



PRINCIPAL'S 411

Santa Maria High School

{1-29-21}

Important Items and Reminders:

- **Teachers of seniors**, please encourage seniors to complete their **FAFSA** application (priority deadline is March 2nd). For a little fun we are kicking off a little friendly competition between gov/econ teachers. Free cap and gown for students of the winning class, AND a traveling trophy, and a \$100 gift certificate for the winning gov/econ teacher. What happens if they all get 100%?!!
- There are still a number of PD opportunities being made available by SBCEO, **(see attachments to this email)**. If interested, please work through your department chair and/or your respective administrator.
- Rotary is hosting their 4 Way Test Essay Contest 2021. **(also see attached to this email)** There are cash prizes and the deadline is Feb. 19th if you would like to encourage your class or any individual students to sign up.
- Don't forget Language Line, please remember this as a resource when needing to overcome a language barrier between you and a parent.

Athletics:

All athletic teams have resumed practices under the same safety protocols as those followed before break. With the recent bands being lifted by Governor Newsom's office, we may actually be ready to start SOME athletic events. Brian and his coaches are working to host a cross country meet (under strict COVID prevention protocol) as soon as next week. It is exciting just to be talking about extra-curriculars again!

Kudos:

The week of February 1st- 5th is National School Counseling Week so what better time to show some appreciation for the remarkable job our counselors do. We are truly lucky to have such a great counseling team here at SMHS. These people address everything from 9th grade orientation to graduation ceremony. Like so many of us, the additional difficulties students and families face due to the pandemic have made an already difficult job even more challenging. Through it all, this team has risen to the occasion and sold out for their students. The students are fortunate to have such a great team pulling for them. So, thank a counselor if you see one this week!

Message from Administration:

I have been fortunate enough to visit quite a few classrooms in the last 2 months and I'd like to say how impressive it is to see the elevated level of technology use, the innovative techniques, new procedures, and policies that teachers have put in place. Everyone seems so much more comfortable with the format of online learning, and have made so many adaptations to their teaching.

I would like to commend the growing number of teachers who have implemented policies that reward students who have reached expectations, while holding struggling students accountable until they too succeed. I have seen many teachers recently with policies that students completing the day's work may log off a bit early, (especially on the 2nd instructional day) while those with sub-standard grades stay the entire time, or until they too are caught up in the class. I have also seen teachers "mandate" office hours for students who are missing assignments or receiving a failing grade. Not only does it allow us to utilize every available minute to assist our struggling students, but it provides the struggling student a way to improve their condition by getting the work done. These teachers are finding ways to make it more difficult for the student to be unsuccessful, than it is to be successful.

The teachers I've seen be the most successful with these strategies do so with a sense of humor, and a sense of caring. It doesn't come across punitive for the student, but rather from a place of mentorship. I would suggest talking over these

topics in future PLC meetings to see what your colleagues are doing. I know there are some cool stuff happening out there!

With that said, I am very optimistic about the spring semester. When looking back on it, I wouldn't wish the circumstances we faced last fall on anyone. It seems that students and teachers are much more prepared, and less stressed than last semester. It's still not easy out there, but if we keep learning from one another and adapting to students' needs, we are set up to have a more pleasant, and more successful semester. Have a great weekend everyone!