

the COMPASS

BVT SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWS • SPRING 2024

Welcome to *the Compass*, our school counseling noteworthy news source. Our team of compassionate counselors are here to guide and support you and your teenager on their educational journey. We're dedicated to fostering the academic, career, and social-emotional wellbeing of your teen to promote individual talents, and a curiosity for learning as they reach their full potential and become career, college, and life ready. Together, we can help you chart their course.

Inspired to Take Action



At BVT, we're all about the trades. So, it's not surprising while visiting a local construction company, a pledge to mental health poster caught the eye of our School Counseling Team Leader, Brooke Johnson. It featured a hard hat, mental health resources for the workplace, and a call to action that spoke to her. Inspired by this awareness campaign, our counselors thought a similar concept could be creatively woven into the Break Free From Depression (BFFD) curriculum and presented during career enrichment classes.

As a parent, you know how challenging it can be to talk with your teen about their mental health. To make having an open and honest dialogue more commonplace, we use the BFFD curriculum to address adolescent depression and discuss the warning signs of suicide – an important topic since many teens struggle with depression and other mental illnesses. By understanding the signs and symptoms of depression, our students learn to identify if they or someone they know might need help. Ultimately, this empowers them to have agency over their lives while keeping a watchful eye on their classmates.

As school peer mentors, our juniors were the perfect group to engage in this peer-to-peer project and bring our mental well-being campaign to life. Armed with resources and the knowledge they'd learned through the BFFD curriculum over the past two years, they were tasked with designing posters using their own words and perspectives.

The goal was to provide our student body with mental health information and encourage students to reach out to a trusted adult or professional if concerned about themselves or a fellow student. The juniors took the assignment to heart.



"Speaking up when you need help is hard; it takes a lot of strength. That is why the message on my poster is: Only You Can Improve Your Mental Health...Speak Up & Take Action!"

"I might have typed a couple of words... and saved someone's life."

"It's not a 988 worker who made the poster. It's the kid that sits next to you at lunch or talks to you every day. It's someone you know. The impact of that is so much greater."

"I realize that one person and the power of hope can make all the difference."

These meaningful and engaging posters are now on display in our vocational shops. Understanding the signs of depression and how to help a friend in need are inspiring our students to take charge of their mental health by speaking up.

Speak Up & Take Action!

Together, we can help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health by speaking openly about our mental well-being. If you're concerned about your teen or someone they know is struggling and is in crisis, help is available. Call or text **988** or visit www.988lifeline.org. To learn more about our mental health curriculum and screenings, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/addressingmentalhealth.

Transition into Adulthood

Life is full of transitions. One major life-changing event occurs when your senior graduates and goes out into the world. This next chapter of their lives can be exciting but also filled with uncertainty. Now, more than ever, it's essential for your teen to have a transition plan as they get ready for their next big adventure. During this time, they'll want to consider healthy life-style choices. With that in mind, we have some fun tips and cool apps that even you will want to use!

Check them out by visiting: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/adulthood





Workforce



College



Military

Prepping for Senior Year

It feels like only yesterday that our juniors congregated in the Competition Center for Mr. Steele's welcome to BVT address. It's hard to believe, but it's three years later, and their senior year is just around the corner! That means it's time for them to put their post-graduation plans in motion. To help them prepare, our school counselors and career enrichment teachers introduce Junior Career Action Plans in November. This portfolio piece is developed to help guide students through the planning process. Students select a Career Action Plan for entering the workforce, military, or their preferred college pathway and use it to develop a well-researched timeline of action items to complete prior to graduation.

For instance, college-bound juniors need to register for a spring SAT and/or ACT exam and finalize their college list. Where as, those interested in the military may consider researching the different pathways to joining the military (ROTC, OCS, Military Academy, enlisting, etc.). Juniors planning to enter the workforce may consider participating in Co-op, which can

begin as early as next trimester and is a great way to gain meaningful work experience, make connections in the industry, and earn money while completing shop requirements. Co-op may factor into other types of career plans as well. For example, it can look impressive on a college resume, if a student plans to pursue a degree in a related field, and the money earned can go towards financing education.

Career planning tasks can be a lot to manage on top of academic and shop responsibilities, especially if that pesky senioritis kicks in! So, we encourage our juniors to take advantage of the summer break by chipping away at them. There will still be time for lazy summer days, and it will feel good to start senior year with many checklist items completed.

Wondering what else your teen might need to do to prepare for senior year? If they haven't already, ask them to share their Career Action Plan with you, and take a look at our Career Planning Checklist: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/careeractionplans.

Planning Season

For everything there is a season, and as gardeners knows, winter is the time to start planning for next year. For students, that means reviewing their course recommendations in January and cultivating thoughtful discussions with our staff and you at home before finalizing their classes. Their last step is to review the course verification sheets in career enrichment classes on **Monday, April 22nd**. If you have any questions or need to make a schedule adjustment, reach out by **Wednesday, July 31st**. After that, students are not permitted to make changes until the add/drop period. Don't delay. Confirm your teen's classes, so they can return to school confident their schedule is ALL SET! www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/courseplanning.

Scholarship Success!

Did your teen earn a grant or scholarship? Whether based on financial need, merit, athleticism, community service, or another talent or skill, receiving a scholarship is a great reason to celebrate! We know you're proud of them. So, share your excitement by completing our Scholarship Reporting Form. It only takes a moment to fill out the form. Click the "BRAG BUTTON" on our Scholarship Reporting page: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/scholarshipreporting.

*Note: that only those grants and scholarships reported by **Friday, May 10th**, and/or issued on Scholarship Night, will be listed in the graduation program.*

CALENDAR 2023 - 2024

Parents, keep your teenager up-to-date on all of our school counseling events, deadlines, and workshops.

- Feb 14 & 15 Seniors: Scholarship Support Days
- Mar 14 Juniors: College Fair
- Apr 5 Seniors: Career Action Plan Due
- Apr 11 Juniors & Seniors: Career Fair
Seniors: Seeking Supports After High School Lesson & Checkout Surveys
- Apr 22 Course Verification Sheets available in PowerSchool
- May 7 Sophomores: Building Wellness Lesson
- May 10 Scholarship Reporting Deadline
- May 31 Juniors: Career Action Plan Due
- July 30 Summer Coursework Submission Due
- July 31 Drop AP Courses Deadline
Request Schedule Changes Deadline
- Sept 9 Add/Drop Period Begins

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.

Assessments

MCAS, AP, SAT, PSAT, oh my! Keeping track of all the assessment exams can be challenging. Here is a sneak peek at the spring schedule:

College Entrance Exams

- Apr 8-10 Sophomores: PSAT-10
- Mar 9, May 4 & Jun 1 SAT Exam
- Apr 13, Jun 8 & Jul 13 ACT Exam

MCAS Exams

- Mar 26 & 27 Sophomores: ELA
- May 21 & 22 Sophomores: Math
- Jun 4 & 5 Sophomores: Science
- Jun 4 & 5 Freshmen: Honors Science

Advanced Placement Exams

- May 6 Chemistry
- May 8 English Lit & Comp/Computer Science A
- May 9 Psychology
- May 10 U.S. History
- May 13 Calculus AB
- May 14 English Language & Composition
- May 15 Music Theory
- May 16 Spanish Language & Culture/Biology
- May 17 Physics 1, Algebra-Based

Visit: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/assessments

for more assessment and registration information. It's your go-to reference for exam schedules, prep courses, and do's and don'ts on exam day.

