

PATHFINDER

West Chester B. Reed Henderson High School Counseling Department Newsletter

September 2019

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GENERAL NEWS

The Henderson High School counselors are excited to begin the 2019-2020 school year. As always, Henderson counselors will work collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition for our students into this next school year—especially our freshmen and seniors. This year we are also excited to welcome Ms. Sharon Macnamara to our counseling department! She is our new Administrative Assistant working alongside Ms. Karen Pyle. Many of you may know Sharon from her time at Peirce Middle School. We are grateful for the experience and multitude of skills that she brings to our department.

In addition to our role of counseling students in the areas of social and emotional development relevant to the school setting, all WCASD high school counselors are continuing to rely heavily on Naviance—our web based platform for career and college planning (including scholarships and financial aid), for guiding our students in career education and college planning. Using the career planning tools, student can discover interests, research careers, link careers to post-secondary requirements and create a resume. Using the college planning tools, students can research colleges and manage the college application process. Using the success planning tools, students can keep track of the tasks they need to complete in order to accomplish their goals. Naviance's course planning functionality allows students to build multi-course plans that meet graduation requirements. And finally, Naviance e-docs allows us to submit application materials to colleges electronically, thus saving time and money so that we can spend more time working directly with students!

We also recognize that communication with families is of the utmost importance, and we are dedicated to maintaining frequent and varied communication. On that note, the WCASD high school counselors will be hosting a "College Application Process" informational presentation for students and parents this month, and a "Financial Aid Night" for parents in October. Details are provided on the following pages.

GENERAL NEWS CONT.....

In the second semester we will host a “College Planning Night” for parents (date, location and time TBD). Parents will receive emails and can view information on Naviance’s homepage announcing all of these annual events. As the school year progresses, we will continue to use Naviance with our Juniors, then Freshmen and Sophomores and their parents.

Our counseling department has many resources for parents and students to access. In addition to Naviance, please visit the counseling department link from the Henderson website home page where you will find information and resources to assist you in career and college planning, financial aid and scholarships, college admissions testing, and other information relevant to raising teens. <https://www.wcasd.net/site/Default.aspx?PageType=1&SiteID=518&ChannelID=549&DirectoryType=6>

COMMUNICATION

In addition to receiving information via our newsletter, the counseling department regularly sends pertinent and informative announcements and information to students via Naviance and to their parents via parents’ email. Please make sure that your contact information is up-to-date in our system. If you have had any recent changes to your phone numbers and/or email addresses, please contact one of the Counseling Dept. Admin. Assistants listed on page one of this newsletter.

Most importantly, we encourage you to contact your student’s counselor as soon as you have concerns or questions. By working together proactively, we can help your student reach his/her goals and enjoy a positive high school experience.

COLLEGE PLANNING**PSAT/NMSQT**

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (commonly known as the PSAT) is a practice test for the SAT I Reasoning Test and will be administered to all Sophomores and Juniors on Wednesday October 16th, 2019 at Henderson during school hours. Students are not required to register or pay for the test. The WCASD will provide student test registration and fees to the College Board for all Sophomores and Juniors. The WCASD will be using the PSAT to measure student aptitude. As always, the 2019 PSAT scores will not be reported to colleges.

Since the PSAT/NMSQT is also used to identify and enter Juniors in competition for national recognition and scholarships, it is especially important that Juniors take the PSAT on October 16th, since the College Board only allows schools to administer the PSAT on one day each year. Stay tuned to the HHS website regarding additional practice opportunities that may arise on a Saturday in mid to late September. Any additional practice tests not associated with the College Board will NOT be used by the College Board to identify and enter Juniors in competition for national recognition and scholarships.

The PSAT is approximately two hours in length and measures reading, writing, and language skills; and math problem-solving skills. The PSAT Score Report *Plus* that students will receive online in January 2020 includes their ERW (evidence based reading and writing), and Math scores. Students can then go to www.collegeboard.com/psatextra for free access to the questions and answers and higher level sample math questions. Essay directions, an official scoring guide, and samples of student-written essays are available; as well as answers and explanations for all questions on the 2019 PSAT.

For more information on the PSAT/NMSQT go to www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html or contact your student’s counselor.

SAT I Reasoning Test ~ ACT ~ SAT II Subject Tests

The decision to take either the SAT I or ACT will depend upon the requirements of the college of your choice. Check the college guides or websites before registering for either test. As a general rule, most schools in the East and the far West accept both the SAT I and the ACT. Schools located in the Southern or Mid-western part of the country may prefer the ACT. We encourage students who may be concerned about potentially low test scores to take both the ACT and SAT I exams. Students are responsible for their own test registration on-line at www.collegeboard.org (SAT I and II) and www.act.org (ACT).

Many of the highly competitive colleges recommend that students complete SAT II Subject Tests in addition to the SAT I Reasoning Test. These one hour subject area tests are offered in the areas of English, math, history, world language and science. Most of these highly competitive colleges do not use the SAT II for admission but rather for placement in first year college courses. Check with each college to determine which, if any, subject tests are required. Students can register for up to three subject tests on one test day.

SAT/ACT DATES FOR 2019-2020

Remember to use the **Henderson's school code #395170** when registering. Early decision candidates, Penn State Main Campus applicants, or military academy candidates should take the SAT's or ACT's twice before their senior year.

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Test</u>
October 5, 2019	September 24 (late reg.)	SAT I & II
October 26, 2019	September 20, 2019	ACT
November 2, 2019	October 3, 2019	SAT I & II
December 7, 2019	November 8, 2019	SAT I & II
December 14, 2019	November 8, 2019	ACT
February 8, 2020	January 10, 2020	ACT
March 14, 2020	February 14, 2020	SAT I only
April 4, 2020	February 28, 2020	ACT
May 2, 2020	April 3, 2020	SAT I & II
June 6, 2020	May 8, 2020	SAT I & II
June 13, 2020	May 8, 2020	ACT
July 18, 2020	June 19, 2020	ACT

LOCAL COLLEGE FAIRS

The Counseling Office schedules college admissions representatives to visit HHS during the year to meet with prospective students. The college rep. visit schedule is posted on Naviance and announced at school daily. Students can sign up to attend a group meeting with a college rep., either via Naviance or in person in the counseling office lobby. In addition, we support local college fairs and encourage students to attend.

PACAC Regional College Fair, Delaware County—Thurs. Sept. 26, 2019. Penn State Brandywine, Media, PA 6:30-8pm. (610) 892-1205

Philadelphia Performing and Visual Arts College Fair— Monday Nov. 4, 2019, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 128 N. Broad St., Phila., 7pm-9pm

NACAC National College Fair Philadelphia—Sunday, Oct. 20, 2019. Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia, PA. 11:00am-3pm

Chester County I.U. College Fair— Mon. October. 21, 2019. Exton Square Mall, Exton, PA 6pm - 8pm.

College Fair for Students with Learning Differences— the first Weds. each Nov. Hill Top Preparatory School, Rosemont, PA, 6-8:30pm. Check at <http://hilltopprep.org/calendar/>

***PACAC Regional College Fair, Main Line** —Thursday May 21, 2020. Villanova University, Villanova, PA. 6:30 - 9:00 pm.

SENIOR CONFERENCES & HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

As part of the WCASD developmental counseling program, counselors met with their seniors in a large group format on Friday Sept.6th to discuss general post secondary information such as the college application process, Naviance, NCAA eligibility requirements, scholarships, and college entrance exams. In addition, school counselors will meet with each senior individually during the first marking period to review credit requirements for graduation, the student's transcript, and their senior schedule. Other relevant issues discussed during this conference will include educational options, college entrance exams, test dates, grade point average, rank, financial aid, post high school career plans and the college and scholarship application procedure used by the HHS Counseling Office. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend their students' senior conferences upon request. Conferences are scheduled during the school day during a period when it is least disruptive to instructional time. Contact your student's counselor as soon as possible to confirm a date and time that you can attend.

The WCASD high school counselors will be hosting a "College Application Process" informational presentation for students and parents on **Tuesday, September 17th at 7:00pm at Rustin High School**
Parents and students will receive an email announcing this annual event.

AND

The WCASD high school counselors will be hosting a "Financial Aid" informational presentation for students and parents on **Wednesday, October 2nd at 7:00pm at East High School**
Parents and students will receive an email announcing this annual event.

During the college application process, the student should take the lead and assume the responsibility of gathering information, meeting deadlines, and communicating with the relevant school personnel. The counselors are here to help students by providing them with the tools and resources necessary for them to complete their application requirements. If a student encounters difficulty during this process, it is very important that he/she contact his/her counselor for assistance. **SAT's and ACT's are not on WCASD transcripts, so students are responsible for sending their own scores directly to colleges from collegeboard.org and act.org.**

On-line applications and materials: Since college applications, essays, activities and application fees are submitted on-line by the student, many colleges require nothing more from the school counselor than a student's official transcript and a Henderson school profile. Students should meet with their counselor to review their transcript for accuracy. Students will use Family Connections in Naviance to make requests for faculty recommendations, requests that transcripts be sent, track application deadlines, explore scholarships, find schools and college majors suited to them and much more. In most cases, counselor forms and/or the student's transcript and school profile (application packet) will be sent directly from the counseling office to the college electronically via Naviance. Family Connections aids communication between students and counselors concerning college-related information.

Teacher, administrator and counselor recommendations: Don't be surprised if many colleges either do not require recommendations, or they make them optional (try to send one or two if they are optional). Students will invite their teacher, administrator and counselor recommenders to upload a recommendation electronically via Naviance and only AFTER they have asked the teacher, administrator, and/or counselor in person.

Faculty and administrators are not required to write recommendations, but may agree to do so upon request. Students should be prepared to provide an unofficial copy of their transcript and extracurricular activities list to their recommender (unofficial copies of transcripts can be obtained from a counseling office secretary). Students are responsible for creating their own record of school-related and outside-of-school activities, including employment and volunteer work. This could look like a simple bullet pointed list or a resume using the resume builder in Naviance.

Confirmation: Students will be able to check when all supporting materials have been submitted through Naviance Family Connection.

Deadlines: application deadlines are the student's responsibility. Our preference is that all requests to send transcripts be made to the counselor via Naviance at least **5 school days** prior to application deadlines - even if students haven't submitted their applications yet. Because of the volume of transcripts processed around Thanksgiving and winter break, the recommended guideline for all requests for transcripts with a **January 1, 2020** receipt is **December 18, 2019** for your best chance that the transcript will be sent before winter break starts. Counselors will not be checking for transcript requests over the winter break.

Rolling admissions: Often, you will not see an application deadline listed anywhere in a college's literature. Instead you may read the term "rolling admissions" Colleges with "rolling admissions" (no set deadline, rather a "first come, first served" admissions policy) usually fill up their freshman class more than halfway by the end of December. So, the earlier a student applies, the better their chances of admission as a general rule. If you are holding off on applying because you are waiting for better SAT or ACT scores—don't! Apply by mid-November and indicate on your application that you are planning to take SATs/ACT's one or more times, and provide the dates that you are registered to take them. The same advice holds true for Early Action (non-binding) deadlines.

Naviance: An abbreviated version of directions for seniors' use of Naviance is on the last page of this newsletter. Seniors were emailed this newsletter via Naviance and given a demonstration in the Sept. 6th large group meeting. Parents are encouraged to attend their child's senior conference to discuss any questions they have about Naviance, the college application process, and about their student's future beyond high school in general.

STUDENT COURSE SELECTION AND SCHEDULE CHANGES FOR 2019/2020

The procedure for establishing class size, schedules and staffing of teachers as well as ensuring a positive educational environment began last February with the course selection process. Teachers, administrators, counselors, students and parents collaborated on students' course selections through the Spring. Schedules are now finalized and changes from one elective to another will not be considered. As outlined in WCASD Course Selection Guide, and per district policy, level changes for math, English, science and social studies (when appropriate) will be addressed and considered. Level changes down for math, English, science and social studies (when appropriate) will be addressed and considered on an as needed basis after September 23rd. Level changes up will be considered at this time with teacher and parent input. All level changes for full year courses must be completed no later than February 7th, 2020. All level changes for semester courses including English 12 hon. and English aca. lit. levels must be completed no later than September 27th, 2019.

Deadlines for adding electives to existing study halls are September 16th for first semester and full year courses, and February 7th for second semester courses.

A Schedule Change Form must be completed with the appropriate signatures required and turned into the Counseling Office within the time frames listed above or they will not be considered.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Our Intervention Counselor, Ms. Candy Jakubowski co-facilitates several support groups with and without outside agencies throughout the year at Henderson. Students receive support with a variety of issues such as substance abuse recovery, grief, stress/anxiety management and anger management. For more information contact Ms. Jakubowski at cjakubowski@wcasd.net or at (484) 266-3408.

NAVIANCE-FAMILY CONNECTION

STEPS FOR REQUESTING TRANSCRIPTS AND RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

The following are the steps to log into your Naviance- Family Connections account:

Click on the Naviance link located on the HHS website (on left) **OR:**

Go to the Family Connection website:

<http://connection.naviance.com/henderson>

When prompted, enter your user id- which is your school email address up to the @ symbol.

Your password is your student ID number (the number you use in the café when buying food)

Click on “submit”

You should now be on the Henderson Family Connection Welcome Page

Requesting Transcripts and Recommendations

Click on the “Colleges” tab

Click on the “Colleges I’m applying to” link

You will see a message about linking your common app account with Naviance. If you are not using the Common App, ignore the message in red. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO REGISTER WITH COMMON APP IF YOUR ARE NOT USING THE COMMON APP.** If you are using the common app, please follow common app instructions listed below.

Click on +add to this list tab to add colleges to your list. Fill out the information on the next page. ***Be sure to ask for a transcript. If you do not ask for a transcript, we will not send one.***

You will now see a running list of the colleges you are applying to.

You can request teacher/counselor recommendation letters at the bottom of this screen. ***If your college requires a secondary school report, please request a recommendation letter in person or via your regular school email to your counselor.***

College Applications – done one of two ways for each college:

The student will electronically complete and submit the application that the college itself supplies via their website or,

The student will electronically complete and submit the application via the Common Application.

Common Application

Register on the Common App website: <https://www.commonapp.org/Login>

Once your account is set up, you must fill in all of the demographic information, and the education section in its entirety. Once this is completed, you will be asked to complete a FERPA waiver. To find the FERPA waiver, click on the “Assign Recommenders” tab for any college within My Colleges. The FERPA waiver is only completed once and covers all current and future colleges and recommenders.

Once the FERPA waiver is complete on Common App, you will be able to link your Common App account with Naviance. This is done on Naviance.

You will request your transcript and recommendation letters on Naviance. The actual college applications will be completed on Common App.