

Guidance Newsletter

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Welcome Seniors!

Greetings from the Guidance Department, and welcome to your senior year! I hope you relaxed this summer, because with all the applications, scholarships, and financial aid right around the corner, you're going to be quite busy. No worries, though. That's what the Guidance Department is for: to help you with all your college needs.

By now I'm sure most of you have been looking at the colleges you're interested in, which is great! If not, try creating an account at collegeboard.com and searching for colleges here. You can narrow your search down to majors, size, gender, location, and just about anything else.

This newsletter doesn't just have to be for seniors, though. Juniors are

more than welcome to take a newsletter and get a sneak peek of what's to come.

Again, our office is always open, and we're always here to help you, whether it's college help, class scheduling, careers, or anything that you need help with to have a successful future! If you have any questions about anything, please feel free to come in and talk to Mrs. Hasty, our secretary; Mr. Donovan, our freshman and senior guidance counselor; Mr. Landry, our sophomore and junior guidance counselor; or any of the interns.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Welcome!	1
College Admissions	2
Essays	2
Recommendations	2
Upcoming SAT Dates	3
Scholarships	3
College Open Houses	4

WATCH OUT FOR SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS!

If a "scholarship" website is asking for any credit card numbers, or if they ask for a certain fee, DON'T put in your information. This is a scam so these people can steal your money! The purpose of the scholarship is for you to get money to help you pay for college so you don't need to take it out of your pockets. If you're questioning a site, don't fill in the information. Stop, ask some questions, and research it. Spread the word so others don't get caught in the same trap.

Applying to College

Yes seniors, it's that time already. Time for us to start applying to college. Most colleges now use the common application online, but double check with the college that you're interested in, because they may not accept the common app. Some require a specific application, and sometimes they're not online.

How do I apply?

Applying for college isn't too difficult. If your college accepts the common application, go to

commonapp.org. Sign up for an account, pick the colleges you want to apply to, and start filling in all the information it asks you. Some questions may be tricky, and may require you to get information from your parents, but overall it's not a hard process. It just takes a while to complete it.

Essays

I'm sure this is everyone's favorite part of the college application, right? No? Well, even if it's not, you're going to have to write an essay when you apply to college, whether you want to or not.

What do I write about?

If the college of your choice accepts the common app, look under the writing section of the common application for essay topics. There's usually about six topics to choose from, including a topic of your choice. BE CAREFUL:

Recommendations

Teacher recommendations are crucial to your application. If you haven't done so by now, ask at least three teachers of your choice to write a recommendation for you. These teachers should be ones who have gotten to know you quite well over the past years in high school so they have something to write about. If you ask a teacher too late, they may say no because there's not enough time or because they have too many recommendations to write. So ask as early as you can so you can get enough recommendations. Most colleges now only ask for one teacher recommendation. Why three then, you ask? Options, of course. If you get a recommendation from two core subject teachers and then on in another class of your choice, you have some choices. Some recommendations will fit

Do I have to pay a fee?

Yes, colleges have an application fee, and each college varies on the price. Sometimes you can get fee waivers and you don't have to pay the application fee. Talk to Mr. Donovan if you're having money troubles.

If you have any questions about filling out your college application, PLEASE do not hesitate to come in our office to ask for help. We want you to fill out the application correctly and fully so you can attend the college of your choice. Come into the office and have one of the staff members look it over before you submit your application. Watch out for deadlines as well, especially if you are applying Early Decision/Early Action.

some colleges have a word or page limit on the essays, and you want to follow those closely. The admissions office takes these limits very seriously.

Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation!

Don't just write one draft of your essay: write many. Have a few people look it over too. Maybe even ask Ms. Tewksbury or Mrs. Carr. After all, they are English teachers. It will benefit you.

better than others. You can also ask a coach if you want to.

Make sure you give the teachers time to write your recommendation. You want it to be good, so you don't want the teachers to be rushing at the last minute. That wouldn't be fair to you or to them.



Upcoming SAT Dates:

Remember seniors, if you don't think you did well on the May SAT, you have a few more chances to raise your scores. Here are the upcoming dates for SAT's:

- November 7th, 2009.
- December 5th, 2009.
- January 23rd, 2010.

Just remember that colleges need to see these scores, so make sure you're not taking the tests too late in the year. Watch out for registration deadlines. Make sure that your test scores are being sent right to your college so you don't have to pay an extra fee.

Make sure that you study before taking the SAT's. If you have an SAT prep book, great! If not, ask to borrow someone's. The more you practice, the higher the score you'll get.

Scholarships!

Think it's too early for scholarships? Think again. It's never too early to start searching for scholarships. There are even scholarships out there for juniors, sophomores, and freshman. You just have to search for them. Luckily, here in the Guidance Department, we've already done most of that work. Over the years we've compiled scholarships and just update them with the new deadlines, and we add new ones when we find them. Even in the first few months of school starting, there are some scholarships with deadlines in October and November. Eventually at the back of this newsletter there will be the Senior Scholarship List once it gets updated. Always come into the

Some colleges require the SAT II, which are the SAT Subject Tests. These tests are more specific, like just math, just biology, just literature, or just a language. Research your colleges well to see if your college requires the Subject Tests.

Juniors: You can take the SAT's on these dates as well. You don't have to wait until May. Here are the rest of the dates that you can take them:

- March 13th, 2010.
- May 1st, 2010.
- June 5th, 2010.

It won't hurt you take them multiple times; well, it might hurt your wallet a bit if you don't have fee waivers. It's completely worth it, though. You may also have the chance to take an SAT Prep course in the spring.

Guidance Office and ask if there are any new scholarships that haven't gotten to the newsletter yet.



Scholarship Tips

- Watch out for the deadlines. They come much quicker than you think.
- Need help looking for a scholarship, or you're unsure of what to do? Don't be afraid to come in and ask questions. That's what we're here for.
- The filing cabinet is there for you. You don't need to ask to use it (unless you don't know where it is. Then we'll tell you.)

Of course you're not just limited to scholarships at school. While you're online at home, just take a second to look through some scholarships. There are endless opportunities for you to get money out there; you just have to dig a little bit.

College Open Houses and Private Tours

The best way to figure out if a college is right for you is by visiting the college itself! Of course not all of the open houses will fit on this newsletter, but we'll put enough on here. Feel free to stop by and ask about the college of your choice if it's not on this list. We also have the bulletin board next to the computer lab that has open house information on it for many different colleges.

- University of Maine in Orono
Monday, November 9th, 2009
- New England School of Communication (NESCOM)
Saturday, November 14th, 2009
- University of Southern Maine (USM)
Sunday, October 25th, 2009

- Keene State College
Sunday, November 1st, 2009
- Central Maine Community College
Saturday, October 24th, 2009

If you can't make it to an open house, many colleges will let you schedule your own appointment for a private tour, and you can get your interview done too. Interviews aren't always required, but it helps the admissions office when going through applications to see who is a good fit. Remember: if you do have an interview, make sure to send out a thank-you letter to the interviewer.

College Visits at school

Many times colleges come to the school to see if anyone is interested in getting more information from them. Listen to the announcements to hear which college is coming to visit and when they are coming. Talk to your teacher and come to the Guidance Office for a pass before the representative arrives.

- Husson College - November 5th @ 12:30pm
- USM & UMO - November 6th @ 10:30am
- UME at Fort Kent - November 19th @ 10:00am

Transcripts

When the first quarter is over, review your transcript with Mr. Donovan to make sure there aren't any mistakes. You don't want to send out a wrong transcript.

Throughout your senior year, keep working hard to keep your grades high. Colleges look at every quarter of your school year. Just because you know your rank isn't changing for graduation doesn't mean you can slack off your last quarter of senior year. Colleges will notice that, and you may have a hard time getting into a college of your choice if you slacked off fourth quarter.

Sacopee Valley High School

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115 South Hiram Road
Hiram, ME 04041

Guidance Phone: 207-625-8541
School Phone: 207-625-3208
School Fax: 207-625-7869

Visit the school
website:
Sad55.org

Our Guidance Office is always open, so feel free to come in and ask any questions that you have. We are here to assist you at any time during the school day. We can be reached at the contact information on the left. We hope that this informational newsletter has been beneficial to you all.

Thank you!

Signed,

The Guidance Department



A note from the author:

Since I haven't gotten a chance to go through all the scholarships yet, here are nine websites I encourage you to visit to find scholarships:

www.fastweb.com

www.mainecef.org

www.famemaine.com

www.mesfoundation.com

www.collegeboard.com

www.scholarshipcoach.com

www.bankofamerica.com

www.college-scholarships.com

www.get-recruited.com

scholarships, financial aid, tough classes, and everything in your jam -packed senior year, just remember to breath. Have fun your senior year. We're almost there. Three years down, one to go.

-Meagan Ouellette

This year is going to be a busy one. In between college open houses, applying for college, writing your college essay, getting teacher recommendations, SAT's,