

FROM THE PTO CO-PRESIDENTS

Welcome, Class of 2014

It's that time of year when we welcome the rising class of freshmen—the class of 2014. High school is just around the corner for the eighth graders, and we encourage their parents to attend all meetings to learn about making the transition to BHS. Please familiarize yourselves with the BHS PTO website, www.bhs-pto.org, and the BHS website, <http://bhs.brookline.k12.ma.us/>. Check out the monthly issues of the PTO's newsletter, *News & Views*, available on the PTO website, to get a feel for what is going on in and around the BHS community. And browse the daily announcements on the BHS website's home page to see what BHS students are doing at school.

Help Wanted: After-the-Prom Party Chairs

Wanted: One, two, or three BHS parents to chair the 2011 After-the-Prom Party.

Responsibilities: You will shadow the current ATPP chairs, beginning right now, to learn the ropes of the event in 2010 and direct it in 2011 (with the help of numerous seasoned subcommittee chairs and parent volunteers).

Requirements: Be ready and willing to give some time so that the seniors can enjoy a safe environment after their prom.

Rewards: Making a huge contribution to an important annual event at BHS, keeping our seniors and their dates safe on the most dangerous night of the year for seniors nationwide, all while showing them a crackin' good time. Meeting and working with members of the BHS community you may otherwise never have the

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FROM THE HEADMASTER

Democracy at Brookline High



Photo by Shelly Parris

“Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science; they bring it within the people's reach; they teach men how to use and how to enjoy it. A nation may establish a free government, but without municipal institutions, it cannot have the spirit of liberty.”

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that in *Democracy in America*. At Brookline High, I frequently repeat the phrase “Freedom and responsibility; liberty and duty; that's the deal!” On Friday, January 29, after the intense three-day midyear exam period, we were, in a very real sense, engaging Brookline High students in a Town Meeting. We were giving our students the freedom—for a whole day—to reflect upon our school's academic culture as well as the responsibility to make recommendations that will improve their academic lives (in the context of a global economy that demands educated workers and the most competitive college admissions environment ever). One session of the day was modeled on a Town Meeting and was held in the Roberts and Dubbs Auditorium, the venue of Brookline's Town Meeting. I read from Tocqueville and from students' essays and letters. For example, one student wrote, “I go from class to class, test-taking and note-taking. After school, play practice, then 30 minutes to grab dinner and finish the homework before my SAT class. Two and a half hours of Kaplan brain-washing. Twelve hours at school, in total. Nine o'clock, I'm home, just sitting down to start three hours of homework and a paper on my political views and the recent election—a topic that I want to have time to think about, but I have a biology test tomorrow on the nervous and endocrine system.”

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BHS PTO NEWS & VIEWS

Editors/Publishers: Jane Patrick and Ellen Mosner

Send comments to:
newsandviews@bhs-pto.org

News & Views is also available on the PTO website, www.bhs-pto.org

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News from the After-the-Prom Party

SAVE THE DATE A Night with Hypnotist Jim Spinnato

* Hypnotism *

* Comedy *

* Audience Participation *

Jim Spinnato
creates a unique show for
adults and teens

Thursday, April 1

*"Sleeping" was never this
funny!*

All proceeds to benefit the
BHS After-the-Prom Party



January's kickoff party was a success. We have chairs for all committees and the party planning has begun. Contact any of the chairs listed below to help with your area of interest. We want and need your help for decorations, fundraising, prizes, and the day of the party. If you can help for one hour, one day, or one month, please join this fun group of people to throw the biggest bash of the year!

—Joan Hyde and Ann Devlin,
ATPP 2010 co-chairs

from the PTO co-presidents *continued*

opportunity to meet. Knowing that you've done something big to make a difference in this community.

After months of making appeals for a couple of new chairs for the After-the-Prom Party, we are sad to say that no one has come forward, which means that the future of this amazing event is at risk. Dr. Weintraub has asked, the current chairs have asked, we have asked, but, *as yet*, no one is willing to do the job. Please think about how you can make a difference in the lives of many students. Parents of the classes of 2012, 2013, and 2014: we need parent representative volunteers from each grade level. Please don't wait; contact us soon!

We want to hear from you. Please contact us if you have questions or would like to know how to get involved with the PTO.

—Adelaide Ketchum and
Karen Hirsch,
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from the headmaster *continued*

Another student wrote, “Basically, I think that it is unfair for students to have to work longer hours than, say, corporate lawyers.” On the other side of this issue are students who are not working hard enough! At the Town Meeting, we asked students to come forward and present two thoughts: one, a component of the academic culture that they want to keep; and the other, a component of the academic culture that they want to change. Then we did something very counter-cultural. We asked the students to take out their cell phones and text their opinions of the ideas to a website, which immediately tabulated the students’ responses and presented them on a large screen on the auditorium stage. I like to say that democracy is a system that asks that your voice be heard while not guaranteeing that your voice will triumph. On January 29, Intersession Day, we asked our students to think seriously, think hard, and think creatively about ways to make their high school learning experiences more meaningful, more genuine, and more reasonable. We asked students to engage in democracy at Brookline High!

In next month’s *News and Views*, I will report to you on the results of Intersession Day, 2010.

—Bob Weintraub, Headmaster

Boston University and Northeastern University Scholarship Applications

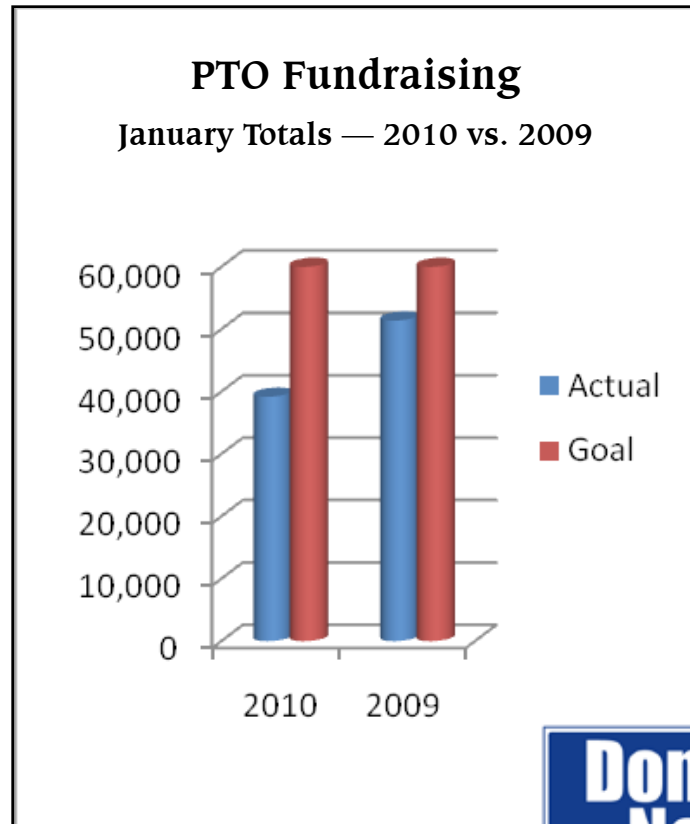
BHS Scholarship applications for scholarships to Boston University and Northeastern University will be available between Feb. 1 and Feb. vacation. There are two full-tuition, four-year scholarships available for BU and one half-tuition, five-year scholarship at Northeastern. See Mr. Butchart in Room 331 to pick up an application, either before or after school, during T block, or during X block.

Brookline Cambodia Partnership

The Brookline Cambodia Partnership is a global leadership initiative at Brookline High School involving students, teachers, and administrators. One of its major goals is the funding of a secondary school in Cambodia through the American Assistance for Cambodia’s Rural Schools Project. The group hopes to raise \$23,000 by August 2010 through a variety of school and community efforts. (The program was officially launched at the Elephant Walk restaurant in Boston on January 30 with a benefit luncheon, featuring a multiple-course Cambodian meal.) Funds will be used specifically to construct a 3–6-room schoolhouse, hire a trained English/computer teacher, and provide internet services on donated computers to 100–400 Cambodian students. To find out more about the Brookline Cambodia Partnership, see www.brookcamb.org.

A Short-Term Shelter Program for Teens

New Pathways is a program for youth age 12–17 who are struggling at home and may be in need of extra support. We provide short-term placement outside the home (up to 21 days) as well as other services, such as therapy, family mediation, and advocacy. Host homes are available in Brookline and Metro Boston. A major goal of the program is to offer teens and their families a break from family conflict and an opportunity to work things out. We are currently accepting referrals for teens interested in the Program as well as recruiting additional host families. For information, please call one of our Program Coordinators: Erin Deery, LICSW, or Josh Eagle, PsyD at 617-277-8107. New Pathways is a program of the Brookline Community Mental Health Center.



Donate Now

Upcoming Events

- **From School to Work and Independence: Practical and Legal Information for Effective Transition Planning**

Thurs., February 11, 7–9 p.m.,
MLK Room

Pamela Coveney, JD, and Jeanine Solomon, JD, of the Disability Law Center, will present important information about transition planning, part of the IEP process for high school students starting at age 14. The DLC presentation will address federal and state laws, transition planning and services, IEP development, MCAS and graduation readiness, how state agencies can help, and the

details of significant recent cases in Massachusetts. [Note: This event was originally scheduled for March.]

- **Update on Special Education Program Review: Phase I Results**

Thurs., March 18, 6:30–8 p.m.
with SEPAC general meeting
to follow, 8–8:30 p.m., Runkle
School Library

Amy Martin will present Phase I Results as will have been reported to School Committee on March 11.

- **College and Gap-Year Night for Students with IEP's and 504's and Their Parents**

Wed., March 24, 7–9 p.m., MLK
Room

Representatives from disability services at Boston University, Northeastern University, Curry College, Mitchell College, and Landmark College will speak about their support services. Students who might want to do something different for a year before college can learn about Gap-Year programs from Dynamy, an internship program in Worcester. RSVP to Janet Gottesman, janet_gottesman@brookline.k12.ma.us or 617-713-5019.

For more information, contact Lisa Guisbond (lisa.guisbond@verizon.net) or either of the SEPAC co-chairs, Peggy Ueda or Patrick Gabridge, at brooklinesepac@gmail.com or visit www.brooklinesepac.org.

PSAT Primer for Parents

Q: As a parent of a junior in high school, I don't know much about the PSAT. Does it matter?

A: Your student has probably taken the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) in October and will get his results back in mid-December. These scores will not be seen by colleges and are only used for the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. Of the 1.5 million entrants, some 50,000 with the highest PSAT Selection Index scores (critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills scores) qualify for recognition in the National Merit Scholarship Program. In September, these high scorers are notified through their schools that they have qualified as either a commended student or a semifinalist. Approximately the top third go on to become National Merit semifinalists while the remaining two-thirds become commended scholars. Even when a student receives his score in December, he still does not know if he will be eligible for the National Merit Scholarship. The score is determined by the cutoff score representing the top scores in your state. These scores fluctuate by a few points over the years, so you cannot base one year's numbers off of another year's, other than to use it as a ballpark. An asterisk (*) next to a score signifies that the student is not eligible for the scholarship. For most students, the PSAT is a great way to judge how they will fare with standardized testing. One of the best features is the follow-up on test results on the Board's website, www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/quickstart. Here a student can see how his score compares to others who took the test, in

his state as well as nationally. He can see how many questions he actually missed and whether they were easy, medium, or hard. Most importantly, it gives him a range of how he will do on the actual SAT, based on these scores. If your student did not do as well as you both had hoped or expected, you might want to discuss with a professional how to determine what type of test preparation makes the most sense. You might also want to discuss the differences between the SAT and the ACT and whether your student might do better with one test over another. This also becomes a great opportunity to sit down with your student and discuss the upcoming college entrance tests and when your student might be most prepared to take them. The College Board website also posts upcoming test dates for the remainder of the school year and their registration deadlines. Students should review the actual answers with the test book that is returned to them so they can go back and rework the mistakes that they made. It is a great opportunity for students to assess whether or not they have prepared enough. But keep the results from this test in perspective, as they will not count, which I cannot reiterate enough. Except for the top handful of students who will move on to either commended or finalist status based on achieving high scores, this test should only be seen as a practice for what is to come.

—Adapted from The Seattle Post Intelligencer, December 9, 2009

News from B-CASA and B-PEN

B-CASA (Brookline Coalition Against Substance Abuse) and B-PEN (Brookline Parent Education Network)

“What Was That Kid Thinking?”: The Teenage Brain and the Allure of Pills and Alcohol, presentations and discussion for parents and teens, March 4, 7 p.m., Roberts/Dubbs Auditorium

Ever felt that parents and teens seem to be operating on totally different wavelengths? It's not surprising, given that studies of the teen brain show that judgment, decision-making, and impulse control abilities don't fully mature until the early twenties. Add to that the proliferation and accessibility of prescription and over-the-counter medications and a culture in which teen alcohol consumption is rampant, and today's youth are particularly vulnerable. Understanding the intricacies and landmarks of adolescent brain development can aid parents and teens in formulating strategies to avoid risky decision-making and dangerous patterns of behavior. On March 4, BHS-designated Day of Awareness, this presentation gathers health experts, BHS Peer Leaders, and renowned speakers, including former First Lady of Massachusetts Kitty Dukakis and McLean Hospital's Dr. Marisa M. Silveri, for a special evening of presentations, personal stories, and discussions meant to foster insight and strategies for minimizing risky choices that can lead to unhealthy consequences. For info, see www.B-PEN.org or contact June Harris (june_harris@brookline.k12.ma.us).

News Alert: Watch Out For House Parties

Over the holidays, several out-of-control house parties in the Brookline area involved BHS teens and underage drinking, resulting in a rash of student diversionary program referrals. It is suspected that at least one of the parties was facilitated with alcohol purchased by returning BHS grads using fake ID's. (Unfortunately, many high school students also use fake ID's, and the use of one is a felony in Massachusetts; if you find one, confiscate it!) If you haven't already done so, talk to your teen about parties at unsupervised houses as well as the consequences of being a minor with alcohol and/or a fake ID. It is also recommended to check and keep track of your own alcohol supplies, making sure you are not unwittingly providing alcohol for teen get-togethers. Two out of three teens (ages 13-18) report that it is easy to get alcohol from their homes without parents knowing about it.

Perhaps more troubling is that one-third of teens aged 13-18 report that it is easy to obtain alcohol from their own parents knowingly, and one in four teens have attended a party where minors were drinking in front of parents, under the parents' mistaken belief that it is safer to let kids drink in the controlled environment of their own house rather than elsewhere. However, this is not only a safety issue but a legal one; social host laws can make parents liable when underage

drinking takes place anywhere on their property. See <http://www.dontserveteens.gov> for more information. Be smart, be safe, don't contribute to underage drinking.

Parent Network Meetings

B-PEN sponsors drop-in, facilitated get-togethers offering parents the opportunity to connect face to face with one another and discuss a variety of parenting issues and strategies around common social, emotional, and developmental concerns that all teenagers face. Meetings are 7-8:30 p.m. in the MLK Room. Bring questions, concerns, and friends.

Freshman Parent Network meeting, March 8

Sophomore Parent Network meeting, March 16

New Parent Network Newsletter on “Healthy Relationships”

While kids may have hundreds of friends on Facebook, face-to-face relationships can be a lot more complex. B-CASA's latest Parent Network Newsletter is a special issue on “Healthy Relationships.” BHS Peer Leaders offer a primer on teen “dating,” explaining some of the latest teen lingo. Look for tips on talking to your teens about your values, the basics of making and keeping good friends, signs of abusive relationships, teen sex and the law, and much more. See www.BCASA.org or sign up for emails at www.bhs-pto.org/.

PTO Volunteer Opportunity

We're sad to report that our veteran fundraising co-chairs, Carol Kopelman and Michele Friedler, are hanging up their spurs at the end of this year. We're looking for one or two people to take their places, working closely with the co-presidents to develop and run fundraising campaigns starting next academic year. If you're interested, please contact Karen Hirsch or Adelaide Ketchum at copresidents.bhs.pto@gmail.com.

Performing Arts News

Interview with “Blood Brothers” Director, Nicholas Jacobson-Larson

The latest addition to BHS’s Drama Department is Nicholas Jacobson-Larson, who is directing the upcoming production (February 3–6) of the annual musical, “Blood Brothers.” This powerful show by Willy Russell is a nature vs. nurture tale of twins separated at birth, one raised in an English family of great privilege and the other raised in poverty. Its two-decades plus production in London’s West End makes it one of the longest-running works of musical theatre in history, yet it is little known in this country.

Originally from Minnesota, Jacobson-Larson studied acting and directing at the University of Minnesota and musical theater writing, composition, and conducting at Berklee College of Music, where he conducted “The Light in the Piazza” last January. His own musical, “To the Moon” (an adaptation of *Cyrano de Bergerac*), had its world premiere at the Anoka Theatre, for whom he is currently writing an original musical.

How are rehearsals going?

Rehearsals are intense—fast-paced but fun. It’s a challenging piece for high school kids—though I hesitate to refer to them as “kids” because they are wise far beyond their years.

Why this particular musical?

I chose “Blood Brothers” because it is an actor’s musical, not your typical razzle-dazzle, falling chandelier, flying witches, Broadway fare. I wanted the choice to attract kids from all across the drama department, not just the kids who usually do the musical.

If you had unlimited funding, what would you do for the program? What is your vision for the drama program?

I would produce three musicals per school year: fall, winter and spring. More opportunities for the students to hone their skills and make lasting friendships.

What’s the one quality you’d like to see more of in your students or in the BHS “scene?”

More guys at auditions. It’s always difficult to convince teenage boys that prancing around onstage while singing about “the bright golden haze on the meadow” is cool.

Chamber Music Concert Rescheduled

Due to the Mexico trip, the February 24th BHS Orchestra Chamber Music Concert has been rescheduled. It is now planned for March 8 at 7:30 p.m. in the Tappan Gym Dance Studio.

FoPA (Friends of Performing Arts) Has a New Website!

For the latest on the Performing Arts department at BHS, visit the just-launched Friends of Performing Arts website, www.FoPA.weebly.com. This user-friendly site has the most up-to-date information on events as well as news, articles/interviews, reviews, department information/contacts, and background about FoPA, a PTO subcommittee dedicated to supporting the rich diversity of performing arts at BHS. Coming soon: videos and a photo gallery.

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<http://twitter.com/BHSPTO>

IMPORTANT DATES (link to BHS PTO [calendar](#))

February

- 1: Sophomore PTO meeting*
- 2-12: BU, Northeastern Scholarship Apps available
- 3: Junior PTO meeting*
- 3-7: Musical: “Blood Brothers”
- 6: ACT
- 9: 2nd qtr grades submitted
- 9: Freshman PTO meeting*
- 10: Senior PTO meeting*
- 15-19: Feb. Vacation, No School

March

- 2: All-Town Chorus
- 2: Freshman PTO meeting*
- 3: Senior PTO meeting*
- 4: B-CASA Day of Awareness (day and evening programs)
- 5: Junior semi-formal dance
- 8: B-PEN Freshman Parent Network
- 8: Chamber Music
- 9: Sophomore PTO meeting*
- 10-13: Spring Play
- 10: Junior PTO meeting*
- 11: Early Dismissal, 12:30
- 11: SEPAC event
- 13: SATS
- 14: BEF Spelling Bee
- 16: B-PEN Sophomore Parent Network
- 17-18: State Festival Play
- 19: Feats on the Floor
- 24: SEPAC event
- 25: All-Town Spring Concert
- 26-27: Acappellafest

April

- 1: Hypnotist/ATTP Fundraiser
- 2: Good Friday, No School

* See the 2009-2010 PTO Meeting Calendar for details

Fifth Annual Pan Mass Challenge (PMC) Kids Ride

The Newton-Needham Kids PMC ride is going on its fifth year and has joined forces this year with Brookline to make this very successful event bigger and better. Bike riders collect monetary pledges, which help the Jimmy Fund find a cure for cancer. Last year the Newton-Needham ride raised \$50,000, which went directly to the Dana Faber Cancer Institute. This year, with Brookline on board, our goal is to have 500 riders and raise \$75,000.

The ride takes place Sunday, May 23, from 12–4 p.m. at the Wells Office Park in Newton, and includes a toddler ride, a ride that loops around the office park for

older children, and an 18-mile teen ride that goes from the office park to Dover and back. It is an exciting day with a post-ride celebration, including a DJ dance party by Siegal Productions, face painting & crafts, raffles, a silent auction, and refreshments.

Creating a riding team to represent Brookline High School would be a terrific community service project. No experience is necessary, just an interest in connecting with other families in the community. Registration is \$10, and the fundraising minimum is just \$50. For more information see <http://kids.pmc.org/newtonneedham/>.

Coalition for Brookline ASD Parents (COBAP)

Do you live in Brookline and have a child on the autism spectrum? The Coalition for Brookline ASD Parents is holding its second parents meeting of the 2009–2010 school year. This will be a wine and cheese social to get acquainted and discuss parent issues and questions, meeting on Sunday, February 7, at 7:30 p.m. at Village Family Chiropractic, 126 Harvard St., <http://www.villagechiro.com/howtofindus.html>. Questions? Email Beth Kaufman at bkpubservices@yahoo.com or Pam Palmucci at ppalmucci@rcn.com. You can also sign up for our Yahoo group at www.yahoo.com. Enter “COBAP” under “Find a Group.”

Adoptive Families Together

A parent-run confidential group to share personal concerns and needs around adoptive parenting, AFT provides education, advocacy, support, and more. We also welcome adopted individuals, birth parents, foster parents and all those with a connection to adoption. The Brookline Group is led by Matt Paluszek and Tracy Grondin and meets at the Brookline Public Library, Main Branch, 361 Washington St., 2nd Fl. Conf. Room, on the last Monday of each month [January 25, February 22, March 22] from 7-8:30 p.m. Feel free to drop in! For more information 617-587-1554 or lbaeumler@mspcc.org.

French Exchange and Hosting Opportunity

A group of 21 Brookline students, accompanied by Ms. Gurry, Mr. Kimball, and Ms. Alberola, will travel to France from February 5 to February 18. They will spend the first week with host families residing in Angers and the last days in Paris. The French students will then come to BHS from March 28 to April 10. We are still looking for families to host the three French teachers. Please contact Agnes Alberola at 617-713-5094 if you can help. Many thanks!

Brookline Solo Parents Group Meeting

Sunday, February 7, 4–5:30 p.m. at 23 Warwick Street (home of Julie Dollinger, 617-734-4221). Come share, listen, and enjoy other Brookline families like yours. Whether solo by divorce, single parent by choice, death, separation, never married, or other circumstance, please join the fun! Come with kids or without! If you are interested, but can't make the meeting, please let us know if you'd like to be on our

email list. We chip in for childcare. We meet Sundays at 4-5:30 p.m. on Feb. 7, Mar. 14, Apr. 11, May 16, and Jun. 6, 2010. For info: Ellen Messing, (Driscoll parent) at 617-731-9587 or ellen.messing3@verizon.net, Priscilla Wren (BHS and Runkle parent) at 617-383-5031 or prwo@hotmail.com, or Claire Hsu (Devotion parent) claire_hsu@hotmail.com, or join our Yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/brooklinesp>.

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2009–2010 PTO MEETING CALENDAR

Meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. in the Martin Luther King Room, unless otherwise noted. For updates, check the PTO website (www.bhs-pto.org).

Freshmen Class of 2013

Tuesday, 2/9
*Understanding Elective
Choices for Sophomore Year*

Tuesday, 3/2
*Changing Expectations in
the Sophomore Year: Student
Panel*

Wednesday, 4/7
*Social Development of
Teenagers—Boys vs. Girls*

Wednesday, 5/12
*Potluck dessert & parent
social networking (topic TBA)*

Sophomores Class of 2012

Monday, 2/1
*Junior Year Classes:
Hearing from the Teachers*

Tuesday, 3/9
*Social Networking—
Working For or Against
Your Teen?*

Wednesday, 4/14
*The Junior Year:
A Student's Perspective*

Monday, 5/17
*Potluck dessert & parent
social networking*

Juniors Class of 2011

Wednesday, 2/3
*Guidance Night
Auditorium*

Wednesday, 3/10
*College Alternatives and
Gap Year Options*

Tuesday, 4/13
College Fair

Wednesday, 5/19
*Panel of Seniors About
Senior Year*

Seniors Class of 2010

Tuesday, 2/10
*Senior Slump—The
End of Senior Year*

Wednesday, 3/3
*Choosing the Right
College After Acceptances
Come In*

Monday, 4/5
*Health/College Issues:
College Life*

Tuesday, 5/4
*Goodbye: Parent to
Parent Conversation
Teachers' Lounge*