

SOPHOMORE NEWS
WINTER 2017
Sponsored by the Guidance Department

MCAS The tests of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System will be administered to the Class of 2019 this spring, beginning on Tuesday March 21st with the ELA Long Composition. The ELA Language and Literature portion of the test will follow on Wednesday and Thursday, March 22nd and 23rd. The Mathematics' component will be administered on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 16th and 17th. In preparation for the test, all sophomores will attend a workshop in the Performing Arts Center prior to taking the MCAS.

SELF-HELP AND PARENTAL SUPPORT The receipt of a Somerset Berkley Regional High School diploma is contingent upon passing the ELA, Mathematics, and Science MCAS tests. Considering the test's importance, students should be mindful of a few common sense preparation tips:

- On testing days be sure to get plentiful rest and good nutrition. Long tests over consecutive days can be physically and emotionally draining.
- Attendance during the testing days is critical. Avoid tardiness and do not schedule personal appointments at this time.
- Check out the Department of Education's Web site at www.doe.mass.edu for sample questions and test questions from past years.
- Since the composition topic will require students to write about a literary work that they have read, students should refamiliarize themselves with the characters, plot, theme, and setting of at least three or four works so that they will be prepared to write in detail on the topic.

WHAT IF I FAIL MCAS? This question plagues many students and parents who are apprehensive about the high stakes of the exams. Although Somerset Berkley students have done well on the tests in the past, there are some students who need to take advantage of the retest opportunities that are offered at least four times during the junior and senior years. If a student is unsuccessful after three attempts, the school system may file an appeal on the child's behalf. However, students should keep in mind that one of the criteria in the appeal process is 95% school attendance.

COURSE REGISTRATION FOR 2017-2018 Plans are being developed for on-line course registration to held in February 2017. Stay tuned for additional information regarding the course registration process. After February vacation, the students will meet individually with their guidance counselor to discuss course selections in light of academic achievement and career plans. From this meeting, the students will bring home their course request forms for their parents/guardians to look at, discuss, and sign, and then return to the guidance office. Students should consult with parents, teachers, and counselors to be sure that their course selections are appropriate before the master schedule is created and students' course selections are programmed in late May. **The student must have their parents/guardians sign their course registration forms.**

PROJECT CONTEMPORARY COMPETIVENESS (PCC) is a summer enrichment program available to all Grade 9 and 10 students. Applications are available in the guidance office. The deadline for all applications is Friday, January 20, 2017. Interested students should see their guidance counselor for additional information.

THE PSAT/NMSQT and SAT In the upcoming school year (2017-2018), many members of the Class of 2019 will be taking both the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT's. Beginning with the March 2016 SAT's for the first time since 2005, both tests underwent sweeping changes on what is tested, how the test is

scored, and how to prepare for the test. Among the numerous changes to the SAT's are: the Reading and Writing sections will be combined into one score, the Essay section will be optional and scored separately, and there will no longer be a penalty for incorrect responses. For a complete and detailed explanation of the changes to the SAT's, please see the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT sections on the Collegeboard (www.collegeboard.org) for detailed and up-to-date information.

GRADE PROGRESSION Counselors would like to remind students that for progression to grade 11, the accumulation of 72 credits at the end of sophomore year is recommended. Keep in mind that although 65% is the minimum passing grade to earn full credit in a course, some subjects recommend a minimum of 70% average to continue in levels one (math and science) and two (math) with the next sequential course.

COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT Beginning with the Class of 2014, students are required to complete 20 hours of community service over four years as a requirement to graduate from Somerset Berkley Regional High School. Community service provides students with the opportunity to engage in active learning while developing good citizenship. Community service documentation forms are available in the guidance office. Students can return their completed community service documentation form can be returned to their guidance office or the main office.

2016 Christian Herter Memorial Scholarship Juniors and sophomores who display strong academic promise but whose socio-economic background and/or environmental conditions may inhibit their ability to attain a post-secondary education/degree may apply for this scholarship (awarded to a maximum of four years). Interested students should see their guidance counselor for the application, as there is a nomination process within the school, as well. The deadline to see your counselor will be February 5, 2017.

COMMUNICATION WITH GUIDANCE Somerset Berkley Regional High guidance counselors are doing their best to assist their students not only with academic and career advice but also with any concerns that affect their well-being. Counselors cannot read minds, however. Students are encouraged to communicate with their counselors. Anyone who would like to speak to a counselor can drop a note in the counselor's mailbox in the guidance office. Parents, especially those who have difficulty making phone calls during the workday, might find email an effective way to communicate. Counselor email addresses are as follows:

- bolduca@sbrgional.org
- judgej@sbrgional.org
- mccarthyt@sbrgional.org
- poissong@sbrgional.org

Important Date: Term II ended on Thursday, January 26th and Term III ends on Thursday, April 6th.

**The Guidance Staff
would like to wish all our student and their families
a happy and safe holiday season**