

# The Counseling Connection

DECEMBER/JANUARY, 2018/2019

*A Publication of the Counseling Department at Monson High School*



## Teen Vaping and E-Cigarette Use is Rising

Teen vaping is hitting record numbers says the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Some 3.6 million middle and high school students regularly vape, up 1.5 million since last year. This represents a 78% increase among high schoolers and a 48% increase among middle school students. One in every five high schoolers vaped in the past month alone.

Vaping, the act of using an e-cigarette which mimics the feeling of smoking a traditional cigarette, is the latest trend to sweep the nation as evidenced by these numbers. E-cigarettes were initially created for adults in 2003 as a way to quit smoking but the use among teens has taken off. Most view an e-cigarette as less harmful and more socially acceptable as an alternative to the traditional cigarette, however it is much harder to detect because the vapor often smells like fruit or an air freshener. Marijuana and other drugs can also be vaped in the e-cigarette cartidges.

However, what public health officials did not expect is that teens would latch onto the newer products which has grown into the current phenomenon. And since research indicates that 90% of smokers start smoking before age 18 and 95% start before age 21, the need to limit early exposure and consumption is more important than ever.

Because of the huge number of youth who are starting to use e-cigarettes, the FDA is taking notice. Companies like JUUL, Vuse and VMR claim that they are not targeting the youth, but with fruity and other appealing flavors more readily available, many have questioned their motive.

One of the problems with e-cigarettes is that while they are believed to be less harmful than traditional cigarettes, many still contain nicotine (the addictive drug in tobacco) and other harmful chemicals that are linked to lung disease and cancer. However, because they are still relatively new on the market, the long term consequences of e-cigarette use is unknown at this time. Early exposure to nicotine can damage the developing brain and can lead to addiction of other substances. Once addicted, it is much harder to quit.

Further complicating this public health predicament is the marketing of e-cigarette paraphernalia. Manufacturers have cleverly found ways for them to look like every day products such as USB drives, pens or office products which make it extremely hard to be detected by parents and

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## Alumni Day Set for January 3

The Counseling Department will once again sponsor the annual Alumni Day on Thursday, January 3, 2019, with a snow date of Friday, January 4.

All alumni of Monson High School are welcome to stop by the school that morning, however, a handful of alumni are needed for the more formal aspect of the program.

Alumni are needed to speak to juniors and freshmen about their experiences since leaving high school. Freshmen homerooms will meet during SAP to hear the alumni discuss the transition out of high school into either college or the world of work. They will discuss what they now know they wished they had known when they were freshmen. In addition, small groups of juniors will also hear a more detailed presentation. Alumni will talk about a typical college schedule, how different the academic expectations are compared to high school and about the college social scene.

Alumni who are interested in speaking at this event are encouraged to contact Mr. Bardwell in the Counseling Office by January 2.



# College

## O SAT Registration

SAT registration information is available online or in the Counseling Office. SAT's will be given: March 9 May 4 June 1

## r ACT Registration

ACT registration information is available online or in the Counseling Office. ACT's will be given on: February 9 April 13 June 8

See the Counseling Office for registration information.



## Application Deadline Reminder

Seniors are reminded that many colleges have application deadlines in early January. For those that do not, seniors are encouraged to apply before January 1 as well. Waiting until the last minute to file an application can create unnecessary delays in the review of your application.

Students who have a January 1 deadline must request a transcript no later than Friday, December 14 in order to ensure processing before vacation.

## Important Financial Aid Update for 2019

The 2019-20 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can now be completed, which is a change from previous years. Instead of using 2018 income data, FAFSA completers will be able to pull income data from the 2017 calendar year, or prior-prior data.

Students should go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to begin the online submission process. Both parents/guardians and students must obtain a FAFSA ID as part of the FAFSA completion process. One advantage of the electronic form is that there are built in safety features to help avoid making common mistakes or omitting critical data. Whichever method you choose, it is important to check your work carefully as mistakes will have an impact in the processing of the form and ultimately could delay the college from making a financial award. The FAFSA should be completed no later than February 1. Copies of the completed form should be made or printed for the student's files.

The College Scholarship Services' Profile® form is available online at the College Board's web site, [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). The form is only required at schools listed on the application and should be completed by January 15.

Please be careful if using a third party to help you complete these forms. Web sites like [www.fafsa.com](http://www.fafsa.com) are for-profit entities and will charge you to complete your form(s). There are many scams out there, so you should proceed cautiously. If you do need help, contact the Counseling Office for assistance or the financial aid office of the school to which you are applying. If you feel that you must secure professional help in completing the forms, please make sure that you know the person and agree upon a set fee up front before entering into an agreement.

Students and parents are reminded to check in the Counseling Office for scholarship information. Listings are distributed to seniors around the first of every month in the **Senior Scoop**.

## Financial Aid Assistance Warning

Have you received a letter promising financial aid assistance and access to 100% of the funding needed to finance your child's education? You are invited to attend a seminar and if you wish to continue to receive college prep services a fee is charged. Families are pressured into continuing the process and large fees are charged, money which could go to pay for college instead.

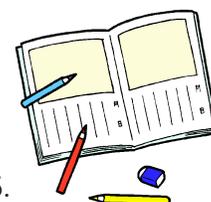
Families are strongly encouraged not to pay for such assistance as free help is available through resources available in the Counseling Office or from the college to which the student is applying. While it may be tempting to purchase such services, you are advised to carefully consider alternatives.

## Test Prep Class Begins in February

The Counseling Department will once again coordinate a spring SAT/ACT prep course for juniors.

Classes will be held on Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. at the high school. Final details will be mailed home in January. Classes will begin on February 26 and end on May 2. There will be no class during April vacation. Mrs. Zippin (math) and Ms. Doherty (English) will be the instructors. The administration of a practice test would also be part of this class. The cost of the course will be \$165 which includes a study guide with sample tests.

Sign-ups will begin in January in the Counseling Office. The full payment will be due on January 25.



## Fourth Annual MCAC Week Celebration A Success

Monson seniors participated in the annual Massachusetts College Application Celebration Week program from November 13 – 16. Fifty-four (out of a total of 66) seniors completed 82 applications during the week to 58 public colleges and 72 private schools. Several received assistance from the school counselors to complete their college applications. There were 39 on-the-spot decisions from American International College, Elms College, Westfield State University, Worcester State University, Western New England University, Springfield Technical Community College and Holyoke Community College. Over \$173,000 in scholarship funds were awarded as part of the instant decisions.

Fifty-four seniors (or 82%) of the class applied to at least one college before November 16 for a total of 130 applications submitted so far. Each were recognized in an all-school assembly by having their name announced and received their “I applied to college” t-shirt provided by Herff Jones and designed by Maggie Klassanos.

The annual Mascot Madness was cancelled due to the inclement weather and delayed opening on November 16. It will return next year as part of the annual tradition.



## PSAT Scores Coming Soon

The October 2018 PSAT scores will be available online via the student's College Board account. Students who provided email addresses will receive notice from the College Board to create an account and access their scores. If your student did not provide an email address when s/he took the PSAT then there would be no way for the College Board to notify students that the scores are available.

The High School will distribute paper reports to juniors the week of December 17. We will meet with students in a computer lab where we will have them create a College Board account if they do not already have one.

How to access your online PSAT/NMSQT scores and reports:

- 1) Log in to an existing College Board account or create a new one at [studentscores.collegeboard.org](https://studentscores.collegeboard.org)
- 2) Once logged in, select PSAT/NMSQT Scores \*Or\* Use “Missing Scores” to locate scores. (If you are being asked for an access code, we will be able to provide you one.)

Additional resources to understand the PSAT scores and access Khan Academy for personalized practice can be found at: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/educators/k-12/score-resources>.



## Financial Aid Assistance Available

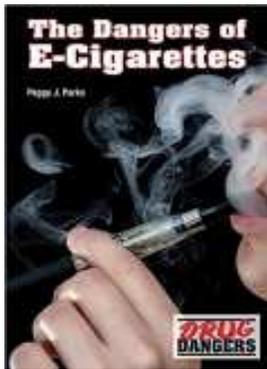
On Sunday, January 27 the Massachusetts Association of Student Financial Aid

Administrators will sponsor the annual College Goal Sunday, a program designed to provide families with free financial aid information and assistance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The program will begin at 1:00 p.m. at Quinsigamond Community College. Students and their parents should bring completed 2017 IRS 1040 tax forms, W-2 statements, 2017 untaxed income records, 2017 business and investment records, their FAFSA ID, social security #, driver's license, current bank statements and their alien registration card (if you are not a U.S. citizen). Similar programs were held in November at AIC and HCC. Go to [www.masscolleggoalsunday.org](http://www.masscolleggoalsunday.org) for more info.

## Attendance Policy Reminder

As we near the end of the first semester, students and parents are reminded of the school's attendance policy. A student who is absent more than 10 times in a semester course (or 5 days in an alternate day course) will lose credit for the course regardless of his/her grade, unless days are waived through the Main Office or through the attendance appeal process. Also, if there is a question about the number of absences a student has in a specific class, the teacher should be contacted via email for clarification.





# Book Review

## The Dangers of E-Cigarettes

by Peggy J. Parks

E-cigarettes have helped to reduce traditional cigarette use among adults but has also created a new challenge - that of the increasing popularity and use among teens. Health officials have become alarmed at the exploding popularity of e-cigarettes because so much remains unknown about them. The

Dangers of E-Cigarettes discusses the scope of the problem, effects of vaping, addiction potential, risks for youth vapers, and regulation issues.

Marijuana and heroin are experiencing a resurgence in popularity. Opioid painkillers and synthetic drugs are grabbing headlines, too. The Drug Dangers series examines what is taking place today in connection with these and other commonly abused drugs. All volumes clearly and accurately investigate their effects, whether they have addictive properties, the challenges of treatment and recovery, and efforts to prevent their use and abuse. Sidebars, fully documented quotes, organizations to contact for more information, and full-color graphs or maps and photos support the text.

*Accessed from [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com)*

# IMPORTANT DATES

- Dec. 1 ..... SAT Administration
- Dec. 6 ..... ASVAB Administration
- Dec. 7 ..... Term 2 progress reports
- Dec. 8 ..... ACT Administration
- Dec. 11 ..... Early Release Day
- Dec. 22 - Jan. 2 ..... Vacation
- January 3 ..... Alumni Day
- January 4 ..... Alumni Day Snow Date
- January 11 ..... February ACT Deadline
- January 21 ..... ML King Holiday
- January 22, 24 & 25 ..... Semester 1 Exams
- January 24 & 25 ..... Half days
- January 25 ..... Semester 1 Ends
- January 27 ..... College Goal Sunday@QCC
- January 28 ..... Semester 2 Begins
- February 5 ..... Early Release Day
- February 6 & 7 ..... MCAS Bio Test
- February 8 ..... Winter Carnival
- February 9 ..... ACT Administration
- February 18 - 22 ..... Winter Vacation

## Junior Parent Conferences Are Coming

Parents of juniors should note that they will be expected to attend a conference with the respective school counselor for their rising senior in late March or early April to discuss their child's senior year schedule and his/her plans for after graduation.

Typically these conferences take place during the school day and last approximately 45 minutes to an hour, depending on the student's plans for after high school.

Letters to parents with more details and assigned meeting times will be sent home in early March. Parents will be asked to confirm the time and reschedule if the time is not convenient.

Counselors will accommodate your schedule when possible.



## Teen Vaping

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school officials. There is also a direct correlation to the increase in the number of youth using e-cigarettes and the advertising spent on such products.

Another concern is the relative ease of which e-cigarette products are available. Found at virtually every type of convenience store, e-cigarette products are easy to get, cheap, sweet, often confused with other snacks and consumables (e.g.: candy bars) and are made to seem harmless.

As recently as 2017 the FDA determined it would not require approval of e-cigarettes and would not do so until 2022 however several lawsuits have been filed to require more research and evaluation.

Parents and other concerned adults are advised to closely watch what young people are doing. Pay particular attention to unexplained sweet scents you may notice as well as unfamiliar pens, USB drives or battery charging devices. Talking to your child about the dangers of vaping and making him/her aware that you are knowledgeable about the subject can also be a deterrent.

For more information about vaping, please contact the Counseling Office or School Resource Officer at 267.4589.