

# COUNSELOR UPDATE

Academics | Social-Emotional Learning | Career and College

## Upcoming Events

- ◆ 10/8 - Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences, 5-8:30 PM
- ◆ 10/09 - No School, Teacher Institute Day
- ◆ 10/12 - No School, Columbus Day
- ◆ 10/14 - SAT Test for Select Seniors
- ◆ 10/19 - No School, Remote Learning Planning Day
- ◆ 10/20 - End of 1st Quarter
- ◆ 10/24 - Optional ACT test at OLCHS
- ◆ 10/26 - Service Hours Due for NHS Applicants
- ◆ 10/27 - Green Day Freshmen start attending in-person
- ◆ 10/29 - Gray Day Freshmen start attending in-person
- ◆ 10/29 - Optional PSAT/NMSQT at OLCHS
- ◆ 11/2 - All Green Day Students start attending in-person
- ◆ 11/3 - No School, Election Day
- ◆ 11/4 - Optional Military ASVAB Test at OLCHS
- ◆ 11/5 - All Gray Day Students start attending in-person

## Student Services are Still Here for You!

Whether you are at home or at school, our Social Workers and School Counselors are here to offer you and your child support. To make it easier to schedule appointments, all of the School Counselors now have an online appointment page through Calendly.



Parents and Students can sign up directly on this page to book time with their School Counselor. When you book your appointment, you will have the option to schedule it over the phone, via WebEx video conference, or in building. You may also reach out to your School Counselor or Social Worker via email.

For links to each counselor's individual scheduling page, please visit <https://www.olchsstudentservices.com/>.

## Seminars go Asynchronous During Remote Learning

In a typical year, students meet with their counselors four or five times each semester in counseling "Seminars" to participate in lessons on and activities surrounding academic success and future planning. This year, school counselors

## Student Services Online Resources

Check out various resources on our [Student Services Website](#).

## Trades & Apprenticeships

Go to [Union Apprenticeship Application Info](#) to view more information about apprenticeships in our area.

## College, Career, & Military Visits

Go to our [College and Career Center Website](#) to view our visit calendar!

## Service Learning Opportunities

Go to the [Service Learning](#) page on our website to view our Service Learning Calendar, a list of Pre-Approved Sites, and more!

## Scholarships

Click [HERE](#) to view the OLCHS Scholarship Bulletin. Check often for updates!

have made their Seminar curriculum asynchronous in an effort to provide the same quality of instruction, exploration, and planning as we are able to in a traditional school year. Lessons are posted in class-organized Canvas courses as videos with to-do lists, assignments and quizzes with due dates, and extension activities. Here is a sample of the lessons posted to each class course thus far:

**Freshmen:** Getting to Know You, Setting up Naviance, taking the Strengths Explorer Assessment and the Career Cluster Finder

**Sophomores:** Academic Success, Working Hard, and Identity Exploration

**Juniors:** Academic Success, Planning for your Future, and the Do What You Are Assessment

**Seniors:** Optimizing Senior Year, College Planning, and FAFSA & the Financial Aid Process

If you don't have access to your student's Canvas curriculum, email or call their counselor today!

Still need to finish a Seminar activity? We accept all late work. The more your child completes in Seminar, the more prepared he/she will be to leave high school after Senior year. Contact your School Counselor with any questions or concerns about

## Engaging in Your Student's Education



As a parent you now have access to see all of the assignments that are coming up (before they are due), see your student's grades and receive alerts on your student's activity. You can access Canvas Parent on your

## Follow Us!

### Facebook:

[OLCHS Student Services Office](#)

### Twitter:

[@OLCHSStServices](#)

### YouTube:

[OLCHS Student Services](#)

phone or computer.

The following slideshow (12 quick slides) explains how to set up your account and pair it with your student's account. It will only take 5 minutes for you to become fully engaged with your student's coursework. [Access the slideshow here.](#)

If you have any questions, or are having issues with getting it set up, please reach out to your student's counselor.

## Success & Support During Remote Learning?



This year has been like no other year. Students may be feeling stressed or distracted while learning remotely at home. They might feel like they can't learn this way. What can we do together if your student is having trouble with remote learning?

As parents or guardians, you can help build self-efficacy, encouraging your child that they have the flexibility and resources to overcome difficult situations. This will help them in life after high school as well. When they feel stuck, you can ask them:

### What resources do you have?

- Canvas or Class notes
- Spartan Plus every afternoon for help from your teacher
- Videos from the teacher or KhanAcademy.org

### Who can you go to for help in your classes?

- Teachers via email or through Canvas, stay in the Webex after class to ask a question or join their afternoon Spartan

Plus for additional help.

- Your peers. Find a study buddy for each class to help each other be successful.
- Contact your Counselor by phone, email, set up a Webex meeting.

Talk with them about what their strengths are and how they can use them when they approach a problem. Encourage them to share their feelings. [Here are additional tips.](#)

### **If your child still needs assistance, additional supports their counselor can help with:**

- Wifi on Campus - Students can sign up in Skyward's Arena Scheduling to come to the school building to work remotely from the student cafeteria to stay more focused on school. 8:20am - 12:30pm. They can pick up a free lunch to take home.
- Homework Help - Ask your student's counselor to get signed up. A Peer Homework Helper or NHS Tutor can work with your student 1pm-3pm.
- Remote NHS Tutor - Ask your student's counselor to have a tutor arranged to work with your student remotely from home.
- Targeted Groups - The School Counselors and Social Workers provide various groups addressing student's academic and social & emotional needs. Talk to your child's School Counselor if any might be right for your child.

### **How are counselors monitoring students during remote learning?**

As in any school year, the School Counselors are using a range of data to provide students and parents with appropriate supports. This includes progress grades, attendance records, discipline records, teacher reports, and parent input. Students were also sent a Social Emotional Learning Survey to give us their feedback on how they feel about school, what they feel about their ability to learn and succeed in school. We continue to evaluate our interventions and supports for students and always welcome your feedback. Contact Thea Meierkort, Student Intervention Facilitator and School Counselor at [tmeierkort@olchs.org](mailto:tmeierkort@olchs.org) with any additional questions.

## **Finding Success: Advice from a Student**

Remote learning is different from being in the school learning. Not everyone is having a difficult time. Some students are actually being successful with remote learning. For some students, attendance has improved (Yes, teachers are still taking attendance!), homework completion has gotten better, and tests scores have gone up. How are these students doing it? Nicola Zeck, a

senior from the class of 2020 that attended a full-time virtual school, offered the following strategies to be successful in remote learning:

- If possible, work outside your bedroom... Completing schoolwork in, or near, bed hinders productivity. When Nicola was near her bed she constantly craved relaxation. She was not able to separate her desire to nap from her intention to prioritize schoolwork. When she started working in a location that she didn't associate with sleep, she became more productive. The kitchen table is perfect.
- Silence your phone... Silencing her phone and eliminating any tempting distractions from her desktop improved her focus. Before doing this, she wasted many hours on social media.
- Schedule regular breaks... If you are completing 6-7 hours of schoolwork during one day, it's important to pre-schedule specific times for regular breaks, including breakfast, lunch, and exercise. Even when you are logged on to virtual classrooms with teachers, you should get up to stretch and move around.
- Follow a calendar.... If you enjoy remote learning, ensure that you monitor assignment due dates. Because you don't see your teacher every day, the teacher will not remind you to submit your assignments like when you were in school.
- If you struggle with following a schedule, you can ask your counselor to show you how to use an assignment notebook or daily planner. If you don't submit assignments when they are due you will fall behind which can be overwhelming and stressful. However, learning how to manage your time a little better can help you overcome that hurdle.
- Take notes... Nicola highly suggests taking notes while reading your textbook and watching lectures. Even if your teacher does not require you to submit notes, taking them has helped her retain information when it came to preparing for tests.
- Stay organized.... Your counselor, or tech support, can show you how to organize your Canvas classes so that you are able to find assignments easily.
- If you are struggling.... Ask your teacher for help. You don't have to do in during virtual class. You can meet with your teacher during Spartan Plus in the afternoon. Not enough students take advantage of Spartan Plus. In many cases, meeting with your teacher during Spartan Plus is like having a tutor because it is just you and the teacher working together.

Need help practicing these skills? You guessed it - reach out to your School Counselor for help!

# Mental Health Screening

At OLCHS, we believe it is important to focus on the whole student paying close attention to the emotions that are often associated with teen years. These years are marked by a rollercoaster of emotions which may be difficult for teens. It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil; however, depression appears to be occurring at a much earlier age. We have implemented a variety of programs on mental health education for students, faculty and staff.

In October, we will be presenting the virtual Signs of Suicide (SOS) Prevention Program to all Health classes. The program includes a screening tool and an educational video. If the student indicates the need for support, he/she will be contacted by an OLCHS social worker and the parent will be contacted. The program has been used by thousands of schools. It has proven successful at increasing help-seeking by students concerned about themselves or a friend and has shown a reduction in suicide attempts in a randomized, controlled study (American Journal of Public Health, March, 2004). For more information please visit [www.elyssasmission.org](http://www.elyssasmission.org)

# Spartan Shout Out Videos

The social workers have been reaching out to the students in innovative ways during remote



## MANAGE YOUR STRESS

### 1 Create a Plan

Mark due dates and upcoming events on a calendar, prioritize tasks and complete them ahead of schedule.



### 2 Get Moving!

Stress can cause you to feel fatigued, but if you fight through it and get some exercise, your body and mind will be more relaxed afterwards.



### 3 Seek Solitude

Venture away from the mental clutter of crowds and devices. Go for a quiet walk outside or listen to your favorite peaceful tunes to recharge your batteries.



### 4 Pursue Your Passions

Make weekly time for your hobbies and activities that bring you joy, such as reading, creative endeavors, or spending time with loved ones.



### 5 Put Your Health First

Aim to eat well, get 7-9 hours of sleep each night, and limit caffeine, which can cause anxiety. When your body feels rested and nourished, your mind will too.



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<http://isdnow.umbc.edu/>

learning. Each week a "shout out video" is posted on various social media platforms with tips and tools for coping with the stress of COVID-19's way of life. [Check out our YouTube channel!](#)

## Mindfulness and Meditation

Mindful meditation has been proven to reduce anxiety, stress, and depression in countless studies. We encourage our students to make stress relief techniques a healthy habit in their lives. [Check out this YouTube clip on meditation apps.](#)

## New FAFSA Graduation Requirement for 2021 Grads and Beyond



Did you know that there is a new graduation requirement for the Class of 2021? Public Act 101-180 (effective 6/01/20) requires that public high school students must complete the FAFSA or, as eligible, the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid, as a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma. A waiver provision basically allows a parent, guardian, or the student - if 18 or emancipated - to opt out for any reason.

### **What is FAFSA Documentation? What do we submit?**

Option 1 - Screen shot, PDF, or physical print out of the FAFSA confirmation page showing student name and submission date.

Option 2 - Screen shot, PDF or physical print out of the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid confirmation page showing student name and submission date.

Option 3 - Submit signed FAFSA Non-Participation Form (included in this mailing). *NOTE* - If submitting this form, it must be done physically on paper. OLCCHS cannot accept digitally signed and submitted forms.

**Important Dates - When do I have to submit this?**

Students planning to graduate in January 2021:

1. Should submit the 2020-21 FAFSA, which is open currently
2. Documentation should be submitted to Student Services Office 117 by **Thursday, December 10, 2020.**

Students planning to graduate in May 2021:

1. Should submit the 2021-22 FAFSA, which opens October 1, 2020
2. Documentation should be submitted to Student Services Office 117 by **Thursday, May 13, 2021**

**I Need Help with this - Where can I go?**

1. All seniors have access to a seminar regarding the FAFSA requirement and Financial Aid in their Senior Seminar class.
2. The OLCBS school counselors can help you answer questions about which option is best for your student.
3. Mrs. Kenny will host FAFSA Fridays each Friday from 12:30 - 2:30 pm. [Families can reserve a spot here.](#)
4. A volunteer from the IL Student Assistance Commission will also host workshops on select Monday afternoons. [Families can reserve a spot here.](#)
5. Student Services staff is planning on hosting in-person FAFSA workshops this semester. Details will be shared with families via email, Skyward and Canvas once finalized.

**If you have questions about the FAFSA requirement, please contact Mrs. Kenny:**

Kelly Kenny, College & Career Counselor 708-741-5853

[kkenny@olchs.org](mailto:kkenny@olchs.org)

## English Language Learners

This past January, all English Language Learners participated in the ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency test. ACCESS provides a standardized measurement of academic language proficiency for ELL students throughout the state of Illinois. With this information, we can monitor individual ELL student progress on an annual basis. The Individual Student Reports with your child's results

on ACCESS along with your child's program enrollment will be mailed out this week. This information is for you to review and keep.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's scores or placement, please contact:

Samantha Razik - 708-741-5643 - [srazik@olchs.org](mailto:srazik@olchs.org)

Mary Kerrigan 708-741-5663 - [mkerrigan@olchs.org](mailto:mkerrigan@olchs.org)

Our first Bilingual Parents Advisory Committee (BPAC) took place on Monday September 21 virtually. [Here is the recording](#) of the meeting if you were not able to join us.

## Help Us Improve!

Did you enjoy receiving this newsletter? Do you have recommendations or questions for the OLCHS Counselors? Take this brief survey to help us improve our services. [Click here to take the survey!](#)