

## OFF & RUNNING

The first quarter of the 2016-2017 school year will be “off and running” on August 31<sup>st</sup> and before we know it those first report cards of the year will be going home with students. This year the first quarter will close on Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup> and while this date is months away, it tends to “sneak up” on all of us. It is always our goal here at Suffield High School to keep parents as informed as possible of their student’s academic progress and with the Power School “parent portal”, you can view your student’s ongoing progress at any time. All parents will also receive an interim progress report when they’re mailed home around October 3<sup>rd</sup> but we encourage any parent with questions or concerns about their son’s or daughter’s progress to contact us immediately. Parents can call anytime to speak with a teacher (860-668-3810) or school counselor (860-668-3813) and we can also be reached by email ([shs.suffield.org](mailto:shs.suffield.org)).



## WELCOME 2020!

Counselors will meet with all incoming ninth graders during Math classes on Friday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> to encourage them to get off to a good start academically and to seek our assistance throughout the year. We welcome the Class of 2020 to Suffield High School, and we encourage all of our new ninth graders and their parents/guardians to contact us for assistance at any time during the year.

## TIME MANAGEMENT FOR BUSY HIGH SCHOOLERS

According to a report from the National Center of Education Statistics, participation in an extracurricular activity is linked to better academic performance. Balancing school, an extracurricular activity and, for older students, a job can be overwhelming, so use these simple tips to help make better use of the time you do have.

1. **Make a to-do list.** Think of the list as a contract with yourself; once you have written a task down, you’re committed to finishing it. To-do lists help you stay organized and motivated, and scratching off items gives you an awesome feeling of fulfillment.
2. **Stay up to date.** As hard as it may be, try to stay caught up with – or even ahead of – your homework. Falling behind can make that pile of homework seem insurmountable, creating more stress and making it harder to catch up.
3. **Stick to a schedule.** At the beginning of the semester, make a weekly schedule that includes set homework periods, and stick to it. It will help you get in the habit of doing homework at the scheduled time, and you will be less likely to let it pile up until the last minute.
4. **Don’t waste the weekend.** Although it’s tempting to kick back and just unwind after a stressful week getting in a few hours of homework Saturday or Sunday afternoon can help prevent you from becoming overburdened and stressed out during the week.

5. **Limit time on social networking sites.** Students are spending more and more time each week on social networking sites which allows ample opportunity for procrastination. Avoid checking any sites you may use during your designated homework time. For kids who also have a problem texting, or access these sites on their smart phones, turning off the phone will help you avoid distractions.

6. **Don't feel bad about saying no to friends.** If you're invited to a friend's house after school but know you don't have time to socialize, say no. Your friend will understand.

**SOURCES:** Taken from: *The Hartford Courant* Author: Joseph Adinolfi

## SAVE THAT DATE DEPARTMENT

On **Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>** an Open House Program will be held at Suffield High School. All parents/guardians are encouraged to attend and follow their student's schedule of classes and meet teachers, counselors and school administrators.



## OPEN HOUSE TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. **Make sure you attend.** Try to arrange your schedule so at least one parent can be there. Your attendance shows the school that you are serious about your teen's education.
2. **Make a plan.** Write down questions to ask each teacher.
3. **Talk with your teen** and get ideas for things to ask.
4. **Introduce yourself** and remind the teacher whose parent you are when you walk in the room.
5. **Take notes.** You'll hear a lot of information in a short time. Your notes will help you remember what each teacher said.
6. **Raise your hand** and ask a question. If you are wondering about something, chances are other parents want to know, too.
7. **Ask for a conference** if you need more time to talk one-on-one. This isn't the time to talk about your child's individual needs.
8. **Ask for each teacher's email address** (and give them yours) so that you can contact them quickly if the need arises later in the year. Email has become the most efficient way to maintain contact with school personnel.

## NCAA INFORMATION



Any senior considering participation in a Division I or II collegiate athletic program next year should apply for NCAA certification NOW! You cannot participate in a Division I or II sport unless you are certified by the NCAA Clearinghouse. Prospective college athletes should register online at <http://eligibilitycenter.org> and then visit the SHS Counseling Office to submit a transcript request form so that your academic record can be sent to the NCAA.

## SENIOR INFORMATION

Counselors will meet with all Suffield High School seniors on Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, to provide an overview of senior year college planning. Counselors will review the college application process and encourage seniors to get started, if they haven't already, in seeking letters of recommendation, writing their application essays, and completing the Common App. Seniors will also learn how to stay on top of the many local scholarship opportunities that are advertised in the counseling office. As always, we would be happy to meet with you and your senior to answer your questions. We can be reached any school day at (860) 668-3813.



## COMMON APPLICATION HELP AVAILABLE

SHS Counselors will offer assistance to seniors on completing the Common Application in **the SHS Commons during Period 7 on four consecutive Tuesdays – September 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> and on October 4<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>**. Seniors should bring their Chromebook or own device and their login and password information for the Common App. Parents are also welcome to attend along with their senior.

## SAT TEST PREP OPPORTUNITY

SHS is partnering with Catalyst Test Prep to offer an SAT Bootcamp on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, September 25<sup>th</sup> from 9am – 1pm here at the high school. This two-day program will help to prepare students with go-to strategies for every question they'll face on the October 1<sup>st</sup> SAT. Tuition is just \$150 and students can enroll at [www.CatalystPrep.com](http://www.CatalystPrep.com) or by phone at 1-800-235-0056. Similar Bootcamp courses will be offered here at SHS later in the school year to help Juniors prepare for the ACT and the SAT which will be administered in the spring.

## SELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION



A reminder to male students that they are required by law to register with the selective service system within 30 days of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. If they don't, they may find themselves permanently ineligible for federal college loans and grants, student aid in most states, job training and federal or many state jobs. Students can register online at [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov) or at their local post office.

## HOMEWORK

### Have Teens Spend at Least Ten Hours a Week on Homework

If your teen spends less than ten hours a week studying, it may not be enough. Most experts say two hours per school night is about the right amount of homework for high school students.

Does ten hours sound like a lot? Think about the other ways teens spend their time. Some spend twice that much time at a job or in front of the TV.

There may be nothing due tomorrow, but once a teen gets to high school, there is always something she can do to get ahead on her assignments or study for an upcoming quiz or test.

For some weeks, ten hours isn't enough. If it's test time or your teen has a project or paper due, the right amount of time could be 15 hours or more.

*Source: S. A. Lieberman, The Real High School Handbook.*

## 2016 PSAT/NMSQT

The 2016 Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) will be administered during the school day on Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup> here at the high school. The test, co-sponsored by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation, is an important step in making college plans. This year, all SHS 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, & 11<sup>th</sup> graders will be required to take the test (free of charge).



**The redesigned PSAT/NMSQT mirrors the knowledge and skill areas tested and benefits offered by the redesigned SAT. Here are some of the key topics students will encounter on the new PSAT.**

- **Relevant Words in Context**
- **Command of Evidence**
- **Focus on Math that Matters Most**
- **Problems Grounded in Real-World Contexts**
- **Analysis in Science and in History/Social Studies**
- **Founding Documents and Great Global Conversation**
- **No Penalty for Wrong Answers**

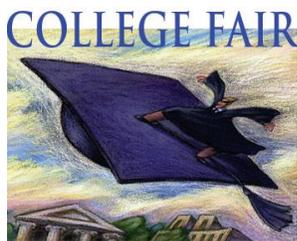
By taking the PSAT/NMSQT juniors can also enter the competition for scholarships administered by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and all students can participate in the College Board's Student Search Service, which gives students an opportunity to hear from colleges that they might not otherwise know about.

Students who take the test receive a detailed score report that allows them to review all test questions and answers. The report contains valuable information about estimating SAT scores as well as finding out where to get and how to use information about colleges and financial aid.

All students will receive the 2016 PSAT Student Bulletin which will provide them with helpful hints on what to expect and a practice test to get their "feet wet."

IT IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED THAT STUDENTS TAKE THE PRACTICE TEST AND READ THROUGH THE STUDENT BULLETIN COMPLETELY TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THE TEST BEFORE TAKING ON 10/19.

## COLLEGE FAIR COMING



Western New England University in Springfield, MA is proud to again be hosting a college fair sponsored by the New England Association of College Admission Counselors on Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 – 4:00 PM.



The fair is designed to help area college-bound students with their college search process. Over 200 colleges, universities, and post-secondary institutions are expected. This will give students an opportunity to collect informational materials and talk with admissions professionals. For directions to the campus or assistance with any questions you have, please feel free to call the WNEU Admissions office at 1-413-782-1321.

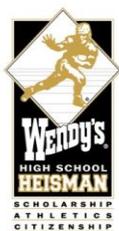
## SELECTING COLLEGES FOR FIT RATHER THAN REPUTATION

The proliferation of college rankings and onslaught of magazine and newspaper articles proclaiming the increasing selectivity of college admissions leads students to believe that “most selective” means the “best”. But a college education is not a “one size fits all” purchase; what’s right for one student may not be right for another with similar characteristics. Your ultimate success in life is not determined or limited by the college you attend. Select your school not for its reputation, but by how well it fits your requirements.

A degree from the most prestigious college will not guarantee you a higher-paying job, more chances for advancement in your career, or success in any way you might define the term. Indeed, studies have shown that students who have been accepted at one of the most prestigious institutions but choose to attend lesser known schools attain the same degree of financial success as those who chose the more selective college. It is not the college that makes the difference but rather the innate attributes of the applicant. Drive, intelligence, work ethic, and leadership qualities will later translate to a successful career.

In selecting your college, you need to be attuned to those characteristics that you value the most. Look for colleges that help students find their own voices; those at which students are most engaged in the learning process. Try to look beyond the buildings and beauty of the surroundings, and focus on the students and professors with whom you’ll share your time. Find the colleges that support the way you learn best, and where the institutional mission and philosophy fits your goals for your own education. If you look first to who you are and understand the person you wish to be, you’ll be able to choose wisely and find the college that best fits you.

*Taken from: The College Advisor*



## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Wendy’s High School Heisman Award application is now available to Seniors who excel in academics, athletics, and student leadership. If you are a senior with at least a B average who participates in at least one varsity sport you are encouraged to apply! Go to [www.wendysheisman.com](http://www.wendysheisman.com) to apply or see your counselor for assistance. Deadline is 10/3.

## CRITICISM TAKES TOLL ON TEENS



Probably the biggest relationship destroyer within a family is negative criticism. Spouses sometimes dish it out on each other, and, of course, children are always easy targets -- especially teens. Just think back through the past 24 hours, and try to remember both the positive and negative comments you made to your children. Usually there are many more negative comments than positive, with words such as "Are you walking out the door looking like that?" and "Get off that computer and do something useful."

Most people brace themselves when they hear the words "I want to be honest with you." They know that they're about to be creamed by so-called constructive criticism.

In one of the classic books on this subject, "Negative Criticism" by Sidney B. Simon, the author talks about one student who didn't want to come home for holiday breaks because her father was so negative to her. "Sure enough," Simon wrote, "as soon as she walked in the door, her father started in with his nonstop criticisms. But she did not stop him -- physically. She went up close to him, cupped his face in her hands and said: 'Daddy, I am home. I really don't need your criticism right now. What I need is your love.' He started to cry; she started to cry. They sat down and had one of the most meaningful talks of their entire lives together."

*Taken from: Springfield Republican /Author: Tom McMahon*

## UCONN EARLY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE (ECE) REMINDER

Students enrolled in a UCONN/ECE course this year who have not yet registered for that course through UCONN's online ECE registration process, will need to do so by **September 15<sup>th</sup>**. If a student does not **register and enroll** by the UCONN/ ECE deadline they will not be eligible to receive UCONN credit for the course. Information on how to register and enroll can be found at [ece.uconn.edu](http://ece.uconn.edu) or in the SHS Counseling Office.

## FAFSA CHANGES FOR CLASS OF 2017

Some important changes are coming to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid this year, but Joseph Orsolini, a college financial aid adviser in the Chicago area, hasn't fielded many questions from parents. "It's still so new and fresh that people don't realize these changes are going forward," says Orsolini, who runs College Aid Planners, advising 250 to 300 families each year and conducting financial aid nights at local schools and libraries. The changes will significantly affect the process of filing for federal financial aid and, for some families, the amount of aid they'll receive. For families of current and prospective college students, here are the changes to be aware of.

**1. Older tax data will be accepted.** The current FAFSA filing system requires students and parents to complete the federal form as soon as possible after Jan. 1 – typically before they've filed the previous year's taxes, which aren't due until April. Families often have to estimate their income and other data and then update their information later. The new timeline will take effect beginning with those who apply for financial aid for the 2017-2018 school year (SHS Class of 2017). Applicants and their families will be able to start the FAFSA in October (instead of having to wait until after January 1<sup>st</sup>) using the same data they reported on their 2015 tax returns. The use of older data means families can start the process earlier and most won't have to rely on estimates. The aim is to reduce inaccuracies and the need for verification, give institutions more time to review documents and potentially allow them to mail award letters earlier in the application cycle. "I think it's a really positive change for students and families and the application process in general," says McClean.

**2. Asset protection will plunge.** When parents report their financial information on the FAFSA, a portion of their assets – certain savings and investment funds – are not counted by the federal government toward the amount of money they are expected to contribute to their child's education. That can mean a higher federal financial aid award than their student would otherwise qualify for. However, that protected portion will plummet next year, continuing a downward trend. The sheltered asset amount varies, depending on the age and marital status of the student's parents, among other factors

**3. Schools will lose a data point.** When students file the FAFSA, they can choose up to 10 colleges to get their financial details. In the past, when students sent their FAFSAs to multiple institutions, those schools could see the other colleges on the mailing list. Starting with the 2016-2017 application, universities will lose that insight.

That's likely good news for students. Some experts worried that universities used the list to make financial aid decisions. For example, a school may have interpreted a student's decision to list that institution first on the FAFSA as an indication the student would be more likely to attend and less likely to care about the financial aid package. School officials could have then used this as justification in awarding that smitten student fewer institutional dollars.

Taken From: [usnews.com](http://usnews.com) Author: Susannah Snider

***\*The SHS Counseling Department will host a Financial Aid Night on Wednesday evening, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 7PM in the SHS Auditorium for parents and students to learn more about the college financial aid application process. Mark your calendars now to save the date!***

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER

- September 1<sup>st</sup> Deadline to register for the October 1<sup>st</sup> SAT.
- September 2<sup>nd</sup> Counselors meet with all ninth graders during Math classes to assist in the transition to SHS.
- September 10<sup>th</sup> ACT Administration
- September 14<sup>th</sup> Last day for students to ADD new semester one or full year courses.
- September 15<sup>th</sup> Last day for students to register for UCONN/ECE courses.
- September 16<sup>th</sup> All seniors meet with counselors during English class to review college/career readiness planning calendar and application procedures.
- September 16<sup>th</sup> Deadline to register for the October 22<sup>nd</sup> ACT Administration.
- September 18<sup>th</sup> NEACAC College Fair at WNEC, 2:00 – 4:00 PM
- September 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> Common Application assistance available to seniors and parents in the SHS Commons during P7 (1:15-2:10).
- September 22<sup>nd</sup> Suffield High School Open House. All parents are encouraged to attend and follow their students' schedule of classes, meet teachers, counselors, administrators, etc.
- September 23<sup>rd</sup> All juniors meet with counselors during American Studies class to review college planning timetable and important dates and events.
- September 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> SAT "Bootcamp" at SHS – go to [www.CatalystPrep.com](http://www.CatalystPrep.com) Call Catalyst at **800.235.0056** to register.
- September 26<sup>th</sup> All sophomores meet with counselors during Biology class to review college planning timetable and important upcoming events.
- September 28<sup>th</sup> Financial Aid Night for SHS Parents & Students. 7PM in the Auditorium.

