



WINTER 2018 NEWSLETTER

News and Updates

Insights to New Grading System

"It was good enough for us; it should be good enough for my student!" Such was the sentiment of one parent and board member who went with three staff members to a conference about grading practices on January 12. Over the course of the day, University of Kentucky professor and grading expert Tom Guskey provided an overwhelming amount of evidence that convinced that parent of the need to reconsider traditional grading systems.

There has been a lot of talk about NYPs and the changes to our grading policy, and grades are a very emotional and loaded topic. At the conference, we learned that grades are also one of the most studied topics in education, with research dating back to the beginning of last century! Because of the emotions involved, though, very few significant changes have taken hold in schools.

As we study grading systems, we will be sharing some of the most recent research with you. For the parent mentioned above, the most compelling point was simple logic, best expressed by Guskey himself: "The true culprit in this matter [...] is not minimum grades or the zero—it's the percentage grading system. In a percentage grading system, a zero is the most extreme score a teacher can assign. To move from a B to an A in most schools that use percentage grades requires improving only 10 percentage points at most—say, from 84 to 94 percent. But to move from a zero to a minimum passing grade requires six or seven times that improvement, usually from zero to 60 or 65."

This logic underlies our move to eliminate zeroes from our system, and it also supports a review of the percentage grading system on the whole. At this conference, we learned about other grading methods that can provide more accurate and helpful feedback to parents and students alike, and we will be considering these systems in our Leadership Team and at Parent Partnership meetings throughout the year. We are also pleased to announce that Dr. Guskey himself will be coming to speak to Region 1 faculty in August, with a parent session in the evening. We hope you can join us for these conversations; your participation is incredibly helpful in making changes such as these that make a big difference in the lives of your students.

- Ian Strever

Executive Functioning Presentation

On Wednesday, January 24 from 7-8:30 PM, Dr. Peg Dawson will be presenting a workshop for parents on Executive Functioning for middle and high school parents. Executive functioning is a blanket term that covers skills such as organization, prioritizing, study skills, and task initiation that are often challenging for young people. If your student is having difficulty with these skills, don't miss this workshop! Click on the link for more details: [Workshop with Peg Dawson, EdD](#)

Workshop Series on Addiction and Complex Trauma

Greenwoods Counseling Referrals, Inc. and the Housatonic Youth Services Bureau are pleased to announce a **FREE** three-part training series on *Addressing Addiction and Complex Trauma in our Community - Building Our Strengths*. The three free workshops will be held at the Housatonic Youth Services Bureau next to HVRHS.

The first two workshops will be presented by Hope Payson, LCSW, LADC and the third will be by Kate Becker, LCSW, RYT. Workshops I and II are approved for 5 continuing education credit hours each through the NASW/CT for LCSW, LPC, LMFT, LMSW and Licensed Psychologists. Workshop III is pending approval.

Workshop I, Friday, 2/9/18 - 9AM-2PM: The Roots of Addiction

Workshop II, Friday, 3/2/18 - 9AM-2PM: Complex Trauma and Addiction

Workshop III, Friday, 4/6/18 - 9AM-2PM: Techniques that Address Trauma and Addiction

This training is made possible by a grant from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. Lunch will be provided at each of the workshops. To register for any or all of the workshops, please contact Michele Sonnati via email at msonnati@greenwoodsreferrals.org or via telephone at (860) 567-7724. Visit the [link on our website](#) for specifics.

Community Partners Collaborate on Northwest Corner Opioid Report

In case you missed this report in the December Newsletter, we encourage you to [read the report](#) compiled by the NW Community Foundation, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, McCall Center for Behavioral Health and the Foundation for Community Health. It is a very thorough and thoughtful overview of the opioid situation in our region and the resources available to our community.

Mental Health Monday

The Housatonic Youth Service Bureau (HYSB) has been publishing “Mental Health Monday,” a monthly resource for parents of Region One students. Each month, they provide information about a topic of interest in the area of mental health or adolescence. [Click here to view their January edition](#), and watch your email for future editions.

Learning More About Bees

Annual Bee Seminar will be held this year on February 3rd. [Click here](#) for details.

Opportunities for Your Student

Talent Show

The senior class will be hosting a talent show on April 6th. If your child is interested in participating, have them get an application from their PLP teacher or to fill in the google doc distributed by Roxy Hurlburt. Completed applications should be turned into John Samaha.

Art Opportunities

Good news for students interested in developing their creative and artistic skills! There are tremendous opportunities available for high school students during the summer months.

[Click here](#) to view a list of programs divided into geographic regions, with an emphasis on programs in the northeast. The list is not comprehensive, but provides information on over thirty programs. Please note: each program has an application deadline that **tends to fall between February to April**. Make sure to note the deadline for the program that interests your student.

Photo Exhibit in HVRHS Art Gallery

The Two Walls Gallery (located in the HVRHS library) is pleased to show the work of **Tara Nugent**, a 2009 HVRHS graduate. The exhibition titled, **“The Presence of Absence”** features Ms. Nugent’s poignantly moving portraits of the inanimate and the forgotten detritus in our world. Ms. Nugent received a BFA in photography from the Hartford Art School and has worked for renowned photographers as a studio assistant. Her work has been shown nationally. For further information, please contact Warren Prindle at wprindle@hvrhs.org



The show will open on **25 January (Thursday) from 2 – 4 pm and from 5 – 7pm** and refreshments will be served. For further information, please contact Warren Prindle at wprindle@hvrhs.org

Career Experience Opportunities

This season the CEO is hosting several “How-to” programs for students that will provide interactive and engaging opportunities for them to develop their interview and business communication skills as well as improve their overall ability to communicate more effectively.

The Job Shadow Program allows students to observe a specific occupation or career by shadowing a professional in that field for a half day. For more information on student eligibility and requirements, email Dr. Mary O’Neill at moneill@hvrhs.org or follow on Twitter @hvrhscareeredu

Academic Bowl 3-2-1 Team Comes in First in CT . . .

Despite having several “first timers” on the team this fall, the HVRHS team placed first for high schools in Connecticut, 2nd place high school in New England and 46th (top 25%) in the country! Well done, we hope each of you will be available to compete again in the spring.



Calendar:

- January 24th: Marking Period 2 and Semester 2 Ends
Peg Dawson Parent Workshop, 7PM in Room 133
- January 25th: Late Opening 10AM
- February 1st: Trivia Night in Café, Jr. Class at 5:30
- February 2nd: Jostens Here during PLP for Juniors and Seniors – Rings and Caps & Gowns
- February 8th: Late Opening 10AM
- February 12th: Report Cards
- February 14th: Regional Band and Chorus Concert in Auditorium (snow Date 2/15) at 7:30 PM
- February 16th: Sophomore Class Dance in Cafeteria at 7PM
- February 19- 20: School Closed for President's Day
- February 21st: Junior Parent Night in Room 133, 6 PM
- February 22rd: Reception in Room 133 for Chinese Visitors 7:30AM
- February 24th: FFA Alumni Dinner in Room 350-351, 6PM
- February 26th: Ag-Ed FFA Chapter and Public Speaking in First 3 and Activity Block
- February 28th: Mid marking Period

Save The Date

- March 11-14 NEASC Accreditation Visit
- March 15-17 *King and I* by the Housatonic Musical Theatre Society
- March 21 Connecticut SAT School Test Date
- June 5th 2018 Civic Life Films at Noble Horizons