

GUIDANCE UPDATE • SEPTEMBER 8, 2004

Numbers indicate article of particular interest to parents and students of the indicated grade(s).

CALENDAR

9th Grade Assembly: Making High School Count--Friday, September 10, 2nd block

Junior Guidance Meeting Thursday, September 9, 2nd block.

Senior Guidance Meeting—Friday, September 17, 2nd block

CAREER FOCUS: ACTUARIES (9, 10, 11, 12)

If you have a talent for mathematics, a career as an actuary may be right for you. Actuaries use statistics and data to predict the occurrence of future events. This involves more than picking next year's Super Bowl champion, although there are similarities. Actuaries work in the insurance, pension and banking sectors of the economy. Many corporations, regardless of industry, also employ actuaries, as does the government. The median wage for actuaries is approaching \$70,000 per year.

Actuaries must earn a bachelor's degree, often in actuarial science though math and other business majors are closely related. Ohio State University and Ohio University both offer bachelor's degrees in actuarial sciences. Completing math courses beyond Algebra II would help you in preparing for this career.

To learn more, access OCIS through the guidance department website.

COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT: OHIO NORTHERN UNIVERSITY (9, 10, 11, 12)

Ohio Northern University is a private college in Ada, Ohio with an undergraduate enrollment of about 3000 students. Pharmacy, business and engineering programs are among the 60 available majors. Ohio Northern offers co-op options in many majors. The Polar Bears compete in NCAA Division III. Tuition and fees for 2004-05 range from \$25,815 to \$29,010. In the past three years, seven Shelby graduates have enrolled at ONU. Learn more through OCIS, the guidance office, or the ONU website.

WEIGHTED GPA CALCULATIONS (9, 10, 11, 12)

Shelby High School employs two methods when determining a student's Grade Point Average (GPA) depending on the time period for which the average is being calculated.

Because quarterly and yearly GPAs are used to determine honor rolls and academic letters, these GPAs are calculated using the traditional system of awarding an extra quality point for a weighted class. Hence, a grade of "B" in Honors English II would be worth four quality points instead of three quality points. The sum of the quality points is divided by the number of credits to determine the nine-week or one academic year GPA.

Cumulative GPAs are determined using an add-on system of weighted grades. The unweighted GPA is calculated for the student's entire high school career. Then, for each completed weighted class, .05 is added to the unweighted GPA to determine the weighted GPA.

After a student has attempted 20 credits, the add-on system results in a higher GPA than the traditional system. However, this is not the reason we utilize the add-on system. In the traditional system, a student is inadvertently penalized in the determination of the cumulative GPA when they take non-weighted courses such as Spanish IV, Advanced Math, Music, Art or Ag-Science. The add-on system encourages students to take a broad range of courses while still challenging themselves by taking advanced courses.

JUNIOR TASKS (11)

The primary concern for your junior year is to work up to your capabilities in your classes. As you may have discovered by now, 11th grade courses require more preparation time for completing assignments and studying for assessments. Keep in mind that this year will determine one third of the transcript you send to universities in your applications next fall. Also, the work you do now will enhance your scores on the ACT test. Which leads to your second task; preparing for the ACT test.

The best preparation for the ACT test is to work hard in you classes. Additionally, since the ACT is a timed test, pushing yourself to read quickly and accurately, especially when reading articles, will facilitate your efforts on the ACT.

In general, you should consider taking the ACT on the April 9 test date. That way you are well into your second semester classes. In some cases you should consider the February 12 test date, particularly if you are taking Algebra II during the first semester. Discuss this with your guidance counselor. Remember that ACT preparation software is available in the media center. As a junior, you will also decide if you need to take the new writing portion of the ACT. See the next article for further information.

Your third task is to continue exploring career, college and/or military service opportunities. OCIS, the guidance department webpage, the media center and resources in the guidance office can all be valuable resources. Again ask your guidance counselor for help in this process.

CHANGES IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING (11)

(Reprinted with permission from ACT)

The college entrance exams, the ACT and SAT, will introduce changes in 2005. Some colleges will require students to take a writing test as part of the entrance exams for admission in the fall of 2006.

Key facts:

- ACT will offer the ACT Assessment and the ACT Assessment Plus Writing beginning with the Feb. 12, 2005, test date. You will need to choose one of these options.
- The ACT Writing Test will be optional. If the colleges you're interested in don't require a writing sample from your college entrance exam, you won't need to take that part of the test on the ACT. The SAT writing test will not be optional and will be a part of every SAT test.
- There will be no other changes to the ACT test. The type of ACT test a student takes in the fall of 2004 will be the same as in 2005. The SAT is changing and a new type of test will be introduced with the writing test in March 2005. With the ACT, you won't have to determine which version the colleges would like you to take since the basic test is staying the same.

For information and test prep help on the Writing Test, visit <http://www.actstudent.org/writing/index.html>.

DO YOU NEED TO TAKE A WRITING TEST? (11)

(Reprinted with permission from ACT)

Since the ACT Writing Test is optional, you will need to decide whether to take it. Some colleges will require the test, some will recommend it and some won't require it. So how do you decide?

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ACT will provide information on colleges that have said they will require or recommend a writing test and those that won't require it. That information will be available at www.actstudent.org soon. You'll also be able to find out directly from the colleges you're interested in attending.

Some counselors are recommending that students consider taking the Writing Test if they're unsure what colleges they will apply to. Because the optional Writing Test is offered at every ACT test date, you will have ample opportunity to take the test again. Check out the college requirements and then talk to your counselor if you have questions.

If you're a senior, you aren't expected to take a writing test because the tests will first be used by colleges beginning in the fall of 2006.

OHIO CAREER INFORMATION SYSTEM (9, 10, 11, 12)

The Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) is available to our community through the guidance website. Student have been given a handout with the web address and our username and password. (We are not permitted to display that information on our website.) You may also call the guidance office for our username and password. OCIS provides extensive information on careers and colleges/universities throughout the country.

NEXT GUIDANCE UPDATE: September 22, 2004
