

The Counseling Connection

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER, 2017

A Publication of the Counseling Department Monson High School



Smartphones: Friend or Foe?

Does your child have a smartphone? Is he on it all the time? Has he stopped socializing like he used to? Are sleeping and eating habits impacted? Does he seem withdrawn and reserved more than usual? While some of this is normal adolescent behavior, the increased use (and obsession) with smartphones is

causing many educators, mental health providers and medical professionals grave concerns.

The Millennial generation, those born between 1995 and 2012, are now high schoolers and college-aged students. They were born into a world that has only known the internet and at least three out of four middle schoolers today have a device which connects them to the power of the internet and instant communication options. They are likely to have a social media presence (Instagram, Twitter, Snap Chat, Facebook) and researchers are finding that they have become more withdrawn and isolated than ever before.

Some believe we are on the verge of a mental health crisis never seen before and blame it in part, to the smartphone. Rates of teen depression and suicide have skyrocketed since 2011. Depressive symptoms among boys have increased by 21% from 2012-2015 while girls' rates increased by 50% during the same time frame. Rates of teen suicide have also increased dramatically.

Twelfth graders are going out less often in 2015 than eighth-graders did as recently as 2009. They are dating less, their sexual activity is decreasing and the teen birth rate hit an all-time low in 2016, down 67% since 1992 when it reached its peak (which are not necessarily bad things). Teens today are less likely to get their driver's license, perfectly comfortable having a parent chauffeur them around. More than one in four teens lack a license by the time they graduate from high school.

Work patterns have also changed. In the late 1970's, 77% of high-school teenagers had a job, but by the mid 2010's, only 55% did. The number of eighth-graders who work for pay has been cut in half. While the great recession (2007-2009) can be attributed to some of that decline, teen employment rates have not risen even though job availability has returned.

Teens today are much less likely to leave home. Adolescents are not spending any more time today engaged in clubs and activities than in the past, nor are they spending any more time on homework or studying. They also do not need to leave the house because they can spend time

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College Application Celebration Week Activities Planned

Monson High School will again participate in the Massachusetts College Application Celebration Week (<http://www.mass.edu/gearup/events/mcac.asp>) program from November 13 - 17. This is very exciting as we create an opportunity to honor and celebrate our seniors. The main focus of the week is to get seniors to complete their college applications if they have not already done so.

Members of the MPS community will assist seniors complete their applications on November 13 and 14. American International College, Bay Path University, HCC, Springfield College, Elms College, STCC and Western New England University will be conducting on-the-spot Decision Day programs that week.

There will also be an assembly on Friday, November 17 from 8:45-9:45 AM in the gym to acknowledge seniors who have applied to college that week (or before). Each participating senior will get a t-shirt and recognition in front of their peers. We also will have our third annual Mascot Madness, a friendly competition between local college/university mascots. Please join us.



College

O **Dual Enrollment Registration To Begin**

r Juniors & seniors who are interested in taking a dual enrollment class at a local public college, university or community college should see their school counselor ASAP.

e One class is usually free and depending upon the school, is taken on campus. Introductory classes are available on a first come first serve basis.

r Students must complete an application and have it signed by a parent/guardian and must pay for books and supplies.

Classes fill quickly so it is advised to register early. The deadline to enroll is December 1.

Financial Aid Night Scheduled

A detailed presentation regarding the financial aid process and an explanation on how to complete the forms will be conducted on Wednesday, October 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the cafetorium. Linda Dagradi, representing the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority, will explain the application process, go over the required financial aid forms and answer any questions. All are welcome to attend and refreshments will be served.



Letters were sent to all senior families inviting them to this important event. For more information contact the Counseling Office at 267.4589x1108.

MCAS Scores Coming Home Soon

Spring 2017 MCAS English Language Arts, math and biology testing results will be mailed home soon. Students who do not meet the passing score of 220 (Needs Improvement) will have the opportunity to retake that portion in November. In addition, an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) must be developed for students who earn a Needs Improvement (NI) score (220 - 238). The EPP will highlight a student's strengths and challenges in the area(s) needing improvement. Affected students must also take and pass a course in the subject area in both the junior and senior year. Students affected by this requirement have already been scheduled for the appropriate courses.

College visitation schedule

The following representatives will be visiting in October/November:

Assumption College.....	10/10/2017	..... 12:00
Bay Path University	10/11/2017	..... 10:00
University of Maine	10/11/2017	..... 12:00
Worcester State University	10/12/2017	..... 9:00
Dean College	10/12/2017	..... 11:00
Springfield Technical Community College	10/13/2017	..... 10:00
Framingham State University	10/16/2017	..... 9:00
Landmark College, VT	10/16/2017	..... 11:00
UMASS – Amherst	10/18/2017	..... 10:00
Springfield College	10/19/2017	..... 11:00
Endicott College	10/19/2017	..... 12:00
UMASS – Boston	10/23/2017	..... 11:00
University of St. Joseph (CT)	10/25/2017	..... 8:00
Johnson State College, VT	10/26/2017	..... 12:00
Roger Williams University	10/26/2017	..... 1:00
Eastern Connecticut State University	10/27/2017	..... 1:00
Westfield State University	11/2/2017	..... 1:00
Colby-Sawyer College	11/03/2017	..... 10:00
Sacred Heart University	11/6/2017	..... 8:00
Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising	11/6/2017	..... 10:00

Juniors & seniors are reminded that they must receive permission from their subject matter teacher 24 hours in advance in order to attend one of these sessions. Passes can be obtained in the Counseling Office.

SAT Registration

2017-18 SAT registration information is now available in the Counseling Office . SAT's will be given on the following dates:

Nov. 4	Dec. 2
March 10	May 5
June 2	

ACT Registration

2017-18 ACT registration information is now available in the Counseling Office. ACT's will be given on:

October 28	December 9
February 10	April 14
June 9	July 14

Study guides with test-taking hints for both tests are also available in our office. Monson High School is a testing site for the ACT in October, April and June only. The SAT must be taken at a local high school.

For more information (including on-line registration) about the SAT, go to www.collegeboard.org and for the ACT go to www.actstudent.org.

Smartphones,

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with their friends on their phone. The number of teens who get together to hang out every day has drastically declined – roughly 40% of teens from 2000-2015. No more going to the mall, the basketball court or the corner store.

Survey results are very clear. Eighth-graders who spend more than ten hours per week on social media are 56% more unhappy than those who are on less. Those who spend less time with onscreen activities are reportedly happier.

Cyberbullying has also increased significantly, particularly among girls. Social media is a perfect outlet to carry out aggression and exclusion because it is often anonymous and not in person. It is much easier to offend or bully someone when he or she is not in your face.

Lack of sleep is also an ongoing issue. Teens should get eight to nine hours of sleep each night yet most are not even getting seven. Fifty-seven percent of teens were more sleep deprived in 2015 than in 1991 and that rate increased 22% from 2012-2015.

While smartphones may be here to stay, there are still many things parents can do to help turn the tide against these alarming statistics:

- If at all possible, delay providing a phone to your child until later in life. While the child will not enjoy being the “only one” without a device, it will be better for you both in the long term.

- Limit the time your child has access to the phone or device and stay firm. Many phone plans have parent controls which minimally allow it to be turned off during certain hours, particularly during school or sleeping time. This will likely cause tension and turbulence, but will avoid him using it during inappropriate times.

- Adopt practices that ensure there are screen-free times when you expect to talk and interact with your child. Times such as dinner, special events (movies, sporting events) or family meetings should be sacred and no screens should be on or used. This goes for adults too. They must be good role models.

- Encourage your child to participate in typical childhood activities such as dance, sports, boy/girl scouts, church youth groups or community events

- Socialize with other families/relatives which share your views about screen time and phone usage. This will help weaken the belief that you're the only family who has rules about phone and screen usage.

- Encourage your teen to get a part-time job to get out of the house and keep busy.

- Monitor sleeping patterns and encourage a lights-out, screen-free period especially just before bed time.

If none of these suggestions seem to work, then it is time to consult with the school counselor, your pediatrician or a mental health professional. Smartphones and the related technology which come with them are great for many things, but when used inappropriately, can be detrimental to your child's physical and emotional well-being.



PSAT and Pre-ACT Test Date Set

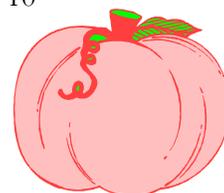
The PSAT or practice SAT and Pre-ACT (practice ACT) will be given at Monson High School on Wednesday, October 11. The PSAT is designed for juniors seeking practice for the real SAT's. The PSAT also serves as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test which allows top scoring juniors in the country to compete for millions of dollars in scholarships. The Pre-ACT is for sophomores to prepare for the ACT which is taken in the spring of the junior year or fall of the senior year.

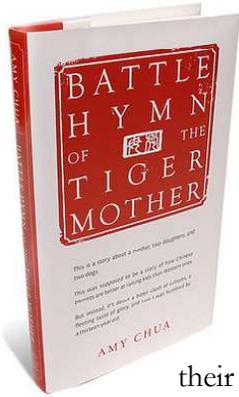
The school district will pay for all students to take the tests. There is no need to register. Students who wish to opt out of either test must notify the Counseling Office no later than October 6.

Students taking either test must report to their designated testing room at 7:35 where attendance will be taken. They must bring with them two number two pencils and a calculator. The test administrators will attempt to emulate the actual test administration as closely as possible so students will know what to expect when taking the real tests. Therefore, students are not allowed to talk or move around the test site. Testing will last until approximately 10:45 AM.

There is no penalty for incorrect answers on either test so students should attempt each question.

PSAT test takers will take part in a pre-administration activity on Tuesday, October 10 in various classrooms during third block.





Book Review

Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother

by Amy Chua

An awe-inspiring, often hilarious, and unerringly honest story of one mother's exercise in extreme parenting, revealing the rewards-and the costs-of raising her children the Chinese way.

All decent parents want to do what's best for their children. What *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* reveals is that the Chinese just have a totally different idea of how to do that. Western parents try to respect their children's individuality, encouraging them to pursue their true passions and providing a nurturing environment. The Chinese believe that the best way to protect your children is by preparing them for the future and arming them with skills, strong work habits, and inner confidence. *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* chronicles Chua's iron-willed decision to raise her daughters, Sophia and Lulu, her way-the Chinese way-and the remarkable results her choice inspires.

But Chua demands as much of herself as she does of her daughters. And in her sacrifices-the exacting attention spent studying her daughters' performances, the office hours lost shuttling the girls to lessons-the depth of her love for her children becomes clear. *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* is an eye-opening exploration of the differences in Eastern and Western parenting- and the lessons parents and children everywhere teach one another.

This book is available for loan from the Counseling Office.

Essay Writing Workshop Will Be October 20

Do you need help writing your essay for your college application? Are you not sure what topic to write about? The counseling staff will meet with seniors during SAP on October 20 in the Cafetorium to help answer these questions.

The focus of the workshop will be on effective ways to create a high quality essay. Topics discussed will include:

- What makes a good essay
- What colleges look for in an essay
- What to avoid putting in the essay
- Selecting a topic

Seniors unable to attend this session or who wish to begin working on their essay prior to October 20 should stop by the Counseling Office to pick up some information. Counselors are also available to review essays for students. Anyone with questions about the program or the process should see either Mr. Bardwell or Mrs. Sorel.



IMPORTANT DATES

Oct. 10	.....	Sophomore College Night
Oct. 11	.....	PSAT @ MHS
Oct. 11	.....	Pre-ACT @ MHS
Oct. 18	.....	Financial Aid Night
Oct. 20	.....	Essay Writing Workshop
Oct. 28	.....	ACT Administration
Nov. 2	.....	December SAT Deadline
Nov. 3	.....	December ACT Deadline
Nov. 3	.....	End of Term I
Nov. 4	.....	SAT Administration
Nov. 8, 9 & 14	.....	MCAS ELA Re-test
Nov. 9	.....	No School - Professional Day
Nov. 10	.....	No School - Veterans Day
Nov. 13 - 17	.....	College Application Week
Nov. 15-16	.....	MCAS Math Re-test
Nov. 23-24	.....	Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 2	.....	SAT Administration
Dec. 9	.....	ACT Administration
Dec. 14	.....	ASVAB Administration

ASVAB Test Scheduled

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) will be administered on Thursday, December 14 from 7:35 -10:35 a.m. in Room 208. The test is useful to determine what opportunities may exist for individuals in any branch of the armed services. Taking the test in no way obligates anyone to serve. Students also receive detailed career information with the results. Juniors and seniors interested in taking the test should sign up in the Counseling Office by December 1.

Staff Directory

Robert Bardwell, Counselor & Director
bardwellr@monsonschools.com
Kristen Sorel, Counselor
sorelk@monsonschools.com
Jen Gouvin, School-to-Career Coordinator
gouvinj@monsonschools.com
Maria Maloney, School Social Worker
maloneym@monsonschools.com
Diane Goodrich, Admin. Assistant
godrichd@monsonschools.com