



Student Artwork



Tamiscal *times*

Volume 17:1

Fall 2005

Message from the Principal

As you read through this issue of the *Tamiscal Times*, I hope that you'll get a taste of the variety of experiences that students encounter at Tamiscal and that you find the articles helpful. The newsletter affords us a venue for background information that we hope will make the school come alive for you as well as tips on college, assessments, important dates, and services available for students. In addition to the *Tamiscal Times*, we've been using e-mail, regular mail, and phone calls for more frequent communication. Perhaps the best source of up-to-date information about the school can be found on our website at tamiscal.org. I'm always amazed and delighted by the transformations many of our students make as they become part of the Tamiscal community.

We have a unique opportunity this school year to thoroughly examine our ongoing progress through the WASC self-study. I'm looking forward to broad participation by both parents and students who will join the staff in evaluating what works and what needs to be improved. We'll be posting the meeting dates and times on our web page.

The 2005-06 school year has been going great so far! Among the highlights:

- Growth API score increased 19 points from 775 to 794. We are extremely proud of the outstanding performance of our students as a group and as individuals.
- Perfect fall wilderness trip for TEAM
- Full Mock Senate and Senior Dinner coming up in December
- Exciting uses of technology such as incorporation of distance learning into the students' independent study assignments; this resource is providing the additional background, context, interaction, and support that they might get in a traditional classroom.
- Soon picnic tables, benches, and umbrellas will complement our lush school garden
- Enthusiastic students and involved parents
- 100% participation in standardized tests so far this year
- Dedicated, highly skilled teachers and staff guiding all students to succeed
- Don Kreider, our volunteer math tutor extraordinaire
- A new instructional assistant for SIS, Janet Poser, who happens to be an experienced math teacher
- Dr. Mildred Medina, our new Full Circle counselor, available Monday through Thursday mornings
- Student art and photos of happy, engaged students throughout the classrooms

As always, I invite you to call, e-mail, or visit me with any questions, suggestions, or comments. I value the open communication and effective partnership we have in place to help all Tamiscal students reach their goals and meet state and district educational standards.

As the holidays approach, I send my warm wishes to all of you for a happy and safe season.

Marcie Miller

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Mock Senate and Senior Dinner 2005

by Susan Berkhout

All of our seniors are taking US Government and have been busy learning about our own government as well as learning some comparative government by comparing our government with other democracies.

This will be the second year that we have had a Mock Senate at Tamiscal; in prior years because of small numbers of students, we had only Mock Committees. All "senators" will be presenting their bills at their Mock Committees on December 8th. Each committee will select a bill to be sent to the floor of the Mock Senate the following week. Students whose bills are not selected will have other roles such as arguing for or against another senator's bill, filibustering, and so on.

All senators will be preparing questions about the four bills that will be voted on. We are expecting another professional mock senate learning experience again this year.

The Mock Senate will take place on Thursday, December 15, 2005 from 2 until 5 PM, and it will be followed by our second annual Senior Dinner. The dinner will be held in the HUB at Tamiscal beginning right after the Mock Senate. A committee of senior parents is planning the decorations and food.

If you are interested in helping out, please contact Kathy Nunan at knunan@comcast.net.

Integrity in Learning: Plagiarism vs. Honest Assessment

**We are
committed to
fostering a
community
of life long
learners,
driven by their
desire
to grow
academically
and
personally.**

Plagiarized work is defined as writing that is taken from another source without giving credit to the original author. The true crime of this offense is that it hampers the learning of the student, since teachers cannot accurately assess the student's writing, nor can they identify areas that need strengthening. Unfortunately, we often see evidence of plagiarism in students' work.

Students copying Cliff Notes or downloading essays— even paying for them— have obviously crossed the boundary of plagiarism. Additionally, students who work with tutors often produce work that is not authentic. Our staff tries very hard to support character building among our students, and we want to see an end to these dishonest practices.

We have recently purchased a program to check student work against any written work produced on-line, and we plan to implement this immediately. According to policy at Tamiscal, students caught plagiarizing will receive an F grade for the assignment. Since Tamiscal calculates attendance hours by student work, students will also lose attendance hours. *If the situation persists, or becomes serious, a parent conference will be held.*

We ask for strong parent support in this matter. Again, we cannot help your child develop their literacy skills when we are unable to evaluate the work they submit. Please speak with any private tutors you may employ, and also check your or your child's credit card statement to see if any on-line essay company fees have been charged.

We are committed to fostering a community of life long learners, driven by their desire to grow academically and personally. The success of Tamiscal rests heavily on the trust and open communication built between teacher and student. The integrity of students during their high school years will carry over to college, their career, and personal lives. We invite you to have a conversation with your child regarding integrity as an essential value for success at Tamiscal and in life.

Does your child have questions on technology?
Do you wish you had someone you could ask for help?



Meet AL

AL is your child's new technology tutor,
and he's available **24** hours a day, **7** days a week.

AL stands for **Atomic Learning**, the TUHSD's new online resource for computer software training. In addition to being used for staff development, AL is available to our students and their families in school and at home throughout the school year.

Atomic Learning's "just-in-time" approach to software training focuses on answering the common questions encountered when learning and using software. How do you cut and paste in Word? Is your child making a PowerPoint presentation and looking for help? How do you type a formula in Microsoft Excel? Here's how:

1. Go to www.atomiclearning.com
2. Enter the following user name and password:
3. User Name: *nnnnn*
4. Password: *ppppp*
5. Type your question in the search box and click on **Search**

An answer will be provided in the form of a short, narrated movie which will walk you through all the steps needed to complete the task.



Students enjoying the garden. Picnic tables, benches and umbrellas are coming soon!

The Tamiscal Directory is on its way

Be on the lookout for the 2005-06 Tamiscal Directory with names, phone numbers, and addresses of Tamiscal/Team families.

A special thanks goes to Kelly Todd and Petrice Larson for their generous contribution of time, hard work, and expertise in putting together this handy resource.

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ATTENTION JUNIORS & SENIORS!**FREE SAT TEST PREP**

The University of California is offering FREE SAT preparation through UCCP (UC College Prep Online). Access tutorials, practice sessions, vocabulary builder, diagnostic testing, and more.

Take advantage of this free opportunity to boost your scores. The website is:

www.uccp.org

Counselor's Corner

by Susan Berkhout

Tamiscal seniors are following a trend that has become popular in recent years and are applying early action or early decision to colleges of their choice.

In past years, colleges seem to be giving the nod to students who are willing to complete the applications early and designate certain schools as high priorities.

While this trend has been building momentum in recent years, this year seems to be a bumper year!

In the counseling office we have already processed 17 early action or early decision applications and have another five or so to do. The good news is that one of our students, Caroline Nunan, has already heard that she has been accepted by Marymount Manhattan, and I am certain that several others will hear good news before Christmas.

Of course we have the usual number of students who are applying via the regular deadlines.

Just as a point of information, I thought you might like to know that since the 2001 graduating class Tamiscal's college acceptances by the University of California have quadrupled from 3 to as many as 16 annually, and private college acceptances have more than tripled from 8 to 29 last year. Our students are setting high goals for themselves and are achieving them!

All About College Admissions Testing

by Judy Bloch

Questions that are commonly asked are which college admissions test should my student take and which test preparation company is the best? Perhaps this information will be helpful.

There are two admissions tests which colleges will accept, the SAT and the ACT. These two tests are different and occasionally a student will score better on one than the other. Then that student would send his/her best test score (whether it is an SAT or an ACT) to the college. I suggest that students take both tests to cover their bases.

The SAT is a reasoning test. It consists of math, verbal and writing sections, each earning the student a score of a possible 800 or a total score of 2400. The ACT tests the student's knowledge in four areas: English, Math, Reading, and Science with each carrying 1/4 of the weight toward the total score of 36. In addition, the student may sign up to take their writing test. Colleges know how to compare the different scores. Both registration forms are available in the College/Career Center or students can register online at SAT or ACT.

There is also the SAT II, the subject tests. The University of California system (not all colleges) require the SAT II tests. In fact the admission officers want students applying to the UC's to take at least two of the subject tests. These tests are administered on a Saturday morning.

Go to the SAT and the ACT websites for their test dates. SAT is www.collegeboard.com and ACT is www.actstudent.org. Junior parents beware: There are fee waivers for all SAT tests which may also be used for college applications in their senior year. Call Judy for the financial parameters.

Because more students in Marin take the SAT than the ACT, there are four sites in Marin that offer the SAT; Novato (Novato H.S.), Ross (Branson School), San Anselmo (Drake High School) and San Rafael (Terra Linda H.S. – the best bet for STAND-BY). The ACT is not offered in Marin except for two dates in the fall, the September and October administrations at Novato High School. If the student wishes to take the spring tests, they will have to choose test sites in S.F., Oakland, Berkeley, or Santa Rosa. Most of our students take the ACT at S.F. State. Colleges will accept any admission test score taken before January of a student's senior year (exception: Cal Poly will not accept a Dec. test score and, this year, the CSU's are asking students to take either the October or November tests). So, if students are unhappy with their junior spring test results, they have several test dates available in the fall to re-take the tests. The SAT offers test dates in Oct., Nov., and Dec. ACT offers administrations in Sept., Oct., and Dec. When students request that their SAT I test results be sent to a college, the College Board sends all of them. Colleges are interested in the best scores only, so students shouldn't worry that even their "bad" scores are viewed.

There are several test preparation companies offering strategy classes in Marin. These courses typically consist of a series, 12 or so, of group sessions. The one exception is Ivy West which sends tutors to your home. These sessions cost in the neighborhood of \$800. In addition, the Tamalpais Union High School District Adult & Community Education program, offers test preparation classes through Revolution Prep for six weeks (\$399) at Drake High School. Call 1-877-738-7737 for information and to register. I cannot recommend any particular program over another but I can give you flyers so you can call and ask any specific questions that you may have.

Your College/Career Center

Do you know what services are available to your student? Your full service center offers the following college and career assistance. Judy Bloch, who is a certified UC Berkeley College Admissions Advisor, offers conferences, which explore developing the college list, admissions testing, financial aid information, and writing the college essay. She maintains a college/career reference library of books, videos and CD's. Most of these can be checked out.

Applications, college catalogs, scholarships and financial aid forms are available here.

Working with the Marin County School-to-Career program, students are offered internship placements, job shadow experiences, and career orientated field trips. In addition, The Marin County Regional Occupational Program provides students with the opportunity of taking additional high school classes on other campuses. These free classes include: arts and communications, business and marketing, health and bioscience, service occupations and technology and engineering. Students sign-up and complete the application forms through the College/Career Center.

Judy also offers career searches, resume writing assistance, job listings, and issues yearly work permits. Students who are working can participate in the WEEP (Work Experience Education Program), earning high school credit for every 18 hours of work. Judy coordinates this program and administers the curriculum. Eight students participated in this program last year. Call Judy at 945-3779 to make an appointment or to gather more information about the above listed opportunities.

Community College: Some Important Facts

Q. How does a student apply to a community college?

A. The paper application is available at all times in the College/Career Center, Room 2 and at the college campus.

Q. What are the qualifications?

A. The student may attend any California Community College in the state if they have a high school diploma. If not, they need to: be eighteen years old or older, have successfully passed the California High School Proficiency Examination or the GED (General Education Development) examination.

Q. Can high school students take classes at community colleges while they are attending high school?

A. Yes. Tamiscal students often take classes at College of Marin.

Q. What are the advantages of a community college?

A. There are many. To list a few:

- Faculty members' primary responsibility is teaching
- Classes are small
- A wide variety of programs are offered
- Since course schedules are flexible, students can work
- It is financially very affordable
- After two years, students can transfer to a four year college as a junior
- Computer labs are plentiful and accessible
- A comprehensive array of support services are offered
- Students can earn a two year degree (AA or AS)
- The program offers students a chance to build an all new academic record

Q. Do some community colleges have dormitories?

A. Of the 106 community colleges in California, 11 have dormitories.

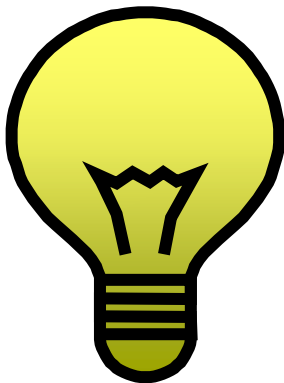
Many Tamiscal students attend College of Marin. Studies show that students who spend their first two years at a community college and then go on to graduate from four-year colleges are as well prepared academically as those who go directly to four-year colleges.

Paying for College

Many of our seniors are now applying to college and many of our families plan to apply for financial aid. There is a comprehensive article on our website. Go to tamiscal.org, click on College/Career and then on FINANCIAL AID. The gateway form is the FAFSA. This year our federal government prefers that parents fill out the FAFSA online at www.studentaid.ed.gov. This form cannot be sent until January and should be completed no later than March to take advantage of the grant money. If you do not have your taxes completed by January, you may use this year's numbers or estimate the amount. You will be given an opportunity to change the amounts when you receive your Expected Family Contribution.

Those seniors who are applying to private colleges should check to see if their college choices are among the 75 that require the financial aid **Profile**. If they must fill out the Profile, this should be completed in the fall. Also, lucky for us in Marin, we have the Marin Education Fund in San Rafael. Their counselors offer free financial aid information. Visit their website at www.marineducationfund.org for their workshops (scholarships, too) and for their hours. If you still have questions, call Judy Bloch at 945-379.

The Lighter Side of College Admissions



How many students does it take to change a light bulb at...

BROWN: Eleven, one to change the light bulb and ten to share the experience

COLUMBIA: Seventy-six, one to change the light bulb, fifty to protest the light bulb's right to not change, and twenty-five to hold a counter protest.

DARTMOUTH: None, Hanover doesn't have electricity.

PENN: One and he gets six credits for it.

YALE: None, New Haven looks better in the dark.

STANFORD: Only one, dude.

WILLIAMS: The whole student body, when you're snowed in, there's nothing else to do.

HARVARD: One. He/she holds the bulb and the world revolves around him/her.

Tamiscal Fund

Thanks to those of you who have already contributed to the Tamiscal Fund! You may have recently received a letter requesting contributions from the parent co-chairs of the annual fund drive, Kathy Nunan and Jo Butler. Because of your generosity, Tamiscal is able to provide additional library materials, art supplies, refreshments for test days and school activities, and up-to-date technology to supplement our school budget. We are also able to bring in artists for student workshops and staff development. We very much appreciate your financial support that helps fund school programs and a supportive campus climate.

Modernization Bond

The TUHSD and Board of Trustees are holding a series of public meetings to explore whether the district should schedule another bond election to continue the work started under the current bond. Tamiscal High School was completely rebuilt as a result of the last successful bond measure, but there still are district projects that weren't included as part of that bond measure. Please feel free to join us at our next School Site Council meeting in the Tamiscal Hub on Thursday, December 12 at 12:30. Assistant Superintendent Arvo Toukonen will make a short presentation and be available for questions.

Getting to Know...

Dr. Mildred Medina, PsyD
Full Circle Counselor, Tamiscal High School



Dr. Medina recently joined Tamiscal as Full Circle Counselor providing extra support for students during the school year. She was originally born in the Philippines and later moved to San Diego, where she grew up hanging out at the beach, hiking the mountains and trails, riding her bike everywhere, and climbing any big rock she could find. Her love of the mountains climbing, camping, and hiking still continues.

Mildred received her Bachelor's in Psychology at UCSD, then decided to go East for her graduate studies. She received a Master's in Professional Counseling while living in Washington,

DC, then a second Master's in Clinical Practice at Hartford plus a Doctorate (PsyD) in Clinical Psychology. During her graduate work in the Northeast she chose to live in New York City to experience the "city that never sleeps." She claims it definitely lived up to its reputation.

Dr. Medina feels fortunate to have lived and traveled in several countries around the world. Other than the U.S. and Philippines, she lived in Okinawa and mainland Japan during high school. While living overseas, she traveled to South Korea, Guam, and Thailand. Additionally, she

has traveled to England, France, Barbados, Aruba, Baja California, and to parts of Canada. Other than enjoying the outdoors, she likes listening to music (from classical and opera to Hip-Hop and Rock), watching movies, attending concerts, spending time with family, playing the piano, reading, and traveling.

Specific group discussions will be held throughout the year on anxiety, time management, peer conflict, relationship issues, alcohol and drug awareness, senior transition, and other student concerns.

Please feel free to call or drop by, to suggest other topics for discussion, or to make an appointment.

Office Hours:

Monday
8:00am-1:30pm

Tuesday &
Wednesday
8:00am-1:00pm

Thursday
8:00am-12:30pm

Phone:
945-3762

Are We Prepared?

Julie Seha, a School Site Council parent representative, is currently reviewing Tamiscal's readiness in case of disaster.

Having TEAM as part of Tamiscal is very reassuring, since both Chuck and Patchen hold current Wilderness First Responder certificates. It helps that Team students also learn and practice wilderness medicine skills in class and in the field. Stoves, sleeping bags, some food, water purification and other supplies are stored on campus, and Team has two satellite phones.

We are purchasing walkie-talkies for the school and are working with the district to activate our public address system. As part of disaster preparedness, we will be reviewing our safety procedures and assuring that each classroom has emergency supplies and easily accessible information.

If any Tamiscal parents are interested or trained in this area, we would welcome your participation on the committee.

Interpreting Report Cards

Parents, if this is your student's first year at Tamiscal, you may be unfamiliar with partial credits. Tamiscal teachers award credits as we progress through the semester. At R1 there should have been 1 CR completed with a grade. Now, at R2, you should see 3 credits and a grade. At the end of the semester, you will see the full 5 credits and a grade. Should your student get less than 3 credits in any class for this reporting period, it means the student is behind in completing work. Most students who are behind have already been assigned to SIS. Please speak with your child's teacher if you have concerns.



Master teacher
Rosemary Eagan with
student Laura Fiesel

Tamiscal to prepare for new accreditation process

What is WASC, and why is it important?

Tamiscal will soon begin a WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) self-study in preparation for a visiting team of educators in spring, 2007 to determine our term of accreditation. Other schools and colleges use the accreditation as validation that the school meets identified standards and criteria. After the previous two visits Tamiscal was granted the highest rating, a six-year term of accreditation, without a mid-term visit. The accreditation process is an ongoing cycle of improvement. In the Tam district, each year the schools analyze student performance data (based on state and district assessments) to see how well our students are performing. We identify areas of strength and improvement and develop an Instructional Improvement Plan with specific goals and objectives to improve learning. The staff and School Site Council (with parent, student, and staff representatives) agree on a budget using site funds to implement the Plan.

Who is involved?

It is essential that the self-study brings together a broad and representative group of students, parents, community members, and staff in order to discuss the school from a variety of perspectives. In addition to working with the Leadership class and School Site Council, we will ask for student and parent volunteers, representing independent study and Team, to participate in Focus Groups to gather and analyze information about specific areas. We have not yet determined the dates for the Focus Group meetings but plan to later e-mail the times.

What does WASC look at?

There are five broad Focus areas with specific criteria developed by WASC and the California Department of Education:

1. Organization
 - a. Vision and Purpose
 - b. Governance
 - c. Leadership and Staff
 - d. Resources
2. Standards-based Student Learning- Curriculum (*what is taught*)
3. Standards-based Student Learning: Instruction (*how it is taught*)
4. Standards-based Student Learning: Assessment and Accountability
5. School Culture and Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

How can I become involved to help Tamiscal?

Let us know (e-mail principal Marcie Miller at mmiller@tamiscal.org or call 945-3750) which Focus Groups look interesting to you. We'll be sure to let you know when the committees are meeting.

What will I be expected to do?

Participation in a Focus Group means that you'll attend at least one evening meeting to look at the criteria and analyze data, such as the Student Performance Report and Perception Survey. Some committees will gather additional data by interviewing students and staff, reviewing student work, sitting in on classes, and talking to other parents. Out of this investigation, the Focus Group will identify a few areas of strength as well as areas that need improvement.

What happens next?

Since we're a small school, we'll have the entire staff along with representatives from each of the Focus Groups discuss the findings and agree on several areas of strength and needed improvement. The group will develop an action plan to address the areas needing improvement. Out of all of these discussions, we will develop a written plan—our Self-Study. We'll mail the report to the Visiting Committee Chairperson next fall and await the 3 1/2 day visit in the spring of 2007. The Visiting Committee will meet with a variety of students, parents, certificated and classified staff members to verify what is written in the report. Based on their findings, they will recommend a term of accreditation to WASC and write a summary report of their visit.

Reminder about Final Exams

Please note that Tamiscal final exams in English, Social Studies and Electives are scheduled during the week of December 5. Math and Science finals are scheduled during the week of December 12.

Students taking courses at Tamalpais, Redwood or Drake High Schools have finals during the week of December 12.

Please check dates with your teachers now to avoid conflicts!