting in January and take the Compass test in January/February/March. After passing the test, there will be a mandatory orientation at PHS and at Clark College (both in April) in order to participate in the program. For more information, see the Running Start link on the Counseling Center web site.