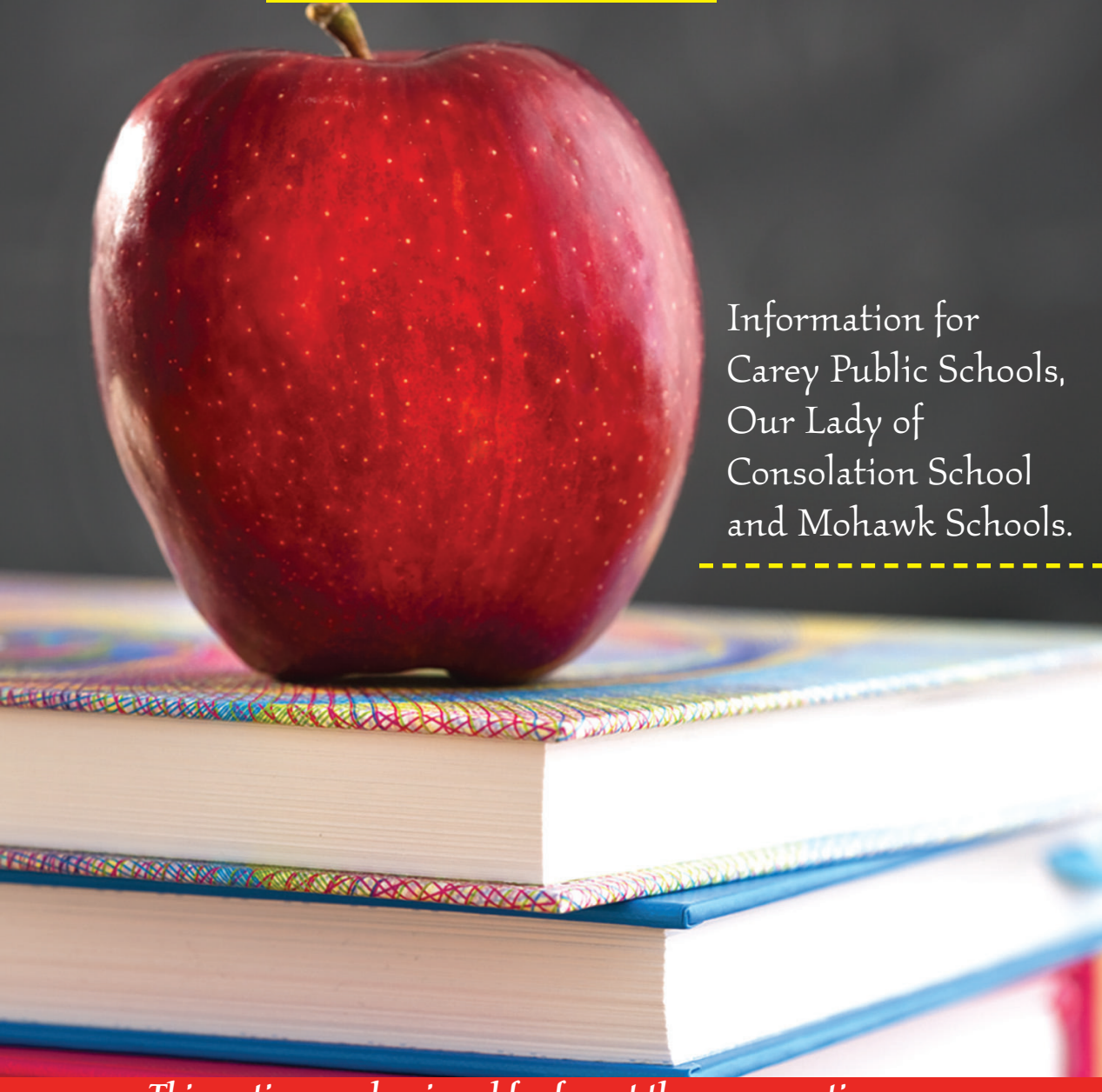


August 2021

A Special Supplement to

The Progressor-Times
and The Mohawk Leader

Back-to-School TIME



Information for
Carey Public Schools,
Our Lady of
Consolation School
and Mohawk Schools.

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Colleges extend optional testing

For upperclassmen, the prospect of graduation is never far from the mind. Graduation marks the culmination of years of hard work and dedication in the classroom.



Graduating involves various steps and testing is part of that equation, particularly for people who are planning on attending colleges, universities or going on to pursue advanced degrees. Standardized test requirements are slowly disappearing from schools' criteria for admissions. The COVID-19 pandemic may have helped accelerate that disappearing act.

According to Edmit, an educational financial planning resource, says the concept of a test-optional school is not new. Since the mid-2000s, various universities have included test-optional clauses in their admissions policies. This means that students' standardized test scores are not reviewed as part of the college application process.

The standardized tests that are normally part of admissions reviews include the SAT, which debuted in 1926, and the ACT, which has been around since 1959.

In lieu of COVID-19 related postponements or cancellations of standardized tests, a greater number of schools have announced they won't require future applicants to submit test scores with their applications. While some are saying this is a temporary revision to the process, other schools are calling it a pilot program for the next few years.

Seventy-two percent of colleges and universities adopted test-optional policies for the 2021-22 school year and some

schools are now extending that policy for the next one to two years, indicates IvyWise, an educational consulting company. Some of the schools that have suspended the SAT and ACT requirements, at least for the time being, include Cornell University, Penn State, Williams College, Amherst College, Boston College and Columbia University.

Many students have been hit hard by the pandemic and removing testing requirements means they do not have to face another challenge, especially in light of reduced testing capacities and a scarcity of test availability.

The education and school resource Grown and Flown says a surprising side effect of test-optional amendments at selective universities is that applications have increased. Harvard announced it received more than 57,000 applications for the college class of 2025, which marks a 42 percent increase from the previous year.

Schools have modified admissions requirements in recent months, including removing standardized test scores from the equation.

It is always wise to consult with the admissions department of schools to learn if their admissions requirements have been updated.

How back to school shopping has changed in the COVID-19 pandemic



Though hundreds of millions of adults and adolescents have now been vaccinated against COVID-19, there figures to be some lingering effects of the pandemic during the upcoming school year. That could affect which school supplies families buy in the weeks to come.

Here's a look at some of the latest trends.

- A shift from physical stores: According to data from IBM's U.S. Retail Index, the pandemic has accelerated a shift away from physical stores to digital shopping by about five years.

It's likely that school shoppers will turn to the Internet for their supplies, which means local brick and mortar shops should increase their web presence and digital shopping capabilities to reach online shoppers. This includes omnichannel fulfillment, such as buy online and pickup in store (BOPIS) options.

- Reassessment of what's essential: The pandemic may have changed which items consumers consider essential. For example, clothing became less significant as a greater number of students were enrolled in virtual learning. Back-to-school shoppers may purchase less clothing and focus more on tech items,

among others.

- Traditional supplies become less necessary: In 2020, Deloitte forecasted that a shift in preferences and intentions would result in parents buying fewer traditional supplies, such as notebooks and office supplies, as they chose to invest in digital resources to supplement children's education. That shift likely will continue into this school year.

- Support for local retailers: Community spirit grew in the early days of the pandemic and continues now. Many people prefer to shop in locally owned stores. Eighty percent of customers surveyed feel more or as connected to their communities, according to the business industry consultant company Accenture.

- Customers are trying new brands and products: Shoppers are trying new products out of curiosity as well as necessity.

Back-to-school shopping may include novel brands and other items that may not have been readily purchased in years past.

Back-to-school shopping may continue to look a bit different than in previous years, spawning trends that may ultimately become the new normal.

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