



FEBRUARY 2024

# THE GUIDANCE LIGHT

Cold Spring Harbor Central School District



## *Cold Spring Harbor Jr/Sr HS Counseling Center NEWSLETTER*

### **A Message from the Director's Desk:**

Dear Students and Families,

The second semester of this 2023-2024 school year began on Monday, January 29. This marks the transition to many new courses for students who are enrolled in semester-long classes. It also brings a fresh start to students in all classes as the new quarter begins. As families review the activities ahead during this month, please be reminded of the SEPTO College Night Program on February 7th. Students with IEPs and 504 Plans are encouraged to attend along with their parents. Much information will be shared about the high school to college transition process as Ms. Raszka, Asst. Dir of PPS, and Ms. Herold, 504 chairperson and wellness counselor, address this important topic.

As we reflect on the important relationships in our lives during this month of February and celebrate Valentine's Day, we also are reminded to honor the contributions and legacy of African Americans during Black History month. Additionally, the month of February provides an opportunity to recognize our school counselors for their valuable work through the celebration of **National School Counseling Week (February 5-9, 2024)**. This year's theme is "*School Counselors: Standards Based - Student Focused.*" Specific information about the role of the school counselor in Cold Spring Harbor can be found in this newsletter. We are grateful for the individual relationships our counselors build with each student and the collaborative approach they take to meet their varied goals.

Please be reminded that the course selection process for the 2024-2025 school year at the Jr/Sr High School will end on March 4. The eSchool portal provides access for all families to view current course recommendations and selections. Please reach out to counselors, teachers and directors/chairpersons with any questions you may have during this process.

Warm regards,

*Mona E. Hecht*



*Happy Valentine's Day*



### **Important Dates:**

**February:** 2024-2025 course selection meetings with counselors

**2/7:** SEPTO College Transition Planning Night  
7PM HS Library

**2/10:** ACT Exam

**2/15:** Suggested registration date for June SAT and ACT exams to ensure preferred test center availability

**2/23:** Registration Deadline for March 9 SAT



**COLD SPRING HARBOR  
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*Soaring Higher • Growing Stronger • Achieving Greatness*





# SPRING SEMESTER

It may not yet look or feel like SPRING, but we have started the spring semester and that brings an opportunity to assess our progress related to our goals. What a great time to get organized, adjust our goals, and put new habits in place. It may be challenging to stay on track and we might find ourselves falling into patterns that aren't the most beneficial for us. Now is the time to reflect on current routines and practices, and make changes if needed.

Here are some ideas:

- ⇒ Complete homework and review material daily
- ⇒ Identify questions and/or areas of difficulty, and address them right away
- ⇒ Seek out assistance: see your teacher for extra help, visit the homework center, ask a friend, or search online support
- ⇒ Take an extra step: read ahead, go over a graded assignment or assessment, and review what you need to work on to ensure understanding

## Cold Spring Harbor Jr/Sr High School

Counseling Center  
(631) 367-6840



Mona E. Hecht

Assistant Superintendent for Counseling,  
Student Services and Human Resources

### COUNSELORS

Angelica Ferraro

Heather Friedland

Jennifer Herold

Jacqueline Kovach-Devlin

Jennifer Pickering

Gerard Spennato

## February Counseling Center Announcements NEW Counseling Canvas Pages

On January 23, Ms. Pickering led a professional learning session to guide our counseling team in creating *NEW* grade-specific Canvas pages. Using these pages, the counselors will be sharing announcements, reminders and school success tips throughout the year. The pages are now active - *stay connected and take a look!*



## Course Selection Process

Counselors are continuing to work with each student in grades 7-11 to ensure a personal and appropriate program is planned for the 2024-2025 school year. **Important Reminder:** The **deadline** for next year's course selection is **March 4, 2024**. After that time, the administrative team will be reviewing course enrollment data, making decisions about numbers of sections to run, determining staffing needs, and creating the master schedule. Choices and decisions made now affect all of these next steps. No elective course changes will be accepted while this process is underway. Students may review their selections again in May, at which time requests for changes will be accepted and addressed if there is availability in the requested courses.



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# Your School Counselor



As we celebrate *National School Counseling Week*, February 5-9, we would like to share information about the role of the school counselor here in Cold Spring Harbor. Our counselors work closely with students, families, faculty, staff and administrators to ensure that each individual student has the opportunity to meet with much success in and out of the classroom.

At the junior high school level, Ms. Pickering addresses the many transition needs students have as they move from the elementary buildings to the junior high school. She works closely with these students through grades 7 & 8 to ensure the continuity of services through junior high school and appropriate preparation for the transition to high school.

As students move into high school, they are assigned a school counselor with whom they work for all four years: Ms. Ferraro, Ms. Friedland, Ms. Kovach-Devlin or Mr. Spennato. Additionally, our wellness counselor, Ms. Herold, supports students as the 504 chairperson and in a variety of ways through small group and individual activities. All counselors address the needs of all students by presenting classroom sessions on pertinent grade level topics throughout the year. Counselors then work individually with each student to create a personalized plan that includes and addresses each of the areas listed below. The comprehensive school counseling program is developmentally appropriate and serves all students.

## ACADEMIC

- Monitor Academic Progress
- Course selection advisement: balancing rigor, interests and goals
- Managing transcripts
- GPA calculation
- Attendance: monitoring and providing support
- Monitoring graduation Requirements
- Managing diploma types
- Providing academic support and guidance: identifying barriers and creating action plans for success
- Honor society information

## PERSONAL/SOCIAL

- Exploring students' interests, skills and talents
- Encouraging engagement in junior and senior high school activities: in-school and/or out-of-school
- Providing guidance to develop organizational, problem-solving, positive decision-making, and time management skills
- Supporting the development of positive interpersonal skills
- Ensuring compliance with DASA (Dignity for All Students Act)



## COLLEGE/CAREER

- Exposing students to options through college/career exploration and learning opportunities
- College testing advisement: PSAT, SAT and ACT
- Naviance: college and career exploration and application tool
- College exploration process
- Classroom information sessions and parent/student evening programs
- Letters of recommendation for college applications
- College athletics: NCAA
- Assist students with Financial Aid information and process

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## *The Counseling Team Welcomed ROB FRANEK to CSH*

On January 22, Rob Franek, Editor in Chief of The Princeton Review, author of numerous college guidance books, and college admission expert, spoke to more than 80 students and parents at the Junior/Senior High School. A long-time friend of the school counseling community and a sought-after speaker, Rob demonstrated compassion and humor as he shared current data, recent trends and valuable suggestions with families as they embark on the often-daunting college exploration process. While there are many stories in the

news about the impact of test-optional policies, the affirmative action decision affecting college admission, and the cost of college today, Rob was able to provide clarity and insight.

With literally thousands of options, the goal of finding the right college *fit* should be at the forefront of the search process. There are many colleges that fall within the categories and criteria that students and families identify as most important - academic offerings and ratings, selectivity, career placement, size/location, campus life options, ....your school counselor can assist in creating a personal list to explore. Taking the time to explore the options available while also exploring personal priorities, needs, and preferences will assist in identifying options that match each student well. While there may be outside influences and pressures trying to impact the process, students and families must ultimately make decisions that align with that personal *fit*.

The entire CSH counseling team works individually with students through each step of the process, while weaving post-high school planning into all grade levels in order to support students at every step of their high school journey. Our students are prepared for, and focused on, their futures. Our counselors work with our school community and the college admission community at large to guide, support and help launch each student to reach their goals and potential. The right *fit* is waiting for you!



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# ***JUNIORS: COLLEGE and POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING***



The counselors look forward to meeting individually with students in grade 11 to discuss the college exploration process. All grade 11 students are reminded that the Junior Bio is due in the counseling center by **March 4, 2024**. This important document is used by your counselor to prepare for your individual junior college meeting.

Students and parents are asked to review and complete their sections of the Junior Bio, providing information that can assist the counselor when identifying and recommending colleges to consider, step by step timelines, and a unique plan for each student. Appointments will be scheduled after the Junior Bios are received.

The college exploration and application process can be exciting, daunting and time consuming. Planning ahead, and accessing the resources available to you, including your counselor, will assist as you navigate this endeavor. We look forward to working together!

## **COLLEGE ADMISSION FACTORS**

The college admission process raises questions from students and families about how admission decisions are made. The most important factor in this process is a student's academic record: the courses taken and the grades earned. Additional factors are often considered, and these can include, but are not limited to, a review of the student's activities, student's voice (essay) and feedback from the teachers and counselors who can speak on their behalf.

### **1. Academic Record:**

- Grades Earned
- Courses Taken
- Trends in Achievement
- SAT/ACT (if required/submitted)

Each student's profile and plans are unique. Counselors assist students in identifying options that match with each student's interests, goals, strengths, and best chance for admission.

### **2. Other Factors:**

- Student voice: ESSAY
- Student's demonstrated interest
- Teacher/Counselor voice: Letters of recommendation
- Extra-curricular activities
- Work
- Portfolio (if needed)
- Interview (if offered)

Students who have engaged deeply in areas of interest, have assumed leadership roles in activities, or have excelled in a particular area may set themselves apart from similar applicants.



### **3. Distinguishing Factors:**

- Leadership
- Deeply exploring an interest
- Going the extra mile



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## *SUMMER 2024: Let's Explore the Options*

The days may be cold and gray right now, but it won't be long until the sun is shining late into the evening and flowers are peeking from the ground. As we move into the second half of this school year, many students and families are starting to think about summer activities. The Cold Spring Harbor Counseling Center has created a guide that we hope will assist with this exploration process.

Included in the guide is an extensive list of pre-college programs where students can spend time on a college campus and explore areas of interest - creative writing, the arts, sciences, music or technology. Students who may prefer to experience some adventure can explore outdoor opportunities near and far. Additionally, there are a number of athletic options for those who want to focus their energies on sports. While they are not listed in the summer guide, other great summer options may include local job opportunities and community service projects.



### **CSH Summer Program Guide**



This document will continue to be updated as we receive information about additional programs throughout the spring semester. The counselors are available to discuss options and provide guidance related to individual students' interests and goals, so please reach out with questions.

### **SAVE THE DATE: 2024 Spring College Expo**

The Nassau Counselor's Association will be hosting the annual **SPRING COLLEGE EXPO** at Hofstra University on April 16, 2024 from 3:30 - 8:30pm in the David S. Mack Sports Complex. This event includes representatives from a large number of colleges throughout the country as well as information sessions on topics including collegiate athletics, financial aid and the needs of students with disabilities.

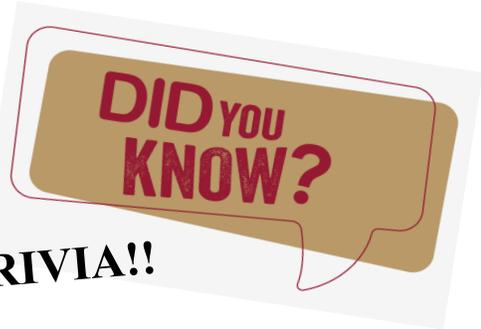
Families can use this [LINK](#) to access the flyer with a QR code and plan for the event.



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## THE COLLEGE PROCESS: Demonstrated Interest

Colleges are receiving record numbers of applications each year. In an effort to understand an applicant's level of interest, and chance of enrolling if admitted, many admission offices are tracking students' levels of "demonstrated interest."

### How can a student "demonstrate interest?"

- ⇒ Connect with the college by getting on the mailing list and opening emails
- ⇒ Follow the college on social media
- ⇒ Connect with the admission representative who visits CSH and/or is the Long Island rep
- ⇒ Attend a college fair and make sure the individual college knows you're there (have a conversation and fill out their contact card)
- ⇒ Visit the campus, take a tour, and join an information session
- ⇒ Participate in virtual or in-person events

Even if a college does not track demonstrated interest, a number of college applications include a supplemental essay, asking "Why Us?" Students who are able to answer that question with very specific information about the college, the desired program or courses of study, and/or opportunities on campus show that they have done their research.

Most importantly, the more contact a student has with a potential college, the better chance they have of knowing it is the right fit. Take the time to learn about the options, ask questions, and connect with admission officers, current students and alumni when possible.

## COLLEGE TRIVIA!!

1. Most students in the current junior class have used Naviance a few times, and some have logged in many times. What is the average number of times a member of the CSH Class of 2025 has used Naviance by the end of January 2024?

- A. 4
- B. 5
- C. 8
- D. 13

\* Students in grade 11 will be using Naviance quite a bit during the college exploration and application process - see your counselor if you need assistance!

2. How many applications did UCLA receive from freshman applicants in 2023?

- A. 42,800
- B. 73,600
- C. 98,000
- D. 145,900

3. All CSH HS students have access to this FREE SAT/ACT prep program:

- A. Princeton Review
- B. Kaplan
- C. Methodize
- D. Regents

4. This university's mascot is a *wave*:

- A. University of Alabama
- B. Pepperdine University
- C. Coastal Carolina University
- D. University of Hawaii



Answers: 1. C, 2. D, 3. C, 4. B



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