

THE ADVOCATE



SCHOOL-WIDE NEWS & EVENTS

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT 09.19.13 @ 5:30

All families and students are encouraged to attend. Meet, or reconnect, with school staff and get information about what's new at SHS!

ADVISORY

Advisory block will soon be shifting to an academic enrichment model; students will be able to access teachers and get extra help if they've missed class or are struggling.

COUNSELOR CASELOADS A GUIDE...KIND OF

If you are unsure of who your school counselor is, the best thing to do is call the office and ask the counseling assistant, Lisa Allen (885-7914)! Our caseload breakdown is not a perfect system, but the tips below should help:

Mr. Touchette, jtouchette@ssdvt.org

All 9th graders and a few 10th graders

Mrs. Haskell & Mrs. Davenport, chaskell@ssdvt.org & pdavenport@ssdvt.org

10th -12th graders, usually those with last names beginning with A-L

Mrs. Costello, jdunn@ssdvt.org

10th -12th graders, usually those with last names beginning with M-Z

Welcome!

The school counselors of Springfield High School are excited to introduce a new - and old - office tradition: a quarterly newsletter called *The Advocate!* As people devoted to working with teenage minds, we understand that SHS families are sometimes left "out of the loop" on what's happening inside of our building. It is our hope that *The Advocate* will provide you with more insight about how we are supporting students, how we can help to support SHS families, and how we can all work together to better the school community. We chose our title as a reminder to ourselves (and our readers) that our professional priority is to advocate for our students and help them become advocates for themselves.

Change is in the air

As many of you noticed in the letters that were mailed home this summer, our office has undergone some significant but exciting changes. We are welcoming a new 9th grade counselor, Jason Touchette, to the team. Also, Corrie Haskell welcomed a baby girl into her family and will be out on leave until mid-October. Her leave will be covered by Patty Davenport, who will remain on staff as the newly appointed Multiple Pathways Coordinator. Finally, Jade Dunn became Jade Costello following her August wedding (her contact

information will remain the same until further notice).



Jason Touchette brings energy and experience to the 9th Grade Academy and the SHS counseling team.

What to expect

In this first edition of our newsletter, we want to tell you what you can expect from *The Advocate*. Four times a year, we plan to update you on school-wide issues and initiatives that are pertinent to the counseling office. We will also have four sections that pertain specifically to students and families in each grade (9-12). These sections will include upcoming events, important announcements, current challenges, and fun opportunities that are related to each grade level.

If readers ever have any questions, concerns or suggestions about how we can improve the newsletter or make it more relevant to Springfield families, please feel free to contact the School Counseling Office at 885-7914.

“There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

-Nelson Mandela

12th Grade

Over the next four weeks, the school counselors will be visiting two 12th grade advisories each day. We will be distributing some important post-secondary paperwork including: Transcript Release Forms (to be signed by parents/guardians) Senior Information Packets (to be filled out by students and families) and Teacher Recommendation Letter Contracts (to be completed by students and classroom teachers). As families, please remind your students to be working on these tasks and getting them turned into the counseling office as soon as possible. Students should also be scheduling Senior Meetings with their counselor during the month of September; these meetings give us an idea of what the student has done over the summer to prepare for the college process and we can give the student a “to-do list” and timeline to help them meet their goals.

Each 12th grader also has a Naviance account they created with last spring. This is a free online tool that allows them to build resumes, fill out career/interest inventories, and build college lists. Please encourage your student to share their Naviance account with you, as it is also a great tool to help families familiarize themselves with the post-secondary planning process. Naviance is also the place where recommendation letters and transcripts will be uploaded and sent to colleges, so if a student has forgotten how to use Naviance (or forgotten their password) encourage them to see their counselor.

Finally, we cannot stress enough how important it is for ALL students to use the counselors as a resource during their final year at SHS. We recognize that much of our 12th grade support is around the college process, but we also want to help those students who are entering the workforce, military, or planning to take a “gap year” before working or continuing their education. We want all students and families to feel comfortable accessing our guidance during this exciting and challenging transition year.

News & Info

- Visits from college admissions reps. are happening in September and October! They are listed in daily announcements, advertised around school, and dates/times are sent to all 12th graders through email.
- Senior College Planning Night on Oct. 8th @ 6:30 in the cafeteria
- VSAC's Paying for College workshop on Nov. 14th @ 6:30 in the cafeteria
- November 1st - UVM's Early Action application deadline, which is free for all Vermont residents

11th Grade

11th grade is usually the most academically challenging year of high school. Many students are challenging themselves with honors and AP courses and the workload and expectations of teachers increases. Counselors often see a spike in anxiety during 11th grade and we encourage students and families to reach out to us for support. It is vital that 11th graders take advantage of teacher help nights and any other small group/one-on-one support opportunities. If a student is struggling in a specific

class, families are also encouraged to connect with the classroom teacher BEFORE reaching out the counselor. The teachers have the most investment and the best insight into academic challenges and every teacher's email address is listed on the district website.

Along with academic stress, 11th grade is also the year that we see an uptick in risk-tasking. Many of these behaviors are normal and are related to developmental milestones, like driving and dating, but we want to make sure students have a place to turn if they are feeling pressured or overwhelmed - and that families have a place to turn if they are feeling overly concerned. School counselors can't always solve these struggles, but we are always a safe place to vent or a place to turn to for additional resources.

For 11th grade students who are considering college, we strongly advise taking the SAT I or ACT exam at some point this year. SHS offers the SAT I and ACT exam onsite in the spring, but students can register for the fall or winter exams at other local high schools through the websites below. If your family qualifies for F/R Lunch, students should speak to their counselor about obtaining a fee waiver.

websites:
collegeboard.org
actstudent.org

News & Info

- 11th graders in Level I tech center programs will not partake in advisory this year. Advisors and counselors will be sure to touch base with these students throughout the year to be

sure they are getting information about school-wide events, post-secondary planning, etc.

10th Grade

10th grade can be one of the strangest and most uncertain times of high school. A lot of educators will reference the “sophomore slump” as a telling label for this in-between time; students are no longer experiencing the excitement and stress of 9th grade and yet they’re still not considered veteran upperclass(wo)men. One of our goals as a department is to help our 10th graders feel more active in the school community. We encourage families to support their 10th graders in getting involved in a club, sport, or extra-curricular activity. Not only do these foster friendships, but they can boost feelings of belonging and self-worth. If you have any questions about athletics, music, drama, Green Horn or student government, please contact the staff members listed below. Students will also have the opportunity to learn about and sign-up for a variety of clubs during our annual Club Fair on Monday, October 7th during advisory!

-Athletics: Joe Brown, AD,
jbrown@ssdvt.org

-Music: Jim Chlebak, Music
Director, jchlebak@ssdvt.org

-Drama: Becky Skrypeck, Drama
Director, rskrypeck@ssdvt.org

-Green Horn: Mike Janiszyn, GH
and GH LAdvisor,
mjaniszyn@ssdvt.org

-Student Government: Kevin
and Liz Coen, Student Council
Advisors, kcoen@ssdvt.org and
ecoen@ssdvt.org

Although we are fully invested in the 9th Grade Academy model, we realize that it calls for some significant adjustments for students during these first few weeks of 10th grade. One of those adjustments is that every student is assigned a new school counselor. In order to help the students become more comfortable and familiar with their counselor, will be be visiting 10th grade advisories in late October through November. We will be working with students on goal-setting, academic planning, and familiarizing them with Naviance (an online tool they will use to prepare for college and other post-secondary ventures). If a student or family is anxious to connect with their new counselor at the start of the year, students are welcome to make appointments in the counseling office during advisory or passing periods and families are welcome to contact our office assistant, Lisa Allen, at 885-7914 or ljallen@ssdvt.org.

News & Info

- PSAT testing will be administered to all 10th graders on Oct. 16th. There is no cost and this exam will familiarize students with the format of the SAT I Exam and offer them post-secondary planning tools.

9th Grade

Welcome to our building and welcome to jungle that is high school! Some families may have had other children come through SHS and some may be experiencing this for the first time, but we hope every 9th grade student and family feels excited about the next four years. In the counseling office, 9th graders are in a unique situation in that they all have the same counselor, Mr.

Touchette. Coming to us from a long tenor at a K-8 school and with a background in alternative education, “Mr.T” has a great skill-set and a valuable outlook when it comes to working with students who are learning to adjust to a new place and new expectations. We hope all 9th graders have a chance to meet and chat with him this fall; he is anxious to get to know the Class of 2017 and help acclimate them to the high school.

As many of you know, the 9th graders are all within a first-year academy model. One team of teachers works together and instructs every first-year class. This allows for more personalized support during their transition and allows the teachers to make cross-curricular connections. An important component of the academy are Teacher Help Nights. Every teacher has a designated afternoon where they are willing to stay late and work with students individually and in small groups on assignments, projects and any content students may be struggling with. We STRONGLY encourage every 9th grader to utilize these help nights on a regular basis! If you have questions about when a specific teacher holds their help night, please contact the main office or email the teacher directly.

News & Info

- For those first-year families who have not created Powerschool accounts, there will be information about how to set-up your accounts (enabling you to track students' grades, assignments and attendance) at Back-To-School Night on September 19th!