

## JUNIORS – SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to a new school year! My name is Julie Sitko and I am the College and Career Counselor. This is the time to start thinking 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.

### Here are some things to think about as we go through your child’s junior year:

#### FALL - Post-Secondary Timeline for juniors

- Begin the college and career exploration process with Naviance
- Think about taking the PSAT October 12
- Register for the SAT and/or ACT beginning in the winter (February/March)
- Register to attend college visits at Moon
- If your child is thinking of testing – do test prep

### 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](http://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.

**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?

## **FINANCIAL AID AWARENESS**

### ***PHEAA Virtual Financial Aid Night***

*Tuesday, October 1, 2024*

*6:30 PM*

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.

### **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>

### **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.

### **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.

### **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 2026 Teams (under Post-Secondary Planning, then files). The same list is also on the High School Counseling Center webpage. For the graduating class of 2026, 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

### **PSAT:**

The PSAT is being offered at Moon on Saturday, October 12. The deadline to register is September 2. Mrs. Wilhelm has shared registration information. [Here's the registration link.](#)

### **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 at the end of their junior year (requested through Naviance) and official test scores, if they are available. These scores must be sent directly from ACT or College Board. If a student has an NCAA account, their transcript will automatically be sent at the end of the junior year. You do not need to request the transcript. 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. *This registration does not apply to students attending division III or NAIA schools.*

### **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 graduation rate— schools should try to get students in and out in four years. Be 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! And, are they going to have fun?

--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%, they might not need to submit test scores.

### **Emails from Post-Secondary Schools:**

If your child has not yet, they will be getting inundated with emails from colleges. I have a few suggestions on how your child can manage the emails.

1. Create an email address just for post-secondary planning. That way, all of the emails students get from colleges won't flood their regular inbox.
2. They should create a folder in their email and filter emails from the colleges they think they want to look at later. They can also create a folder of schools that they are interested in, so they don't miss any important messages.
3. They should check this email account once a week or every few days. Delete messages they're not interested in. They're likely going to be overwhelmed with information from colleges and managing the emails is necessary, so they don't miss anything important.

### **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. You should be checking this site regularly. 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). 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.

**College Board's Opportunity Scholarships:** If you use College Board for college searches or practicing for the SAT through Khan Academy, you could win scholarship money.

### **If you are looking for good college resources, here are two of my favorites:**

**Georgia Tech Admission Blog** has a lot of great information not specific about Georgia Tech, but about the college search and selection process in general. The blog is insightful, educational, and humorous.

<https://pwp.gatech.edu/admission-blog/>

**The College Essay Guy** – another great website for assistance in writing college essays, along with general information about the college search/selection process. He is witty and has awesome advice on essays. He charges a fee to review essays, but he also has a lot of free information on his website. <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/>

### **Pittsburgh Teen FBI Academy:**

The 2024 Pittsburgh FBI Teen Academy is open to high school juniors and seniors who 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.