



DECEMBER 2024

# THE GUIDANCE LIGHT

Cold Spring Harbor Central School District



## *Cold Spring Harbor Jr/Sr HS Counseling Center Newsletter*

### **A Message from the Director's Desk:**

Dear Students and Families:

As the first few months of this school year draw to a close, I'm amazed at how quickly time has passed. With so many exciting activities and successful events behind us, it's hard to believe another calendar year is nearing its end. This time of year always prompts reflection: Did I make the most of 2024? Did I reach my goals? Do I even remember all of them? Could I use just a bit more time?

As we say goodbye to 2024 and look ahead to a fresh start in 2025, there is so much to anticipate and plan for. In schools, the end of one year also means preparation for the next. In early January, we will begin the course selection process for the 2025–2026 school year. This process starts with teachers making course recommendations for students, which will be finalized in December and shared with students and families via the eSchool portal.

These recommendations are thoughtfully made, based on the information we have at this point in the year. Teachers consider each student's current progress to suggest the courses that offer the best chance for future success. While recommendations are specific to each subject area, they are ultimately reviewed in the context of the student's overall program during their course selection meeting with the school counselor in January or February.

As students and families navigate teacher recommendations, course offerings, and the academic program for 2025–2026, please remember there are many resources and people available to support you. School counselors, teachers, and building leaders are here to help, as are the *Program of Study*, *Scope and Sequence documents*, and *grade-specific course planning materials*.

This newsletter provides important details about these topics—and much more!

Warm regards and best wishes for a joyful and healthy holiday season.

*Jeannette Alomia*

Director of Counseling, K-12



### **Important Dates:**

**12/2: Grade 11 College Kick-off** Parent/Student Night Program  
7PM - PAC

**12/6:** Recommended deadline to request college application materials from the counseling center for January 1 deadlines

**12/7:** SAT Exam (not at CSH JR.SR HS)

**12/14:** ACT Exam



**COLD SPRING HARBOR  
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*Soaring Higher • Growing Stronger • Achieving Greatness*



# COURSE SELECTION TIMELINE

*Important Dates to Remember*

## I. December 2024:

- ⇒ Teachers make course recommendations for individual students in all core courses. Course recommendations will be visible on the eSchool student/parent portal on December 20, 2024.
- ⇒ Program of Study and individual grade-specific scheduling sheets are available for students/families to review and use to plan a list of requested courses.

## II. January/February 2025:

- ⇒ School counselors meet with students to review course recommendations and choose elective courses. Parents are encouraged to participate.

## III. March 5, 2025:

- ⇒ Course requests will be locked and master schedule build will begin. Changes to course requests will not be made after this date; level changes will be reviewed as needed.

### Cold Spring Harbor Jr/Sr High School

**Counseling Center**  
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### December Counseling Center Programs

#### Grade 11 College Planning Kick-Off Parent/ Student Workshop

Monday, December 2 at 7pm in the PAC

Choosing a college and preparing for the application process involves many important steps and decisions. This parent/student program is designed to offer valuable guidance on navigating this journey. We will review the key activities and milestones families will encounter in the coming months, including an introduction to using Naviance for college exploration and planning.

*We look forward to seeing grade 11 students and their parents on the evening of December 2*

#### Classroom Counseling Sessions

In December, counselors will host the second of three classroom sessions to support students at key milestones in their academic journey. For grade 11 students, these sessions will officially launch the college exploration process, providing an overview of the steps and resources available to guide them. Grade 8 students will participate in sessions focused on time management and high school planning, building on the topics covered during the recent Parent/Student Night for 8th-grade families.

The counseling department's approach ensures all students receive essential information in classroom or group settings, followed by opportunities for more personalized support through individual or small-group meetings tailored to their unique interests, needs, and plans.



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## PSAT....Now What?

PSAT/NMSQT scores were released by the College Board in early November. Students in grades 10 and 11 who took the PSAT/NMSQT in October are now able to view their score reports. Students can log into their College Board account for their full report. Also, scores have been uploaded into Naviance and can be viewed there. Counselors have connected with each student who took the PSAT to ensure they are able to access their scores and understand how to read the report. This [brief video](#) can also help guide students through the score report.

The PSAT was a practice exam. Students in grade 10 had an early look into the testing process and the new digital exam while juniors can use their score report to help determine their next steps in the college testing cycle. The digital SAT exam is shorter (2 hours instead of 3) and includes an adaptive model whereby questions students receive later in the exam are determined by how they answer questions in the first module of the exam.

There are many practice test options available to students. CSH students have two **FREE** ways to practice and prepare for both the Digital SAT and the upcoming ACT exams.

1. As of December 7 All CSH students can take a : **FREE Practice SAT and ACT** through the Princeton Review. The tests will be taken online at home and results will be provided immediately.
  2. All Cold Spring Harbor HS students also have access to the *free* **Methodize Test Prep** Program. Students can access this program through the menu in their Castle Learning accounts. Methodize provides SAT and ACT prep tools including diagnostic tests, full length exams, a vocabulary builder and a complete self-paced preparation program for both exams - SAT and ACT - with informative videos and instruction on specific test question types with tips to address them. Watch this [video](#) from creator/founder Mr. Tom Ehlers to learn more and then **give Methodize a try!**
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### ***Grade 8 Parent/Student Evening Program***

On Wednesday, November 20, the Jr./Sr. High School team collaborated with the counseling department to present the annual High School Transition Program for 8th-grade families. This informative event highlighted key aspects of the academic opportunities available in 9th grade and beyond, the distinctions between junior high and senior high school, and the important considerations for students as they finish their 8th-grade year and prepare for the exciting journey ahead. Click [here](#) to access the presentation.

As we approach the 2025–2026 course selection process in the coming months, the decisions made now will play a vital role in shaping students' future paths. This is an exciting time, and there are many resources and people available to provide guidance and support. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns as we navigate these next steps together.



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# 2025 - 2026 COURSE SELECTION

A student's high school course schedule is an opportunity to engage in challenging, rewarding, and personally meaningful academic experiences. Thoughtful planning ensures a balance between rigorous coursework and opportunities for success. As you consider your options, think about your four-year high school plan and long-term academic goals. Here are some guiding questions to reflect on:

- *Which subjects do I find most engaging?*
  - *Where do I excel, and what are my strengths?*
  - *What challenges me in a way that promotes growth?*
  - *How much time can I realistically dedicate to my coursework and other commitments?*
- 

The choices made during the course selection process shape both individual schedules and the school's master schedule. It's important to carefully consider the level of rigor for each course, the total demands of your schedule, and your ability to maintain a healthy balance between academics and extracurricular activities.



Ultimately, your transcript will reflect the courses you've taken and the grades you've earned, so thoughtful planning with your goals in mind can set the stage for success.

## ***IMPORTANT SCHEDULING RESOURCES***



### **Grade-Specific Scheduling Forms:**

Students and parents can now explore all course options by grade level using our NEW Grade-Level Scheduling Forms (see below). These forms provide a comprehensive list of courses available to students in each grade. Families are encouraged to review these carefully, paying close attention to course expectations, the student's interests, and both short- and long-term academic goals.

*The Program of Study is an excellent resource for learning more about course pathways and specific course details. The current Program of Study is available for reference, and the 2025–2026 version will be posted online and available in print by the end of December.*

#### **GRADE 9 (for current 8th grade students):**

**[GRADE 9 COURSE SELECTION FORM](#)**

#### **GRADE 10 (for current 9th grade students):**

**[GRADE 10 COURSE SELECTION FORM](#)**

#### **GRADE 11 (for current 10th grade students):**

**[GRADE 11 COURSE SELECTION FORM](#)**

#### **GRADE 12 (for current 11th grade students):**

**[GRADE 12 COURSE SELECTION FORM](#)**



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# Winter and Spring with the Class of 2026!



On Monday, November 25, the high school counselors kicked off their annual College Kick-Off Classroom Sessions with grade 11 students. This first session is part of a three-part series designed to help students begin their college exploration and post-high school planning journey.

During the session, counselors emphasized the importance of finding college options that are “the right fit” for each student. They introduced factors to consider when identifying personal preferences, specific goals, and individual aspirations for this exciting next step.

If you’re a parent of a junior, ask them about the shoe they chose—it’s a fun part of the activity!



This winter and spring, counselors will continue working closely with juniors through Sessions II and III of the College Kick-Off program. These sessions provide valuable information to help students navigate the college exploration process. Following the classroom sessions, counselors will meet individually with students and their parents to discuss plans in greater detail.



Please mark your calendars for two important events:

- \* **Monday, December 2, 2024 (7pm PAC):** Grade 11 Parent/Student Night - College Exploration Process
- \* **Saturday, December 7:** Free virtual SAT/ACT Practice Test ***FREE Practice SAT and ACT***
- \* **Monday, January 13, 2025 (7 p.m. PAC):** ***SAT & ACT: All You Need To Know*** by the Princeton Review



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# The FAFSA is Now Open!

Dear Class of 2025 Families,

We are pleased to announce that the Beta version of the 2025-2026 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is now available, offering a more streamlined and user-friendly experience for students to begin their applications.

The full version of the FAFSA application is expected to launch on December 1, 2024.

Completing the FAFSA is a crucial step in accessing financial aid for higher education, including:

- 
- Federal grants
  - Federal loans
  - State and institutional scholarships
  - Work-study opportunities

Even if you believe your family may not qualify for need-based aid, many colleges and universities require the FAFSA for consideration of merit-based scholarships.

We strongly encourage families to complete the FAFSA as early as possible to maximize financial aid opportunities. You can access the application [here](#).

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the Counseling Center. We are here to support you every step of the way!

Sincerely,

*Jeannette Alomia*

Jeannette Alomia

Director of Counseling, K-12



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# FREE Practice SAT and/or ACT

The **Princeton Review**®

## Free SAT® and ACT® Virtual Practice Tests for Cold Spring Harbor Students!

Free practice tests are a great way to find out how you may score  
on the SAT or ACT without having the scores count.

### SAT

December 7th 9:00am



**SCAN QR CODE OR CLICK  
HERE TO REGISTER**  
Registration deadline 12/6

### ACT

December 7th 9:00am



**SCAN QR CODE OR CLICK  
HERE TO REGISTER**  
Registration deadline 12/6

**All tests will be held online at home.**

- You can register for both and take one at a later convenient time.
- Test will be available to take in your Princeton Review portal for 4 months.
- Students will receive detailed instructions on how to complete the test.
- Multiple timing options are available for students with accommodations.
- Students receive a detailed score report highlighting their strengths and weaknesses.

**Want more information on courses and tutoring?  
Visit [PrincetonReview.com](https://PrincetonReview.com) or call 800-2REVIEW.**

Questions? Contact Elyssa Cooke- Long Island Outreach Specialist  
631-664-3079 | [elyssa.cooke@review.com](mailto:elyssa.cooke@review.com)

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## WS BOCES: Wilson Tech

Each year, some of our students from Cold Spring Harbor High School join peers from 17 other school districts in the towns of Babylon, Smithtown, and Huntington to develop skills that are in high demand by employers. These students participate in Western Suffolk BOCES' Wilson Tech career and technical education programs for half of their school day while continuing their academic courses at CSH for the other half. Options include technical careers (i.e., Robotics), health careers (i.e., Nurse Assistant), transportation careers (i.e., Aviation), and construction careers (i.e., Architectural and Design/CAD), among others.

On Monday, December 16, a representative from WS BOCES Wilson Tech will visit the counseling center during periods 2 and 3 (8:34 - 9:58 AM) to meet with interested students. Please complete the [Wilson Tech Info. Session Interest Form](#) if you would like to attend this informative meeting. During this session, students can learn about the variety of program options and have their questions answered. Some programs have articulation agreements with several colleges and universities, which means students can potentially earn and transfer college credits to participating colleges.

If you're interested in exploring Wilson Tech, see your counselor. A complete list of available programs can also be found in the *Program of Study*.

DID YOU KNOW?

## COLLEGE TRIVIA!!

1. The list of *most attended colleges* by CSH students over the last 10 years includes 3 of these 4 schools. Which college is **not** in the top 10 Most Attended:  
A. Bucknell University  
B. Suffolk Community College  
C. Clemson University  
D. University of Notre Dame
2. Over the last ten (10) years, the **top 3** most attended Ivy League colleges by CSH students (in order of enrollment, highest to lowest) are:  
A. Cornell Univ., Univ of Penn., Brown  
B. Univ. of Penn., Cornell Univ, Princeton Univ.  
C. Cornell Univ., Dartmouth College, Univ. of Penn.  
D. Dartmouth College, Cornell Univ., Brown Univ.
3. The ACT will be offered in DIGITAL format, starting in what month?  
A. December 2024  
B. January 2025  
C. April 2025  
D. September 2025
4. This college's mascot is a deer:  
A. University of Maine  
B. Lewis and Clark College  
C. Fairfield University  
D. Carleton College



Answers: 1. C, 2. C, 3. C, 4. C



## NCAA College Athletics: CORE COURSE GPA

All Cold Spring Harbor HS students have free access to the **Core Course GPA** program. Student athletes who are interested in playing collegiate athletics can find helpful guidance through these [available resources](#).

Additionally, more than a dozen [brief videos](#) on recruiting and the NCAA Eligibility process.

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