

CANTON HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S CORNER NEWSLETTER

April 2010

I often feel as though the seasons in a school are dictated not by the weather or the calendar, but by events. It is hard to believe it is April already, but the sight of lacrosse sticks and softball mitts confirms it! Third term has just ended and we are entering the home stretch of what has been a wonderful school year.

This "season" in the guidance office we are focused on a new set of tasks. Chief among those are helping seniors to close out the final term of their high school career successfully, and by extension, helping them to transition to life beyond high school. Over twenty of our seniors are participating in the second year of our "Externship" program, an experiential learning opportunity outside of the walls of CHS. We are also preparing a new cohort of seniors-to-be as all of our eager juniors face the daunting prospect of planning for their own transition to the next step in their life's journey.

Advancement into each new grade is an important milestone for each child. I recently told the underclassmen how I feel that course selection is an exciting opportunity in their young lives. After the laughter quieted, I explained that course selection is, for many children, the first time they are in control of decisions based on their interests and curiosities. One beauty of Canton High School is the breadth of course offerings available to our students. One never knows when and where a particular experience will spark a student's desire to learn.

Encourage your children to explore their interests, now and always.

Best wishes for a lovely spring,

Dan Rubin
Director of Guidance

Save the Date!!

Tuesday, April 13th – Last day to submit requests for changes of courses and/or levels

Saturday, April 24th – 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm – Rhode Island Convention Center – NACAC Providence National College Fair

Tuesday, April 27th (9:00 am – 12:00 pm & 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm) and Wednesday April 28th (9:00 am – 12:00 pm) – World Trade Center Boston – NACAC Boston National College Fair

FRESHMEN, SOPHOMORES, JUNIORS Course Selection Update

We have received completed course selection sheets for students attending Canton High School next year. All of the course choices have been entered into our database and verification sheets have been mailed home. Along with verification sheets are instructions for parents and students about the procedure for changing course choices. If a student would like to take a course at a higher level than the one recommended by their teacher, a request will be submitted in writing with a rationale for the requested change. The department coordinator will review the recommendation with teacher and parent and make a final decision on placement. If, in light of a student's overall workload, he/she would like to take a lower level than the one recommended, that too should be submitted for approval with an

explanation of the rationale. This process must be completed by April 13th.

This policy is intended to be sure that each student has the opportunity to take on an appropriately challenging curriculum, and at the same time to consider the school administration's need to have accurate counts for each class as the schedule is built. Accuracy is critical because any changes to a student's schedule once the master schedule is built can cause significant disruption to that student's schedule.

SENIORS

The Month of College Decisions

As students are frequently reminded, college applications are mailed to the *Admissions* Office because their primary responsibility is to accept students into their college. While some of the most selective admissions offices in the country send out more denials than acceptances, when students have applied to an appropriate range of colleges and universities they are left with an array of college acceptances from which to choose.

When offered admission...

When considering options and making final choices, it may be helpful for students to:

1. Talk through their thought process with others - parents, counselors, teachers, friends, current students at the college;
2. Visit the campuses again, attend classes, and stay overnight if possible (*it feels very different knowing one is accepted!*);
3. Consider the original reasons they applied to the schools; compare again the courses, activities and other opportunities among the schools by reviewing the catalogs;
4. Compare expenses and financial aid packages; and
5. Trust their intuition. Many students find it helpful to make a list of pros and cons to assist in the comparison of their colleges. **Encourage your child to make a personal decision, one that makes the most sense for his or her particular interests, needs and requirements.** It may be difficult for her to say no to a more "prestigious" school when another college is really the better choice. You may need to be a reassuring guide and sounding board in that process with your child.

When denied admission...

Most students experience being denied from at least one college to which they have applied. The

sheer number of college applicants makes the admissions process at many schools highly competitive. It is important for students to recognize that a rejection letter from a college is not personal. Highly selective colleges and universities receive applications from many more students than they could possibly admit. Admissions decisions are based on the needs of the college and the composition of the applicant pool each year, so sometimes students are rejected by colleges to which they might have been admitted in another year.

For some students, a rejection from a college is the first major disappointment they have experienced. Students are remarkably resilient and they do adjust to this disappointment. The responses of those close to them (especially their parents!) are most important in maintaining their self-esteem and perspective. It is important that we acknowledge that life normally includes some disappointments, that we have all experienced obstacles in our paths, and even more importantly, that we all learn and grow through such experiences.

In the unlikely event that your child is not accepted to a school he or she considered a safety school, have them see their counselor immediately. Several colleges have deadlines later than March 1st and each spring, counselors receive a list of colleges across the country that still have openings after the universal May 1st, Candidate's Reply Date.

Wait List

Some students will be notified that they are on a Wait List. This means that the admissions committee feels that the student is an admissible candidate, but that the college has many more qualified applicants than it can accept. The admissions officers will accept students from their wait list as other accepted students decline their admission. Colleges are expected to provide wait listed students with a history that describes the number of students placed on the wait list, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing.

Even if your child is on the Wait List at one school, it is necessary to send in a deposit to the second choice school. Students cannot count on being taken from a wait list and they need to be sure to have reserved a space for themselves elsewhere.

Many students find that they would rather not remain on a wait list because they feel comfortable with the college where they deposited. For some, making a decision and establishing an allegiance with a school to which

they are already admitted feels much better than continuing to wait, and not knowing where they will go. This is an individual decision which deserves careful consideration. We find that most students are ultimately very happy with the choices they have made. Most often such decisions work out for the best; wonderful opportunities await students at the colleges they attend!

Deposit by May 1

Students should hear all admissions decisions and financial aid offers from their colleges by April 15 at the latest, and they have until **May 1**, the nationwide **Candidate's Reply Date**, to let the college of their choice know that they plan to attend. Some colleges may give students housing priority based on the date of deposit, however if a deposit is sent in to reserve housing it should be fully refundable until May 1.

As of May 1st, a student may only have a deposit in at one school of his or her choice. Having more than one deposit in is called "double depositing" and it is an unethical practice. If the colleges involved determine that a student has "double deposited," admission may be jeopardized at both institutions. It is an acceptable practice to deposit at one school and maintain one's name on a wait list at another. However, indicating to two colleges that you will be attending by sending deposits to both should not be considered.

Let the other colleges know

Courtesy dictates informing the other colleges to which students were accepted that they will not attend. In fact, students should inform colleges they will not attend as soon as they know, because it is with this information that colleges can monitor their yield and accept students from their wait list.

Deferring college for a year

Some students may exercise the option to defer their matriculation until September, 2009. To do so, students should call their college to be sure that deferrals are allowed and follow up with a letter that states their reasons for the request and an indication of their plans for the interim year. Most colleges are happy to allow such deferrals, with the stipulation that students do not take courses at another college during that time. The college will generally require a deposit to hold the student's space in the class of 2013.

Comparing financial aid packages

As seniors receive their acceptance letters, some will also receive financial aid award letters. Caution should be used when examining aid packages, as they may vary greatly from one

institution to another. Contacting the college Financial Aid Officer (especially at your child's first choice college) to explain any extenuating circumstances is appropriate at this time. This is especially important if you need to clarify information which may not have been adequately documented on the financial aid forms or which has changed since you filed.

Financial aid administrators are usually willing to review your situation and advise you accordingly. Remember, if your son or daughter is applying for Town of Canton scholarships, he or she may receive additional funds.

Town scholarships are announced at Scholarship Night in early June

JUNIORS

Juniors are actively involved in their post-secondary planning through Guidance Seminar, individual meetings with their counselors, and for some students, Career Planning class. Students often experience significant intellectual growth during the process of defining what they want in a college and contemplating where they might want to spend the next four years. It is an exciting, reflective, and at times anxiety-riddled experience, but also a major milestone in your child's development.

College Fairs

College fairs are excellent opportunities for students to meet college representatives, ask questions and get their names on mailing lists. Over 200 schools and colleges usually attend these fairs.

TEC Higher Education Night, Westwood High School

Wednesday, April 7th - 7:00-9:00 pm

NACAC Providence National College Fair, Rhode Island Convention Center

Saturday, April 24th - 1:00-4:00 pm

NACAC Boston National College Fair, Boston Convention & Exhibition Center

Tuesday, April 27th - 9:00 am-12:00 pm and 6:00-9:00 pm

Wednesday, April 28th - 9:00 am-12:00 pm

SAT Registration Deadlines

Juniors should be registered for the May 1st SAT Reasoning Test at this time (and June 5th SAT Subject Tests, if appropriate). If they plan to take but have not yet registered for the June 5th SAT

Tests, they should do so immediately. The deadline is May 4th, but we suggest registering much earlier to guarantee a spot at a school close by, as Canton High School is not a test center in June. Students may also register online at www.collegeboard.com.

SOPHOMORES

Sophomores completed the English Language Arts component of MCAS during the last week of March, and will have the Math component on May 17th and 18th. More specific details will be included in the May Newsletter.

SAT Subject Tests

Some sophomores may choose to take SAT Subject Tests on June 5th. While most students do not take any SAT tests until junior year, if your child has been a strong student in Chemistry Honors (A or high B grades), June is the appropriate time to take the SAT Subject test since students will have nearly completed the courses. Only a very small number of highly selective colleges consider SAT Subject tests in admissions and students will have other opportunities to take these tests in junior year and in the fall of senior year.

Interested sophomores may pick up a SAT registration bulletin and the booklet *Taking the SAT Subject Tests* in the guidance office. May 4th is the registration deadline for the June 5th test. Please check www.collegeboard.com for further information.

Summer Opportunities

Summer vacation is a wonderful time for students to explore their interests, meet new people and experience new environments. Information about dozens of summer programs is on file in the Guidance Office and students and parents alike are welcome to browse through the files at any time. Programs vary from general or specialized academic, to language study and travel abroad, to outdoor adventure and community service programs. For example, many colleges offer on-campus pre-college sessions for current high school students, especially juniors.

Other opportunities include such specific adventures as studying marine biology in the Caribbean, traveling/studying in a foreign country, or rebuilding wilderness trails. Keep in mind that the Guidance files do not have a

complete inventory of all possibilities. If you need some help finding the type of program you are looking for, take some time to do research in the library, a bookstore or on-line. Another good resource is Student Camp and Trip Advisors in Newton (617-558-7005 or 800-542-1233).

While we do not recommend any particular program, established programs should be able to provide you with references in the area who can give you some feedback on their experiences.

TEC Summer Internships

The Education Cooperative (TEC) can help college and non-college-bound juniors and sophomores explore specific career options. Interns are placed with a sponsor in a professional setting and become involved in projects that will expose them to various career and vocational options, develop decision-making skills, increase their ability to work with professionals, and establish work experience that can be included on their resumes.

The opportunities are unlimited! An extremely wide variety of careers may be explored. Each intern makes a 60-hour commitment to the Internship Program.

If interested, please see the internship link on the guidance website or contact the TEC Coordinator for Summer Internships at (781) 326-2473.