

Hello from the Counseling Center at Moon Area 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. 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 you go through your child's senior year:

SPRING - Post-Secondary Timeline for seniors

- College applications should be completed and submitted. Have your children check their portal on the school's websites, to ensure their applications are complete.
- All transcript requests must be made through Naviance. If your child is not sure how to request transcripts, there are guides in the Class of 2025 Teams page. Go to Post-Secondary Information <Files <Naviance Guides <Requesting transcripts and teacher recommendations.
- A copy of your child's most recent transcript (including first semester grades) was uploaded into the Portfolio section of Skyward. I encourage you to look over the transcript and save a copy for your records. If there are any questions or concerns about the transcript, please reach out to your child's school counselor.
- Transcripts were updated with grades at the end of the first semester for seniors. 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.
- Colleges will be hosting accepted student programs. Attend those for the schools your child is interested in. You'll get additional information about your desired program of studies. If you can get on the college campuses, this is a great opportunity to see the schools before your child makes a decision.
- Determine if your schools require any additional financial aid forms and complete those as well as the FAFSA.
- Students should receive all college decisions by mid-March to early April and will also be getting financial aid award letters. Be sure to look at financial aid awards prior to picking a college. This is huge investment – do your homework, do your research, and make an informed decision. If your child has specific questions a financial aid award, contact the financial aid offices at the colleges. If you need general help understanding your child's financial aid award letter, I'm happy to look at it with them. Be sure you and your child understand what is a loan, a scholarship, a grant, and how much money they'll be paying out of pocket.
- College is all about fit. What fits what you're looking for in academics? Social life? Distance from home? Affordability?
- It's a requirement for male students, when they reach the age of 18, register for the Selective Service. More information can be found here: <http://www.sss.gov>

FINANCIAL AID:

THE FAFSA is up and running! **Before you can actually work on the FAFSA, both the student and a parent need to create a FSA ID.** The FSA ID is the username/password you will use to log into the FAFSA. This is also your legal signature. You will use the same FSA ID each year and if as a parent, you have other dependents in college, your FSA ID is the same for all dependents. To create the FSA ID, you will need your social security number, email address or a phone number. Once you create the FSA ID, it will take a few days for you to be able to access the FAFSA.

<https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>

To create your StudentAid.gov account, visit www.studentaid.gov/fsa-id. We recommend completing this as soon as possible! For additional guidance, please visit: <https://studentaid.gov/resources/prepare-for-college/creating-your-account>

When students are creating an FSA ID, they should NOT use their Moon email address. They should use a personal email as this will be the credentials they use throughout college and they will not have access to their Moon email account after they graduate.

You can also complete a Net Price Calculator – found on the financial aid page of every college in the US. This online tool will give families and idea of the cost of education – it is not exact, but an estimate.

In-Person FAFSA Completion Workshop

Duquesne University – Power Center Ballroom

600 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15282

Thursday, March 6th

4:30-6:45 PM

Click here to register for a 45-minute appointment (4:30-5:15pm, 5:15-6pm, 6-6:45pm):

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6S9VXF9>

All students and contributors (such as parents and spouses) must establish their StudentAid.gov accounts at StudentAid.gov at least 4 days prior to attending these events.

Transcripts for Scholarships: Most transcripts for scholarships can be unofficial transcripts. Check with the organization granting the scholarship. You can find your unofficial transcript in the portfolio section of Skyward (transcripts in Skyward will be updated with semester grades about a week after reports are distributed). If you checked with the organization offering a scholarship and they absolutely require an official transcript, contact Ms. Monyak at mmonyak@moonarea.net.

Scholarships:

All scholarships that come through our office are listed in Naviance. To find the scholarships, log in to your Naviance account, go to the 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. You should be checking this site regularly.

Local (Moon) scholarships are available in Naviance. Look for more information on the Seniors 2025 Teams page and email. These are the Scholarship Search in Naviance (colleges>Scholarships and Money>Scholarship Search), with a * before the name of the scholarship (*Moon Education Association Scholarship). You **MUST** follow the posted directions when completing these scholarships. Applications turned in without following the instructions will not be accepted. Continue to look at Naviance for new scholarship opportunities. The deadlines for the majority of these scholarships is March 14.

Here are two good resources for paying for college and understanding financial aid:

www.mysmartborrowing.com

www.collegecosts.ed.gov

And here are some good websites for scholarship searches:

www.goingmerry.com

www.scholarships.com

www.fastweb.com

www.scholarshipamerica.org

www.finaid.org

Additional Scholarships:

National Catholic College Admission Association (NCCAA) will award 16 \$1000 scholarships to students going to member Catholic colleges. Check out this [list](#) of member Catholic colleges. The deadline is April 1.

The Pittsburgh Metropolitan Area Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation is proud to offer students who are Hispanic/Latino or of Hispanic/Latino descent scholarships. Deadline is April 30.

Lola G. Duff and William H. Duff, II Scholarship Fund – Applicants must be seniors in Allegheny County, going on to pursue a four-year degree. Students must be of the Protestant faith and supply a letter of recommendation from a member of the clergy. Deadline is March 4.

PSCA (Pennsylvania School Counseling Association) Scholarship – One scholarship for \$1000.00. Students must submit a one page essay on a School Counselor who has made a difference in your academic, career, and/or social-emotional development. Deadline April 1.

The Hermine Solt Student Scholarship which is a \$500 scholarship for a Pennsylvania High School senior who is pursuing higher education in a business-related field (office technology, accounting, secretarial, business education (including business education teaching), business management, etc.). Complete details including criteria, guidelines, and scholarship application can be found at PAEOP's website.

Financial Aid Webinars:

Financial Aid Timeline—Know What To Do When This 1-hour presentation will provide the starting points and web resources for effective research before, during, and after your student makes postsecondary decisions. The journey will begin before high school and end in the land of understanding choices. One thing is for certain— it is never too early to start planning for a successful higher education experience. You will be guided along the exciting, and sometimes bumpy, road to planning for an affordable education. Knowing what to expect and to plan for it is the key, as failing to plan, is planning to fail!

Thursday, March 10 Noon (ET) Thursday, March 24 6:30 PM (ET) Register at pheaa.org/virtual

Understanding the Offer Letter & Balances The offer letter, or financing plans, that you receive provide an idea of the costs associated with postsecondary education—but they can be confusing, as each school formats their information differently. In this 1-hour webinar, Suzanne Sparrow, William McGinley, and Daniel Wray of PHEAA will help you understand and navigate through the types of aid that are listed, what you are being offered, and identify the balances and next steps needed so you can make knowledgeable and affordable decisions. Q&A interaction is encouraged. Event Dates Tuesday, March 12 6:30 PM (ET) Tuesday, March 26 Noon (ET)

Check Your Email and your college portals!

Colleges communicate with you through email or through the online admissions portal that was created when you applied for admission. You have to check your email and your portals. If you don't, you might be missing out on important information from the colleges, regarding your admission status or scholarships.

Completing Applications:

In September, your child may have been excited about applying for a school and now that it's February, they're not as excited about the school. Maybe they even applied, but haven't sent transcripts or board scores because they decided they don't want to go to that school. If your child is no longer interested in a school, please have them send a quick email to the school, or call them and let them know. If your child doesn't tell a school they're no longer interested, they will think your child is still interested in their school and may continue contacting your child to remind them to turn in the missing application materials. Additionally, if your child has been accepted to a school and decided to attend another school, please let all schools where they applied know – again, they like to know this information and it's nice to let them know where you are in your application journey.

Visiting schools:

If you and your child 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 your child. 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 those scores could

potentially hurt an application. Keep in mind, with most schools being test optional, the students who are submitting test scores generally have higher scores, so the middle 50% are going to be skewed to the higher end.

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 students haven't had an opportunity to test, they can still gain eligibility without test scores. More information can be found [here](#). *This registration does not apply to students attending division III or NAIA schools.*

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 administered annually to more than one million military applicants, high school, and post-secondary students. The test can also be taken by students wanting to know where their abilities lie. The ASVAB is required for any student interested in enlisting in the military. **The test is offered to Moon students, on Wednesday, March 12, free of charge.** Register here: <https://forms.office.com/r/pdLnhShQp>

Summer Opportunities:

Youth Garden Internship

North Hills Community Outreach is seeking two youth Garden Interns to help grow produce for low-income families and learn more about vegetable gardening. Duties include:

- Working under the Garden Coordinator to help maintain the garden through field preparations, planting, cultivation, harvesting and packing crops to be distributed at NHCO's three food pantries
- Assist volunteers as needed
- Record amount of food grown and distributed to food pantries
- Participate in the Youth Garden Summit at the end of the season

Site Location: 119 Davis Ave, Bellevue, PA 15202

Hours and Timeline:

- Position will begin June 2025 and go through August 2025 during summer break
- 8-10 hours/week average, flexible schedule, Monday-Friday between the hours of 8am and 5pm

Compensation: \$10.30/hour

To Apply: Interested applicants should submit a cover letter and resume to Kate Robson at kerobson@NHCO.org. Applications must be submitted no later than May 1, 2025.

Education and Support Series:

The Moon Area High School Transition team is offering the following programs for our students and families. All meetings start at 6:00 PM and to join them,

CLICK: [Join the meeting now](#)

or SCAN:



Tuesday March 25 at 6pm - McGovern Wealth Group: Lifetime Financial Growth

Ryan Wirth- Wealth Management Advisor

- Navigating financial and estate planning can feel overwhelming, especially when preparing for the future of a loved one with a disability. This discussion will offer valuable insights and practical strategies to help you plan effectively and secure long-term well-being for your loved one.

Tuesday April 15 at 6pm - CCAC West Hills Center

Jennifer Cowans- Executive Director of West Hills Center

- Overview of what CCAC has to offer, College terminology, Cost of college, how do you pay for college, and highlight skilled trades/apprenticeship program options.

Wednesday May 7 at 6pm - PA CareerLink Pittsburgh

Alexis McCartney- Site Administrator

- PA CareerLink Pittsburgh will provide a general overview of the online and in person career services, resources, and skill building courses available for jobseekers.