Good Afternoon Parents, Guardians & Students:

It's hard to believe that October is here already. That means there are a lot of exciting things coming up for students.

ALL AP STUDENTS: An email will be coming out shortly with instructions on how to complete registration and order exams. The cost is $102 per exam (fees are set by the College Board plus a small processing fee for our payment system).

You can view all archived Guidance Newsletters for this school year HERE

Seniors:

The college application season has officially kicked off and our seniors are very busy filling out applications and writing essays. We recently hosted a series of Common Application Workshops, visited English classes to give an overview presentation and we conducted individual Senior Conferences. College visits for WHS are ongoing and weekly emails are sent out with dates, times and links. We have approximately 80 colleges visiting us this fall with more being added each day. You can view all visits in the calendar feature in Naviance.

FREE **SUNY** Application Week… During the week of October 20 - November 3, all SUNY schools will waive their application fees for up to 5 schools.

FREE **CUNY** Application Week… During the week of November 10 - November 21, all CUNY schools will waive their application fees for non-NYC Public School students in NY..

A reminder that FAFSA is NOW OPEN- All students and families are strongly encouraged to apply ASAP. Federal aid, loans and grants (money that is offered and is not owed back) are given through this process. Even if you do not believe you will qualify for aid, you may be eligible for grants from the colleges. Visit the FAFSA website HERE - We will post updates about when the application period opens. Last night we held our Financial Aid Night for parents and it was well attended.

Below are some helpful resources to access in advance of completing the FAFSA. To begin, you should create your FSA ID some time before that. See link HERE on how to do that.

FAFSA Portal

CSS Profile

NYS Higher Education Services Corp

Everything You need to Know for the CSS Profile - (US News & World report)

Financial Aid Night Slide Presentation (2025-26 School Year)

Financial Aid Tips & Advice - (2025-26 School Year)

Financial Aid Info - (2025-26 School Year)

Parents and guardians are reminded to check and see if the CSS Profile is required by the colleges your son/daughter is applying to. You can access the CSS Profile HERE.

By now many of you have had your Senior Conference with your Counselor and the rest will be having it very soon. As we begin October, some application deadlines are approaching. It is important that each of you take inventory of the schools you are applying to and when their deadline is. Our advice is to apply 2 weeks in advance where possible but no later than 5 days in advance. Doing so will create a buffer of time to rectify any issues that arise between the time you "hit" submit and the actual deadline. It also gives your Counselor time to send the required documents (including official transcript, letter of recommendations, teacher rating forms, school profile and other miscellaneous items). Remember, **you MUST tell us when you apply**.Simply complete a College Application Communication Form (CACF) each time you apply. The form is HERE

IMPORTANT - Some colleges have additional essays or tasks to be completed. These are usually found in the "My Colleges" section on Common App. However, we have found that some (not a lot) schools are not as clear as we would like and will link these additional requirements in other areas or will send to you after you apply. If you follow the below practices, you should not be surprised by any application requirements.

1) Thoroughly check the "My Colleges" section of Common App for each of your schools. This includes checking under the "info" section to see what the school's test optional policy is. Many times, in lieu of test scores, the college will require things like a graded essay, additional writing sample etc... Click the link under test optional policy which will take you directly to the college's website and test policy.

2) Check the college's website directly. Go to Admissions, Undergraduate Admissions and if you're declaring a major, look out for any special requirements.

3) In most cases, the application requirements are clearly outlined on Common App but there are occasionally a few colleges that are not as clear. When in doubt of the requirements, always call Admissions and ask questions. Better to be safe than sorry.

4) After submitting your application, look for an email from each school (not the email from Common App) confirming that you have applied. Sometimes it comes a day or two later. In this email, most colleges will instruct you to create an account with them so you can monitor the status of your application, see what was received and what is missing. Please do this for each school and track your applications. Use this form that we created HERE to help you stay organized.

5) One additional task that is growing in popularity is called transcript self-reporting or the self-reporting of your past grades and coursework, sometimes under the guise of STAR/SRAR

(Self-Reported Academic Record). Be on the lookout for this and be sure to complete this step. Ask your counselor if unsure.

See below for some local and virtual college fairs...

Juniors:

WHS is offering the Digital PSAT/NMSQT to Juniors this year on Saturday, October 11, 2025. REGISTRATION IS NOW CLOSED. The **PSAT** is a practice version of the SAT.

Students will need to report to WHS on 10/11/25 at 7:45 am. This will be the only test date offered by Westlake High School for the PSAT. Students who arrive late will be unable to test once the exam begins. Digital testing will be administered on district supplied devices. Students should NOT bring any devices on testing day. Any devices brought to the test center will be required to be powered down and stored away from the student during testing and during breaks. Students are allowed to bring an approved calculator (See list HERE) but there will also be an on screen calculator. Students should also bring a pen or pencil for scratch work and any snacks or drinks they may need for the assigned breaks. Seating will be assigned. Students testing under regular time conditions are expected to finish the exam between 10:15 am and 10:45 am. Students approved for additional testing time will finish between 10:15 am and 12:00 pm.

To prepare for the PSAT, it is strongly advised to download the Bluebook software HERE so students can preview the format and practice by visiting Khan Academy

*** The PSAT also acts as the NMSQT for Juniors - The National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) Program is an academic competition where you can potentially get recognition and qualify for scholarships based on your PSAT score. High school students can become eligible for the program by first taking the Preliminary SAT (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT).

As we begin to look forward in the year, Juniors will begin the college search process soon. In December, Counselors will begin meeting with students and families individually to discuss the college search process. Additionally, we will be hosting **College Night for Juniors on December 2, 2025 -** Mark your calendars, more info to follow.

See below for some local and virtual college fairs…

College Fair Announcements:

1. NACAC Sponsored Virtual College Fairs

Sunday, October 19th - 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm Register HERE

Sunday, November 9th - 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm - Register HERE

Students and parents are invited to attend the below **In-Person** College Fairs.

2. Southern Westchester College Fair
Wednesday, October 22, 2025
6:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Westchester County Center, White Plains, NY

3. Northern Westchester College Fair
Thursday, October 23, 2025
6:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Jefferson Valley Mall in Yorktown Heights

For #2 and #3 - College representatives are eager to meet with your students. We expect approximately 200 colleges to attend the in person fairs.

All students are welcome to attend. Admission is free. There is no need to register.

Students may also visit HERE for a current list of colleges. Directions are included on the site.

QUESTIONS:
Please call 914-739-2313 or wpccfairs@att.net
Westchester Putnam College Conference Committee
P.O. Box 90, Crompound, NY 10517

4. Rockland County College Night
Tuesday, October 21, 2025
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Rockland Community College

5. Port Chester High School College Fair
Wednesday, October 8, 2025
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Port Chester High School

Sophomores:

WHS is offering the Digital PSAT/NMSQT to Sophomores who wish to take it this year on Saturday, October 11, 2025. REGISTRATION IS NOW CLOSED. The **PSAT** is a practice version of the SAT. Sophomores in accelerated courses are most suited for the PSAT - 10th Graders will be able to take the exam in 11th Grade.

Students will need to report to WHS on 10/11/25 at 7:45 am. This will be the only test date offered by Westlake High School for the PSAT. Students who arrive late will be unable to test once the exam begins. Digital testing will be administered on district supplied devices. Students should NOT bring any devices on testing day. Any devices brought to the test center will be required to be powered down and stored away from the student during testing and during

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During the school year, the focus for Sophomores is career exploration and research. Throughout the year, we will be engaging in different experiences that touch upon the topic of careers, including a workshop, how to use Naviance and different career cafes where students can learn about clusters of different career paths. We will be hosting a **Career Cafe for Sophomores in early December**. More info to follow.

Freshmen:

Freshmen Workshops will be taking place in November. Students and parents will be invited to attend small group workshops with their Counselor where several topics about high school and beyond will be discussed. Topics range from graduation requirements, what colleges want, SAT and ACT tests and much, much more.

As always, the Counselors are here to assist you with whatever you need. We are available to our students on a drop in basis, by appointment or by email. And we are available to parents by phone, email or scheduled meetings during the school day. Below are the guidelines to accessing your Counselor...

* Our office is open and students are welcome to come down and drop by or to make appointments and see us.

* Students can make appointments with their Counselor via email or by stopping in to schedule a time with our clerical staff.

* We can also schedule phone conversations and correspond via email.

* We will make every effort to respond to parents in a timely manner but please know that our priority during the school day is your children and their needs so it is possible we may not return your call or email until the following school day.

Please contact your Counselor if you are having any issues, questions or difficulty.

If you would like to email/call your Counselor, our contact info is below...

Guidance Phone # - (914) 769-8440

Mrs. Lauren Cody - Email: lcody@mtplcsd.org - Phone Prompt 4

Mr. Nicholas DiPaolo - Email: ndipaolo@mtplcsd.org - Phone Prompt 2

Mrs. Colette Magnan - Email: cmagnan@mtplcsd.org - Phone Prompt 5

Mr. Tim O'Dwyer - Email: todwyer@mtplcsd.org - Phone Prompt 3