



December 2014

# Suffield High School

## Monthly Guidance Newsletter

### Mid Term Point

Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup> marks the mid-term point for the second marking quarter this year (already!). Progress reports should be in the mail later that week. If you have questions, please feel free to contact your student's teachers directly by email at [suffield.org](http://suffield.org). Parents are also encouraged to check the Power School "parent portal" regularly, to stay informed as to their student's academic progress!



### College Application Deadlines



Seniors are reminded to watch those college application deadlines as the holidays approach. Many colleges use January 15<sup>th</sup> or February 1<sup>st</sup> as their application deadlines so seniors are encouraged to pay close attention to these dates and prepare their applications accordingly. The Suffield High School guidance office is happy to process and mail senior transcript materials, but this takes time, so seniors need to submit their transcript requests to the guidance **office at least two weeks prior to the college's application deadline!** Transcript requests

for applications due by January 15<sup>th</sup> should be submitted, along with all supplemental materials, to the guidance office by Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>! Those due by February 1<sup>st</sup> should be submitted by Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>!

### Local Scholarship Reminder

Seniors are reminded to check the local scholarship board in the guidance office each week so as not to miss out on an opportunity to apply for an award. New scholarships arrive weekly and application deadlines vary, so parents should remind their senior to stop in and check our listing every week.



### College Planning Appointments for Juniors and Parents

As the holiday vacation approaches and more and more of this year's seniors complete their college applications, our attention in the Guidance Office begins to shift to the Junior Class of 2016. Toward that end, counselors will meet with all juniors on Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup> to do a classroom activity on college/career planning. In addition, it is our hope and plan to meet Individually with every junior and their parents/guardians to assist in planning for life after Suffield High School. We would like to invite juniors and their parents to come in together for an individualized college/career planning appointment sometime in the next few months. Please contact our office (860) 668-3813 to set up



a time to come in and meet. During the meeting, counselors will review a college planning calendar and encourage juniors to plan ahead on visiting colleges during upcoming school vacations; seek letters of recommendation later this spring; begin thinking about ideas for a college application essay; and put together a resume of awards and activities for use with college applications early next fall. Counselors would also like to show parents the **“Naviance/Family Connections”** online college planning program that we’ll be demonstrating to all juniors as part of our classroom lesson. This customized program is an excellent tool that juniors will be encouraged to use frequently throughout the college search process to identify schools that fit them best in terms of personal preferences and academic qualifications.

As is true with any big endeavor, the whole college/career search process is less overwhelming when you start early, break it into smaller pieces, and tackle it one piece at a time. We look forward to helping you do just that and to working with you during this exciting time!

Your Friendly Neighborhood School Counseling Department (YFNSCD)

### Tips for Juniors on How to Start Your College Search

Preparing to start your college search may seem like a daunting task, but there are several ways to approach the challenge. The key to conducting a successful search requires you to go through three progressive steps of self-education:

1. Understand, at least generally, what you want.
2. Talk with your teachers, coaches, parents, school counselor or an older sibling; they will reveal insights that you may not be aware of.
3. Take the time to visit schools. Plan to stay for a night or weekend so that you will be able to feel what it's like to live there. A college's website cannot simulate the feeling of interacting with the students and professors or convey the atmosphere at events, games, lectures and so on. Check out the college or university's student newspaper to get one perspective on the politics on campus.



### Top Ten Ways to Enjoy the College Admissions Process

*The Middlebury College (VT) admissions office has compiled a list of tips to help guide students and parents through the various aspects of the college admissions process. Both admissions counselors and students at the college contributed their opinions based on their daily experiences at Middlebury. We hope you find this list helpful!*

**10. Visit, if possible, at least some of the colleges that you are considering.** Nothing will help you more to define the ideal learning environment for you, and to help you see for yourself whether the labels and stereotypes that get attached to some colleges really are valid.

**9. Feel free to schedule an interview if you are going to be visiting, if the college offers individual interviews, and if it is a college that you are seriously considering.** But don't worry if you can't have or don't want one. Interviews are virtually never a required part of the process, and they may or may not even be what is considered "evaluative." But having one could help you learn more about the institution, and it could help the college learn more about you. Once you've had an interview or two, you'll find them amazingly enjoyable.

**8. Share your reactions about the colleges you visit with your parents and others.** Sure, it's sometimes a pain that they want to be so involved with what ultimately will be your decision, but since they are frequently the ones who are going to be helping you pay for this experience, it's important that they are on the same page with you.

**7. Be thoughtful in your choices so that you don't feel as if you need to apply to 15-20 colleges just because some of your friends are.** If you are diligent enough with the steps above, you ought to be able to narrow it down to 6-8 attractive options fairly easily, and if those cover a range of competitiveness for you, you will be fine next spring. It will also be nice to save money on those application fees...

**6. Apply Early Decision only if you felt like "lightning struck" during your college search and it is your clear first choice.** Too many students apply ED for the wrong reasons (i.e., because of whatever strategic advantage they think it may give them in being admitted), but applying early can take you out of the "driver's seat" of a very important decision. This is especially true for anyone for whom financial considerations are going to be important in their decision about where to attend. You and your family may wish to be able to compare different financial aid/scholarship awards.

**5. Be aware that your SAT/ACT scores will probably play less of a role in your admissions decision than you may think.** Most selective colleges do not have "cut off" scores below which applicants are not admitted, and most have a fairly wide range of scores represented among their admitted students. That's because test scores only provide colleges with the roughest possible measure of your potential for success academically in college; your high school grades are a much better predictor of that. Higher scores are better than lower scores, of course, but even the highest scores are by no means a guarantee of admission to the most selective colleges. At most colleges to which you apply, it is likely that your scores will look quite similar to those of other applicants, which means it is unlikely that they will be a deciding factor in your candidacy.

**4. Relax when it comes time to writing your personal essay and let it come from your heart.** Yes, the essay is important enough to be required by most colleges, but please know that very seldom is the essay reason enough by itself to admit or reject anyone. We just want to get to know you a little better, and your grades and scores only paint part of your picture. Your essay can do that, but don't forget to proofread and use your spell check . . .

**3. Choose the teachers who write letters of recommendation for you carefully.** Since those letters are another way for us to get to know you better, they should come from teachers who know you well, maybe even teachers who have had contact with you outside of their classrooms such as through clubs, teams, etc. And don't forget that some of the teachers who challenged you the most may be able to write an even more meaningful letter for us than the ones from whom you got easy "A's."

**2. Submit additional letters of recommendation only if they are from people who know you really well and can add things about you that others couldn't.** Letters from friends of your parents who happen to be alumni of the college to which you are applying, for example, don't usually shed much additional light for us.

*And the Number One way to enjoy the college admissions process is:*

- 1. Breathe deeply and always remember that a year from now you will very likely be attending some truly excellent college where you will get a first-rate education and have a wonderful experience.** The great thing about higher education in the United States is that there are so many terrific options that almost everyone ends up having a really positive college experience. And don't forget that the quality of your educational experience is far more up to you than it is up to the institution that you attend.

## Congratulations Department

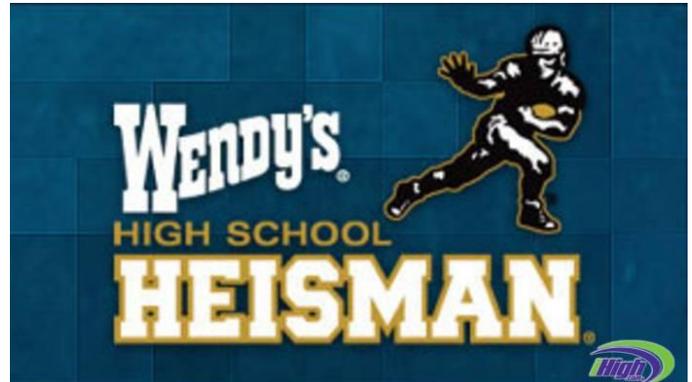


Congratulations to sophomore Zach DelVaglio, son of David DelVaglio of Suffield, on being chosen as Suffield High School's nominee for the Hugh O'Brien Youth Foundation (HOBY) Connecticut Leadership Seminar. Zach will participate as Suffield's HOBY ambassador at this spring's program, which works to motivate and develop future leaders. The mission of HOBY is to seek out, recognize and develop leadership potential commencing with high school sophomores. The program introduces high school sophomores to distinguished leaders of the community from various sectors such as business, technology, education, government, arts, and science. Through intense but informal panel discussions, HOBY participants get a realistic look at their nation, its people, and their own role in the world community. Congratulations also go to sophomore Caelie Flanagan, daughter of Gina and Scott Flanagan of Suffield, who has been chosen as the alternate nominee.

## Wendy's High School Heisman

Congratulations to senior **Taylor Schwab**, daughter of Cindy and Tim Schwab of Suffield on being named the **State of Connecticut Winner** in the prestigious 2014 Wendy's High School Heisman Award Program! Taylor was chosen as the top female candidate for the award from applicants representing high schools across the entire state.

Congratulations also go to senior **Sam Cutler**, son of Kim Worthington and Edward Cutler of Suffield on being chosen as a **State Finalist** in the same program. A senior at Suffield High School, Sam is an outstanding student/athlete and leader by example within our school community.



The Wendy's High School Heisman program, awarded in conjunction with the collegiate Heisman, celebrates the achievements of the nation's top high school seniors both in and out of the classroom. Just as the collegiate Heisman is known for being the top award in college football, the WHSH award is known for being the most prestigious award at the high school level. The award encourages future leadership by recognizing well-balanced lifestyles at an early age. To be eligible for this award, students must display academic aptitude, athletic talent and community leadership.

Created in 1994, the Wendy's High School Heisman program has celebrated youth excellence for 20 years. The program consists of six stages: applicants, school winners, state finalists, state winners, national finalists and national winners. Entries are initially evaluated by ACT Assessment during the Applicant, State Finalist and State Winner phases and then passed on to a distinguished panel of judges. Known for the ACT college entrance exam, ACT is a non-profit organization offering educational measurement and research services.

## Free College Credit



Enfield, Connecticut

Asnuntuck Community College is offering the chance for SHS juniors and seniors with a 3.0 GPA or better, to enroll in a **FREE college course** during the upcoming spring semester on a space available basis. Interested students must submit their ACC High School Partnership Application materials to the guidance office by **Wednesday, December 17th**.

A representative from the college will be here on 12/11 at 10AM to speak with any interested students or parents about the program. Any SHS junior or senior with at least a "B" average is eligible to apply for this opportunity.

## Community Service Credit Reminder

Any student wishing to apply for the Community Service Credit Program for the spring semester must submit a completed application form by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Students involved in a quality, ongoing community service project can earn a maximum of .50 credits for 100 hours of documented volunteer work, but they must complete the required form by the deadline. Interested students should see their counselor for more information.

## Tuition Discounts Available

Are you worried about affording college?

If the major you want to study is not offered by any of Connecticut's state colleges or universities, you may be able to attend an out-of-state college at sharply reduced tuition.

The New England Board of Higher Education's Regional Student Program (RSP) provides a substantial break on out-of-state tuition to Connecticut residents enrolled in certain programs offered by state colleges and universities in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island or Vermont.

Aquaculture, aviation science, food science, hospitality management, information systems engineering, ocean engineering, outdoor education and textile design are examples of the hundreds of degree programs available to Connecticut residents with a tuition break through the RSP.

Undergraduate and graduate programs are listed in the RSP catalog, the "Apple Book", for Connecticut Residents. This fall NEBHE distributed copies of the catalog to all high school guidance offices and libraries, city and town libraries, state college and university admissions offices.

The catalog is also available online at <http://www.nebhe.org/tuitionbreak> or in print from the New England Board of Higher Education, 45 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111.

The RSP, established in 1955, not only saves students and their families thousands of dollars in college tuition, but also saves taxpayers millions of dollars by enabling the six New England states to share educational resources and avoid duplication of costly academic programs at public campuses.

NEBHE is a nonprofit, congressionally authorized agency whose mission is to promote greater educational opportunities and services for residents of the six New England states.



## Upcoming Events for December

December 6 <sup>th</sup>	SAT Administration
December 12 <sup>th</sup>	Counselors will meet with Juniors during English class to do a college planning activity.
December 13 <sup>th</sup>	ACT Administration
December 17 <sup>th</sup>	Deadline for interested Juniors and Seniors to apply for a FREE Spring Semester course at Asnuntuck Community College, through the High School Partnership Program.
December 29 <sup>th</sup>	Deadline to register for January 24 <sup>th</sup> SAT Administration. This is generally considered to be “last chance” for seniors seeking fall admission to take the SAT.
December 24 <sup>th</sup> – January 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>HOLIDAY VACATION!</b>

### Happy Holidays!

**The Guidance Department would like to wish all of our students and their families the very best during the upcoming Holidays. We hope all will enjoy a happy and healthy Holiday Vacation!**

