

SENIORS – NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

Julie Sitko, College and Career Counselor
jsitko@moonarea.net
412-264-9440, ext. 2038

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 at the beginning of the school year. 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.
- 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. All deadlines are found on college's websites.**
- 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.
- 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>.
- College is all about fit. What fits what you're looking for in academics? Social life? Distance from home? Affordability?

ASVAB:

The ASVAB is a multiple-aptnitude 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>

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 will be available around December 1

IN-PERSON FAFSA Completion workshop

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 @Moon Area High School (change of date)

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.

Even though the FAFSA will not be open until December, seniors can create an account now! You'll create an account at studentaid.gov. The student and at least one parent should create the accounts. If a parent has an account for an older child, or themselves, you can use that same account for the senior. STRONGLY encourage seniors to use a personal email address, as you will use the same information for the entire duration you're in college (and you won't have access to your Moon email after you graduate).

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. 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.

[Ron Brown Scholar Program](#) – offered to African American high school seniors, this scholarship focuses on leadership and civic engagement. Application deadline **December 1, 2024**.

The [Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling \(PACAC\)](#) sponsors a scholarship for PA high school seniors. This is a short application with three short answer questions. Students must have a 3.0 GPA to qualify. Deadline is **February 3, 2025**. There are four scholarships – one worth \$1500 and three scholarships worth \$1000. It's a quick and easy scholarship application – apply! The scholarship will open on November 15.

[APIA Scholars](#) – offers scholarships to qualified students of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage. Applications will open around November 15.

[The Jackie Robinson Foundation](#) – scholarships and leadership development to minority students. Application deadline **January 9, 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 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 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.. 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. 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*

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.

Job Opportunity:

Sewickley YMCA is hiring lifeguards. For afterschool, weekends, and evenings. Certification and training provided. For more information call Jeff at 412-741-9622 ext. 147 or jjarvis@sewickleyymca.org