



Blind Brook High School



From the Principal's Desk...

Blind Brook High School – An American High School Today.

How many of us can recall the first time we tried to get into a movie when we were underage? What an exciting thought! For those of us that did something like that it served a need to demonstrate that we were ready for what comes next, even if the theater owners or the state did not find us “mature” enough to handle the content and sophistication of the presentation. Often young people feel the need to act grown up, to say I am 8 ½ rather than 8 years old. There are many examples of this form of behavior some of which may even be encouraged by parents and society in general. Hence the students who take SAT examinations in the seventh grade and those students in high school that participate in college level summer programs while in high school and even middle school.

It is with little surprise then that the practice of students, in their senior year of high school, is to emulate college students by participating in the ritual of spring break . It has rapidly developed into a rite of passage for middle class American youth. Long gone is the notion that spring break is a reenactment of the 1960 movie *Where the Boys Are* with George Hamilton and Dolores Hart or Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon enjoying the surf in Fort Lauderdale with the gang.

Spring break has become more than a ritual though. It has become a cash cow for the travel industry resulting in thousands of airline passenger seats and hotel rooms being filled for fun in the sun. Cancun, Mexico alone reports over 100,000 high school and college students making it their destination for spring break. The Bahamas, a Blind Brook favorite, boasts equal popularity. Spring break has, at times, also become the lead story in national television shows such as *Inside Edition* about outrageous behavior. The television program recently reported that teams of marketers representing Bacardi Rum provided souvenirs and “rum and coke showers”. *USA Today* reported “50 hours of free drinking” as part of a seven day vacation package targeted for the young traveler. Tour operators will often ask that participants waive liability.

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Does this mean that high school students should not be traveling to spring break? Perhaps, or perhaps not. What it does mean is that students and their parents should be aware of the options that they have for a spring break activity and the caveats that they should employ in evaluating those options. Start your research early. Discuss options with parents who have been through the scene. Spring break can be more than beach partying. A number of alternatives exist that can be both entertaining and dare I say educational. Examples of these activities can be culled from a number of resources including www.Syta.org, which serves as a representative of the travel industry.

In making a decision about an appropriate spring break activity, your child, and I use the phrase “your child” deliberately, common sense rules of parenting should apply. Parental instinct is a gift. Use it. Health and safety should be paramount. Keep in mind that experimentation and pushing the envelope in terms of behavior are normal for teenagers.

Although there are no guarantees in life, adult supervision that meets your expectation for children at home is an excellent starting point for supervision away from home. Some parents believe that they have addressed this matter by going with their children to the same general location but staying at a different place. In and of itself this sounds like a good idea; however, asking yourself how you will address an emergency in advance is a good talking point. Another point is having a conversation with your child on your expectations and the strategies that they should follow when they find themselves in a situation that they feel is uncomfortable or dangerous. Most research shows that scare tactics are counterproductive. Defining parental expectations is the way to go.

With all of this in mind remember that spring break is for parents as well. It should be a time that your mind is at ease and that your concerns are not much more than a child sneaking into a movie as an under-age viewer.

William J. Stark
Interim Principal



From the Guidance Department.....

Although September, 2008 may seem a long way away, now is the time to start thinking about next year's schedule. Choosing an academic program that is aligned with your interests and talents may seem daunting. In this process, there are difficult decisions to be made in regard to both core and elective courses. Knowing that there will be many questions and concerns, the counseling department is committed to providing students with support and encouragement as they make those choices.

When guiding students in developing a course program, the counselors use input from teachers, department coordinators and administrators to ensure that students are placed in courses that are both rigorous and enriching. In the months ahead, counselors will be meeting with students to review the 2008-2009 Course Catalog and to select courses for the upcoming school year. Students will have the opportunity to review the catalog and their course requests with their parent(s). After the course requests have been tallied, the school administration constructs a master schedule that accommodates as many student requests as possible.

Unfortunately, many students make decisions regarding courses solely in response to the college admissions process. As counselors, we are often asked (verbatim): "How is this going to look for college?" When advising students, we always encourage students to develop a plan that challenges them as learners and enhances their academic experience, to select courses that are demanding without being overwhelming, and to seek out courses that correlate with their interests and talents. If a student is able to develop a schedule that accomplishes the above, then they will be very well prepared for the admissions process, and more importantly, the college experience.

To take a class for the sole purpose of bolstering a transcript can have deleterious effects. Often, we see students who experience high levels of stress and who feel discouraged because they cannot manage the demands of their course program. Colleges want students who make good choices, challenge themselves and are successful in their academic pursuits. Ultimately, students must strike a balance between challenging themselves and maintaining a healthy lifestyle that promotes well being and self confidence. The counselors are here to support you as you reflect on your academic goals and work toward achieving that balance.



**Parent/Principal Conversation
January 31, 2008
7:30pm in the IMC**

February dates to remember.....

- 02/11 BOE Workshop Mtg. 8pm
- 02/14 PTA Mtg. 8:45am RSS Cafeteria*
- 02/15 Superintendent's Conference Day - Schools Closed
- 02/18-02/22 Winter Recess—Schools Closed
- 02/25 Classes Resume
- 02/27 Parent/Principal Conversation 9:00am MS Café

*please note the time change of the PTA meeting.



*President's Day
February 18, 2008*