

# the Compass

BVT SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWS • SPRING 2025

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.



## Regain the Momentum

Have you ever lost momentum even with the end in sight? This easing up can happen to the best of us, and our students often experience it in the third trimester. As school counselors, we've noticed students losing steam and starting to coast this time of year. Whether it's a slip in grades, a lack of focus, or simply feeling overwhelmed, it's not uncommon for students to lose momentum and need additional support.

As a parent in tune with your teen, you know their aspirations and ponder the best way to assist when they lose speed and motivation wanes. Sometimes, a gentle reminder that they have the ability, skill, and resources can make all the difference in how they approach their work. Other times, an alternate strategy is needed to reflect, refocus, and recommit. Here are some strategies you may want to employ to empower your teen to harness their energy and move forward.

**Reflect:** We all face challenges and setbacks. Before suggesting solutions, ask your teen how they're feeling and what hurdles they're encountering, then listen. Let them know their feelings are valid, and speak to them with kindness and compassion. Instead of saying, "You need to get your grades up," try asking, "I've noticed you've been struggling lately. What's going on? How can I help?" Prompts like this allow your teen the space to reflect and talk about what's concerning them, whether it's a challenging class, social pressures, or a lack of interest in a subject they're studying.

**Refocus:** We all have something that inspires us, even if we lose sight of it. Reconnect your teen with their "why." For some, it's making a team or doing well in their shop; for others, it's a long-term goal like securing a competitive Co-Op job or college acceptance. If your teen loves sports, remind them how academic performance can affect eligibility to play. If they're passionate about their trade, good grades can open doors to Co-Op opportunities. Once they see a connection between their effort and passion, they may regain their momentum.

**Recommit:** We have all had to reignite our interest and enthusiasm at some point. Watching your teen not completing assignments can be tricky because you don't want to see them fail. But at the end of the day, it's their work, and they have to be the ones with the resolve to complete assignments and meet deadlines. Rather than telling your teen what to do, ask them about their plan for finishing strong. When they have a say in how they approach their schoolwork and routines, they're more likely to feel in control and recommit to the work ahead.

### Lean into Healthy Habits

While ownership of your teen's actions or inactions should be on them, they may need your help to find achievable solutions. Show your support by encouraging these healthy habits:

**Set Goals:** It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the big picture. Help your teen break down their challenges into smaller, achievable goals. Instead of telling your teen to "study more," you might say, "How

about we plan a study session for your math quiz tomorrow evening?" Completing short-term goals helps them regain confidence and creates a sense of momentum for long-term results.

**Keep a Schedule:** Some people are more organized than others, and this is where many teens stumble. They have goals and to-dos, but they need to put the plan into a schedule to get organized. Suggest using a creative planner or a fun, interactive app to help build their schedule.

**Work Environment:** Identify a good space for your teen to do their work. It could be a cozy room in your home, the library, or a quiet coffee shop. But make sure you remove the distractions and tuck away the devices.

**Active Breaks:** If your teen tries to complete hours of assignments in one sitting, they could benefit from active breaks. Stand, stretch, or go outside to clear their mind and refuel with a healthy snack. A five- or ten-minute break will make them more productive when returning to their classwork.

**Self-Care:** It's hard to do our best when we're not taking good care of ourselves. When teens are overwhelmed, self-care is the first thing to slide. Help your teen prioritize self-care, such as getting enough sleep, exercising, and eating healthy foods.

**Seek Out Support:** Encourage your teen to establish a support system to help keep them focused and on track. Teachers offer extra help and tutoring services on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and organizational support is available through the Learning Lab.

**Celebrate Progress:** Recognize consistent progress with positive reinforcement. After a particularly tough week, acknowledge your teen's effort to improve by saying, "I noticed you've been putting more time into your assignments. That shows real commitment, and I'm proud of you."

Together, we will keep your teen inspired to reach their goals. As they learn how to harness their energy, build momentum, and see the positive outcomes of their effort, they'll persevere through challenges.



Workforce



College



Military

# Senior Year is Coming...

Transitioning from a junior to a senior is pivotal in a teen's high school years. Seniors are considered student leaders, role models, and mentors. It's a time of great power and responsibility. That can be exciting and scary and comes with a whole host of other emotions. And it's A LOT of work!

Luckily, our juniors are not on this journey alone. We start preparing them for their senior year and beyond through career exploration and reflection activities as early as freshmen year. By their junior year, our school counselors and career enrichment teachers are working with them to put their post-graduation goals in motion by introducing the Career Action Plan. This portfolio piece helps guide students through the planning process and spark meaningful conversations about your teen's plans for the future and the tasks ahead that will help them get there.

Students select a Career Action Plan template for entering the workforce, military, or preferred

college pathway and use it to develop a well-researched timeline of tasks to complete before graduation. For instance, the plan might direct your junior to review the Co-Op eligibility requirements and consider whether the Co-Op job they are interested in is a good fit for them when directly entering the workforce or determine whether the colleges on their list require SAT/ACT scores, and if so, when they plan to register for and take these exams.

The Career Action Plan is designed to help our juniors think through their post-graduate plans, guide them through what tasks they need to accomplish, and assist them with organizing all the related items on their to-do list so they don't miss any critical steps in the process. By chipping away at it piece by piece, your teen can start senior year confident and well-prepared.

Encourage your junior to share their Career Action Plan with you and together, review our Career Planning Checklist: [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/careeractionplans](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/careeractionplans).

## CALENDAR 2024 - 2025

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

- Feb 24 Seniors: Scholarship Support Day
- Mar 4&5 Freshmen: Depression Curriculum
- Mar 5 Freshmen: Depression Screening Opt-Out Deadline
- Mar 11 Freshmen: Depression Screening
- Mar 13 College Fair
- Apr 4 Seniors: Career Action Plan Due
- Apr 10 Career Fair
- Apr 28 Course Verification Sheets Available
- Apr 30 Seniors: Seeking Supports After High School Lesson & Checkout Surveys
- May 6 Sophomores: Building Wellness Lesson
- May 30 Juniors: Career Action Plan Due
- July 31 Drop AP Courses Deadline  
Request Schedule Changes Deadline
- Sept 2-12 Add/Drop Period

*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 7-9 Sophomores: PSAT-10
- Mar 8, May 3 & Jun 7 SAT Exam
- Apr 5, Jun 14 & Jul 12 ACT Exam

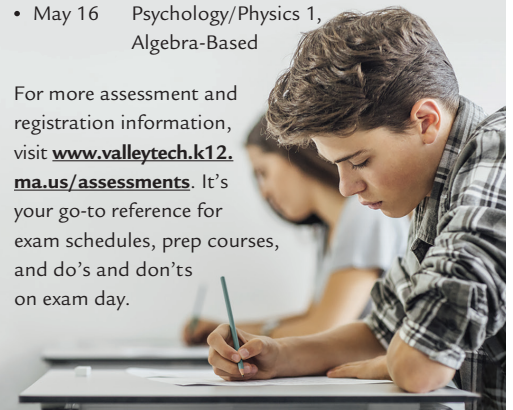
### MCAS Exams

- Mar 25 & 26 Sophomores: ELA
- May 20 & 21 Sophomores: Math
- Jun 4 & 5 Sophomores: Science
- Jun 4 & 5 Freshmen: Honors Science

### Advanced Placement Exams

- May 5 Biology
- May 6 Chemistry
- May 7 English Literature & Composition
- May 9 U.S. History
- May 12 Calculus AB/Music Theory
- May 14 English Language & Composition
- May 15 Spanish Language & Culture /Computer Science Principles
- May 16 Psychology/Physics 1, Algebra-Based

For more assessment and registration information, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/assessments](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/assessments). It's your go-to reference for exam schedules, prep courses, and do's and don'ts on exam day.



## Cartwheel

It's not always easy to know how to support your teen's mental health, but help is available. Our partner Cartwheel Care offers:

### Telehealth Mental Health Services

Licensed clinicians are available outside school hours within seven days of a referral. Services available may include assessments, therapy, medication, and/or care coordination.

### Free Webinars & Mental Health Resources

Webinars are designed to empower caregivers with practical, actionable information on various mental health and wellness topics. To learn more, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/mentalhealthwellness](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/mentalhealthwellness).

## Show Us the Money!

Your senior receiving a scholarship is a great reason to celebrate. Share your excitement by completing our Scholarship Reporting Form. It only takes a moment to fill out and get your senior listed in our graduation program. Only those grants and scholarships reported to us by **Friday, May 9th**, and/or issued on Scholarship Night will be listed in the graduation program.

So, don't delay! Visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/scholarshipreporting](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/scholarshipreporting) and show us how excited and proud you are of your teen's accomplishments.