the Compass

BVT SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWS • FALL 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 curiousity for learning as they reach their full potential and become career, college, and life ready.
Together, we can help you chart their course.



Are Your Ducks in a Row?

As your teen heads back to school and your family settles into a new routine, everyday life can get busy. Consequently, it is easy for teens to feel overwhelmed by their schedules, assignments, and deadlines, especially if they lack adequate time management and organizational skills. You may notice that when your teen gets stressed, it's often a result of issues that stem from a lack of organization, and they may need support to develop these skills.

As a parent, you know your teen and their learning style best. You know, when they apply themselves or choose to let things slide. You've seen your teen excel in certain areas and fall short in others. And when they do, your instinct is to help. However, when teens struggle academically, there is a delicate balance between providing necessary guidance and fostering autonomy by allowing them to help themselves advocate, self-manage, and seek out the needed support to successfully handle their work independently.

As educators, we recognize that teens with strong organizational skills are more likely to stay on top of their work, leading to improved grades and reduced stress and anxiety related to school. We recommend that students struggling to keep track of assignments, deadlines, and commitments utilize the Learning Lab for organizational support.

Welcome to Our Learning Lab
Modeled after collegiate learning centers, our Learning Lab is a space within the Digital Learning Commons (DLC) where our students, teach-ers, and staff can collaborate, meet, and study with shared technology and resources. It is open Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., when school is in session, and on selected Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Your teen is welcome to visit the Learning Lab in the morning and take a moment to get organized before school. They can check Canvas and PowerSchool, review assigned work and ensure it is complete and correctly submitted, study for tests or quizzes, check school e-mail, work independently or with a staff member, and prepare for a successful day. They can also return for additional support during regular school hours with a pass and permission from a teacher or counselor.

In the afternoon, your teen can use their time in the Learning Lab to organize backpacks, binders, folders, and other materials. They can check that their student planner is filled out and makes sense, ensuring they have what they need to complete their homework or start it in a quiet space supported by a teaching assistant. After-school homework help is also available most afternoons with one of our National Honor Society students in Math/Science or English/History. The tutor calendar for the month is posted at the Learning Lab entrance.

The Learning Lab offers all students:

- a quiet, cozy, space to study or complete assignments independently
- organizational assistance with goal setting, task prioritization, and time management
- access to printers, laminators, school supplies, and additional learning materials
- small group and make-up testing
- structured support with classwork and/or homework
- help with developing study skills, routines, and strategies as part of their daily routine
- the opportunity to practice self-advocacy
- a connection to the school network, Wi-Fi, and additional support from our Technology Department, where laptops and chargers can be borrowed in a pinch

Schedule a Visit
However, if your teen needs one-on-one support, they can alert a Learning Lab staff member by scheduling a support session with our online form (**www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/scheduleasupportsession**) or they are welcome to stop by the DLC. If transportation home is an issue, there is a 3:15 late bus on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

We encourage you to talk with your teen about the goal of their session. Help them narrow down what they should focus on. They may want to make a note in their planner or create a checklist of what they want to accomplish, especially if they have multiple objectives. They should plan to have the materials they need with them to complete their work. Clarify when and how you expect your teen to utilize the Learning Lab and the consequences at home for not meeting the expectation.

For more information about our Learning Lab and the incredible resources housed within the DLC, visit **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/technology**. Together, we will help your teen self-manage, find a strategy that works best for them, and leave feeling productive, knowing they've got their ducks in a row.

Schedule Changes



Back-to-school jitters are normal and expected, especially regarding your teen's new fall course schedules. If you or your teen is unsure about one of their classes, take some time to talk to them about why. Whatever the reason, it may be wise to get the teacher's perspective and/or give it a cycle or two and then reassess. After some investigating, you'll often realize it's not time to raise the white flag. However, if it ultimately seems that a transfer would be best for your teen, our add/drop period runs from **September 2nd – 12th**.

This timeline provides students with an initial window for testing their schedules. It also limits the confusion of students transferring between classes while being mindful of potential make-up work accumulation. Our end date also ensures that transfers occur prior to when the state requires all courses to be recorded on transcripts, which is preferable when considering college admissions.

Please note that students are not permitted to change courses due to teacher preference. To ensure equity, students are transferred to the course section with the most available seats. To learn more about our add/drop policy, visit **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/adddroppolicy**.

CALENDAR
2025 – 2026

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

Aug 18 – 22	Sophomores: Meet Your Counselor
Aug 21	Freshmen: Meet Your Counselor
Sept 2	Academic Course Add/Drop Begins
Sept 9	Seniors: College Application Process Workshop
Sept 12	Academic Course Add/Drop Deadline
Sept 23	Seniors: Financial Aid Lesson
Oct 1	FAFSA Opens for College-Bound Seniors
Oct 1	Thanksgiving & Holiday Drives Begins
Oct 16	Juniors: Depression Review Lesson
Oct 21	Seniors: MEFA College Financing Seminar
Oct 28	Juniors: Depression Screening
Nov 4	Juniors: College Application Process Lesson
Nov 6	Junior Parents: College Exploration & Application Process Workshop
Nov 20 & 21	Thanksgiving Drive Pick-up

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.

Ready for College?



Applying to college can be exciting and overwhelming for you and your teen. There are many pieces to figure out before this new chapter of their life begins. We want to help you and your teen have positive and productive conversations about college. It's much easier to provide emotional, practical, moral, and logistical support when you understand the process yourself!

Junior Parents: Join the counselors at a free virtual College Exploration & Junior Process Workshop on **Thursday, November 6th**, where we will cover:

- Creating a college list
- SAT/ACT Exam considerations, prep, and registration
- Senior course selection
- Determining application type and who to ask for recommendations
- Writing a college essay
- Preparing for college sports

Senior Parents: Join the counselors for a MEFA College Financing Seminar at BVT on **Tuesday, October 21st**, that will cover:

- Applying for financial aid and how financial aid decisions are made
- Financial aid award letters
- How your family can pay their share of college costs
- What free resources are available

In September, keep an eye on your e-mail; we'll be sending you information about completing and submitting college applications, SAT/ACT scores, financial aid forms, transcripts, request procedures, and scholarship opportunities. To learn more about college planning and how it aligns with your career goals, visit **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/careerplanning**.

Assessments

MCAS, AP, SAT, PSAT, oh my! Keeping track of all the exams and requirements can be challenging. No worries. Here is a sneak peek at the fall schedule:

• Aug 18	Juniors: PSAT Open Registration
• Aug 23	Seniors: SAT Exam
• Sept 6	Seniors: ACT Exam
• Sept 13	Seniors: SAT Exam
• Sept 19	Juniors: PSAT Registration Deadline
• Oct 4	Seniors: SAT Exam
• Oct 14 – 17	Juniors: PSAT Exam
• Oct 18	Seniors: ACT Exam
• Nov 8	Seniors: SAT Exam
• Dec 6	Seniors: SAT Exam
• Dec 13	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 prep courses, schedules, and dos and don'ts on exam day.

