

Greetings Seniors and Their Blue Dragon Families!

Great start to the school year! It's been fun to see the student energy, hear their questions about post high school. Don't blink, this year will fly by!

This week I spent some time with the seniors in Employability class for a post high school planning pep talk and some career planning advice. It is hard not to get overwhelmed by all the possibilities and deadlines! Together, we will figure out it!

I'm glad to be a resource for your student to help them get to where they want to be. I will be sending emails to the seniors throughout the year and visiting with them in their classrooms to help guide their plans. I've been told that my website can be helpful to families as well. Be sure to check out my "Academic and Career Planning" page on the site.

- <https://michellepliska.wixsite.com/mysite/academic-career-planning>

NOW is the time to register for the October ACT test and narrowing down the list of places to apply.

- **ACT October 22 test date registration is due September 16.** The late registration deadline is September 30. If your family is experiencing financial stress, contact me about a fee waiver. College bound students that haven't taken the ACT yet are encouraged too. The October test date is good timing for their next steps...applying to those colleges and technical schools! There are some free test prep options out there. Method Test Prep in their SD MyLife account is a good one. The SD state libraries have great free resources too. More testing info is on my website as well.
 - Here is the link to register: <http://www.act.org/>
- **PLANNING DAY is Wednesday September 21.** If your student is unsure where they want to go and what they want to do, that is not uncommon! We are offering Seniors a chance to attend Planning Day again. At High School Planning Day there are representatives from many institutions to answer student questions about their programs and about ways to fund their future education. There will be reps from a variety of both in state and out of state colleges, universities, technical institutions. Some of our nation's Military Services will also be present. Financial Aid organizations will be present too. We've blocked out time during the school day for our interested students to get on a bus, explore and chat with the recruiters and college reps.

Students can see me for a permission slip and that is their ticket on the bus.

NEXT thing to consider, is applying to those technical schools and colleges and financial aid. It is never too early! APPLY!

- Technical school and college applications are open now. Students can apply to more than one place and decide which one is best later. SD College Planning campaign is coming up soon, October 3 to November 30. Students can apply for free to up to 3 SD colleges and technical schools during that time.
 - GHS seniors get 2 college visit days that will not affect their attendance. See Mrs. Costello for details.
- FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) opens up on October 1. No matter which technical school or college your student applies to it smart to complete the FAFSA. You cannot make too much money. At a minimum your student will qualify for \$5,500 in low interest loans from the government. There are loans, grants and work study that students may qualify for, but it starts with this free application.
 - <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>

OTHER: We have several helpful events and resources for post high school planning. All this talk about preparing for college and work after high school might have you asking, how do we pay for college? Families have two opportunities this fall to learn about how to pay for college!

- **COFFEE WITH THE COUNSELOR: Let's Talk Graduation Plans, College and Financial Aid.** Join me in my room on November 2 at 2pm and November 9 at 6pm, during conferences and we can talk about it all. A financial aid expert from Mapping Your Future will join us virtually to walk you through how to apply for FAFSA and scholarships.
- **SCHOLARSHIPS TOO.** Deadlines vary a lot on scholarships. You can check out my website to see some that are open now. Ask your student about Build Dakota for the technical colleges and SD Opportunity for the SDBOR universities. Please note, my website is organized best on a laptop or desktop. On a mobile device it is a jumbled mess! My site will link you to many other scholarship sites:
 - <https://michellepliska.wixsite.com/mysite/scholarships-andfinancial-aid>
- **NCRC (National Career Readiness Certificate): December 8.** The NCRC is an industry-recognized, portable credential certifying essential skills needed for workplace success. To earn certification, students must attain at least the lowest certification level on three ACT® WorkKeys assessments: Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. This vital initiative is part of the Department of Education's goal to ensure that, "All students graduate college, career, and life ready." NCRC is offered to all Seniors. Obtaining a silver or better on the NCRC counts as an Industry Recognized Credential for the Advanced Careers Endorsement on the student's high school diploma. Cost is FREE.

- **ASVAB: November 16.** This one is especially important for those interested in careers in the military. I'm honored to connect you with a recruiter as well.
- **COMING SOON: SD Department of Labor will be here with the Career Launch program.** Your student can plan a meeting with our Career Advisor from the DOL to explore all kinds of job opportunities, job shadows and internships too!
- **OUR DAKOTA DREAMS:** One of my favorite sites to help students and families navigate this important year is Our Dakota Dreams. There are excellent timelines and resources and guides here! This site is linked in my website as well.
 - OurDakotaDreams.com

Please, feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions about any of the info or if you have information you want to share. I am here to support all of our students with all of their career and college readiness, academic goals and social and emotional learning. I am proud to be in it together with you!

Respectfully,

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