

September, 2020

## Freshman Success Newsletter



We are BHS:

We **Believe**

We **Honor**

We **Succeed**

And we **DREAM BIG!**

Congratulations class of 2024-you made it through the first week of e-learning! Sure-there were some bumps in the road, but that's life, and we find solutions. You were able to get into all of your classes. Some of you had some issues, but you advocated for yourselves by reaching out to your teachers, your counselors, or me. That's the first step in becoming an adult-finding solutions to problems so you can move ahead.

## **Freshmen on Track:**

### **What does this mean?**

Freshmen who are on track to graduate are those who have at least 10 credits by the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and receive no more than one E in core classes (English, PE, Math, Science).

### **Why is this important?**

If you fail one semester of a core course, you have to make the credit up. That means you will be behind your classmates academically, and possibly socially and emotionally. Staying on track freshman year is the biggest predictor of lifetime success. Studies have shown that being a "freshman on track" is a better predictor of high school graduation than the neighborhood where a student lives, race, income or prior test scores. Freshmen on track at the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade are four times more likely to graduate than those who are off-track.

Let that sit for a minute. Whether you plan a career, military or college after high school, you will be one year behind your peers. That puts you behind them in education and income. Over a lifetime, you could be missing out on hundreds of thousands of dollars and benefits (insurance, paid vacation days, etc.), and experiences.

### What can you do?

- Talk to your teacher. Tell them you feel lost, don't get it, please explain it again. This is easily done 1:1 during teacher office hours from 2:30-3pm daily.
- Talk to me or your school counselor. Your counselor's name is on your schedule in IC.
- Get involved! There are so many clubs, activities and sports at BHS. We have something for everyone. if you don't see what you are looking for, or have an idea for a club, email Mr. Bral at [jeffbral@U-46.org](mailto:jeffbral@U-46.org) and we will do our best to get a sponsor. Here is a link to our clubs and activities-find something to get involved in. Studies show that involvement in extra-curricular activities builds teamwork and leadership skills, as well an opportunity to meet new people. These are life-long skills.
- Make friends with your classmates on line for study groups.

If you haven't already done so, please send me a picture of yourself with a sentence or two about your hobbies and what you are looking forward to at BHS. Also, don't forget to fill out the survey!

## What can parents/guardians do to help?

- Talk to your student! Have discussions about life skills, about being engaged-especially in e-learning. Ask what they did in school, what they learned, how they contributed to class.
- Check their grades in Infinite Campus.
- Ask to see work they have produced.
- Ask if they need help-show them you are invested in, and value, their education.

## What will BHS do?

We have a number of supports built into our classes and student services.

- Our freshmen teachers will meet twice monthly to discuss students who may be having academic, social or emotional issues.
  - **Academic support:** teachers, peer tutors or Peer Leader mentors
  - **Behavior/social, emotional:** together with school counselors, Deans and social workers, we will support students to make positive choices in their academic and social lives.

- **Problem-Solving Team** (MTSS lead Nick Goshe, counselors, Deans and social workers) that looks at data (behavior, academic and grades) and works with students, teachers and parents to provide supports.
- **Freshman Advisory Council:** Coming soon! Will be made up of freshmen students to support each other and have a voice in what happens at BHS. Let me know if you are interested: [adeledalesandro@U-46.org](mailto:adeledalesandro@U-46.org)

### Overcoming “stage fright”:

You are sitting at home, looking at squares of people as if you are watching a multiplied version of The Brady Bunch. You may know a few people in class. The teacher seems nice, but...you don't add to the conversation or raise your hand or voice an opinion. DO IT! Be engaged in class. You matter. Your opinion matters. Your learning and your perspective matters. Ask the question that is probably on everyone else's mind. Be bold, be fierce-be the leader. You will be a better person for it and you may be helping someone else out.

## Life Rules:

**RESPECT:** Yourself, teachers and classmates. Respect the learning and the work you are doing. Respect the perspectives of others.

**VALUE:** Yourself, others, the work, your place at BHS and your life. YOU MATTER!

**TRUST:** Be consistent in your words and actions-don't talk behind someone's back or feel safe calling someone out online. You expect that from others, so pay it forward.

**SUPPORT:** Give each other a hand. If you see someone struggle, or acting in an unkind way, step up. Be that person who helps, who shows they care, who empathizes with someone.

**FOCUS ON RESULTS:** Do your work-that's your job right now. Your reward is your diploma in 4 years! Do good things-for yourself and others.

**BREATHE:** Take a few minutes each day to sit in a quiet spot and just breathe.

As always, if you need anything, please reach out to me or your counselor. Look in your email for a message from your Peer Leader mentor. Please email him/her back-that's common courtesy (another life skill!).

You got this class of 2024!

