

Sophomore Newsletter | January 2026

Julie Sitko, College and Career Counselor

 jsitko@moonarea.net |  412-264-9440 ext. 2038

Welcome, Class of 2028!

Hello from the Counseling Center! I'm Julie Sitko, your College and Career Counselor. I support students and families in exploring post-secondary options and identifying "best fit" colleges, universities, and career paths. Each month, you'll receive this newsletter to help you stay on track. Please feel free to reach out any time with questions.

NACAC National College Fair – Pittsburgh

 David L. Lawrence Convention Center

 **January 27-28, 2026**

- **Evening Session for Families:**

 Tuesday, January 27 | 6:00–8:30 PM

Parents/guardians and students are encouraged to attend together.

 **Pre-registration required:** <https://www.nacacattend.org/26Pittsburgh>

Upcoming Virtual Program: College Counseling Series – Spring 2026

All programs are virtual evening events and will be recorded and posted to the Moon Area Counseling Center website.

Everything You Need to Know About the Digital SAT & ACT

 Wednesday, January 21 |  6:30 PM |  Virtual

 *Register by 6 PM on Feb. 10*

[Register here](#)

Presented by Mike Goldstein, founder of Goldstein Test Prep. Topics include:

- Updated data, scoring information, and strategies for the digital SAT and its adaptive testing format
- Adaptive testing and scoring
- Bluebook app and digital testing tools
- Updates to the ACT, including digital options, and the optional Science section
- Understanding today's test-optional landscape
- New format of the combined reading/writing sections with one paragraph per question
- Continued evolution of test optional admissions policies and how to determine where to send test scores
- Decisions by schools such as Yale, Dartmouth, the University of Texas, Purdue, and others to require test scores of all applicants and what it means for admissions rates, average scores, and diversity goals

Questions can be emailed in advance to mike.goldstein@goldsteintestprep.com

Post-Secondary Education Planning Night

 Wednesday, February 4, 2026 |  6:30 PM |  Virtual

Recommended for Grades 10–11

Join counselors from Moon and Pine-Richland, plus guest speaker **Jennifer Winge**, VP of Enrollment at Allegheny College, to learn the basics of the college search process. [Register here](#).

LECOM Visit in January

A representative from LECOM (Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine) will be visiting MAHS to share information about their programs in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and health sciences. Students

interested in healthcare careers are encouraged to stop by, ask questions, and learn more about early acceptance opportunities. Students will also participate in a soap carving – to teach students about tooth anatomy, and basic carving skills used by dentists.

- Date: January 13
 - Time: 2nd period
 - Location: Room 112
 - All grade levels are welcome -sign up in Naviance under “What’s New”
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So You Want to Be a Music Major?

 January 15 |  7:00 PM |  MAHS Band Room

An Informational Seminar for Students in Grades 7–12

The Moon Area Music Department invites students in grades 7–12 who are interested in pursuing music in college to attend our annual “So You Want to Be a Music Major?” seminar. Join guest speakers from the School of Music at Duquesne University for an engaging and informative session covering:

Topics Include:

-  Degree & Career Options in Music
-  Preparing for College Auditions
-  Selecting a College or University
-  What to Focus on as a High School Musician

Whether you're just beginning to explore music as a career or already preparing for college auditions, this seminar is designed to guide you on your next steps.

Questions? Contact Mr. Barthen at nbarthen@moonarea.net

Managing College Emails

You’ll soon be flooded with emails from colleges. Here’s how to stay organized:

1. **Create a college-only email account**
 2. **Set up folders** to sort emails by interest
 3. **Check it weekly** – delete what you don’t need, save what you do
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Favorite College Search Resources

 [Georgia Tech Admission Blog](#)

Great advice for students and families, with insights into the college admission process. Bonus: It’s funny and easy to read.

 [College Essay Guy](#)

Tons of free advice on college essays and applications. There are paid options, but many helpful tools are available at no cost.

Summer Programs for Sophomores

These enrichment opportunities are perfect for motivated students ready to explore interests and challenge themselves. Apply early!

- [PA School for Excellence in Agricultural Studies](#) at Penn State
- [Iacocca Global Entrepreneurship Intensive](#) at Lehigh University
- [Governor’s School for the Sciences](#) at Carnegie Mellon University
- [Governor’s School for Global & International Studies](#) at University of Pittsburgh
- [Pennsylvania Free Enterprise Week \(PFEW\)](#) – Learn business by running a simulated company.
- [Carnegie Mellon Pre-College](#) – Art, design, drama, gaming, music, STEM.

- [Hillman Academy](#) – Cancer research internships
- [Magee-Womens Research Institute Internship](#) – Biomedical research (apps due Feb. 9).
- [Wildlife Leadership Academy](#) – Conservation field school.
- [Duke Summer Academy](#), [Eisenman Materials Camp](#), and more.

Check each program's website for details and deadlines.

Questions?

Please don't hesitate to reach out. I'm here to help you and your family navigate this exciting journey!