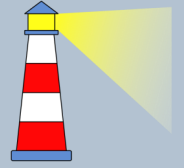


MARCH 2024

# 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,

Brace yourself. It's that time again. As we greet the month of March, and the start of spring which is soon to follow, the days seem to speed up a bit. The seemingly slow motion of the winter months gives way to a feeling of sliding downhill. One look at the school calendar for March provides a glimpse into all this is packed into this month. The next few months are expected to move just as quickly as we face the approaching end of this school year. At this time, we look forward to the start of spring sports seasons where the practices and games may still end after sunset with a chill in the air, but will soon finish in warmer temperatures with the sun still on the horizon. We also look forward to our district-wide Sports Night that will bring our school community together, the junior high school musical, International Night, the joint FOCUS/SEPTO presentation featuring Mr. Jeremy Thode, and six weeks of opportunity to make the third quarter the strongest one yet this year before the marking period ends in early April.

The high school counselors soon will begin meeting with individual grade 11 students and their parents for college planning meetings. There is much to think about as the many college options are considered and students begin to identify the characteristics that are most important to them. This process is filled with excitement, anticipation, concern and hopefulness. The counselors work closely with each family, providing guidance and support through it all.

As always, please reach out with questions or concerns, stay connected through the new counseling center Canvas pages and this newsletter, and know that the CSH counseling staff joins all faculty and staff is supporting each and every student in our schools.

Warm regards,

*Mona E. Hecht*



### **Important Dates:**

**3/4:** Junior Biography due in the counseling center for college planning meetings

**3/8:** Registration Deadline for April 13 ACT

**3/9:** SAT

**3/10:** Daylight Saving Time Begins

**3/22:** Late Registration Deadline for April 13 ACT



**COLD SPRING HARBOR  
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*Soaring Higher • Growing Stronger • Achieving Greatness*



## ***SPRING COLLEGE FAIRS: In-Person and Virtual Options***

As the spring college exploration season gets underway, college fair offerings are being announced. The National Association of College Admission Counseling's annual college fair program will continue to be offered virtually this year as well as in-person.

### **NACAC - New York Fair:**

March 10, 2024 - 12:00 - 4:00pm

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center

### **NACAC Virtual College Fair**

March 24, 2024 - 1:00 - 6:00pm

April 21, 2024 - 1:00 - 6:00pm

**Nassau Counselor's Association:** The Nassau Counselor's Association will be hosting the annual **SPRING COLLEGE EXPO** at Hofstra University on April 16, 2024 from 5:30 - 8:30pm. 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.



### **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

## **March Counseling Center Announcements**

While the February recess period has provided a well-deserved and much-needed break, March includes many full school days and activities. Progress reports for the third marking period will be available on the portal on March 6. During this month we look forward to the start of the spring sports seasons, many school events, and submission deadlines for the National and Junior National Honor Societies. All students in grade 11 are also reminded to complete and submit the **JUNIOR BIO**.

Junior bios include information to help guide the college exploration process, so please submit this document to your counselor by the priority deadline of March 4 so a college planning conference can be scheduled.

Also, please be reminded that the course selection process for the 2023-2024 school year is coming to a close. All chosen courses will be used to build the master schedule for next school year. As has been shared multiple times already, **no changes to course selections will be made after March 4** while the master schedule is being built. It is important for all students and parents to review the chosen selections now and see your counselor before March 4 if any changes need to be made.

Thank you for your cooperation and careful review of all course selections.



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# College Planning Process



The college exploration process can be exciting and daunting all at the same time. The CSH Counseling Center has created a timeline and checklist to assist students and families. Your school counselor is your most important resource during this time, but this checklist can help too. Below is a condensed version of the March - June activities included in the complete list.

See the entire checklist [HERE](#). S: Student P: Parent B: Both

## March 2024: Planning Kickoff

- S\_\_ Complete your **Junior Biography** and submit it to The Counseling Center (priority Deadline: March 4)
- S\_\_ Schedule a Junior Planning Conference with your counselor
- B\_\_ Research colleges that seem to match your academic achievement, academic interests, locations and extracurricular preferences
- B\_\_ Begin to familiarize yourself with college websites
- S\_\_ Think about which two teachers you will ask to write letters of recommendation for you. Before you decide: Think about who can provide the best letter for you (it may not be a course in which you earned an A; it might be a course you struggled with and prevailed in at the end!) Make an appointment to speak with the two teachers you choose and ask if they would be so kind as to support your college applications by writing a letter. If the teachers agree send them a thank you note (not an email) on nice stationery.
- B\_\_ Decide whether you will use the April break to visit colleges and make your plans.
- B\_\_ Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center if you hope to play a sport at the Division I or Division II level. Arrange to have your transcript sent to the Eligibility Center at the end of Junior year.
- B\_\_ Read the Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete. It is a good idea to print this and keep it in your Athletics folder. You will refer to it many times, especially if you are a recruited athlete. The Guide is updated every July.

## April 2024

- S\_\_ Look at the Common Application essay topics. The essays change from time to time, but these will give you a sense of the kinds of essays that are possible.
- B\_\_ Continue your college research.

## May 2024

- P\_\_ Check financial aid websites of the colleges to which you think you will apply.  
Note required forms; they can differ. Mark your calendar so that your forms will be sent to each college at least one week before any official deadlines. Assemble documentation that will be necessary. The Federal Aid form is called the FAFSA. The student must establish an account and then complete the FAFSA in the fall.
- P\_\_ Some private colleges have their own funds that are available to students. They require the CSS/Profile. Next year's form will be available in summer 2024.

## June 2024

- B\_\_ Continue your college research online and by visiting colleges.
- S\_\_ Check with your teacher recommenders to make sure they have the information they need from you to write your letters. (Many write their letters during the summer.)
- S\_\_ Create a resume of all your in- and out-of-school activities since the beginning of grade 9



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# Junior High School Counseling Program



Ms. Pickering works closely with junior high school students on a variety of topics throughout the school year. The springtime allows for specific activities that assist students in learning about their own specific strengths and interests.

During the months of March and April, students will meet with Ms. Pickering in small group workshops to focus on career exploration activities. These workshops will include an introduction to the Naviance program, which students will use each year from grades 7 through 12.

The junior high school years include many opportunities for students to learn about themselves, explore areas of interest, try different activities and engage in meaningful learning experiences. Ms. Pickering continues to assist students with all of this, and more, as she leads students through these valuable activities.

Grade 7 students will learn about personal areas of interest as they complete a valuable Interest Inventory in the Naviance program. This activity will assist students in connecting their interests to opportunities inside and outside of school.

Grade 8 students will use the Naviance program's "Strengths Explorer" to identify their personal areas of interest and abilities that may assist them in exploring personal goals.

**REMINDER:** Please keep an eye out for this year's **MENTAL WELLNESS MONTH** activities during the month of May 2024. While Ms. Pickering and the junior high school team once again will be leading a month-long series of mental wellness activities during the days and weeks in May, it is important to continually focus on mental and physical wellness all year long. Let's begin the spring season with purposeful and impactful activities - each day - that support our individual wellness! Some ideas: mindful breathing, tech breaks, stretching/yoga, reading a good book, getting enough sleep...

## CSH COUNSELING CENTER: We're Here for You

Students in our schools manage many responsibilities and often juggle schedules that appear to hold more activities and expectations than hours in the day.

While the levels of achievement among students are high, the increasing levels of stress and anxiety are rising too. Maintaining a manageable course load and reasonable schedule of extra-curricular activities is ideal, but it is often difficult to keep the perfect balance of both.

School counselors can assist students in making decisions when faced with multiple options, planning for the future, addressing current challenges and trying to balance it all. It is normal to feel stressed and being able to manage the stress while also managing the responsibilities is a positive goal.

Specific strategies can assist students when the stress of it all starts to get in the way. Creating a tool kit of strategies that work for you, such as an exercise break, breathing techniques, a nap, or reaching out to a counselor or a teacher can help.

School counselors help students develop useful strategies, and are available for more specific and targeted support. Our wellness counselor, Ms. Herold, also is available in the counseling center.



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## ***Attention Student Athletes: NCAA Information***

Students who may be interested in participating in collegiate athletics should refer to the NCAA Eligibility Center's information on Division I, Division II and Division III athletics. Students who will participate at the Division I or Division II level must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center and must meet specific criteria. Information about each division can be found on the links below and on the NCAA Eligibility Center's website.

**[DIV I Facts Sheet](#)**

**[DIV II Facts Sheet](#)**

**[NCAA Center High School GUIDE](#)**



## ***DIGITAL SAT: NEW in March 2024***

Please be reminded - the **NEW Digital SAT** will make its debut on the March 9, 2024 test administration date.

Here is our friend, Rob Franek, Editor in Chief of the Princeton Review, with four reminders about this new version of the SAT:

**[Rob Franek Digital SAT Video](#)**

## ***SSAR....What?!??***



If you are starting the college exploration process, this information is for you. The SSAR is a **Self-Reported Academic Record**. It allows applicants to enter and submit their high school courses, grades, level of course, and length of course directly into a system for the college's review. This includes courses taken as well as senior courses in progress. Students begin this in their **senior year** and use their high school transcript to enter each, just as they appear on the high school transcript. One final official transcript from the high school will only be sent to the college if you are admitted and planning to enroll.

While most colleges still require and accept an official transcript from the high school for each applicant, the SSAR is growing in popularity. Some colleges offer the option and some now require all applicants to submit their academic record this way. The list of colleges that now require the SSAR includes but is not limited to University of Pittsburgh, Northeastern University, Clemson University, Virginia Tech, New York University, University of Florida and Penn State University.

The SSAR helps colleges standardize the data of applicants whose transcripts vary from one school to the next. They also can use the data to calculate the GPA according to their system and/or criteria. Completing the SSAR takes time so students need to plan ahead when they begin the application process. Make sure to check each college's application requirements and see your counselor with questions.



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## SUMMER 2024

Please be reminded of the CSH  
Counseling Center's

### SUMMER PROGRAM GUIDE



## College Testing: Test Optional and Test Free

Colleges with **current** Test Optional or Test Free Policies can be found here:

### TEST OPTIONAL and TEST FREE COLLEGE LIST

While this site is a good resource, please be reminded that the best source of information is each individual college's admission office and website. College policies may change and their admission practices can vary year to year.

Please note: test optional schools still consider scores for those who submit them. Submitting scores to be considered in the application process is an important decision. See your counselor and review the college's admission data to determine the best decision for you.



## College Testing Requirements Keeping Up With All the Changes

Test Optional. Test Blind. Test Flexible. Tests Required. How do we keep it all straight and what do students and families need to know?

Yale announced last week that it will now require standardized test scores for students applying for the class entering in fall 2025. Dartmouth announced the same news in early February. Also last week, the University of Michigan announced their formal adoption of a test optional policy for the winter 2025 academic term and beyond. Currently, the University of Michigan has a "test flexible" policy. Many colleges have decided to go **permanently** test optional; others are **currently** test optional. Some colleges do not look at tests scores at all.

Current juniors are registering for and taking college entrance exams. The SAT and the ACT are administered multiple times throughout the year and test scores still often matter. When college applications are submitted and individual decisions are made regarding submitting, or not submitting, test score students need to have the best possible options. Taking practice tests, preparing for the right test option, and ensuring there are possible scores to be submitted are all part of the college exploration process.

Both the SAT and the ACT have many available practice test and prep options. The NEW Digital SAT is available for the first time this March 2024. Please be reminded that ALL students in CSH have the FREE Methodize program available to prep for either or both exams. Students can find Methodize in their Castle Learning accounts and can see their counselor for assistance.

When it comes to college admissions, many aspects of the process often appear unclear or even mysterious. College testing is not one of them. Individual college testing policies are clearly outlined on each college's Admission webpage. The policies may vary, but they are clear.

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## *Honor Roll and High Honor Roll*

Students in the Junior/Senior High School are eligible for Honor Roll and High Honor Roll each marking period when report card grades are posted. Honors and AP courses are not weighted in determining eligibility for Honor Roll. Students with any incomplete grades cannot be considered for Honor Roll until the incomplete work has been made up and a grade determined.

The lowest average required for making **HONOR ROLL is B or 3.00**

The lowest average required for making **HIGH HONOR ROLL is A - or 3.66**

Additional information about Honor Roll can be found in the CSH Junior/Senior High School Agenda Book.

Third marking period **Progress Reports** will be posted on Wednesday, March 6, 2024.

Third marking period ends on April 11 and **Report Cards** will be posted on April 18, 2024.

*"I am who I am today because of the choices I made yesterday."*

Eleanor Roosevelt  
First Lady of the U.S.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

## **COLLEGE TRIVIA!!**

1. Which university was the birthplace of **insulin** and **stem cell research**?  
A. Harvey Mudd College  
B. University of Toronto  
C. University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign  
D. Oberlin College
2. Which university is associated with the discovery of the **MRI**:  
A. MIT  
B. Univ. of California - Berkeley  
C. Stony Brook University  
D. University of Missouri
3. This is the oldest university in the **world**:  
A. College of William and Mary  
B. University of Oxford  
C. University of Bologna  
D. University of Athens
4. This college's mascot is **not** a tiger:  
A. Princeton University  
B. Clemson University  
C. Louisiana State University  
D. University of Mississippi



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



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