Dear Parents and Guardians,

Fall weather is here and the Guidance & Counseling Dept has been very busy. Seniors are busy applying to colleges, kids have solidified their schedules, many students recently took the PSAT and we begin to look forward to 1st quarter grades and yes, the holiday season. There are some general things we would like to remind you of...

1. Parents of Juniors, don't miss our **College Night for Juniors** on **Tuesday, December 8th at 7:00 pm in the WHS Library** .

This is an evening event where we kick off the college search process for juniors and discuss the crucial elements of how to search for colleges, what they look for and how to determine what schools are a good fit. We are excited to announce that we have an excellent guest speaker this year, **Mr. Ryan Depuy, Vice President for Undergraduate Admissions at Iona University.** This is definitely an event you will not want to miss.

2. Clubs and activities have now started. We recently had a club fair where students were able to sign up for our various club offerings. Students are encouraged to attend club meetings and explore their interests. Getting involved has many positive effects socially and academically.

SENIORS

Over 1200 college applications have been processed to date with many more to follow. We are proud to report that many of these students have applied Early Action, with some applying Early Decision. And of those who did not, many of them have heeded our advice about getting their materials in early despite their deadlines being later on. ***We strongly encourage ALL students to have all of their applications in, regardless of the deadline by December 1st.***

We also encourage ALL families to apply for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). It is through this process that federal aid, loans and grants are awarded. Grants are monies given by schools that are often not required to be paid back. Some schools only award merit scholarships to students who also apply for FAFSA. You can apply HERE.

Be sure to notify your counselor of any college applications by using the steps outlined in the eDocs Student guide HERE

Also, if you are submitting SAT or ACT scores, be sure to send your SAT/ACT scores electronically to the schools to which you are applying. This is the student's responsibility. Scores can be sent from www.collegeboard.com OR www.actstudent.org depending on which scores you are sending. Your Counselor is willing to assist you through this process if need be.

Parents should be completing the CSS profiles for any schools requiring them. Again, click here for that site and for a list of participating schools.

We will have a **FREE APPLICATION DAY** for Westchester Community College **Monday, December 14th at 10:45 am in Guidance**.

After submitting any college applications and notifying your counselor, seniors should be on the lookout for emails from each school with links to set up portal accounts to monitor the status of each application. While this can be a complex task if you have a large number of schools applied to, it is imperative that you set up these accounts and monitor your applications. Counselors and parents do NOT have access to this info. Use this form that we created HERE to help you stay organized.

One additional task that is growing in popularity is called transcript self-reporting or the self-reporting of your past grades and coursework, sometimes under the guise of SRAR or STARS (Self-Reported Academic Record). HERE is a list of participating schools but there could be others using a different self reporting service. Be on the lookout for this and be sure to complete this step. Ask your counselor if unsure.

JUNIORS

Juniors recently took the Digital PSAT exam. Scores from this exam will be released in student's College Board accounts later this week. Students created these accounts using their own login credentials.Counselors do not have access to students' College Board accounts but will receive score data some time in the coming weeks which will then be uploaded into Naviance. Parents/students will be invited to an in-person 1:1 **Junior Conference** beginning in Mid-December through Mid-January. Mark your calendars for **College Night on Tuesday, December 8th at 7:00 pm.**

Shortly, you will receive information instructing juniors on how to register for SATs and ACTs. Registration for national test dates is completed online by students and their families. It is good to start planning which tests and dates you will be signing up for. It is important to plan your testing calendar very soon and secure test locations for national tests. Westlake will NOT be a national test center this year.

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. Click HERE for a listing of local test prep options.. We do not endorse any specific program or tutor.

Naviance continues to be the industry leading standard for college research. It is an outstanding tool to use during the college search process. Updated Junior GPAs will be uploaded into Naviance after the 1st Q Report Cards become available. HERE is an overview video of the various tools in Naviance. This video HERE guides through a college search tool called SuperMatch. While you can certainly wait for the Junior Conference to begin exploring Naviance and colleges in general, we thought the previous two links might be helpful for those curious about starting some research now. We will begin to use the program more in depth and beyond

the career exploration uses of the past two years. Parents can opt in to a Parent Portal for Naviance (view only access) or choose to use their son/daughter's account. Simply email Ms. Amanda Perez at aperez@mtplcsd.org and she will guide you through the process.

SOPHOMORES

Sophomores recently took the digital PSAT exam. Scores from this exam will be released in student's College Board accounts later this week. Students created these accounts using their own login credentials.Counselors do not have access to students' College Board accounts but will receive score data some time in the coming weeks which will then be uploaded into Naviance. Career exploration will be the focus on our work with Sophomores this year. In the early spring, sophomores will be invited to workshops to explore various careers and college options. Our first **Career Cafe** of the year will take place on Friday, December 4th (more info to follow) and we are happy to have a full panel of speakers from Business Professions with a catered lunch for the students attending. More info on how to register for this event will be made available to students soon.

FRESHMEN

Freshmen are now well acclimated members of our school, fully involved and invested in classes, clubs, sports etc..

9th Grade students and parents will be attending one of our 9th Grade School Counseling Workshops in the next two weeks, hosted and facilitated by your School Counselor. The 9th Grade Workshop is a presentation geared towards looking ahead at the next 4 years of high school and beyond, including conversation around graduation requirements, course selection, extra help, getting involved, college and much more. Don't miss the opportunity. If you did not sign up and want to attend, please reach out to your counselor.

If you registered, you did or will receive a mailed confirmation with the date and time of your selected 9th Grade Workshop. Included in this mailing will be a pass for your son/daughter to show their teacher if missing class that period. We encourage parents to attend but students are welcome to attend without a parent attending.

If you have any questions, always feel free to contact your son/daughter's Counselor. We are here to help you.

Enjoy the Fall weather!!

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

Mrs. Connie Cotrone- Email: ccotrone@mtplcsd.org - Phone Prompt 5

Mr. Nicholas DiPaolo - Email: ndipaolo@mtplcsd.org - Phone Prompt 2

Mr. Tim O'Dwyer - Email: todwyer@mtplcsd.org - Phone Prompt 3