

## **THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS**

At West Hills, we are fortunate to have guidance counselors available to all students at every grade level. Counselors at West Hills Middle School design programs and services to meet the needs of our students with a focus on academic, career, and personal/social development that are aligned with the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program. The emphasis is on academic success and healthy socio-emotional development for every student. The counselors are involved in goal setting, establishing behavioral standards and expectations, providing support services and models for decision making, as well as seeing that all students have opportunities to participate in a wide variety of activities and experiences. Counselors also meet regularly with students in order to provide academic and socio-emotional support, teach study and coping skills, share resources, facilitate conflict resolution, discuss academic and extra-curricular planning and scheduling, and problem solve.

While the counselors' primary focus is on the developmental issues of the students at WHMS, the role and duties of a counselor range widely and include:

- Providing support to parents, teachers, and staff members.
- Serving as a source of information for and as a facilitator of communication between parents, teachers and staff members.
- Enrolling and orienting new students and families.
- Supporting special needs students as well as students with accelerated abilities.
- Meeting regularly with students individually and in small groups.
- Serving as building assessment coordinators.
- Coordinating communication between the Building Intervention Team and general education teachers.
- Running lunch time Circle of Friends and Peer Interaction Groups.
- Teaching classroom counseling lessons on a wide range of developmentally appropriate topics including goal setting, communication, technology use, character education and peer conflict.
- Conducting several "Parent Coffee With Counselors" for 4/5 parents and for 6-8 parents throughout the year.
- Assisting in transition activities for students entering the upper elementary, the middle school and those moving on to the high school.
- Monitoring academic progress and facilitating the Maximizing of Academic Potential for all students.
- Providing information and referrals to parents on outside personal and academic resources and support services available.
- Facilitating the development of Educational Development Plans for all students beginning in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Overseeing the selection of students who are invited to apply and planning induction ceremony for the National Junior Honor Society at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level.

## **COUNSELOR SUPPORT OF PYP AND MYP**

Guidance counselors directly support the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme and Middle Years Programme at West Hills. They do so through facilitating and monitoring schedules of all students to meet requirements of the PYP and MYP, educating parents on unique aspects of the PYP and MYP programmes, modeling and utilizing the IB Learner Profile in counseling sessions and lessons, participating in Learner Profile assemblies, and overtly modeling and encouraging internationally minded behavior that reflects the IB mission statement.

## **HOW DO I CONTACT MY COUNSELOR?**

1. FOR PARENTS: During the 2011-2012 school year, parents of 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who wish to speak with their child's guidance counselor should contact Mrs. Jahnke. Parents of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students should contact Mr. Castellani.

Mrs. Jahnke  
[ajahnke@bloomfield.org](mailto:ajahnke@bloomfield.org)  
248.341.6103

Mr. Castellani  
[acastellani@bloomfield.org](mailto:acastellani@bloomfield.org)  
248.341.6104

2. FOR STUDENTS: Any student who wishes to meet with his/her counselor simply needs to fill out a Counselor Appointment slip in the main office and place it in your respective counselor's box.

## **LUNCH GROUPS FOR STUDENTS**

Counselors run lunchtime Peer Interaction Groups and Circle of Friends Groups at all grade levels. Groups typically meet one or two times a month during a child's lunch. Groups are intended to facilitate student-to-student communication, dialogue, support, problem solving on a variety of age-appropriate topics.

The opportunity to join a group is open to all students. During the fall, students will learn about opportunities to join groups within their general education classroom at the 4/5 level and at lunch time for the 6-8 level. Information about groups will also be distributed via the school listserv. Parents, if your child wishes to join a group but the window of opportunity has passed, please contact your child's counselor.

## **PARENT COFFEE WITH COUNSELORS**

Our Parent Coffee With Counselor programs have been a tradition at West Hills for many years. These programs provide a time for parents to dialogue with our counselors and with other parents. Selected topics for programs over the years have included transition issues at various grade levels, technology use, research on the relationship academic success and parent involvement, and research on the importance of school attendance.

During the 2011-2012 school year, the counselors will host the following Coffee With Counselor Programs for the indicated grade levels\*:

September 26, 2011	4/5 Parent Coffee With Counselors	9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m
October 3, 2011	G6 Parent Coffee With Counselors	9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
November 1, 2011	6-8 Parent Coffee With Counselors	9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
January 12, 2012	4/5 Parent Coffee With Counselors	9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
March 8, 2012	6-8 Parent Coffee With Counselors	9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
May 17, 2012	8 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup> Transition Parent Coffee With Counselors	9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
May 21, 2012	5 <sup>th</sup> to 6 <sup>th</sup> Transition Parent Coffee With Counselors	9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

\*Please check list serv announcements for selected topic and room location of Parent Coffee With Counselors.