

the Compass

BVT SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWS • FALL 2023

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.



What's Your Game Plan?

In the Game of Life, players must choose whether to begin a career or go to college. Of course, each path has clear advantages in the board game, but when it comes to helping your teen navigate their high school career choices and future career plans, they have more than two paths to consider.

You may find yourself asking them, "What's your game plan?" With so many opportunities to ponder, the best option for your teen may not be so obvious to them. To help your teen weigh their career readiness options and formulate a post-secondary game plan, our school counselors and career enrichment teachers work collaboratively to encourage their career development, from our freshmen and sophomores exploring potential career paths and identifying character strengths to our juniors and seniors developing their Career Action Plan.

We're dedicated to helping you, help your teen chart their course by fostering their vocational training, academic, and social-emotional well-being while promoting their individual talents and a curiosity for learning as they become career and life ready.

Career Enrichment

In Career Enrichment classes, your teen is introduced to various career pathways and encouraged to discover what interests them or, more importantly, what doesn't. Students get schooled in Career Development, where

they gain the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to navigate a myriad of career, college, and military options available for success after high school. The curriculum starts with the exploratory process and basic technology skills, financial literacy, career development, resume writing, and employability, and then advances to Co-op cover letters, resume refinement, mock-job interviews, and shop portfolio presentations. In addition, there is post-graduation career planning, professional networking and informational interviews, and personal budgeting for entry-level employment.

These positive career development experiences help your teen build transferable skills, provide context, motivation, and vision for their current and future academic work, and serve to increase school engagement, high school graduation rates, and post-secondary educational success.

Career Planning

To balance out the Career Enrichment curriculum, our school counselors help your teen build a course schedule that is challenging without being overwhelming while keeping their post-graduation plans on track. In the fall, school counselors present workshops to our juniors and seniors as they prepare to complete their Career Action Plan, which includes a helpful timeline and resources to consider while looking at these pathways: Workforce, College, and Military.

Your Plan of Action

Now that you understand the career development and planning process our students are offered, we encourage you to talk with your teen about their plans as we work together to help them chart their course and prepare them for their career.

Take a moment to check in and ask, "What is your game plan?" The answer will vary depending on the progress of your teen's post-secondary planning. Be patient and listen to how they respond. Then ask some follow-up questions:

- Why do you want to work for that company, attend that college, or serve in the military?
- How will you achieve your career goals: by working, going to college, or enlisting?
- What job, program, or branch appeals to you?
- What are your long-term career and life goals?
- What credentials or experience do you need?
- What if your Plan A doesn't work out? Do you have a Plan B?

Allowing your teen the space to think, reflect, and answer these questions is a helpful way for them to consider how their career interests could play out across all available avenues. With many career opportunities within many industries, we encourage our students to think about the bigger picture. From Co-op placement (end of junior/early senior year) to thinking about working part-time/full-time trade work or attending a community college, there are many exciting ways to put their career game plan into action.

Next Steps...

Check out our Career Planning Checklist to help you and your teen think about and discuss where they want to go with their career and how they might get there. For more information visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/careerplanningchecklist.





To Add/Drop or Not to Add/Drop

Each fall, we open our doors to students musing about their schedules. “What teachers did I get? Who else is in my classes? What will the workload be like?” These back-to-school jitters usually subside fairly quickly. Still, there are times when a student’s immediate reaction to a class is, “Get me out!”

Our emotions are important signals, but that initial fight or flight gut reaction isn’t always the best solution. If your teen is concerned with any of their classes, take some time to reflect with them about why. If they have a friend who struggled with a particular teacher, that doesn’t mean they will too. If they’re worried that the workload isn’t the right fit, they may want to give it a cycle or two to see if that’s really the case or if it was just part of everyone settling in and getting to know each other. It may also be helpful to reach out to the teacher and get their perspective.

If you and your teen ultimately decide a transfer would be best, our add/drop period runs from **September 11th – September 27th**. This limits the confusion of students switching classes, while keeping makeup work accumulation in mind. It also ensures transfers occur before the state requires them to document their course on their transcripts. To begin the process, have your teen meet with their counselor to discuss their concerns.

Please note that students may not change courses due to teacher preference. And to ensure equity, students are transferred to the course with the most available seats. For more information visit: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/adddropolicy.

Building Wellness

Teens may face emotional and psychological challenges as they grow into young adults. A great deal of their behavior, thoughts, and feelings are a normal part of development. Yet, students’ responses to these challenges can vary from disabling disorders and transient problems to amazing resilience. Visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/addressingmentalhealth to learn about our Mental Health & Wellness curriculum and how we’re addressing our student’s social/emotional wellness.



Junior Parents, You’re Invited!

Graduating from high school can be exciting and overwhelming. If pursuing college is one of your teen’s goals, it’s important for you to understand the ins and outs of the application process. Join us on **Tuesday, November 21st**, for a free virtual College Application Process Workshop where we will cover:

- Student & Counselor Responsibilities
- Letters of Recommendation
- SAT/ACT Registration
- To-Do List & Timelines
- College Applications
- Financial Aid

We’ll guide you through the process and help your teen move into senior year with clarity. We hope to see you there. Register today at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/collegeapplicationprocess.

CALENDAR 2023 – 2024

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

- Aug 23 Sophomores: Meet Your Counselor
- Aug 24 Freshmen: Meet Your Counselor
- Sept 7 Seniors: College Application Process Workshop
- Sept 11 Academic Course Add/Drop Begins
- Sept 12 Seniors: Career Action Plans/Financial Aid Lesson
- Sept 27 Academic Course Add/Drop Deadline
- Oct 4 Thanksgiving Drive Begins
- Oct 11 Junior Depression Review Lesson
- Oct 17 Junior Depression Screening
- Nov 14 Juniors: College Application Process Lesson
- Nov 21 Junior Parents: College Application Process Workshop
- Nov 27 Holiday Drive Begins
- Dec 1 FAFSA Opens for College-Bound Seniors

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.

Assessments

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

- Aug 21 Juniors: PSAT Open Registration
- Aug 26 Seniors: SAT Exam
- Sept 9 Seniors: ACT Exam
- Oct 7 Seniors: SAT Exam
- Oct 10 – 12 Juniors: PSAT Exam
- Oct 28 Seniors: ACT Exam
- Nov 4 Seniors: SAT Exam
- Dec 9 Seniors: ACT Exam

Visit: www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/assessments for more assessments and registration information. It’s your teen’s go-to reference for schedules, prep courses, and dos and don’ts on exam day. Our school counselors are available to answer questions and help your teen develop their personal assessment calendar.

