

# the Compass

BVT SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWS • SPRING 2026

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.

## A Place Where Hope Blooms



An incredible transformation is taking place at the front entrance of our school. After taking root, several inches below the ground during a blustery winter, fifty yellow tulip bulbs are now poised to bloom together in our newly planted Hope Garden.

This inspiring display is the result of months of thoughtful planning and collaboration among our school counselors, students, and facilities team. As winter gives way to spring, our school community waits—somewhat patiently—to see the fruits of their labor. Gardening, after all, requires hope and trust in the future.

On a cool October day, a small group gathered with a shared purpose: to focus on mental health while planting tulip bulbs as part of a new school counseling initiative. In partnership with the Yellow Tulip Project, our counseling department is working to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding youth mental health through the creation of this Hope Garden. Stigma remains one of the greatest barriers preventing individuals from seeking help, yet support and hope are available.

Yellow tulips symbolize hope. Through the Hope Garden, we are bringing our community together and addressing the importance of mental health through conversations. The Yellow Tulip Project was created by a young adult who had experienced the loss of two friends to suicide and was struggling with her own mental health. The project has since grown into a nationwide movement promoting awareness, connection, and healing.

A Hope Garden is more than just colorful landscaping—it serves as a daily reminder that hope can be cultivated even in the toughest times. Through our partnership with the Yellow Tulip Project, we are committed to ending mental health stigma and encouraging open conversations at school and at home about mental well-being.

As a family, take a moment to notice the Hope Garden when you visit the school or talk about it at home. Consider asking:

- What does hope mean to you?
- What are some things that help you feel hopeful or supported during challenging times?
- Who are the trusted adults or friends you can talk to when you need help?

These simple conversations help normalize talking about feelings and remind your teen that they are not alone.

### Small Conversations Matter

**Mental Health = Physical Health:** Just like we treat physical illness, mental health deserves the same care, attention, and understanding.

**Normalize The Conversations:** Talking about mental health regularly, at home and at school, helps reduce stigma and makes it easier for kids to ask for help when they need it.

**Check-ins:** Having short, everyday chats with your teen helps build trust and makes harder discussions feel less intimidating over time. Mental wellness

conversations are ongoing. Give it a try. You may find that these chats can make a big difference.

**Use Natural Entry Points:** Finding natural ways to start conversations about mental health—like watching a movie together where the characters are struggling—can be a gentle way to reduce the stigma and focus on your teen's well-being.

**Reframe The Questions:** Rather than asking, "What's wrong?" Try open-ended questions like:

- "How are you feeling today?"
- "What's been going well lately?"
- "What's been hard this week?"

**Nature Is Healing:** Being in nature can help open up conversations that would otherwise be challenging to approach. Going for a walk can reduce stress and make it easier for teens to open up and share.

**It's Okay Not To Be Okay:** Struggling with mental health is common, and it's nothing to be embarrassed about, especially for teens navigating growth, friendships, and school pressures.

**Peer Support:** Often, teens lean on friends first for support, which can be really helpful. However, it's important to let your teen know that if they are struggling with something and feel overwhelmed, they may need to reach out to a trusted adult.

**Identify Their Trusted Person:** If your teen doesn't want to talk to you (Sigh!) or their friends, encourage them to name another trusted adult or school support person they can reach out to.

As a parent, you don't have to carry heavy concerns alone. If a conversation with your teen feels uncomfortable, seek professional help: reach out to your teen's school counselor, their pcp, an outside counselor, or emergency services.

When we come together—put our hands in the soil, share experiences, and talk openly—hope truly does bloom. We can support mental health awareness in many ways. To learn more about the Yellow Tulip Project, access mental health resources, or explore how to plant your own Hope Garden, visit [www.theyellowtulipproject.org](http://www.theyellowtulipproject.org).



# Measure Twice, Cut Once

In carpentry, you measure twice and cut once because precision matters. The same principle applies to building your teen's next year's schedule. Careful planning now ensures a strong, well-constructed foundation for their success.

Students began the process in January by reviewing course recommendations and having thoughtful discussions with our staff and with you at home before submitting their plans to our Scheduling Office.

In May, after some preliminary planning, we'll share course verification sheets. Think of this as the "measure twice" moment. It's time for you and your teen to confirm every detail and make any final adjustments to the blue-

prints before we start framing BVT's master schedule. This step is critical to ensure we have the correct number of sections, given staffing constraints, for a solid, precise, and custom-built, made-to-last course schedule.

If your teen needs to make an adjustment, don't wait. The deadline for schedule changes is **Friday, July 17th**. While there will be an Add/Drop period in September, we're working together to build their final course schedule. The longer your teen waits, the greater the risk of gaps in their schedule, extra work to contend with, and the possibility that we may not have the right courses they need. Remember, it's far better to measure carefully now, so we can build it right the first time!

## See You Later, Seniors

It's hard to believe, but the final trimester of high school is just around the corner for our seniors. This milestone marks an exciting, yet sometimes overwhelming chapter in their lives. Earning a high school diploma and vocational certificate is a tremendous achievement that reflects years of dedication and hard work. It brings feelings of pride, joy, and often a sense of relief.

At the same time, leaving behind familiar routines, teachers, and friends can feel daunting. Many students worry about losing connections, second-guess their chosen path, and wonder how they'll manage the independence and responsibilities that come with adulthood. Seeing classmates get into their dream schools or share future plans can add to the pressure for those still figuring it out.

We encourage you to remind your teen that just because they're "leaving the beaver lodge," it doesn't mean they're leaving the BVT family. As alumni, they play an essential role in our community, and we want them to stay connected. Graduates who join our alumni registry receive the Connect (our alumni newsletter), job postings, class reunion announcements, and invitations to special events. Alumni can also give back in meaningful ways:

- Volunteering at career-related events like our annual Industry Insights Seminar
- Providing Co-Op opportunities
- Serving on our advisory board
- Sharing success stories that help shape and improve our programming
- Some alumni even come home to join our staff, teaching and mentoring the next generation

Wherever life takes the Class of 2026, they'll always be Beavers. Graduation isn't goodbye. It's a celebration of all we've accomplished together and the start of a new chapter in a lifelong partnership. We'll always be here cheering them on, with doors wide open, eagerly waiting for them to reach out.

# CALENDAR 2025 - 2026

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

- Feb 26 Seniors: Scholarship Support Day
- Mar 12 Juniors: College Fair
- Mar 16 Freshmen: Depression Screening Opt-Out Deadline
- Mar 16&17 Freshmen: Signs of Suicide Curriculum
- Mar 18 Freshmen: Depression Screening
- Apr 8 Seniors: Seeking Supports After High School Lesson & Graduation Surveys
- Apr 9 Career Fair
- May 4 Course Verification Sheets Available
- May 5 Sophomores: Building Wellness Lesson
- July 17 Drop AP Courses Deadline Request Schedule Changes Deadline
- Aug 31 Add/Drop Period Begins

*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 7-10 Sophomores: PSAT-10
- Mar 14, May 2 & Jun 6 Seniors: SAT Exam
- Apr 11, Jun 13 & Jul 11 Seniors: ACT Exam

### MCAS Exams

- Mar 24 & 25 Sophomores: ELA
- May 19 & 20 Sophomores: Math
- Jun 2 & 3 Sophomores: Science
- Jun 2 & 3 Freshmen: Honors Science

### Advanced Placement Exams

- May 4 Biology
- May 5 Chemistry
- May 6 English Literature & Composition/ Physics 1 (Algebra-Based)
- May 8 U.S. History
- May 11 Calculus AB
- May 12 Psychology
- May 13 English Language & Composition
- May 14 Spanish Language & Culture
- May 15 Computer Science A

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.

