



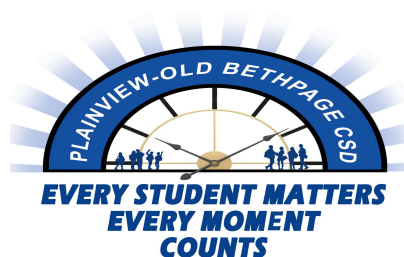
Summer 2026

Plainview- Old Bethpage Central School District GUIDANCE NEWSLETTER

106 Washington Ave, Plainview, NY 11803 (516) 434-3000

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Welcome Message

My name is Dr. Andrea Judge, and I am honored and excited to join the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District! I am the new Director of School Counseling for the district.

I have over 25 years of experience in education, with 20 of those years dedicated to school counseling. During my career, I served as a high school counselor for 12 years in NYC DOE and as a Guidance Coordinator for 8 years for a district in Suffolk County. In addition, I am a licensed social worker and have worked in private practice on and off for the past 13 years.

Throughout my career, I have been committed to supporting students not only academically, but also socially and emotionally. I believe that every student has the ability to reach their highest potential when they feel supported, valued, and connected to their school community.

It is my goal, along with the entire Guidance Team, to continue providing exceptional support and guidance to all of our students and families. We want every student to feel a sense of belonging and to know that they are an important part of this wonderful school community.

As always, the Guidance Team and I are here to listen, assist, advocate, and support you and your children. I look forward to getting to know our students, families, and school community and to working together to make this a successful and meaningful school year. I am truly excited for this new chapter and grateful for the opportunity to serve the Plainview-Old Bethpage community!

Director's Message

The start of a new school year brings with it a sense of possibility—a fresh opportunity for growth, connection, and learning. As students return to classrooms, routines, and friendships, families and schools play a vital role in setting a positive tone for the year ahead.

Whether your child is entering kindergarten, navigating the middle years, or preparing for graduation, the transition back to school can bring both excitement and challenges. Establishing strong routines at home, encouraging healthy sleep and screen habits, and talking about goals and feelings are just a few ways families can lay the foundation for success.

This newsletter includes tips, reminders, and resources to support your efforts at home and to help you stay connected with your child's school. We encourage you to reach out to your child's counselor with any questions or concerns—and to never hesitate to ask how you can be involved.

Together, we can ensure that every student starts the year with a sense of belonging and the tools they need to grow—not just academically, but socially and emotionally as well.

Wishing your family a **smooth** and meaningful start to the school year!

Dr. Andrea Judge, LMSW, Director of School Counseling K-12
ajudge@pobschools.org

The Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District

Directory of School Counselors

Judy Jacobs Parkway Elementary	Old Bethpage Elementary	Pasadena Elementary	Stratford Road Elementary
Ms. Lodato, 434-3386 School Counselor Days 1, 3, 5	Ms. Lodato, 434-3386 School Counselor Days 2, 4, 6	Ms. Reyer, 434-3770 School Counselor Days 2, 4, 6	Ms. Reyer, 434-3370 School Counselor Days 1, 3, 5

HB Mattlin Middle School	Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School
<u>School Counselors – 434-3272</u> Mr. Goldberg – Grade 8 Ms. Luzzi – Grade 5 Ms. Ralton – Grade 7 Ms. Riley – Grade 6	<u>School Counselors – 434-3319</u> Ms. Ok – Grade 7 Ms. Petrusic – Grade 8 Ms. Rusnack – Grade 6 Ms. Zaffers – Grade 5

Plainview -Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School

Guidance and Counseling Department: 434-3150

School Counselors Grades 9-12

Ms. Baker	Mr. Izzo
Mr. DiDomenico	Mr. Jarmon
Ms. Egosi	Ms. Rivas-Laline
Ms. Goodwin	Ms. Siegel

School Counselors are certified educators who improve student success for ALL students by implementing a comprehensive school counseling program. As vital members of the school community, counselors help to create a culture of success for all. School counselors help all students:

- Apply academic achievement strategies
- Manage their emotions and apply interpersonal skills
- Plan for postsecondary options

School Counselors do this by providing:

- Individual student academic planning and goal setting
- Classroom lessons based on student success standards
- Short-term counseling to students
- Referrals for long-term support
- Collaboration with families/teachers/administrators/community for student success
- Advocacy for students at CSE/504 and other student-focused meetings
- Data analysis to identify student issues, needs and challenges
- Acting as a systems change agent to improve equity and access, achievement opportunities for all students

Tips for a Smooth Transition Back to School

Returning to school brings a mix of excitement and nervous energy—especially for students entering kindergarten, middle school, or high school. A few thoughtful strategies can help make the transition smoother and more positive for both students and families.

For All Students: Help ease the return by:

- Re-establishing routines a week before school starts (bedtime, screen time, and morning schedule)
- Talking about what to expect—new teachers, new rules, and upcoming opportunities
- Encouraging conversations about feelings, hopes, and goals for the year
- Ensuring plenty of sleep and a healthy breakfast to support focus and energy
- Reviewing schedules
- Reconnecting with classmates through playdates or local meet-ups

For Kindergarteners: Starting school for the first time is a big milestone! Help your child feel confident by:

- Practicing independence (e.g., zipping a backpack, bathroom routines)
- Reading books about starting school to spark positive conversations
- Labeling all belongings clearly
- Using encouraging, excited language about school and new friends

For Middle Schoolers: Middle school brings new routines and responsibilities. Support your child by:

- Reviewing their class schedule and helping them learn how to navigate it
- Talking about lunchtime, lockers, and switching classes
- Helping organize binders, folders, and planners
- Encouraging involvement in clubs or after-school activities
- Reinforcing that it's okay to ask for help and how to advocate for themselves

For High Schoolers: High school is a time for independence, future planning, and balancing responsibilities:

- Setting academic goals and reviewing graduation requirements together
- Discussing time management, study habits, and healthy screen use
- Encouraging self-advocacy with teachers and counselors
- Talking about college/career interests and long-term planning
- Supporting involvement in meaningful extracurriculars

We're Here to Help!

Your school's Counseling Team is here to support your child's academic, social, and emotional success. Don't hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns. Let's work together to make this a confident and successful school year!

The Importance of Play

There is an abundance of research that supports the benefits of play. Research also shows that play most effectively supports learning when children have opportunities for both free (unstructured) play and adult-directed play. Some of the ways children benefit from different types of play include:

- Fostering social skills
- Enhancing self-regulation and executive function
- Improving language skills
- Supporting math and science learning, and
- Providing health and physical benefits such as healthy body weight, increased coordination, improved sleep and reduced stress and anxiety

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, “play is not frivolous; it is brain building. Play has been shown to have both direct and indirect effects on brain structure and functioning.”

Recognizing the importance of play, POB provides play opportunities for our kindergarten and first-grade students, providing both guided and free play. Our Elementary Counselors, Ms. Lodato and Ms. Reyer, will be closely involved in working with our kindergarteners during their scheduled play times, and our first-graders will be working with our Physical Education teachers.

The Let Grow Project

The Let Grow Project is a national initiative dedicated to promoting childhood independence by encouraging parents and schools to give kids more freedom to explore, take risks, and build resilience. Founded on the belief that “when adults step back, kids step up,” Let Grow offers free resources like the *Let Grow Experience* and *Play Clubs*, which help children gain confidence through real-world tasks and unstructured play. By supporting small steps toward autonomy, Let Grow empowers families to nurture capable, self-reliant kids in a world that often leans toward overprotection. Want to learn more? <https://letgrow.org/>





Attend a College Fair!

Upcoming Dates:

October 4: NACAC (National Association of College Admission Counseling) Fall Long Island National College Fair @ Hofstra University, David Mack Sports Complex (11:00 am - 3:00 pm)

September 29: NCA (Nassau Counselors' Association) Fall College Expo @ Adelphi University(5:00 pm - 8:00 pm)

College Admissions Resources

Navigating the college admissions process can be overwhelming. However, there are many resources to help. First and foremost, your school counselor is your go-to for all questions and concerns around the admissions process. Our high school counselors are well-versed in the latest admissions trends and campus offerings, as they regularly visit colleges and participate as members of college advisory committees.

Here are a few other resources that you may find helpful:

Websites:

Grown and Flown <https://grownandflown.com/>

- Covers a range of issues such as parenting and college admissions

College Board - collegeboard.org

- Provides resources for SAT/ACT prep, college search, and financial aid.

Khan Academy - khanacademy.org

- Free SAT prep resources and college admissions advice.

Niche - niche.com

- College reviews, rankings, and statistics to help with the college search process.

U.S. News & World Report - Education - usnews.com/education

- College rankings, articles, and advice on the admissions process.

College Confidential - collegeconfidential.com

- Forums, articles, and resources for parents and students navigating college admissions.

Fiske Guide to Colleges - fiskeguide.com

- Detailed college profiles and admissions advice.

Cappex - cappex.com

- College search tool, scholarship resources, and admissions information.

Helping Your Child Navigate the World of AI

Guidance Tips for Parents in the Digital Age

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming part of everyday life—powering everything from voice assistants and online searches to homework tools and social media feeds. As students interact more with AI, it's important that they do so **critically, responsibly, and ethically**.

What Parents Can Do:

1. Talk About What AI Is

Explain that AI uses patterns and data to make predictions or respond to questions—but it doesn't think or feel like a human. Use relatable examples like Siri, ChatGPT, or TikTok recommendations.

2. Encourage Curiosity—with Caution

Let your child explore AI tools, but talk about the importance of verifying information. Ask: *Who made this? Why is it suggesting that?*

3. Discuss Ethics and Integrity

Using AI for support is different from letting it do the thinking. Talk about academic honesty, plagiarism, and the value of original work—especially for middle and high school students.

4. Monitor and Guide Use

Stay engaged with the tools your child is using. Set healthy boundaries and talk about screen time, privacy, and responsible digital behavior.

5. Learn Together

AI is evolving fast. Stay informed as a family, and model an open-minded, thoughtful approach to using technology.



Social Media, Cell Phones & Student Wellness: What Parents Need to Know

Research continues to show that excessive cell phone and social media use can negatively impact children's mental health, academics, and overall well-being. As we begin a new school year, it's important for families to stay informed and set healthy boundaries around technology.

- **Mental Health:** Teens who spend more than 3 hours/day on social media report higher rates of anxiety and depression. Late-night phone use also disrupts sleep.
- **Cyberbullying:** About 1 in 5 adolescents has experienced online bullying, which is linked to lower self-esteem and school performance.
- **Academic Performance:** Phones in school have been tied to lower test scores due to distraction.
- **Social Development:** Excessive screen time may hinder face-to-face communication skills.
- **Exposure & Addiction:** Many teens encounter inappropriate content, and some show signs of compulsive phone use.

Parent Tips for Managing Cell Phone & Social Media Use:

- **Set Boundaries:** Create phone-free times (during meals, homework, bedtime).
- **Monitor Use:** Stay aware of apps your child uses and review privacy settings.
- **Model Healthy Habits:** Limit your own screen time and engage in offline activities as a family.
- **Encourage Balance:** Support hobbies, sports, and face-to-face social time.
- **Educate:** Talk about digital safety, cyberbullying, and the long-term impact of online behavior.

Trusted Resources for Families:

- [Common Sense Media](#): Reviews, app ratings, and parent guides
- [StopBullying.gov](#): Cyberbullying prevention and response
- [HealthyChildren.org](#): AAP guidance on screen time and media health
- [Wait Until 8th](#): Support for delaying smartphone use in young kids

Mark Your Calendar! Attend POB's Parent University on [October 27th](#) where we will explore these topics!

Big Feelings, Big Support: Helping Your Elementary Child Thrive at School

You might be wondering: *What does a school counselor do in elementary school?* The answer is simple—we're here to help **all students grow socially, emotionally, and academically** so they can be their best selves at school and at home.

What We Do:

- **Classroom Lessons:** We visit classrooms to teach skills like friendship, problem-solving, managing big feelings, kindness, and respect.
- **Small Groups:** Some students benefit from small group time to practice things like sharing, confidence-building, or calming strategies.
- **One-on-One Check-Ins:** We meet with students who need extra support during tough days—whether they're feeling worried, sad, or frustrated.
- **Team Support:** We work closely with teachers, principals, and families to make sure every child feels safe, connected, and ready to learn.

What to Watch For: Common Concerns in Young Children

Every child is unique, but there are some signs that might mean your child could use extra support:

- Big emotions that seem hard to manage (frequent meltdowns, anger, sadness)
- Trouble making or keeping friends
- Worries or fears that seem to get in the way of school or home life
- Avoiding school or frequent stomachaches/headaches with no clear cause
- A big change in mood, behavior, or sleep
- Difficulty adjusting to a family change (divorce, loss, move, new sibling)

If you notice any of these signs, don't worry—you're not alone! We're here to help you figure out what your child needs and what supports can help them thrive.

How We Partner with Parents:

You know your child best—and when we work together, great things can happen!

Please reach out to the school counselor if:

- You're noticing changes in your child's behavior, mood, or school experience
- Your child is going through a life transition or loss
- You'd like help with strategies to support your child at home
- You want to check in about how your child is doing at school

We're here to support your child's **whole self**—heart, mind, and confidence. Please don't hesitate to connect with us. Whether it's a quick question or a bigger concern, we're just a call or email away.



POBJFK Parents: Save the Dates!

August

28 Operation Apply (Seniors only)

September

3 Senior Guidance Information Night (Grade 12 students and parents)

24 Financial Aid Night

October

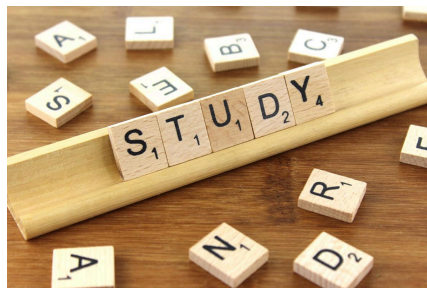
7 Junior Guidance Information Night (with special guest Elyssa Cooke from Princeton review)

21 PSAT (grades 10 and 11) and SAT (grade 12) School Day at POBJFKHS

27 Parent University: Mental Health and Wellness

November

3 Sophomore Guidance Information Night (with special guest Tom Ehlers from Method Learning, Test Prep)



12 Study Tips for Back to School

Here are some valuable strategies for effective study skills from one of our test prep partners, Princeton Review.

1. Identify more than one study space. Variety helps!
2. Track more than homework in a school planner.
Include all activities and social commitments
3. Start small. Complete assignments in small chunks.
4. Create a simple system to stay organized. Try separate folders for handouts for each subject. Nothing fancy!
5. Establish a routine. Try to do homework around the same time every day.
6. Create a distraction-free zone. Turn off the devices!
Or at least turn off the notifications until homework is done.
7. Get real. Be realistic about how long your assignments should take and plan accordingly.
8. Use class time wisely. If you have time after class, ask your teacher to clarify a concept that seems fuzzy.
9. Look over your notes each night. Fill in details. Highlight key concepts. Interacting with your notes will help you remember them.
10. Study a little every day.
11. Don't let a disappointing grade keep you down. Take proactive steps to improve.
12. Make a friend in every class. Help and support each other!

WELCOME CLASS OF 2039!

The first days of kindergarten are filled with what seems like a never-ending list of exciting “firsts” for children. This time represents a major change in the lives of children as well as the lives of the parents and families of our students. It is natural for parents / guardians to feel a range of emotions. Along with feeling anxious about how your child will fare, parents/guardians may also feel sad because their child is growing up so quickly. Remember that feelings are always OK! Here are some quick reminders to help your child in their transition to school:

- ★ Wake up early. Leave enough time for a relaxed breakfast and any unplanned issue that may arise.
- ★ If your child is nervous or upset, encourage them to talk to you about their feelings. Don’t burden your child with your own fears and anxieties. Focus on the fun that they will have and the new friends that they will meet.
- ★ Stay involved with your child’s classroom experience. Join the PTA and volunteer at school. Most importantly, ask your child about their experience every day.
- ★ Pack lunch wisely. Make sure your child can open all of their own lunch containers and that they like the food that you have packed.
- ★ Don’t be afraid to be your child’s advocate. If you have any concerns, reach out to your child’s teacher or the building administrator.





2026-27 EXAMINATION & TEST DATES CEEB CODE 334-532



PSAT/SAT TESTING SCHEDULE POBJFKHS SAT TEST CENTER #33-764

POBJFK will offer three College Board tests for POB students ONLY. These tests will **NOT** be listed on the College Board website. Registration and payment **MUST** be done through the POBJFKHS Guidance Department. Information will be sent via Parent Square.

October 21, 2026 PSAT: 7:30am Available for 10th and 11th grade POB students ONLY
October 21, 2026 SAT: 7:30am Available for 12th grade POB students ONLY

Registration begins on September 3 and ends on September 18. Register and pay here: aptsusa.com/pobjfk
Due to College Board deadlines, there will be NO late registration for these exams

March 18, 2027 SAT: Available for 11th grade POB students ONLY. Registration information will be sent midyear.

National Test Dates Register at collegeboard.org

ANTICIPATED TEST DATES	TEST(S)	REGISTRATION DEADLINE	LATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE (late fee applies)
September 12, 2026	SAT Reasoning	August 28, 2026	September 1, 2026
October 3, 2026	SAT Reasoning	September 18, 2026	September 22, 2026
November 7, 2026	SAT Reasoning	October 23, 2026	October 27, 2026
December 5, 2026	SAT Reasoning	November 20, 2026	November 24, 2026
March 6, 2027	SAT Reasoning	February 19, 2027	February 23, 2027
May 1, 2027	SAT Reasoning	April 16, 2027	April 20, 2027
June 5, 2027	SAT Reasoning	May 21, 2027	May 25, 2027

ACT National Test Dates Register at act.org

TEST DATES	TEST	REGISTRATION DEADLINE	LATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE (late fee applies)
October 17, 2026	ACT	September 11, 2026	September 29, 2026
December 12, 2026	ACT	November 6, 2026	November 29, 2026
February 27, 2027	ACT	January 22, 2027	February 9, 2027
April 10, 2027	ACT	March 5, 2027	March 23, 2027
June 12, 2027*	ACT	May 7, 2027	May 25, 2027

*At Plainview-Old Bethpage John F. Kennedy High School. **POBJFKHS ACT TEST CENTER #216650**

Important PSAT/NMSQT Information

What is the PSAT/NMSQT?

The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) is a practice version of SAT taken by juniors, and sometimes, by sophomores. By taking the test, juniors may qualify to enter competitions for prestigious awards and scholarships. It is a two hour and forty five minute test that measures critical reading skills, math problem solving and writing skills. This year, the PSAT will be given on Wednesday, October 21, 2026. **All juniors** are strongly encouraged to take this exam. **There will be no fee for juniors for the PSAT.**

Should sophomores take the PSAT?

When considering whether or not to take the PSAT as a sophomore, remember that sophomore scores do not count as a qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program. The purpose of taking the PSAT in the sophomore year is to give students an additional opportunity to practice the test.

How to register for the PSAT:

- ❑ **Registration opens on September 3 and is available through September 18. Parents must use this link to register: aptsusa.com/pobjfkhs/**

What is the fee for the PSAT?

There is no fee for juniors. The cost is covered by the POB district. Sophomores **pay \$19. Fees are processed through the registration link.**

How do students receive their scores?

Students will be able to access their scores online. These score reports are excellent resources to help students begin their preparation for the SAT exams that are typically taken in the spring of junior year.

Where will the PSAT take place?

Testing will take place in the high school. Students should arrive no later than 7:30 am.

Can students have extra time for testing?

Students who require any type of testing accommodation **MUST** be pre-approved by the College Board. This approval process can take approximately eight weeks. For additional information, parents can contact Dr. Judge at ajudge@pobschools.org

What Should I Bring on Test Day?

- Your **FULLY CHARGED** Chromebook and a power cord
- A sharpened pencil and/or a pen for scratch paper
- An acceptable calculator (visit collegeboard.org to review the calculator policy) A calculator is available through the digital format as well, so this is NOT required.

College Testing/Planning Timeline

The process of applying to college can be overwhelming as there are many pieces to the puzzle. Although many colleges are test-optional, some require a standardized test score as part of the application process. When is the best time to take the SAT or ACT? Your school counselor will help you make a plan that is appropriate for your child. Below is a general timeline for test planning:

GRADE 9: Students should focus on their courses, join some clubs and/or sports and do their best as they begin to build their high school record.

GRADE 10: If your child feels that they would like to get an early start for practice, they can take the PSAT. This will give students an opportunity to get a feel for the SAT. Parents should start to think about planning for SAT and/or ACT prep. Summer is a great time to prepare with a class, online programs or self-prep books (see below for more information).

GRADE 11: All juniors should take the PSAT (see article to the left) in October. Students can take the SAT or ACT in the winter or spring. Taking one or both tests for a second time is advisable but it is important to plan for prep work to be scheduled in between to address targeted areas that students want to improve on.

GRADE 12: If seniors feel they want another opportunity to improve their score, they can consider the October, November or December test administration dates, depending on their college application deadlines. The SAT will be offered to POB seniors on October 21. Use this link to register: aptsusa.com/pobjfk The registration deadline is September 18.

Test Prep Options

The Plainview-Old Bethpage School District partners with two SAT/ACT Prep programs. Both offer special discounts to POB students. We encourage you to explore each option to find out if their offerings work for your child. In addition, remember that Khan Academy [SAT Practice](#) offers free online help for SAT preparation in addition to a wide variety of coursework. Below you will find the contact information for each of our SAT/ACT Prep partners:

Method Learning: <https://www.methodlearning.com/>

Note: Tom Ehlers, President of Method Test Prep will present to our students and parents on **November 3 at 7:00 p.m. prior to the 10th Grade Guidance Meeting. All are welcome!**

Princeton Review: www.princetonreview.com/POBHS

Note: Elyssa Cooke, Partnership Specialist at Princeton Review will be available for our students and parents on **October 7 at 6:30 p.m. prior to the 11th Grade Guidance meeting.**

Academic Department Contact Directory

Art

Dr. Ben D. Wiley, 5-12 Coordinator, 434-3125

Business

Ms. Maria Carnesi, Coordinator, 434-3136

ELA Literacy / Library

Ms. Mary LaMotta, Director, 434-3254

English

Mr. Jeffrey Yagaloff, 7-12 Chairperson, 434-3185

Family and Consumer Science

Mr. Thomas Schwartz, Coordinator, 434-3125

Guidance

Dr. Andrea Judge, LMSW, Director, 434-3150

Mathematics and Computer Science

Ms. Regina Lee, Director, 434-3197

Music

Mr. Michael Rodgers, Director, 434-3283

Physical Education, Health and Athletics

Mr. Jeffrey Salzberg, Director, 434-3100

Science, Research and Technology

Ms. Dame Forbes, Director, 434-3191

Social Studies

Ms. Maria Carnesi, Chairperson, 434-3203

Special Education, Mental Health and Support Services

Ms. Monica Manzi, Executive Director, 434-3020

*Ms. Jennifer Strangio-Lott, Assistant Director,
Gr. Pre-K-4, 434-3020*

Ms. Carli Adler, Assistant Director, Gr. 5-8, 434-3020

Ms. Sandra Parmentier, Assistant Director, Gr. 9-12, 434-3020

World Languages and English as a New Language

Mr. Leonardo Rivera, Director, 434-3139





Dr. Andrea Judge, LMSW
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K-12
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