

The Counseling Connection

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A Publication of the Counseling Department at Monson High School



What's Happening to the Boys?

Could it be true that the current American school structure inherently favors girls over boys – that school expectations for behavior favor girls, that teacher expectations for classroom performance favor girls and that boy brains are not wired to succeed in school? Statistics show that girls do outnumber/outperform boys in many ways.

- ◆ The number of male undergraduates on college campuses today is 44%, compared to 58% in 1976.
- ◆ Elementary school boys are two times more likely to be diagnosed with a learning disability and two times as likely to be placed in special education classes.
- ◆ Boys aged five to twelve are 60% more likely than girls to repeat at least one grade.
- ◆ Females receive higher grades in virtually every subject and thus are more likely to be on the honor roll and receive more academic honors.
- ◆ The self esteem of boys is negatively affected when they are labeled as low-performing, poor learners or “problem” students.
- ◆ A University of Michigan study reported that the number of boys who didn't like school rose 71 percent between 1980 and 2001.
- ◆ Boys are 33% more likely than girls to drop out of school; thus more girls than boys graduate from high school.
- ◆ High school girls are 36% more likely to take Advanced Placement or honors biology than high school boys.
- ◆ Twelfth grade girls score an average of 16 points higher than boys on standardized reading tests and 24 points on standardized writing tests.
- ◆ High school boys are 30% more likely to use cocaine than high school girls.

But why? One theory that supports the changing trend towards improved achievement for girls is that the way that teachers teach these days favors the girls. Curriculum that is driven by standardized tests often dictates what, when and how a teacher delivers instruction. There is so much focus on “passing the test” that teachers have lost their individual freedom to do what is best for all students. Boys are also likely to be more competitive in their learning yet the learning environment is focused on a cooperative, more collegial approach which favor girls. The fact that student-teacher ratios have increased and that physical education, sports programs and recess time within the school have been either reduced or eliminated doesn't help the boys.

Some scientists believe that the reason boys are not wired for school success has to do with the fact that a boy's brain develops slower than

continued on page 3

More MCAS Scheduled

Parents and students are reminded of the upcoming MCAS testing schedule.

All sophomores will take the mathematics MCAS session 1 on Wednesday, May 23 and mathematics session 2 on Thursday, May 24. The biology MCAS will be given on Wednesday, June 6 and Thursday, June 7 to all grade 10 students who did not take the test in February.

Again this year sophomores will take part in math boot camp during the school day on May 14, 15, 16, 18 & 21 in an effort to be better prepared for the test. The support sessions will take place during an extended SAP schedule and will be taught by the math teachers. Students will be assigned to one of five groups and over the course of the five days will receive review materials in number sense, algebra, statistics, geometry and measurement.

A reminder that all students who earn a needs improvement score (220-238) in ELA or math must have an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP). The plan requires students to continue taking courses in the area of weakness and must meet additional criteria set forth by the Principal.



College

PLUS Loans Available

O Are you a parent of a senior looking for additional ways to help finance the cost of a college education? Parents might consider a Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS), a low interest educational loan that allows a parent to borrow up to the full cost of education (tuition, room & board). PLUS loans are not based on income or assets and offer a competitive, variable interest rate (not to exceed 9 percent) that is adjusted each July. PLUS borrowers do not need collateral and can take up to ten years to repay the loan. There is no pre-payment penalty and the loan interest may be tax deductible.

For more information contact the college financial aid office to which your child has applied.

Federal Financial Aid Resources Available

Net Price calculators are one of the latest tools to help families understand paying for higher education. Net price calculators are available on a college's financial aid website and allows prospective students to enter financial information about themselves to find out what the expected cost would be at the particular institution.

This calculation gives families an estimate of the amount that a student pays to attend that institution in a single academic year AFTER subtracting financial aid. Exact awards are not made typically until March or April.

Service Academy Program Set

Students interested in attending a United States military service academy or ROTC program are invited to a meeting on Saturday, April 28 at 12:30 pm at the Westover Air Reserve Base Conference Center in Chicopee. Sponsored by Rep. Richard E. Neal, the purpose of this program is to educate students about the service academy nomination and application process.

Applicants to the service academies (Naval, West Point or Air Force) must secure a congressional nomination as part of the application process.

Because of security to gain access to the base, a registration form to attend the event must be returned to the Representative's office by March 31.

For more information contact jeanne.ahern@mail.house.gov or 413.785.0325.

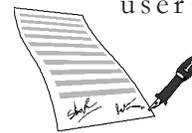
Seniors College Transition Program Set for May 18

The counseling staff is pleased to again offer a program for seniors - **So You've Decided Which College to Attend, Now What?** The program will take place on Friday, May 18 during the special extended SAP schedule.

The program will feature Elizabeth Cleary, a member of the Residence Life staff at UMASS Amherst, and recent MHS graduates talking about the transition to college - what went well and what didn't go so well. They will offer advice about pitfalls to avoid, how to get along with roommates, living in a dorm, managing one's time and much more.

My College Quick Start Available to PSAT Test Takers

Juniors who took the October PSAT are reminded that they have free access to My College Quick Start, the College Board's web-based career, majors, and college exploration tool. Students received information on how to access their accounts on their 2017 PSAT/NMSQT Score Reports, which were given to students in December. Students must go to www.collegeboard.org, create a user account and enter their



access code. This same account can be used in the future to register for the SAT.

The web portal includes an online personality assessment as well as profiles of academic fields for over 450 occupations.

Local Scholarship Application Available

Twenty-one local scholarships are now available through the Common Scholarship Application.

Seniors were given copies at a class meeting on March 23. The benefit of the Common



Application is that a student only needs to complete one application and then makes copies for each scholarship for which they are applying. A copy of the application can also be found at www.monsonschools.com under the documents/publications link on the high school counseling department page. Applications must be postmarked or delivered by Tuesday, April 24.

For more information contact the Counseling Office.

Boys, continued from page 1

those of girls. Not only do girls develop sexual maturity about two years ahead of boys, but that the girl brain fully develops 18 months sooner than that of a boy. Girls mature more quickly and process information much faster than boys, all of which favors them academically. Scientists do caution that the environment, family background and a boy's temperament do play a part in a boy's development, however, not enough to negate the differences.

As boys begin to experience failure, frustration and academic road blocks, they begin to shut down. Their self esteem is negatively impacted; they begin to feel incompetent and fail to develop a sense of belonging. Gender stereotypes also contribute to this phenomenon as boys resist being labeled as smart, a brain or a nerd. The peer pressure for boys to resist demonstrating intelligence or academic success is immense. It's just not the cool thing to do. Instead, boys are generally applauded by their peers for negative school behavior.

For many years it has been the girls who have received a great deal of necessary attention from all aspects of society to improve their status. Programs like women in engineering and medicine which encourage girls to go into these traditionally male dominated fields were wide spread. Title IX, the 1972 federal law requiring schools to provide equal opportunities for girls both in the classroom and in the athletic arena has done much to improve options for girls. But what are we doing to promote success for our boys that are falling behind?

Obviously changing our society or educational structure is a Herculean task, but being aware of this trend and removing some of the barriers that hinder boys are critical. Here are some things that we can do to help boys reach their full potential:

- ◆ Make it a point to discuss your concerns regarding your son with his teacher(s), school counselor or administrators. Encourage the teacher(s) to provide extra help to your son that supports academic success.
- ◆ Model good school behavior. Sit down with your son and do "homework" together. This not only accomplishes the task, but also creates bonding time.
- ◆ Encourage your son to read. Have him read to you and you also read to him. Choose titles that will be of interest to him, ones that will help to instill the value of being able to read.
- ◆ Men (preferably fathers) have to advocate for their sons. They should go to PTSA meetings and be visible at other school/community functions and not just as coaches. If dad isn't available, seek out other positive male role models – uncles, grandfathers, or trusted family friends – who can act in this capacity.
- ◆ Encourage boys to assume leadership positions outside of sports such as a class officer, yearbook editor or Boy Scout leader.
- ◆ Emphasize the importance of going to college and provide positive male role models, men who are successful because of going to college.

It is extremely important to note that many boys are very successful and manage to navigate through the educational system without any problems. Equally significant is that many girls experience the same types of barriers as do boys, but generally in smaller numbers. The bottom line is that we need to provide learning environments and a societal norm that provide appropriate educational instruction (and thus student success) for all students. If we can reach this goal, then all students will benefit.

Senior Signing Day Is May 17

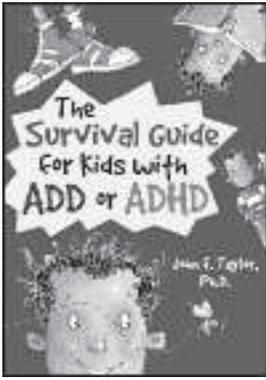
MHS will present its fourth annual Senior Signing Day on Thursday, May 17. Similar to the NCAA model where high school student athletes are celebrated when they sign their National Letter of Intent, our program will recognize and celebrate all 67 seniors by highlighting their pursuits after graduation.

The program will begin with a breakfast for all seniors, their families and invited guests at 8:00 followed by a school wide assembly at 8:45 AM where all grade 9-11 students will participate. All grade 8 students will also attend in order to be part of the program. The event should conclude around 9:45.

Each senior will receive a Signing Day t-shirt, have their future plans highlighted when their name is announced and receive a certificate from their sponsor, and an admission representative from their respective school, military recruiter or local business community representative. A high school staff member will also sponsor each student. They will then sign the official banner highlighting that plan which will then be displayed in the foyer afterwards. Music will be provided by the MHS Band.

This is truly a community celebration and therefore all are welcome to attend. The event is coordinated by the high school counseling staff. Special thanks to the Monson PTSA, Roberts & Sons Printing and Soccer City for providing financial support for the breakfast, banner and t-shirts.





Book Review

The Survival Guide for Kids with ADD or ADHD

by John Taylor

What are ADD and ADHD? What does it mean to have ADD and ADHD? How can kids diagnosed with ADD and ADHD help themselves succeed in school, get along better at home, and form healthy, enjoyable relationships with peers? In kid-friendly

language and a format that welcomes reluctant and easily distracted readers, Free Spirit's newest survival guide helps kids know they're not alone and offers practical strategies for taking care of oneself, modifying behavior, enjoying school, having fun, and dealing (when needed) with doctors, counselors, and medication. Includes real-life scenarios, quizzes, and a special message for parents.

About the Author

John F. Taylor, Ph.D., has written and created many materials for young people with ADD and ADHD and their families. He is the founder and president of ADD Plus, a company that offers resources and workshops for parents and teachers of kids with ADD and ADHD. The father of three children with ADD, John lives in Monmouth, Oregon.

This book is available for loan from the Counseling Office.

AP Exam Balances Due

Students who have signed up to take an AP Exam in May are reminded that the balance is due no later than April 27. The cost for one exam is \$94 and a \$25 deposit per exam fee was due in March. Students on free/reduced lunch are expected to only pay \$25 per exam. AP Exams are scheduled during the first two full weeks of May and will be held in Room 108.



Attendance Policy Reminder

As we near the end of the school year, students and parents are reminded of the school's attendance policy. A student who is absent more than 10 times in a semester course (or 5 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. 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.



IMPORTANT DATES

April 9	National College Fair
April 14	ACT Administration
April 16-20	Spring vacation
April 24	Local Scholarships Due
May 3	June SAT Registration Deadline
May 4 ...	June ACT Registration Deadline
May 5	SAT Administration
May 9	AP English Literature Test
May 10	AP Government Test
May 11	AP US History Test
May 15	AP Calculus Test
May 16	AP English Language Test
May 17	Senior Signing Day
May 23-24 ..	MCAS Math Administration
May 24-25	Senior Exams
May 25	Senior Last Day
May 30	Senior Awards Night
June 1	Graduation
June 2	SAT Administration
June 6-7 ...	MCAS Science Administration
June 9	ACT Administration
June 22	Last Day of School (9-11)

Scheduling Update

The initial course selections for students in grades 8-11 for the 2018-19 academic year have been made.

Counselors have met with juniors and their parents and are in the midst of meeting with sophomores and freshmen individually to review their course requests. Parents should have already signed their child's course selection sheet indicating their approval.

It is unknown when schedules for next year will be available, but most likely not until late June or early summer.

Please contact the Counseling Office with questions or concerns.

Staff Directory

Robert Bardwell, Counselor/Director
 bardwellr@monsonschoools.com
 Kristen Sorel, School Counselor
 sorelk@monsonschoools.com
 Jennifer Gouvin, School-to-Career Coordinator
 gouvinj@monsonschoools.com
 Maria Maloney, Social Worker
 maloneym@monsonschoools.com
 Diane Goodrich, Administrative Ass't
 goodrichd@monsonschoools.com