

# Counseling Communiqué

*Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Counseling Center  
Counseling Department*

## Welcome Back

September 2011  
Volume 24, Issue 1

I hope that you have all had a smooth transition back to school from an enjoyable and relaxing summer. We in the Counseling Office are excited to once again have the privilege of working with all of your students and look forward to an exciting year full of opportunity for your children.

I wanted to take this opportunity to outline some of the supports that the Counseling Center has to offer. Each student at ABRHS is assigned a counselor with the anticipation that they will work with them during their four years of high school. Counselors are here to help students with issues ranging from academic and scheduling needs, to career and college planning, and even with any personal difficulties they may be experiencing. It is our goal to work together with families to help maximize the student's development and to help navigate the high school years. Please do not hesitate to email or call your child's counselor if you have any questions or concerns.

In addition to the Counselors, there are also many other resources available to families and students. The monthly newsletter, *The Counseling Communiqué*, is designed to get you information in a timely and manageable fashion. Plus, our web site ([ab.mec.edu/abrhs/counseling](http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/counseling)) has information on staffing, career planning, summer opportunities, college application procedures, and much more. Juniors and seniors will also use our on-line career and college program, Naviance, to assist them with their career and college search. Any students or parents having difficulty logging into their Naviance account should contact either their counselor or Andy Palmer at [apalmer@mail.ab.mec.edu](mailto:apalmer@mail.ab.mec.edu).

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome a couple of new additions to our department. We are very excited to have hired a new School Psychologist, Dr. Katherine (Katie) Florek. Dr. Florek comes to us with a wealth of experience and we are thrilled to have her on our team. We are also lucky to have a School Counseling Intern, Ms. Katie Abruzzese, with us this year.

We look forward to working with all of you this year and wish you all of the best. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. Have a great year.

Todd Chicko  
Chairperson, Counseling

*We extend a special welcome to freshman, new students and their families!*

### Dates of Interest

#### September

- 9 Registration deadline for Oct 1st SAT Test
- 13 & 14 Activities Fair - during all lunches
- 14 Fall College Night—7 P.M.
- 16 Registration deadline for Oct 22 ACT Test
- 20 PSAT registration begins
- 22 Back to School Night
- 23 Late start for students
- 29 No School



### Coming in October

- 1 SAT and Subject Tests Date
- 10 Columbus Day—no school
- 15 PSAT Test Date
- 22 ACT Test Date

# College Planning for Seniors

## Teacher Recommendations and Parent Response Form

Seniors are reminded that they need to determine the number of specific teacher recommendations required (if any) by each college and request letters from the faculty if they have not already done so. Students will need to log on to their Naviance account and select the appropriate teacher's names from the drop down menu on the "Colleges I am Applying To" page. This will alert the teachers to upload their letter of recommendation and applicable form. Once all the necessary application documents are submitted (see below for more details), everything will be sent to the school electronically.

In addition to specific letters of recommendation, seniors should have a minimum of two in-house recommendations on file with their counselors. These letters are used to assist the counselor in preparing the School Report/Counselor Evaluation. Parents are also asked to complete the Parent Response Form by October 3rd. This form was included in the Junior College Night packet and is also available on Naviance. This form should be completed online or returned to the student's counselor to assist in the counselor evaluation process. Students are asked to complete the senior questionnaire on Naviance by October 3rd as well.

## Application Procedures

The Counseling Department has a packet available on the Counseling Center website under College Information outlining the college application procedure. This handout should be helpful to both students and parents as it takes the applicant through the process step by step. This packet is also available at <http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/counseling/college.shtml>



The senior year in high school is a busy one, filled with many decisions, responsibilities, deadlines and applications. We encourage seniors to keep in close contact with their counselors in order to receive helpful information, ideas, support and an overall perspective on the college application process.

As this academic year progresses, we will use this newsletter to keep parents and students informed as to what help is available here in the high school and from other sources.

The Counseling Department will be sending student records electronically this year using coordinated Naviance and Common Application software (this can be done even if the school does not accept the Common Application). Students will need to log on to their Naviance account and complete the privacy notice and Common Application information located under "Colleges I am Applying To". This will provide the appropriate consent for the students' records to be released electronically and indicate whether the student has waived his/her right to access the letters of recommendation. It is highly recommended that students waive their right as described so that colleges know that counselor and teacher recommendations will remain confidential. When these are not confidential, they carry less significance in the admissions decision process. ABHRS cannot send a transcript or other application materials until this screen has been completed. Please note: in order to complete this information, students will need to create a free Common Application account, even if they are not applying to Common Application schools.

Students will then need to complete the blue "Consent for Release of Student Records" form located in the counseling office. These forms need to be completed and turned in to Mrs. Link, Registrar with the \$4 transcript fee **20 days prior to the application deadline**. Application materials cannot be sent to colleges without this form.

Counselors will be meeting with their senior students in small groups on September 14th and 15th to review the post high school planning process and answer questions. Seniors are also encouraged to begin scheduling individual meetings with their counselors as well.



## Fall College Night

The Counseling Department will hold the Fall College Night for students and parents on Wednesday, September 14th, at 7:00 P.M. in the auditorium. A presentation on the pros and cons of early decision and early action will be directed at seniors who are planning on applying early to college and to those who are considering this option.

In addition, counselors will review the procedures for students to follow in submitting applications and requesting transcripts, school reports, and teacher recommendations. Much of this information is available as a handout in the Counseling Center and on the web site, but the workshop offers students and parents a chance to review the steps and to have any questions answered.

# Bulletin Board

## PSAT Information for Juniors



The PSAT/NMSQT will be administered at ABRHS on Saturday, October 15th. Registration for juniors will be from September 20th–October 3rd in the Counseling Center. The fee for taking the test is \$25.00 payable by check to ABRHS. Please make sure the student's name is on the check. There will be a \$5.00 late fee for any junior registering after October 3rd.

The Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualification Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is a two and 1/2 hour test that provides a measure of verbal and mathematical skills considered to be important for success in college. It is also the first step toward consideration for all scholarships administered by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. Students who wish to be Merit Scholarship candidates must take the test in October of their junior year to be eligible for scholarships granted in the spring of their senior year.

Any junior who expects to go to college can benefit from taking the PSAT. The PSAT will introduce the students to the type of questions that will be faced when taking the SAT in the spring. It provides an estimate of some of the skills that are necessary for satisfactory work at the college level. The PSAT does not measure motivation, creativity or many other characteristics that contribute to success, but it is a useful tool in planning for a student's future.

Parents often ask about whether or not a sophomore should take the PSAT. While some believe it could be an "extra practice," it is only recommended if a sophomore student has completed both Algebra I and geometry by the beginning of his or her sophomore year. Sophomores may register beginning October 3rd through the 12th.

**Final date for registration is October 12th.**



## Ninth Grade Orientation Groups

Beginning September 19th through the 22nd, counselors will visit ninth grade English classes to conduct student orientation groups. The purpose of these groups is to introduce each student to his or her counselor as well as to provide students with information on topics such as graduation requirements, the ABRHS credit system, counseling services, academic planning, the Student Assistance Team, and extracurricular activities.

## Testing Dates 2011-2012



[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)  
2011-2012 ACT Tests

[sat.collegeboard.org](http://sat.collegeboard.org)  
2011-2012 SAT and SAT Subject

### *Testing Date*

September 10  
October 22  
December 10  
February 11  
April 14  
June 9

### *Regular Registration Deadline*

August 12  
September 16  
November 4  
January 13  
March 9  
May 4

### *Testing Date*

October 1  
November 5  
December 3  
January 28  
March 10 (SAT only)  
May 5  
June 2

### *Regular Registration Deadline*

September 9  
October 7  
November 8  
December 30  
February 10  
April 6  
May 8

## College Representatives Visit ABRHS

During the fall, over 160 schools and colleges send admissions representatives to visit Acton-Boxborough. Attending the sessions is a good way for seniors and juniors to learn about the programs offered by various schools. Parents are also welcome to attend.

Students should check their Naviance personal accounts for a listing of all college visits. Students are encouraged to sign up for the college visit through Naviance after receiving permission from their teachers in advance of the scheduled visit. Seniors may miss a class to attend a college visit with their teachers permission, they may not miss a test or quiz. Juniors may attend during a free period or during their lunch period only. A listing of college visits is also posted in the Counseling Center. Colleges already scheduled to visit this fall are Southern New Hampshire University, Roger Williams University, Colorado State University, Grinnell College, Fairfield University, College of the Holy Cross, Rochester Institute of Technology, Union College, Villanova University, Amherst College, Gettysburg College, University of Massachusetts and many more.

## High School Counseling Staff 2011-2012

Mr. Todd Chicko, Department Chairperson  
Mrs. Cynthia Adamchek, School Psychologist  
Ms. Jodi Chu, School Counselor  
Mrs. Sara Clinton, School Counselor  
Ms. Shannon Dandridge, School Counselor  
Ms. Katie Florek, School Psychologist  
Mrs. Martha Frost, Social Worker  
Mrs. Jennifer Gabel, School Counselor  
Mr. Stephen Hitzrot, School Counselor

Mrs. Wioletta Pawlowska, School Counselor  
Ms. Susan Root, School Counselor  
Ms. I'Esha Thomas, School Counselor  
Ms. Kristen Vanderstucken, School Psychologist  
Mrs. Elizabeth Warren, School Psychologist  
Mrs. Melissa Dempsey, Administrative Assistant  
Mrs. Kappy Kelly, Administrative Assistant  
Mrs. Jane Link, Registrar, Records Secretary

