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HSD Intranet**Hazelwood East High School motivating seniors to prepare for college**

Hazelwood East High School is motivating seniors to prepare for life after high school.

The senior class participated in an assembly-style presentation called "Making College and Career Count." The topics discussed by presenter Rod Moyers included academic achievement, choosing a college, financing education and career success, with an emphasis on interviewing for jobs, time management, networking for future opportunities, personal finance and credit card debt.

Shonda Ambers-Phillips, college and career counselor at Hazelwood East, organized the assembly because "it's a great way to get seniors energized about the college and career planning process. Every year, you'll have some students who are late bloomers. They are behind in the application process or in developing post-secondary plans. Often times all they need is a nudge in the right direction."

"Although the school counselors are constantly communicating this message to students, sometimes it can be internalized differently if it comes from an outside source," Ambers-Phillips said.

At the beginning of the program, Moyers led the students through an exercise. He asked everyone to stand up. As he called out specific questions and statistics, students sat back down. In the end, the few who remained standing provided a visual of the percentage of students who actually graduate from college after high school.

"Any one of you can make it if you make the right choices," Moyers followed, encouraging the students to understand that each individual experiences college in a different way.

He followed the exercise with a glossy workbook to help the students understand the concepts. The workbook covered choosing a major or a career field; characteristics for success such as organizational skills, logic, effort and leadership; understanding and building your personal brand; do's and don'ts for networking; and a list of websites as resources for college and career planning.

Moyers advised students to be more cautious with social networking sites, blogs, tweets and posts because the details they post online, including pictures, can have an influence on being accepted to college or being offered a job.

Ambers-Phillips thought the presentation was helpful.

"In my opinion, the most informative part of the presentation was the winning characteristics for success. The list of characteristics and skills discussed are applicable to almost every job," she said.

"The presentation helped me as a counselor because it gives added credibility to what we emphasize on a daily basis. The literature that was distributed gave students a tangible artifact to research options for college and career readiness," she continued.

Student feedback to the assembly was positive.

"Students who seemed apprehensive about going to the assembly were pleased by the speaker and the quality of the information that was conveyed," said Ambers-Phillips. "Many students stayed after the presentation to talk about their personal experiences."

Following the assembly, several students went to the new College and Career Center at Hazelwood East. The center is designed for students to explore colleges, universities and technical schools. It features a library of resource materials with college guidebooks and catalogs, career directories and more. Laptop computers are available for students to look at college websites or to submit applications electronically. Pennants from local, state and regional colleges decorate the walls and the whiteboard provides details about upcoming events and deadlines.



Seniors at Hazelwood East High School are taking advantage of the new College and Career Center at HEHS. The center opened in October and students can explore colleges, universities, technical schools and career options.