Holliston High School Counseling Department
Grade 12 Learning Opportunities

Senior year is a time for focus, reflection, and preparation for life beyond Holliston High School. In the first term, students planning to attend college work closely with their counselors to refine their list of schools, finalize application plans, and ensure all requirements are met. They also learn about the roles and responsibilities of students, counselors, and teachers in the application process, fostering clear communication and shared accountability.

As part of the college planning process, students gain a clear understanding of the financial aid system through a coordinated program with the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA), equipping them to make informed choices about funding their education.

For students pursuing other pathways - such as entering the workforce, pursuing technical training, or enlisting in the military - counselors and our Career Services Coordinator provide individualized and small-group support to create personalized post-high school plans.

Grounded in our *Vision of a Graduate* and aligned with both the CASEL Social-Emotional Learning competencies and the Massachusetts DESE SEL standards*, the Grade 12 program helps students strengthen self-awareness, manage responsibilities, make informed decisions, and build the confidence to navigate their next chapter with purpose and resilience.

College Boot Camp - August - Typical Offerings

College Boot Camp is designed to prepare students for every stage of the application process, offering targeted workshops and personalized support before the school year begins. Sessions cover the essentials:

- **The Nuts and Bolts** – A soup-to-nuts overview of the college application process, showing how all the pieces fit together.
- **Financial Aid** – A financial aid expert from MEFA (Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority) shares key information about paying for college, including grants, loans, and scholarships.
- **Cleaning Up the Common App & Application Nuances** – Step-by-step support for completing the Common Application and addressing common logistical questions.
- **Essays – Brainstorming, Feedback & Writing Session** – Guidance for students at any stage of the essay-writing process, from topic development to revision.
- **Counselor on Call** – One-on-one access to school counselors for personalized questions and application support.

Nuts and Bolts of the College Application Process - Families Invited - Typically offered in September/October

- Invite teachers/FERPA
- College search update form

- Who sends what review
- How to release and send scores
- Go over Common Application & match to Scoir
- Requesting transcript
- Common Application guided work session
- Review interviewing and essays
- Outside recommenders
- ED agreements
- Colleges I Am Applying To (Scoir)/Deadlines
- Coalition App: Letters of rec/transcript request

Senior Year Planning: Key Steps for College Admissions

Seniors will kick off their final year with important sessions and resources to guide them through the college application process and beyond.

Topics include:

- *Senior Assembly – Kickoff*: Typically held in September, an overview of the college application process
- Transcript review and how to use SCOIR for managing applications
- General Q&A about the college admissions process
- Information about upcoming College Admissions Rep Visits
- *Seniors – Small Groups*: Hands-on sessions focusing on the nuts and bolts of applying to college
- *Seniors/Families – Individual Meetings*: One-on-one support for personalized guidance
- NCAA Eligibility Center: Reminders for DI and DII prospective student-athletes to register
- *College Rep Visits*: Available for two months at the start of the school year with a shared calendar for all students
- Financial Aid & Scholarships: Overview of timelines and resources

Senior Year Planning: Career Connections

Seniors will have opportunities to explore career pathways and connect with industry professionals to help guide their next steps after high school.

Topics include:

- Interactive career panels with professionals from various fields
- College and career exploration resources
- Guidance on internships, work-study programs, and job opportunities
- Networking opportunities with local professionals and alumni

Senior Year Planning: Military Pathways

Seniors interested in pursuing military careers will have access to resources and guidance to help them navigate the application and enlistment process.

Topics include:

- Overview of military branches and opportunities
- Understanding the enlistment process and requirements
- Guidance on the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)
- Connecting with military recruiters for one-on-one meetings
- Discussing military academies and ROTC programs

By senior year, students have been actively developing the skills emphasized in Holliston High School's counseling program since Grade 9 - self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship-building, and responsible decision-making. These final experiences serve as a culmination of that work, providing opportunities to apply these competencies to real-world decisions about their futures. Whether pursuing higher education, entering the workforce, serving in the military, or exploring other opportunities, seniors graduate with the confidence, adaptability, and resilience needed to thrive beyond high school and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Alignment with Massachusetts DESE Social-Emotional Learning Standards

*This programming is intentionally designed to align with the **CASEL Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Framework**, which focuses on developing five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These competencies serve as the foundation for students' academic success, personal growth, and healthy relationships.*

*Additionally, our program aligns with the **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) SEL Standards**, which build upon the CASEL framework by specifying grade-level learning expectations and promoting the integration of SEL skills across academic and social contexts. The MA DESE standards emphasize fostering resilience, equity, and active participation in the community throughout students' educational journeys.*

Together, these frameworks guide our intentional efforts to equip students with the skills and mindsets needed for success in high school and beyond, supporting their well-being, responsible decision-making, and engagement as contributing members of society.