

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- The PSAT will be administered on Wednesday, October 14th to all juniors and interested sophomores. Look for more information to be posted on the EOS web site and Guidance EBoard.
- Ninth Grade Student-Parent Conferences with counselors will begin in early October. Appointments will be mailed home in the next week.
- Early College Experience Applications (ECE) are due in the Guidance Office on September 10th. Any changes regarding ECE courses require completion of add/drop forms. Contact your counselor for more information.
- Tutoring will be available in most subject areas. This service is provided by the National Honor Society. Contact your counselor for more information.
- Applications for MCC and QVCC courses at EOS are available in the Guidance Office.

Measuring Engagement: One Student At A Time

Okay, let's start with this premise—test scores are ubiquitous. In this case, "ubiquitous" means (Is this feeling like a test?) a) *useless*, b) *prone to be ubiquitousized*, c) *overrated*, or d) *everywhere*. If you answered "useless", you'd likely find others who'd agree, but it's also not useful in this case. B? Be serious. What about "c"-overrated? Well, you may be right. But, again, not here and you don't get a chance to explain why. So, the correct answer is...

d) "everywhere". Surprised? Probably not, with test scores (SAT,ACT,CMT, and CAPT) appearing in all of the major publications. Clearly, they are all pervasive (a synonym for ubiquitous, but not to worry-synonyms have been removed from the SAT). And, of course, what these scores mean is a much broader question, even one that could serve as a prompt—if this were really a test. But we'll leave it perhaps for another time.

There was another time, (last year—2008), when EOS collected data that produced numbers of a different kind. It was a test, sort of, administered to virtually every student enrolled at the time (about 1100). But

there were some noticeable differences with this "test". Instead of measuring cognitive skills, the data reflected affect—or how students *felt*. More specifically, it measured how they



felt about their experiences at EOS High School. Students took it anonymously (to increase the likelihood of honest responses) and their answers were "correct" to the degree that they accurately reflected their *feelings*. Using the *High School Student Engagement Survey*, an established instrument constructed by the Center of Evaluation and Educational Policy at Indiana University (IU), the EOS Guidance Department led the mission by administering the survey in Social Studies classes after providing to students an explanation for the purpose of it. A paper-and-pencil exercise was administered that took about 30 minutes to complete. They were collected

and then bundled for delivery to IU. There, the results were tabulated and grouped according to categories of survey items and instructions the Guidance Department provided.

In general, the survey was comprised of three sections. In no particular order (questions were mixed), the survey included items that measured *engagement of the mind* (cognitive, intellectual, academic engagement), *engagement of the heart* (emotional engagement), and *engagement in school life* (social, behavioral, participatory engagement). Additionally, the survey was administered in a manner that permitted the aggregate data to be analyzed by course level—driven by the hypothesis that engagement differs according to course levels (A, B, G) chosen by students.

The results of this arduous undertaking have been informative and instructive, for sure. Although the data was collected several months ago and may seem like "day-old bread" taken off the discounted cart, in fact it remains priceless still today.

In the months ahead, slices of this data will be shared through this publication. Readers may then determine for themselves if engagement is...well...ubiquitous.

Roaming Numerals

Below are the combined SAT averages of Math and Critical Reading for Class of 2009 EOS graduates accepted at colleges listed

| | |
|------|-------------------|
| 1275 | UCONN-Storrs |
| 1094 | UCONN-Htfd |
| 1083 | ECSU |
| 1094 | CCSU |
| 1218 | U of Vermont |
| 1015 | Keene State |
| 1148 | U of Rhode Island |
| 1530 | Brown University |
| 1153 | U of Hartford |
| 1207 | UMass-Amherst |
| 1530 | Georgetown |
| 1530 | Cornell |
| 1340 | Northeastern |
| 1400 | U of Michigan |
| 1385 | Boston University |
| 1495 | New York Univ. |
| 1033 | Champlain College |

Class of 2009 Reaches for Higher Education

The Class of 2009 included 295 graduates who have now moved on to other pursuits that involve some kind of formal higher education, military commitment, work experience, or less structured endeavors.

In all, 148 students (50.5%) are matriculating to 4-year colleges and another 65 (22%) are attending 2-year schools. Immediate employment is the choice of 21 graduates (7%) while 52 others (17.5%) had no immediate plans in late June and were content with continuing their search for possibilities and perhaps even taking a year off before deciding. Eight students (2.6%) chose certification programs and one enlisted in the military.

Regarding college choices and considerations, students submitted a combined total of 890 applications (859 online) and received 548 acceptances. They applied to 223 schools in 26 states, Canada, and the

District of Columbia. The latest data indicates that EOS students from the Class of 2009 will be attending a total of 71 schools.

Continuing a trend observed in the past few years, Manchester Community College will see the most EOS graduates matriculate, with 50 students expressing plans to attend the community college in the fall. The University of CT will receive the largest number of students among four-year schools, with 43 moving on to the Storrs Campus, and 3 to the West Hartford Branch. Close behind in numbers is ECSU, which enrolls 28 students for September.

Seventy-eight students are enrolling in four-year public universities within the Connecticut borders, 62 are matriculating to two-year community colleges in-state, and 10 students are attending private colleges and universities in CT. Sixty-three graduates are mov-

ing on to schools out-of-state, with 42 attending private colleges and universities, 18 enrolling in public 4-year schools, and one each in a private and public two-year school, respectively.

Of those students who are crossing over the Connecticut boundaries, New York is receiving the highest number (16), followed by Massachusetts (11), Vermont (6), New Hampshire (4), Pennsylvania (4), DC (4), Rhode Island (3), and 12 states with 1 or 2 (Indiana, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, Hawaii, Texas, Georgia, California, Oregon, Maine, Michigan, and Illinois).

This is a process that began formally in December of their third year at EOS, and the obvious hope is that these students will soar to greater heights in their new environments. The entire school community should be proud of their achievements and the opportunities they've earned.

Making Life Work

It used to be so simple, or so it seemed. You either graduated from high school and found work in a trade or at the local factory, or you went on to higher education and then sought employment in positions that presumably required an advanced degree. Either way, most everyone with a diploma in hand was earning a decent living and making life work.

It's just not that simple today. In fact, this idea of deciding what to do when you grow up can get pretty complicated. The data sure shows it. And the stories we've all heard jibe with the data. So, we're attempting to do something about it (hardly thinking it's a panacea). To help students find their place in life, we're introducing a program called "Making Life Work."

The Guidance Department plans to invite guest speakers to tell students about the work they do, the challenges they face, the satisfaction they derive from a job well done. And we will ask speakers to tell students, too, about the pitfalls they encountered along the way and how they managed their way through them. Finding your way in life takes hard work—mistakes and all. But students should know that it's what is necessary in to make life work.

Look for recordings of these presentations to appear on YouTube and video podcasts.

Digital Relationships Become Virtual Reality

Like it or not—call it progress or not—you may wonder if the world has really become smaller (remember Marshall McLuhan?) or simply gone mad. But, this much we do know—the world has clearly gone digital as more connections are being made each day through digital means and reality as we’ve known it is different now than it was in 1999.

With over sixty percent of teenagers reporting that they have posted profiles on web sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Club Penguin, and the like, and a similar percent viewing such sites as their primary mode of communication with “friends” - spending as many as six hours daily “talking”, combined now with a significant increase in such activity among adults, and then including the impact such sites as Google and YouTube and Amazon have had on behavior, it seems time that educators begin to explore and exploit digital communication as a means of enhancing connections with students and parents alike.

So, the Guidance Department intends to do just this. A major ini-

tiative underway this school year is to reduce paper while increasing communication with the various constituencies that comprise the school community. As much as the department would like to go paperless, it realizes instead that the more realistic goal at this juncture is to pursue an objective of less paper. And, thus, it will—a virtual paperless reality.

This newsletter, delivered electronically, is just one example of the Guidance Department’s quest to get greener, be more accessible from multiple locations, and reduce costs along the way. There will be other examples to follow, such as using email through the Naviance portal (see back page for more on Naviance) to share information with students and parents/guardians in a more timely and frequent manner, delivering streaming video to provide information to the school community in a manner that is more user-friendly (namely, to view the content at one’s convenience), recording podcasts that are portable (and convenient), and even—perhaps—a Facebook page where

we can all be friends. Oh yeah—the Guidance Department will post regularly on an eboard as well.

This may sound ambitious, and perhaps even radical. Yet, it shouldn’t. Most people—young, for sure, and an increasing number of older adults—are communicating quite commonly and comfortably in digital mode, seeking information in digital mode, shopping and making purchases in digital mode, and even being directed to destinations in digital mode (your GPS, remember?).

The pace of life has quickened, no doubt, as we’ve entered this digital age. More happens in a minute’s time today than ever before, like it or not. And like most things, how one uses this digital mode goes a long way in measuring its relative value. Along the way, then, as the Guidance Department experiments with what’s been described in this piece, your feedback will offer guidance to the department and help shape and strengthen its relationship to the school community.

In the meantime, the department will stay in high-tech touch.

Wit & Wisdom

The greatest classrooms of this nation or any nation are not in any school or university. They’re around the dinner tables in the homes.

Richard Berendzen

In raising your children, spend half as much money and twice as much time.

Unknown

I take a very practical view of raising children. I put a sign on each of their rooms: Checkout

Time is

18 years.

Erma Bombeck

Texting Raises Serious Safety Concerns

If kids are keeping their parents up at night tossing and turning, it’s possible these same kids are up as well—texting and texting more. At least this is what findings from several recent studies are revealing as we move deeper into the digital divide. Some compelling numbers reveal the extent of texting done by today’s teens.

According to a 2008 Nielson study, teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17 “text more than any other demographic group”, logging an average of 1742 messages monthly—almost 60 a day. And it may be even more today as we approach the end of 2009. What’s worse, an insurance poll found that 67% of teens admitted to texting while driving at high speeds and 37% in this same poll disclosed that texting was so distracting that it led to an accident or a close call. And then there is “text thumb”, sleep deprivation, an inability to read social cues, etc.

What to do? Well, parents should talk to their driver-age children about the dangers mentioned above. And they should discuss the health-related issues that are beginning to present as a result of this new phenomenon. Finally, it would be wise to learn the language of texting. Understanding the language is the first step in addressing it.



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Reaching Out To Homes

Dear Region 19 Community,

This edition of the Guidance Newsletter is presented exclusively in electronic form for the first time. Our plan is to continue offering the newsletter via this medium as a means of cutting costs, reducing paper, and allowing interested readers to access the information more easily with any available computer or mobile device.

If you haven't yet provided an email address, simply contact the Guidance Department by email—www.guidance@eosmith.org and we'll add it to our database. Be sure to check the school web site often for more information.

www.eosmith.org

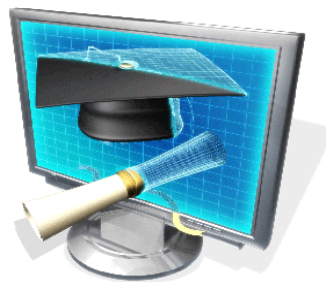
Naviance: It's Worth Writing Home About

The Guidance Department has contracted with an on-line service that provides extensive information on the post-secondary planning process, and it is accessible to students and parents from their home computers. EOS families have had access to Naviance for the past three years, and those who have used it have found it most helpful in a variety of ways.

Naviance is a purchased service that, in addition to college information, also includes an on-line Learning Styles Inventory, a career interest inventory (with extensive occupational information that accompanies the inventory) and a high school version of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (called DoWhatYouAre). Naviance has the capacity to maintain an electronic portfolio on each student over the course of one's high

school experience. And a database on college admissions decisions for EOS students over the past five years is available to users. Scattergrams of SAT scores and GPA ranges are included in this database.

New this year to Naviance is a feature called eDocs. This addition pro-



Naviance is an internet-based program available in your homes to use at your convenience.

vides the EOS Guidance Department to send over a secure network official student transcripts in electronic form to over 900 colleges and universities that have signed on to this service. Aside from being more efficient, it will provide a cost-savings to EOS in postage and office materials typically used in such matters.

The Guidance Department intends to communicate more frequently with student and parents through the email portal available in Naviance. Most all EOS students have been given passwords to access their own individual accounts. Many parents have requested passwords as well. If you haven't yet done this, you are encouraged to contact the Guidance Department as soon as possible. Simply send your request to:
guidance@eosmith.org.