

MARCH 2025

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,

Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes a noticeable shift in pace. As we welcome March, the slow rhythm of winter gives way to a fast-moving stretch toward the end of the school year. A glance at the March calendar reveals just how much is packed into the coming weeks. From now through spring, the days will feel like they're flying by.

We're excited about the start of spring sports, where chilly, post-sunset practices will soon turn into warm evenings with games finishing before the sun dips below the horizon. Our school community will also come together for several special events, including the district-wide Sports Night, the junior high school musical, International Night, and the joint FOCUS/SEPTO presentation. Plus, there are five weeks left in the third quarter—plenty of time to finish strong before the marking period closes in early April.

For our juniors and their families, college planning season is underway. In the coming weeks, high school counselors will meet individually with grade 11 students and their parents to navigate the college search and planning process. This journey is filled with excitement, anticipation, and sometimes uncertainty. Our counselors are here every step of the way, offering guidance and support to help students find the path that's right for them.

As always, we encourage you to reach out with any questions or concerns. Stay connected through the counseling center Canvas pages and this newsletter. The entire CSH counseling team remains committed to supporting every student alongside our dedicated faculty and staff.

Warm regards,

Jeannette Alomia

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Important Dates:

3/7: Junior Biography due in the counseling center for college planning meetings

3/8: SAT (not at CSH Jr Sr HS)

3/9: Daylight Saving Time Begins

3/16: Late Registration Deadline for April 5 ACT



**COLD SPRING HARBOR
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Soaring Higher • Growing Stronger • Achieving Greatness



SPRING COLLEGE FAIRS: In-Person and Virtual Options

As the spring college exploration season gets underway, college fair offerings are being announced. The National Association of College Admission Counseling's annual college fair program will continue to be offered virtually this year as well as in-person.

NACAC - New York Fair:

April 6, 2025 - 12:00 - 4:00pm

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center

NACAC National College Fair - New York

NACAC Virtual College Fair

March 23, 2025 - 1:00 - 6:00pm

April 27, 2025 - 1:00 - 6:00pm

NACAC Virtual College Fair

Nassau Counselor's Association: The Nassau Counselors Association will be hosting the annual SPRING COLLEGE EXPO at Hofstra University on April 1, 2025 from 5:30 - 8:30pm. This event includes representatives from **a large number of colleges** throughout the country as well as information sessions on topics including college athletics, financial aid and the needs of students with disabilities.



Cold Spring Harbor Jr/Sr High School

Counseling Center
(631) 367-6840



Jeannette Alomia
Director of Counseling, K-12

COUNSELORS

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Gerard Spennato

March Counseling Center Announcements

The counseling team was truly touched by all of your thoughtful and heartfelt messages during National School Counseling Week. Your kind words mean so much to us. They love working with their students and are deeply committed to supporting each one as they pursue their academic, personal, and college/career goals. The counselors continue to be inspired every day by the successes, growth, and achievements of the students they serve. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your child's journey.

As we move into March, the calendar is filled with full school days and a variety of activities. Progress reports for the third marking period will be available on the portal March 6 after 5 p.m. This month, we look forward to the start of spring sports, upcoming school events, and important submission deadlines for the National and Junior National Honor Societies.

A reminder to all grade 11 students: please complete and submit your **JUNIOR BIO** by the priority deadline of **March 7**. The information included in the Junior Bio plays a crucial role in guiding the college exploration process. Timely submission allows your counselor to schedule your college planning conference and support you through this exciting journey.

Additionally, the course selection process for the 2025–2026 school year is nearing completion. All chosen courses will be used to build next year's master schedule. As previously shared, no changes to course selections will be made after March 5 while the master schedule is being finalized. We urge all students and parents to review course selections now contact with your counselor **before March 5** if any adjustments are needed.

Thank you for your attention to these important deadlines and for your thoughtful review of course selections.

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Important Information

The
**Princeton
Review**

COLD SPRING HARBOR COUNSELING CENTER PRESENTS:

FINDING YOUR BEST FIT COLLEGE

WITH GUEST SPEAKER ROBERT FRANEK
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE PRINCETON REVIEW

MONDAY, MARCH 24TH, 2025 7-8PM
AT COLD SPRING HARBOR HIGH SCHOOL

WHAT WE'LL COVER:

- College hopes and worries
- What makes a college a best fit
- Test optional admissions
- Truth & misconceptions around tuition costs

ABOUT ROB:

- National expert on colleges and higher education
- Gives 100+ lectures yearly
- Featured in major media: NYT, WSJ, ABC, NBC, CNN, NPR
- 26-year career: publisher, editor, author, college admissions administrator

Scan to register



**OR CLICK
HERE**



ALL REGISTRANTS
ENTERED IN TO RAFFLE
FOR \$41,400+ OR ACT
TIX COUPON!

Junior High School Counseling Program



Ms. Pickering works closely with junior high school students throughout the year, guiding them through a variety of topics and activities designed to support their growth. Spring offers a special opportunity for students to explore their unique strengths and interests through engaging, hands-on activities.

During March and April, Ms. Pickering and school counseling intern, Mr. Leheste, will be visiting the classrooms to conduct lessons on career exploration. These lessons will introduce students to Naviance, a program they will use annually from grades 7 through 12 to support their academic, college/career and personal growth. The 7th grade students will complete an interest inventory in Naviance. This activity will help students connect their personal interests to opportunities both inside and outside of school, laying the groundwork for future exploration. The 8th grade students will use the Strengths Explorer in Naviance to identify their personal strengths and abilities. This tool encourages students to think about how their unique skills can shape their personal goals and future aspirations. The junior high years are a time for students to discover more about themselves, explore areas of interest, try new activities, and engage in meaningful learning experiences. Ms. Pickering continues to support students through these important milestones, helping them build a strong foundation for future success.

REMINDER: Mental Wellness Month – May 2025 May is Mental Wellness Month, and Ms. Pickering, along with the junior high school team, will lead a month-long series of activities promoting mental health and well-being. While these events highlight the importance of mental wellness, it's essential to prioritize both mental and physical health throughout the entire year. Let's welcome spring with purposeful, daily wellness activities that support our well-being. Here are a few ideas: Practice mindful breathing; take regular tech breaks; incorporate stretching or yoga; enjoy reading a good book and get enough restful sleep. Together, let's make this spring season one of reflection, growth, and wellness!

CSH COUNSELING CENTER: We're Here for You

Students in our schools manage a wide range of responsibilities, often balancing demanding schedules filled with activities and expectations that seem to outnumber the hours in a day. While student achievement remains high, rising levels of stress and anxiety are becoming more common. Striking the right balance between a manageable course load and a reasonable schedule of extracurricular activities is ideal-but not always easy.

School counselors are here to support students in making thoughtful decisions when faced with multiple options, planning for the future, addressing current challenges, and finding balance. It's normal to feel stressed at times. The key is developing strategies to manage stress while handling responsibilities. When stress starts to feel overwhelming, certain strategies can help. Building a personal toolkit of stress-management techniques—such as taking an exercise break, practicing breathing exercises, taking a short nap, or reaching out to a counselor or teacher—can make a big difference.

Our school counselors are always available to help students develop effective strategies and provide more personalized support. Additionally, our wellness counselor, Ms. Herold, is available in the counseling center for further assistance.



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Attention Student Athletes: NCAA Information

Students who may be interested in participating in collegiate athletics should refer to the NCAA Eligibility Center's information on Division I, Division II and Division III athletics. Students who will participate at the Division I or Division II level must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center and must meet specific criteria. Information about each division can be found on the links below and on the NCAA Eligibility Center's website.

[DIV I Facts Sheet](#)

[DIV II Facts Sheet](#)

[NCAA Guide for the College-Bound
Student Athlete](#)



ACT ONLINE TESTING: NEW in April 2025

Please be reminded - the **NEW ACT online testing** will make its debut on the March 5, 2025 test administration date.

ACT Online Testing and Enhancements: Starting in April 2025

ACT Paper Testing Enhancements: Starting in September 2025

Beginning in April, 2025, students who choose to test online will have more flexibility and choice, experience a shorter test, and get more time to respond to each question. Please note that at this time, not all testing centers offer the online testing format. Beginning with the September 2025 test, all students testing on a Saturday, either online or on paper, will experience these benefits. Click [here](#) for more information on these upcoming changes.

SSAR....What?!??



If you are starting the college exploration process, this information is for you. The SSAR is a **Self-Reported Academic Record**. It allows applicants to enter and submit their high school courses, grades, level of course, and length of course directly into a system for the college's review. This includes courses taken as well as senior courses in progress. Students begin this in their **senior year** and use their high school transcript to enter each, just as they appear on the high school transcript. One final official transcript from the high school will only be sent to the college if you are admitted and planning to enroll.

While most colleges still require and accept an official transcript from the high school for each applicant, the SSAR is growing in popularity. Some colleges offer the option and some now require all applicants to submit their academic record this way. The list of colleges that now require the SSAR includes but is not limited to University of Pittsburgh, Northeastern University, Clemson University, Virginia Tech, New York University, University of Florida and Penn State University.

The SSAR helps colleges standardize the data of applicants whose transcripts vary from one school to the next. They also can use the data to calculate the GPA according to their system and/or criteria. Completing the SSAR takes time so students need to plan ahead when they begin the application process. Make sure to check each college's application requirements and see your counselor with questions.



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SUMMER 2025

Please be reminded of the CSH
Counseling Center's

SUMMER PROGRAM GUIDE



College Planning Process

The college exploration process can be exciting and daunting all at the same time. The CSH Counseling Center has created a timeline and checklist to assist students and families. Your school counselor is your most important resource during this time, but this checklist can help too. The list of March-June activities can be found on page six of the [College Kick Off Resource Guide](#)

College Testing: Test Optional and Test Free

Colleges with **current** Test Optional or Test Free Policies can be found here:

TEST OPTIONAL and TEST FREE COLLEGE LIST

While this site is a good resource, please be reminded that the best source of information is each individual college's admission office and website. College policies may change and their admission practices can vary year to year.

Please note: test optional schools still consider scores for those who submit them. Submitting scores to be considered in the application process is an important decision. See your counselor and review the college's admission data to determine the best decision for you.

College Testing Policies Keeping Up With All the Changes

With so many terms surrounding standardized testing, it can be difficult to keep everything straight. What do students and families really need to know?

Over the last year, announcements from top universities highlight the evolving landscape: Brown, Dartmouth, U. Penn, and Yale require standardized test scores for students applying for the class entering in the fall 2025 and beyond; in contrast, the University of Michigan recently formalized its test-optional policy beginning with the winter 2025 academic term and beyond. Previously, Michigan followed a test-flexible policy; and while some colleges have adopted permanent test-optional policies, others remain test-blind, meaning they do not consider test scores at all. The landscape is diverse, and policies continue to evolve.

Many juniors are currently registering for and taking college entrance exams. The SAT and ACT are administered multiple times each year, and for many students, test scores still matter. When it comes time to submit college applications, having the option to include strong test scores can make a difference.

Key steps for students include: taking practice tests to determine the best exam fit, preparing thoroughly to maximize potential scores, and ensuring test scores are available should they choose to submit them.

Both the College Board (SAT) and ACT offer a variety of practice tests and preparation resources. Significant changes in standardized testing are underway: the digital SAT, launched in spring 2025, introduces a new testing experience designed to be more streamlined and adaptive; and the online ACT will debut this spring, with further enhancements coming to both the paper and online formats in September.

These updates reflect the evolving landscape of college entrance exams, offering students greater flexibility and improved testing experiences.

All students have **FREE access to the Methodize program** for SAT and ACT preparation. This resource is available through students' **Castle Learning accounts**. For assistance accessing or using Methodize, students should reach out to their counselor.

While many aspects of the college admissions process can feel unclear or mysterious, college testing policies are not. Each college clearly outlines its testing requirements on its Admissions webpage. Although these policies vary from school to school, the expectations are transparent.

Staying informed and prepared ensures students have the best possible options when the time comes to apply.



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Honor Roll and High Honor Roll

Students in the Junior/Senior High School are eligible for Honor Roll and High Honor Roll each marking period when report card grades are posted. Honors and AP courses are not weighted in determining eligibility for Honor Roll. Students with any incomplete grades cannot be considered for Honor Roll until the incomplete work has been made up and a grade determined.

The lowest average required for making **HONOR ROLL is B or 3.00**

The lowest average required for making **HIGH HONOR ROLL is A - or 3.66**

Additional information about Honor Roll can be found in the CSH Junior/Senior High School Agenda Book.

Third marking period **Progress Reports** will be posted on Thursday, March 6, 2025.

Third marking period ends on April 4 and **Report Cards** will be posted on April 21, 2025.

"I am who I am today because of the choices I made yesterday."

Eleanor Roosevelt
First Lady of the U.S.



**DID YOU
KNOW?**

COLLEGE TRIVIA!!

1. Which U.S. university is the oldest institution of higher education, founded in 1636?

- A. Brown University
- B. Yale University
- C. Harvard University
- D. University of Pennsylvania

2. Which university's mascot is the Nittany Lion:

- A. Pennsylvania State University (Penn State)
- B. Loyola Marymount University
- C. Columbia University
- D. Clemson University

3. Which Ivy League school is located in Ohio?

- A. William and Mary University
- B. Rice University
- C. Oberlin University
- D. Swarthmore College

4. Which U.S. university is home to the first school of computer science, est. in 1965?

- A. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- B. Cornell University
- C. Stevens Institute of Technology
- D. Carnegie Mellon University

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



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