

Guidance & Counseling Department Publication

“Counselor Bulletin”

September 2016

Welcome New Students

This September CCHS will welcome over three hundred freshmen and upperclassmen who are transferring to CCHS from other secondary schools. In the beginning, CCHS can seem large and confusing for new students. In most cases that feeling passes quickly as students find their way around and discover teachers, students, and support staff who are willing to offer assistance.

After the initial anxiety disappears, most new students have two remaining questions: How will I fit in and make friends at CCHS? And how will I do academically in this new school? The second of these questions is easier to answer. Students who are willing to put forth consistent, good effort (including a commitment to completing homework regularly) and who are willing to ask for help when needed, usually are successful academically. In addition to seeking assistance from their teachers, students should know about and make use of free, in-school tutorial resources. The MARC (Math Assistance Resource Center), the SSERC (Social Studies, English Resource Center) and the after school tutorial room supplement the help that students can receive from their regular classroom teachers. Students should see their counselors to get more information.

Finding a way to get to know peers may require some planning. While CCHS students are generally courteous and welcoming to new students, many current students, especially upperclassmen, lead busy lives and may not take the time to actively reach out to a new student. For this reason joining a club, activity or sports team is one of the best ways to get to know other students and to begin to feel like a member of the CCHS community. Within the diverse co-curricular program at CCHS, students can discover an activity which continues an interest or introduces a new one.

Volunteering in the community not only earns the required community service hours, but helps students begin to feel more a part of the larger community. School counselors can help students identify interesting options within the co-curricular program as well as volunteer opportunities. Students can also use the 2Volunteer link on the CCHS website to look for ideas.

Later, as students begin the college search process, they will discover that most colleges are also interested in how the student chose to be involved in the school and community. This involvement is the best way to make friends and feel “connected” to the new school.

Fourth Quarter Loose Ends

Students are reminded to review their final report card from last year and to check for any **credit reductions** or **incompletes**. Immediately in September, students should see teachers about completing incomplete work.

SAT Test Dates

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Test</u>	<u>Register By</u>
October 1	SAT I/Subject Tests	Sept. 1
November 5	SAT I/Subject Tests	Oct. 7
December 3	SAT I/Subject Tests	Nov. 3
January 21,2017	SAT I/Subject Tests	Dec. 21,2016
March 11	SATI only	Feb. 10
May 6	SATI/Subject Tests	Apr. 7
June 3	SATI/Subject Tests	May 9

ACT Test Dates

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Register By</u>
September 10	Aug. 5
October 22	Sept. 16
December 10	Nov. 4
February 11,2017	Jan. 13,2017
April 8	Mar. 3
June 10	May 5

Senior Post Secondary Planning Program – YOG 2017

On **Thursday, September 8, 2016 from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.** the first of two post-secondary planning sessions scheduled for YOG 2017 seniors and their parents will take place in the CCHS Auditorium. At this meeting members of the Guidance & Counseling Department will provide information on the following subjects: applications, time lines, applying early, transcript procedures, and current trends in admissions.

A workshop on financial aid for post-secondary education will be offered on Thursday, October 13, 2016 from 7:00-8:30 p.m..

Applying Early to College

Early Decision and Early Action are variations in the application process used by a large number of colleges.

In the traditional application process, students apply to colleges by a designated deadline, which is usually early January to mid-February, and receive responses in late March or April. In Early Decision or Early Action, a student applies early in the senior year, and receives a response before January.

Students who apply under an Early Decision process agree to enroll if accepted. Students can have only **one** Early Decision application pending at any one time, and if accepted, **they must withdraw any other applications**. Early Action has similar timelines as Early Decision, but students are not committed to the school therefore they can continue to send applications if they choose to.. College policies vary in whether students are allowed to apply to more than one Early Action school.

Applying Early Decision has advantages and disadvantages. For seniors who have done thorough research to identify a single school of particular interest, the ED process may have college choice resolved by the middle of second quarter. In addition, because numbers of students who apply Early Decision are typically smaller than those who apply to the same college at the regular deadline, the odds of admission may be higher for a student who would be considered a strong candidate for a competitive college. Early Decision may also be appropriate to the student who **does not** need financial aid. Parents of students who plan to apply for financial aid are advised to contact the financial aid office early in the fall to have a conversation about what they might expect in aid. With increasing numbers of students applying to college, Early Decision can be an asset to students in a position to take advantage of this option.

Applying Early Decision may not be to students' advantage under some circumstances. Students who are not solidly in the profile of the college to which they apply run the risk of being deferred to the regular cycle or even denied admission in competition with stronger ED candidates. Students who need more time in senior year to strengthen their academic or testing records or to demonstrate depth in extracurricular activities may not be good candidates for Early Decision at competitive schools. Students who need financial aid will miss the opportunity to compare aid packages. Individual packages have varied considerably in the past few years, including those for students who only qualify for merit aid. Finally, the students who made an ED choice without adequate consideration of other colleges may have very little time to evaluate options and prepare a strong application before the regular application deadlines.

For more information on Early Decision, Early Action, and other early admissions options, students can refer to the Counseling Department website and consult their guidance counselor.

For a detailed understanding of this process, we recommend *The Early Admissions Game* by Christopher Avery.

Financial Aid

Beginning with this year's senior class, the financial aid timeline has changed. Instead of applying in January 2017 using your 2016 tax information, families can begin applying in October 2016 using their 2015 tax information. The Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority at www.mefa.org is a great resource for paying for college. MEFA will be at CCHS on October 13th for a seminar on financial planning and all parents are welcome to attend.

College/Career Mini-Fairs at CCHS - All students are welcome!

The Guidance & Counseling Department will be hosting "College/Career Mini-Fairs" beginning in September. Representatives from various colleges, universities, institutions and the military will be visiting CCHS on,

Thursday's from 11:00 a.m. until 12:45 p.m.

For a complete schedule, please check the CCHS website

Junior Parent Program - YOG 2018

On Wednesday, October 5, 2016 from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the high school auditorium, a meeting will be held for YOG 2018 Junior parents/guardians, which will focus on what families should be doing about postsecondary plans during the junior year. Topics discussed will include the timeline for the admissions process, sources of information, issues of student stress, and the role of parents in the process. This meeting is designed primarily for parents; however, students are also welcome to attend.

Taking the PSAT

The Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT), will be given on **Saturday, October 15, 2016** at CCHS. The PSAT provides practice for the SAT and identifies students, in the Class of 2018, who may qualify as National Merit Scholarship candidates. Juniors are encouraged to take this test. Results from the test may be used to determine what sort of review course, if any, would be helpful to individual students for taking the SAT. Sophomores considering the PSAT will be able to sign up if space is available .

Registration : Detailed information will appear in the **CCHS Daily Bulletin**.

Freshman Groups – YOG 2020

During the week of September 12 - 16, counselors will be meeting with freshmen students in small groups. Appointments will be mailed home approximately one week prior to the meeting. Parents are asked to remind their child of these meetings. A number of topics including counseling services and extracurricular involvement will be discussed in this meeting. Students will share their impressions of the high school and voice questions or concerns they might have about school or their classes. The role of the counselor and social worker will also be reviewed.

Freshman Parents' Discussion – YOG 2020

An evening program with the Guidance & Counseling Department – **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2016 6:00 – 7:00 P.M.** in the **CCHS AUDITORIUM**. Prior to the back-to-school program **FRESHMEN PARENTS only** are invited to hear about the transition to the high school.

Don't miss Back-to-School Night, Thursday, September 15th at 7:00pm !

Have a Great School Year!