

July 23, 2010

Parents:

Our Fall enrollment continues to climb. We have 190 students enrolled today. I can not hold your space. After April 1<sup>st</sup>, the state requires me to take students on a first come, first served basis. If you have not turned in your form, please do so as soon as possible.

Applicants for University High School and 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders who wish to apply to the University Junior High need to get their forms and references in. The UHS has moved straight across the Plaza street, a few doors down from Saladel. It's more than twice as big as the old UHS. Drive by and take a look!

Orientation will be on Aug 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 for the main campus and Aug 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 for the UHS/UJS site.

The **calendar** is enclosed. Yes, we are still having the Reward Days for those who pass the TAKS Benchmarks. **Meal forms** are also enclosed. We have to have a new meal form **every** year. If your family is new, there was a new meal form in your enrollment packet, so you do not have to fill out another one, although the cost of breakfast is 2 cents more. **Supply lists** are enclosed. 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students should also have a planner.

#### Judo News

Well. The summer is just about gone. For many, the summer is full of days that basically end up being the same. Some are even ready for school to start. But for others, it has been busy. Judo players always have something to do.

Devin Sobay, are resident super star, has been very busy with his judo this year. Devin, who turns 13 this August, has participated in three major judo tournaments since school let out last spring. Devin went to San Diego, California in June and took second in the USJA/USJF combined Junior National tournament. As I am writing this, Devin has gone to Atlanta, Georgia to compete in the USA Judo Junior Olympics. I currently don't know how many will be in his division, but many of the best in the nation attend this tournament. Next weekend, Devin and I will go to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, where Devin will compete in an international tournament called the Jr. US Open. These three tournaments will be used to determine the ranking of judo players in the US. In years past, Devin has been rated the #1 player in the nation, but last year he fell to 3<sup>rd</sup>. He is determined to get his title back. If he regains his #1 position, then he will be the representative for the US in any international Jr. tournaments. Devin has an ultimate goal of representing the USA in the Olympics in 2016. He is certainly on the right path, but it requires him to compete in every tournament he can, especially those far away where the quality players are. His family is raising money to help defray the cost of all of that travel.

Devin is not the only Judo player from Bright Ideas who has been busy this summer. Jordan Johnson (also 13) was promoted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Judo Rank (Yellow-Orange) in May. Jordan has gone to classes two nights per week at Texoma Judo; working out with the club there. His technique and determination have improved considerably. He will soon be eligible for promotion to solid orange, the 4<sup>th</sup> judo rank.

For the rest of us, judo will start up again when school starts in August. Each student in the grades 4,5,6, and 7 will have to have a judo gi, which is available at cost from the school. If you had one last year, and it still fits and still looks good, then you are set. Otherwise, you will have to purchase one from the front desk. We will be getting the size for all students the first week and by week three, all should be in uniform each class. **Karate uniforms are not acceptable** because they tear too easily. It is recommended that students wear shorts under their uniforms. Long pants hanging out the bottom can cause the students to stumble and fall unnecessarily. Also, on judo days, girls should wear a U-neck T-Shirt under their uniform, for modesty's sake.

Judo is a great sport for people of all ages. It is the second most popular sport in the world (soccer is 1<sup>st</sup>) and is the first sport to sell out at the Olympics. It was started in 1882 by a Japanese professor who wanted a way for people to practice marital arts without risking constant injury. The two guiding principles of judo are 1) mutual benefit and welfare and 2) maximum efficiency. It was intended to develop the human character toward ultimate perfection. President Theodore Roosevelt was a black belt as was Elvis Presley.

It teaches you, no matter how many times you get knocked down, you have to get up and keep trying. See you on the mat. Carl Plummer, USA Judo Continental Level judo coach.

We will have a new attendance procedure to enforce the state attendance rules. We will be hopefully purchasing a new technology that will make attendance accurate and efficient, called ScholarChip. Each student will have a card that either their parents tap on a device (elementary) as they enter the main building parking lot door, or the student taps their card (middle school and high school) as they enter each

class. Section 25.095 of the Texas Education Code states that parents must be warned that students must attend 90% of the year or they lose credit. Students may make up missed work and make up missed days by attending tutoring. Four hours = one day. Students who are 18 or older may be withdrawn after 5 absences in one semester. However, being able to make up work does not mean students won't get cited for truancy. We are hiring new personnel who will promptly file truancy on students who miss 4 days or more in a 6 wk period. The new technology and new personnel will have a great impact on our attendance rate, which means more state funds for the school. Plus, half of any fine paid by truants, which is usually \$325 for each day missed, will go to the school.

A new law involves the use of car seats. Any child that is under 4 ft 9 inches tall or under 8 years old must be in a car seat or booster car seat. If a child is younger than 8, but taller than 4' 9" tall, he does not have to be in a car seat. A fine of \$25 can be assessed for the first offense and \$250 for subsequent offenses. This means that when we have field trips, these students must be provided with their car seat or they may not go on the field trip.

Graduation 2010 was truly a joy. I wish every one of the parents and students could have attended. They would have been inspired and motivated. The students give a small speech thanking the people in their lives who have helped them graduate. The students' speeches were especially moving this year. There was a lot of sniffing from the audience. I really liked how much the students said they appreciated the teachers who were close to them, and a thread that wove in and out was how they wouldn't have made it without their teachers, parents and/or grandparents and friends pushing and motivating them. One said she never thought she would be graduating, much less going to college. The next part of Graduation is when a faculty member or myself gives a short speech about the student whose just finished his speech. The faculty talks about what makes this student extraordinary, some of the obstacles they've overcome, and list the student's type of diploma, Recommended or Distinguished, GPA, and college hours earned. Exie Nicholas produced a lovely PowerPoint that was truly lovely and personal. Thank you to all of the staff and parents who had anything to do with graduation. Graduation 2010 has set a new standard that will be hard to meet next year!

Congratulations to our 16 graduates of 2010! Below are their names, how many college credits they earned, and their plans for the Fall. All but one are also Texas Scholars, which means that they have advanced diplomas, either Recommended or Distinguished, and have completed at least 2 college hours. This is a very important boost for their college applications. As you will see, most of the graduates are continuing on with their studies at Vernon to complete their basics, and then will transfer to MSU.

Jade Baker: **12** college hours, Vernon College, majoring in Computer Science  
Courtney Biddle: **23** Vernon College, majoring in Computer Science  
Courtney Chamberlain: **23** *Valedictorian*, college hours, MSU, major undecided  
Tony Cleek: **23** college hours, graduated in 3 years, Oklahoma University, majoring in Pharmacy Technology  
Josh Ferguson: **19** college hours, Vernon, majoring in Radiology  
Jordan Hazlewood: college hours, Vernon, majoring in Psychology  
Julia John: **38** college hours, graduated in 3 years, Vernon, major is undecided  
Danielle Leon: **12** college hours, graduated in Dec., MSU, major is undecided  
Sean Morath: **9** college hours, graduated in 3 years, Vernon, major is undecided  
Christopher Moats: **13** college hours, MSU, majoring in History  
Cappy Park: **21** college hours, graduated in 3 years, Vernon, majoring in Criminal History and Psychology  
Tiffany Sellers: Vernon, major is undecided  
Jennifer Sheldon: **6** college hours, Vernon, major is undecided  
Emily Wall: **15** college hours, Vernon, major is undecided  
Allison Walls: **35** *Salutatorian*, college hours, graduated in 3 years, Texas Tech U, majoring in Family Science  
Billie Wilson: **15** college hours, Vernon, major is undecided

There is a wide range of how many years these stellar graduates have been at Bright Ideas and a wide range of obstacles they had to overcome. One student had been at Bright Ideas for only semester, and two students had been here for 7 years. Several students were living on their own and two had children. One was the first in his family to go to college. This shows that ALL students are capable of going to college before they graduate, if they are motivated to work hard and have close relationships with their teachers and someone at home, be it friend or family to keep them motivated.

Our school is growing and growing. This year we have more students than ever before, and our enrollment for the fall is higher than ever before. We've developed a reputation for having wonderful students, very involved, cooperative parents, very few discipline issues, and a fantastic teaching and support staff. It takes all of us working together to make Bright Ideas the outstanding school it is this year, our 25<sup>th</sup> year.

Thank you for being here!

[Lyndaplmr@aol.com](mailto:Lyndaplmr@aol.com)