

PARENT PRINCIPAL CORNER



Enrollment Information

- Seniors ... July 30th 7:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Juniors ... July 30th 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.
- Sophomores .. July 31st 7:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Freshmen ... July 31st 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Enrollment is held in the cafeteria at the high school.

If you have more then one student at the high school feel free to pick the time that works best for you.

Hello ...

My name is Alan Beam and, as many of you may already know, I have been hired as the new principal at Shawnee Heights this coming fall. First let me start by saying I am excited to be the new principal of Shawnee Heights High School. I have always been impressed

with the high school, students, and the community.

I would like to create a monthly newsletter but with the budget cuts I need to cut back on mailing costs. So rather than receiving it monthly, you can expect a newsletter when we

mail report cards. The rest of the time I will keep you informed (and still save money) through my blog. The blog can be found on my website along with a ton of other information. So please take some time and visit me on the web. <http://www.usd450.net/webpages/>



ALAN BEAM (NEW PRINCIPAL)



JENNIFER BESSOLO (NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL)



T-BIRD LAND

Enrollment ... Changes ... More

So let's get started! First, we are going to change how progress reports are handled. My understanding is every five weeks the high school mails out 1100 reports. At a cost of .44 a mailing that's \$484.00 X 8 (8 times a year) = (around) \$3800.00 a year. We think it is important parents know if their child is struggling. So for now, we will run a report about every 4 1/2 weeks of students with **failing grades or D's**. Parents of students identified in this report will be receiving a progress report in the mail. For the other parents there are two options to consider.

1. Setup PowerSchool so it sends you a notification each week via e-mail. Most parents now have an e-mail account and PowerSchool will e-mail you the student's grades on Sunday evening, AUTOMATICALLY! It's easy to setup. You can check directions on my website (under Resources .. PowerSchool) or during enrollment we will have a station to help you get this setup. You will need to enter your e-mail address so please make sure to have it with you.

2. We will also provide a signup sheet during enrollment for parents who still wish to receive a progress report in the mail. Please keep in mind the reason we are limiting who we mail progress reports to

is to cut costs. So we hope most parents will choose option #1 to help us save a little money. Besides, it's a great way to keep on top of your student's grades.

Speaking of enrollment day, we have a few other changes coming your way. In the past every student received a folder containing handouts. My understanding is that these are the same handouts each and every year. So again, to save money we will not have folders at enrollment. Instead, we will give parents any required handouts and have a table where parents can pick up whatever additional information they want. Now, if you are a new student or freshmen you will still receive that folder full of handouts. Every penny helps.

Enrollment is scheduled for July 30th & 31st. Seniors kick off enrollment at 7:30 a.m. on the 30th. Juniors will follow starting at 12:30 p.m. Then on the 31st the sophomores begin at 7:30 a.m. and we finish up with the freshmen at 12:30 p.m.

I will do my best to make myself available on these two days so don't be shy, feel free to come up and introduce yourself.

In addition to my newsletter/blog, I am going to try something for the first time in my career. I have set

up a message board where parents and community folks can post questions and comments. If you are interested, again visit my website <http://www.usd450.net/webpages/abeam> and in the right corner locate the link "Message Board". Once you click you will be given the choice of "Mr. Beam's Message Board Center" or "For Parents". The first will be used with staff and students and requires a password. The parents section is open to you and the community. Click on "For Parents" and find a list of categories. Right now there is only one, entitled "PowerSchool". Click and you get a list of topics. Click one more time and you got the first set of questions. To post your reply simply click on "Post Reply". PLEASE NOTE ... I have to approve your post before it becomes public and I will not post anything that is not fit for our school site. My goal is to use this information to help improve Shawnee Heights High School. My hope is to TRY and post something new each week. But please don't get upset with me if I miss a week or two.

I will provide more information in the months ahead. I just wanted to get this first newsletter in your hands and hope to see you during enrollment.

Data, Data, Data

One thing that drives schools today is data. Each summer I work to look at the past year's data to determine what we might need to work on this coming year. Sometimes the data isn't fun to look at. Here is just a little taste of the 2008-09 data.

State assessments are not official yet so I'm not allowed to share the actual scores with you yet. But I will say, we have some work ahead of us this upcoming year. It appears that we have not yet made the required score for AYP with the Junior class. A number of students will be retaking the test this spring. In preparation for that retake, any student who was flagged last spring can expect some additional requirements this upcoming year. More on this as we begin the school year. We will also be working with our sophomore class in preparation for them to take the assessment this spring.

Other issues that jumped out at me were, first, the percentage of students who had at least one failing grade on their semester report card when credit was issued. First semester saw 15% of the student body and second semester had 14% with at least one failing grade.

Another area was the number of students who had missed 10 days or more during the school year (336 students). The average GPA for these students was 2.2 but when you removed the handful of 3.0 students who missed right at 10 days the GPA dropped to 1.7. Students can not get an education unless they are here. One more, I was surprised that a student can be failing classes or not attending school on a regular basis, yet they continued to attend school activities or participate in extracurricular activities. One last item pulled from the staff survey was a need to take a look at our discipline plan.

The next step will be to take this data and begin some discussions with the staff and school site council. From those discussions you can expect some additional changes. So keep your eyes on the newsletters and blogs.

INFORMATION

For the fall sporting dates visit

http://www.usd450.net/calendar_sports.cfm?season=Fall

Student handbook can be found online on my site under "My Resources" <http://www.usd450.net/webpages/abeam/>. I'm sure there will be a few changes in the handbook over the upcoming year. As they are approved by the board my plans will be to share them either in the newsletter or blog.

Numbers and other information can be found at <http://www.usd450.net/SHHigh.cfm?subpage=110195>. This includes sports and activities, sports fee, activity pass information, attendance, counseling and more.

While we try not to, educators tend to use a lot educational jargon. We sometimes forget that parents are not exposed to the same phrases. So on those occasions we make a mistake and you don't want to ask what does that mean? Check out <http://www.schoolwisepress.com/smart/dict/dict.html>. This provides you with a simple dictionary of educational terms like AYP and NCLB.

E-News

The district offers a powerful tool for parents called e-news. On the main site locate the link "Subscribe to E-News". The next window requires you to setup your account (if you haven't already done this). While setting up your profile you can select the type of news you want to receive. For the high school I highly recommend: a) Shawnee Heights H.S., which will be used to make general announcements, b) School Cancellation, c) High School Sports which will include cancellations and other changes with the schedule. Others you might consider is a) Board of Education, b) Booster Club and c) Message from Superintendent.

Entering an e-mail address will allow E-News to e-mail you the news. Entering a cell number allows E-News to text you the messages (please make sure you have unlimited texting).

Like PowerSchool, we will have someone during enrollment to assist you in signing up if you wish.

Facebook

One area I really work hard at is providing information about technology to parents. Our students are growing up in a technology world and most of us (parents) are immigrants to this technology world. Unless parents really work at it things can slip past us.

FBI PUBLICATION - A PARENT'S GUIDE TO INTERNET SAFETY [HTTP://WWW.FBI.GOV/PUBLICATIONS/PGUIDE/PGUIDEE.HTM](http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm)

Facebook

I thought my first article should address a tough issue. One website that has taken over this , and for that matter even some adults, is Facebook. The biggest issue I have with Facebook is the feeling of privacy. Over and over I hear students tell me that "My page is private, only my friends can see it!" While Facebook does work hard at protecting the privacy of its user no one should every believe ANYTHING on the Internet is private. Facebook gives students a false sense of security and it is important they learn that nothing on the Net is private. For the record, over the years I have seen a number of ways in which people (this includes law enforcement) can get into a student's Facebook account (even those who have set their page to private).

But don't get me wrong . The answer ISN'T to keep them off Facebook but instead work with them to understand how to use sites like Facebook. It's a powerful tool if used right.

A few things to consider:

1) You might create your own Facebook account, (besides, you

might be surprised how many people you know who are using it). Then consider friending your child.

Friending is a Facebook term which means connecting to their page. This means you can see their page and they can see yours. I would suggest that you have a discussion with your student in advance to determine how your student feels about this idea. Some will be extremely opposed to it. You could force the issue but in this case I have seen a number of students just create dummy pages to keep mom and dad happy. Another issue during this discussion should be the guidelines, once you are friended. Can you write on their wall? This means post comments on their page. You might find that they are willing to friend you but might be embarrassed to have you writing on their wall.

2) If they agree to friend you, don't worry about this suggestion. But, if your child has a real problem with you joining their page, I would strongly consider honoring their wishes. They tend to see Facebook like we saw a diary. However, I would REQUIRE them to show you their page when you request to see it. Again, this is a privacy issue, so I wouldn't abuse previewing their site because they might create a dummy site. I personally only look when I feel they might be hiding something. For example, closing the computer screen when I walk into the room.

Another concern you might want to share involves their friends' sites. So often I hear students tell me they would NEVER put anything on their site that would be compromising.

Yet, they have a friend as part of their profile who might have a photo showing your student in the background doing something they shouldn't. The fact that your child is connected to this friend with the photo will make it easier for someone to find the photo.

If you get that "mom/dad why do you want to do this to me?" You might share some additional insights. That you are concerned about their future and want to help them make wise decisions. One of the first things colleges do before admitting students is to "Google" the name. In some cases they have individuals digging deep on the Net. Years from now when they may forget about a Facebook site they created in high school an employer might find the site. If they question this just have them check the Internet. There are a ton of examples of how people have been impacted by something they placed on the net. Whether it was loosing a scholarship or not getting one. Loosing a job or not getting one.

Two last points: First, please understand that I am only making some suggestions. Many of you probably already have rules handling websites, like Facebook, and you have to do what you are comfortable with. Second, I don't do this to scare you to keep kids off sites like Facebook. Actually, I believe the experience is a powerful one that can benefit the student in the long haul.

TO ASSIST YOU:

The following link is a YouTube video clip created by students about Facebook for Parents. <http://tiny.cc/>