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

• 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. MOST colleges do not require letters of recommendation – check with the colleges prior to having your child talk with their teachers.

• 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. Guides on how to request transcripts and recommendation letters are in the Seniors 2025 Teams page.

• Complete the Moon Records Release form. This form was sent to students through the Class of 2025 Teams chat on September 9. The form must be completed before any transcripts will be sent. Once the student completes the Records Release, they will be able to request transcripts the next school day.

• 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.

• 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.

College Appy-Hour: In 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.

COLLEGE FAIRS

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
PACAC West Pittsburgh College Fair
Robert Morris University
6-8 PM
UMPC Complex
For the West Pittsburgh fair, 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 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?

HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) College Fair
Thursday, October 17, 2024
PNC Park
Over 40 HBCU's will be there to talk with students and answer questions about the schools. Juniors and seniors are invited to attend. This fair is during the school day and transportation will be provided. Permission slips are in the Counseling Office and are due on October 10.

Networking Event with HBCUS: Students can engage with recruiters from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), corporate executives, industry professionals, and prominent leaders. This event aims to cultivate relationships that guide, mentor, and support students as they navigate their educational and career aspirations. A keynote speaker will give the welcome address (to be announced) and offer optional professional headshots for students. A selection of heavy hors d'oeuvres will be available.
Hosted by The Center that Cares invites is inviting your family to attend the Citywide High School Network Event hosted by on October 17, 2024.
The event will occur at the Jeron X. Grayson Community Center, 1852 Enoch Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Register here: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cares-connects-elevate-your-future-citywide-high-school-networking-event-tickets-1003976449587?utm_experiment=test_share_listing&aff=ebdsshios

College programs in 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

U.S. Military Academy Service Event
Thursday, October 10, 2024
Robert Morris University

UPMC Events Center
5:45 PM – 8:30 PM
Representatives for the United States Military Academy at West Point, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy will be hosting a **Military Service Academy Night** for students interested in attending one of our nation's Service Academies. As students begin to consider and work towards the possibility of attending an academy, this event is intended to assist in their overall preparedness.

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. Register here: https://forms.office.com/r/gtuwLBdYQz

FINANCIAL AID AWARENESS
The FAFSA will be available around December 1

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. Join the meeting here: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86201251344

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.
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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	Date	Time
Westminster College	Tue October 1, 2024	11:03 AM
Pennsylvania Western University	Tue October 1, 2024	11:55 AM
Villanova University	Wed October 2, 2024	11:20 AM
American University	Wed October 2, 2024	1:30 PM
Carnegie Mellon University	Thu October 3, 2024	8:27 AM
Community College of Allegheny County	Thu October 3, 2024	9:19 AM
Ohio State University-Main Campus	Fri October 4, 2024	9:19 AM
Robert Morris University	Fri October 4, 2024	11:03 AM
Wake Forest University	Mon October 7, 2024	8:27 AM
University of Florida	Mon October 7, 2024	9:19 AM
Worcester Polytechnic Institute	Tue October 8, 2024	8:27 AM
College of Charleston	Tue October 8, 2024	1:23 PM
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	Wed October 9, 2024	9:44 AM
The College of Wooster	Wed October 9, 2024	1:30 PM
Towson University	Thu October 10, 2024	9:19 AM
Franklin and Marshall College	Thu October 10, 2024	1:23 PM
Lycoming College	Fri October 11, 2024	10:11 AM
University of Miami	Fri October 11, 2024	11:03 AM
Youngstown State University	Tue October 15, 2024	8:27 AM
Vanderbilt University	Tue October 15, 2024	11:55 AM
Boston University	Wed October 16, 2024	8:56 AM
Case Western Reserve University	Fri October 18, 2024	10:11 AM
Juniata College	Mon October 21, 2024	8:27 AM
Marietta College	Mon October 21, 2024	1:23 PM
Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania	Tue October 22, 2024	8:27 AM
New Jersey Institute of Technology	Tue October 22, 2024	10:11 AM
Pennsylvania College of Technology	Wed October 23, 2024	8:56 AM
John Carroll University	Wed October 23, 2024	12:08 PM
Washington & Jefferson College	Thu October 24, 2024	9:19 AM
Saint Vincent College	Thu October 24, 2024	1:23 PM
Thiel College	Mon October 28, 2024	8:27 AM
Gannon University	Mon October 28, 2024	11:55 AM
Heidelberg University	Tue October 29, 2024	10:11 AM
La Roche University	Tue October 29, 2024	1:23 PM
Virginia Commonwealth University	Thu October 31, 2024	8:27 AM

Visiting schools:

If you have a chance to visit schools, here what you should 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.

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 (can't be requested in Naviance).

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.
-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*

Emails from Post-Secondary Schools:
If you have not yet, you will be getting inundated with emails from colleges. I have a few suggestions on how you can manage the emails.

1. Create an email address just for post-secondary planning. That way, all of the emails you get from colleges won't flood your regular inbox.

2. You can create a folder in your email and filter emails from the colleges you think you want to look at later. You can also create a folder of schools that you are interested in, so you don't miss any important messages from them.
3. Check this email account once a week or every few days. Delete messages you're not interested in. You're going to be overwhelmed with information from colleges and managing the emails is necessary, so you don't miss anything important.

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 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.