

OHS MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide equal access to all curricula by forming a partnership with families, by communicating our expectations clearly and often, and utilizing the resources of FCPS in challenging all of Oakton's students to achieve their academic and personal best.

OHS VISION STATEMENT

We agree that all students should have access to a rigorous educational experience, and we are dedicated to helping students achieve the individual goals that will strengthen their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development. We understand that in order to lead youth, we must be willing to model a passion for lifelong learning and personal growth and development.

SUBMIT

If you have an article that you would like to have included in Access Oakton, please forward it to Kirsten Rucker at: kkunklerrucker@verizon.net. The due dates for articles for future publications this year are: February 3, March 31, and June 2.

The PTSA's Holiday Season Wrap-Up

Pam Burke, PTSA President • Pam.a.burke@gmail.com

Thank you for reading our second Access Oakton Newsletter. We have been busy these past months.

Our first session with Dr. Ciardi was held in November. Dr. Ciardi is a family therapist and she provides Oakton parents with the opportunity to discuss with both her and other parents concerns about students in a very casual environment. This is a very casual, unstructured program. We all have similar concerns but different way of

approaching these issues and group discussion is beneficial. Please look at your Keep in Touch weekly email for the next meeting.

All Night Grad is working to plan our celebration for the night of June 20. A mailing is being sent to parents of seniors with info about purchasing tickets and the tiered pricing. All parents are encouraged to volunteer to help with this event. 300 volunteers are needed for the success of this celebration. We will have on-line volunteer sign-up available.

Our Freshman Parent Coffee was held

on Veterans Day. We had a great turnout and it was helpful to meet each other, have coffee and meet with administrators and staff to learn more about Oakton and have questions answered.

Please look in this newsletter for the Academic Booster section. We are very proud of our Cougar Commendation breakfast to recognize students for their contributions to Oakton.

Finally, the PTSA is short of our membership goal of 925 mem-

berships. At \$15 membership, we need 200 more memberships to be able to meet all the needs of our budget. If you haven't yet, **please join the PTSA**. A membership form is available on our website, Oaktonhsptsa.org. Thank you for your continuing support.

Please enjoy your winter break and have a safe holiday season.

Pam Burke
PTSA President
Pam.a.burke@gmail.com

“At \$15 membership, we need 200 more memberships to be able to meet all the needs of our budget. If you haven't yet, please join the PTSA. A membership form is available on our website, Oaktonhsptsa.org.”

▶ See page 8 for the Membership Form!

Upcoming Events at Oakton

7-Jan Registration due for practice SAT/ACT

15-Jan Practice SAT/ACT

26-Jan Practice SAT/ACT feedback

3-Feb Articles due for the Feb Access Oakton edition

15-Feb Cougar Dinner Theater

School Directory Purchases

If you missed purchasing a directory at the Back-to-School Nights, don't worry! Directories are still available. You can purchase them in the Main Office from Beth Speed or you can contact Liz Krage at 703.620.9747 or kragedesign@aol.com. Directories are \$5 each and support PTSA programs.

Oakton High Best Buddies Chapter Named Outstanding Chapter by Best Buddies International

The Oakton High School Best Buddies Chapter has received the 2009-10 Outstanding Chapter Award from Best Buddies International at the group's annual leadership conference! Oakton was chosen from over 800 Best Buddies high school programs and 62 Outstanding Chapter applications for its dedication to the Best Buddies mission.

During the 2009-10 school year, the Oakton chapter held monthly events to provide buddy pairs with the opportunity to socialize outside school. Events included a Halloween party, a family potluck dinner, and a trip to a local movie theater. Oakton also hosted the statewide Best Buddies Walk for Life in the spring as well as a basketball tournament for area schools. Oakton's chapter has 18 pairs of Best Buddies and 50 associate members.

Best Buddies creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, and leadership development for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Letter from the Principal: 2011-2012 Course Registration

John A. Banbury, Principal • john.banbury@fcps.edu

Dear Parents,
Wow! First quarter of the 2010-2011 school year is already past, and second quarter is well underway. In fact, we are already planning for the 2011-12 school year because, shortly after the winter break, we will start planning for registration of next year's courses.

To help you and your sons and daughters prepare for upcoming courses at Oakton, we are starting, with this month's newsletter, a series on "Everything You Always Wanted To Know" about each of the various departments at Oakton. In each of the next four newsletters, we will highlight a single department and present all the courses in that department and their course descriptions. We will first

“To help you and your sons and daughters prepare for upcoming courses at Oakton, we are starting, with this month's newsletter, a series on “Everything You Always Wanted To Know””

look at the four core departments – Math, Science, English, and Social Studies – and then move on to electives in upcoming issues. In each edition, we will outline the courses and discuss prerequisites, co-requisites, and rationale for course sequence. We will try to point out helpful suggestions and pitfalls to avoid as you plan for your child's future curriculum schedules.

The first contribution in our series will be from the Math Department and Mrs. Becky Lyon, the Math Department chair. I hope you enjoy this series and find it helpful.

As always, have a wonderful and restful winter break with your families, and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
John Banbury

VHSL Scholastic Bowl Team's competition to be aired on NBC

The Oakton HS Scholastic Bowl Team scrimmages teams from other Fairfax County Schools biweekly in preparation for the Regional and District Tournaments that will take place in late January and early February. Our team, which consists mostly of highly motivated freshmen, sophomore, and juniors, meets Mondays and Thursdays after school and practices by reviewing questions from previous competitions and brainstorming current events questions.

The team had a busy schedule during October and November. Oakton scrimmaged Falls Church, Madison, Langley, and Fairfax, and it attended the taping of the NBC4 show "It's Academic" on Nov. 15. Oakton competed against



Bullis HS and Churchill HS, both from Potomac, MD. The show will air on NBC4 on Jan. 15 at 10:30 AM. Oakton was represented by Kristi Carrigan, Emma Pfeifer, Haaris Sohail, Katherine Croote (alternate) and Cameron Lindsay (alternate). The team sponsors are Marianne Scales and Jackie Fernandez.

What do you know about Advanced Placement (AP) at Oakton?

SOME COURSE HIGHLIGHTS:

AP Computer Science A

WHAT IS COMPUTER SCIENCE? So far, you have most likely used computers in your everyday life whether it be for writing a paper using a word processor, surfing the internet, or playing games. All of the programs you used were created by Computer Scientists. Computer Science is then the study of how to create computer programs. AP Computer Science A is just an introduction, but by the end of the first year you will be surprised by what you can do!!! The AP language is Java™, a language that is used throughout the tech industry.

BENEFITS: This is also one of the few AP courses offered to Sophomores and many more. Come to the Curriculum Night (Feb 9, 2011) to find out more about this course!

GOOD WEB SITE: <http://www.cs.washington.edu/WhyCSE>

AP Environmental Science

“Learn the Science behind the news”

What is Environmental Science? The study of the world we live in and our impact on the world. Students study topics such as water quality, endangered species, population growth, alternative energy supplies, and climate change.

Benefits: Learn about what is happening in your world – and why we got so much snow last winter! Earn college credits and more!

AP Japanese

What is Japanese? The students acquire introductory cultural understanding through seven units, consisting of traveling in Japan; Japanese Tradition and Customs; Traditional and Pop Culture; Technologies and Communications; Future Plans and Careers; Environmental and Social Issues; and Government and Global Community.

Benefits: While learning the Japanese culture and society, the students develop full range of linguistic skills, including: presentational (spoken and written communication), interpersonal (interactive communication),

and interpretive (understanding of spoken or written communication) skills in Japanese. Come to Curriculum Night Feb 9 to find out more.

AP Seminar – AP English Lit/AP US Government/AP Comparative Government

What do you study in this seminar course? Students in the trifecta course will take three AP exams: AP Literature, AP US Government and AP Comparative Government. In AP Government students will learn about the challenges of a global community as they explore the government and politics of the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, Mexico, Nigeria and Iran. Students in AP English Literature will analyze poetry and prose through writing and discussion. Interdisciplinary connections will be made between the literature and the politics throughout the course.

Benefits: 3 AP Courses wrapped into one!

Number of AP Courses: 26
Number of AP Exams given 2010: 2248

Average Pass Rate: 73%
(Compared to 58% nationally.)

When students can take AP classes: Sophomore

Find It All @ Your OHS Library

Check Out the OHS Library Web Site: <http://www.fcps.edu/OaktonHS/library/>

Databases Offer Information

If your student needs accurate, unbiased, reliable information from an authoritative source, Google may not be the best solution. Did you know that Oakton HS Library purchases excellent research databases that are aligned to curriculum topics? Remote access usernames and passwords are available on the Oakton HS Library Blackboard course. Click *Online Databases* button and open the first item, *Online Databases 2010-11.docx*. Please notify the library promptly if your student

Student Overdue Notices and Bills Were Delivered

Students received notices in November for overdue library books and/or bills for lost or late materials and unpaid library printing fees. Printed notices are delivered once per quarter. Please ask your student if he received a notice and encourage him to resolve library obligations promptly.

New Concern for Parents regarding the Abuse of Caffeine Drinks

Parents should be alert to the increasing use of caffeinated drinks mixed with alcohol. These concoctions are commonly known as, "Blackout in a Can," "Liquid Cocaine," and "Alco-Pop." They are marketed under a variety of names and can be purchased at retail stores. Obviously, we very are concerned that unhealthy college age behavior will be imitated by high school students.

The concern for parents is that young adults often drink far more alcohol than they realize.

Caffeine inhibits the body's natural response to slow down or stop drinking alcoholic beverages, thus leading to alcohol overdosing or poisoning. A 23.5 ounce can of these beverages has an alcohol content of 12 percent (alcohol by volume) or the equivalent of four beers. It sells for about \$2.50 a can, making it very appealing to young adults. Now that the FDA is banning these types of manufactured beverages, parents should be aware that alcoholic beverages, like vodka, are often being added by consumers into non-alcoholic caffeinated drinks.

FDA NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Nov. 17, 2010

Media Inquiries: Michael Herndon, 301-796-4673,
michael.herndon@fda.hhs.gov

Consumer Inquiries: 888-INFO-FDA

FDA Warning Letters issued to four makers of caffeinated alcoholic beverages

These beverages present a public health concern

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today warned four companies that the caffeine added to their malt alcoholic beverages is an "unsafe food additive" and said that further action, including seizure of their products, is possible under federal law.

The companies receiving Warning Letters and their products are:

- Charge Beverages Corp.: Core High Gravity HG, Core High Gravity HG Orange, and Lemon Lime Core Spiked
- New Century Brewing Co., LLC: Moonshot
- Phusion Projects, LLC (doing business as Drink Four Brewing Co.): Four Loko
- United Brands Company Inc.: Joose and Max

FDA's action follows a scientific review by the Agency. FDA examined the published peer-reviewed literature on the co-consumption of caffeine and alcohol, consulted with experts in the fields of toxicology, neuropharmacology,

emergency medicine, and epidemiology, and reviewed information provided by product manufacturers. FDA also performed its own independent laboratory analysis of these products.

“Peer-reviewed studies suggest that the consumption of beverages containing added caffeine and alcohol is associated with risky behaviors that may lead to hazardous and life-threatening situations.”

"FDA does not find support for the claim that the addition of caffeine to these alcoholic beverages is 'generally recognized as safe,' which is the legal standard," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Principal Deputy Commissioner. "To the contrary, there is evidence that the

combinations of caffeine and alcohol in these products pose a public health concern."

Experts have raised concerns that caffeine can mask some of the sensory cues individuals might normally rely on to determine their level of intoxication. The FDA said peer-reviewed studies suggest that the consumption of beverages containing added caffeine and alcohol is associated with risky behaviors that may lead to hazardous and life-threatening situations.

The agency said the products named in the Warning Letters are being marketed in violation of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (the FDCA). Each Warning Letter requests that the recipient inform the FDA in writing within 15 days of the specific steps that will be taken to remedy the violation and prevent its recurrence. If a company does not believe its products are in violation of the FDCA, it may present its reasoning and any supporting information as well.

If the FDA believes that the violation continues to exist, the agency may pursue an enforcement action that could include seizure of the products or an injunction to prevent the firm from continuing to produce the product until the violation has been corrected.

FDA's action today follows a November 2009 request to manufacturers to provide information on the safety of adding caffeine to their products.

FDA is aware that on November 16, Phusion Projects, LLC, the maker of Four Loko, announced its intention to remove caffeine and other stimulants from its drinks. FDA views this announcement as a positive step. FDA has not yet heard officially from the company about this announcement, including how quickly it will remove present product from circulation and how quickly it will reformulate its product. FDA intends to work with Phusion Projects, LLC and the other manufacturers to assure their products meet safety standards.

Cougar Orchestra Notes

Congratulations to the following 10 outstanding musicians who represented Oakton at the Regional Orchestra event at Hayfield Secondary on November 12-13, 2010: Violin: Stacy Ham, Irene Lee, Alice Xiang, Rachel Kim, Christina Lee; Viola: Wendy Xue, Mikey Lanke-nau; Cello: Mike Dettmar; Clarinet: Rachel Kim; and French Horn: Carl Con-das. These students will now proceed to the Virginia All-State auditions in late February.

The following 11 outstanding musicians will be representing Oakton at District Orchestra which will be held at Oakton High School on January 7-8, 2011: Violin: Ricky Bassett, Chris Suh, Tom Zhang, Edward Kao, Brian Hortelano, Brenda Oh, Henry Yen; Viola: Amanda Cerva, Ian Johnson; Cello: Emily Wang and Eric Hautbois. We are proud of all of these exceptional musicians!

The Oakton Writing Center

The Writing Center opened last year at Oakton. Organized and run by Mrs. Blankenship, it is a place for students to receive assistance with any writing assignment. The tutors in the Writing Center are Oakton students trained in writing for various subjects. Tutoring sessions are 20 minutes long and are completely FREE. The Writing Center is open during Cougar Time every day, during A and B lunch on Monday and Tuesday, and during C and D lunch on Thursday and Friday. The Oakton Writing Center is also open after school on Wednesday from 2:15 to 3:30. Students do not need to schedule appointments; they can just walk in on the spot. Students are welcome to bring assignments at any stage in the writing process. The Oakton Writing Center is located in Room 310 (the old Career Center) across from the clinic in the guidance hallway. Students of all grade levels are welcome!

Drama heads to the Big Apple

How is it December already? Thanks to everyone who came to our productions of IS HE DEAD? and THE FAMILY MAN last month. We were so pleased with how both shows turned out and the support in the audience and lobby is always amazing. Our boosters continue to wow me with their creativity and dedication. I am so lucky to have such a dream team working with me.

Now it is time for some fun as we head off for 24 hours in NYC. We'll be seeing A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC and SPIDERMAN the musical, plus taking an acting workshop. This is always a fun and lesson filled trip that I enjoy as much as the kids do. Of course NYC doesn't have all the good theatre. We will also be taking a field trip to Signature Theatre to see SUNSET BLVD on Sunday, February 6th as well as CYMBELINE at the Shakespeare Theatre on Thursday March 6th.

As our Drama 2 students close their Soap Opera Murder Mysteries, we are looking for our Shakespeare piece that we will take to the Folger

student festival in March. In Drama 3 & 4 we are picking and casting our one act plays, one of which will go to our VHSL competition in January. You will have an opportunity to see all of these shows at our 3rd annual Cougar Dinner Theatre on Tuesday, February 15th. Festivities start in our lobby at 6:00 pm.

Our spring musical of OKLAHOMA! has been cast and rehearsals will start in February. Let's keep our fingers crossed that the snow doesn't fall like last year and we can stay on schedule.

A big congratulations goes out to our CAPIES critic's team who is off to a wonderful start with 9 reviews already having been published. Chris Papas, Caroline Werenskjold, Olivia Meyer and Adrienne Picciotto are the lucky writers.

From all of us here in the theatre department, we wish you a happy and creative holiday season and a most inspired New Year.

Vanessa Gelinias

News from Theatre Arts:

www.oaktondrama.org

Students Observe Open Heart Surgery

During the first two weeks of December, Human Anatomy and Physiology students will be visiting INOVA Fairfax Hospital for the viewing of Open Heart Surgery through the observation dome. During the visit, students will be introduced to cutting-edge technology, learn about the important roles performed by all members of the cardiac surgical team, and develop a deeper understanding of the risk factors and impact of coronary artery disease. HAP students at Oakton have been visiting the Dome for the past six years and many consider this field

trip as one of the most rewarding and exciting educational experiences that they have had. Following the field trip, students will simulate a CABG bypass procedure in the laboratory.

HAP is an upper level elective designed to appeal to students who have an interest in a possible career in the Health Sciences.

If you are a professional who would like to share some of your career experience with interested and engaged students at OHS, please contact

Ann Starr: ann.starr@fcps.edu

Self-Identification of Students' Valuables is Very Important

WHAT IS OPERATION IDENTIFICATION?

Operation Identification is a nationwide program designed to discourage theft of valuables and provide a way for you to easily identify stolen property.

If you mark all valuables with permanent identification numbers, the thief will find it difficult to sell them to his "fence" or other underground sources. Thus, if thieves know your valuables are marked, they may look elsewhere. It also helps security and the police to contact you when the property is recovered and lets you identify it so it can be returned to you.

WHAT NUMBER SHOULD I USE?

Mark your valuables with your initials or driver's license number (see *warning below*). The number should be engraved in an area that cannot be easily dismantled, and which is easily observed. If your driver's license number is your social security number do not use it as a means of identification.

After marking your property, make a list of your valuables and keep a copy of the list in a safe place, like a safe deposit box. If you should subsequently become a victim, you will be able to quickly describe the

stolen property from the list. This will be of great help to security and the police in their attempts to recover the stolen possessions.

WHEN USING AN ELECTRIC ENGRAVING TOOL, FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

- Practice using the engraving tool before marking your property.
- Engrave the number or initials.
- Identify your property as conspicuously as possible without defacing it. On some valuables, it's wise to engrave a second number or letters in an inconspicuous spot for added security.
- When engraving, hold the tool in an upright position – not at a slant.
- To adjust for hard surfaces, such as metal, adjust the engraver knob to the loudest setting.
- The Oakton High School Security Office has an electric engraver tool you can use to mark your property.
 - Ipods, cell phones and cameras are good candidates for marking.
 - It also never hurts to take a digital photo of valuable items.



School Counseling Monthly Report:

As the holidays approach, the Office of School Counseling would like to give an overview of what to expect as the year goes on. Each counselor has met his or her ninth graders during the Freshman Transition Program. During the first few days of Cougar Time, we also met with students to review study skills, time management, goal setting and other topics that are important for students new to high school. At the same time, we have worked to support the upperclassmen. As always, the seniors are navigating through post graduate planning.

Counselors remain available to all their students throughout the year.

Counselors are working to identify and support those students who are having academic difficulties as well as those who may be experiencing personal issues that interfere with their ability to achieve at Oakton. Whether by listening, advising, or making the proper referral, counselors are looking to make the high school experience a good one for all students. We will be implementing more class level programs for the 10th and 11th grades after winter break. These

programs will focus on planning, school success, and citizenship as well as academics.

We welcome parent calls and emails and hope to provide timely assistance. Parents are still the best source of information on students no matter how old the student becomes. If you are looking for more ways to be involved, the Counseling Office is seeking volunteers that can help with some of the clerical projects in the department. If interested in being a parent volunteer, please contact Sarah Fronckel at 703-319-2804.

Cougarmart Winter Sales

The Band Boosters are selling White House Ornaments and continuing their citrus sales. Citrus can be ordered at the beginning of each month. Please look at the website, oaktonbands.com under the fundraising tab. These can be paid for through PayPal.

Cougar Swim and Dive Team is selling Scrip (prepaid gift cards, purchased at face value) please contact Nancy Robbins at 703-620-4178 if interested.

Football is selling "Home of an Oakton Cougar" signs. These can be yard signs or used indoors. Help map out Cougar Country by getting yours for the holiday. Contact Sally Goins at goinssally@aol.com for special holiday pricing.

Boys Basketball is selling 'Fan' tee shirts for \$10 available at home games. Wear your tee shirt to a game and be eligible to win Tropical Smoothies!

Girls Dance is sponsoring a Dance Clinic Dec 13 through 17. Please see attached flyer.

AP Government and AP Environmental Science Courses Team Up for a Hearing Simulation

In early November students in AP US Government and AP Environmental Science engaged in a simulation of a public hearing on the expansion of the Cleveland Hopkins airport. Students were assigned to a variety of pro growth and environmental interest groups and presented their perspective to a panelist of outside experts. Panelists included professionals from environmental government contracting groups such as LMI and individuals with expertise in urban planning. Students had to be well prepared to present information and to answer questions from the expert panel. All students did a fantastic job and got to see the real world interplay between the two courses.

In the words of some students:

"It felt like a real world experience;"

"I liked presenting to a panel and how those on the panel challenged us to know all we could about the issue."

Japanese 5, Advanced Japanese 12th, and AP Japanese News

Haiku and New Year's Card Contest

The students in the combined class of Japanese 5, Advanced Japanese 12th, and AP Japanese have been working on acquisition of Japanese language proficiency as well as deepening of the cultural understanding.

In November, the students studied how to make Haiku in Japanese and composed them. These Haikus will be sent to Japan for participation in the Ito International Haiku Contest soon.

Also, in December the class will participate in the national New Year's card-designing contest. The National Council of Japanese Language Teachers

sponsors the contest. The three cards selected by the students will represent the class. These were designed by Sam Fine, Ashleigh Oberg-Porter, and Courtney Pinkard. We wish them the best for the national contest. The student projects, including the Haikus, the New Year's cards, and the calligraphy, will be displayed in the Oakton High School library in January. They demonstrate creative ability of the students. I hope you will have a chance to view them.

Yoko Thakur- Japanese teacher

Preparing for next year...

Though it is only December, we are beginning to plan for next year. One aspect of the planning process is to encourage students to begin thinking about the courses they may wish to pursue. At Oakton we would like all of our students to take at least one honors or Advanced Placement course during their high school career. We are fortunate to offer a wide array of courses both in the core content area and in the electives. Why should a student be interested in the advanced academic programs?

- The MOST significant factor leading to success in college is the rigor of the high school curriculum.
- Many colleges grant credit for courses in which students scored high on the AP exam.
- These studies expand the student's ability to read, write, and think analytically, and to build life skills in knowing how to approach challenging material.
- These courses expose students to rigorous academic study while at Oakton where they have the ability to meet with teachers during the school day for academic intervention and support.

Approximately 95% of our students pursue education after Oakton. Who should consider taking an AP or honors class? Just about everyone.

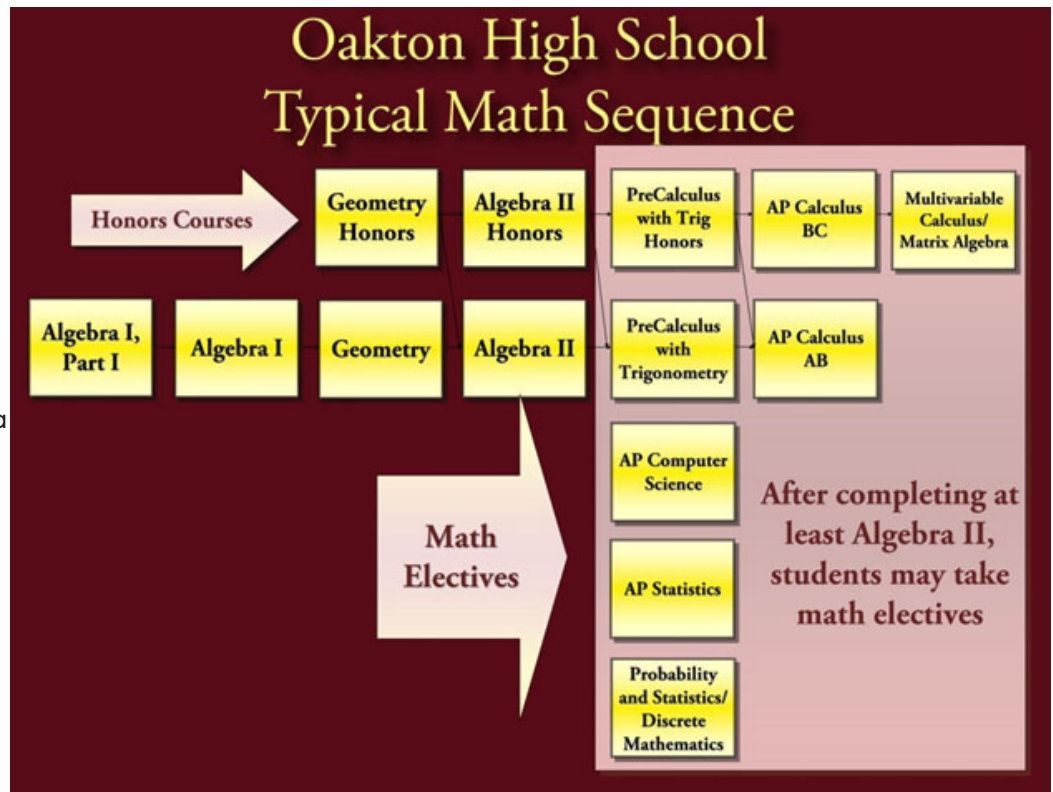
Everything You Always Wanted To Know About the Math Department

I'm Becky Lyon and I am the department chair for the Math Department at Oakton High School. I thought it would be a great idea to write an article for the PTSA newsletter to introduce you to the department and let you have a more global look at the entire department rather than just the courses your children take.

Who we are:

Our department consists of fourteen full-time and two part-time math teachers. They are all wonderful teachers who care about your student's success in mathematics. If you haven't had a chance to meet them all, they are Judy Aukamp, Mary Barnes, Sally Curle, Sonja De Kee, John Gluck, George Hubac, Edmund Lau, Nancy Luciani, Melissa McInerney, Erica Mirabello, Diann Reber, Ann Reiners, Iris Routenberg, Carolyn Tabrizi and Carolyn Veltri. Also working with us this year from the Science Department and teaching a section of Algebra I is Brooke Davies. We are also very lucky to have excellent Special Education teachers who work in both teaming and self contained classes. They are Justin Janis, Stephannie Ledesma and Andrew Park.

We teach the 2300+ students at



Oakton High School in 79 sections of math this year, consisting of the SOL classes, AP classes, and electives.

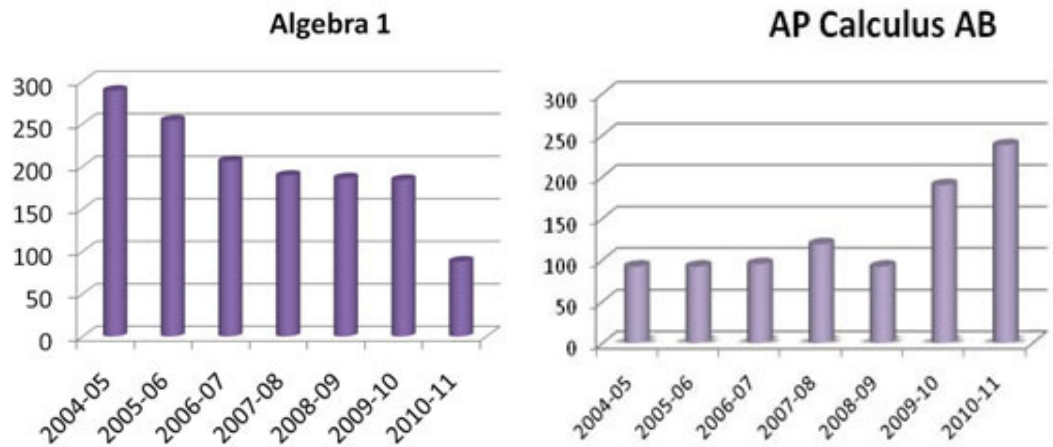
The diagram above shows the math

courses we teach and the general sequence of classes that students can take.

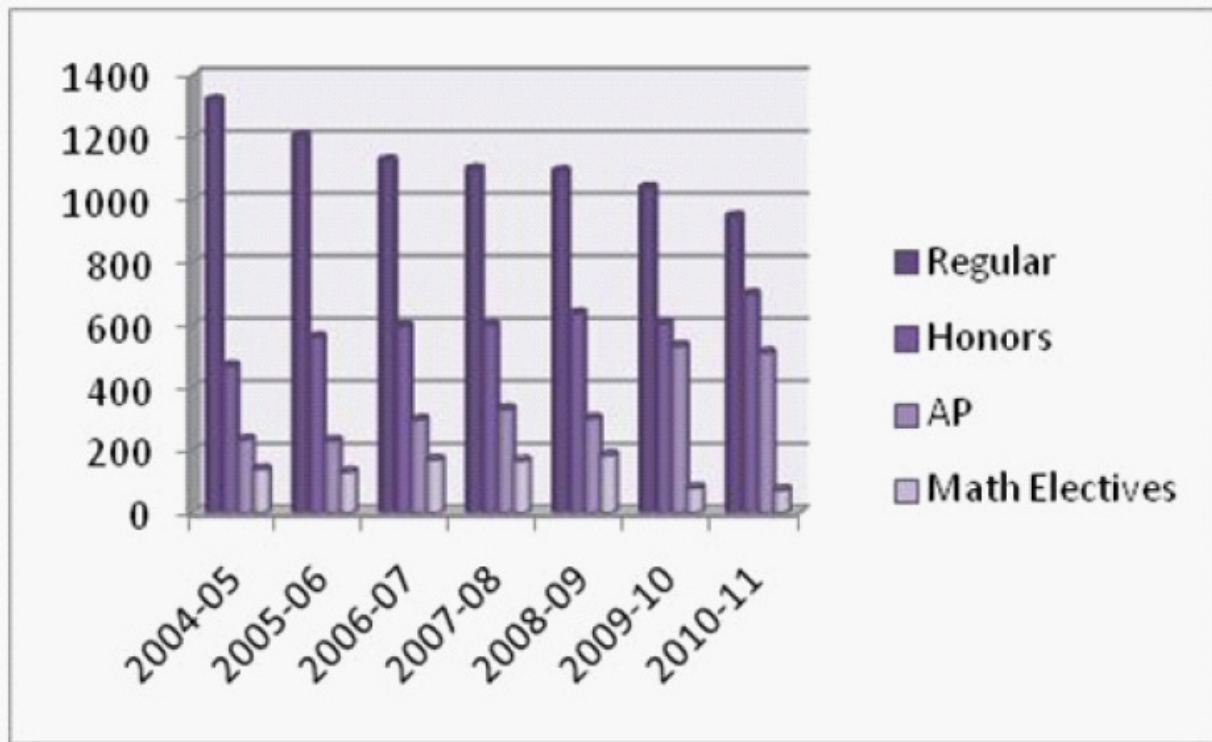
What we do, now vs. then:

Every year in February and March the school counselors work hard at placing students in the right classes for the following year. At the end of that cycle we accumulate those registrations and create enough classes to accommodate them. We've been experiencing some very drastic changes in the enrollment of math students over the past decade and even more so over the past five years. There are many reasons for these trends, but two are more recent.

First, Fairfax County middle schools have been teaching more and more of our students algebra and geometry. This is to reach their goal of having every student take a math course beyond the required Algebra II course and to make upper-level math courses, in general, more available to



the Fairfax County student. This has created a reduction of enrollments in our SOL classes (algebra I, algebra II, and geometry) and higher enrollment in our upper-level and AP classes. This is not a coincidence. The middle schools in our pyramid were pilots in a program to enroll all students in Algebra I by 8th grade. Algebra I was the largest class we had to staff when I began in 2005, and is now currently the smallest.



What we do, now vs. then (cont.) :

The chart above tracks the enrollment in our classes by type, showing another trend in enrollment we are seeing in the Math Department at Oakton High School. This shows how the enrollment of students has been shifting toward the honors and higher-level classes over the years.

Oakton students, as much or more than other students in the county, have taken advantage of the opportunities that have been presented to them by their middle schools, Fairfax County, and our teachers at Oakton. We all feel the impact from the changes. Your children have a different course load to handle, we have a different schedule to fill with teachers, and you have the daunting task of watching your children doing homework for harder classes at a younger age. We welcome the changes and are so impressed by

the students for rising to the challenges. Keep up the good work encouraging and supporting their decisions. Let us know when we can help as well.

Our department works in groups of highly effective collaboration teams. Fairfax County strongly encourages, and in

“We have begun the practice of comparing results of assessments to each other to guide our instruction. This not only allows us to see who is “getting it” and who isn’t, but to reflect on our own instruction and use others’ best practices.”

most cases requires, the use of collaboration teams. Our principal, Dr. John Banbury, not only encourages the teams, but offers and teaches challenging graduate-level courses to our teachers and administration for curriculum development and collaborative growth. Our teams meet officially every Wednesday morning, but unofficially we do very little with our classes without consulting our

teams first. We no longer have a simple set of guidelines to teach by. We now have benchmarks and standards that we need every student to meet every year. Research shows that this is best achieved by the use of collaborative teams.

With very little exception, every assessment given to your child is given to every other student in the curriculum. Grades for assessments and homework are weighted the same in a given curriculum, and for the most part, across curricula. Instruction is discussed and shared throughout a team. We have begun the practice of comparing results of assessments to each other to guide our instruction. This not only allows us to see who is “getting it” and who isn’t, but to reflect on our own instruction and use others’ best practices. Those are really fancy ways of saying, “Hey, they learned everything except this one thing; let’s teach it again, better.”

What you can do to insure your student's success in Math:

Remember all the resources that are available to you as a parent. Your child's teacher should have Blackboard available to your student with updates as to what is happening in the class. You can have parent-access to that site by contacting the main office. I recommend that you get this access immediately if you do not already have it. Even if you don't use it on a regular basis, when you do need it, it will be there.

Support our homework policies. Although it is usually not a big percentage of their actual grade report, it is imperative that they do it. They need to practice what they learn to gauge whether or not they have learned it. We need them to feel that they are in control of their own learning. If they missed a concept, we will never know it until we mark it wrong on an assessment if they do not complete their homework and ask questions. They may have been able to succeed in their previous math classes without doing homework, but this may be the year when they really need to start practicing outside of class. This is normal as math is a progression with more college-level material being taught the further the students progress.

Ask for a grade report if you haven't seen one in a while. Math is a cumulative subject. If a student misses a concept in the beginning of a quarter, it will most likely hurt their successes throughout the quarter, the year, and even in future math classes. We usually send grade reports out to an entire class at a time, but there is no reason you can't ask for one when you want one. If your child has his/her own email address, have him/her

give that to the teacher. Then your child will also be able to see what is currently on his/her grade sheet and what you are seeing.

Contact your child's teacher when you need help or clarification and give us the opportunity to help. We want your child to succeed, not fail. We understand that if a student is trying and struggling, that may not be what they believe, but it is true.

“It is also important that each student continue in mathematics throughout his/her high school career, but selecting the appropriate level may help avoiding some of the mathematics pitfalls along the way.”

Most importantly, have a conversation with your child about what classes he/she wants to take in mathematics. As I indicated previously, math is a progression regimen with significant jumps from one level to the next. Some students may not

want to remain on the math track they began in middle school for a variety of reasons, not even related to ability: An extremely demanding schedule with multiple AP or Honors courses; the time demands of a higher level math course; or interest, both in another subject or a lack thereof in mathematics – to name a few. It is important to have an open discussion about how they did this year, whether they had to put in a lot of extra effort or did they understand the math easily. This information, along with input from the guidance counselor and current math teacher, can help you and your child make the best decision for his/her future in mathematics.

It is also important that each student continue in mathematics throughout his/her high school career, but selecting the appropriate level may help avoiding some of the mathematics pitfalls along the way.

In conclusion:

Thank you for reading this article and for letting me brag about the Math Department at Oakton High School. Please don't let this be the end of the discussion. If you think there is something we can

do better in order to help students learn more math, let me know. My email address is rhlyon@fcps.edu and my phone number is 703/319-2843. I'd be happy to listen. If I get enough questions and/or comments,

I hope I'll be allowed to print another article in the newsletter.

And most of all, thank you for being a great parent to a great student at a great school.

National Honor Society inducts new members

National Honor Society. On Tuesday, November 9, 2010 the following students were inducted into the H. Glenn Cunningham Chapter of the National Honor Society. The induction ceremony was held in the Robert "Skip" Bromley auditorium. The OHS Madrigals performed the National Anthem and English Teacher Beth Blankenship gave the keynote address. A reception was held at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Christopher	Abdullah	Jean	Evans	Tony	Lee	Katherine	Reft
Nicole	Abdullah	Scarlett	Forrest	Yea-Rim	Lee	Emily	Richey
Simren	Ajrawat	Robert	Fuchs	Gregory	Leonard	Hyo Jun	Rim
Garrett	Allen	Robert	Garcia	Maggie	Lin	Nicol	Rivadineira
Aaron	Andrews	Kian	Ghaffari	Andrew	Lohmann		Fernandez
Charles	Aquilina	Abigail	Glauberaman	Austin	Lopez-Gomez	Angela	Roller
Sarah	Arthur	Colleen	Gleason	Allen	Luethke	Richard	Rossini
Lauren	Banker	Krista	Gray	Laura	Macaluso	Emma	Rouse
Dominick	Barbaris	Ankit	Gulati	Kari	Maharaj	Anthony	Rowen
Carlos	Barbery	Angelica	Habulan	Sarah	Mahmood	Ariana	Rucker
	Santander	Stacy	Ham	Emma	Mankin	Aneesh	Sandhir
Morgan	Bayer	Chadwick	Hard	Kalli	Martin	Sean	Schweiker
Michael	Becker	Rebecca	Henenlotter	James	Mason	Tara	Shafiei
Alex	Bernstein	Rachel	Hildebrand	Shannon	Mason	Gregory	Shallcross
Alexandra	Berube	Elizabeth	Himes	Camille	May	Smita	Sharma
Natalie	Bien	Jacob	Hirsch	Alexandra	Meyers	Sarah	Signore
Benjamin	Braudaway	John	Hollingsworth	Andrew	Mitchell	Rebecca	Singerman
Thomas	Braudaway	William	Hollingsworth	Ganesh	Mohan	Pratik	Singh
Kathryn	Brodie	Tianyuan	Hou	Daniel	Monaco	Nicholas	Smith
Kali	Brown	Catherine	Humphries	Ryan	Moore	Sarah	Smith
Mary	Brown	Leanne	Hyer	Shawn	Mufti	Patrick	Sofo
Kristen	Brunngraber	Sara	Iacovino	Ryan	Mulreany	Caitlin	Sojka
Samuel	Buck	Jennifer	Imm	Catherine	Muncy	David	South
Stephen	Buscemi	Todd	Irving	Leeann	Muncy	Melanie	Sov
Megan	Cahill	Shreya	Jha	Austin	Murga	Antonia	Stabile
Charles	Cary	Maricela	Jimenez-	Conor	Murphy	Maxwell	Stabile
Sarah	Casey		Moreno	Su Yeon	Nam	Kayla	Stamey
Demi	Chang	Christine	Johnson	Cole	Neuffer	Cathryn	Stikeleather
Emma	Chaplin	Lauren	Johnson	Dan	Nguyen	Mary	Stoney
Colin	Clark	Taylor	Johnson	Erin	Nieusma	Mira	Tanenbaum
Kelsey	Clarke	Keiona	Jones	Laura	Norton	Gabrielle	Tate
Adelle	Clinton	Anuja	Kelkar	Caitlin	O'Brien	Megan	Taylor
Nyah	Collier	Andrew	Kelly	Michelle	Oh	Camden	Thacker
Timothy	Collins	April	Kim	Hannah	Park	Alexander	Tyskowski
Carl	Condas	Chan Hee	Kim	Janice	Park	Nicole	Votaw
Dennis	Cooney	Christine	Kim	Summer	Perez	Jacob	Wagner
Emily	Corridon	Eunice	Kim	Christopher	Peterkin	Ashleigh	Wilson
Alexa	Corso	Jennifer	Kim	Kathleen	Pham	Alice	Xiang
Matthew	Cristler	Rachel	Kim	Brian	Phillips	Brenton	Yarnall
Maxine	Daniels	Sabrina	Kim	Adrienne	Picciotto	Kiara	Yeatman
Jordan	Dawson	Ashley	Koch	Kyle	Pinkham	Dorothy	Yen
Katherine	Dawson	Marnie	Kremer	Kevin	Qian	Xiaoxiao	Zhang
Kyle	Delgado	Sharmishta	Kumaresh	Shannon	Ragan	Ricky	Zhu
Sumeet	Dixit	Amanda	Labb	Brian	Raust		
Nicole	Do	Michael	Lankenau	Stephen	Readyoff		
Rawan	Elbaba	Jeong Bin	Lee	Catherine	Reed		

Take a combination SAT/ACT practice test at Oakton High School

Deciding between the SAT or ACT? Take Kaplan's practice
test to help you decide!

Saturday • January 15, 2011 • 8am-12pm
Cafeteria

\$10-pre-registered, registration JANUARY 7

All proceeds benefit Oakton Academic Boosters
Please bring 2 sharpened #2 pencils and a calculator!

Parents and students are invited to pick up test results and attend a
Test Strategies Seminar in the Oakton Cafeteria on
Wednesday • January 26, 2011 • 7pm-8pm

Sponsored by: Oakton Academic Boosters and Kaplan



1-800-KAP-TEST
www.kaptest.com

KAPLAN
TEST PREP AND
ADMISSIONS

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Please fill out this form and return it along with \$10 to the Academic Boosters at
Oakton High School (2900 Sutton Rd. Vienna, VA 22181).
Scholarships are available – see your guidance counselor.
All checks should be made payable to OHS Academic Boosters.

NAME: _____

PARENT NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____



TEST PREP AND ADMISSIONS

December 2010

Dear Oakton High School Juniors and parents:

The college admission process is more competitive than ever. One of the biggest challenges for a student is to achieve a competitive score on standardized tests. Scoring well on standardized tests will build tremendous personal confidence and is a crucial element in a student's successful journey through the college admissions process.

Oakton High School Academic Boosters and Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions have come together to give Oakton students an opportunity to take a combination SAT/ACT practice test. Virtually 100% of schools are looking at SAT and ACT scores interchangeably, so this test allows students to see how they will perform on both tests, and gives them standardized test practice that does not go on record.

The Practice SAT/ACT will be given on Saturday, January 15, 2011 from 8:00am-12pm. Please arrive a little early, the test will begin at 8:00. The test will be held at Oakton in the Cafeteria, and the price is \$10 for pre-registered students. The registration deadline is Tuesday, January 7. This deadline is firm. This too, is practice for meeting test registration deadlines and college application deadlines. 100% of the proceeds will go to benefit Oakton High School Academic Boosters. Scholarships are available and those requests should be routed through your guidance counselor. We want this opportunity available to all interested students.

With this letter is a registration form for the practice exam. If you would like to attend, please send a check made payable to OHS Academic Boosters and return the form to:
Academic Boosters • Oakton High School 2900 Sutton Rd. • Vienna, VA 22181

On Wednesday, January 26, 2011 at 7pm, in the Oakton Cafeteria, Kaplan will return test results with individual feedback. There will also be a seminar that discusses how the SAT and ACT are used in college admissions, the difference between the two tests, and important test-taking tips and strategies. Students are encouraged to attend this valuable session.

At Kaplan, we believe that the first step to achieving a high score is diagnosis. A practice test will determine a student's strengths and weaknesses before he/she takes the real test. We hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity. Please email Pam Burke at pam.a.burke@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Lisa Farnham
Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions

Pam Burke
PTSA President