

Principal's Newsletter

Voorhees High School

Volume 2, Issue 4

March 2013

Note from the Principal

I hope that your student(s) had a productive first semester. Before you know it, we will be planning for graduation, but before then there is a lot of work to do.

On March 5, 6 and 7, the Junior Class will take the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). As a reminder, all test-taking students are to report to school at their normal time. The test starts promptly at 7:45 AM. For students not taking the test, they are to report to the bus stops/school two and a half hours later than normal.

I wish you all the best during this second semester.

Sincerely,

Ron Peterson

Calendar for March 2013

- 3/1 Deadline to sign up for AP Exams
- 3/1 – 3/3 Ski Trip to Stowe VT
- 3/5 – 3/7 HSPA Testing
- 3/6 ASVAB Test
- 3/12 – 3/14 HSPA Make-ups
- 3/13 In-Service 11:55am Dismissal for students
- 3/21 College Night Part 2 – 7:00 PM in Auditorium
- 3/22 Choir Coffee House – 7:00 PM Café
- 3/22 – 3/23 Students for Change Lock-in - Gym
- 3/26 Quarterlies
- 3/27 Quarterlies
- 3/28 Quarterlies
- 3/29 – 4/5 Spring Break



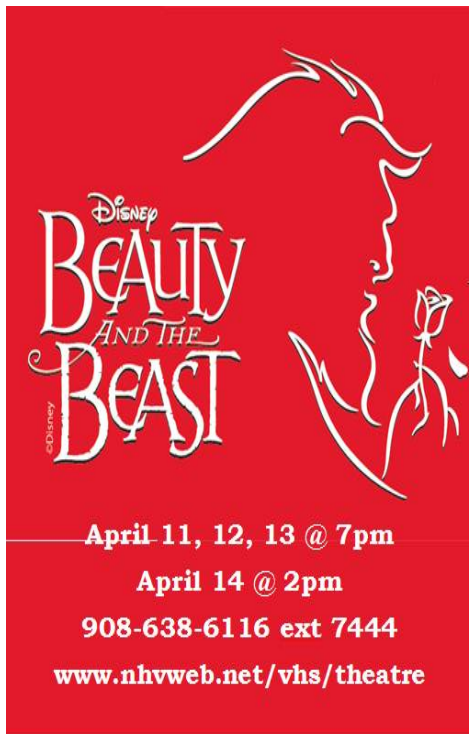
Upcoming Events

Music

March 22nd, Choir Coffee House at 7:00pm in the VHS cafeteria. Music of the 20's 30's 40's and 50's. \$5 at the door, all you can drink coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and appetizers and desserts. Money will benefit the choir and sculpture garden.

Aidan Giannelli, Joe Reynolds, and the VHS instrumental students have worked extensively on preparing for the **Instrumental Pops Concert on Wednesday, February 27th**. Nancy Lomas and Mike Schmidt helped manage the stage. 114 students are involved in the performance. The concert was at 7 PM on Wednesday, February 27th.

Drama Club



Tickets on sale now for the VHS Drama Club's production of Disney's Beauty & the Beast.

April 11, 12, 13 at 7pm and
April 14 at 2pm

Advance Ticket Prices:

\$8.00 for students/faculty/senior citizens, \$10.00 for adults

All tickets at the door cost \$10

Art

Ms. Christina Grodkiewicz and some fellow Art Teachers and students successfully completed the first Raku Kiln firing at Voorhees High School.

Mr. Jeremy Brant and the Advanced TV Classes will depart for the Student Television Network Convention in Los Angeles next week!

A number of VHS students will have art work on display at the Clinton branch of the Hunterdon County Library from March 5th through March 29th

School News

“The Importance of the HSPA”

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Overview

On March 5, 6, and 7, all juniors in public schools in New Jersey will be taking the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). This standardized test includes math and language arts sections, and the students must pass both sections in order to be eligible to graduate from high school. Since this is such an important test, we would like to explain the test in more detail and show parents what we are doing to help the students be successful on it.

After taking the test, the students receive a score in the 100-300 range for each section of the HSPA. The score breakdown is as follows:

- 100-199 (partially proficient; the student does not pass that section)
- 200-249 (proficient; the student passes that section)
- 250-300 (advanced proficient; the student is advanced in that section)

Every year, I go into all of the junior English classes to give the students information about the HSPA. Students always ask me why it is important for them to do well on the test, and they want to know if colleges find out their scores. No, colleges do not find out individual student's scores; all that the colleges know is that the student passed the test. However, what the colleges (and anyone else who reads the paper) do find out is how the students at Voorhees High School as a whole did on the test. As a student applying to a college from Voorhees, it is in the student's best interest to come from a school with very good test scores. The higher the percentage of advanced proficient scores, the better the students will look. A student in the top 10% of a school with 40% of the students being advanced proficient on the HSPA obviously had to work much harder than a student in the top 10% of a school with 20% of the students being advanced proficient.

With all of that in mind, our HSPA scores have been very good. For example, our advanced proficient scores in language arts the past five years have increased significantly:

- March 2008: 16.7% advanced proficient in language arts
- March 2009: 24.5% advanced proficient in language arts
- March 2010: 30.4% advanced proficient in language arts
- March 2011: 33.7% advanced proficient in language arts
- March 2012: 34.9% advanced proficient in language arts

The mathematics advanced proficient scores have also been outstanding, as 47.8% of the juniors were advanced proficient on the March 2011 HSPA.

Success

These HSPA scores do not happen on their own, but are the result of the hard work of our students and teachers. Our English and math curricula teach the students the skills that the students need to be successful on the test, and teachers regularly expose the students to the kinds of questions they will encounter on the test. Being familiar with the format of the questions helps to alleviate students' anxiety as they sit down to take the test.

In addition, students who we have identified as being at risk of not passing the HSPA (either from their ASK 8 scores or from teacher recommendation) are placed into a math or language arts workshop class that provides them with the remediation they need to be successful on the test.

Over the past few years, we have started showing the students the importance of the HSPA with some new programs. Two years we began holding HSPA prep sessions. With this program, seniors in the National Honors Society are available to work with the current juniors to help prepare them for the HSPA. The goal of this program is to help students move from being proficient to advanced proficient, but the seniors are also prepared to work with students who need more basic skills. Students can sign up for a HSPA tutor for math or English by completing a form that they will receive in their English class. The form is also available on the Voorhees English department web page, and will soon be available on the Voorhees HSPA web page.

We strongly encourage juniors to take advantage of this opportunity to work with a senior in the National Honors Society to help them become more comfortable with the test and to learn strategies from the seniors who were successful with it last year.

Two years we also created a HSPA web page on the Voorhees web site. There are links to this web page on the main Voorhees page, as well as on the math and English web pages. We reset the counter each year, but over 1800 people visited the page the first year we created. The HSPA web page is filled with very helpful information, including sample questions and the scoring guidelines for both subjects.

All junior students will also receive two booklets from the state about the HSPA. One explains why they have to take the test and the other shows what they can expect to see on the test. I will give the students these booklets when I go into their junior English classes, but there are also links to online versions of the booklets on our HSPA web page.

Motivation

Finally, we realized that one major way to improve our HSPA scores was to provide a little extra motivation for the students to do well. Three years ago, we honored the students who were advanced proficient on either the math or language arts section by inviting them to have ice cream after school. We told the students how proud we were of them, gave them a certificate to acknowledge their accomplishments, and allowed them to socialize as they enjoyed their ice cream.

Two years ago, we took this a step further by having a HSPA Ceremony at night. We invited the students who were advanced proficient on both section and their parents to a ceremony, during which we presented them with a certificate and congratulated them on their success. After hearing a few speeches and getting their certificates in the auditorium, we informally chatted as we enjoyed cake and

refreshments. A few days later we still had the ice cream social after school. We continued both of these traditions last year, although we had to wait until October to have the HSPA Ceremony at night.

We will continue both of these celebrations this school year, as we think that it is important to honor the students for their hard work and success. It is our hope that the junior students will give that extra effort so that they can attend these celebrations.

We know that our students and teachers work very hard, and our HSPA scores continue to reflect that. Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you have about the HSPA. Thank you for your support as we continue preparing your sons and daughters for the test!

HSPA Information

March 2013 - HSPA Testing **Daily Schedule for March 5, 6, and 7** **Make-Ups are March 12, 13, and 14**

On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, March 5, 6, and 7, all juniors will be taking the HSPA test in specified classrooms. Several seniors will also be tested. Special needs students will be given passes to their respective testing areas.

The HSPA timing will vary from day to day. The approximate administration times for the March HSPA are as follows:

March 5	Mathematics	2 hours, 32 minutes
March 6	Language Arts Literacy – Day 1	2 hours, 10 minutes to 2 hours, 40 minutes
March 7	Language Arts Literacy – Day 2	2 hours, 1 minute

In the past, these assessments were administered during the school day while other classes followed their normal academic schedules. However, in an effort to provide an optimum environment for the students taking this highly important assessment, we will be implementing the following schedule.

Rather than testing in the gyms in large groups, the schedule change allows our students to test in classrooms, which should improve the academic conditions for our students who are taking these high stake tests, while allowing all other students to maintain their normal academic contacts.

- **Attendance will be taken in the testing location, so students must report directly to their HSPA designated classrooms.**
- **Just as is required for SAT testing, every student must present a Voorhees High School I.D. card or a valid driver's license each day of testing before they will be allowed to participate in HSPA testing.**
- **The students' testing locations and any additional information will be emailed/mailed.**

- All Juniors and Seniors participating in testing will return to class after they have completed their HSPA requirements for the day. They will go to lunch during their normal lunch period.
- Students who miss any section due to illness will be advised by their guidance counselors to sit for the makeup sessions scheduled for March 12, 13, and 14. Any students not taking a make-up session will follow their regular schedules on these testing days.
- The only exception to the schedule below is that Sophomores will arrive at the normal school start time on Wednesday, March 6th to take the ASVAB and will be testing in the gymnasium.
- Instructions for Polytech students:
 AM Polytech students not taking the HSPA are to attend Polytech via the bus from Voorhees High School at its regularly scheduled time. These students will report to the new café upon returning from Poly-tech for mods 1-8.

AM Polytech students who are testing will report to their assigned testing rooms and will then report to the new café at the conclusion of testing each day for mods 1-8.

PM Polytech students will report to their mods 1-2 class and will then get the bus for Polytech at 11:25 am. They will be missing classes that they usually attend for mods 3-4 through 9-10. Please allow students to make up any work missed.

At the conclusion of testing, all students will follow the schedule below. All periods are 20 minutes.

HPSA SCHEDULE

PERIOD	MODS	TIME
	HSPA TESTING	7:45-10:30
1	1-2	10:45-11:13
2	3-4	11:17-11:37
3	5-6	11:41-12:01
4	7-8	12:05-12:25
5	9-10	12:29-12:49
6	11-12	12:53-1:13
7	13-14	1:17-1:37
8	15-16	1:41-2:01
9	17-18	2:05-2:25

HSPA Room Assignments

The High School Proficiency Assessment will be administered on March 5, 6 and 7 for all juniors and any seniors who have not already passed the HSPA. Listed below are the room assignments for testing.

<u>Room</u>	<u>Students with the Last Names of:</u>
311	Ahmad to Brodean
312	Cafora to D'Avella
313	DeCarli to Furka
314	Furnald to Hildenbrand
315	Hill to Kerekgyarto
214	Koester to Martin
220	Marturana to Ollenrenshaw
255	Olsen to Robertozzi
256	Roberts to Shea
257	Simila to Trepiccione
262	Tweedie to Zyla & Seniors

Please note: If your student is eligible for testing accommodations, he/she will receive a room assignment from the Main Office and will not report to the assigned room above.

As a reminder, please note the following:

- Students are to bring several #2 pencils and a calculator. No pens of any kind are allowed. Calculators must have algebraic logic, the ability to do powers and roots of any degree, and at least one memory cell.
- Just as is required for SAT testing, every student must present a Voorhees High School I.D. card or a valid driver's license each day of testing before they will be allowed to participate in HSPA testing.
- Students may **not** use dictionaries or other reference materials during testing.
- Cell phones, MP3 players, or unauthorized electronics are not allowed in any testing room. **Any student found to have unauthorized electronics in his or her possession while in the testing room will have his or her answer folder voided for that section and will not be allowed to re-take the section until the following school year.**

Student Achievements

English Students of the Month

Month	Student	Grade	Teacher
September	Tori Crans	11	Mr. Broan
October	Sam DeFabrizio	11	Mrs. D'Agusto
December	Fariz Avasia	10	Mrs. Beneszewski
December	Ed McBurney	12	Mr. Masser
January	Ashley Robbins	11	Mrs. Castello

Senior Writing Mentors from Voorhees visit High Bridge Elementary:





Art

Over 25 art students helped paint 31 bird houses for **Jennie Haver Scholarship Fund**. A **100th Birthday Gala** is being held on March 15th for Ella Haver (niece of Jennie Haver). The bird houses will be on display along with bird houses painted by students from other high schools in the county. For a \$20.00 donation, participants at the gala can choose a birdhouse to keep. The money raised will help fund the scholarship.

The following Voorhees HS students exhibited artwork at the Mount Olive High School 2013 Invitational Competition:

Megan Cerwinski -photograph
Katie Heuss –photograph
Joanna Mizak - photograph
Mia Schaumburg –photograph
Caroline Clark-drawing
Kristen Halozan-drawing
Mary Kozlowski-drawing
Lucas Sisko-drawing

Kristen Erikson-ceramics
Anne Lipomanis-ceramics

13 schools participated in the show. Each school submitted 10 pieces of work. The opening was held on Tuesday, Feb. 5th at 7pm at Mount Olive High School.

Student Activities

FCCLA (Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America) and The Friends of Rachel (FOR) Clubs took a trip to the Little Brook Nursing Home on Valentine's Day - they made cards for the residents, played the piano and sang some songs. The students did a fantastic job interacting with the residents - they served them tea and coffee as well as some desserts. They (the staff) were thrilled we came and welcomed us back for another visit. They are planning on going back for Easter...doing some sort of spring time activity.

On Wednesday, January 23, 2013, the **Voorhees Mock Trial Team** met with North Hunterdon's Mock Trial Team in the Hunterdon County finals. The competition was the plaintiff side for Voorhees and the defense for North Hunterdon. The coach for Voorhees is Kathy Manz and the coach for North Hunterdon is Matt Bisco.

The plaintiff side consisted of Christina Giordano and Allison Kauffman as lawyers and Liam Kennedy, Jenna Cafaro and Leah Neel as witnesses. The rest of the team consists of Josephine Gallagher, Annie Monaco, Soren Denlinger, Veronica Sanchez-Zutic, Carly Heft, Ryan Koenig, Hope Murray, Jessie Stover, Sophie Lipomanis, Robert McCabe and Kacee McCoy.

While both teams put up a good fight, the Voorhees team ultimately won the competition and will be moving on to the regional competition on Thursday, February 7th.

Voorhees Mock Trial Team



Athletics

The **Voorhees Wrestling Team** finished **3rd** in the district. **Seven** wrestlers will now be sent to the Regional tournament. These young men are now among the top 128 wrestlers in the state at their respective weight class. **VHS is extremely proud of them! Voorhees High School** was also named the **#3** ranked team in our Region out of 45 schools.

1st place finishers: **Cody Ihling, Jadaen Bernstein, Alex Fischetti**
2nd Place finishers: **Tom Beishke, Nick Ruggiero**
3rd Place finishers: **Kyle DiNapoli, Christian Okulicz**
4th Place finishers: **Tyler Yarnell, Kyle Levy**