



ORRHS Guidance Newsletter

Current Guidance Happenings

Welcome Back from the ORRHS Guidance Department!

We are so excited to welcome our Bulldogs back in the building and hope you are looking forward to a great year ahead! Your Guidance Department is here to support you throughout your high school experience. Whether you need help with academics, social-emotional support, planning for college or a career, or simply someone to talk to, our counselors are here for you.

September is National Suicide Prevention Month, a time to remind everyone that asking for help is a sign of strength and that no one has to navigate difficult moments alone. More information will be coming soon about our annual Suicide Prevention Awareness Walk: *Walk A Mile In My Shoes*.

We are looking forward to a great year of learning, growth, connection, and opportunity. Welcome back, Bulldogs, we are so happy you're here!

Students and families, please reach out to the guidance team if you need anything:

- **Administrative Assistant Mrs. Bichsel:** heatherbichsel@oldrochester.org; 508-758-3745 x 1414
- **Guidance Counselors:**
 - **Ms. Shields: (A-F)** lisashields@oldrochester.org;
 - **Ms. McPhee (G-M)** wendymcphee@oldrochester.org;
 - **Mr. Janicki: (N-Z)** mikejanicki@oldrochester.org;
- **Social Workers:**
 - **Mrs. Dowdall:** kerridowdall@oldrochester.org;
 - **Ms. Mazzei (long-term substitute):** carolinemazzei@oldrochester.org;
- **School Psychologist Ms. Andrade:** julieandrade@oldrochester.org;
- **Registrar Mrs. Bertrand:** kellybertrand@oldrochester.org
- **Director of Guidance Mrs. Cioffi:** christinacioffi@oldrochester.org

Attention Sophomores and Juniors - PSAT Information, Register by 9/12



PSATs are offered to 10th and 11th grade students and will be held on **Saturday, October 17th**. It is important to note that PSATs are **DIGITAL** this year! Any student who is interested in registering to test should see Ms. Bichsel in guidance by **September 11th**. PSATs will cost \$30 per student and payment can be made as cash or check, payable to Old Rochester Regional High School. Please see your guidance counselor with any questions!

IMPORTANT: Please complete this link if you plan on taking the PSATs: [PSAT Sign up Link](#)

Information for AP Students

Attention all AP students, create your CollegeBoard account and join your AP Google Classrooms if you haven't already! If you need help with your log on, please contact Mrs. Cioffi.

Guidance is now collecting the \$40 per exam non-refundable down payment for your Advanced Placement Exam(s). The deadline to make your deposit is **Friday, October 30th**. Payments of cash or check (made payable to ORRHS) will be accepted in the guidance office. If you miss this deadline, an additional \$40 per exam late fee will be added to your exam cost. The full cost per exam is \$99 including AP Seminar and Research. If you qualify for Free or Reduced lunch and would like to apply for a waiver, you must contact Guidance or Mrs. Millette prior to Friday, November 1st, for approval. Students that are approved to receive a waiver will be responsible for a payment of \$53 per exam, with \$15 due by November 1st to avoid the \$40 per exam late fee. Please contact christinacioffi@oldrochester.org with questions related to APs.

SAT Information

Are you planning on taking the SAT? Here are some important deadlines to remember:

- Sept 18th is the deadline to register for the Oct 3rd test
- Oct 23rd is the deadline to register for the Nov 7th test
- Nov 20th is the deadline to register for the Dec 5th test
- Feb 19th is the deadline to register for the March 6th test
- April 16th is the deadline to register for the May 1st test
- May 21st is the deadline to register for the June 5th

Students register using their College Board accounts at [SAT College Board Registration](#). **Reminder: Fee waivers are available in guidance for eligible students - please see your counselor to learn more!**

Senior Meetings



We know how important it is for our families to feel supported during the transition to life beyond high school and we are here to help! Contact us at any time with questions. The Guidance Counselors will begin meeting with small groups of seniors in the Guidance Conference Room during Bulldog Block to review the steps in the college application process, Naviance, the Common Application, and scholarships in early September. In addition, screencast tutorials have been created and posted on the guidance website under Grade 12, that you may find helpful RE: Naviance and creating a Common Application. Senior Meetings will last approximately 45 minutes. Meeting appointment times will be sent via e-hall pass.

Senior To Do List

Seniors, it's time to make sure that your **Naviance Senior Questionnaires** and **Resumes** are complete. Please take the time to complete those if you haven't already. Reach out to your guidance counselor if you have any questions! Here is a quick [link](#) to our website and a snapshot of our [Senior Curriculum](#) for your review!

Ongoing Virtual Opportunities to Learn from MEFA

Check out MEFA's valuable resources and tools to help you prepare for the future and navigate the college planning process. The Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority is here to help. Register for live sessions by visiting www.mefa.org/events.

SEL & Health Tip: Start Small, Stay Connected

The beginning of a new school year can bring excitement, stress, and a lot of change all at once. Give yourself time to settle in and focus on a few small habits that can help you feel your best.

- **Take care of the basics:** Get enough sleep, eat regularly, stay hydrated, move your body, and make time to recharge.
- **Stay connected:** Check in with friends, trusted adults, teachers, or your counselor when you need support.
- **Ask for help early:** You do not have to wait until something feels overwhelming to reach out.

Why it works: Taking care of your mental and physical health helps you feel more balanced, focused, and ready to take on the year.

Small steps each day can make a big difference!

Opportunities Beyond the Classroom

- **Application and Info Session for U.S. Senate Youth Program:**

The application is now open for the 65th annual [United States Senate Youth Program](#). Details for Massachusetts students are now available on DESE's [U.S. Senate Youth Program webpage](#). Applications are due at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 25. High school juniors and seniors actively serving in an elected or appointed leadership role are encouraged to apply to represent Massachusetts. Two delegates will be chosen to represent the state at the program's Washington Week in Washington, D.C. March 6-13. The two delegates will also receive a \$12,500 undergraduate college scholarship. DESE will host an optional, virtual information session about the program for interested students, caregivers, and school and district staff from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 9. Participants can [register online for the the U.S. Senate Youth Program information session](#). The session will be recorded and posted online for those who are unable to attend. Please email any questions to achievement@mass.gov.

- **Governor's Youth Climate Council:**

The [application is now open for the 2026-27 Governor's Youth Climate Council](#). This opportunity for students in grades 9–12 allows students to engage with each other and the Governor's Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience about Massachusetts climate policy. The council will meet monthly over Zoom from September through May with opportunities for in-person events throughout the year. No prior climate experience is required. Students can apply online using the link above through Friday, September 11. Please email any questions to [Nadira Khan](#).