

Principal's Newsletter

Voorhees High School

Volume 1, Issue 4

February 2012

Note from the Principal

I hope that your student(s) had a productive first semester. Before you know it, we will be planning for graduation, but before then there is a lot of work to do.

On March 6, 7 and 8, the Junior Class will take the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). As a reminder, all test-taking students are to report to school at their normal time. The test starts promptly at 7:45 AM. For students not taking the test, they are to report to the bus stops/school two and a half hours later than normal.

I wish you all the best during this second semester.

Sincerely,

Ron Peterson



*It's a
Great
Day to
be a
Vike!*

Calendar for Feb./March:

- 2/6 Blood Drive
- 2/8 In-Service – 11:55 Dismissal
- 2/10 Arts Night
- 2/10 Wrestling Tricky Tray 6:00pm
- 2/17 ½ Day President's Weekend
- 2/20 No School – President's Weekend
- 2/29 Pops Concert 7PM
- 3/6 -3/8 HSPA
- 3/13 – 3/15 HSPA Make-ups
- 3/14 In-Service 11:15 Dismissal
- 3/27 3rd Marking Period Ends
- 3/29 – 4/1 Spring Musical

“How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying”



School News:

Cell Phones

Please remember that students are not to use their cell phones during the school day. They can be a disruption to classes and your child's learning. Almost all phones today are equipped with cameras and can be an academic issue and more importantly a privacy issue. With the new focus from the state on harassment, intimidation and bullying, the use of cell phones is a common way students harass others.

Parents, if you need to get a message to your son or daughter please call the main office (638-6116) and we will get the information to them at a convenient time in their schedule. If it is an emergency we will notify them immediately and we can also arrange for any supports they may need at that time. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Gifted & Talented:

GIFTED AND TALENTED INFORMATION: Scholarships, programs & other opportunities

Please be aware of how you may access the Gifted & Talented website to identify scholarships and other opportunities for all students in grades 9 – 12. The coordinator is: Megan Grilli-DeRobbio. She can be contacted at: mgrilli-derobbio@nhvweb.net. School office hours of availability - Voorhees High School – 7: 30 AM – 11 AM, located inside the Athletic & Student Activities Office on the 1st floor; North Hunterdon High School – 11:30 AM – 3:10 PM.

All students are welcome to utilize these resources. A dated message will be posted in the Announcement box on the main page of the website when updates are made and will specify where new postings have been placed onto specific links. It is best to periodically check the website once every other week for routine updates to the Scholarship Opportunities, Current Programs & Opportunities, and Summer Programs & Opportunities links.

Click [here](#) for the direct link to the website.

If you are on Voorhees' main page, click on the "Administration" link and then click on "Gifted & Talented" to access the Gifted & Talented website.

The website is composed of:

* Scholarship Opportunities – to individual colleges, universities, and other organizations for students in grades 9 – 12; please be advised scholarship eligibility/criteria may be based upon age, grade, GPA, community service, potential majors/programs of interest, extracurricular activities, etc.

- * Information on kinds of scholarships
- * Conducting Your Own Scholarship Search – scholarship websites for students to do their own scholarship searching
- * Current Programs & Opportunities – through various colleges, universities, organizations, and institutions
- * Volunteer Opportunities – through nationally renowned organizations as well as county based organizations
- * Summer Programs & Opportunities – through various colleges, universities, & organizations; including study abroad opportunities
- * Career Resources
- * Preparing for College – resources to aid students in preparing for the college admissions process
- * Preparing for College (resources for parents)
- * Learning Disability Opportunities & Resources
- * Resources for College Searches and Aid

Please note that if you have any questions regarding any postings, please do not hesitate to email Ms. Megan Grilli-DeRobbio at mgrilli-derobbio@nhvweb.net. It is strongly encouraged for students to stop in to setup individual appointments with her to discuss their interests, questions, and concerns for applying to scholarships and other opportunities.

HSPA Information:

“The Importance of the HSPA”

Overview

On March 6, 7, and 8, all juniors in public schools in New Jersey will be taking the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). This standardized test includes math and language arts sections, and the students must pass both of them in order to be eligible to graduate from high school. Since this is such an important test, we would like to explain the test in more detail and show parents what we are doing to help the students be successful on it.

After taking the test, the students receive a score in the 100-300 range for each section of the HSPA. The score breakdown is as follows:

- 100-199 (partially proficient; the student does not pass that section)
- 200-249 (proficient; the student passes that section)
- 250-300 (advanced proficient; the student is advanced in that section)

Every year, I go into all of the junior English classes to give the students information about the HSPA. Students always ask me why it is important for them to do well on the test, and they want to know if colleges find out their scores. No, colleges do not find out individual student's scores; all that the colleges know is that the student passed the test. However, what the colleges (and anyone else who reads the paper) do find out is how the students at Voorhees High School as a whole did on the test. As a student applying to a college from Voorhees, it is in the student's best interest to come from a school with very good test scores. The higher the percentage of advanced proficient scores, the better the students will look. A student in the top 10% of a school with 40% of the students being advanced proficient on the HSPA obviously had to work much harder than a student in the top 10% of a school with 20% of the students being advanced proficient.

With all of that in mind, our HSPA scores have been very good. For example, our advanced proficient scores in language arts the past four years have increased significantly:

- March 2008: 16.7% advanced proficient in language arts
- March 2009: 24.5% advanced proficient in language arts
- March 2010: 30.4% advanced proficient in language arts
- March 2011: 33.7% advanced proficient in language arts

The mathematics advanced proficient scores have also been very good, as 39.8% of the juniors were advanced proficient on the March 2011 HSPA.

Success

These HSPA scores do not happen on their own, but are the result of the hard work of our students and teachers. Our English and math curricula teach the students the skills that the students need to be successful on the test, and teachers regularly expose the students to the kinds of questions they will encounter on the test. Being familiar with the format of the questions helps to alleviate students' anxiety as they sit down to take the test.

In addition, students who we have identified as being at risk of not passing the HSPA (either from their ASK 8 scores or from teacher recommendation) are placed into a math or language arts workshop class that provides them with the remediation they need to be successful on the test.

Over the past couple of years, we have started showing the students the importance of the HSPA with some new programs. Last year we began holding HSPA prep sessions. With this program, seniors in the National Honors Society are available to work with the current juniors to help prepare them for the HSPA. The goal of this program is to help students move from being proficient to advanced proficient, but the seniors are also prepared to work with students who need more basic skills. During each session, the seniors help the juniors on a different aspect of the test. This is the schedule for the HSPA prep sessions this year:

Date	Language Arts Focus	Math Focus
Tuesday, February 7, 2012 (during school)	Overview of the test; multiple-choice and open-ended questions	Overview of the test

Wednesday, February 15, 2012 (during school and after school)	Expository writing	Data analysis and statistics
Wednesday, February 22, 2012 (during school)	Persuasive writing	Probability
Thursday, March 1, 2012 (during school and after school)	Advanced proficient skills	Discrete mathematics

We strongly encourage juniors to attend these prep sessions to help them become more comfortable with the test and to learn strategies from the seniors who were successful on it last year.

Last year we also created a HSPA web page on the Voorhees web site. There are links to this web page on the main Voorhees page, as well as on the math and English web pages. Over 1800 people have visited the page since we created it last year. The HSPA web page is filled with very helpful information, including sample questions and the scoring guidelines for both subjects.

All junior students will also receive two booklets from the state about the HSPA. One explains why they have to take the test and the other shows what they can expect to see on the test. I will give the students these booklets when I go into their junior English classes, but there are also links to online versions of the booklets on our HSPA web page.

Motivation

Finally, we realized that one major way to improve our HSPA scores was to provide a little extra motivation for the students to do well. Two years ago, we honored the students who were advanced proficient on either the math or language arts section by inviting them to have ice cream after school. We told the students how proud we were of them, gave them a certificate to acknowledge their accomplishments, and allowed them to socialize as they enjoyed their ice cream.

Last year, we took this a step further by having a HSPA Ceremony at night. We invited the students who were advanced proficient on either section and their parents to a ceremony, during which we presented them with a certificate and congratulated them on their success. After hearing a few speeches and getting their certificates in the auditorium, we informally chatted as we enjoyed cake and refreshments. A few days later we still had the ice cream social after school.

We will continue both of these celebrations this school year, as we think that it is important to honor the students for their hard work and success. It is our hope that the junior students will give that extra effort so that they can attend these celebrations.

We know that our students and teachers work very hard, and our HSPA scores continue to reflect that. Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you have about the HSPA. Thank you for your support as we continue preparing your sons and daughters for the test!

Richard Broan
English Supervisor
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Student Achievements:

This year's **Yale Model United Nations Competition** was a great success and a great experience for the 24 students involved. **YMUN** took place at Yale University from January 19 – 22. Club officers **Andrew Martini, Christina Giordano and Clare Cutri-French** led a team of mature, informed and inquisitive Voorhees students at one of the most established and revered model United Nations conferences in the world. This was a valuable experience in understanding global issues and their possible resolutions as well as a valuable inside look at a prestigious Ivy League school over three and a half days. The Academic Team advisors were Mrs. Jennifer O'Steen and Mr. Reid Kirby. They were proud of their students' engagement in the daily committee meetings and their maturity and cooperation during YMUN sponsored events.

The Spanish Club, Diana Liscinski advisor, and **Interact & Able Club**, Maggie Reluzco advisor, held their 2nd annual **Chili For Chile Benefit on Friday January 20th**. **\$1300** was raised to donate to the Levantando Chile fund to help rebuild the workshops of the Mapuche Weavers from Tirua Chile. The students worked very hard to make this event a success. The organizers of the benefit were the officers of the **Spanish Club: Courtney Zyla, Ashley Batson, Nicole Ortega, Caitlin Mahoney and Emily Passera**. The event could not have taken place without the hard work and dedication from these girls.

The **Voorhees High School Mock Trial Team** beat North Hunterdon High School on Saturday, January 28th at the Flemington Justice Center. The team moves on to the county finals on Wednesday, February 1, at 6:00 p.m. in the old historic courthouse in Flemington. The Voorhees Mock Trial Team will compete against Hunterdon Central's prosecution for the country championship. If the team is successful on Wednesday night, they will compete in the regional competition on Monday, February 6th. This is a full day event in New Brunswick. The following students should be congratulated for their win and their hard work: **Megan D'Avella, Erin McDowell, Lauren Olsen, Kate Palisay, Christina Giordano, Annie Monaco, Josephine Gallagher, Allison Kauffman, Kaity Collins, Carly Heft**

The **VHS Consumer Bowl Team** won the **NJ High School Consumer Bowl County Competition** on Thursday, January 26 at the County Administration Building in Flemington. The Voorhees team beat North Hunterdon by a score of 255 to 30, and will now go on to compete in the Central Regional competition in April. For further information on the competition, please see the website at <http://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/bowl/index.htm>.

The team consisted of: **Jason Farrell, Courtney Zyla, Sam DeFabrizio, Captain-Clare Cutri-French, Tess Pecina, and Valerie Noonan, with Debbie Hunt as advisor.**

Faculty Achievements:

The VHS Art Department is currently accepting orders for an 18-month, full-color calendar, filled with the art work of Voorhees High School students and printed by the NHHS EOS program. The sale of the calendar will benefit the **VHS Sculpture Garden Project**. Calendars are available for a \$20 donation sent to **MaryJo Rosania, Art Department Supervisor**.



Voorhees High School Sculpture Garden

The Voorhees High School Sculpture Garden Project began as a partnership between Eileen Carmella (since retired VHS art teacher) and Bruce Wood (VHS Maintenance Supervisor) and a few former students, in particular, Andrew Curtis, a 2011 Voorhees Graduate. Andrew's design plans will be used as the primary diagram for the Sculpture Garden. A committee has met in order to get the plans off the ground.

The initial goal of the project was to create a “Zen garden” type space, to be used by students and staff for classes, contemplation, and art work display. A Memorial Walkway within the garden has since been added to the original design, due to the three tragic losses that affected the close-knit Voorhees community this school year.

As mentioned above, the Art Department is holding a Calendar Sale to raise funds to purchase the bricks for the walkway. In addition, the idea is to have seating arrangements, placards on trees, and plantings dedicated to individuals. All this will be added to the art pieces that have already been completed for the project (2 large murals and large and small scale ceramic pieces).

Athletics:

Wrestling

VHS-NHHS Match

Most Valuable Player - Walter Gonsiewski

Hunterdon/Warren/Sussex Association

160lb Champion Jadaen Bernstein

145lb Champion Ronnie Honickel

Ronald Honickel achieved his 100th win on January 25, 2012

Winter Track

- **Bhavin Gala** was the Skyland Conference 800 meter champion
- **Nisa Cicitta** was the Skyland Conference 3200 meter champion

Voorhess Jr. Vikes
Wrestling & Cheerleading

TRICKY TRAY



Friday, February 10th



Doors open 6:00

Voorhees High School

Win many great prizes

LET'S LISTEN:
TEENS SPEAK OUT ABOUT COMMUNICATION
AND GETTING ALONG WITH PARENTS



Are you frustrated by conversations with your teenager that always seems to end in arguments? Annoyed by your teen's "attitude" and "disrespect"? Saddened by attempts to connect with your teen that never seem to work?

Join us for a unique evening of interface with young people! Listen in as area teenagers talk with adults about values, responsibility, schoolwork, making mistakes, and communicating with parents.

Be sure to come prepared for a dialogue! – these kids are eager to answer questions from the audience....so bring your concerns and frustrations and ask our lively panel...get "real teen" input on how to make things better between parents and teens.

Date: Thursday, March 1, 2012

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Location: Hunterdon County Library- 314 State Rte 12, Flemington, NJ

Presented by: School-Based Youth Services, Hunterdon Behavioral Health

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