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THE ROCKET

Rockcastle County High School

Volume XIX Number 4

February 20, 2002

Freshmen still falling behind

BY JESSICA DENNY

Despite several efforts to help freshmen they are still having trouble adjusting to high school. During the fall semester 35% of all freshmen failed at least one class.

"Problems with students begin during freshmen year," said RCHS Principal John Hale.

One of the problems is that 30% of the freshmen class will not graduate.

The school has made several efforts to prevent this, including two freshmen tutoring programs, ESS, and 21st Century. With all the help they are receiving why are they still not doing well?

Teachers seem to think attendance could be a problem.

"Attendance is a big issue," said Global Issues teacher Debbie Coffman.

She says they are still not used to the work load at the high school, so when they miss school they can't get caught up. This then leads to low grades.

Some teachers don't have any problems with their freshmen students. Freshman-English teacher Mrs. Nancy Bussell claims she can't complain.

"They're fine. They always do everything I say."

Mr. Chris Frith, also a freshman English teacher, says there is a higher failure rate at the beginning of the year. Mr. Hale hopes that a new grading policy will help bring the failure rate down. He thinks having just one grade every semester instead of one every nine weeks will help grades go up.

RCHS had a parent/teacher conference earlier than usual in hopes that this will also help combat the problem. The conference was held on January 31. 180-out

of over 800 students had parents sign in at the meeting. Fifty of those were freshmen. Mrs. Dawn Stallsworth had 10 out of 13 of her freshmen students' parents show up.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN ISS
FALL 2000 AND 2001

Grade	9	10	11	12	Total
2000	201	156	98	71	526
2001	314	123	137	92	666

RCHS is keeping its behavior under control with In School Suspension (ISS). Freshmen account for almost half of the ISS visits for the school. The chart above includes ISS data for RCHS. Grades are also influenced by bad behavior.

"Class disruptions, and disrespect are what get most students sent to ISS," said freshman teacher and ISS supervisor Rick Barnett.

He also added that their attitudes become more positive as the year progresses. This leads to an improvement in students' grades. Most teachers agreed on this matter.

After talking to several freshmen I have learned that they treat due dates as if they were still at the middle school. Some freshmen proceeded to say they had more time at the middle school for assignments, and homework was done in class. They also said it should be like that at RCHS.

However some freshmen like Surprise Stallsworth are doing well.

She mentioned that there were disruptions from other students during class, but she has had no problems adjusting to high school.

There are probably more students like Stallsworth. Since 25% failed a class, that would leave 75% adjusting to high school just fine.

Students can expect new exit by summer

BY BRIAN REYNOLDS

If you have heard the rumors about the new exit for students by the baseball field, it's true!

According to the director of Buildings and Grounds Services, Mr. Doug Mullins, "There will be a new exit for students' only."

Mullins said he made the decision after the safety committee informed him about problems in the

parking lot.

Assistant Principal Barry Noble, a member of the safety committee, said the parking lot was over crowded, which caused many accidents. Another exit would reduce the traffic flow, therefore reducing accidents.

"The new exit is an A+ idea. Mr. Mullins needs to be com-

mended on his decision making skills," said senior Kane Hofbrook.

Senior Tim McClure disagrees. "Only a section of the parking lot would use the exit. The idea is a waste of the schools' money."

Don't look for the exit too soon. "Weather permitting, the exit should be ready by the middle of summer," said Mullins.



Snowfall and rain have contributed to delays on the new parking lot exit. Located at the far end of the parking lot, the exit will be for right-hand turns only. (photo by Brian Reynolds)

Full year of English IV, end-of-course exams possibly in future

BY CLIFTON T. WILLIAMS

Future seniors might have to expect a full year of English according to a proposal presented at the latest SBDM (Site-Based Decision Making) Council meeting.

The proposal, presented by Jennifer Mattingly, Chairperson of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, suggested that instead of requiring seniors to participate in both English IV and Transitions, English would be made a full year course. This would incorporate English, as well as a nine weeks of transitions-based concepts, namely the senior project.

"The senior project is the baby

of Transitions. It's what I care most about," said Mattingly.

Parent member Paul Abney said a research paper similar to the senior project in English would be very valuable to the students, however he would not vote for any proposal that did not "eliminate transitions."

"Transitions class is just a waste of time," commented Abney. "Stewart (Abney) played paintball, videotaped it and got an A."

Another main concern of the proposal is the amount of class time spent on portfolio writing during an eighteen week period of English IV,

in comparison to the time spent on other content material. The focus of this concern was on writing that will help prepare students for college.

"Academic writing at the college level is apparently not appropriate for the portfolio," said Mattingly.

This seemed to be the common opinion of the representatives of the English department. If the proposal is approved, English teachers would have at least one more full

See PROPOSAL
page 15