

CANTON HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S CORNER NEWSLETTER

June 2010

It's hard to believe I am writing our final newsletter of the 2009-2010 school year. This is always an exciting time of year in schools, with students and teachers alike looking forward to recharging their batteries during the summer months. The close of this school year brings up some bittersweet feelings for us in the CHS Guidance office. At the end of this month, we say goodbye to two dear friends. Joanne Teliszewski is fulfilling a career goal of hers by transitioning to a new role within the school as our new Library Media Specialist. Joanne has spent the past two years working toward her Master's degree in Library Media Studies and we couldn't be happier for her! Carolyn Christino, our beloved Guidance office secretary is retiring after 40 years of dedicated service. It will be impossible to replace Carolyn's deep knowledge of our office routines and procedures and we will all miss her dearly. We wish her the best of luck as she transitions to a new phase in her life. We are currently in the process of reviewing applicants for each of these positions and I look forward to introducing you to our new additions later in the summer.

Below, you will find a brief statement about assessing student progress and growth as we wind down the year. To that end, we are also assessing our own work as a guidance department.

At the end of this newsletter is a brief survey created by the National Office for School Counseling Outcomes designed to assess the effectiveness of school counseling programs. We invite you to complete this survey and return it to the high school Guidance office. With the implementation of the guidance seminar program, we have continued to experience a great deal of change this year, and we hope to use your feedback to continue to grow and deliver the best possible services to meet the needs to Canton High School students.

We look forward to a rejuvenating and healthy summer, and wish you the best!

Dan Rubin

Assessing Progress

Students in all grades should take time to reflect upon their progress this year. As a parent, you can help your child put her growth into proper perspective. All of us have learned and grown throughout this year, with varying results. If your child is not happy with his performance this year, you may be able to help him decide what he wants to do differently next year. What is very important is to seek your child's opinion of his or her progress in addition to your own thoughts and observations about the year.

Always, we want to remain focused that schooling is about nurturing a love of learning. Effort and inquisitiveness need to be valued and praised along with achievement. Remember that a poor academic year can be improved upon significantly in subsequent years. If this has been a good year academically, encourage your child to keep up the good work and let them know how proud you are of their efforts.

In addition to assessing your child's academic performance, help them to evaluate their

extracurricular involvement. Have they been involved in activities that were satisfying? Do they want to try new activities next year or continue what they have started, therefore developing more depth and skill? Have they found a healthy balance between academic and extracurricular pursuits? Some students' interests lead them to participate in activities outside of school; for example, in the community, in religious organizations or in volunteer or paid work. Rest assured that all these contributions are well respected. What is most important, though, is that your students are spending constructive time outside of school: in sports, school, religious or community activities, lessons, hobbies, paid or volunteer work. A rule of thumb is that more depth and commitment in a few significant activities is better than a broad array of activities with minimal involvement. However, it is an individual decision for each child and should be based on his or her interests, not on building an activity resume to send to colleges.

When students apply to college or for employment, how they have approached their course work during the school day is important and will be apparent from their transcripts and recommendations. However, what they do outside the school day and during the summers can be most revealing about their commitments, passions, and depth of character.

SENIORS

We bid you and our seniors a fond farewell! It has been a pleasure to work with the class of 2010; we have shared the joys and tribulations of watching them mature and develop through their time at Canton High School. It has indeed been a growth-filled process for all of us. Congratulations and best wishes in the future!

Transitioning On

We wish our seniors the very best as they move on to the next phase of their lives and we look forward to seeing them next year when they return home. We love to hear about their college experiences. It helps us to stay informed and it is always a pleasure to see our students as they grow and mature through their college years. In addition, juniors and seniors often ask us for names of CHS graduates who are willing to answer questions about their colleges or to host prospective students.

Seniors will be asked to indicate on their Senior Exit Survey sheets if they are interested in being a contact person for their college and many have indicated that they would be willing to do so.

Students Delaying College

If your child has chosen not to pursue further education at this point and decides at a later date that he or she would like to go to college, he or she should know that all the services of the Guidance Department are available to him or her. Graduates should call to set up an appointment with their counselor and they may access the resources in the Guidance Office.

Transferring

Sometimes students decide to transfer from the college they originally attend. These students should be reassured that they may seek the help of their guidance counselor and make use of the resources available in the Guidance Office.

Student Records

We are required to keep student's temporary record for five years from their graduation, after which time we destroy them. The temporary records for the class of '10 will be available for pick up after July 1, 2010. Any students from the previous five years of graduating classes can be picked up anytime prior to the five year limit. Essentially, the following records are destroyed after five years: *the temporary record*, which consists of standardized test scores, records of extracurricular activities and attendance data. The following is kept for 60 years: *the transcript (or permanent record)* which includes identifying information regarding student and parents or guardians, course titles and grades received, grade level completed and year completed.

JUNIORS

College Visits

Most juniors have been making significant progress on their initial college lists in guidance seminar. They are well-prepared to continue their college investigations through the summer - visiting college campuses, reading catalogs, researching on the internet and through resource books, talking to current college students, interviewing where appropriate, requesting applications and maybe even writing drafts of essays.

It makes sense to see college campuses when in session (i.e., spring and fall) but some students' fall schedules are such that they must visit during the summer. The only drawback to visiting colleges during the summer is that there are fewer students on campus than will be present in the fall. However, it does provide you with knowledge of the setting, facilities and special programs as well as the opportunity to meet with admissions personnel, faculty, learning specialists, coaches and activity leaders. College admissions offices are open almost all summer for tours and information sessions.

Because of summer commitments, some students will have to visit colleges and schedule interviews in the fall, but keep in mind that taking students out of school and away from their classes adds more stress to an already full schedule. Therefore, it is important to make the best possible use of the time you have.

Tours and Interviews

You or your child should call the admissions office or check the colleges' websites to see when tours and information sessions are scheduled, and whether you need to make a reservation. The more visiting and investigating students do this summer, the better off they will be in the fall when they should be working hard academically, continuing in meaningful activities as well as completing college applications and essays. Students are encouraged to schedule college visits during non-school hours; however, a student will be excused from school for college visits or interviews which cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of school time.

The CHS Guidance Office

Parents and students alike are welcome to utilize materials in the Guidance Office during the summer months. Available resources include: books on college admissions, college majors and sports, financial aid; programs for students with learning disabilities; college view books; college catalogs (which provide course descriptions, requirements for majors, etc.); and college videos.

Canton High School is generally open from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm during the summer months.

TERi College Access Center in Boston

Located on the basement level of the Boston Public Library in Copley Square, the TERi Center is a well-stocked and well-staffed facility that can help you in your college search this summer. Use of all resources is free and materials include: books on college planning and financial aid; college catalogs; and computerized academic, career guidance and financial aid programs. The TERi Center is open Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and Sundays (May through October) 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. All services are free. For more information and directions, please call the TERi Information Center at (877) 332-4348 or check their website, www.tericollegeaccess.org.

Using the Internet to Guide You

The following is a list of web sites that may be helpful in your child's college search. Most colleges and universities will have their own individual web sites which include admission

requirements, application procedures and deadlines, means to request information, and perhaps even a "virtual tour."

College Board: www.collegeboard.com

College View: www.collegeview.com

Princeton Review: www.review.com/college

Historically Black Colleges and Universities:

www.smart.net/pope/hbcu/hbculist.htm

Financial Aid: www.finaid.org

PG Programs:

www.petersons.com/private/select/pspgs.html

Canadian Universities:

www.uwaterloo.ca/canu/index.html

The Common Application

Over 400 colleges belong to this group (www.commonapp.org) which accepts one application and usually a supplement for each college. The benefit is that students complete much of their information once, and then are able to send it to several colleges.

How Many Colleges?

After investigating a variety of colleges, students should be able to narrow their list in the fall to approximately six to eight colleges that match their criteria and represent a range of selectivity. Counselors will meet with their students in the fall in Senior Guidance Seminar to continue to provide assistance with the college search and application process.

Emphasize safety/realistic schools

Based on what we are hearing from the colleges this year, many colleges are becoming increasingly selective in their admissions practices. This is due to several factors: the population of 17-18 year old students is at an all time high, a larger percentage of those students are applying to college, and those students are applying to more colleges therefore colleges are receiving more applications each year. The result is that students who might have been accepted a few years ago were not this year. (All students who applied appropriately of course had several choices.) We just want to make sure that our students have good choices.

To that end, it will make sense to help your children to focus just as much on their mid-range and most realistic colleges as they do on their reach colleges. We consistently tell our students the same information. As long as students apply

to appropriate colleges, they will have several choices next April.

A reminder to parents: Please feel free to submit a parent questionnaire, or “brag sheet” to your child’s counselor to provide any information you would like to share. The more information counselors have, the more descriptive their letter of recommendation can be. Please submit any materials by June 25, 2010, if possible, so that counselors can use them during the summer. If you have any questions, please contact your child’s guidance counselor.

SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS

Testing for students with disabilities:

The College Board has been tightening the guidelines for eligibility for extended time on PSATs, SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests, and Advanced Placement exams.

From the current brochure: “The presence of an IEP, 504 or other plan, or professional evaluation *does not guarantee* that a student is eligible for testing accommodations.” Students need to be *making use of* the same accommodations in school that they are requesting for the PSAT, SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests or AP exams. Parents of students who are currently on an IEP or a 504 plan that provides their child with extended time need to complete a Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) application form (available in the Guidance Office). Once a student receives approval from the College Board to utilize extended time, they may exercise this accommodation for the following tests: PSAT, SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Tests and AP.

Canton High School Parent Survey School Counseling Program Review

Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions in this survey. Your honest response to all questions will assist in the review of the School Counseling Program, including guidance and adjustment counseling. All responses will be kept confidential.

Please circle the response that best answers each question.

How many years has your child attended this school? 1 2 3 4 5

What is your ethnicity? African American Asian Hispanic Native American

White Other _____
(please specify)

Do you know who your child's current School Counselor is? Yes No

Approximately how many times has your child reported meeting with the School Counselor while at this school?

Never 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+

Approximately how many times have you spoken with your child's School Counselor?

Never 1-2 3-4 5-6 7+

Please circle the appropriate number after each statement that best reflects your opinion.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

I believe my child feels comfortable meeting with the School Counselor. 1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor has helped my child to select appropriate courses. 1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor has **not** been helpful to my child during the process of scheduling or changing courses. 1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor has helped my child with personal and/or school problems. 1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor has helped my child to think about his/her goals after graduation from high school. 1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor provided information to my child about careers and the world of work. 1 2 3 4 5

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neither agree nor disagree

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

The School Counselor has **not** helped my child with future educational planning, college selection, and placement.

1 2 3 4 5

My child has participated in classroom or small group programs covering topics such as study skills, violence prevention, peer pressure, etc.

1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor has provided services that have been helpful to my child.

1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor is **not** available to me when I have questions.

1 2 3 4 5

I feel satisfied with the work School Counselors are doing.

1 2 3 4 5

I believe the School Counselors work cooperatively with administrators, teachers, and other staff.

1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor is knowledgeable about services outside of the school system.

1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor has helped my child to develop socially, emotionally, and academically.

1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor believes my child can succeed.

1 2 3 4 5

The School Counselor has been an effective advocate for my child.

1 2 3 4 5

Please list what you believe to be the most important activities of the School Counselors.

Please list the most significant strengths that currently exist within the School Counseling Program.

Please list the most significant weaknesses that currently exist within the School Counseling Program. What would you change?

Thank you again for taking the time to complete this survey.