

COUNSELOR CHATTER

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020 EDITION

Mrs. Zearley, Lexington HS Counselor

WELCOME TO YOUR SENIOR YEAR!

I want you to enjoy, make memories, and have fun. Make the most of this year, but don't forget: this is the year that begins the rest of your life! Make good choices, be safe and PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE! Before you know it, you will join that period of life when *ADULTING* must begin. Woohoo!

CHECK YOUR FOLDER OFTEN IN MY OFFICE

This is where you will find scholarship information and updates on things I need from you. You will get a monthly newsletter and other information, which will be imperative to this year. This newsletter is lengthy due to a later start date and the amount of information at the beginning of the year. Not all newsletters will be this long. PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRELY. It is worth your time, if you want to continue being successful.

"Counselor Chatter" monthly memos as well as other information specific to Seniors will be accessible online at www.lexington.k12.ok.us. Go to the school website and look on the right hand side under "Quick Links" to find the link titled "LHS Senior Site".

MY OFFICE IS ALWAYS OPEN TO YOU FOR WHATEVER YOU NEED.
PLEASE COME SEE ME! I'M SERIOUS. :)

REMIND APP

Also, I will send information and reminders using the Remind App. You and/or your parents/guardians can sign up for this by texting @lexhs21 to 81010 to receive information via text message or you may log on to www.remind.com/join/lexhs21 to receive updates. If you sign up and would like to unsubscribe, you simply reply "unsubscribe".

SCHOLARSHIPS/IMPORTANT LINKS

There are many scholarship search engines. I will be able to share A LOT of information with you, but you will need to do your own research as there are entirely too many offers for any one person to keep up with at any given time. Here are a few websites that will be extremely important for you to keep up with:

www.ucango2.org

www.actstudent.org

www.scholarships.com

www.fastweb.com

www.okcollegestart.org

www.cappex.com

APPLY TO COLLEGE!!!

Begin to apply to your individual colleges of interest SOON.....LIKE NOW! If you meet admission criteria, NOW IS NOT TOO EARLY! The earlier you apply for admission, the better your chances of getting scholarships and offers. Just because you apply to a

college and they accept you and offer a scholarship, does not mean you are obligated to go there. SHOP around, apply to colleges and determine later where your best offers and programs are. See who will get you the best deal for the best future!

When you are ready to fill out an application, you may do so on your own OR if you need help you are welcome to come work on it in my office. You all are one of my biggest focuses and my door is always open. You must put forth the initiative to come to me, though. I'm more than happy to help, just ask.

I will offer 2 days of "excused absences" for you to visit college campuses. See me for more information.

ACADEMIC FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE

- Make sure the school's course offerings appeal to you
- Ask what the student-teacher ratio is at each school
- If you learn better in smaller classes, consider smaller or private schools
- If you work best independently, or want more course options, consider a larger university
- When two schools are evenly matched academically, visit the campuses to see which one has an atmosphere that suits you
- If you know what you want to study, research the top schools in that field and compare their requirements and special programs
- Make a list of pros and cons for each school for easy reference
- Trust your gut instinct
- Consider how you will pay for the college you are interested in. Ask yourself if the college you want to go to is offering you a scholarship, whether you qualify for grants through FAFSA, or if you will have to take out loans to pay back later

FAFSA: FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

The FAFSA opens OCTOBER 1. Mr. Kirk Rushing- an academic counselor at ECU- and a few other academic counselors are coming to Lexington High School to help you and your parents fill this out. *TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY!* He will be here during Parent-Teacher Conferences from 5:30-7:30pm on Tuesday, October 13th AND from 9am-3pm on Thursday, November 12. Be on the lookout for sign ups. You will use your most recent tax information to complete the application. The earlier you apply for FAFSA, the better. All colleges will require that you apply for FAFSA whether or not you are eligible. This will be done at www.fafsa.gov. Everyone who will go to college will be required to fill out a FAFSA application.

SCHOLARSHIPS = FREE MONEY (DOES NOT HAVE TO BE PAID BACK), generally awarded through applying and is based on merit, academics, or achievement

GRANTS/FEDERAL PELL GRANTS = FREE MONEY (DOES NOT HAVE TO BE PAID BACK), generally based on income and awarded through FAFSA

WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS = WORK PART-TIME IN COLLEGE TO PAY FOR COLLEGE; awarded to students who qualify through FAFSA and generally work on campus

LOANS = MONEY THAT *MUST* BE PAID BACK AFTER COLLEGE WITH INTEREST (in most cases)

COLLEGE AND CAREER NIGHT

College and Career Night will be held during Parent-Teacher Conferences from 3pm-9pm on Tuesday, October 13. You don't want to miss it! More info to come later.

Please remember the following ACT dates for this year:

OUR ACT CODE FOR LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL IS 372105

Test Date	Deadline	Late Deadline	Online Score Release*
Oct 10, 2020	Sept 17, 2020	Sept 25, 2020	Oct 20; Nov 3, 2020
Oct 17, 2020	Sept 17, 2020	Sept 25, 2020	Oct 27; Nov 10, 2020
Oct 24, 2020	Sept 17, 2020	Sept 25, 2020	Nov 3; Nov 17, 2020
Oct 25, 2020	Sept 17, 2020	Sept 25, 2020	Nov 11; Nov 25, 2020
Dec 12, 2020	Nov 6, 2020	Nov 20, 2020	Dec 22, 2020; Jan 5, 2021
Feb 6, 2021	Jan 8, 2021	Jan 15, 2021	Feb 16; Mar 1, 2021
Apr 17, 2021	Mar 12, 2021	Mar 26, 2021	Apr 20; May 4, 2021
June 12, 2021	May 7, 2021	May 21, 2021	June 22; July 6, 2021
July 17, 2021**	June 18, 2021	June 25, 2021	July 27; Aug 10, 2021

HOW TO SUCCEED ON THE ACT

Few things cause a high school student as much fear as sitting down to a standardized test. That's particularly true if the test can determine the course of your future. But taking the ACT doesn't have to be a scarring experience if you prepare yourself properly.

The ACT stands for American College Test. It is, along with the SAT, one of two standardized tests that students usually take before entering college.

Developed by the University of Iowa and first offered in 1959, the ACT was once required mainly by western colleges. But ACT scores are now accepted by virtually all colleges and universities in the United States, including all Ivy League schools, says ACT spokesperson Kristin Crouse.

"I stress as much as I can the importance of both ACT and SAT," says Jim Eiseman. He is the academic vice-principal of a private high school.

He says the college that many of his graduates go to used to require the ACT and pay for the test at the high school level. Now the college accepts either the ACT or SAT, but Eiseman says administrators still find the ACT useful for predicting a student's progress.

"The reason [the college] liked the ACT is that in addition to the English and math, it also covered social studies and science, thus giving a little larger picture of the student," he says.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The ACT consists of multiple-choice tests in English, mathematics, reading and science. Since February 2005, ACT also offers an optional writing test. Students will need to take that test if the colleges they plan to apply to require it, Crouse says. Students have about three hours to complete the test. The ACT is offered at more than 2,000 locations throughout the U.S.

IN PREPARATION

There are a number of ways that students can prepare for the ACT. Crouse says the best way to be prepared is by taking the right classes in high school. She said the minimum recommended coursework includes four years of English and at least three years of math, natural sciences and social sciences.

"Taking challenging courses will prepare students for college work," she says. "The ACT measures what a student knows and is ready to learn next. It indicates how prepared a student is to do college-level work."

Other than taking the right classes, most experts agree that practice makes perfect. "The first step is realizing that a student can and should prepare,"

says Michael Bergin, director of exam preparation for Huntington Learning Center, a chain of programs in the U.S. that help students with learning and study skills.

"Test content and question types are public knowledge, so one can learn exactly what is tested well before test day."

ACT and SAT prep are among the center's areas of expertise. Bergin says instructors often use practice tests when helping students prepare. However, he says there are a variety of resources available, including books, software and ACT preparatory classes.

Eiseman also advises students and parents to take advantage of the wide array of resources out there. "I have booklets on testing, videos on testing, flash cards, etc., all in the school's career center. I try to point out all the materials and resources for test preparation, and try to have as much of these materials available to the students."

But the important thing is to know what's coming, says Gary D. Phye. He is a professor of educational psychology at Iowa State University. He said the more prepared students are on the big day, the more likely they are to do well. "The improvement comes from knowing what to expect," he says. "It's just a pure and simple practice effect."

TEST TIME

On test day, there are many ways that students can get themselves in the right frame of mind. Eiseman says his students are advised to get a good rest before the exam, and to limit sugar on the big day.

"Sugar is bad, bad, bad for memory retention," he says.

Perhaps the most important thing is to maintain a relaxed atmosphere, he says. "I tell the students to come to the test as relaxed and rested as possible," Eiseman says. "I try to keep all stress out of the testing room and still maintain the required testing conditions and environment."

Bergin says those who are properly prepared will likely be the most relaxed. But even those who aren't should keep a cool head.

"Even students new to the ACT should remember that no single question is pivotal to the overall score," he says.

"If a question is too tough, close your eyes, take a deep breath and move on. Also, never leave a question unanswered on the ACT. There is no wrong

answer penalty, so you have nothing to lose and everything to gain by making a good guess."

WHAT THE RESULTS MEAN FOR YOU

The number of questions a student gets right on each section is the raw score. Raw scores are converted to scale scores for each section. The scale scores range from 1 (low) to 36 (high) for each of the four tests and for the composite. The composite is the average of the four test scores rounded to the nearest whole number. A score of 21 is average, while a 27 or higher puts a student in the 90th percentile.

But even if your score isn't spectacular, Phye points out that ACTs are likely not the only factor that will determine what college or university you will get into. For instance, he says, Iowa State University often takes a number of other criteria -- grades, activities, etc. -- into account when deciding whether to grant admission. ***"It's only one of several pieces," he says.***