

SENIOR NEWS
SEPTEMBER, 2016
SPONSORED BY
THE GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT
SOMERSET BERKLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

SENIOR NEWS is written for grade 12 students and their parents. The guidance department staff hopes that the monthly newsletters will serve to both inform and remind parents and students alike of important dates and events. In addition there is important information covered in the newsletters regarding career and college information as well as financial aid and scholarship information. Please save these newsletters for future reference. Students may pick up future monthly newsletters in the guidance office. The newsletters will be available during the first week of every month and students will be informed through announcements. Parents/guardians should obtain future newsletters from their sons and daughters. The Senior News will also be available on the SBRHS website – www.sbreghional.org, click on the link for guidance.

NAVIANCE: This interactive tool can help students with career exploration, college search and requests for letters of recommendation and transcripts. All students were provided access codes and asked to create accounts. If you have not previously done so it is important that you do this now as you must request recommendations via Naviance. See your counselor with any questions. Guidance will be holding workshops for seniors to assist them in learning how to use Naviance.

YEARBOOK: The 2017 yearbook cost is \$78 and may be purchased during cap and gown measurements and shortly, online. Any senior who did not take a senior portrait with Chestnut Hill Studios or Pasternak Photography must submit a picture to Mrs. Gosson or Mrs. Hoyle by October 25, 2016. Any pictures submitted after that date will either appear at the back of the book or not at all. There will be a yearbook website for information and picture uploading. Stay tuned for more information. The first yearbook meeting for all interested seniors will be in September. Listen for announcements on date and time. All baby pictures and candid photos should be turned in during cap and gown measurements.

2016-2017 STUDENT HANDBOOK/AGENDA BOOK: Each student received a very convenient and useful handbook that not only covers academic requirements and disciplinary regulations but also has the following features - a built in 2016-17 calendar, high school calendar of events (mid-term/term dates, holidays, early dismissals, etc.), eight day schedule with lunch schedules on back cover, study skills and test skills reference pages, career possibilities listing, general resources for english, mathematics, science and social studies. Parents should review the handbook/agenda book as well.

NOTICE: Students should be aware that the add/drop period ends **September 19, 2016**. In keeping with our desire to promote a greater partnership between home and school, students are reminded that all requests for course changes must be signed by a parent/guardian. Level changes can be made until one week after the second parent/teacher conferences but also require parental consent. Please see the student handbook (pages 115-116) for more information.

PROGRESS REPORTS: In addition to quarterly report cards, student progress can be monitored online. Reports are available using the Somerset Berkley Regional High School Aspen program. Information on how to access this information will be provided to parents/guardians in the first day packet. This information will be helpful to monitor student progress as well as speaking with teachers at parent/teacher conferences.

REPORT CARDS will be mailed home to parents/guardians after the completion of each quarter. Please be sure to notify the guidance office of any changes in residency, to assure you receive your son/daughters' report card. Also, if your son/daughter has a last name that is different than the one on the mailbox, you may consider adding their name to the box to avoid any confusion.

SAT TESTS: Both SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests are offered at Somerset Berkley Regional High School on **Saturday, November 5** (regular registration deadline is October 7, late mail registration is October 18, late online registration October 25) and at area high schools on **Saturday, December 3** (regular registration deadline is November 3, 2016). Students are required to take the SAT Reasoning Test for admission to 4 year and some 2 year colleges. Most state institutions only require the SAT Reasoning Test for admission. Some 4 year private institutions also request the SAT Subject Tests. Many colleges require or recommend one or more of these subject tests for admission or placement purposes. Check the requirements of colleges under consideration or see your counselor before deciding which tests to take.

PLEASE NOTE: Students can receive SAT registration information online at www.collegeboard.org and in the guidance office. The guidance staff will start to conduct individual senior interviews in October.

ACT ASSESSMENT TEST DATES: ACT is offered at area high schools on October 22 (regular registration deadline is September 16; (late deadline is September 17 – Sept. 30; late fee required) and December 10 (regular registration deadline is November 4; late deadline is November 5-18, late fee required). You can register online www.actstudent.org.

TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM: Each student must complete and sign a senior release form. The release form gives guidance counselors permission to send a student's official high school transcript to college admissions officers, military recruiters and/or employers. If a student is **under 18** at the time that they sign the release form, a **parent/guardian must also sign the release form**. It is the student's responsibility to return these forms, with the appropriate signature(s), to the guidance department as soon as possible. **If permission is not granted in writing, a copy of the student's official high school record cannot be forwarded to the above parties.** This can cause significant delays regarding the application process for college admissions, military recruitment and/or employment. If a student or parent has any questions regarding the release form and/or the high school record, they should contact their counselor.

A ROAD MAP TO COLLEGE PLANNING: This evening workshop for parents/guardians of grade 12 students will be held on **Wednesday, September 28 from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.** Following are some of the topics that will be covered regarding the college application process: a timetable, college search plan, standardized admissions tests, college visits, the application, essay, recommendations, and financial aid. The program will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center.

MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM: In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts there are two distinct public systems for higher education - the two year community college, and the four year state university. Presently, there are fifteen community colleges, and thirteen state universities all strategically located throughout the state of Massachusetts. A student applicant is required to complete a separate application **for each and every** community college, or state university to which he/she wishes to gain admission. Applications to these institutions are available online.

OPEN HOUSE: Beginning in the fall, and continuing throughout the year, many colleges are conducting Open House Programs for prospective students. It is suggested that seniors consult with the admission representatives who will be attending college fairs, check websites of schools or call schools of interest.

THE ANNUAL SOMERSET BERKLEY-CASE COLLEGE NIGHT will be held at Somerset Berkley Regional High School on **October 5, 2016** from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. A list of schools attending will be available the week before College Night. College Night affords parents, as well as students, the opportunity to speak directly with college admission representatives concerning programs, costs, facilities and financial aid. It also allows students an opportunity to obtain school catalogs and applications.

COLLEGE VISITS: Students who wish to visit post secondary institutions that they are considering applying to may only do so with the approval of their parents/guardians. School days missed for school visits will be counted as absences from school and all school work missed should be made up immediately upon return to school. Parents/guardians who have approved school visits for their sons/daughters are asked to call the attendance office at the high school (508-324-3124) on the morning of the school visit to inform the attendance clerk that their son/daughter will be absent from school. The student has two responsibilities:

1. to give advance notice to his/her teachers of the college visit, and
2. to provide his/her teachers with documentation that validates the college visit.

Seniors should be in the process of obtaining individual catalogues and applications for schools in which they are interested.

The ultimate online resource for college-bound students: CollegeBoard.com. Please check it out.

Applications for scholarships listed in "[Senior News](#)" throughout the year are available in the reception area of the guidance office and on the Somerset Berkley Regional High School web site.

Obtain a calendar and add important dates on the calendar (ie. dates for college fairs, SAT registration deadlines, college application deadlines, scholarship application deadlines, etc.). A calendar will help to keep you organized. Or add the important dates to the calendar in your student agenda/handbook. Routinely check the bulletin boards outside the guidance office for "Open House" dates for college visits, financial aid/scholarship information, and individual school posters with a variety of information.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EARLY DECISION AND EARLY ACTION OR EARLY NOTIFICATION? Early Decision requires a legal commitment on the part of both the college and the applicant. Early Action and Early Notification offer an early commitment on the part of the college or university but require no commitment to enroll on the part of the applicant.

EARLY DECISION/EARLY ACTION/EARLY NOTIFICATION APPLICANTS are reminded to adhere to the strict deadlines enforced by 4 year colleges. If you are seriously considering this type of application, it is strongly recommended that all information (application, transcript, recommendations, etc.) be received at the institution before **November 1st**. Since this is a different type of admission process, those seniors considering early applications are advised to schedule an appointment with their guidance counselor immediately to discuss the admission procedure in detail. Students are further reminded that early application policies many times require early financial aid applications as well. It is important that you check with the school that you are applying to regarding their financial aid policy.

COLLEGE ESSAYS: Start writing your college essay now. Do your research, ask several teachers to review your essay, and make your work as professional looking as possible. There are many essay guides in print and on line that give great tips on essay writing. This is not the time for you to throw something together the night before your application is due. Admissions officers will be looking for quality.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION: Counselors and teachers need a minimum of seven days to write a comprehensive and flattering recommendation letter. Please provide a copy of your activity sheet or resume when you request the letter. An activity sheet is available for student use in the guidance office. Remember, after you verbally request a recommendation, you must then submit a request via Naviance.

NCAA INITIAL ELIGIBILITY CLEARINGHOUSE: All college-bound student-athletes who wish to practice and compete at a **division I or II** institution must register with the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse. Since 1994 all student-athletes must be cleared through the Clearinghouse before they may practice or compete. The Clearinghouse will determine a student's eligibility by reviewing an official high school transcript and the official SAT/ACT score. Students should meet with their counselor to review the steps that must be followed. Students may file the application online www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. Please note that division III colleges **do not** participate in the NCAA Clearinghouse procedure. For more info visit www.ncaa.org.

SOMERSET BERKLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL FINANCIAL AID NIGHT: A financial aid workshop has been scheduled for Wednesday November 2 beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the Somerset Berkley Regional High School Performing Arts Center. A financial aid representative from MEFA (Massachusetts Education Finance Authority) will conduct the workshop. The financial aid process will be discussed in detail along with a line by line review of the two financial aid forms (1) 2017-2018 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and (2) 2017-2018 Financial Aid Profile.

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS: Throughout the school year, colleges will be sending materials to the guidance office which describe different types of honors scholarship programs based on high academic achievement. Information will be kept in the guidance office.

POST-SECONDARY FINANCIAL AID: There are two forms involved in the financial aid filing process. One form is the 2017-2018 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students and parents applying for federal financial aid must complete this form. The second form is the 2017-2018 Financial Aid Profile. This second form is optional to complete depending on the policy of the institution(s) the student will be applying to for admission(s). It is extremely important that students and parents consult with institutions to confirm if the one form (2017-2018 Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or both forms (2017-2018 Free Application for Federal Student Aid and 2017-2018 Financial Aid Profile) are to be completed by students and parents.

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINES: It is the student's responsibility to adhere to scholarship deadline dates in addition to obtaining all the required materials requested of scholarship applicants. Give yourself enough time to complete the work. Put deadline dates on a calendar or in your agenda book.

SCHOLARSHIPS:

National scholarship opportunities: Students should visit the appropriate websites.

COCA-COLA SCHOLARS PROGRAM: **Deadline October 31, 2016.** Seniors in secondary schools throughout the country can compete for scholarships for study at any accredited U.S. post secondary school of the recipient's choice. Selection is based on a number of factors with special emphasis on character, personal merit and background. Merit is demonstrated in a variety of ways: leadership in school, civic and other extracurricular activities; academic achievement; and motivation to serve and succeed in all endeavors. Coca-Cola scholarship program guidelines and applications are available online – www.coca-colascholars.org, click on Coca-Cola Scholars Application.

HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION: **Deadline October 25, 2016.** The Horatio Alger Association seeks to assist students who have demonstrated integrity, perseverance in overcoming adversity, strength of character, financial need, a good academic record, commitment to pursue a college education, and a desire to contribute to society. Apply online at www.HoratioAlger.org/scholarships.

SAE ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM: The Society of Automotive Engineers is offering a number of scholarships to qualified students who are interested in the field of engineering or a related science (including math, chemistry, physics, biology, technologies, and computer science). Applicant must enroll in an engineering program accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology at a university of the applicant's choice. Applicant must be a U.S. citizen and meet minimum SAT /ACT and G.P.A. requirements as outlined in the individual requirements of each scholarship. Students may obtain information and apply on-line at <http://students.sae.org/scholarships/>.

Scholar-Athletes - apply for the Wendy's Heisman Scholarship: www.wendysheisman.com
Deadline (**online**) 3 pm on October 3, 2016

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