

Good Morning Students & Parents

We hope that your Thanksgiving was enjoyable and that the time spent with loved ones was rewarding. As we look forward, there are a number of important things we would like to remind you of:

SENIORS

Our **seniors** are in the process of putting the final touches on their college applications. As of today, 80% of our seniors have sent in roughly 1570 applications to 288 colleges and universities, and we are beginning to hear back from some of these schools with regard to admissions decisions. **If your son or daughter is planning on sending any applications out, they must be in to us ASAP, regardless of deadline so that we can ensure all of the supporting material is sent out before the holidays.** Please encourage your sons and daughters to make appointments with their Counselor to do this. Please make your son/daughter's Counselor aware of any college decisions (acceptances, wait-lists and denials) as well as any scholarship offers. Again, we stress the importance of applying for FAFSA - The portal is open at this time. This process does not only qualify students for aid and loans but also for grants through individual schools. You can apply [HERE](#). Below are a list of helpful links and resources. Remember, FAFSA is open for the 2025-26 School Year.

- [FAFSA Portal](#)
- [CSS Profile](#)
- [NYS Higher Education Services Corp TAP](#)
- [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 - \(2025-26 School Year\)](#)

On **Monday, December 15th at 10:00am in Guidance**, we will be hosting a **Free Application Day** for any students wishing to apply to **Westchester Community College**. Students can come down and complete an application in person with assistance and have their fees waived. Reminders about this will be sent out as the day gets closer.

After the holidays, the Counselors will be starting the scholarship process with seniors.

JUNIORS (Lots to read but an important time of year)

College Night for Juniors is Tuesday, December 2nd at 7:00 pm in the WHS Auditorium. We STRONGLY encourage all Juniors and parents to attend. We have a guest speaker, Mr. Ryan Deputy, Vice President of Undergraduate Admissions for Iona University. He will review the college search process and offer tips and advice about how to approach the college application and search process. Our counselors will go over the use of Naviance in the search process.

Since the nature of the topic will produce many questions and thoughts, we do ask students and parents to sit together as you both embark on this important part of high school/college planning.

Junior Conferences: Juniors should have received mailed invitations for their Post High School Planning (Junior) Conference. These conferences will run from December through January. Parents are encouraged to attend in person. If the scheduled time is not convenient, feel free to contact your counselor for an alternative time/date between the hours of 7:30am and 2:45pm. Unfortunately, virtual conferences are not possible for this conversation. An important worksheet for this conference was mailed to you as well. You can view it [HERE](#) again and complete it prior to your conference date. Please also have a look at the very important **WHS College Handbook** [HERE](#). We will go over this in our Junior Conference.

PSAT Scores: PSAT Exam scores have been posted to students' College Board accounts and have been uploaded to student Naviance accounts. The scores in Naviance are summary scores only. You can find them on Naviance by clicking on "About Me" in the upper right hand corner of your account landing page, then click "Test Scores." Detailed score reports will be available through your College Board accounts and a hard copy will be distributed at Junior Conferences.. [HERE](#) is a helpful guide to understanding your PSAT scores.

If you are having trouble logging into your Naviance account, you can retrieve your password using the 'forgot password' tool [HERE](#). Our advice is to save your password to your device but always keep a record of what it is to avoid future login issues. If you have questions about your PSAT scores, feel free to see your counselor.

SATs/ACTs: It is important at this stage that students and families begin planning their calendar for what tests they plan to take and when.

While the SAT and ACT are optional at **MOST** schools, some **DO REQUIRE** these tests. It is essential that students pay close attention to each school's test policy as they begin to add schools to their interest lists. It is the philosophy of the WHS School Counseling Dept. that students attempt both the SAT and ACT. While there are similarities between these two tests, there are also differences. Some students perform better on one over the other, and some do the same on both. It is a hard prediction to make which is why we recommend taking both. Both allow "Score Choice" which means that you can select the scores you wish to show. This allows students to try as many attempts at both tests as they wish.

Check out our ACT flyer [HERE](#) for more info on how to find test centers, register etc... Keep in mind, students testing nationally MUST register on their own using the ACT website [HERE](#) .

Check out our SAT flyer [HERE](#) for more info on how to find test centers, register etc... Keep in mind, students testing nationally MUST register on their own.

The WHS School Counseling Dept. strongly encourages students to prepare for these exams. There are a variety of test prep options locally. Many are using a virtual, livestream format and range from 1:1 prep to small group prep. Contact your counselor for a listing of local test prep

programs. We do not endorse any specific program or tutor. You can also practice for the SAT using the College Board Khan Academy for free - [HERE](#)

It is anticipated, although not fully worked out yet that Westlake will be offering a Digital SAT to it's juniors ONLY some time in March 2026. Once the College Board releases more details on its School Day testing for 2026, we will pass along more info on how to pay and register for this specific exam. **Please note that registration for this exam ONLY will be through the school. All other tests should be registered for using the links above.**

Career Cafe: We will be hosting a **WHS Health Professions Career Cafe** on **Friday, December 5th during periods 5,6 & 7 (10:45am - 12:45pm)**. We will have a delicious catered lunch for those who signed up and attend. The WHS School Counseling Department hosts Career Cafes throughout the year focused on various career clusters. This is an excellent way to learn about the different careers in law and hear from professionals in the field.

If you are interested in attending the Career Cafe but did not sign up, please see your counselor to be added to the waitlist.

SOPHOMORES

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FRESHMEN

Freshmen just completed their 9th Grade Group Workshops where they met with their Counselor to learn about all of the opportunities that exist at the high school as well as what is required to graduate and what colleges are looking for. The workshops were informative and seemed to spark an interest with students, as many of them have come down to see their Counselor with follow up questions and seeking ways to get involved. We look forward to meeting with our 9th Graders again in February to do course selection for the 2026-27 School Year and have a look at academic progress to date. Then, in the Spring, we will spend a few days doing some career exploration activities with all 9th graders.

As always, if you have any questions, please contact your counselor. We hope you enjoy the Holiday season with your loved ones!

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