

**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- **UC School of Engineering is offering a one-week residential summer program for current 10th and 11th graders . Participants will explore engineering careers while working on hands-on projects with UC faculty. The fee is \$500. Contact Guidance for more information.**
- **Registration for Advanced Placement (AP) Exams will take place between March 3—31. Students planning to take AP exams should register in the Guidance Department.**
- **Three Rivers Community College in Norwich is offering 15 Millstone Station Scholarships to students interested in pursuing a degree in Nuclear (and possibly Mechanical or Electrical) Engineering Technology. These are full scholarships and included as well is a paid summer position for 12 weeks at Millstone Station. More information is available in the Guidance Office.**

# Counseling e-news

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## What Is the Purpose of a High School Education?

So, what is the purpose of a high school education these days? Does it still need to be four years in duration, with basically the same graduation requirements that have been in place for the past several years? Does a high school diploma hold the same value it once did a decade or two ago? Is there a disconnect between what educators emphasize and what students want? And if there is such a disconnect, shouldn't educators know better anyway what students need? Need for what, one may be wondering? And should college preparation be the primary mission of one's secondary school experience? These and several other questions were addressed in a national survey recently completed by Deloitte, LLP, a sizeable accounting firm that conducts such educational surveys on an annual basis. The findings, as is often the case with such data, may raise even more questions than answers.

In these times and in this changing economy, the primary purpose of a high school education may be different than years ago when graduates could move into manufacturing jobs and the like immediately upon graduation. Today, these opportunities just aren't nearly as plentiful. So, when asked the purpose of high

school, 48% of students and 42% of parents indicated that the primary objective is to prepare students for college (presuming



higher education leads to better employment opportunities), while just 9% of high school teachers agreed.

While survey supporters pointed to the results as a perceived disconnect in purpose, critics claimed that the wording of survey items was misleading and/or ambiguous. These critics believed it was inappropriate to ask what students want when they don't necessarily know what's ahead of them. And teachers generally felt they were preparing students for higher education anyway by delivering their crafted curricula. So, the outcome—preparation for success in higher education—was there as a consequence of delivering the appropriate instruction.

That seventy percent of the students responding in this survey

indicated plans to attend college is just about the same percentage of high school graduates who actually matriculate into higher education (compared to about 75% of EOS graduates). What's clear is that more high school graduates are going on to college as compared to past decades. What may be surprising though is that less than half (28% of all high school graduates) actually earn a four-year degree. And as much as 40% require some form of remediation, with much of this given at the community college level.

One plan that has been hatched from this data has eligible high school students completing graduation requirements in two years and then moving immediately on to higher education. Eight states have signed on to this venture, and Connecticut is one of them. A cross section of school districts is being identified for possible implementation.

Should college be in every high school student's plan? If not, should at least some form of higher education be included, especially in this 21st century economy? Should high schools be preparing students for transition into higher education? And should students be permitted to graduate high school in two years? These are heady questions. The answers are...

**Articles of Interest Are Regularly Posted On Guidance EBoard**



One measure of academic achievement is the SAT. Fair Test.org takes a different view.

*"THE PRIVILEGE OF A LIFETIME IS BEING WHO YOU ARE."*

JOSEPH CAMPBELL



## PSAT Offers Preview of "Real Thing"

Results of the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) arrived in early December and individual score reports (along with student test booklets) were subsequently mailed home to participating students. A total of 290 students completed the PSAT, with 246 juniors (87% participation rate)) and 44 sophomores taking it. The test was administered on a school day in October and Region 19 covered test fees for juniors. Feedback from the test may be used by students to both predict performance on and prepare for the SAT. Aggregate data offers a glimpse of how this cohort will perform on the three-and-one-half hour exam.

Juniors, on the whole, aver-

aged 50.9 in Critical Reading, 51.3 in Math, and 49.4 in Writing (really editing). These numbers compare favorably to the national mean scores of 47.0, 48.3, and 45.9, respectively. The 44 sophomores who participated averaged 55.8 in Critical Reading, 55.9 in Math, and 52.5 in Writing.

As many may know, The College Board re-centered scores over a decade ago so that 500 is now the "average" score attained in each of the sections. Using this measure, 53% of the juniors taking the PSAT scored at or above the average in Critical Reading, 56% achieved likewise in Math and so did 51% in writing. Scores typically improve when students take the SAT later in their junior or senior year.

Seventy-one percent of the juniors elected to participate in the Student Search Service. This provides permission for The College Board to make student test scores available to colleges. Schools then start the recruitment process by targeting students and distributing information via email and paper mail. Scores, however, are not used in the admission process.

The PSAT will return to the Saturday test date in October. More information will follow.

Certainly the best preparation for the SAT is an academically challenging course of studies. Test prep materials may also help students become more familiar with the test format.

## Major Decisions: What Students Say They Intend To Study

Students sitting for the PSAT back in October were asked, as part of a pre-test survey, to select a major area of study they wish to pursue in higher education. Most all juniors replied, with 39 opting out.

Among the 206 respondents (102 males, 104 females), the highest percentage of responses (21.8%) fell into the "Undecided" category. Of note, males and females were similarly undecided as 23.5% of the males and 20.2% of the females selected this option.

As a group, the more popular majors chosen were Visual & Performing Arts (13.6%), Health Professions/Sciences (10.2%), Business Management (7.3%), Engineering (6.8%), Biological Sciences (4.4%), Agricultural Sciences (3.9%), Psychology (3.9%) and Education (3.4%). Reflecting a national trend, English Literature garnered just 1.5% of the total while Math & Statistics was shut out (0%). Other majors getting shut out completely were Communication & Journalism, Natural Resources, Philosophy/Religious Studies, Social Service Professions, and Theology/Religious Vocation.

Gender disparities were found in Computer Science (M=5%, F=0%), Education (M=0%, F=6.7%), Engineering (M=11.8%, F=1.9%), Health Professions (M=6.9%, F=13.5%), Psychology (M=2%, F=5.8%), Visual/Performing Arts (M=10.8%, F=16.3%) and Computer Science (M=2.9%, F=0%).

If past practice is any predictor, these students will change majors at least a few times before they graduate from higher education.

Register for the SAT on [collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com)

# Course Planner Offers Long-Range View

The EOS Guidance Department has added another feature to Naviance that is intended to provide students and parents with a tool to evaluate course selections in the context of postsecondary planning.

Called "Course Planner", (CP) users may now be able to construct four-year plans of study and measure these plans with a "College Power Meter" that shows the types of schools (selectivity) that may be in reach. Likewise, users can see the kinds of courses they may be required to complete in order to

be considered as viable candidates for admission to certain categories of schools.

Another feature of CP is that course descriptions are now easily accessible simply by dragging the



**Failing to plan is planning to fail.**

cursor over the course titles. This eliminates the search through pages of a course description booklet for information on any particular course.

In the weeks ahead, CP will be linked with Power School (PS) the latter being the web-based program EOSHS uses to store data (grades, attendance, etc.). With this connection, terms grades will be imported into CP and course selections made in CP, in turn, will be exported to PS. More information will, hopefully, mean wiser choices.

**Counselors will be meeting with students over the next several weeks to review selections and to make scheduling adjustments.**

## In Line With On-Line Course Registration

Using software tools recently made available to EOSHS, the first phase of an annual building project was recently completed in successful fashion. The project referred to is construction of the 2010-11 master schedule,

Students were given the opportunity to make their course selections for next year via an on-line portal that opened over a three week period in late January and early February. Several students were ushered into the Library Media Center's Computer Lab where they were given instructions on how to access the system and guidance on appropriate course selections. Other students (and their parents) completed this initial phase at home.

By the time this window for course selections closed on February 12th, 771 students who will be returning to EOSHS next year had made tentative course selections. This represents about 85% of the returning population. Selections that next year's 9th graders make will be inputted the "old-fashioned" way.

Counselors will be meeting with students over the next several weeks to review selections and to make scheduling adjustments. Final completion of this building project is expected to be in early May, with 2010-11 schedules due out by the end of that month.

## CAPT Slated for Five Days in March

The annual Connecticut Academic Performance Tests will be administered on five days in the month of March. Three of these days are set by the CT State Department of Education. Most all sophomores are required to complete these tests and achieve at least "Proficiency" as a graduation requirement established by the Region 19 Board of Education. Juniors who did not reach proficiency in any one (or more) area(s) will be required to re-take the test(s). Freshmen will sit for practice CAPT exercises during this scheduled testing period.

CAPT will be administered on the state mandated dates of March 2, 3, and 4. The other scheduled dates are March 15 and 19. Makeup dates will be March 5, 9, 10, 11, 16, 23, and 24. Note that juniors and seniors will be dismissed at 11:04 AM on March 2, 3, 4, and 15. Freshmen as well as juniors and seniors will be dismissed at 11:04 AM on March 19.



**Debates about the value of standard tests continues.**

