

SENIORS – SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to a new school year and your child's senior year of high school! 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. I will send you this newsletter monthly and it 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

- Check with the colleges your child wants to apply to determine if they need SAT or ACT test scores. 90% of schools are not requiring board scores this year for admission or scholarships. Even if students do test, they don't have to apply with test scores – look at the scores normally accepted at a school and determine if students should apply with or without test scores. (easy to do – search: 50% SAT at X college/university)
- If your child does register for 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 look at the highest test scores and should not penalize students for the lower test scores.
- Have your child talk to teachers about writing recommendation letters. Students should 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 the winter holidays. Be cognizant of individual college deadlines.
- Your child will request transcripts to be sent via Naviance. I will be talking with the seniors next week about requesting transcripts and recommendation letters. Guides on how to request both are in the Seniors 2025 Teams page.
- Complete the Moon Records Release form. This form will be available on Monday, September 9 through the class Teams page. The form must be completed before any transcripts will be sent. Any questions, reach out to Ms. Monyak.
- Encourage your child to register to attend college visits at Moon. More information is below.
- 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 21. To vote, your child needs to be 18 by Election Day (November 5). 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.

SRAR workshop: Students applying to Pitt, Penn State, Virginia Tech, Clemson, University of Delaware – among other schools do not require students to turn in a transcript when they apply to these schools. Instead, students will complete the Self-Reported Academic Record (SRAR) as a required part of their application. I'm partnering with Penn State – Beaver to host a workshop where students will complete the SRAR with the Director of Enrollment. He'll walk the students through the SRAR. [Students must register here for the SRAR workshop](#). Prior to the workshop, there are several steps the students have to take (including create a SRAR account). Students who sign up for the workshop will get information about what needs to be done prior to the workshop. The workshop will be held **Thursday, September 12 during 2nd and 3rd periods.**

COLLEGE FAIRS

Christian College Fair

Thursday, September 19
Beaver County Christian School
6-8 PM

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

Monday, October 7

North Pittsburgh College Fair

LaRoche University

6-8 PM

Tuesday, October 8

South Pittsburgh College Fair

Bethel Park High School

Wednesday, October 9

West Pittsburgh College Fair

Robert Morris University

6-8 PM

UMPC Complex

Please register for a barcode at www.StriveFair.com. In the app, you'll be able to see what colleges are registered.

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.

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 basic questions like:

How many students are at your school?

What are your most unique majors?

Why do students like your school?

What is the campus culture like?

College Appy-Hour: In September and October, during homeroom (Wednesdays), I'll be in the LGI and seniors are invited to come and work independently on college applications. I'll be there to answer questions, so this is a good time to dedicate to applications and essays. Students must sign in at homeroom and then get a pass to the LGI.

FINANCIAL AID AWARENESS

The FAFSA is going to be released around December 1

PHEAA Virtual Financial Aid Night

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

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. Registration information will be available closer to the event.

IN-PERSON FAFSA Completion workshop

Wednesday, January 15, 2025 @Moon Area High School

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. Your child should be checking this site regularly. My favorite scholarship search sites are: www.fastweb.com, www.goingmerry.com, and www.pittsburghfoundation.org/scholarship_search#hs. The last site is local (Pittsburgh) scholarships. You do have to search through the scholarships, but there is a lot of money available to students.

Scholarship opportunity for female seniors:

P.E.O. Chapter BN of Sewickley is seeking outstanding young women who are seniors in high school to apply for the P.E.O. Star Scholarship. This scholarship provides a one-time \$2,500 award to high school senior women who wish to pursue post-secondary education. A woman is eligible to be recommended for the P.E.O. Star Scholarship provided she:

- Exhibits excellence in each of the following areas: leadership, academics, extracurricular activities, community service, and demonstrated potential for future success
- Has a minimum cumulative unweighted GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Is a citizen or legal permanent resident of the United States or Canada
- Plans to attend an accredited post-secondary educational institution in the United States or Canada, full-time or part-time, in the fall of the academic year following high school graduation

Candidates should email a resume to gbklavon@gmail.com that gives their name, address, phone number, email address, unweighted GPA on a 4.0 scale, citizenship, lists of extracurricular activities, community/volunteer service and work experience with activity years, leadership positions and involvement. The deadline is **Tuesday, September 3, 2024**. Additional information may be found at www.peointernational.org by clicking on "P.E.O. Projects/Philanthropies" then clicking on "Star Scholarship." Questions? Reach out to Gretchen Klavon at 7412-463-30114 or emailing her at gbklavon@gmail.com.

Coca-Cola Scholars Program: This is an achievement-based scholarship awarded to students in their final year of high school. Students are recognized for their capacity to lead and serve, as well as their commitment to making a significant impact on their schools and communities. The Foundation has provided over 6,900 Coca-Cola Scholars with more than \$84 million in educational support. 150 Coca-Cola Scholars are selected each year to receive this \$20,000 scholarship. Applicants must be:

- Graduating from a high school in the US this academic year
- US Citizen, US National, US Permanent Resident, Refugee, Asylees, Cuban-Haitian Entrants, or Humanitarian Parolees
- Planning to pursue post-secondary education (must be an accredited two-year school or four-year school)
- Have 3.0 GPA in high school

Deadline to apply September 30, 2024. [More information can be found here.](#)

College programs in Pittsburgh:

[Notre Dame on the Road](#)

Thursday, September 26

7:00 PM

Pine Richland High School Auditorium

This session will include information on academic, community, and spiritual life at the University of Notre Dame and insights into the admission and financial aid process. This is a great opportunity to get your questions answered.

Please register [here](#). (If the link doesn't work, search for Notre Dame on the Road + Pittsburgh).

University of Chicago in Pittsburgh

October 8

6 PM

Winchester Thurston School

Davis Center

4951 Centre Avenue

Pittsburgh, 15213

Register here: <https://prospects.uchicago.edu/register/?id=76b43e13-1a2e-43e9-8849-9d93308262b7>

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 13. More information will be shared in October and November. The test will also be administered in March 2025.

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.

There is an issue in Naviance and not all schools are showing up. I'm working on getting that fixed and will share the full list with the students.

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.

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 2025 Teams (under Post-Secondary Planning, then files). The same list is also on the High School Counseling Center webpage. For the graduating class of 2025, 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, starting September 14

-[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 17 of the Program of Studies. More information can be found [here](#). *This registration does not apply to students attending division III or NAIA schools.*

Pittsburgh Teen FBI Academy:

The 2024 Pittsburgh FBI Teen Academy is open to high school juniors and seniors how have any interest in the FBI – not just criminal justice. Due to the vast workforce in the FBI, what they do and how a relationship with the FBI can help their school is encouraged to apply.