

# Tanagers' Nest News

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## Suddenly ... What Do You Mean, It's May?

by Jon Frey April 30, 2024

The old adage certainly is true that time flies ... and more so as we get older! I'm really not sure where the school year went. Wasn't last week, January and we were starting the new semester? Maybe a month ago it was Homecoming ... right? Maybe? Wow. I know the parents of the seniors can relate. While it has been a busy year, it has also been such a fun and rewarding year. Seeing the students grow and mature over the course of a school year really is fun and it serves as such an effective reminder as to why we do this (work as educators).

Junior assessments have wrapped up with 100% participation/completion! A BIG shout out to our juniors who were patient during a week-long Internet issue that literally hit the first day we planned to test. Nevertheless, we were able to resume testing and the students really did a great job working with us to get testing done. I know I speak on behalf of the staff and counselors responsible for the testing when I say, "thank you and great job!" to our juniors for helping make this as painless as possible for all concerned!



Registrations for classes have been submitted since the last newsletter and the inputting of those requests is underway. Right now, we're seeing between 15% to 20% of registrations across all four grades (8th through 11th) have yet to be turned in. What this means is that those who did not turn in a registration will have a schedule built for them based upon their credit needs as determined by their school counselor. Simply put, they may not end up in the classes they wanted most. We want to encourage all students to make sure they turn in a registration form - even now - is better than not at all as it will allow those building the schedules to know what your student's preference is, for classes. **Please ask your student(s) if they made certain to turn in their registration for next year's classes!** If we can save your student and/or our staff some headaches in the fall, we would very much like to do that. Please ask them turn it in to their counselor - asap. Thanks!

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not congratulate the Class of 2024 on a job, well done! We are all so proud of you and all that each of you has accomplished!

*Jon*

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## VHS Recognized by U.S. State Department!

by **Jon Frey** on May 1, 2024

Vermillion High School is pleased to announce that the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has recognized VHS for welcoming international students to study here as part of the International Youth Exchange Program. Each school year, VHS hosts between one and four International Exchange Students.



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Pictured are Lindsey Cutler (L) State Department Monitoring Unit Chief and (R) Bagul Bekdurdyeva, International Exchange Student from Turkmenistan.

## VHS Native Student Honor Ceremony - May 8th

by **Jon Frey**, on Apr. 30, 2024



VHS seniors of Native descent will be recognized on Wednesday, May 8th at 4:00pm in Prentis Park in the amphitheater on the South end of the park. There, the students will receive a traditional star quilt and be recognized for their accomplishments. A small dinner will follow in a nearby park shelter.

## Student Checkout - What to Know

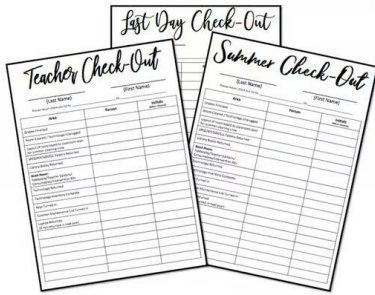
by **Jon Frey**, on May 1, 2024

With seniors wrapping up their time at VHS the week of May 6th and all other grades the following week, here are some items we want to make certain to share regarding student check-out.



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All students must pick up a check-out form in the office during final exams. Among the items they will need verified are that they have turned in their laptop (which receives updates and general maintenance, if needed, over the summer), lunchroom balances should be settled if in the negative, and can be rolled over if there is a balance remaining. Graduating seniors can have their lunchroom balances refunded or passed along to a younger sibling.

Textbooks must be returned to the teacher from whom they were checked out and all library books should be returned to the library. Lockers need to be cleaned out and visually inspected as part of the checkout process and all sports uniforms must be returned to the coach - unless of course, the season is continuing past the last day of school. Unserved Saturday School minutes must be cleared by seniors prior to graduation practice. Any unserved Saturday School for students in all other grades will roll-over to next year.

Seniors must complete the checkout process before graduation practice on Thursday, May 9th at 10:00am. All other grades must complete the checkout process by 1:30pm on Thursday, May 16th.

## Teacher Feature!

This month, we will feature Ms. Sara Rohde, our *Business Teacher*.

**Where is home?** Newcastle, Nebraska.

**Where did you get your (post-HS) education?** Wayne State College.

**How many years have you been teaching at VHS? Overall?** This is my third year at VHS, and in education.

**What classes do you teach?** Personal Finance, Intro to Business, Accounting I & II, Co-Teach Visual Media Marketing, Internship Coordinator.

**Did you always want to teach or did something lead to you teaching after first doing something else?** I did not always want to be a teacher. I started out in the business world, first in banking and later in payroll. I was led to teaching after taking part-time hours, when my kids were younger, as a paraprofessional and substitute teaching. I am very thankful for





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the people in my life (and at VHS) who encouraged me to take the leap into full time teaching.

**Do you coach any sports? Do you sponsor any activities or clubs?** Native American Club & Caged Creations.

**What is your favorite part of teaching at VHS?** My favorite part of teaching at VHS are the students and staff. I love going to extracurricular events and seeing our students be themselves. It's a great privilege to work and laugh with our students. Our staff is really special, very encouraging and supportive.

**Anything else?** I enjoy spending time with family and friends and being outdoors.

## Important Dates & Information for Spring Semester

- May 1st - Senior Awards Day Presentation - 2:00pm, VHS Auditorium (Public Welcome)
- May 6th & 7th - Semester Exams (Seniors ONLY)
- May 8th - Native American Graduate Honor Ceremony - 4:00pm - Prentis Park
- May 8th - Senior Cookout & Baccalaureate Service (*optional*) - 6:30/7:00pm - VHS Aud.
- May 11th - Graduation - 1:30 pm, Sanford Coyote Sports Center, USD (Doors open 12:30 pm)
- May 14th - 16th - Semester Exams (Grades 9, 10 & 11)
- May 16th - Final Day - 1:30 pm dismissal.
- May 30th to July 3rd - Summer School - VHS
- June 14th, 15th & 16th - All School Reunion - VHS & Various Sites in Vermillion

**RED text denotes important dates for seniors!**

## Important Dates & Information for Fall Semester

- August 15th - 1st Day of Classes for 2024-25 School Year
- September 10th - Picture Day
- September 13th - No School - Teacher Inservice
- September 23rd - 27th - Homecoming Week
- October 9th - Picture Retake Day

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## CTE Survey – Need to Try Again!

by **Jon Frey** on Apr. 30, 2024

Recently, we were asked by the South Dakota Department of Education to survey our parents about our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming at Vermillion High School. Currently our CTE staff is composed of our Business/Finance instructor, Sara Rohde, our Art/Graphic Design instructor, Dr. Grant Riedel, our Construction and Manufacturing instructor, Mark Neitzke and our Family & Consumer Sciences instructor, Hope Druin. These four individuals teach introductory through capstone courses in their respective career pathways to provide our students with vocational experiences prior to graduation.

When we originally put the survey out a few months back, we did not have very many responses. The survey went out via a School Messenger message and that may not have been the best way to send it, so we want to try again via this newsletter.

Here is [the link](#) in both QR code form and [clickable form](#). The survey is very brief, but we would really appreciate your feedback. Thank you!



## Graduation FAQ

by **Jon Frey** on Apr. 30, 2024

What if my senior did not finish checking out of school? **Your senior is required to complete the formal checkout process prior to participating in graduation exercises. He/She has until the end of school on Friday, May 10th to complete check out. You can expect him/her to be notified at graduation practice if he/she failed to properly check out of school.**

What about lunch balances? **Positive balances can be passed down to a younger sibling or refunded, if requested. Negative balances need to be settled before a diploma can be awarded. Seniors will be notified of negative balances at the time of check out.**

What if I just discovered that my senior failed a class he/she needed to graduate? **He/She cannot graduate ... yet. However, your senior will still be permitted to participate in the**

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graduation ceremony, but he/she will not find a diploma in the diploma cover, but rather a note letting your senior know that we expect to see him/her in summer school to finish up the important missing credit so that we can award the diploma at that time! After all, better late, than never!

When is graduation practice? **Thursday, May 9th at 10:00am - Sanford Coyote Sports Center (be early, not late)!**

Does my senior need to wear his/her cap and gown to graduation practice? **No. Practice will be informal. Although, it is not a bad idea for your student to wear or have available, the footwear they intend to wear during the ceremony just to make sure walking on the ramp feels natural.**

Where is the Sanford Coyote Sports Center and where should we park? **953 North Dakota Street, Vermillion - Directly South of, and attached to, the DakotaDome. Utilize the parking lot just to the East of the DakotaDome/Sanford Coyote Sports Center or the lot directly South of the SCSC.**

How do I get the creases and wrinkles out of my senior's graduation gown? **Steam! Either hang the gown on a hanger in a bathroom with a hot, steamy shower going (you do not want to put the gown in the shower!) or use a steam setting on an iron, but be careful not to burn the gown. You will definitely want to take the gown out of the packaging, hang it up and steam it, sometime before the Saturday of graduation!**

What's up with the tassel? On what side should it hang? **The right side. At the end of the ceremony, once the diploma is conferred, your senior will move his/her tassel to the left side.**

What time does my senior need to be at the SCSC on Saturday? **Please have your senior arrive no later than 12:45 pm.**

What time can my family get into the SCSC on Saturday? **Doors open at 12:30 pm.**

When would be a good time for family photos at the SCSC? **We recommend photos be taken after the completion of the graduation ceremony. It is important that the graduates be in the gathering area prior to the ceremony as attendance is taken multiple times to ensure we have everyone.**

Will graduation be streamed online? **Yes. There will be a streaming link on the district website for the graduation ceremony.**

Can I put a message on my cap (mortar board)? **No. We ask that the only alterations or adornments to the traditional graduation cap and gown are those approved by the principal**

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in accordance with school board policy for students of Native descent. Unapproved tassels, stoles, cords, leis, etc, should be saved for the graduation party or reception, but cannot be a part of the formal ceremony.

Is the SCSC handicapped accessible? **Yes.**

Does my student have to participate in the graduation ceremony? **No.** The formal graduation ceremony is *optional*. However, this is an important moment following thirteen years of formal education and we would like to help your student celebrate this milestone, so we encourage him/her to take part! If your student were to decide they do not wish to participate, please let us (high school administration) know by the end of the school day on May 9th.

How are the speakers chosen for graduation? The keynote speaker is always determined by the senior class leadership. The student speakers are selected by the senior class sponsors and the principal from all students who request to prepare a speech for inclusion in the graduation ceremony.



How long does graduation last? The graduation ceremony will take a little over an hour.

## Activities News

By **Jason Huska** and **Jon Frey** on May 3, 2024

The Vermillion Athletic Booster Club held the Tanager Athletic Hall of Fame on April 20th at the Dakota Center. This event is a great way to honor Tanager athletes. This year's inductees include Gregg Erickson in Football, Vince Roache in Football, The 1998 Volleyball team that won the Class A State championship (Finished the season 34-2.), and finally, Jon Manning as Tanager Supporter. Jon spends countless hours helping in several activities for the school.

As the school year works its way to a close, we begin to see the various spring activities begin to wind down, as well. The spring musical, The Addams Family just wrapped up on



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April 27 & 28th and though threatening weather forced the cancellation of one show, the other two were very well attended! It was an excellent show with a large, diverse cast and crew.

- The VHS Music Finale is at 7:30pm on May 7th.
- Boys tennis will have State on May 13 and 14. We qualified 7 players.
- Girls golf will be hosting our invite on May 13. Dakota XII Conference golf will be on May 20th. Regions and State are coming up on May 23 and June 3 and 4.
- Track will be competing in the Dakota XII Conference meet on May 9th at West Central.
- Girls Softball will be heading into playoffs on May 21st to hopefully earn a bid into the State tournament on May 30-June 1.



## Student Services News

By [Laura Suing](#) & [Luke Hayes](#) on Apr. 30, 2024

### Dual Credit Registration

At this time, our Student Services department reports that Dual Credit registration numbers are lagging behind where they would normally be at this time of year. Mr. Hayes recently sent home this information, but we wanted to share it here, as well.

A quick reminder that spring dual credit registration is open. It would be best to have all registrations completed by May 16th. Registration will close in August but that is not ideal to wait and register for classes.

#### Things to know:

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## 1. General eligibility criteria:

- Seniors need a 3.25 GPA or 21 ACT composite score
- Juniors need a 3.5 GPA or 24 ACT composite score

## 2. Both USD and SDSU do offer scholarships if dual credit courses are taken with the respective university.

## 3. Students can sign up for classes through the Universities or Technical Colleges.

## 4. For more information- [Dual Credit Registration Page](#) or see Mr. Hayes for help. (Both parents and students need to create an account, before a student can fill out the application. Scroll down to see the create account link)

## \*UPDATE\* High School Dual Credit course rates

Students enrolled through the High School Dual Credit (HSDC) program receive a discounted tuition rate, which is one-third of the reduced rate for the course as established by the Board of Regents in its Tuition and Fee Schedule. For the 2024 -25 Academic Year (beginning with the Summer 2024 semester), the updated Dual Credit rate is \$152.54 per credit hour. Students will be responsible for \$50.84 per credit hour, and the state will provide \$101.70.

## SD Opportunity Scholarship

Starting in Fall 2023, the SD Opportunity Scholarship provides up to \$7,500 over four years to a qualifying student who attends an eligible higher education institution in South Dakota. The scholarship is distributed at the beginning of fall semester and the other half is distributed at the beginning of the spring semester:

- \$1,500 – 1st year of attendance
- \$1,500 – 2nd year of attendance
- \$1,500 – 3rd year of attendance
- \$3,000 – 4th year of attendance

There are two ways a student can become eligible for the Opportunity Scholarship:

### Option 1:

- Be a resident of South Dakota.

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- Have an ACT Composite or Super Score of 24 or higher. · Complete the high school course requirements with no final grade below a “C” and a cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 prior to graduation.
- Attend an accredited university, college, or tech school in South Dakota.
- Enter the program within 5 years of high school graduation.

Option 2: (has a higher ACT requirement, but no curriculum or GPA requirement)

- Be a resident of South Dakota.
- Have an ACT Composite or Super Score of 28 or higher and meet the ACT college readiness benchmarks scores equaling or exceeding 18 for English, 22 for Reading, 22 for Math, and 23 for Science.
- Attend an accredited university, college or tech school in South Dakota.
- Enter the program within 5 years of high school graduation.

Participating Institutions:

- Augustana University
- Black Hills State University
- Dakota Wesleyan University
- Dakota State University
- Lake Area Technical College
- Mount Marty University
- Mitchell Technical College
- National American University
- Northern State University
- South Dakota School of Mines & Technology
- South Dakota State University
- Southeast Technical College
- University of South Dakota
- University of Sioux Falls
- Western Dakota Technical College

## Summer and Fall Dual Credit

The application for summer registration will open March 1st and registration for fall courses will open April 1st. We would like to have all applications in by **May 15th** as this helps lower the stress of trying to apply just before classes start after we return from summer break.



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Dual credit gives eligible students the chance to accelerate their education by enrolling in classes to receive both high school and college credit. You can find our dual credit basics document, along with other important information, on the dual credit webpage at <https://ourdakotadreams.com/high-school/dual-credit/>.

There is a wide variety of courses for students to choose from, including courses offered online, on campus. See Mr. Hayes if you have questions.

*As a clarification of the difference between dual credit and advanced placement or AP: dual credit are courses students take at or sponsored by a college or university to obtain general education credit. There are currently two AP courses offered at VHS - Advanced Chemistry and AP Biology. Students elect or choose to take an exam towards the end of the second semester and then depending on their score, they could potentially earn college or university credits.*

## Student Services Important Date Reminders

### ACT Testing

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline	Standby & Photo Upload Deadline
June 8, 2024	May 3, 2024	May 17, 2024	May 31, 2024
July 13, 2024	June 7, 2024	June 21, 2024	July 5, 2024

### FAFSA Update

#### Post-Processing Experience for Students

Students will receive an email informing them that their FAFSA form has been fully processed and their FAFSA information has been sent to the schools they listed on their form.

Students who applied using the online FAFSA form will receive an email that they can access their FAFSA Submission Summary by logging in to StudentAid.gov using their account username and password.





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The Department will send an email reminder to previous FAFSA applicants who have not yet submitted a 2024-25 FAFSA form.

Students will be able to make corrections to their FAFSA once their eligibility has been calculated and ISIR generated. Students may view their eligibility calculation by logging back into their Studentaid.gov account.

The Department will fully process paper applications in the weeks following.<sup>1</sup>

## How do I check the status of my FAFSA® form?

### 2024-25 FAFSA® Form

You can check the status of your 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form by logging in and finding your application status in the Status Center under “My Activity,” which displays after you log in if you have already started or completed a FAFSA form.

The status of your FAFSA form will be one of the following:

**Draft:** Your section of the FAFSA form is incomplete.

**In Progress:** You provided your consent, approval, and signature to your section of the FAFSA form, but the FAFSA form has not been submitted yet.

**In Review:** Your FAFSA form was submitted but hasn't been processed yet.

**Action Required:** You are missing your consent and approval or signature or the FAFSA form was processed, but a correction is required.

**Processed:** Your application was processed successfully. No further action is needed.

**Closed:** Your FAFSA form was never submitted and can no longer be submitted because the federal FAFSA deadline passed

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<sup>1</sup> “2024-25 FAFSA Student Aid Index Update and Timeline (Updated March 14, 2024).” Federal Student Aid, United States Department of Education, 4 April 2024, <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2024-01-30/2024-25-fafsa-student-aid-index-update-and-timeline-updated-march-14-2024>.

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A circular logo featuring a red tanager bird perched on a branch, with the word "TANAGERS" written in a semi-circle below it.

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Note: If you submitted a paper 2024-25 FAFSA form, you can check the status of your form once we process it (after online forms are processed in the first half of March).

To check the disbursement status of your federal student aid, contact your college's or career school's financial aid office.

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[READ MORE ON OUR WEBSITE](#)

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## Vermillion High School

1001 East Main Street, Vermillion, SD, 57069  
605-677-7035