

SENIORS – OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

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My name is Julie Sitko and I am the College and Career Counselor. This is the time to think about life after high school. My role is to advise and support students and families in the college search and to help identify “best fit” colleges and universities, and to assist students in realizing their post-secondary goals. This monthly newsletter will keep you on track for post-secondary planning. Please reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Here are some things to think about as we go through your child's senior year:

FALL - Post-Secondary Timeline for seniors

- An updated copy of your child's transcript has been uploaded into the Portfolio section of Skyward. I encourage you to look over the transcript and save a copy for your records. If there are any questions or concerns about the transcript, please reach out to your child's school counselor.
- Your child will request transcripts and teacher recommendation letters through Naviance. Guides on how to request both are in the Seniors 2024 Teams page.
- Complete the Moon Records Release form. This form was sent to the class Teams page on September 12. The form must be completed before any transcripts will be sent. Any questions, reach out to Mrs. Marciniak.
- Check with the colleges your child wants to apply to determine if they need SAT or ACT test scores. 2/3 of all colleges in the US are not requiring board scores this year for admission or scholarships. If students don't need to test, don't. Even if they do test, they don't have to apply with test scores – look at the scores normally accepted at a school and determine if they should apply with or without test scores. For test optional/test flexible schools, students should only apply with test scores if the test scores are going to enhance the application.
- If your child does take ACT/SAT tests, utilize the opportunity to send their scores to four schools for free. Requesting scores to be sent before testing will ensure the scores get to the schools faster. If scores are lower than previous tests, colleges will usually look at the highest test scores and usually won't penalize students for the lower test scores. Most schools will still review a child for test optional admissions, even if they send test scores to the college, but check with the schools to be sure.
- Have your child talk to teachers about writing recommendation letters. Students should first have a conversation with a teacher about a recommendation letter, then request it in Naviance.
- Encourage your child to apply to college. My recommendation is to submit applications by Thanksgiving, but no later than Christmas. Be cognizant of individual college deadlines.
- Participate in online programming hosted by colleges. Information is posted on the schools' individual websites.
- Encourage your child to register to vote! If they haven't already registered, the deadline to register to vote in Pennsylvania is October 23. To vote, your child needs to be 18 by Election Day (November 7). More information on registering to vote: <https://www.votespa.com/Register-to-Vote/Pages/How-to-Register-to-Vote.aspx>. Encourage your child to research the candidates and vote on candidates who they feel best represent what is important to them. Have them pay attention to the local elections – those are the elected positions that will most likely have the most influence on their day-to-day lives.
- It's still a requirement that male students, when they reach the age of 18, register for the Selective Service (military). More information can be found here: <http://www.sss.gov>.

Transcripts and recommendation letters from counselors:

Students must give the school counselors at least two weeks to send any transcripts (students can check the progress of the transcripts in the **manage transcripts** section of Naviance). If the students also asks for a counselor recommendation letter, it might take longer, because it is time consuming to craft well-written letters which advocate for your child. If a student requests transcripts today and three days later, asks their school counselor to write a recommendation letter, the transcript and letter will then be sent two weeks after the school counselor receives any documentation to help them with the letter. It is the student's responsibility to understand which colleges require a letter from a school counselor and ask their counselor in an appropriate time frame. Students who need a recommendation from their counselor must talk to their counselor about the letter.

COLLEGE FAIRS

During the first week of October, there are college fairs all over Allegheny County.

Monday, October 2

North Pittsburgh College Fair

LaRoche University

6-8 PM

Kerr Fitness Center

Tuesday, October 3, 2023

South Pittsburgh College Fair

Bethel Park High School

6-8 PM

Thursday, October 5, 2023

West Pittsburgh College Fair

Robert Morris University

6-8 PM

UMPC Complex

Please register for a barcode at www.StriveFair.com

Show your barcode to colleges who will scan it to send you more information about their schools. The day after the fair, you will receive a report with information about each college with whom you scanned.

HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) College Fair

Thursday, October 26, 2023

PNC Park

Over 40 HBCU's will be there to talk with students and answer questions about the schools. Students are invited to attend. This fair is during the school day and transportation will be provided. More information will be given to students the week of October 9.

College fairs are a great opportunity to explore options, gather information, ask questions, get a feel for campus culture, learn about scholarship opportunities, and compare options. They could also be an opportunity for overwhelmed or unsure students to start thinking about what type of post-secondary education is best for them. The schools will be arranged alphabetically and the best way to approach the college fair is just to wander around, gathering information and asking basis questions like:

How many students are at your school?

What are you most unique majors?

Why do students like your school?

What is the campus culture like?

College Representatives Visiting Moon Area High School:

Colleges come to Moon to talk to students about their schools. This is a good opportunity to get general information about schools, but also a great opportunity to meet the admission counselors. Often, the counselors who do these visits are also the same people who will read your child's college application and can be a first line resource for all questions about that school.

All visits are listed on the Naviance homepage, under "What's New." Students sign up for visits in Naviance. Registration will close one hour prior to the visit. All visits are also on the announcements. Most visits are in person, but a few are virtual. To register for a visit, your child will go to the main page of their Naviance account, go to the of visits, under "What's New," click on more info beside the name of the school and on the next page, "register me." Once registered students will stop by the Counseling Center to get a pass to attend the visit.

This list will change and additional schools will be added. The most current list is in Naviance.

College

Ohio Northern University

Date

Mon October 2, 2023

Time

10:11 AM

<u>Worcester Polytechnic Institute</u>	Mon October 2, 2023	11:03 AM
<u>The College of Wooster</u>	Tue October 3, 2023	9:19 AM
<u>Queens University of Charlotte</u>	Tue October 3, 2023	1:23 PM
<u>University of Dayton</u>	Wed October 4, 2023	8:56 AM
<u>Vanderbilt University</u>	Wed October 4, 2023	11:20 AM
<u>Villanova University</u>	Wed October 4, 2023	1:30 PM
<u>Baldwin Wallace University</u>	Thu October 5, 2023	11:03 AM
<u>University of Kentucky</u>	Thu October 5, 2023	11:55 AM
<u>Temple University</u>	Fri October 6, 2023	9:19 AM
<u>University of New Hampshire-Main Campus</u>	Fri October 6, 2023	11:03 AM
<u>Michigan State University</u>	Tue October 10, 2023	11:03 AM
<u>Virginia Tech</u>	Wed October 11, 2023	8:56 AM
<u>St Bonaventure University</u>	Wed October 11, 2023	10:32 AM
<u>Case Western Reserve University</u>	Thu October 12, 2023	8:27 AM
<u>Boston University</u>	Thu October 12, 2023	1:23 PM
<u>Arcadia University</u>	Fri October 13, 2023	8:27 AM
<u>Robert Morris University</u>	Fri October 13, 2023	9:19 AM
<u>Waynesburg University</u>	Mon October 16, 2023	8:27 AM
<u>Wheeling University</u>	Mon October 16, 2023	9:19 AM
<u>Colby College</u>	Tue October 17, 2023	1:23 PM
<u>John Carroll University</u>	Wed October 18, 2023	10:32 AM
<u>Lycoming College</u>	Thu October 19, 2023	10:11 AM
<u>Mercyhurst University</u>	Thu October 19, 2023	1:23 PM
<u>Gannon University</u>	Fri October 20, 2023	9:19 AM
<u>Lehigh University</u>	Mon October 23, 2023	8:27 AM
<u>Jacksonville University</u>	Mon October 23, 2023	10:11 AM
<u>Juniata College</u>	Tue October 24, 2023	8:27 AM
<u>Miami University, Oxford</u>	Tue October 24, 2023	10:11 AM
<u>Bennington College</u>	Wed October 25, 2023	8:56 AM
<u>Harrisburg University of Science and Technology</u>	Wed October 25, 2023	9:44 AM
<u>University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown</u>	Mon October 30, 2023	8:27 AM
<u>Thiel College</u>	Mon October 30, 2023	9:19 AM
<u>Rosedale Technical College</u>	Wed November 1, 2023	11:20 AM
<u>Saint Francis University</u>	Thu November 2, 2023	8:27 AM

Visiting schools:

If you have a chance to visit schools, here are things to think about when you're on campus:

--Talk to people in the department of anticipated study. If your child is totally undecided, talk to the schools about what they do to help pick a major. Colleges have robust career centers and advising programs which help students pick a major, find internships and eventually jobs and graduate schools.

--Ask what is the four-year graduation rate? Colleges report a six-year graduation rate, due to financial aid. Ask about the four year rate-- schools should try to get students in and out in four years -- make sure the school is going to help your child make the best use of their time and get the classes needed to get out in time.

--Ask what is the retention rate for returning sophomores? This number can tell you a lot about what schools are doing to make students happy and keep them enrolled. If a number is low, ask why students are leaving -- what's going on? If the number is high, it's safe to assume students are generally happy and the college is doing a good job of educating students and keeping them happy.

--College is not just about getting a degree. It's about so much more. Is your child going to be challenged at each school? Are they going to have to put in more effort than they ever have? That's a good thing!

--Learn the middle 50% SAT/ACT scores and GPA of admitted students at the schools that interest you. This can serve as a guide to schools that will be a good academic fit for you. Also -- remember if board scores are lower than the middle 50%, but the GPA fits in the middle 50%, in most cases, students do not need to submit test scores, if they could potentially hurt an application.

ASVAB:

The ASVAB is a multiple-aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military. It is also an excellent assessment for general career guidance. It is administered annually to more than one million military applicants, high school, and post-secondary students. The test will be administered on Wednesday, November 1. Students can register [here](#). The test will also be administered in March 2024.

ACT and SAT testing:

If your child wants to test, go to the testing websites for information about testing and open test sites. **(SAT: www.collegeboard.org and ACT: www.act.org)**. A schedule of tests dates is in the class of 2024 Teams (under Post-Secondary Planning, then files). The same list is also on the High School Counseling Center webpage. For the graduating class of 2024, many colleges in the United States are test optional for both admission and scholarships. Before deciding if your child wants to test, check with the schools they are interested in and determine if they need to test. When students apply without test scores, schools are often examining the transcript much closer. For example, if your child is interested in studying business, colleges will look closely at the math classes they took and the grades earned in those math classes.

--Students on free/reduced lunch are eligible for a fee waiver. Have your child see their school counselor or Ms. Sitko

--Every college accepts either the SAT or ACT. There is no preference.

-- When registering for the ACT, I do not recommend taking the writing portion of the exam. I do not think it will be necessary for admission.

--Check out this site to see if schools your child is interested in have determined their testing policies

<https://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>.

ACT/SAT Prep:

Students taking ACT and SAT tests should do some sort of preparation prior to taking the tests. There are many resources available for test prep. All students have FREE access to Khan Academy – an online program that partners with College Board (owners of the SAT) to provide test prep to students. <https://www.khanacademy.org/sat>. ACT also has [online test prep here](#). These are both fantastic resources.

-[Penn State Beaver](#) is offering in person SAT prep classes

-[Eaton Prep](#) offers SAT prep classes at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center.

NCAA:

If your child is an athlete considering playing sports at a division I or II school, make sure to visit the NCAA Eligibility Center website www.eligibilitycenter.org. Student athletes need to submit an official high school transcript (requested through Naviance) and official test scores, if they are available. These scores must be sent directly from ACT or College Board. NCAA will not accept test scores from the high school transcript. If your child hasn't had an opportunity to test, they can still gain eligibility without test scores. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they are taking the appropriate classes to qualify for NCAA Eligibility. A list of NCAA approved courses are on page 6 of the Program of Studies. More information can be found [here](#). *This registration does not apply to students attending division III or NAIA schools*

FINANCIAL AID AWARENESS

The FAFSA is being revamped this year and will not be released until December (an exact date has not been given). More information will be shared with families when it is available.

PHEAA Virtual Financial Aid Night

Wednesday, November 15

6:30 PM

Please join a representative from PHEAA (the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency) for a virtual Financial Aid Night from the comfort of your home. This presentation will provide an early understanding of the financial decisions students need to make concerning higher education. Participants will have the opportunity to enter questions in the Q & A section at any time, as well as at the end of the presentation. [Register here](#)

IN-PERSON FAFSA Completion workshop

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

6:30 PM

This is an opportunity for families to complete the FAFSA with the help of Amy Sawdey, our partner at PHEAA. Registration information will be provided closer to the event.

Scholarships:

All scholarships that come through our office are listed in Naviance. To find the scholarships, log in to your Naviance account, go to Colleges>Scholarships and money>Scholarship list. The scholarships we get in the counseling center are listed on the 'Scholarship list' page. That site is updated regularly, so be sure to check back regularly as new scholarships are posted. My favorite scholarship search sites are: www.fastweb.com, www.goingmerry.com, and www.pittsburghfoundation.org/scholarship_search#hs.

Colleges and universities host open house and other visitation programs throughout the school year. Programs are both in person and online. Colleges are doing a great job of offering extensive online information sessions and visit opportunities. If you have any questions about a school, don't hesitate to reach out to an admission counselor. Counselors are a great resource to help students and their adults through the post-secondary planning process.