

Post-Secondary Planning Guide

Finding a College

Academic

GPA and SAT/ACT requirements?
Your major?
What are your academic strengths?

Personal

Location, size of the college?
What activities are you looking to participate in at college?
What careers match your interests and skills?

Financial

Tuition cost?
Room and Board?
Do the careers that interest you fit the lifestyle you want to lead?

Research Options

Xello career exploration on www.xello.world.
Informative websites include www.collegedata.com www.collegeboard.org.
College admissions reps visit the counseling office during the year.
College visits – should occur now throughout the summer.
ASVAB testing (vocational assessment) offered in September and April at PHS.

What are Colleges Looking for When They Review Your Application?

- GPA/High School Transcript/Demand of Curriculum
- SAT scores or ACT scores, no more subject tests, be aware of test optional policies
- Activities and Community Service
- Awards and Accomplishments
- Letters of Recommendation
- Essays
- Interview if required or optional

Application Process

Types of admissions deadlines besides a regular deadline

Early decision – typically a November 1st deadline, but not always; binding agreement; admissions decision around mid-December.
Early action – most commonly a November 1st deadline but not always; non-binding agreement; admissions decision around mid-December.
Rolling – applications reviewed on a continual basis, decisions released throughout the year.

Letters of Recommendation (Counselor or Teacher)

Initially request teacher recommendation in person, giving advanced notice. Teacher recommendations are sent directly by the teacher, not through the counseling office, and it is the responsibility of the student to obtain any teacher recommendations.

Counselors require at least 10 school days to process a recommendation. Counselors require recommendation profile and/or a resume to write a recommendation.

Apply Online

3-5 schools, possibly more, including safe schools.

May request an official transcript digitally through common application, parchment, etc.

Parchment Exchange

Secure, online electronic transcript ordering service.

Create your account now on www.parchment.com.

Starting in July, you can do a test run on parchment by requesting a "self-view" transcript, and anytime you want to see your transcript or you need an unofficial copy of your transcript, you may request a "self-view".

Parchment is a free service for current students, alumni charged \$9.15 per transcript.

Make sure your transcript is ready by ordering a "self view" (unofficial) transcript and check it before you send your official transcript to schools.

If you've participated in high school activities, then you can have them listed on your transcript by completing an "activities sheet" for the counseling office.

Common Application

Becomes available on August 1, create your account on www.commonapp.org.

May begin working on rough draft of common application essay now.

Invite/assign school counselor to complete transcript and secondary school report.

Invite teacher(s) and assign them to schools that require teacher recommendation(s).

Notify counselor and teachers in person or via email that you are applying using common application.

For any schools applied to using common app, your initial transcript will be sent to those schools through common app.

Application fee waiver forms can be added on common app which would require the counselor's signature. Students are considered eligible for the fee waiver if they are in the free/reduced lunch program.

STARS (Self-Reported Transcript and Academic Record System)

Pay attention to this requirement for some colleges (ie. Temple, PSU, Pitt, etc.), as they may require this to be completed rather than sending a high school transcript with your application.

Can usually access the SRAR from the college's website or can find it with this link: <https://ssar.selfreportedtranscript.com/Login.aspx>

There are other self-reporting systems that some schools use but this is the most common, and any schools using the STARS can be added to your account to be able to access your self-reported record.

If self-reporting is required, follow up with sending an official transcript (usually once accepted or once committed, follow individual school's guidelines for this).

When self reporting your grades it is very helpful to have a copy of your transcript to reference, and you can order a copy of your most recent transcript using parchment.

Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC)

Students may consider starting at community college for many reasons (ie. financial, proximity to home, career/major exploration, certification programs, Associate's degree).

Matriculation agreements with many PA schools making transferring to a four-year school a seamless process.

Honors program for eligible students, which provides full scholarship if accepted.

Info on honors program requirements can be found on LCCC website.

SATs are not required for most LCCC programs but can be used for placement into courses if you have taken them.

SATs/ACTs

www.sat.org/registration or www.actstudent.org

Colleges accept both.

SAT tests - PHS is a test center in March, May, June, and November.

ACT tests - PHS is not a test center.

SAT Prep course available at PHS during the fall and spring; free test prep available through college board and Khan academy.

SAT fee waivers available to students on free and reduced lunch.

The same SAT fee waiver may also be used for ordering score reports.

Mid-Year Reports

Will reflect senior year first and second marking period grades, and an updated cumulative GPA.

Counselors will automatically process mid-year reports for common application schools that require them.

All other midyear transcripts needed must be requested by the student through parchment or through a separate online portal.

Final Transcripts

Your final transcript (for the college you plan on attending) must be ordered through parchment even if you used common app to apply. Be sure to make this request before you graduate to avoid the ordering fee.

Financial Aid

FAFSA

Free application for federal student aid- all students should apply.
Apply to FAFSA as early as October 1 through May 1.
<https://studentaid.gov>
Prior/prior year income information used.
A federal state ID must be created by both parents and students.
Several weeks after FAFSA is processed, PHEAA will email a letter regarding state grant.

CSS Profile

Used by private schools, available in October.
<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>

Scholarships

May apply for scholarships throughout senior year. Some scholarships available for juniors to apply so start checking now.
Check scholarship link on PHS website or Schoology.
Free scholarship search services
www.fastweb.com, www.scholarships.com, www.goingmerry.com

Military

Recruiters visit PHS throughout the year.
ASVAB testing required for those looking to enter the military, it is offered at PHS in September and April each year

NCAA

Athletes looking to participate in D1 or D2 sports in college must register on www.eligibilitycenter.org following completion of junior year.
You will need to request a transcript through Parchment exchange.
See website for more information.

Upcoming Events

ASVAB is April 15 at PHS.
LCCC Open House is April 8 from 5-7pm.
Next SAT test dates are May 2 and June 6
Financial Aid Night in the fall (date TBA).

Now Through This Summer

Job Shadow/Community Service
Work on resumes
Visit colleges and decide where you plan to apply
Work on common application essay rough draft