

January, 2017

Dear Kennedy Families:

The 2017-18 Course Registration Process is underway!

A couple of weeks ago Kennedy students watched an opportunities video that highlighted a few of our District's unique options for students to seek career and college readiness. Last week, students took a "cruise" which allowed them to explore Kennedy courses and program offerings in more depth. Students were able to meet with the teacher(s) of the courses they are interested in taking next year and hear from the instructor who teaches the course what content is taught and how that content is delivered.

This week, all students will view the 2017 registration presentation during SMART Time. Students will receive pre-registration forms and registration guides at this time as well. Students should also seek the advice of parents, teachers, counselors and administrators regarding their course plans for the future. Teachers in core areas will provide their recommendations which you can find either in PowerSchool or on your child's pre-registration form.

Now more than ever students must take their academic planning seriously, which is partly the reason why we have taken the lengths we have to help students explore their many academic options. Far too many students, particularly seniors, are taking too light of loads, frequently choosing 2-3 free periods versus taking coursework that can help them with their preparation for college and career. In the near future, 90% of jobs will require some form of post-secondary training, degree or certification. We don't want to see any student leave high school ill-equipped to tackle the rigors of the post-secondary marketplace.

Students who are looking for options to fill time or get a jump-start on college and career should look to programs like Kirkwood Academy, Iowa Big or Building Trades. Kennedy is also offering several new dual credit options for students to consider. Dual credit coursework allows students to earn college credit and Kennedy credit at the same time.

For juniors and seniors, Kennedy is offering Composition I and II, Fundamentals of Oral Communication, U.S. History to 1877, U.S. History Since 1877 -- and for all students -- Civil Engineering and Architecture as new dual credit options to be taught in our building. Composition I and II, along with Fundamentals of Oral Communication will satisfy the rhetoric requirement at the University of Iowa and several general studies requirements at Iowa State and UNI, too. Composition I and II will satisfy a year of LA study toward the graduation requirement and both U.S. History courses will satisfy the graduation requirement for this discipline. All courses mentioned above will receive a weighted grade. With the cost of higher education exceeding \$500 per course at most public institutions, this can be a substantial savings for families.

Not all students would be ready or even interested in the above options. Other students may want to consider a Kirkwood Academy, which offers 15 programs covering 19 different career pathways. Everything from patient care (CNA), to architecture, to information technology, to hospitality, to

criminal justice, just to name a few, can help students explore interests, gain industry certifications, or get a leg up on college. Academy coursework is free and allows students to get off-campus for a few hours of their day.

Another way to increase rigor and put your child's interests and creative talents to work is through Iowa BIG. In Iowa BIG, students can earn *elective or required* credit within an entirely project-based environment. Iowa BIG offers unique opportunities to develop personal portfolios, as well as employability, communication, and networking skills. If your student is interested in working on community projects off campus and gain some real-world skills, they should consider Iowa BIG, open to all sophomores, juniors and seniors.

Many of our students express a desire to go into the trades. Students have the opportunity to build a house from the ground up through our Building Trades or "Student Built House" program. Students will be exposed to all aspects of home construction, including electrical, plumbing, heating and cooling, drywall, carpentry and more. Even if a student doesn't want to pursue a trades career, this experience can be immensely valuable for any future homeowner.

Kennedy has an excellent selection of AP courses. With 33 AP courses to choose from, students have a unique opportunity to place rigor into their schedule and get a jump on college preparation. Many of Kennedy's recognitions and awards are centered on the AP program. Not only is AP great for college preparation, it can also be a great resume builder.

If you would like more information on any of the programs featured, please visit Registration Central on the Kennedy homepage at <http://kenn.cr.k12.ia.us/>. You will find it under the "Academics" tab. All information pertaining to registration is located here, including: the Registration Guide, Registration videos and presentations, course descriptions (in the Program of Studies) and all pertinent forms (available for download).

The Power School window will open for all 9-11<sup>th</sup> grade students to complete online registration on January 31. Teachers will be offering their recommendations for students this week as well. Students will have until Monday, February 6 to complete their online registration.

Careful and thoughtful planning is a critical component of the registration process and to student success. The resources on Registration Central can help make the most of academic planning. We encourage you and your student to be armed with as much information as possible as you strategically chart the direction of the future. We encourage you to take advantage of the outstanding programming choices that are available at Kennedy. Best wishes with your journey.

-Kennedy Counseling and Administrative Teams