



THE BIG BHS BACK-TO-SCHOOL PTSA MEETING *Tuesday, September 9th*

Welcome all new 9th grade families, and welcome back to all our returning families! We hope everyone had a fantastic summer and is ready for a challenging and productive year. On Tuesday, September 9th, from 7 to 9 PM in the Florence Schwimley Little Theater (FSLT), the Berkeley High PTSA will be hosting it's first, and always, most important PTSA meeting of the year. This first meeting serves as a great introduction to what is happening at Berkeley High. The elections for the School Governance Council (SGC), the Berkeley Schools Excellence Project (BSEP) Committee and the PTSA Board will all be held on this night – not only is this a great way to find out what these groups do for the school each year, but you will also meet and hear from all the parents & guardians who are hoping to work on them. There will also be a welcome from Principal Slemp, followed by a question and answer session. And – this is the meeting where, every year, the PTSA hopefully inspires a new generation of parents & guardians to join us in helping to support our students in the most productive ways possible.

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WELCOME TO BERKELEY HIGH!

Every year in the summer newsletter we run a column with information on how parents and guardians can best navigate Berkeley High. Below are our updated, whole-school suggestions on how to make sense of and best access resources at Berkeley High.

1. **Read this Newsletter carefully every month.** The PTSA Newsletter is mailed home approximately once a month during the school year — it is packed with long-term information. The PTSA works closely with the administration to produce the paper which is paid for by the parents of Berkeley High. Please help fund the Newsletter by joining the PTSA.
2. **Sign up for the ETREE.** Berkeley High School has an e-mail list serve

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BUEN DÍA

¡Bienvenidos! Es el comienzo de un nuevo año escolar, y es importante que desde un principio todos trabajemos unidos para el beneficio de nuestros estudiantes. La idea de escribir esta columna en Español en la Hoja Informativa de PTSA es para mantener a todas nuestras familias Latinas al día con información referente a la escuela, los recursos que se ofrecen, y los eventos y oportunidades para que las familias participen en la escuela. Por motivos de espacio, es muy difícil tener toda la información de BHS traducida en Español, pero intentaremos mantenerles al día con la información de mayor importancia para nuestra comunidad.

En Berkeley High y en la ciudad de Berkeley en general, contamos con muchos recursos para ayudar a nuestros estudiantes y familias. Quiero aprovechar esta oportunidad para hablarles acerca de algunos de estos recursos que les pueden ser útiles durante el transcurso del año escolar. Si sus estudiantes tienen dificultades con sus estudios, la escuela cuenta con un Centro de Aprendizaje para los Estudiantes

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Please Join The PTSA Today!

We absolutely need everyone at Berkeley High to join the PTSA. Your PTSA dues go towards funding all of our communication outlets – the PTSA Newsletter, the BHS etree, the PTSA Website, the Red and Gold, the PTSA Organizer, the PTSA Directory, the PTSA Homework Site and a variety of college handbooks. The PTSA Newsletter alone costs \$15,000 a year to produce. If everyone joins, we'll have a wonderful year keeping you up to date on everything. Last year only 10% of BHS households joined, so we very much need more members this year. Please enclose your tax-deductible contribution today in the PTSA membership envelope included in this summer packet. We love to keep you informed and you love to be informed, but we can not do it without your financial support. You can join for as little as \$10, but if you are able to contribute more, please do (it's always appreciated). Thank you very much in advance.

Mark van Krieken, BHS PTSA President

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-- Important BHS Community Meeting --

BERKELEY HIGH SOUTH OF BANCROFT PLAN

Wednesday August 6, 2008 – 7:00-8:30 PM

The BHS South of Bancroft Plan Site Committee and their architects, Baker & Vilar, will hold a community meeting on August 6, 2008 to share the design for the construction of the new classrooms and athletic spaces on the South side of the campus. The meeting will be in the Berkeley High School Library, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM, and the BHS community is encouraged to attend. The design needs to go before the Board of Education at the end of August, so it is important to get the community feedback before that time. The plan includes the old gym, softball field and parking area, and the stadium stands which will be the first phase of construction.

If at all possible, please try and attend. There are many viewpoints and voices from inside and outside the District and it's extremely important that the Berkeley High community is well-represented with their feedback. The final consideration made on any decision involving school district funds should be whether it's in the best interest of our students.

*Mark Coplan, BUSD Public Information Officer
644-6320, Mark_Coplan@berkeley.k12.ca.us*

STATE BUDGET UPDATE

The end of the 2007-2008 fiscal year ended June 30th and the constitutional deadline to approve a budget passed without a new budget in place for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. At this point in the budget process, the specifics of the budget are now being negotiated by the Governor, the Assembly Speaker, the Senate Pro Tem, and the leaders of the Senate and Assembly Republican Caucus (also referred to as the "Big 5"). How long the current stalemate will last is anybody's guess. We will all need to monitor this closely as it has huge implications for the upcoming school year (and the start in particular).

In the governor's May Budget Revision he announced that he was not going to suspend proposition 98, but according to many, that is not entirely accurate. The May Revision did not include a cost of living adjustment (COLA), which means that cuts will still have to be made. In the May Revision, the governor also proposes a 6.5 % cut across

the board to all categorical programs. Without a COLA and with a 6.5% cut to the state's categorical programs, the governor's proposal will cut approximately \$4.3 billion from the education budget. According to the Association of California School Administrators:

"The true reason the governor decided against suspending Proposition 98 is because he did not have to. The revenues in the state dropped low enough that the Proposition 98 calculation determined that a suspension was unnecessary."

Please be sure to check the etree regularly for updates from the Superintendent's Office, BHS administration and the PTSA. We may very well need to become involved to help push "the Big 5" to a resolution.

*Mark van Krieken
BHS PTSA President*

NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED

There are many roles the PTSA will need filled for the upcoming 2008 – 2009 school year, but one of the most pressing and important is the need for a new editor for the PTSA Newsletter. The Newsletter is the only regular outlet for communication that reaches every BHS household and, as such, provides an invaluable link between the school and the BHS community. The PTSA Newsletter is published approximately once a month and includes articles supplied by the BHS administration, the PTSA and various school and community groups. One of the big bonuses of the job is that you get to meet with Principal Jim Slemp and PTSA and other parent leaders on a regular basis -- you'll be one of the most well-informed people in the school. Although some experience with desktop publishing is certainly useful, it is not necessary, as we will provide training to anyone who needs it. We also have a wonderful support staff of three already in place and ready to help.

If you are interested in the position, or have any questions, please contact PTSA President, Mark van Krieken at markvk4@comcast.net. The Newsletter is one of the most significant contributions the PTSA makes to the BHS community each year, but we very much need your participation to ensure its continued success.

Mark van Krieken, BHS PTSA President

SCHOOL NOTES

Rory Bled: In June, much appreciated Vice Principal Rory Bled announced that she was retiring. She has been a reassuring and steady presence at Berkeley High for many years. During her long tenure, Ms Bled taught French, was the college counselor, and for the last five years, a vice principal. Under her able leadership the International High school was conceived and launched. She will be missed.

New Hires: In addition to a vice principal, the administration is also hiring 18 new teachers, one librarian, six counselors, a BSEP-funded Student Support Coordinator for the after school tutoring services, and an International Baccalaureate coordinator. Among the teachers will be six science teachers, three Spanish teachers, four new BIHS teachers and 3.5 new Academic Choice teachers. Vice Principal Pasquale Scuderi reports that four of the new teachers are graduates of the prestigious Stanford Step Program. In addition, two of our new teachers were student teachers at Berkeley High last year.

Counseling Department: Berkeley High's full complement of counselors consists of two college counselors, one intervention counselor, and 10 academic counselors. Despite fears that we would lose some of them, none were laid off. However, while we did not lose any positions, six of last year's 13 counselors have left the department. Madeleine Scott retired. Jarrod Bordi, Erica Rains-Vargas, Caren Ohlson, Oralia Ramirez and Cory Nakamoto left for other jobs. The plan, as we went to press, is not to shift counseling loads around. So, if students' counselors have not left, they will have the same one as last year. The following counselors will still be with us: Teri Goodman, AHA; Molly Offermann, CAS; Susan Werd, BIHS; Anthony Smith, AC (A-E); and Brenda Wong, AC (F-La). In addition we have our two college counselors: Ilene Abrams and Angela Price.

Registration, and Frequently asked questions.

1. The first day of school is Wednesday, August 27. There is no zero period on the first day of school. First period begins at 8:30 a.m.
2. Students will get their schedules on their grade level day of Berkeley High School Registration Week.

- Tuesday, August 19: Freshman Orientation/ registration
- Wednesday, August 20: 10th Grade
- Thursday, August 21: 11th Grade
- Friday, August 22: 12th Grade

3. The registration schedule is organized by grade level and the session is by last name. The exact time is printed on the envelope which delivered your summer mailing. (Freshmen come in three groups. Please find your group time elsewhere in this package.)
4. Registration is in the Jacket Gym (the new gym).
5. FRESHMEN -- Tuesday, August 19 is Freshman Orientation. No matter what time is indicated on freshman packet labels, ALL 9TH GRADERS REPORT TO THE Community Theater AT THE BEGINNING OF THEIR SESSION.
6. Students should bring the following items with them to registration:
 - \$3 for the BHS Organizer (a combination student planner and a 25 page guide to Berkeley High and are given to all students).
 - All the forms (emergency, health, photo, etc.) need to be filled out.
 - The envelope in which it all came.
7. Over the four days of registration, there are over 3,200 students who need to turn in their forms, get their picture taken, get their student organizer, lockers, textbooks, pick up their schedule, and, if needed, complete a change of schedule request. If it is at all possible, your student should attend registration on the assigned day and time. If everyone waits until the day before school it will be chaos. That said, if your student absolutely can't come on his or her assigned day, there is usually a makeup day the following week. As we go to press, that date has not yet been set, please call the school to find out when it will be.
8. Parents do not need to come to orientation. But, if you really want to, we have chairs set up for you in the Jacket Gym.

Janet Huseby

THE NEW & IMPROVED ORGANIZER

The new organizer is a bit bigger, 8.5 inches by 7 inches. The organizer features a great photo illustration of the school on the front cover and the bell schedule is on the back. The reference pages are more comprehensive and there's a lot more useful information included. The calendar portion is expanded, commencing each day with "0" period.

So far, this new organizer is so popular, we've received a good number of advance orders from parents! The price has increased to \$3.00, and we feel it is an excellent value for parents and students alike. The new organizers will be available for purchase during registration and student orientation.

If you have any questions, please let me know [molliesep@comcast.net].

Mollie Hart, co-chair, Organizer Committee

BERKELEY ATHLETIC FUND (BAF)

-- A Call For Leadership --

The Berkeley Athletics Fund (the non-profit boosters fundraising organization) needs parent volunteers this coming school year! We need to continue to keep BAF strong, and can't do it without parent participation. Our graduating senior parents are leaving holes that need to be filled. Here are the job openings for 2008-2009:

1. **Student-Athlete Parent Coordinators:** 1 for 9th/10th grades; 1 for 11th/12th grades – be point person for BAF activities, working closely with the AD and communicating with parents; hold about 3 meetings a year for Fall, Winter, Spring sports.

2. **BAF Treasurer:** Replace present treasurer — handle deposits/disbursements for 32 teams (write checks to vendors, etc.; work closely with the AD). Knowledge of Excel is essential; knowledge of Quickbooks; and able to handle nonprofit tax returns each year.

3. Fundraising Events:

- Golf Tournament and Hall of Fame Event Subcommittee. (Main committee is already planning for next year's event.)
- Berkeley High Live! Next Edition – Need a parent volunteer coordinator. (Mary Kay Murlas is leaving us but will help with this event next year.)

- Parking Lot Coordinator.

4. **BAF Website:** need a competent web user/designer/editor to keep this going.

5. **Graphic Artist:** Replace parent who has managed to get the best prices with the best quality for our publications; handle material production for advertising all our fundraising.

6. **Representative to the BHS Development Group as a board member for Athletics:**

BAF gets 25% for eSCRIP from BHSDG.

BHSDG is paying for our strength and conditioning coach this year.

Attend monthly school year meetings, 1st Monday, 7 pm.

If there is one reliable and dedicated parent for each job – that's six parents out of over 1,000 families represented in Berkeley High Athletics, it will be a great year and a great transition.

Contact Jahlee Arakaki at (510) 643-8193 daytime, or (510) 526-1878 evenings; or E-mail: jarakaki@berkeley.edu

Jahlee Arakaki
BAF Board Member

NEW HONORS MATH POLICY

The Berkeley High Math Department has voted to make a change in the honors testing policy. ANY student that didn't pass the spring honors math test may do a retake in the fall, even if they didn't score in the "gray zone." Information on signing up for the test is as follows.

The Berkeley High School math department will conduct a second round of Honors testing for the 08/09 school year in late August/early September. The August dates are Tuesday 8/19 and Wednesday 8/20 and the exams will be given at 10:30 am in the College Career Center (located in the administration building). The September dates are Tuesday 9/2 and Thursday 9/4 and the exams will be given at 3:45 pm in room H306. Students take an exam to test into either Honors Geometry, Honors Algebra 2 or Honors Math Analysis. All exams consist of a 45-problem multiple-choice test to be completed in 45 minutes. Students need to bring a pencil and a scientific (non-graphing) calculator. Students new to the district also need to supply the e-mail address of their current math teacher.

Students need to sign up with Mr. Weitz via e-mail to take the test [mweitz@berkeley.k12.ca.us]. Please notify him of the name of the student, what test they want to sign up for and what date they want to take the test. If you don't receive an immediate confirmation, you may assume you have the date you requested. Mr. Weitz will notify you directly if a requested session is full. The policy on honors testing is that all students who want to take an honors math class at Berkeley High School must pass the placement test unless they pass the previous Honors class at Berkeley High School with a B or better. Only students who have not taken the honors test, or are who were offered a retake, may take the test.

Mike Weitz, Math Dept. Chair

JAZZ AUDITIONS

The Berkeley High School Jazz Ensemble will be holding auditions for the fall 2008-2009 school year at the very beginning of school. The Jazz Ensemble is the advanced Jazz band at BHS. The Jazz program consists of 3 bands and allows students to audition for a new band as they grow as musicians. Lab I is the beginning band, Lab II is for intermediate students and the Ensemble is for accomplished musicians that are advanced in their instrument. The Jazz Ensemble attends many festivals throughout the year and, every other summer, has toured internationally – attending festivals and competitions as they tour. The summer of 2009 they look forward to a European tour. It is a challenging and exciting musical environment for students to be part of. This will be Mr. Charles Hamilton's 27th year with the Jazz program and this 2008-2009 season will be his last! During his tenure, the Ensemble has won many awards and placed 1st at many competitions. There have been many renowned jazz musicians coming out of the BHS Jazz program and we look forward to many more emerging.

Auditions will be held the week after Labor Day. Any student interested in auditioning is encouraged to do so, whether you are currently in the Jazz program or not. Specific dates and times of auditions will be announced closer to the start of school through the e-tree or you can email BHS Jazz at berkeleyjazz@comcast.net. You can also look on the BHS Jazz web-site at <http://berkeleyhighjazz.org>. BHS Jazz looks forward to an exciting year and welcomes any student interested in participating.

Fredda Damast

FROM THE COLLEGE ADVISORS

Ms. Price and I hope that you all have had an enjoyable and relaxing summer. We look forward to seeing you in the fall.

A Few Words On Standardized Testing:

Standardized testing is controversial. Some colleges find it convenient to have a single test help them decide who to accept, even though many admissions officers have told me privately that they know how deeply flawed the testing process is. Even data from the College Board, which runs the SAT tests, shows that the strongest correlation is between test scores and family income – the higher the family income, the higher the SAT score. And testing is particularly difficult for students whose first language is not English.

Now, nearly 760 colleges have become “test optional,” meaning that they do not require all students to release their ACT or SAT test scores and give students a range of ways to show that they will be successful at the school. For a list of such schools, go to <http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>. One school, Sarah Lawrence College in New York, refuses to consider any standardized testing scores when selecting students for admissions.

Many smaller colleges that spend the time to review the full profile of each student's application have become test optional. One of the first was Bates College, a highly selective school in Maine, which has now been test optional for over 20 years. In order to study whether there is a difference in the success rates of students who revealed their test scores on their admissions application and those who didn't, Bates requires all matriculating freshmen to submit their SAT scores. Their 20 year study shows that the difference in graduation rates between submitters and non-submitters was one-tenth of one percent. The difference in overall GPAs at Bates between submitters and non-submitters is .05 (five-hundredths of a GPA point – 3.06 for non-submitters and 3.11 for submitters). Their study also shows that non-submitters are more likely to major in fields that emphasize creativity and originality. The complete report is available at <http://www.bates.edu/ip-optional-testing-20years.xml>.

However, we live in a world where the UC's and many Cal State campuses, as well as many other colleges and universities, continue to require students to take standardized tests. Most students who prepare for the tests can increase their scores. As much as I object to standardized testing, I encouraged my own children to prepare. This is the world we live in and I believe we have to use all of the tools we can while at the same time trying to change the system. There are many ways your students can prepare without spending hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Encourage them to do some preparation, to learn the “tricks of the test,” but don't go overboard. A student's transcript is still the most important factor in college admissions. Here are some ways to prepare for the tests:

- Enroll in an SAT or ACT preparation class. Free SAT classes are available at Berkeley High during both fall and spring semesters, sponsored by UC Berkeley's People's Test Preparation Service. Classes are usually held twice per week – one day for math preparation and one for critical reading. Information on the dates the classes will be held this fall will be available in the College Advisor's Bulletin and the Student Daily Bulletin after school starts. No registration is necessary. There are many private tutors and test preparation companies as well. If you have questions about one or more of these, please ask your student to talk with their College Advisor.
- Take practice tests. There is a free SAT practice test available at www.collegeboard.com. Also at the same website, your student can sign up to have the “Question of the Day” sent directly to his or her email. For the ACT, go to www.actstudent.org for free practice questions.
- Free ACT and SAT test prep is also available at www.number2.com.
- There are numerous books available in the College/Career Center with practice tests and helpful hints to help students prepare.

Differences Between The SAT And The ACT:

All colleges in the U.S. will accept either the SAT or the ACT. Some colleges will also accept the ACT in place of both the SAT reasoning test and the SAT subject tests. However, the UC's require either the SAT or the ACT with writing AND two SAT subject tests in two different subject areas.

There are several differences between the two tests.

1. The SAT consists of three sections – Critical Reading, Math and Writing. The total test time is 3 hours and 45 minutes. The ACT consists of four sections – Math, Science, Reading and English, as well as an optional Writing section. (The UC's require the writing section, while the Cal States do not.)
2. The SAT calculates a student's score by adding up the number of correct responses and subtracting a percent of the wrong responses. This means that a student must eliminate some of the answer choices in each question in order to make it worthwhile to guess an answer. The ACT calculates scores by adding up only the correct responses. There is no penalty for guessing.
3. The SAT is considered a reasoning test while the ACT is an achievement test, meaning that the ACT questions are based on what a student has learned in school. Many test prep tutors have told me that the SAT is “trickier” and thus more coachable, while the ACT is more straightforward.
4. For the class of 2009, there is also a difference in the way ACT and SAT scores are sent to colleges. When a

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student tells College Board to send SAT scores to a college, they send all scores from all SAT and SAT subject tests that a student has taken up until that time. ACT, on the other hand, sends scores from only one sitting at a time. For the classes of 2010 and thereafter, College Board, like ACT, will allow students to choose which sitting's scores to send.

We recommend that all sophomores and juniors take the PSAT on October 15 to prepare for the SAT. The results from this test, usually available in December, can help students plan how to prepare for the SAT. Juniors should take either the SAT or the ACT during the spring of their junior year. If they are planning to apply to UC campuses or any other schools which require SAT subject tests, we recommend that they take at least two subject tests (they are one hour long each) in May or June of the junior year. Juniors who are not satisfied with their test scores will have time to study over the summer. The UC's and many other schools require that students complete their testing by December of their senior year.

If your student is not a strong test taker, don't worry. There are many options open to them as more and more colleges become test optional, others put less emphasis on test scores, and preparing in advance can help to raise scores.

Finally, encourage your students to get a good night's sleep on Thursday and Friday before the test and to eat a healthy breakfast on Saturday morning. Remind them to bring bottled water and an easy to eat snack to keep them from getting too hungry during the nearly four hour test. And most important, remind them that these tests are not a measure of their intelligence nor do they predict how successful or happy they will be in college or thereafter. Help them to keep their scores in perspective and to focus on all of their many strengths and talents and the ways that they contribute to the world around them.

FOR SENIOR FAMILIES

Evening meetings for parents/guardians of seniors (please note that these are TENTATIVE DATES):

Tuesday, September 9 at 6:30 p.m. in the Berkeley High School library, Ms. Price and I will be giving an overview of the college admission process. Although some of the information will be a repeat from our presentation last spring, we will go into more depth in many areas. Please come to get all of your questions answered. (Note, this date will be finalized in September.)

Tuesday, October 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the Berkeley High School library, representatives from the UC, Cal States, community colleges and California private colleges will provide an overview of the many options available for your children.

Other important dates:

Friday, September 19: The completed Senior Profile is due

in D221. This form is for students who are considering applying to private schools and some out of state public schools that require a counselor recommendation. It is not needed for students who are only applying to UC's, Cal States or community colleges. For students applying Early Decision or Early Action, the form is due on **September 5**. The form is available in D221 or at <http://bhs.berkeley.net/index.php?page=documents>.

September – December: We are fortunate to have over 100 college admissions representatives come to Berkeley High. Encourage your seniors to attend their presentations. Most college recruiters are the first ones to read student applications from the areas to which they travel, so it's good for students to know who they are and for the representatives to have a face to go with the application. The schedule of presentations is posted in many classrooms, and we announce all visits in the College Advisor's bulletin and Student Daily Bulletin. Students need to sign up in advance and get signed authorization from the teacher whose class they are missing.

We will be making presentations to all senior English classes at the beginning of the year. After that, seniors can sign up for individual 30 minute meetings with their College Advisor. Please encourage them to do so. We will also have drop-in appointments for short questions at lunch and after school. During the meetings we will discuss each student's application choices. In California, there is a formula for determining whether students are eligible for the UC's or Cal States. If they are not eligible based on their grades and test scores, they will not get in. Other colleges do not base admission on a formula. We will always encourage students to apply to their dream school. However, students must remember that they might not be able to get into their first choice college because they might not meet the requirements of that particular school or simply because the school has more qualified applicants than they can accept. There are many schools, not only the most well-known, where students will get a high-quality education and meet people who will be their friends and colleagues for the rest of their lives. So encourage students to investigate less known schools. Today's unknown school could be on the "hot" list in a year or two.

October 1-November 30: Priority application period for the California State Universities. Most campuses are requiring students to apply on line (www.csumentor.edu).

November 1-November 30: Application period for the UC's. Online applications are strongly encouraged (www.ucop.edu/pathways).

September-November: We will be holding the following workshops for students: Early Decision/Early Action, filling out UC and Cal State applications and the Common Application, writing college application essays and filling out financial aid forms. Please encourage your students to attend the workshops. Dates and times will be available in

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the College Advisor's Bulletin and on our website. Please also encourage your students to start writing their essays early so that they will have time to revise. These essays are not easy to write and the UC's require each student to write two essays. Students need to be their own best advocates without appearing whiny or arrogant. They need time for reworking.

Upcoming Test Dates

ACT (www.actstudent.org)	
<u>Test date</u>	<u>Reg. Deadline</u>
Saturday, September 13	August 12
Saturday, October 25	September 19
Saturday, December 13	November 7
SAT and SAT subject tests (www.collegeboard.com)	
<u>Test date</u>	<u>Reg. Deadline</u>
Saturday, October 4	September 9
Saturday, November 1	September 26
Saturday, December 6	November 5

How parents can help:

The college application process is different for each student and family. For most, it is a growing experience, a time for self-evaluation and growth. As we know, growth periods are not generally easy, and as parents it is often difficult to not jump in and try to fix every problem – at least it is for me. But by allowing students to lead the process, we can help them mature and be ready for the next step after high school, whatever that may be. I recommend being the helper, the nurturer, the person a student can go to for brainstorming and new ideas and perspectives. But as parents and guardians, if we take the lead we deny our students this great opportunity to learn about themselves and the world. Let your students take charge of the process by asking them what you can do to help. Here are some recommendations:

- Organization is key to keeping track of the many details of each application. Parents can help by buying file folders and a box to hold them, sending test scores to colleges and standing in line at the post office to mail applications. Remind your student that jobs seem a lot more doable if they are broken down one step at a time. If they would like your help in organizing, show them how to make a chart of deadlines for applications and financial aid as well as a time line for completing them. We will give students a blank chart to get them started.
- Writing the college essay is difficult. The goal is for students to convey who they are to the application

- application reader, who does not know them. We encourage students to show their essay drafts to people who don't know them to see what they learn about the student from the essay alone. Parents and guardians are not the best people for this job because you know your students well. Volunteer essay readers will be available in D221 in October and November. Check the College Advisor's Bulletin and the College/Career Center website (<http://bhs.berkeley.net/index.php?page=home-2>) for the complete schedule.
- Have an honest talk with your student about what you can afford to pay for college. Be sure you also understand and discuss strategies for financial aid. By having this talk early in the application process, you can prevent disappointment later if schools do not offer enough scholarships and loans. Also encourage your student to apply for private scholarships.
- Discuss with your student the importance of choosing schools based on learning style, social and cultural interests, and possible majors – among other things. Don't let name brand competitiveness or rankings dominate their thinking.
- Be excited for your student. While the college search process can be an ordeal for some families, you can make it an experience that strengthens your relationship. As your student matures, you will have some quality time together on this great journey.
- Since the college application process is often stressful, it is important that it not be the main topic of conversation every day. Some families have set up a once a week check-in time that gives students control while allowing parents to understand what is being accomplished.
- Let students fill out their own applications. You may proofread them before they are sent.
- Encourage your students to see their College Advisor to discuss problems and successes. In addition to an individual meeting, students may drop in at lunch and after school any day for shorter discussions without an appointment. We want to meet with ALL students, whether or not they plan to attend college after graduation, to help them plan for their next step.

For a college's view of the parent/guardian role in the college application process, go to www.mit.edu, then click on admissions, freshman, info for parents, and helping your kids through this process.

FOR SOPHOMORE AND JUNIOR FAMILIES

Please let your students know that the work they do during these years is very important for both college admission and college success. Encourage them to do their best. We will start meeting with juniors at the beginning of second semester.

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Big PTSA Meeting (cont. from p1):

Elections: There are three organizations for which we will be holding elections.

- **School Governance Council (SGC)** – The SGC decides questions of school policy. From a policy standpoint, this is the most powerful committee at Berkeley High. During the past year, the committee dealt with the issues of advisory periods and block schedules.
- **Berkeley Schools Excellence Project (BSEP)** – The BSEP committee determines how the school will spend its enrichment money. In light of the Governor's recent cuts to education, this committee's decisions become even more important.
- **The PTSA** -- The PTSA facilitates a variety of forms of communication between the high school and the parent/guardian community, puts various committees together to advocate for students and their families, and hosts a variety of forums on topics of interest to the Berkeley High community.

PTSA Focus & Goals for 2008-2009:

Last year, the main goal of the PTSA was to recreate itself as a result of Berkeley High having gone through some dramatic changes over the past several years. We had gone from one very large school to six small schools and programs and the PTSA needed to adapt. The roles that an overall PTSA still plays are:

- **Continued Production of all PTSA-sponsored Communication** – The Newsletter; the etree; the PTSA Website; the Red & Gold; the PTSA Organizer; the Directory; the Homework Site; and various college guidebooks.
- **Parent Education Series** – A series of seminars, workshops and guest lecturers was started this past April and June. Future evenings will deal with Alcohol & Drugs; homework & stress management; dealing with issues of race; etc.

- **Parent Outreach** – A stronger effort to bring in a more diverse active membership in the PTSA and involvement within the school.
- **Student & Parent Advocacy** – Help facilitate student-teacher communication & parent-teacher-admin communication when students and parents feel they need it.

The top priority of the PTSA for 2008-2009 is to address the achievement gap. This was one of the biggest areas of concern expressed by parents in initial meetings for reconstituting the PTSA. With the new superintendent, Bill Huyett, having expressed his commitment to making the achievement gap his top priority, the PTSA is looking forward to working closely with the district and the staff, parents and students of Berkeley High to make a real difference in this area.

But! – no matter how good the ideas and goals are, they are only as good as the people who work to reach them. We can only go after as many goals as we have groups of parents and guardians willing to work on them. **We need your involvement to make a better Berkeley High!** As we did last year, we have some fantastic leadership lined up. Irma Parker, parent liaison and director of the BHS Parent Resource Center, will be joining the PTSA Board. Karen Hemphill, BUSD school board member (and BHS parent), has agreed to participate in all our meetings. BHS student, Leslie West, is on the Board to help communicate what students feel they need. We also have a handful of great parents, PTSA veterans and newcomers alike, who will be involved this year, but we absolutely need your participation if we are going to have a big impact for our children.

We hope you will join us for what should be a very informative and productive evening.

Mark van Krieken
BHS PTSA President

Buen Dia (continued from page 1):

preguntar.

8.- Los padres no tienen que venir al día de orientación. Pero, si quieren venir, tendremos un área en el gimnasio donde se pueden sentar a esperar.

Nuevamente, bienvenidos y no se olviden, su participación en la escuela y en el proceso educativo de su hijo/a es de mucha importancia para ellos, para ustedes, y para la comunidad Latina en Berkeley High.

Simón Tiles, Parent Resource Center
stiles@berkeley.k12.ca.us; 644-8524

College Advisors (cont from page 7):

Help your students find extracurricular activities that they enjoy.

Wednesday, October 15: The PSAT is given at Berkeley High. Students must bring their photo ID's. This test is excellent preparation for the SAT for sophomores and juniors. Also, the PSAT test results of juniors are used for selecting National Merit semi-finalists. Information on how to sign up for the test will be available in the School Bulletin and College Advisor's Bulletin toward the end of September.

Ilene Abrams, 644-6804,
iabrams@berkeley.k12.ca.us
Angela Price, 644-4576,
angela_price@berkeley.k12.ca.us

BHS PE CLOTHES

If students wish to purchase BHS PE clothes, they may do so. BHS PE clothes are not required but students must wear a t-shirt, shorts, and athletic shoes for PE.

T SHIRTS & SHORTS - \$10
SWEAT SHIRTS PANTS - \$15

PE clothes will be sold during freshman orientation (in front of the Donahue gym). PE clothes will be sold before school, after school & during lunch at the PE office (located at the old gym, on Milvia and Durant). **Thank You Very Much!**

Shirley Sommers, BHS PE Dept.; 644-8888
Shirley_sommers@berkeley.k12.ca.us

Buen Dia *(continued)*:

(*Student Learning Center*), de lunes a viernes de 3:15-6:00, en el salón D221 (Centro Universitario y Vocacional – *College Career Center*), donde un grupo de tutores les ayudaran con sus tareas. También, el *BHS Development Group* patrocina periodos de tutoría gratis en muchas asignaturas.

Para aquellos estudiantes y familias que quieran comenzar a planificar el proceso de aplicación para las universidades contamos con el Centro Universitario y Vocacional (*College Career Center*) donde tenemos información y folletos de muchas universidades. Nuestras consejeras les pueden ayudar con el proceso de selección de universidades y con el proceso de aplicación a ellas.

Berkeley High también cuenta con un Centro de Recursos para Familias (*Parent Resource Center*). El Centro sirve de conexión con la escuela para muchas familias. Nuestros objetivos son incrementar la participación y la voz de las familias en la escuela, su entendimiento del proceso educativo y los recursos que se ofrecen en BHS y en la comunidad. El Centro realiza talleres y reuniones educativas para las familias de Berkeley High durante el año escolar. Venga y participe. De manera adicional, el Centro de Recursos para Padres cuenta con personal bilingüe, así que nos pueden llamar si necesitan ayuda en Español.

También existe PTSA, la Asociación para Padres, Maestros y Estudiantes. PTSA es otra avenida de participación para las familias en la escuela. No se olviden que su participación en la educación de sus estudiantes, tanto en casa como en la escuela, es de vital importancia. Adicionalmente, existen también dos servicios bastantes útiles para familias, el Etree y Edline. Usted podrá encontrar mayor información acerca de estos servicios dentro de este paquete informativo que ha recibido.

Rory Bled: Durante el mes de Junio, la Subdirectora Rory Bled anuncio su retiro. Su contribución a Berkeley High ha sido muy grande, primero como maestra de Francés, luego como consejera universitaria y durante los

últimos cinco años como subdirectora. Bajo su visión y liderazgo, *Berkeley International High School* fue concebida y creada. ¡La vamos a extrañar mucho!

Nuevos Miembros del Personal

Escolar: De manera adicional a un subdirector, el personal administrativo está contratando a 18 nuevos maestros, una bibliotecaria, seis consejeros y un par de coordinadores.

Departamento de Consejería:

Berkeley High cuenta con dos consejeras universitarias, un consejero de intervenciones, y diez consejeros/as académicas. A pesar de la crisis del presupuesto educativo, al final no se despidió a ninguno de los consejeros de la escuela. Sin embargo, seis consejeros y consejeras no van a regresar para el próximo año escolar: Madeleine Scott se ha retirado; Jarrod Bordi, Erica Rains-Vargas, Caren Ohlson, Oralia Ramirez y Cory Nakamoto han aceptado otros empleos. Para la fecha de hoy, el plan es mantener al mismo consejero/a de su hijo/a para el próximo año, siempre y cuando el consejero/a no se haya marchado. Teri Goodman (AHA), Molly Offermann (CAS), Susan Werd (BIHS), Anthony Smith (AC, A-E), y Brenda Wong (AC, F-La) estarán con nosotros el próximo año. Para el próximo año seguiremos contando con los servicios de nuestras dos consejeras universitarias, Ilene Abrams y Angela Price.

Comienzo del Año Escolar

1.- El primer día de clases es el miércoles 27 de Agosto. Ese día no habrá periodo cero, y el primer periodo comenzara a las 8:30AM.

2.- Los estudiantes recibirán su horario de clase de acuerdo a su grado. Durante la semana de inscripción, cada grado ha sido asignado un día diferente para que los estudiantes vengan a la escuela a buscar los horarios:

- Martes 19 de Agosto: Inscripción/Orientación para estudiantes del grado 9 (freshman)
- Miércoles 20 de Agosto: Grado 10
- Jueves 21 de Agosto: Grado 11
- Viernes 22 de Agosto: Grado 12

3.- El horario para la semana de

inscripción se ha organizado por grado, y la sesión de cada estudiante se ha organizado por apellido. La hora exacta ha sido imprimida en el sobre que usted ha recibido junto con este paquete informativo durante el verano. (Los estudiantes del grado 9 se presentaran en tres grupos, y usted podrá encontrar mayor información al respecto en este paquete).

4.- La inscripciones serán en el nuevo gimnasio de la escuela.

5.- ESTUDIANTES DEL GRADO 9 – El martes 19 de agosto es la Orientación para Freshman. TODOS los estudiantes del grado 9 se DEBEN REPORTAR al Teatro Comunitario al PRINCIPIO DE SU SESION, sin importar la hora indicada en el paquete informativo.

6.- Para la inscripción, los estudiantes deben traer lo siguiente:

- \$3 para pagar por la agenda de BHS (que contiene una agenda y una guía de 25 páginas acerca de Berkeley High, que todos los estudiantes reciben)
- Todas las planillas y formularios (de emergencia, de salud, fotos, etc.) que se deben de haber llenado.
- El sobre en el que recibieron este paquete informativo.

7.- Durante los cuatro días de inscripción, tenemos aproximadamente 3,200 estudiantes que van a entregar sus formularios, se van a tomar sus fotos, van a recibir sus agendas, sus armarios, sus libros, sus horarios, y si lo necesitan, van a llenar una solicitud de cambio de clases. Entonces, les agradeceríamos mucho su contribución al asegurarse que su estudiante se presente durante el día y la hora asignada. Tendríamos un gran caos si todos los estudiantes se presentan el día anterior al comienzo de clases. Sin embargo, si por algún motivo su estudiante no se puede presentar durante el día y la hora asignada, la escuela tendrá un día de inscripción adicional la semana siguiente. Para la fecha de impresión de esta hoja informativa no se ha decidido la fecha del día de inscripción adicional, pero puede llamar a la escuela para

cont. on page 10

Welcome To Berkeley High (cont. from page 1):

serve that passes on the Student Daily Bulletin, the College Advisor's Bulletin, news, notices, and volunteer opportunities. The volunteers running the etree work with the Berkeley High administrative team to ensure accuracy. It is an invaluable resource on the day-to-day happenings at the school.

To subscribe automatically send an email to bhs-request@idiom.com with one word only in the subject line: subscribe. When you want to remove your name from the list, do the same with "unsubscribe" in the subject line. Parents Diane Douglas and Melissa Bloom are the volunteer moderators. If you have trouble subscribing, please call Janet Huseby at 527-1130 or, better yet, send her an email at jhuseby@pacbell.net

Helpful Hint: At the bottom of each etree message there are three links. One is to the etree website, one connects you to the PTSA website (see below), and the last, most useful, connects you to the etree archives. The archives contain every etree posting since April 2004—including the one last week with the vital information you already forgot...

3. Subscribe to the Jacket. The students of Berkeley High produce an award-winning student paper packed with information and insight. It is distributed free to students on a biweekly schedule and mailed home to subscribers. Subscriptions cost \$45 per semester and \$90 for a full year. Full sponsorships are \$200. If you would like to subscribe, send a check made out to the Berkeley High Jacket to Berkeley High Jacket, 1980 Allston Way, Berkeley, CA 94704.

4. Volunteer. There is nothing like being on-site—if only for an occasional hour or two. There is any number of opportunities to volunteer: Registration, the first weeks of school, mailings, the Athletic Fund, the Development Fund, test monitoring, chaperoning dances or field trips, helping in the library. If you see a chance to help, take it. You will take away more than you give.

Volunteer opportunities are posted (often by our Volunteer Coordinator Janet Huseby) on the etree (see above). If you do not have email access, you may contact her at (510) 527-1130.

5. Attend the PTSA meetings. The meetings are packed with information and a great place to network. The first meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 9th from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Florence Schwimley Little Theater (FSLT). This meeting is particularly important — not only to hear from Principal Jim Slep, but to vote for representatives to the important BSEP and School Governance committees (see below) and for the PTSA leadership board.

6. Serve on a committee. There are two important school-wide committees at Berkeley High. The **Berkeley School Enrichment Project (BSEP) Site Committee** spends roughly half a million dollars annually raised by a special city parcel tax. Our college counselors, the Parent Access office, the Afro Haitian dance

drummer and algebra tutors are just a few items paid for by the site committee. The **School Governance Council** spends some money but more importantly makes policy decisions for the school. Both committees are composed of teachers, students, administrators and elected parent/guardians. Elections for parent/guardians are held during the first PTSA meeting of the year. Please plan on attending — if not to run, then to vote. Elections are held at the first PTSA meeting of the year (see above).

7. Use the Internet. There are two main BHS websites; one run by the school, the other by the PTSA. The PTSA website, managed by parent Matt Wong, is excellent and updated often. It carries the bell schedules, student daily bulletins, teachers' email addresses, athletic information (including team schedules), news and more. In addition, each of the small schools and programs has created a site. Finally, there is the Parents of Teens, not affiliated with the high school but useful nevertheless.

- BHS: www.bhs.berkeley.k12.ca.us/index.html
- BHS PTSA: bhs.berkeleypta.org
- Academic Choice: bhsacademicchoice.com/index.htm
- AHA: aha.bhs.berkeleypta.org
- CAS: www.cas.bhs.berkeleypta.org
- CP Academy: www.bhscpa.org
- SSJE: ssje.bhs.berkeleypta.org
- Parents of Teens: parents.berkeley.edu/subscribers.html

8. Edline. This is an amazing new option introduced during the past school year. By subscribing to Edline you will be able to access your child's grades and attendance. Invaluable! Look elsewhere in this packet for information on how to sign up.

9. Contacting a teacher, counselor or staff member. There are three ways to contact a teacher, counselor, or administrator: email, phone, or note. Notes may be left in the Teacher's Boxes which are located just across from the Front Desk. To leave a phone message, call the front office (510) 644-6120 and you will be connected to Voice Mail. Teacher and Staff email addresses can be found on the PTSA website (see above). Here's a shortcut to most staff addresses: Firstname.Lastname@berkeley.k12.ca.us

Financial Support. Giving money (and time) is always important. There are three main school-wide organizations that need your financial support: The Berkeley High School Development Group, the Athletic Fund and the PTSA. The Development Fund supports a wide-variety of activities from the Health Center to teacher grants to the Red and Gold. The money the BHSDG raises makes an enormous difference at the school. The Berkeley Athletic Fund purchases equipment and uniforms for the more than 1,000 students involved in the 17 sports. The PTSA focuses on communications (this newsletter, for instance) and hospitality.

Janet Huseby

THE BHS PARENT RESOURCE CENTER

The Parent Resource Center (PRC) would like to welcome back our "09" Seniors, the 9th grade Freshmen Class and all other BHS families, teachers, administrators and staff for the 2008 – 2009 school year. We hope each family had a wonderful summer. The beginning of the school year is a time for us all to roll up our sleeves and get busy. Berkeley High is a very large school and there are many opportunities for each and everyone to get involved and participate in some kind of way. Remember, we all bring something to the table and one person can indeed make a difference. Parents can serve on several committees at BHS including; School Shared Governance Committee, Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), Berkeley High School Development Group and the Principal Advisory Committee. Volunteer opportunities are also available in the following areas; Parent Center, the College Career Center, BHS Front Desk Greeters, Faculty Luncheon Committee, and many other areas in the school.

The Parent Center is entering its ninth year on site at Berkeley High School. Its main goal is to address and serve the needs of all BHS parents and their families. Special emphasis is placed on addressing the need of engaging disenfranchised parents, especially parents of color, into the school's decision making process, as well as helping them to navigate the educational system at the high school.

The Parent Center is a place where parents can come and feel welcome, have a sense of belonging and be reassured that their ideas, concerns and issues are valued. It is a safe environment for growing, learning and connecting. Last but not least, parents and students voices are heard. The Center provides an array of services. They include; Parent/Student Advocacy, Resources/Referrals for parents and students, Drop-In Availability and Bilingual Translation. It inspires students to be focused and respectful. The Center also stresses the importance of education and working together for both parents and students. Student services include; the Positive Minds Mentoring Program, student emergency fund, school supplies and assistance with academic support. Throughout the school year, Life Skills workshops will be presented on Saturday mornings from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon. Some of the topics will include; Student/Family Health and Wellness, "When Blue is the Blues " (Depression), College Essay Writing and Funding, Financial Planning, Literacy and Parents, Guardians and Grandparents Support Groups. The workshops will be posted to the BHS e-tree and in the Parent Resource Center.

The Parent Center is located in Room D-224 on the 2nd floor of the Main Administration Building, 1980 Allston Way. BHS Parent Center staff are Irma Parker and Simon Tiles. The hours of operation are daily from 8:30 am – 3:00 pm. Information on BART Discount Ticket orders will be available in August.

You may reach the Center staff by calling (510) 644-8524. Please stop in to visit your Parent Center. ALL ARE WELCOME!

Irma Parker & Simon Tiles

WRITING COACHES RETURN TO BHS THIS FALL

WriterCoach Connection (WCC), the program that brings skilled, individual help to students on their writing assignments will return to the Community Partnerships Academy and, funding permitting, will also serve Communications Arts and Sciences (CAS) students this year.

Over 30 volunteer writing coaches worked throughout the 2007-08 academic year with all CPA ninth and tenth grade students, and students and teachers alike found that the one-on-one attention motivates students and improves the structure, organization, and overall quality of student writing.

Working with an encouraging adult "made writing fun," "helps me get more ideas running," and "helps me to go deeper into the book we are reading," wrote students on the WCC assessment surveys. Returning CPA teacher Susannah Bell said coaches "brought a shot of enthusiasm about writing" to her freshman class, and she looks forward to working with coaches again this year. "WriterCoach Connection is a phenomenal resource for our small school," she says. "It is an invaluable tool for what I believe is our most important goal -- ensuring that our students are prepared for college writing."

You'd be a great writing coach! WCC encourages parents, guardians, and community members of all ages, ethnicities, and walks of life to volunteer. You don't have to be a writer or teacher, as step-by step training is provided. The commitment is only 1-2 hours per week during the school day. For more information and to register, please visit www.writercoachconnection.org (go to "Volunteer"). Or contact Lynn Mueller, writercoachconnect@yahoo.com, 510-524-2319.

Lynn Mueller

ENCOURAGE YOUR KIDS TO JOIN A CLUB

Or A Sport, Or A Dance Class, Or . . .

Many people have commented over the years that, with the amazing variety of academics, sports, performing arts and clubs, Berkeley High very much reminds them of a small (or perhaps not-so-small) college. And just as in college, one of the main objectives of every student is to make good friends and acquaintances. Because of its size, Berkeley High can seem a little overwhelming, but also because of its size, you can rest assured that there are always a bunch of kids who share the same interests as your child does. The trick is in finding those other like-minded kids.

Berkeley High has a wide assortment of student-run clubs and there's bound to be one (or more) that will appeal to every student. A few years back, my son joined the newly-formed Ninja Club. Their first order of business – attacking the Pirates Club. The following week they attacked the Environmentalist Club. When one of the kids in the group expressed an interest in making films, they started a Cinematography Club. Pretty soon they had 20 to 30 kids showing up each week to brainstorm ideas and periodically put out movies that they posted on YouTube. Clubs are a wonderful way for students with similar interests to find each other.

Clubs usually advertise their first meeting of the year in the Student Daily Bulletin. The SDB is read aloud to students during second period. It is also sent home on the etree (see pages 1 & 10 on how to subscribe). Every year new clubs are born as student interest shifts. Students wishing to form a club should contact Vice Principal, Vernon Walton (who also maintains a list of current clubs).

Other ways to create social opportunities for your child are to encourage them to check out all the different sports teams the school has to offer. There is a great amount of camaraderie on every team Berkeley High has – from the well-known sports like basketball, football and baseball to badminton, volleyball or cross-country. There's never any harm in trying out. I know a lot of kids who made teams they didn't think they could make and ended up having a great time. Berkeley High also has a great range of performing arts classes that are worth having your child check out. You don't necessarily have to be talented to have a fun time and make new friends. The best way to start the Berkeley High experience is to investigate as many social opportunities as possible. BHS is a fantastic place, but it is best enjoyed with friends at every turn.

*Mark van Krieken
BHS PTSA President*

THE BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GROUP (BHSDG)

-- Help Us Make A Difference At Berkeley High --

What is the Berkeley High School Development Group (BHSDG)?

We are the major fundraising organization at Berkeley High School (along with the Berkeley Athletic Fund). As an independent non-profit organization, our mission is *to support and strengthen the educational experience of all BHS students by raising and distributing funds to enhance academic and other programs at BHS*. We rely on donations and support from the families of BHS students and from the Berkeley community. Thank you to everyone who donated to the DG this past year!

What do we actually do for the school? Where does the donated money go?

Our grant process focuses on school-wide activities that serve *all students* no matter what small school or program they are in. We also accept donations earmarked for specific projects, programs, and teachers. However, by donating to our Annual Fund you can be sure your dollars will go to the places they are needed most.

- After-school tutoring services
- Classroom grants for all teachers
- Science Classroom Equipment
- College trips in 2008-09 for all 10th graders

- Student Organizers
- The Red and Gold Parent Handbook
- College Handbooks for 10th, 11th and 12th graders
- Professional development for BHS staff
- Digital and other equipment for Special Ed
- PTSA newsletters
- First Step Scholarships
- 25% of e-scrip revenues to the Berkeley Athletic Fund

We're an all-volunteer organization made up primarily of current BHS parents and we usually meet the first Monday of each month in the College & Career Center. Our first meeting for 2007-08 will be on Tuesday, Sept. 2nd (as Monday, Sept. 1st is Labor Day) from 7-9 PM in the College & Career Center.

Please support and **join** the BHSDG! We look forward to meeting you and working with you in 2008-09! It is never too early or too late to donate to the BHSDG. Your tax-deductible donation of any size would be greatly appreciated.

Berkeley High School Development Group
P.O. Box 519
Berkeley, CA 94701-0519

Nonprofit Tax ID # 94-3173406

Susan Helmrich & Jenny Burroughs, BHSDG Co-Presidents