



Oak Grove High School COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Carol Blackerby, Interim Principal

Martha Brazil, APED

Ron Smith, APA

Volume 42 Issue 1

Principal's Principles

by Carol Blackerby, Interim Principal

Yea! We opened school successfully and made it through the first six weeks. Students were settled in classes earlier than the district requires, club and athletic activities happen every day, and, believe it or not, last week was Homecoming. We played Lincoln High School on Friday, October 30, in the Phil Stearns Stadium. The dance was on October 31. Speaking of dances, the Leadership Team at Oak Grove has put in place a policy of no "freaking," with freaking being what an old person like me calls dirty dancing. FYI: This decision is meeting with mixed reviews from our students.

Oak Grove did not have a freshman orientation late in the

summer as planned. In part this happened because of the transition of principals. Mr. Richard Frias retired this summer (we hope he's having fun on the tennis court) and I, Carol Blackerby, came in – at least for awhile. I used to be an English teacher and counselor at Oak Grove for many years and left in 1996 to be vice principal of Piedmont Hills High School and Independence High School. I'm actually retired, but filling in here until the district gets Oak Grove the best person for the job.

Oak Grove continues to be the warm and community-oriented school I left. Oak Grove is the village that is raising your child. I do have to acknowledge that our scores on the

state STAR test dropped 4 points this year, but the two preceding years, our scores showed a gain of 22 points and 5 points. Therefore, we will continue teaching the state standards and developing programs and systems that will help students succeed. For example, this year since funding issues closed our Tutor Center, Associate Principal Martha Brazil had the idea of devoting the first part of the weekly teachers' collaboration into a tutorial. Also, in terms of helping students, Mr. Jay Braun is teaching a course which allows students to recover F grades in math.

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Attendance Issues

by Ron Smith, Associate Principal

Because of our state's ongoing structural budget deficit, our attendance accountability is paramount for our school system. Attendance apportionment is based on students attending school on a daily basis. If students are pulled out of school for any reason other than for illness, court appearance, or quarantine, monthly funding from the state is significantly reduced therefore, our district budget is cut drastically for each unauthorized absence.

We encourage all students to attend school daily. Students who have

unauthorized absences will receive SARB (School Attendance Review Board) letters from our District Office. There are serious penalties for truancies, including fines.

Parents, if you need to make medical appointments or take vacations, please schedule these appointments and vacations during non school time.

On a slightly different subject, please notify the Registrar if you change your address, telephone number, or emergency contact. This might seem unimportant, but it is

sad when students who get sick have to stay at school because we can't reach the parents.

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eScrip for Oak Grove General Fund Account

By registering your grocery store, Macy's, and credit/debit cards through eScrip, a percentage of your purchase goes back to the school's general account. This is one of the easiest ways to raise money for Oak Grove without spending any extra money! You can support up to three different funds!

To register your Safeway, Macy's or credit/debit cards with eScrip, please go to www.escrip.com or fill out the attached registration form and place it in Mrs. Ceballos' mailbox in the administration building. Mrs. Ceballos will do the work for you and shred any information with your card numbers. (eScrip is

powered by a SECURE web service.)

***Teachers ~ you can help by registering your cards too! ***

If you have any questions, please contact your eScrip Coordinator, Elaine Ceballos, at Ceballos-McGee@esuhsd.org or call 408-347-6631.



3 Easy Ways to Earn for Our Group

1. Sign Up/Add Cards 2. eScrip Online Mall 3. eScrip VISA®

Click to learn how!

Principal (cont.)

Speaking of what Oak Grove is doing to help students, I think school-home communication is hugely important. With that said, starting on November 12, I will be meeting with parents – a principal's coffee kind of thing. One day per month I will meet with different parent groups. This November 12, I will meet with parents to answer any questions about the school and to relate information important on a group to group basis.

Oh, one more thing. I

suggest you read the school's webpage regarding the H1N1 virus. The district has posted a statement. To me the most important sentence is its telling you to keep your children (and yourself) home if you are sick.

Finally, thank you to Wells Fargo Bank who continues to support Oak Grove both in spirit and resources and thanks to our Attendance staffers: Patti Gustafson and Cindy Pullano for raising our attendance by 0.6%. Remember, attendance is our funding source

Attendance (cont.)

registrar and update your current information.

Finally, we are entering into our flu season, please encourage your son or daughter to dress appropriate and maintain a healthy diet. The medical profession encourages flu shots for this time of year.

Remember it is cool to stay in school!!!

...From the Counseling Department....

by Dan Campagnolo, Head Counselor

Seniors

This is a very big year for you!!! You need to make sure everything is in order for courses, grades, credits, graduation, college applications, college entrance exams, financial aid, scholarships, etc. Here are some guidelines:

High School Graduation Requirements

Make sure you will meet all graduation requirements in courses and credits, and in passing the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). You should have received a graduation inventory sheet in your Government/Econ class. This sheet will help determine your graduation status and is also useful in filling out college applications. See your counselor during lunch or after school if you need advice. If you are way behind in credits, classes at a local Community College can help.

College Applications

You can start on your college applications now. The final due date for mailing (or e-mailing) them is November 30. Do not wait until the last week!! Start on it now. College applications for all California State Universities (CSU) and all University of California (UC) schools are available on line. The websites are easier, quicker, and they are self-correcting. Log on to www.csumentor.edu for the CSU and www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply for the UC.

College Entrance Exams

Make sure you have taken or plan to take the SAT Reasoning Test and/or SAT Subject Tests or the ACT Test. Most colleges will accept scores up to the December test date. CSU requires an SAT Reasoning Test or an ACT Test. UC requires an SAT Reasoning Test or an ACT Test (with Writing) **and** SAT Subject Tests. Log on to www.collegeboard.com for SAT or www.act.org for ACT. These websites will give you information on test dates and registration deadlines. Test prep materials and information is also available on their websites or from your counselor. If you qualify for a fee waiver, see Mr. Campagnolo.

Financial Aid and Scholarships –

Scholarship applications and websites are available in the Counseling Center. Check for new scholarships periodically. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will be available in December. You should log on to FAFSA on the Web to get a PIN number started. Go to www.fafsa.ed.gov and click on “pin site.” You may look to see what’s available on that website but **do not** start the application. You cannot submit that until January 1st, 2010. There are plenty of scholarships on the internet on other websites. Start surfing!

Grade Point Average -- Keep working hard and improve your GPA. Colleges always look at the final graduation transcript (June) for admission purposes.

How to Get Involved with Your Child's Education

By Martha Brazil, Associate Principal of Educational Development

Successful education is a collaborative effort between students, parents, and schools. Multiple studies over the past several decades have conclusively shown that parental involvement has a tremendously beneficial impact upon student achievement. A recent study by the National Parent Teacher Association shows that students whose parents take an active role in their education have higher grades and test scores than students with uninvolved parents. Furthermore, drug abuse and violent behavior is significantly lower among students with involved parents.

Parents who want to assist their children with their education may not know the most effective ways to aid in the learning process. The following is a list of techniques that can streamline your efforts to help your children learn:

1. **Establish a daily family routine.** Provide a quiet place to study and have your son or daughter sit there for a pre-established period of time each night. Even if he/she does not have any homework, have him/her get a head start on an upcoming assignment or pick up a book to read for pleasure.
2. **Monitor out of school activities.** Know where your children are after-school and how much time is spent watching TV, talking on the phone, browsing the internet, texting or playing video games.
3. **Model the value of learning, reading and writing.** Show your children by your own actions that you believe reading is both enjoyable and useful. Have books available to read at home, have your child read to you, and discuss what they are studying.
4. **Encourage students to do their best in school.** Your child should know you want them to do their best in all classes and on all standardized tests. Although the STAR results do not appear on transcripts and are not required for graduation, they are a reflection of your child and the school. With fewer classes available through summer school and long waiting lists at community colleges, students should be encouraged to pass all classes so they can graduate on time.
5. **Establish open lines of communication with the school.** Call teachers if you think there is a problem before it is too late. Do not wait until right before the semester ends and do not wait for teachers to call you. All teachers can be reached through e-mail or voicemail. Refer to the school website (<http://og.ca.campusgrid.net/home>) for more information.

One final way to stay connected with your child's education is to attend the meetings of one of the many parent organizations that we have at Oak Grove. In addition to the Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA) and School Site Council (SSC), Oak Grove also has parent meetings for various interests. Please contact the school for more information or call me directly at 347-6540.

Dear Oak Grove Parents:

I wanted to take this opportunity to reach out to you and your family as we begin a new year filled with exciting changes and new challenges. For many, the election of a new president last year brought with it the promise of positive change in areas including the economy, education, and healthcare. With regard to the economy, the current climate continues to appear bleak and has had a negative effect on many households. Of course, these concerns can cause stress for our teens, which may or may not lead to depression and drug or alcohol abuse. As you know, you are the most influential person in your child's life, thus it is critical to continue to keep the lines of communication open between all family members.

Looking forward, the current economic climate is temporary and we expect to see bright spots in the near future. In the meantime, I wanted to share with you some important resources that are available to your family. Our Eagle Student Support Center on campus, (located in PF20), offers students individual and group counseling as well as referral services to outside agencies that provide information on social and emotional health, clothing and shelter as well as resources for medical insurance and groceries. If you or another member of your family is in need of assistance, I invite you to seek support from our school and community, and remember all families go through difficult times; this too shall pass.

If you suspect your child may be using drugs, or alcohol, don't ignore the warning signs. Teens seldom grasp the concepts of addiction. Most view themselves as impervious to peril. For some teens, the stress of adolescence, pressure from their peers, and dealing with school and family challenges can become so overwhelming that drugs and other high risk behaviors become an enticing escape from reality. The mood swings and unpredictable behavior that most teens experience make it difficult for parents to tell if their child is using drugs, or if their child may be at risk for depression, self mutilation or suicide. Here are some common warnings signs to watch for:

- **Neglected appearance/hygiene**
- **Poor self-image**
- **Grades dropping**
- **Violent outbursts at home**
- **Frequent use of eyewash**
- **Unexplained drop in weight**
- **Drug paraphernalia**
- **Slurred speech**
- **Curfew violations**
- **Running away**
- **Skin abrasions**
- **Hostility towards family members**
- **Glassy eyes**
- **Change in friends**
- **Depression/Withdrawn**
- **Apathy**
- **Recklessness**

- **No concern about future**
- **Defiance of family values**
- **Disrespectful behavior towards parents**
- **Lying/Deception**
- **Sneaky behavior**
- **Disregards consequences**
- **Loss of interest in healthy activities**
- **Verbally abusive**
- **Manipulative/self-centered**

- **Stealing/borrowing money**

It is also important to remember the following:

- **Don't panic if you suspect your child is in trouble.**
- **Open communication is the key to addressing these issues.**
- **Don't lecture or blame, seek to find solutions.**

Listen with empathy and without judgment if you want your kids to talk to you.

Thank you for allowing us to serve your family.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Casel

Student Support Services Program Coordinator
Oak Grove High School
408-347-6827

Medi-Cal Can Make a Difference!

Medi-Cal offers low- or no-cost health care coverage for children and pregnant women. Medi-Cal offers a number of health care advantages to you and your family including:

- No-cost comprehensive health, dental and vision benefits for children.
- No monthly premiums.
- No co-payments for any benefit.
- Choice of health insurance plans in most major population centers.
- Family property (such as savings or cars) does not count towards eligibility.
- More children with higher family incomes qualify for no-cost Medi-Cal.
- Available for children of single or two-parent working families.
- Application can be mailed in. A visit to the welfare office is not required to apply.

Who is eligible?

An individual applying for Medi-Cal eligibility must be a California resident. Currently, there are more than 165 categories under which an individual or family may be considered eligible for Medi-Cal. The most commonly known categories are listed below:

- Children under the age of 19.
- Low-income pregnant women.
- Qualified low-income Medicare recipients.

- Working families. Families and individuals with incomes too high to qualify for cash assistance but otherwise qualify for CalWORKS (formerly AFDC) or Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Payment (SSI/SSP).
- People in special treatment programs (ie. tuberculosis or dialysis).
- Undocumented immigrants (emergency, pregnant related, and certain long-term services only).
- Age 65 or older, blind and disabled persons.

What benefits are included?

- Prescription medicine
- Dental and vision care
- Regular checkups
- Immunization and well-baby care
- Physician and hospital services

Frequently asked questions:

1. How much does it cost to cover my child?

Medi-Cal provides free health coverage for children who qualify.

2. Who can apply?

Parents, legal guardians, stepparents, foster parents or caretaker relatives may apply for insurance on behalf of a child. Only the parent's income will be considered.

3. What documents do I need to provide?

There are three documents that you will be asked to present. The first is proof of income, such as your most recent pay stub, a signed statement from your employer, a copy of last year's federal income tax return. The second is your child's birth certificate or proof of immigration status. And finally, you will need proof of California residency.

4. Do the programs require citizenship and immigration information from parents?

Medi-Cal does not collect information on the immigration status of parents/guardians who are not seeking coverage for themselves. These programs cannot and will not provide information on the immigration status of such parents to the INS or use immigration information to demand or collect repayment information from recipients for services lawfully received.

For more information...

Call the Medi-Cal for Children toll-free number: 1-888-747-1222