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Camden Hills tracks graduate progress with Mitchell Institute

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VillageSoup/Knox County Times Reporter

ROCKPORT (Sep 4): Hoping to better understand where its graduates go next, Camden Hills Regional High School is working with the Mitchell Institute and contracting with a nonprofit to produce an achievement picture of its students, beginning with the class of 2001.
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In doing so, the school is required to let parents and students know that it will be releasing names and birth date data to the National Student Clearinghouse in Herndon, Va.

"We've been trying for many years to find a good source of longitudinal data about our kids' experience once they graduate from CHRHS," said Assistant Principal Piet Lammert. "Several years ago we did a homegrown survey and had such a poor response that the data was not useful."

This time, Camden Hills and the Mitchell Institute will hire the National Student Clearinghouse to access information on enrollment, degrees, diplomas, certificates and other educational achievements of the students. The clearinghouse maintains records for 2,800 institutions that enroll 91 percent of U.S. higher education students.

The Mitchell Institute, founded by Maine's former U.S. Sen. George Mitchell, works to increase the likelihood that young people from every community in Maine will aspire to, pursue and achieve a college education, its mission states.

"The clearinghouse has actually been identified and secured through the Mitchell Institute as part of their ongoing efforts to heighten the postsecondary access rates of Maine graduates," said Lammert. "This association has provided us with both the impetus and the funding to contract with the clearinghouse to obtain this data that we've long sought for ourselves."

The project entails that Camden Hills release the names and birth dates of graduates as directory information, which is allowed under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act, provided that the school tells parents and eligible students about the directory information and allows parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

The clearinghouse tracks and verifies post-secondary and secondary student degrees, diplomas and enrollment to help colleges, universities and high schools to reduce costs and workloads, and improve efficiencies "and enhance the quality of service they provide to their students and alumni, lending institutions, employers, and other organizations," according to the organization.

On Monday, Camden Hills issued its press release about the project, saying it "serves as notification of our intent to release the above information of CHRHS graduates since 2001 unless we receive notification indicating a desire to prevent disclosure. Students wishing to prohibit the release of this information should contact Lammert at 236-7800 (ext. 259) or piet_lammert@fivetowns.net by Sept. 20, 2007."

Those wishing to learn more about the clearinghouse can do so by visiting studentclearinghouse.org.

"Once we have the data the clearinghouse provides, we'll have some more quantifiable information to add to the anecdotal reports that have previously been our only source of our graduates' experience," said Lammert on Tuesday. "We'll be able, for example, to know not only if students went to the school they intended, but also if they remained and completed their chosen program. This provides us the opportunity to do some follow-up and find out why a student might have left or, conversely, why they succeeded. All of this is aimed at doing the best job we can to educate our students while they're here and prepare them for their chosen postsecondary pathway."

Related Links:

- [National Student Clearinghouse](#).
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