the Compass

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



Rise & Shine

With the start of the school year, you might be inspired to use those upbeat, urgent phrases your own parents said at the start of a school day: "Rise and shine" or "Time to get ready." These reminders help move teens from sleep to get-up-and-go, alongside encouragement like "Have a great day" and "Don't forget your backpack." Over time, with guidance and consistency, these parental nudges help teens learn how to care for themselves independently.

A new school year offers a natural reset and fresh start with new clothes, a haircut, or updated school supplies. This back-to-school "glow-up" isn't about perfection, chasing trends, or fitting in. At its core, routine and self-care are about helping your teen step into the new year feeling grounded, capable, and confident in who they are.

One often-overlooked way teens build confidence is through daily routines. How they care for and present themselves each day can have a meaningful impact on their mental health. Small, consistent habits provide structure, reduce anxiety, support emotional regulation, and boost self-esteem. Over time, these routines can positively affect mood, behavior, and overall confidence.

Create Healthy Habits

Consistent hygiene routines are about more than cleanliness; they are closely connected to emotional well-being and self-worth. Showering, brushing teeth, using deodorant, and wearing clean clothes help create structure and a sense of normalcy. It also fosters self-compassion, strengthens self- worth, builds social confidence, and makes us more approachable.

We also recognize that many teens, especially those managing anxiety, depression, ADHD, or other mental health challenges, may find basic self-care routines overwhelming at times. Encouraging and modeling healthy habits reinforces the idea that taking care of your body is a form of self-respect. Each habit sends a powerful message: I matter enough to take care of myself. Over time, those messages help strengthen emotional resilience.

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Fit for the Occasion

Consistent adult modeling sends a powerful message. When teens understand what clothes are appropriate for different settings, they often feel more comfortable and confident navigating new or demanding environments. Feeling put together can lead to subtle but meaningful shifts: standing a little taller, making eye contact, and participating more confidently. When your teen feels their clothing fits the occasion, they're often less distracted and can focus on learning, participating, and connecting with others. These changes can influence how others respond, reinforcing a cycle of confidence and connection.

Talk through clothing choices for school, including academics, shop, PE, and extracurricular activities, versus home or social settings. Discuss how to balance comfort, practicality, and personal style. Encourage your teen to manage their laundry and plan outfits the night before to help reduce morning stress and support long-term responsibility. Some teens may even enjoy identifying a few reliable "go-to" outfits or a simple weekly rotation of their favorite looks.

Supporting Your Teen

Conversations about hygiene, clothing, and presentation can be sensitive during the teen years, when independence and identity matter deeply. How these conversations happen is just as important as what is said. The goal is not to control choices, but to guide and support teens in building habits that help them feel confident and prepared.

Start with curiosity: "What helps you feel most successful at school?" Focus more on how things feel than how they look. Emphasize confidence and readiness rather than appearance. Set clear yet supportive expectations for hygiene, modesty, and school-appropriate clothing, while still allowing room for personal expression.

Sporty's Closet provides our students with access to hygiene products and gently used clothing. If your teen could benefit from this support, or if you would like to make a donation, this school-based resource can be accessed confidentially through your teen's counselor.

Glowing-Up

As teens prepare to return to school, practices like good hygiene and dressing with intention send a powerful message: "I'm ready. I'm capable. I can show up." When teens feel prepared, comfortable, and confident, life often feels more manageable, engaging, and hopeful—and their best selves are better able to shine through.



Exploring College?

As your teen prepares for life after high school, you may explore a variety of post-secondary options. If that includes college, we understand that planning can feel both exciting and overwhelming. Understanding the process early on can help you provide meaningful emotional, and practical support as they navigate this important transition.

Senior Parents: In September, please keep an eye on your e-mail for information related to the college application process, including:

- Completing & submitting applications
- Sending SAT/ACT scores, if applicable
- Financial aid forms and timelines
- Transcript requests and procedures
- Scholarship opportunities

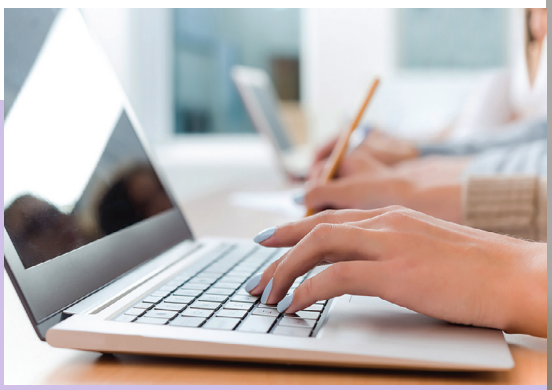
On **Tuesday, October 20th**, join the counselors for a virtual College Financing Seminar hosted by MEFA, which will focus on understanding the cost of college and the financial aid process, including:

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

Junior Parents: Join the counselors on **Thursday, November 5th** for a virtual College Exploration & Junior Process Workshop, which will cover:

- Creating a college list
- SAT/ACT Exam(s), prep, and registration
- Senior course selection
- Application type and timelines
- Selecting recommenders
- College essay basics
- Preparing for college athletics

While these supports are designed for families considering college, we guides students in thoughtfully planning for all post-secondary pathways. To learn more visit: **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/careerplanning**.



Add/Drop Policy

Is your teen feeling unsure about their schedule for the new school year?

- Back to school jitters are normal and expected when trying new classes.
- Talk with your teen about their concerns and encourage them to give classes a fair try.
- Consider getting the teacher's perspective before allowing changes.
- Note that students may not change courses based on teacher preference; transfers are made to the section with the most available seats.
- Our Add/Drop period runs from **Tuesday, September 8th** to **Friday, September 18th**, allowing students time to test their schedules before courses are finalized and documented on transcripts.
- Except in rare extenuating circumstances, course changes are not permitted after the Add/Drop deadline.

To learn more about our Add/Drop Policy visit: **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/adddroppolicy**.

CALENDAR
2026 – 2027

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

Aug 24–28	Sophomores: Meet Your Counselor
Aug 26	Freshmen: Meet Your Counselor
Sept 8	Seniors: College Application Process Workshop
Sept 8	Academic Course Add/Drop Begins
Sept 18	Academic Course Add/Drop Deadline
Sept 21	Seniors: Financial Aid Lesson
Sept 28	Thanksgiving & Holiday Drives Begin
Oct 1	FAFSA Opens for College-Bound Seniors
Oct 20	Seniors: MEFA College Financing Seminar
Oct 26	Juniors: Depression Review Lesson
Oct 27	Juniors: Depression Screening
Nov 5	Junior Parents: College Exploration & Application Process Workshop
Nov 9–13	Juniors: College Planning Workshop
Nov 19 & 20	Thanksgiving Drive Pick-up

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.

Stay Informed & Engaged
ParentSquare, our all-in-one communication platform, allows us to share announcements and updates with you and your teen in one secure place. Parents are automatically enrolled using their PowerSchool e-mail address. Download the app, log in, and customize your preferences to stay informed and engaged.

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 22	Seniors: SAT Exam
Aug 24	Juniors: PSAT Open Registration
Sept 12	Seniors: SAT Exam
Sept 19	Seniors: ACT Exam
Oct 3	Seniors: SAT Exam
Oct 17	Seniors: ACT Exam
Nov 7	Seniors: SAT Exam
Dec 5	Seniors: SAT Exam
Dec 12	Seniors: ACT Exam

Visit: **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/assessments** for more assessments and registration information.

