



# THE COUNSELOR COMPASS

Braden River High School    December 2025



## A NOTE FROM YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

**For our BRHS Students:** As the first semester comes to a close, take a moment to celebrate how far you have come! Winter break is a perfect time to pause, reflect, and recharge. Think about what worked well in your academics and what small changes could make next semester even better. Whether it is staying more organized, asking for help sooner, or keeping up with study habits that served you well. Most importantly, give yourself permission to rest and enjoy some self-care. Relax, spend time with loved ones, and do things that bring you joy. A refreshed mind and body will help you start the new semester strong and ready for success!!

**For our BRHS Parents:** As the first semester wraps up, encourage your teen to take pride in their progress and hard work. Winter break is an ideal time for them to slow down, recharge, and reflect on their academic journey. Talk with them about what went well for the semester and what could be improved. Remind them that self-care is just as important as school work. Getting enough rest, enjoying family time, and doing activities that bring happiness will help them return refreshed and ready for a strong second semester. Your support and positive outlook can make all the difference!

### Tutoring Opportunities

Please visit the BRHS tutoring page  
<https://www.manateeschools.net/o/bradenriver/page/tutoring-opportunities>

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### December Dates to Remember

**12/2** FAST ELA, BEST Algebra & EOC

Retakes

**12/16 - 12/19** Semester Exams

**12/19** End of 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter/1<sup>st</sup> Semester

**12/20 - 1/5** Winter Break

**1/6/2026** Welcome Back & Happy New Year!! Start of Semester 2!



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## **!Save the Date! AP vs. DE Night**



**Wednesday, January 14, 2026  
6:00 PM in the BRHS Auditorium**

- Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment?
- What is the difference?
- Which pathway is better for you?

The BRHS School Counselors, along with student and teacher guest speakers, will be able to answer all of these questions and more during our information night.

The School District of Manatee County partners with 3 local colleges to provide extended opportunities for students while still attending high school. University of South Florida (USF) & State College of Florida (SCF) provide opportunities for high school students to earn college credit towards a college degree. Manatee Technical College (MTC) provides opportunities for students to learn a vocational program & prepare to enter the work force directly after high school.

Unable to attend? Students can use the link below and complete the interest request form. We will contact each student individually.

**<https://forms.office.com/r/4XMpRd3GaZ>**

More information regarding dual enrollment programs at the local colleges can be found using the website below.

**<https://www.manateeschools.net/o/bradenriver/page/dual-enrollment>**



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## Teacher Spotlight

Each month, we want to shine light on one of our amazing educators. We will take a shallow dive into their inspirations, teaching passions and maybe learn about some hidden talents.

### Master Sergeant (MSG) Johnny Browning

**Teaching Position:**  
**JROTC Instructor for**  
**9<sup>th</sup> Grade**



**What inspired you to become a teacher?** When I retired after 22 ½ years in the Army, I was looking for a second career. One day a buddy said I should see what he does as a JROTC instructor. After shadowing him, I knew I wanted to be an instructor from that day on. It reminded me of my time as an Army Drill Instructor, but without all of the yelling. It has been very rewarding for me to watch a “civilian” grow to a professional Soldier in 9 short weeks. Seeing a student come in as a freshman and watch them grow and develop over the course of 4 years is even more rewarding.

**How do you build relationships with your students?** Personal interaction on an almost daily basis. Find those things that interest them and feed on it. Also, find something they are good at and showcase it publicly so that they feel they are being noticed for excellence. We (JROTC) have a lot of opportunities built into our curriculum plans to allow for multiple instances of interaction with our classes so this is an easy thing to accomplish.

**What is one goal you have for your students this year?** For them to really narrow down what they want to do by the time they graduate and then start to prepare for that as much as they can now (with appropriate classes/clubs/positions of greater responsibility, etc).

**What is one thing your students would be surprised to learn about you?** That I like gaming as much as they do and would “own” most of them in the games they like to play. Also maybe that I like to play guitar and used to be want to be a country music star. I’ve sang and played in several of my old school’s talent shows and one year put together a teacher band.

## Club Spotlight: BRHS Orienteering Club

We are excited to shine light on different clubs and organizations around campus that make our school community so vibrant!! This month our club spotlight shines on the BRHS Orienteering Club.

### **What days, times, and location does the club meet?**

The season begins in January. We meet after school on Wednesdays for training/practices in room 820.

### **What is one thing people might not know about your club?**

Although you typically must be enrolled in the JROTC program in order to be involved in our unique activities, Orienteering is the only activity in which we invite non-JROTC cadets to participate. Each participant is also state ranked.

### **What is one accomplishment the club is proud of?**

We continue to place respectfully in all competitions in a field of schools/teams that had been doing these competitions for several years.

### **What is one goal your club is working towards this year?**

We are looking to see our returning members advance to high skill levels and improve their state rankings.

