

## SENIORS – NOVEMBER 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. Transcripts will be updated with grades at the end of the first semester. The reason we don’t update transcripts at the end of the first quarter is because credits are earned when a class is complete. The GPA will only update after the completion of a class, either a semester or full year course. If you want to send an unofficial report card to a college, you can download it from the Skyward portfolio.
- 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. It can also be found on the class of 2024 Teams page, along the top (in APPS), look for Fill/Moon Area High. The form must be completed before any transcripts will be sent. Any questions? Reach out to Mrs. Marciniak.
- 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 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. All deadlines are found on college’s websites.**
- Participate in online programming hosted by colleges. Information is posted on the schools’ individual websites.
- Encourage your child to vote! 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 life.
- 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>.
- Remember college is all about fit. What fits what you’re looking for in academics? Social life? Distance from home? Affordability?

#### 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’s 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.

## **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 Search. The scholarships we get in the counseling center are listed on the 'Scholarship Search' 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](http://www.fastweb.com), [www.goingmerry.com](http://www.goingmerry.com), and [www.pittsburghfoundation.org/scholarship\\_search#hs](http://www.pittsburghfoundation.org/scholarship_search#hs).

## **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](http://www.collegeboard.org) and ACT: [www.act.org](http://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.. Even if your children 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.

--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. It is not 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](http://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*

## **POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS**

**"So, You Want to be a Music Major?"** seminar. The discussion will include a mixture of topics geared towards students wishing to obtain information about studying music in college. Parents are also welcome to join the event. Thursday, Monday, January 29. For more information, see Mr. Barthen

Topics include:

- Degree options
- Career options based on degree
- How to prepare for a college audition
- How to select a college/university
- What to focus on as a high school musician

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.