College Visits

Multiple college representatives visit Palmer Ridge to talk about programs with interested students. The list is constantly updated on Naviance, under the colleges tab. If you are interested in an upcoming visit, make sure to sign up through Naviance and print your ticket as your pass.

Scholarships

Seniors - Are you interested in receiving financial aid and scholarships in order to pay for college or postsecondary education? If so, check out some of the upcoming deadlines below. Don’t forget to log onto Naviance to view more detailed information, additional requirements for colleges, and the most recent updates of scholarship opportunities. **NOTE:** Once you are logged in to Naviance, click the colleges tab and scroll down to the bottom of the page to find scholarship information.

Happy Holidays!

We hope that you had a wonderful and relaxing Thanksgiving Break! There are only three weeks left in this semester. As students begin to wrap up their classes, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. In this addition of the Counselor Connection, we are sharing an article by Larry Rosen from the Phi Delta Kappan magazine called “The Distracted Student Mind: Enhancing Its Focus and Attention.” We hope that you find some of the information beneficial as you navigate your teen and cell phone use.

It is our hope to provide communication and share information with the students and families of Palmer Ridge High School. We will regularly release additions of the Counselor Connection to keep you up to date on events, opportunities, scholarships, and important information. Make sure to check your email and keep an eye out for each new issue. We look forward to partnering with you to make this year your best one yet!

School Counseling at Palmer Ridge High School

Here at PR we offer a comprehensive school counseling program to all students that aligns with the American School Counseling Association national model and standards. Our professional and licensed school counselors work with students, parents and guardians, staff, and the wider community to provide resources and support to students in college and career, academic, and personal/social domains. Through implementation of a comprehensive school program we facilitate the development of students’ attitudes, skills, and knowledge necessary for success in high school and beyond. Please visit our school counseling website for more information on the counseling program, Palmer Ridge, and resources.

The School Counselor Role

Throughout the past century the role of school counselor has evolved to support students with a variety of needs in academic, college and career, and personal/social development. In fact, school counselors are “highly trained educators in pre K-12 settings who uphold ethical and professional standards to design, implement, and manage comprehensive, developmental, results-based school counseling programs that promote and enhance students success” (American Counseling Association, American School Counseling Association, & National Education Association, 2008, p. 1). Within the Palmer Ridge High School Counseling Program, we provide classroom guidance lessons and presentations, individual student planning and solution-focused problem-solving, responsive services, consultation, collaboration, and system support. If you would like to learn more about our role please review some of the links below or make an appointment with your school counselor.

Who Are School Counselors? – An article on school counselor qualifications, role, and impact.


Empirical Research Studies Supporting the Value of School Counseling – Information of the impact of comprehensive school counseling programs and school counselor support.

* For more information visit our counseling directory at https://www.lewispalmer.org/Page/4338.
Advice on Teen Smartphone Use

“Due to the constant temptation to check their smartphones, today’s students are spending less time on their schoolwork, taking longer to complete assignments, and feeling more stressed in the process,” says Larry Rosen (California State University/Dominguez Hills) in this *Kappan* article. Have we reached the saturation point? “Sadly, I don’t think we are there yet,” says Rosen. “The smartphone is still only 10 years old, and many of us are still falling deeper into our obsessive relationship with these devices.” Some data from recent studies:

- College students unlock their phones at least every 15 minutes, look at them about five minutes each time, and spend a total of 4½ hours a day glued to their devices.

- Online conversations are teens’ lifeblood, accounting for much, if not most, of their social lives.

- Teens are constantly multitasking, even though they know it’s not efficient.

- When teens have their cell phones taken away, they become highly anxious.

- Phone-related anxiety is closely linked to poor academic performance and sleep deprivation.

- About 80% of teens say they rarely if ever sleep well, usually because they have a smartphone at their bedside and check it before going to sleep and during the night.

- The average adolescent finds it difficult to study for 15 minutes at a time.

- During a 15-minute stint of studying, teens spend at least five minutes in a state of distraction.

- 80 percent of high-school teachers and 63 percent of elementary teachers say technology is making students less able to sustain attention.

- Office workers are interrupted (or interrupt themselves) every 3-5 minutes, take as much as 20 minutes to get back to work, and feel stressed by having to work faster to make up for the lost time.
Personal Social Updates

In November, Mrs. Sell, our School Social Worker, met with 9th graders during Study Hall to discuss Prosocial Behavior. She will be meeting with all Sophomores this week during Study Hall to discuss Stress Management and Healthy Coping Skills. She is also helping our school implement a program called Sources of Strength. It is a great program that focuses on spreading hope and using student resources to help and strengthen. You will be hearing more about this program in the months to come.

DISCOVER SOURCES OF STRENGTH

https://sourcesofstrength.org/

Mission: Our mission is to provide the highest quality evidence-based prevention for suicide, violence, bullying and substance abuse by training, supporting, and empowering both peer leaders and caring adults to impact their world through the power of connection, hope, help and strength.

Vision: We believe that many strengths are more powerful than one, and our united goal is to activate and mobilize these strengths in ways that positively change individuals and communities.

Advice on Teen Smartphone Use

Continued

Rosen has these suggestions for messages that educators and parents should be giving kids:

- **Your brain needs an occasional “reset.”** Elementary-age children should spend no more than a half hour at a time on a device, followed by a break at least that long. Preteens and adolescents should spend no more than 90 minutes at a time with technology, followed by at least 10-15 minutes on an activity that calms their brain – going outside, exercising, listening to music, meditating, taking a shower, having an in-person conversation with a friend, playing a musical instrument, practicing a foreign language.

- **Build stamina for studying without technology.** Treat this like any kind of strength training, says Rosen: start off easy and gradually increase the amount of time without a tech break. He suggests 15 minutes at first, turning off all websites and apps that aren’t relevant to the study topic, setting an alarm, and placing the phone within sight, face down. When the alarm goes off, the student can check for messages and notifications for a minute, then set another 15-minute alarm. When the student can tolerate 15 minutes, perhaps finishing a paragraph when the alarm goes off rather than immediately grabbing the phone, push the time to 20 minutes, then 25, and so on. During this strength-building sequence, it’s helpful for the teen to notify friends that there might not be an instant response to messages so they don’t keep texting.

- **Sleep is sacred.** Nine hours is the recommended amount for high-school students, and kids should know that melatonin is naturally secreted in the hours before bedtime to produce sleepiness – unless they’re peering at a blue-light device. Ways to keep the melatonin pumping: use a pink-light setting in the hour before bedtime, or listen to familiar music or TV shows, read a paper book, and ramp down mental effort.

- **Cut down on the number of alerts and notifications.** It may not occur to teens that they can de-activate apps that aren’t of strong interest, cutting down on distracting notifications. Rosen says he’s amazed at the number of apps he uses each day, often without even thinking.

- **Carve out tech-free zones.** These might include the dinner table, restaurant meals, the car, the family den, and the bedroom. During the day, teens might need occasional one-minute breaks to check their phones and keep FOMO (fear of missing out) under control.

“The Distracted Student Mind: Enhancing Its Focus and Attention” by Larry Rosen in *Phi Delta Kappan*, October 2017 (Vol. 99, #2, p. 8-14), www.kappanmagazine.org; Rosen can be reached at lrosen@csudh.edu.
Quick links for Testing Preparation
If you are planning on taking the PSAT, SAT, or ACT this year, you may want to utilize some of the following links to facilitate your learning. Click below to find out more.

- Khan Academy and College Board- FREE
- PrepFactory
- March2Success
- MasteryPrep
- Method Test Prep
- Pikes Peak Test Prep
- Test Prep Seminars
- ACT Online Prep

Social Worker Corner
The holiday season is upon us and this time of year it seems no matter how hard we try to slow things down, everyone is busier than ever. Do you feel as though the holidays come and go so quickly? Take a moment to pause and reflect on all that has happened in 2017. This season of family gatherings and togetherness is a great opportunity to think about and discuss any accomplishments, good news, or great memories with your family and friends. Also be sure to share your failures, trials, or missed opportunities from this past year. Consider how both have changed your perspective or life's path. The month of November is set aside for gratefulness and gathering. Being grateful has many benefits: less anxiety, decreased depression, self-acceptance, and improvement of mental resilience. Practicing gratitude regularly can actually change the chemical makeup of your brain helping you become a more energetic, happier, and healthier person. Take some time to really reconnect with your family and friends. Relax and reflect on life, but most of all enjoy each other's company. These positive connections make life more doable on tough days.

“We can lift ourselves, and others as well, when we refuse to live in the realm of negative thought and cultivate within our hearts an attitude of gratitude.”
Thomas S. Monson

References
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American School Counseling Association,
& National Education Association.
(2008). Who are school counselors?
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“The Distracted Student Mind:
Enhancing Its Focus and Attention” by
Larry Rosen in Phi Delta Kappan,
October 2017 (Vol. 99, #2, p. 8-14).
www.kappanmagazine.org

Sources of Strength
https://sourcesofstrength.org/

Coming Soon:
January Edition of the Counselor Connection

- Registration Details for the 2018-2019 School Year!
- Information on the D38 College and Career Night
- Spring Semester ICAP Lessons
- College Credit Opportunities