



Mark T. Sheehan High School—Wallingford, Connecticut

# Principal's Newsletter

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## PSAT Administered October 14

On Wednesday, October 14, all sophomores and juniors will have the unique opportunity to take the PSAT/NMSQT® (Preliminary SAT®/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) for free! This test includes a Reading Test, a Writing and Language Test, and a Math Test; all focused on the knowledge, skills, and understandings that research has identified as most important for college and career readiness and success. It also allows students to compare their academic skills with those of other students nationwide. To learn more about the PSAT/NMSQT (how to prepare and sample test questions) visit <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10?navid=gh-pn>.

To accommodate the administration of the PSAT/NMSQT®, a special bell schedule will be followed on October 14. All students in grades 9 through 11 are required to report to school at the regular time of 7:30 a.m. While students in grades 10 and 11 are tested, freshmen will attend two special programs presented in conjunction with Wallingford Rotary, Youth and Social Services, the National Association of Mental Illnesses, and the Coalition for a Better Wallingford: “The Value of Community Service,” which highlights the many options for service within the Wallingford community and “Mental Health and Addiction,” highlighting the challenges that teenagers who become addicted to drugs and alcohol face, with an emphasis on the Wallingford community. Seniors are granted late arrive privilege and must report to school at 10:20 a.m. and go directly to the gymnasium in order to take the class of 2016 photo with Maring Visuals. Room information for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors will be posted in their classrooms.

PSAT	7:30–11:15
1B	11:20–11:45
2B	11:50–12:55 Lunch Wave 1 11:50–12:20, Class 12:25–12:55 Class 11:50–12:20, Lunch Wave 2 12:25–12:55
3B	1:00–1:25
4B	1:30–1:55

SPECIAL BELL  
SCHEDULE  
FOR  
OCTOBER 14

### Upcoming Events:

- PTAC Meeting, Oct. 1, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., LMC
- Advisory Schedule, Oct. 2
- SAT Exam, Oct. 3, 7:45 a.m., Lyman Hall
- Marching Titans Showcase, Oct. 3, 5:00 p.m.
- Interim Ends, Oct. 5
- College & Career Fair, Oct. 6, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., Oakdale Theater
- Assembly Schedule, Oct. 7
- Freshmen Elections/Class Meetings, Oct. 8, per. 2
- Evening Conferences, Oct. 8, by appointment
- Blood Drive, Oct. 9
- Columbus Day, Oct. 12, School Closed
- Professional Development for Teachers, Oct. 13, School Closed
- PSAT Test, Freshman Assembly & Senior Class Photo, Oct. 14, Special Bell Schedule
- Moran Eighth Graders Visit Sheehan, Oct. 20 & 22
- Half Day Schedule, Oct. 21
- Advisory Schedule, Oct. 23
- Science Performance Task, selected students grades 11 & 12, Oct. 27
- Underage Drinking Presentation, Oct. 28, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., Town Hall
- Advisory Schedule, Oct. 30

*Mark T. Sheehan High School provides a challenging and supportive environment that inspires students to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and responsible, contributing members of a dynamic global society.*

## Evening Conferences October 8

**FIRST INTERIM:** The first interim ends on October 5, 2015. Parents/guardians are reminded to visit the PowerSchool Parent Portal, <http://powerschool.wallingford.k12.ct.us/public>, to view their son's/daughter's academic progress to date. After entering your personal username and password, click on the "grades and attendance" icon to obtain current grade information by course.

**EVENING CONFERENCES:** Parents have the opportunity to meet with teach-

ers after each interim period. The first Parent-Teacher Conference is Thursday, October 8 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The format will allow parents to meet with teachers by appointment for 15 minutes to discuss their son's/daughter's academic performance, class attendance, and any other concerns. (Students may accompany their parents to these conferences.)

To schedule an appointment with a teacher, contact the school at 203-294-5905 starting October 1 through

October 6 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. This will give us the opportunity to provide teachers with information regarding their appointment schedules. Since teachers will only have 12 appointments scheduled for 15 minutes each, parents may not be able to speak to each of their son's/daughter's teachers on this night, but arrangements can be made to speak with the teacher at another time. Appointments with school counselors can also be made on this evening.



## The Parent-Teacher Conference

**How do conferences work at the high school and do I really need to be there?** This is a question frequently asked by parents, especially today when so much information can be obtained online. Conferences are not only a time to discuss your child's academic successes or struggles, but also a time to meet the individuals who are working with your child every day. The teachers will be able to offer not only academic insight about your son/daughter, but many of them can provide you with valuable social and emotional insight about your child. For example, your son/daughter may do well in a class but consistently misses random homework assignments. To the parent, it may look like the student is simply forgetful or isn't paying attention, whereas the teacher may see something else that could be leading to that forgetfulness or missed opportunities. It's okay to discuss the "whole child" with teachers. Parents can provide valuable insights for teachers, and that can help the teachers make important decisions about your child. Conferences can help develop a strong teacher/parent relationship built upon the trust that all adults involved are looking out for the student's best interest.

There are three dates for parent conferences. They are staggered throughout the year to help parents stay informed of how their son/daughter is doing in classes. In addition to the evening conference on October 8, an evening conference will also be held on December 15 (snow date 12/22), with afternoon conferences scheduled for April 7.

## Virtual Backpack

"Virtual Backpack" is a new feature on our school website. It is an archive of documents that were previously sent to parents via email or postal service. It also includes PowerPoint presentations from parent evening programs. For example, for those of you who were unable to attend the mastery-based learning presentation, you will be able to find a narrated PowerPoint in the virtual backpack on this topic.

## Special Assembly Program

Thanks to the generous support of the Connecticut Elks Association, students will be able to attend a special presentation by Ray Lozano, a drug, alcohol, and substance prevention expert and public speaker. His talk, which will take place on October 7, will focus primarily on the dangers of alcohol abuse.



## Halloween

Dressing for Halloween is a tradition enjoyed by both students and staff at Sheehan High School. Although it is acceptable for students to dress in costumes, those costumes need to be school appropriate. Overly revealing clothing or costumes that are offensive or otherwise not in good taste are unacceptable. Parents/guardians are asked to address this topic with their sons/daughters and monitor what they plan to wear. Students found to be dressed inappropriately will be asked to change clothes and may be sent home. Halloween will be observed on October 30.

## House Parties, Underage Drinking & The Law

Parents and students are invited to attend a social discussion about underage drinking law and liability in Connecticut, and hear about common underage drinking scenarios with which many parents/guardians are faced. The discussion will take place on October 28 at the Wallingford Town Hall from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

This presentation will cover tough topics such as minors drinking at your home (with and without your knowledge), what is/is not typically covered by insurance when there is an injury related to minor alcohol consumption, the role of parent permission, who can be sued, as well as the legal and liability consequences related to drinking and driving.

Learn what EVERY parent and student should know about:

- Underage drinking risks & liability

- Social hosting laws
- DUI laws & liability
- Tips for safe hosting at your house

Speakers include fellow Wallingford parent Greg Allen who is an attorney with extensive experience in liquor law and personal injury, and Officer Michael Fraenza from the Community Police Division of the Wallingford Police Department.

*Community service will be awarded to Wallingford Public High School Students who attend with a parent!*

This is a presentation from the System-wide Parent Teacher Advisory Council, with the help of the Wallingford Public Schools, the Coalition for a Better Wallingford, the Wallingford Department of Youth & Social Services, and the Wallingford Police Department.

## Internet Safety Presentation for Parents

One of our focuses here at Sheehan High School is to educate our students not only in the classroom but also through various assemblies that address the many social pressures our students face on a daily basis. Last school year we presented an Internet safety assembly to all students grades 9-12. Seeing the need to expand this information beyond the students, the Sheehan community will host the same event for parents of Sheehan students. On November 9, from 6:30-8:00 p.m., Scott Driscoll, a former law enforcement officer and owner of *Internet Safety Concepts: Empowering Smart Online Choices*, will present to parents all of the changing facets of the Internet and social media and their impact on your son's/daughter's daily life.

Mr. Driscoll's website states, "Through this presentation, parents will be informed of new trends and techniques that are being used on-line by the predators and by our children. They will also be given tips on what to do to

prevent a dangerous situation from happening. Parents will see how what their children do on-line now can have long term negative effects on their future. Parents will learn tools and strategies they can use to keep their families safe." For further information about Mr. Driscoll and his presentations, please visit his website at [www.internetsafetyconcepts.com](http://www.internetsafetyconcepts.com).

Since the Internet and social media seem to change on a daily basis, we hope to see as many people as possible at this event. Our hope is to help educate our parents about the pressures of online life and the severity of the choices our children are making. Due to the expected high number of parents that will want to attend this critical presentation, we will send out an invitation via email for reservations. Should you have any further questions, please email or call Mr. Justin Marciano, assistant principal.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

The Wallingford Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), or genetic information in establishing preliminary hiring and employment practices and establishing and providing school activities and programs.

The Board of Education Compliance Officer for Title IX is Cindy Lavalette, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel. Ms. Lavalette's phone contact information is: 203-949-6508. Her mailing address is 43 Hall Avenue, Wallingford, CT 06492.

The Board of Education Compliance Officer for Title VI and 504 is Melissa Iles, District Coordinator of School Counseling. Ms. Iles' phone contact information is 203-294-6926. Her mailing address is 415 Church Street, Wallingford, CT 06492.



## Late Bus Service

The Wallingford late bus is available to students on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Pick up is at the front entrance of the building near the flagpole. The bus leaves promptly at 3:45 p.m.

## New School Counseling Department Chairperson

It is with great pleasure to introduce Sheehan’s new school counseling department chairperson, Ms. Michelle Catucci, to the school community. Ms. Catucci comes to Mark T. Sheehan High School after eight years in Madison Public Schools at both Dr. Robert H. Brown Middle School and Daniel Hand High School. She is a Past President of the Connecticut School Counselor Association (CSCA) and has been on the CSCA Governing Board for 9 years. Because of her involvement with CSCA, Ms. Catucci has presented at professional meetings and conferences at the local, state, and national level. She currently sits on the School Counselor Task Group with the State Department of Education to revise the state curriculum for use by all school counselors in Connecticut so that it aligns with the ASCA National Model and Common Core. She has also serves as an executive board member for ConcussionCORPS and on the Advisory Board for Free Spirit Publishing. Being a strong believer that all children have the ability to reach their goals and be successful in a safe and nurturing school environment, she has worked with school counselors and other educators throughout the state to promote 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, social and emotional wellness, student success planning, and college & career readiness for all students. Ms. Catucci is a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). She has her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Villanova University, her Master of Science degree in Counseling Psychology from Chatham University, and her Sixth Year degree in Educational Leadership from Southern Connecticut State University. Ms. Catucci has lived in Wallingford for almost ten years and is thrilled to work in a community that she is proud to be a part of. She can be reached at [mcatucci@wallingfordschools.org](mailto:mcatucci@wallingfordschools.org) or 203.294.5918.



## The Waffle Project

This year, all Wallingford schools will participate in *The Waffle Project*, a U.S. Air Force humanitarian mission to educate children in Kosovo. To help defray the costs for the instruction and testing for the students, the 169th Aviation Battalion of the Air Force sells breakfast to the multinational troops each Sunday. We have been asked to help the troops in their effort by collecting breakfast items such as pancake/waffle mix and syrup as well as stationery items such as pens, pencils, paper, and notebooks. Donations will be accepted at each school until November 13, 2015.

## A Reminder Concerning Community Service

Students must complete 30 hours of voluntary community service by the end of their senior year in order to be eligible for graduation. To learn more, visit the school website at [www.wallingford.k12.ct.us](http://www.wallingford.k12.ct.us).

**Wallingford Public  
Schools **College and  
Career Fair****

**October 6th, 2015**

**Oakdale Theater**

**6:30-8pm**



## Special Education Resource Fair

*Save the Date!* The district will host a special education resource fair on Tuesday, October 27, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Oakdale Theater. The fair will showcase the supports and services provided within the school system and the greater Wallingford community to families and students with disabilities ages birth to adulthood. Additional information will be distributed closer to the date of this event.

## Sheehan PTAC Meeting

The next meeting of the Sheehan Parent Teacher Advisory Council (PTAC) is Thursday, October 1. The meeting will be held in the Library Media Center located on the school’s lower level beginning at 6:30 p.m. One of the topics on the agenda, which can be found on the school website, is Project Graduation. All parents are invited to attend.