

Athol High School Guidance Information

Athol High School Web Site: www.atholhigh.org

September 2009

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to all returning and new students and incoming freshmen. This newsletter contains important information for students of all grade levels and their parents. Please read this carefully and **keep for future reference**.

GUIDANCE SERVICES

Athol High School enthusiastically welcomes Kathy Colmenares as guidance chairperson upon my retirement in October. We are most fortunate to have her currently on staff to insure a smooth transition of services for students before I leave. Ms. Colmenares has served in the counseling field for many years most recently for nine years in the Mahar Guidance Department. .

Students with last names beginning with A-L are assigned to Mrs. Miller for guidance services; students with last names beginning with M-Z are assigned to Mrs. Colmenares for guidance services.

STUDENT HANDBOOKS AND PROGRAM OF STUDIES

The student handbook which includes the rules and policies of Athol High School is on our web site www.atholhigh.org - go to guidance section and click on "student handbook".

The Program of Studies which includes graduation requirements, a prescribed annual calendar for each grade level and course descriptions is also on the web site in the guidance section - click on "Program of Studies".

COMMUNICATIONS

School news, upcoming activities, and important dates can be accessed through the AOTV bulletin, local newspapers, and the announcement board on the front lawn of the school and the school website, www.atholhigh.org.

UPDATE FAMILY INFORMATION

Throughout the year, **PLEASE** notify the main office of changes to your address or phone numbers. It is **CRUCIAL** that the school be able to reach you concerning your student.

STUDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Activities and important notices are announced daily during the homeroom period. Students are responsible to read the posted notices if they miss homeroom for some reason. Many services and opportunities, such as college representative meetings and scholarship deadlines are announced through the student bulletin. Announcements are posted on the web site as well.

HOMEROOM QUALIFICATIONS

In order for a freshman to be placed in a sophomore homeroom, the student must have earned a minimum of 5.0 credits and have passed English 9 or its equivalent and Algebra I or Algebra IA and IB. To be eligible to be in a junior homeroom, a student must have a minimum of 11 credits; and to be eligible for senior status, a student must have a minimum of 19 credits.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation requirements require students to earn a minimum of 27 credits and to pass required courses in each department. A detailed description of course work is contained in the Program of Studies. The program of studies is also on the web site.

MID-QUARTER REPORTS

The entire student population will be receiving mid-quarter reports four times a year. These reports are brought home by the students themselves. **See the enclosed schedule for mid-quarter and report card distribution dates.** **Parent's Night** is a crucial time to meet with teachers and discuss your son's or daughter's progress. Parents must call the high school starting two weeks prior to Parent's Night for an appointment to meet with teachers. See dates listed for Parent's Nights in the box on page 2.

PERSONAL PORTFOLIO

All students **SHOULD** keep a portfolio of accumulated records and information received in high school. This would include copies of progress reports, report cards, annual Program of Studies, transcripts and credit tally sheets. These documents will help in choosing appropriate courses and assist in future planning.

MEDIATION PROGRAM

A trained mediation team of adults and students is available for students that may need help in resolving conflicts that might arise in school. The service is confidential. Referrals may be made by students, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, or administrators.

LATE BUS

There will be a late bus leaving from the high school on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at approximately 3:00 p.m. from the back of the school. Students do not need to sign-up in the main office to reserve a seat on the bus at this time. This begins on September 8th.

TESTING INFORMATION AND DATES - The website, www.collegeboard.com, allows students to register for college admissions tests (SAT Reasoning, SAT Subject). The site also includes a SAT preparation course that gives students the opportunity to practice both math and verbal skills using real SAT questions. Students may register online for the ACT (American College Test) at www.act.org.

- **Mail in registration DEADLINE for the Nov. 7th SAT Reasoning and SAT subject Tests is Oct. 1st.** Athol High School is a test site for the **November date only**.
- **Athol High School's CEEB number is 220070. This identification number is used when registering for SAT and ACT tests. Students must fill in the number correctly for accurate score reporting.**
- Information about and the testing calendar for the ACT and the SAT tests are located in the guidance office. Athol High School is not a testing site for the ACT exam.
- The **PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test)** will be administered at Athol High School on Wednesday, **October 14th**. Juniors considering college should take this test. The cost is \$13.00 and must be paid by the student when registering in the guidance office. Juniors who took the PSAT as sophomores **MUST** take it again as a junior if they want to be eligible for recognition or scholarships from the National Merit program. Monies are awarded based on outstanding PSAT scores. A limited number of sophomores will be able to register to take the PSAT - the registration process for all students will be detailed in the student bulletin. Some students may be eligible for fee waivers – See your guidance counselor.
- Students taking **Advanced Placement** courses are reminded that **they must pay** for their own AP final exams. The cost is \$78.00 per exam and will be collected in early March. Testing will take place in May.
- Low income families may inquire in the guidance office about reductions for college testing and Advanced Placement Test fees.
- Students who achieve high scores on their 10th grade **MCAS tests** may be eligible for the state funded Adams Scholarship. This scholarship is for tuition reduction and is only accepted at Massachusetts State Colleges. Of course, tuition reductions are subject to state budget allocations.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE 2009-10

September 21st-29th	Parents call main office for appointment for Parent's Night
September 28th	Mid-Quarter reports distributed
September 29th	Parent's Night 6:30 - 8:00
October 29th	Grades close
November 5th	Report Cards (tentative date)
December 4th	Mid-Quarter reports distributed
January 14th & 15th	Final Exams
January 22nd	Report Cards (tentative date)
February 15 th – February 25th	Parents call main office for appointment for Parent's Night
February 24th	Mid-Quarter reports distributed
February 25th	Parent's Night 6:30 - 8:00
March 30th	Grades close
April 6th	Report Cards (tentative date)
May 5th	Mid-Quarter reports distributed
June 1st & 2nd	Senior Finals
June 9h & 10th	Final Exams Grades 9, 10, 11

FOR SENIORS

- **PLEASE READ CAREFULLY** - Any student planning a visit to a college during a school day **MUST** have an appointment with that college and must fill out a “**Visitation Form**” **PRIOR** to the visit. These forms are available in the A.H.S. guidance office. This form must be signed by a parent or guardian, unless the student is 18 years of age; then he/she is required to sign this form and return it to the A.H.S. guidance office. The **second portion**, of this form is to be signed by a college representative in the college admission office or the college representative that scheduled the visit. Then, this second form must be returned to the A.H.S. guidance office. Both forms **must be signed** in order for a student to receive an **exempted** absence. **Parents allowing students to travel with other students must fill out the parent section on the visitation form to have this happen - regardless of the age of the student.**
- **College Fair and Open House** information will be posted in the Guidance Annex on the bulletin boards. Many college representatives from area colleges will be visiting A.H.S. in the fall. A calendar of dates and times that representatives will be here will be distributed in senior homeroom. Any senior interested in meeting with a college representative must sign up in the guidance office one week in advance.
- A Future Planning Program for seniors will be presented in September 23rd during B period 9:18 -10:42 – this program will be repeated in the evening for parents. Parents may attend the morning session if the evening program conflicts with their work schedule. We ask that parents let us know if they plan on attending the daytime program.

IMPORTANT: SENIORS are reminded that in order to graduate, they must PASS AT LEAST 3 COURSES in EACH semester regardless of previous credit.

We encourage students and parents/guardians to make an appointment or call us concerning academic, personal or future planning concerns or questions.

Sincerely,

Ann F. Williams
Guidance Chairperson
(through October)

Kathy Colmenares
Guidance Chairperson

Mary Ann Miller
Guidance Counselor

***PLEASE SAVE
THIS INFORMATION***