

# The Counseling Connection

DECEMBER/JANUARY, 2017/2018

*A Publication of the Counseling Department at Monson High School*

## Massachusetts Commonwealth Commitment Expands Options



There are now more advantages for students who start at a state community college, earn their associate degree within 2.5 years, transfer to one of the Massachusetts' State Universities or the UMASS system and complete a bachelor

degree within an additional two years, all while maintaining continuous enrollment and a cumulative 3.0 GPA throughout the program.

Successful students will have their tuition and mandatory fees frozen for all four years upon entry into the Commonwealth Commitment program which is estimated to be an average of \$5,090 over the four years. Students receive a 10% rebate off tuition and mandatory fees at the end of each successful semester which can be paid via individual check or for a bookstore voucher. This program does NOT cover expenses such as housing, meal plans, health insurance, parking, supplies or other college-related expenses. This program was started in the fall of 2016 and is expected to grow with additional majors and institutions added in subsequent years. Current articulation agreements will not be negatively impacted and high school dual enrollment students can have their earned credits counted as part of this program.

Majors which are included in this agreement currently include biology, chemistry, economics, history, political science, psychology, business, criminal justice, communications and media studies, computer science, early childhood education, English, liberal arts, mathematics, sociology, STEM, physical or natural sciences. Special agreements are in place for the Mass College of Art & Design and Mass Maritime Academy due to their unique majors offered. Not all MassTransfer Pathways programs will be offered at all participating institutions so students should check with the community college and bachelor degree institution prior to enrollment to ensure that they will benefit from the tuition and mandatory fee reduction.

This program also does not cover costs associated with remedial or developmental courses and in addition to the 3.0 cumulative GPA, students must maintain good academic standing, as defined by the host institution to remain eligible. Failure of courses, withdrawals from classes and not satisfactorily meeting course grade requirements could result in dismissal from the program and higher costs.

For more information about the Commonwealth Commitment program go to [www.mass.edu/MAComCom](http://www.mass.edu/MAComCom)

## Alumni Day Set for January 4

The Counseling Department will once again sponsor the annual Alumni Day on Thursday, January 4, 2018, with a snow date of Friday, January 5.

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 2.



# College

## O SAT Registration

SAT registration information is now available in the Counseling Office. SAT's will be given on:  
March 10      May 5  
June 2

## e ACT Registration

ACT registration information is now available in the Counseling Office. ACT's will be given on:  
February 10      April 14  
June 9  
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 15 in order to ensure processing before vacation.

## Important Financial Aid Update for 2018

The 2018-19 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can now be completed, which is a change from previous years. Instead of using 2017 income data, FAFSA completers will be able to pull income data from the 2016 calendar year, or prior-prior data.

Students should go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://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](http://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](http://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 Counseling 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 Counseling 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.

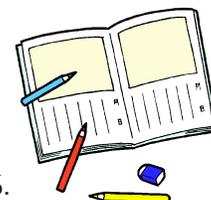
Families are strongly encouraged not to pay for such assistance as free help is available through resources available in the Counseling Office or from the college to which the student is applying. While it may be tempting to purchase such services, you are advised to carefully consider alternatives.

## Test Prep Class Begins in February

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

Classes will be held on Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. at the high school. Final details will be mailed home in January. Classes will begin on February 28 and end on May 3. There will be no class during April vacation. Mrs. Zippin (math) and Ms. Doherty (English) will be the instructors. The administration of a practice test would also be part of this class. The cost of the course will be \$165 which includes a study guide with sample tests.

Sign-ups will begin in January in the Counseling Office. The full payment will be due on January 26.



## MCAC Week Celebration A Success

Monson seniors participated in the annual Massachusetts College Application Celebration Week program from November 13 – 17. Thirty-four (out of a total of 66) seniors completed 61 applications during the week to 33 public colleges and 28 private schools. Several received assistance from the school counselors to complete their college applications. There were 22 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 \$188,000 in scholarship funds were awarded as part of the instant decisions.

Fifty-five seniors (or 83%) of the class applied to at least one college before November 16 for a total of 160 applications submitted so far. Each were recognized in an all-school assembly by having their name announced and received their “I applied to college” t-shirt provided by Herff Jones and designed by Serina Bowen.

Four college mascots along with the Monson Mustang participated in the Mascot Madness by completing a dance routine and playing a plastic cup challenge. Rowdy the Ram from Springfield Technical Community College representing the seniors (aka Kyle Monaghan) was victorious in the spirit competition.



## PSAT Scores Coming Soon

The October 2017 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 the week of December 18 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](http://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

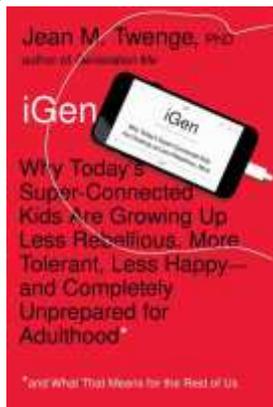
On Sunday, January 28 the Massachusetts Association of Student Financial Aid

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 2016 IRS 1040 tax forms, W-2 statements, 2016 untaxed income records, 2016 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). A similar program will be held at Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester, same time and date. Go to [www.masscollegegoalsunday.org](http://www.masscollegegoalsunday.org) for more info.

## 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

### **iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy- and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood**

by Jean Twenge, Ph.D.

A highly readable and entertaining first look at how today's members of iGen—the children, teens, and young adults born in the mid-1990s and later—are vastly different from their Millennial

predecessors, and from any other generation.

With generational divides wider than ever, parents, educators, and employers have an urgent need to understand today's rising generation of teens and young adults. Born in the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s and later, iGen is the first generation to spend their entire adolescence in the age of the smartphone. With social media and texting replacing other activities, iGen spends less time with their friends in person—perhaps why they are experiencing unprecedented levels of anxiety, depression, and loneliness.

But technology is not the only thing that makes iGen distinct from every generation before them; they are also different in how they spend their time, how they behave, and in their attitudes toward religion, sexuality, and politics. They socialize in completely new ways, reject once sacred social taboos, and want different things from their lives and careers. More than previous generations, they are obsessed with safety, focused on tolerance, and have no patience for inequality. iGen is also growing up more slowly than previous generations: eighteen-year-olds look and act like fifteen-year-olds used to.

As this new group of young people grows into adulthood, we all need to understand them: Friends and family need to look out for them; businesses must figure out how to recruit them and sell to them; colleges and universities must know how to educate and guide them. And members of iGen also need to understand themselves as they communicate with their elders and explain their views to their older peers. Because where iGen goes, so goes our nation—and the world.

*Accessed from [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com)*

## Next School Counseling Advisory Council Meeting Set

The next meeting of the School Counseling Advisory Council will be on Wednesday, January 31, 2018 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 Wednesday, March 28 from 3:45-5:15, location TBA. Contact Bob Bardwell at 267.4589x1109 or [bardwellr@monsonschools.com](mailto:bardwellr@monsonschools.com) for more information.

## IMPORTANT DATES

Dec. 2 .....	SAT Administration
Dec. 8 .....	Term 2 progress reports
Dec. 14 .....	ASVAB Administration
Dec. 9 .....	ACT Administration
Dec. 22 - Jan. 2 .....	Vacation
January 4 .....	Alumni Day
January 12 .....	February ACT Deadline
January 15 .....	ML King Holiday
January 16, 18 & 19 .....	Semester 1 Exams
January 18 & 19 .....	Half days
January 19 .....	Semester 1 Ends
January 22 .....	Semester 2 Begins
January 28 .....	College Goal Sunday-AIC
January 31 ...	Counseling Advisory Comm
February 5 & 7 .....	MCAS Bio Test
February 6 .....	Half day
February 9 .....	Winter Carnival
February 10 .....	ACT Administration
February 19 - 23 .....	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.

