



PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

North Branford High School

Fall, 2010



Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new year with the NBHS community. I am very excited about the developing programs and facility upgrades for our school. Our school library is finishing a much needed renovation with the removal of the asbestos and replacement of our thirty year old carpet and forty fifty year old furniture with new flooring and more durable furniture. There is enough room to have students work during their study halls, and at the same time, have a class visit the library with their teacher to do research. This is a very important resource for educating and preparing our students to be productive citizens in the 21st century. We have renovated the main office area as well and are already noticing it is a more efficient and welcoming place for our students, staff, parents and visitors. A working greenhouse was added to the back of our building and will become an important learning environment for our students. Our freshmen will be attending a new course called *Freshmen Seminar*. This is a quarter credit course which focuses on study and organization skills. We feel it is important to have all our students learn or reinforce the skills that will allow them to have a successful high school experience.

Please plan to be involved with the high school programs and activities this year. There is no better time than this Fall! The senior parent night was this Tuesday. If you missed it, please call your son/daughter's guidance counselor to schedule a meeting for post high school planning. The curriculum night on September 23rd is an opportunity for you to experience a day in your child's life by following their schedule. The teachers will give a brief overview of the curriculum and classroom expectations. I believe it is important for teachers and parents to be a team in supporting our students to be successful; therefore, I think it is important to hear these messages directly from the teachers. You will have an opportunity to have one-on-one conversations with teachers at our parent conferences scheduled in November. The parent forum will be on October 6th where we plan to have a program focused on supporting parents of freshmen and inviting parents to advise us on a new program (see below). Future parent forums will include information on preparing for your child's college search and application process.

This Fall we will be hosting a New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation evaluation visiting committee on November 14, 15, 16, and 17. This is a very important event that impacts our future. The NBHS staff has been working towards this high stakes evaluation for several years. The visiting committee will be meeting with parents and I sincerely hope you will be able to make the time to tell them about your experiences with NBHS. Please mark your calendar to be available for meetings on Sunday and Monday afternoon, November 14 and 15. Thank you in advance for supporting NBHS.

Michele Saulis, Principal

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORT

NBHS is currently implementing a program called PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Support). This is a district-wide program targeted at school improvement that began with TVES last year. PBIS is designed to improve school climate, student engagement, and student outcomes. "PBIS is not a specific curriculum, intervention, or practice, but a decision making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of scientifically-based academic and behavioral practices for improving academic and behavior outcomes for all students" (Sugai, 2008). As part of our implementation of this program we are looking for parental involvement, which will be part of the October 6th parent forum. We look forward to building this exciting program for all members of the NBHS community.

News from the Guidance Department

Phone 203-484-1475

Important Information for Seniors

- Senior Conferences are being held throughout October as part of the post-high school planning process. If you did not sign up or receive a letter with your student's conference time, please make sure you contact your child's counselor to schedule an appointment.
- As the college application process begins, seniors are reminded to be aware of any deadlines they may have for submitting their applications and any other supporting documentation. It is important that you request that your transcripts be mailed to your colleges *at least two weeks* prior to the application deadline to ensure that they arrive on time.
- Teacher recommendations will now be mailed out directly from your teachers, so please remember to provide the teachers who have agreed to write a recommendation for you with stamped and addressed envelopes. Some teachers may prefer to give the student a copy of the recommendation to mail out.

PSAT & SAT

- This year, the PSAT will be administered during the school day on October 13th during the first two blocks of the day, from 7:35 – 10:35. All Sophomores and Juniors will be required to take the PSAT, at no cost to the student. Studies repeatedly show that students who have taken the PSAT at least one time prior to taking the SAT score higher on the SAT than those who have had no exposure to the test.
- Students who are preparing to take the SAT this fall are encouraged to make use of the online test preparation resources available that NBHS subscribes to. If you have never received access information for this site, please ask your math or English teacher for a password.

College Representatives

- Juniors and Seniors are encouraged to come down to Guidance to meet with visiting college representatives. The calendar of colleges coming to NBHS is posted in the Guidance Office and is available on the NBHS Guidance Department website. Students must get a pass ahead of time for the colleges that they want to hear about. Passes can be obtained from Mrs. Bognar.

School Attendance, Beyond the Numbers

As you may know, our NBHS Attendance Policy is outlined on pages 16, 17, and 18 of our Parent/Student Handbook. The policy includes the attendance philosophy and objectives, the definitions (categories) of absences, an the maximum allowable number in classes meeting throughout the year and throughout a one semester course. We encourage you to review this policy with your child at the onset of every school year.

We believe the importance of your child's presence in school and consistent attendance goes beyond the 'numbers' of allotted absences. Attending school and classes is crucial to your child's academic success and social skill development. Academic success requires a consistent presence within the classroom – consistent school attendance provides a greater opportunity for your child to master the content within the courses/curricula. Consistent school attendance also enhances the high school experience for students – as we know through our experiences and as the research indicates, the students who tend to be most successful at the high school level and beyond are those students who attend school regularly and who participate in a variety of activities. As your child progresses from grade to grade throughout the high school experience and then to graduation, the lessons learned in managing academics and the demands of teenage life are crucial in preparing for the next stage of life. The requirements of being on time, attending classes, and attending to responsibilities within and beyond the classroom are parallel to those expectations that students will face upon graduation at the college level and/or within the workforce.

Please feel free to contact us at the high school at 203 484-1465 or via email, tstoeffler@northbranfordschools.org, if you should have any questions regarding the NBHS Attendance Policy.

NEW STAFF



Mrs. Danner
Science Teacher

I am teaching both General Science and Biology this year. I was a graduate of North Branford High School and a member of the tennis and softball teams. I received my undergraduate degree from UCONN, majoring in cytogenetics. I worked at a biotechnology company as a research scientist for almost ten years, performing all sorts of fun experiments with DNA and cells. I went back to school for my masters in education at UNH. I have had the opportunity to teach at an elementary school, a middle school, and now a high school I absolutely love it! I have been married to a wonderful man (and NB grad) for eleven years, and I have two little boys, Jake and Nate. I am looking forward to working with you and sharing my passion for science.

I am excited to be the new Business Education teacher here at NBHS. I am a NBHS graduate and I am glad to say that I now live in Northford again with my husband and daughter. Before becoming a teacher, I graduated from the University of Connecticut as a Business Major and worked in New York City doing Sales and Marketing. I then followed the inclination that began with my high school trip to a Ukrainian school, by going back to graduate school to become a teacher. After completing my MS in Secondary Education, I taught for five years at Hamden High School. This year, I will be teaching Business Management, Accounting, Business Law, Business/Applied Mathematics, and Freshmen Seminar. I look forward to working with the unique and talented students here at NBHS this year and for many years to come.



Mrs. Podzikowski
Business Teacher



Ms. Barbato
Math Teacher

I am the new math teacher here at NBHS. I currently teach Algebra I A/CP, Algebra II A/CP, and Applied Algebra. Previously, I taught at Dodd Middle School in Cheshire and have spent some time in various other schools, including one in Granada, Spain. Outside of school, I enjoy hiking, biking, traveling, and hanging out with my golden retriever, Enzo. I am very excited to be here at NBHS and I look forward to this upcoming school year!



Ms. Lindsay
Life Skills
Paraprofessional

I am a Paraprofessional working in the Life Skills program. I am a graduate of the North Branford High School class of 2005. I am pursuing my B.S. degree in Exercise Science at Southern Connecticut State University. I enjoy going to concerts, boating and playing with my dog.

I am currently working as one of the new Special Education teachers at NBHS. For the past eight years, I worked at Old Saybrook High School as the Life Skills Teacher. While in Old Saybrook, I started the Best Buddies Program and The Dance Team. I am the proud mother of a 16 month old girl named Peyton. My husband, daughter and I currently live in Norwich and are trying to sell our home so we can move closer to the area. North Branford has been extremely welcoming.



Ms. Maynard
Spec. Ed. Teacher

I am your new Physical Education /Health teacher. In addition, I am also a Certified Athletic Trainer and currently work at Valley Physical Therapy where I provide coverage for Coginchaug High School and Mercy High School. Prior to NBHS, I was the Head Athletic Trainer at Middletown High School for 4 years. I attended Southern Connecticut State University for both my Athletic Training degree and my teacher certification. I come from a big family (I am one of six siblings). St. Patrick's Day is like Christmas for my family. I love all things related to fitness but I'm really into snowboarding and running.



Ms. Garrity
PE/Health Teacher



Mrs. Bush
Paraprofessional

I worked as a Paraprofessional at NBIS for the past four years. I have a B.A. in English Literature from Rider College in New Jersey. For the past seven years I have traveled to 6 different continents with the People to People Student Ambassador Program that takes High School students abroad during the summer months. Tennis, down-hill and cross-country skiing, and photography are some of my hobbies as well as traveling to foreign countries. Originally from Maine, I currently reside in East Haven.

I reside in Northford with my husband, four children, and three dogs. Prior to coming to NBHS, I have been teaching special education students at North Branford Intermediate School for the last 10 years. In my leisure time, I enjoy spending time with my family, shopping, and enjoying outdoor activities. I am very excited to be a part of the NBHS faculty.



Mrs. Simmons
Spec. Ed. Teacher



**The following forms are due to
the main office by
Friday, September 17, 2010**

**Student Emergency Information
Parent-Student Handbook Verification
Acceptable Use Policy Agreement
Free/Reduced Lunch Form
Student Insurance Form
Senior Automobile Registration Form**



JOIN US....

**OPEN HOUSE -
CURRICULUM
NIGHT**

Thursday, September 23rd
7:00 PM—9:00 PM

See enclosed flyer

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
P.O.BOX 129
NORTHFORD, CT 06472**

**NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
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Freshman Seminar – A New Beginning

Research reveals that students who are successful during their 9th grade year are 3.5 times more likely to graduate. One F decreases the likelihood of graduating from 83% to 60%. Two F's decreases the likelihood to 44% and three F's decreases the likelihood of graduation to 31%. The challenge for our nation: **Three of every ten students DO NOT graduate!**



North Branford High School, under the leadership of Principal Michele Saulis, is taking a proactive approach to this dilemma. Mrs. Rebecca Podzikowski, a member of the Technology and Careers Department, has designed the *Freshman Seminar* curriculum that will be implemented this year.

During this course, study skills will be introduced that level the playing field for all students. They are skills that help our responsible students become more engaged in their learning and become more efficient when they study and do homework. They are the skills that help students who have traditionally struggled in school get organized, study smarter, and take control of their own learning so they can discover success in school.

This course will cover a wide range of topics that will help students be successful now and in the future. After taking the course, students will discover how much easier it can be to:

- Manage time
- Organize papers
- Complete homework
- Read textbooks
- Study for tests
- Take notes
- Take tests
- Communicate with teachers and parents
- Write research papers
- Set short- and long-term goals
- Use the Internet safely



The *Freshman Seminar* course will provide students with a system of skills and strategies that are time efficient, effective, and can be applied across all content-areas!