

The Counseling Connection

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2018

A Publication of the Counseling Department at Monson High School



Prevention Needs Assessment Survey Results Show Some Concerns

The results are in. One hundred sixty of the Monson grade 8, 10 & 12 students results from the Prevention Needs Assessment Survey (PNAS) have been received by the school district. Students took the survey either online in grade 8 science class or for high school students on paper in the SAP in October. There were 121 questions which spanned the range of feelings about school to drug and/or alcohol use to parental attitudes and perceptions about such behaviors. While over 200 surveys were collected, some were not scored because they were determined to not likely be accurate and thus would skew the results. Over 1600 results were obtained from seven school districts in the Quaboag region. Thus Monson results can be compared to the region as well as from across the country.

The purpose of the PNAS is to give school districts and community leaders information about trends and issues in both schools and communities. Risk factors such as drug and alcohol use (including cigarettes, E-cigarettes, marijuana, amphetamines or opioid drugs), parental attitudes and perceptions about substance use, bullying in school and antisocial behavior were captured in the survey. Highlights include:

- Fewer sophomores smoke cigarettes regularly but do binge drink, use marijuana, alcohol and E-cigarettes on a more regular basis than students in the region and nationally.
- Almost twice as many sophomores in Monson as compared to the Quaboag region have driven with someone who is high.
- Zero percent of 8th graders used marijuana in the past 30 days, but 14.1% have used alcohol and/or E-cigarettes.
- Marijuana use in the past 30 days at the 10th and 12th grade levels exceed the results in the region and across the country.
- Heroin, cocaine and Ecstasy use is virtually non-existent in grades 8 & 10 and only 2.5% have used cocaine in the past 30 days.
- Drinking and getting high at school is either non-existent or occurs less than average compared to regional and national peers.
- The majority of students across all three grades perceive cigarette use, having 1-2 drinks daily and using drugs not prescribed for them as wrong or very wrong.

continued on page 3

Career & College Awareness Week Schedule Set

The Counseling Department will sponsor the annual Career & College Awareness Week March 5 - 9 and will feature several exciting programs for all students. The purpose of the program is to expose students to the idea of going to college and provide access to career and college information. While many students talk about going to college, some do not really know what that means or understand how to make it happen. This program will assist in this effort.

The schedule is as follows:

March 5 - Senior Career Workshop

March 6 - College Prep Night, 6:30 p.m., Cafetorium

March 6 - Sophomore College Exploration day

March 9 - Freshmen Career Exploration Day

March 9 - Hot Jobs 4 U - Career Presentations for juniors

Freshmen Career Exploration Day will provide an opportunity for 9th graders to visit with representatives from different career clusters for 30 minute intervals. Speakers will



continued on page 3

College

O National College Fair Comes to the **r** Big E

n The annual National College Fair, sponsored by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, will be held at the Big E in West Springfield on Monday, April 9. (Please note this is a change from previous years. It is only one day in 2018 as opposed to two in the past.) The Fair will be open from 9:00-11:30 am and again from 6:30- 8:30 on Monday evening. Over 200 regional, national and international colleges are expected to attend. To find out if a college will be there, go to www.nacacnet.org and click on College Fairs and the link to the Springfield National Fair. There is no charge to attend the fair, however a \$5 parking fee is charged to park on the Big E grounds. Students should register beforehand at www.gotomyncf.com/ Registration. After registering, they should print their bar code and bring it with them to the fair. This will save time and make it easier to have information sent afterwards.

Counselors will be available onsite to answer questions which will help students get the most out of the experience.

Juniors can attend the field trip from 9-12 AM. We will return to MHS in time for second lunch. The cost is \$4.00 for the bus. Permission slips and worksheets must be returned by Monday, April 2 in order to participate.

Financial Aid 101

This time of year is always stressful for seniors. Many are still awaiting word whether they will be admitted to their first choice institution. But for all seniors, they have to deal with the reality of paying for their education.

If a student has not applied for financial aid already, this is the first step. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed for every school. This form is available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Some selective schools will also require the Profile® form available at www.collegeboard.com. Depending upon the school, the deadline for these forms can be as early as February 1. Additional forms (i.e.: tax forms) may also be required. If so, information will be sent directly to the student indicating what is needed.

Once the college receives the information, a file will be created and an award package will be created. Although families desire 100% of the need to be met, this is rarely the case. Instead, colleges try to provide a combination of loans, grants and work opportunities to fill the need.

Loans are available to students which are either subsidized or unsubsidized. Subsidized loans are ones that are paid back after graduation and have a low interest rate. Depending upon the type of loan, the amount that can be borrowed will be limited each year. Unsubsidized loans do not have a grace period longer than a few months and have a higher interest rate.

Grants or scholarships are the best type of financial aid since they do not have to be repaid. These are “gifts” from the college or organizations that wish to help students pay the bill.

Finally, work-study is an opportunity to work on campus and earn money to pay one’s bill or to use for spending money. Students must be deemed eligible through the financial aid office to qualify for work-study. The maximum amount a student can earn depends upon the student’s need.

Please see your counselor if you have questions about financial aid.

Junior College Prep Night Is Set

The annual College Prep Night will be held on Tuesday, March 6 beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the cafetorium. Juniors and their families are strongly encouraged to attend. The event is free and open to the public. Each junior attending will receive an extensive packet of information to help with the college search process. Students will also receive an unofficial copy of their high school transcript to ensure its accuracy as well as help determine which schools might be appropriate to consider for admission.

The Counseling staff will provide an overview of the college admissions process, including applying for financial aid. In addition, representatives from Springfield College, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and Springfield Technical Community College will be present to discuss requirements for admission at a variety of post secondary institutions.

Refreshments will be served.



MARK THIS DATE

Survey results, continued from page 1

- Some 35-60% of students at various grade levels have NOT spoken to their parents about substances in the past 12 months, but the majority (85-100%) report that their parents would not approve of them using drugs or alcohol.
- The majority of sophomores and seniors who reported marijuana use in the past 30 days smoked it but gaining in popularity is dabbing, vaping, drinking and eating it.
- Only 4-5% of sophomores and seniors are using traditional cigarettes daily but the use of E-cigarettes exceed the region (26% of sophomores and 30% of seniors) and are double the rates of their peers across the nation.
- All youth report that the first time they either drink, smoke or use marijuana is between the age of 12 (alcohol grade 8) and 15.5 (E-Cigarettes grade 10).
- Students report getting alcohol from someone they knew under 21 or from the home without their parent's permission.
- The majority of students (82%) felt safe or very safe at school.

The results of this survey had been shared with the school administration, School Committee, the School Counseling Advisory Council and the Monson Substance Abuse Community Partnership. Moving forward the results will be used to plan additional programming, both in and out of school, to address the concerns presented in the findings. It is hoped that the Town of Monson will be able to obtain funding to support additional activities of the Community Partnership which would support education, prevention, treatment and recovery. Anyone wishing to learn more about the survey or the results or who wish to get involved with the Community Partnership should contact Mr. Bardwell at bardwellr@monsonschools.com or 267.4589x1109.



Junior Parent Conferences Are Coming

Families of juniors will be receiving letters in early March inviting them to a post high school planning conference with their child's counselor. Counselors will set up individual hour-long appointments between March 19 and April 6 to discuss their senior year schedule and their post high school plans. It is expected that at least one family member attend this meeting as it is critical to help

ensure students are making appropriate future plans.

Please contact the respective counselor should you have any questions or concerns.



Advanced Placement Exam Deposits Are Due

Students taking either AP Government, Calculus, English Literature, English Language or US History in May are reminded that the \$25 non-refundable deposit to order a test is due to Mr. Bardwell no later than Thursday, March 1.

School policy dictates that in order for a student to have the AP designation listed on his/her transcript that they must take the AP exam.

The cost of the exam is \$94 per exam. Students can pay the entire amount all at once or in two payments. The final payment (\$69) is due no later than April 27.

Anyone with questions should contact Mr. Bardwell in the Counseling Office.

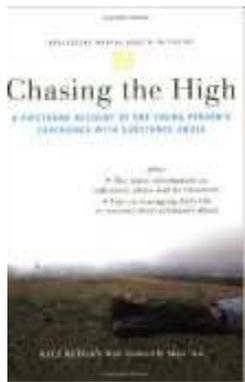
Career & College Awareness Week,

continued from page 1

briefly talk about their individual career paths and opportunities within that cluster. Sophomores will rotate among six local college presentations which will highlight areas of study while in college. The Hot Jobs 4 You program for juniors will focus this year on three clusters - business, finance and entrepreneurship careers.

On March 9 students and staff will be encouraged to wear their favorite college t-shirt or sweatshirt.

Additional information regarding College Prep Night on March 6 can be found elsewhere in this newsletter and will be included in a direct mailing home to junior families in early February.



Book Review

Chasing the High: A Firsthand Account of One Young Person's Experience with Substance Abuse

by Kyle Keegan

Kyle Keegan was like many teenagers: eager to fit in at school, he experimented with alcohol and drugs. Soon, his abuse of these substances surpassed experimentation and became a ruthless addiction to heroin that nearly destroyed his life.

Now in recovery, Keegan tells his remarkable story. Starting with the early days of alcohol and drug use, Keegan charts his decline into crime and homelessness as his need for heroin surpassed all thoughts of family and friends, of right and wrong. He then goes on to use these experiences to offer guidance and practical advice to other young people who may be struggling with substance abuse. In straightforward, easy-to-understand language and along with the psychiatric expertise of Howard Moss, Keegan discusses what is known about the neurobiology of addiction in young people, how to seek treatment, and how to get the most out of professional help. He also covers such topics as therapies which are used to combat addiction, how to talk to families and friends about substance abuse, and how to navigate risky situations.

This book is available for loan from the Counseling Office .

IMPORTANT DATES

Feb. 5 & 7 MCAS Biology Test
 Feb. 6 Half Day - Staff PD Day
 Feb. 9 Mar SAT Registration Deadline
 Feb. 10 ACT Administration
 Feb. 19 - 23 Mid Winter Vacation
 Feb 28. - March 2 MCAS ELA Retests
 March 2 ... SAP Door Decorating Contest
 March 5 - 9 College Awareness Week
 March 5 - 6 MCAS Math Retests
 March 5 Course Selection Day
 March 6 College Prep Night
 March 9 . Apr. ACT Registration Deadline
 March 10 SAT Administration
 March 14 Grade 8 Transition Night
 March 15 Early Release - Parent Conf
 March 16 Prof. Dev. Day - No School
 March 16 - 17 MCAS ELA Boot Camp
 March 22 - 23 Grade 10 MCAS ELA
 April 6 End of 3rd Quarter
 April 6 May SAT Reg. Deadline
 April 9 National College Fair Big E
 April 14 ACT Administration
 April 16 - 20 Spring Vacation

MCAS Re-test Available

Juniors who wish to re-take the MCAS to improve their scores in order to qualify for the Koplík Certificate of Mastery must sign up in the Counseling Office by March 8. The re-tests will coincide with the grade 10 MCAS scheduled for March 27 - 29 (ELA) and May 23-24 (math).

Seniors who are eligible for the Koplík Certificate of Mastery will be notified in the fall. To be eligible, students must score in the advanced category on either the English, math or biology portion of the grade 10 MCAS and proficient or advanced on the others. Applicants must also earn another minimum score on an SAT Subject test, AP Exam or earned some other academic accomplishment. Those who qualify are eligible for a tuition waiver to attend a Massachusetts state college or university.

Applications must be submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Education by May of their senior year. See your counselor for more info.



2018-19 Scheduling Process To Start

We are quickly moving forward with our course selection process for the 2018-19 school year.

Counselors will be meeting with students in small groups during the week of February 27 to discuss the scheduling process. The Program of Studies and course selection information will be shared with students in grades 9-11 at that time. Course selection day is set for Monday, March 5. This is the time when students discuss course selections with their teachers and receive teacher recommendations. Signed course selection forms must be returned to the Counseling Office by March 7.

Parents with questions regarding the scheduling process are encouraged to contact the Counseling Office. All students will meet individually with their counselor later in the spring.

Next SCAC Meeting Is March 28

The next meeting of the School Counseling Advisory Council (SCAC) will be on Wednesday, March 28 beginning at 3:45 p.m at Quarry Hill Room 407. All are invited to join.

The purpose of SCAC is to discuss activities sponsored by the Counseling Department as well as plan for other programs that will be beneficial to our students and the community.

For more information contact Mr. Bardwell @ 267.4589 x1109 or bardwellr@monsonschools.com.

Department Staff

Robert Bardwell (Last Names A-F)
 bardwellr@monsonschools.com
 Kristen Sorel (Last Names G-Z)
 sorelk@monsonschools.com
 Jen Gouvin, School-to-Career Coordinator
 gouvinj@monsonschools.com
 Maria Maloney, Social Worker
 maloneym@monsonschools.com
 Diane Goodrich, Administrative Assistant
 goodrichd@monsonschools.com