

~A Note From the School Counselor~

Hello Parents and Students! Welcome back! I would like to let you know about a few upcoming events and give you some important information that pertains to your High School students.

**ACT (Juniors and Seniors):** Prairie will be offering the ACT test on October 24, 2015 and then again on February 6, 2016. All juniors should plan to take this test at least once. Seniors who would like to improve their score should plan to take the fall test. Students register for this test online at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org). Students must register for the October test by **September 18, 2015** to avoid a late fee.

**Dual Credits (Juniors and Seniors):** Prairie is offering nine dual credit courses this year. Dual credit courses are those that students take for high school credit as well as having the option to take for college credit. The courses include US History, US Government, Economics, Psychology, Pre-Calculus, Math 137, Speech, Natural Science and Chemistry. We will be registering and paying for all courses in the spring, with the exception of speech. Speech is the only one semester course we offer so students will register for speech during the semester they are in the class. Rachel Peasley from LCSC will be here on September 10, 2015 at 8:30 to explain dual credits to the juniors and seniors and to help register those juniors who are currently enrolled in speech. Parents are welcome to attend. There will be another meeting in the spring when students register for all other courses.

- **Fast Forward Program:** All juniors and seniors are eligible for state aid to pay for dual credit courses. The Fast Forward program will pay for three dual credit courses for juniors and six for seniors. New this year is that students will need to set up an online account to apply for this program. I will go into the classroom and assist students with this. I will meet with the current speech students now and the rest of the students in the spring when we register for the college course. I have attached a list of the dual credit courses we offer along with the credits for each so you can see what will be owed in the spring. Do not forget to deduct the amount the state will pay through the Fast Forward program!

**Direct Admission to State Colleges (Seniors):** Legislation was recently passed called "Direct Admissions." This program will proactively admit Idaho's high school seniors into Idaho's public colleges and universities in an effort to engage students, parents, high schools, and colleges in building a culture of postsecondary education, whether that be in an academic program or a professional-technical program.

Admissions will be based on number of high school credits earned, grade point average (GPA) and college entrance exam score. Students who have accumulated at least 12

high school credits, a 3.0 or higher GPA and have taken a college entrance exam will be conditionally admitted to Idaho's eight public colleges and universities for fall 2016.

In October, all seniors will be mailed their admissions notification with a packet of information providing next steps and a timeline for taking advantage of this opportunity. The deadline for students who choose to participate in this program to select a college or university will be the beginning of the calendar year 2016, with a specific date to be determined.

- Parents will receive a similar packet of information indicating that their student has been admitted.

**This program is very new and more information will be coming soon!**

**PSAT** (sophomores and juniors): The PSAT (practice SAT test) will be held October 14, 2015. All sophomores will take this test. It will be paid for by the Idaho Department of Education. This test offers valuable experience for the actual SAT test that they will take their junior year. Within the next few days, your child will be given a study guide that will assist them with preparing for the PSAT. Juniors who would like to retake the test may test with the sophomores, though they must pay for the test. The cost is \$15. Junior students who want to take the PSAT must notify me and must pay the fee prior to the test date.