

The Counseling Connection

DECEMBER/JANUARY, 2016/2017

A Publication of the Counseling Department at Monson High School



My Kid Is In Trouble... What Shall I do?

Teens today have numerous opportunities to make poor choices. Experimenting with drugs or alcohol, sexual relationships, violence, gang behavior, lack of respect for authorities and mental health issues are just a few of the possible causes of a child's troubling behavior. The reasons why your child may exhibit these behaviors is anyone's guess, but that doesn't mean you simply ignore them.

First, try to identify the cause of the problem. Is the behavior a recent development or has it been going on for some time? Has there been an event in the child's life (i.e.: divorce, death, other significant loss) which would justify the behavior? Behavior that is explainable is much easier to deal with than if it happens for no apparent reason.

Next, assure the child that you are there to offer support and encouragement and that you will not judge them even though you may disapprove of the behavior. S/he needs to know that the adults in his/her life are there for them and want to help.

Finally, find someone to help your child. Offer to be involved with this process as little or as much as needed. If the child is willing to discuss the situation with you and/or others, then you're halfway there. If the child isn't comfortable talking to you, encourage him/her to seek out another adult such as a counselor or teacher, family friend, coach or employer to talk about the problem. The bottom line is that it is human nature to talk things through and that in most cases having someone to discuss the problem with begins the healing process.

School counselors are often asked for help with students who are having academic, personal or social problems. We are willing to help both parents and children find the cause of the problem and work together to find solutions. Even though academic and social problems at school are often the result of a problem which has developed outside of school, we are in a good position to help sort through the issues and try to help find a resolution. Our vast experience dealing with teens in all kinds of situations gives us a unique perspective on how to resolve the problem.

There are times when a situation warrants a referral to an outside professional. In some cases this is best for students and parents who would prefer not to have someone in the school know about the problem or for a student who would not want to miss class to be seen by the counselor. The end result is that the student gets the help that s/he needs.

Feel free to call or email us. We can brainstorm ideas about what to do. The worse case scenario is that it gives you a chance to talk about the problem confidentially.

Raising a child is no easy task and that is why it is said that parenthood is the most difficult job one could have. Take advantage of the resources that are available to you and find a viable solution.

Alumni Day Set for January 5

The Counseling Department will once again sponsor the annual Alumni Day on Thursday, January 5, 2017. with a snow date of Friday, January 6.

All alumni of Monson High School are welcome to stop by the school that morning, however, several alumni are needed for the more formal aspect of the program.

Alumni are needed to speak to juniors and freshmen about their experiences since leaving high school. Freshmen homerooms will meet during SAP to hear the alumni discuss the transition out of high school into either college or the world of work. They will discuss what they now know they wished they had known when they were freshmen. In addition, small groups of juniors will also hear a more detailed presentation. Alumni will talk about a typical college schedule, how different the academic expectations are compared to high school and about the college social scene.

Alumni who are interested in speaking at this event are encouraged to contact Mr. Bardwell in the Counseling Office by January 3.



College

O SAT Registration

SAT registration information is now available in the Counseling Office. SAT's will be given on:

Jan. 21 March 11
May 6 June 3

e ACT Registration

ACT registration information is now available in the Counseling Office.

ACT's will be given on:

February 11 April 8
June 10

See the Counseling Office for registration information.



Application Deadline Reminder

Seniors are reminded that many colleges have application deadlines in early January. For those that do not, seniors are encouraged to apply before January 1 as well. Waiting until the last minute to file an application can create unnecessary delays in the review of your application.

Students who have a January 1 deadline must request a transcript no later than Friday, December 16 in order to ensure processing before vacation.

Important Financial Aid Update for 2017

The 2017-18 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can now be completed, which is a change from previous years. Instead of using 2016 income data, FAFSA completers will be able to pull income data from the 2015 calendar year, or prior-prior data.

Students should go to www.fafsa.ed.gov to begin the online submission process. Both parents/guardians and students must obtain a FAFSA ID as part of the FAFSA completion process. One advantage of the electronic form is that there are built in safety features to help avoid making common mistakes or omitting critical data. Whichever method you choose, it is important to check your work carefully as mistakes will have an impact in the processing of the form and ultimately could delay the college from making a financial award. The FAFSA should be completed no later than February 1. Copies of the completed form should be made or printed for the student's files.

The College Scholarship Services' Profile® form is available online at the College Board's web site, www.collegeboard.org. The form is only required at schools listed on the application and should be completed by January 15.

Please be careful if using a third party to help you complete these forms. Web sites like www.fafsa.com are for-profit entities and will charge you to complete your form(s). There are many scams out there, so you should proceed cautiously. If you do need help, contact the Guidance Office for assistance or the financial aid office of the school to which you are applying. If you feel that you must secure professional help in completing the forms, please make sure that you know the person and agree upon a set fee up front before entering into an agreement.

Students and parents are reminded to check in the Guidance Office for scholarship information. Listings are distributed to seniors around the first of every month in the **Senior Scoop**.

Financial Aid Assistance Warning

Have you received a letter promising financial aid assistance and access to 100% of the funding needed to finance your child's education? You are invited to attend a seminar and if you wish to continue to receive college prep services a fee is charged. Families are pressured into continuing the process and large fees are charged, money which could go to pay for college instead.

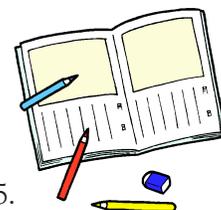
Families are strongly encouraged not to pay for such assistance as free help is available through resources available in the Counseling Office or from the college to which the student is applying. While it may be tempting to purchase such services, you are advised to carefully consider alternatives.

SAT/ACT Prep Class Begins in February

The Counseling Department will once again coordinate a spring SAT/ACT prep course for juniors.

The class will likely be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Final details will be mailed home to juniors in January. It will begin on February 28 and end on May 4. There will be no class during April vacation. Instructors will provide basic SAT/ACT preparation for both the reading and math components of the test. The administration of a practice test would also be part of this class. The cost of the course will be \$150.

Sign-ups will begin in January in the Counseling Office. The full payment will be due on January 15.



MCAC Week Celebration A Success

Monson seniors participated in the annual Massachusetts College Application Celebration Week program from November 14 – 18. Fifty-three (out of a total of 82) seniors completed 103 applications during the week to 49 public colleges and 54 private schools. Several received assistance from the school counselors to complete their college applications. There were 29 on the spot decisions from American International College, Elms College, Bay Path University, Western New England University, Springfield Technical Community College and Holyoke Community College. Over \$130,000 in scholarship funds were awarded as part of the instant decisions.

Sixty-five seniors (or 79%) of the class applied to at least one college before November 17 and were recognized in an all-school assembly. Each had their name announced and which school(s) they had applied to and if they had been accepted. Participants received their “I applied to college” t-shirt provided by CHP Student Health.

Four college mascots along with the Monson Mustang participated in the Mascot Madness by playing dodgeball. Roary the Bobcat from Bay Path University representing the seniors (aka Trey Miller) was victorious in the spirit competition.



PSAT Scores Coming December 12

The October 2016 PSAT scores will be available online via the student's College Board account. Students who provided email addresses will receive notice from the College Board to create an account and access their scores. If your student did not provide an email address when s/he took the PSAT then there would be no way for the College Board to notify students that the scores are available.

The High School will distribute paper reports to juniors on Monday, December 12 during their English class along with their original test book. We will meet with students in a computer lab where we will have them create a College Board account if they do not already have one. How to access your online PSAT/NMSQT scores and reports:

- 1) Log in to an existing College Board account or create a new one at studentscores.collegeboard.org
- 2) Once logged in, select PSAT/NMSQT Scores *Or* Use “Missing Scores” to locate scores. (If you are being asked for an access code, we will be able to provide you one.)

Additional resources to understand the PSAT scores and access Khan Academy for personalized practice can be found at: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/educators/k-12/score-resources>.



Financial Aid Assistance Available

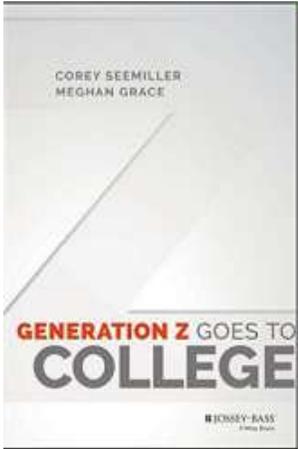
On Sunday, January 29 the Massachusetts Association of Student Financial Aid

Administrators will sponsor the annual College Goal Sunday, a program designed to provide families with free financial aid information and assistance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The program will begin at 1:00 p.m. at American International College. Students and their parents should bring completed 2015 IRS 1040 tax forms, W-2 statements, 2015 untaxed income records, 2015 business and investment records, their FAFSA ID, social security #, driver's license, current bank statements and their alien registration card (if you are not a U.S. citizen). Go to www.masscollegegoalsunday.org for more info. A similar program will occur at Amherst Regional High School on January 19 at 1:00.

Attendance Policy Reminder

As we near the end of the first semester, students and parents are reminded of the school's attendance policy. A student who is absent more than 6 times in a semester course (or 4 days in an alternate day course) will lose credit for the course regardless of his/her grade, unless days are waived through the Main Office or through the attendance appeal process. Also, if there is a question about the number of absences a student has in a specific class, the teacher should be contacted via email for clarification.





Book Review

Generation Z Goes to College

by Corey Seemiller & Meghan Grace

Generation Z is rapidly replacing Millennials on college campuses. Those born from 1995 through 2010 have different motivations, learning styles, characteristics, skill sets, and social concerns than previous generations. Unlike Millennials, Generation Z students grew up in a recession and are under no illusions about their prospects for employment after college. While skeptical about the cost and value of higher education, they are

also entrepreneurial, innovative, and independent learners concerned with effecting social change. Understanding Generation Z's mindset and goals is paramount to supporting, developing, and educating them through higher education.

Generation Z Goes to College showcases findings from an in-depth study of over 1,100 Generation Z college students from 15 vastly different U.S. higher education institutions as well as additional studies from youth, market, and education research related to this generation. Authors Corey Seemiller and Meghan Grace provide interpretations, implications, and recommendations for program, process, and curriculum changes that will maximize the educational impact on Generation Z students.

Accessed from www.bn.com

Next School Counseling Advisory Council Meeting Set

The next meeting of the School Counseling Advisory Council will be on Thursday, January 26, 2017 beginning at 3:45 p.m in the Conference Room at Monson Town Hall. All parents, students and community members are invited to join the group.

The purpose of the Council is to discuss activities sponsored by the Counseling Department as well as plan for other programs that will be beneficial to our students and the community. Participants are able to join one of three subcommittees -

academic, career or social/emotional - which will then coordinate activities addressing topics that fall under that domain.

The final meeting of the year will be on Thursday, March 31 from 3:45-5:15 at the Monson Savings Bank.

Please contact Bob Bardwell at 267.4589x1109 or bardwellr@monsonschools.com for more information.

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IMPORTANT DATES

- Dec. 3 SAT Administration
- Dec. 5 Term 2 progress reports
- Dec. 8 ASVAB Administration
- Dec. 10 ACT Administration
- Dec. 21 January 21 SAT Deadline
- Dec. 23 - Jan. 2 Vacation
- January 5 Alumni Day
- January 13 February ACT Deadline
- January 16 ML King Holiday
- January 17, 19 & 20 Semester 1 Exams
- January 19 & 20 Half days
- Jan 19 College Goal Day-Amherst RHS
- January 20 Semester 1 Ends
- January 21 SAT Administration
- January 23 Semester 2 Begins
- January 29 College Goal Sunday-AIC
- February 6 & 7 MCAS Bio Test
- February 11 ACT Administration
- February 20 - 24 Winter Vacation

Junior Parent Conferences Are Coming

Parents of juniors should note that they will be expected to attend a conference with the respective school counselor for their rising senior in late March or early April to discuss their child's senior year schedule and his/her plans for after graduation.

Typically these conferences take place during the school day and last approximately 45 minutes to an hour, depending on the student's plans for after high school.

Letters to parents with more details and assigned meeting times will be sent home in early March. Parents will be asked to confirm the time and reschedule if the time is not convenient.

Counselors will accommodate your schedule when possible.

