

PATHFINDER

West Chester B. Reed Henderson High School Counseling Department Newsletter

December 2019

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GENERAL NEWS

With the second marking period well underway, it is time to assess how well your student has met their and your expectations for academic achievement thus far. On the following pages you will learn about ways in which the educators at HHS can assist your student in this important area of their lives.

Although counselors meet with all of their students each year, the focus of the WCASD High School Guidance and Counseling Developmental Program in the fall is on Seniors (group guidance and individual counseling) and Freshmen (group guidance). Group guidance for Juniors and individual counseling for both Juniors and freshman occurs and continues throughout the winter, and in the early spring we meet with Sophomores for group guidance. Go to the HHS guidance and counseling website (link to your child's grade level) for more information on our 9-12 developmental guidance and counseling program. The link can be found by copying and pasting this address into your browser: <https://www.wcasd.net/site/Default.aspx?PageType=1&SiteID=518&ChannelID=549&DirectoryType=6>

Throughout the Fall, the Counseling Department has processed hundreds of transcripts to colleges and written letters of recommendations for seniors. The next few pages will update you about where your student should be in this process as well as what's ahead for your senior in the next few months.

By the end of October, most freshmen now know how to navigate the school (without a map!) and have become accustomed to their new high school routine. In an effort to move them forward, counselors conducted additional orientation activities with freshmen during the morning of October 16th. Read about "Freshman Orientation Part 2" on the following pages.

The Pathfinder Newsletter is only a tiny snapshot of information that is available to you and your student. Remember to visit the HHS guidance and counseling website on a regular basis, as it is continually being updated and improved.

The Achievement Center

The Achievement Center (AC) is where students can receive assistance in math, and/or science depending on the period, and general study skills. Typically students go to the AC to get help in test preparation and homework assignments. Also, some students go to the AC because they need or want a quiet place to study with the help of someone who can clarify questions that may arise.

Students may come to the Center voluntarily or respond to encouragement by their counselor, teachers, administrators or guardian to utilize the Center. The Achievement Center is located in Room 164 and it is open from 7:45am to 2:15pm. No appointments are necessary, and students may come during any of the eight periods of the school day whenever they have study hall or lunch. Students may request a pass beforehand from any of their teachers, counselor or administrator.

After School HELP (Henderson Enhanced Learning Period)

The Henderson Library is open after school Mondays through Thursdays from 2:30-3:30. Staff and National Honors Society tutors will be available to provide students with a supportive place to complete homework and get assistance with assignments. No appointment or pass is necessary, just drop-in any time during the time frame outlined above.

National Honor Society Tutoring

The National Honor Society (NHS) provides peer tutoring services at no charge to HHS students experiencing difficulty in any subject area. Students can sign up in homeroom to go to the library during their lunch or study hall and receive tutoring from any one of the resident tutors during that period or students can request a tutor for a specific subject by contacting Mr. Truong or Mr. Heintz, NHS Co-Advisors. Passes are given out in homeroom when the tutoring matches are made.

Teachers, counselors and administrators are available to guide students in this process. NHS peer tutors are also available to student “drop-ins” after school in the library from 2:30-3:30 M-Th. The NHS keeps a record of requests and tutoring matches made. Parents and staff members are welcome to check in on students’ tutoring attendance and their progress by contacting Mr. Truong NHS Faculty Advisor (struong@wcasd.net) and Mr. Heintz (jheintz@wcasd.net).

Teacher Assistance

Teachers are available after school (from 2:15—2:50) for help with classroom assignments and test preparation. Students or guardians can arrange this by either speaking with or e-mailing the teacher directly. Teacher e-mails can be found on HHS’ website.

Math Specialist

HHS has a math specialist who not only assists students with becoming proficient on the Keystone exams, she is often available to assist all students in many subjects within the math curriculum. Please contact your child’s counselor to discuss the possibility of this support for your child.

Monitoring Progress

Monitoring your student's progress by using the Parent Portal on-line on a regular basis is a good way of reminding them that you play an important role in their education. It is appropriate at the high school level to step in and assist your student if they are experiencing academic difficulty and are unable to or are an ineffective self-advocate. Encourage your student to seek help from their teacher(s), counselor, and grade level administrator, and then follow up by emailing or calling your student's educators. If you do not have a Parent Portal account or would like to add a child to an existing account and have not received your Access ID and password, you may come in to the Counseling office with a picture I.D. and obtain it from Ms. Sharon Macnamara or from Ms. Karen Pyle. If you are unable to come to the counseling office in person, call Ms. Pyle or Ms. Macnamara for alternate instructions on obtaining your log-in information. If you have an account but don't remember your username and/or password, please click on the 'Forgot username or password' link on the Parent Portal site (<https://ps.wcasd.net/public/>) and enter the email address that was used to create your account. If you do not have access to that email or need assistance please send an email to parentportal@wcasd.net.

Schoology

Each teacher in the WCASD has a Schoology page that contains information on their curriculum, lessons, and upcoming assignments and assessments. Parents can access their child's teachers' Schoology pages from the Parent Portal using their student's log-in information. For directions on the use of Schoology, copy and paste the following New User Access steps link to a browser: <https://www.wcasd.net/Domain/4722>.

SENIORS — A TIMELINE

September through December—Seniors have been informed by their counselor that they should:

- Meet with their counselor for their senior conference. As was outlined in the September 2019 Pathfinder, parents and guardians are invited to attend their students' senior conferences upon request, and many of you have already taken advantage of this opportunity. It is never too late to speak with your student's counselor about this or any other topic or issue.
- Submit college applications and submit requests to the counselor via Naviance for transcripts and supporting materials to be sent to colleges.
- Request teacher recommendations first in person and then through Naviance. **Follow up with teachers to make sure that teacher recommendations were not just uploaded, but also sent on time (it's a two step process).**
- Register and take a final SAT I, ACT or SAT II in the first semester if needed.
- Meet with college representatives who visit HHS. Many colleges give "points" toward your acceptance when you meet with their admissions reps. Signup for these meetings is done through Naviance.
- Research scholarships. Scholarship Bulletins are sent to seniors' Naviance email, posted in Naviance on the Family Connection home page for seniors as well as under the "Colleges" tab. Some applications are available in the guidance office Career Center, but most are on-line. Students must see their counselor if transcripts are requested by the scholarship.
- Be aware of college deadlines for financial aid forms. The forms are available on-line. Check the website link "College Counseling" and then link to "Show Me the Money".

- Continue to work to improve academic achievement. Many colleges request first and second marking period senior year grades, as well as require a specific minimum GPA to award and keep acceptances and scholarship offers.

Regardless of the type of application you are using (either the colleges' own app, or the Common App), all transcript and teacher recommendations requests are still to be entered into your Naviance Family Connection. This is the only way your counselor will be informed of your requests.

*Seniors were made aware of this process during their senior group meeting and in their individual senior conferences.

January - Seniors Should:

- If they haven't already, file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) according to the earliest college deadline (see below). Parents should take the lead on filling out this application.
- Continue to submit college applications and submit requests via Naviance to the counseling office for transcripts and supporting materials to be sent to colleges.

February - Seniors Should:

- Request that mid-year grades be sent from the counseling office, if your college requests them. At the end of the second marking period, a form will be provided to each senior on which they can list the colleges requesting mid-year (first semester) grades.
- Continue to work to improve academic achievement. Many colleges require a specific minimum GPA to award and keep acceptances and scholarship offers.

Financial Aid

It is recommended that all guardians of seniors file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form whether they think they need help with paying for college or not. Filing the FAFSA is like an insurance policy for financial aid. Once you have a FAFSA on file, you are able to amend it should your family's financial situation change for the worse. If you do not file the FAFSA within the time frame described below, you will be required to wait until the following year's filing window in order to be considered eligible for aid regardless of changes in your family's financial situation before that time. The form must be filed between October 1st, 2019 and June 30th, 2020. However, parents must adhere to their earliest college deadline in order to be processed and accepted by the individual colleges. You can find the FAFSA form and information on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

FRESHMAN ORIENTATION PART 2

On October 16th, while the sophomores and juniors took the PSAT, the Freshmen enjoyed a morning full of activities designed to motivate them to begin making the most of their high school experience. The class was divided into several groups and they rotated through activities, described below:

Student Services Presentations

Candy Jakubowski (HHS Intervention Counselor) presented the Safe-2-Say Something, which is a violence and other dangerous behaviors prevention initiative required by the state of Pennsylvania (<https://www.wcasd.net/Page/11263>). Counselors gave a presentation on the Keys to Success in High School which included information on graduation requirements, credits and GPA, how to access academic help, and the importance of getting involved in extra-curricular activities. Visit the HHS Counseling website to see the freshman presentation powerpoint under the "Counseling Dept. News and Events" section (<https://www.wcasd.net/site/Default.aspx?PageType=1&SiteID=518&ChannelID=549&DirectoryType=6>). Counselors also got freshmen started on the "Do What You Are" personality assessment in Naviance, and presented information on Technical College High School TCHS (<http://www.cciu.org/tchsbrandywine>).

Student Services Presentations Cont....

In a separate time slot, certified community professionals trained freshmen in QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer). QPR is a suicide prevention and awareness program. Students learned how to recognize the warning signs of suicide, Question a person about suicide, how to offer hope and Persuade someone to get help, and how to get help by Referring someone to the appropriate resource. QPR is not a form of counseling or treatment. Training students in suicide prevention is a PA state requirement (ACT 72) in response to the national and local increase in death by suicide.

Individual Freshman Conferences

Starting in December, Counselors will be meeting with freshmen individually to finish and review the “Do What You Are” assessment results, review academic progress, goal setting, and to create a tentative four year plan. Parents are welcome to attend individual conferences with their student. Please contact your child’s counselor to find out when their conference is scheduled.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

PSAT results

PSAT scores from the October 16th testing date are available to view online in mid-December. You can access your student’s results online by visiting collegeboard.org and creating an account or logging into an existing one. There will be a presentation to the Junior class scheduled for December 9th on how to interpret their results. During the Junior presentation they are also introduced to the post-secondary school process.

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 colleges in the East and the far West do not have a preference and will accept both tests. 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. The student is responsible for registering directly with the testing agency online at www.collegeboard.org (SAT I and II) and www.act.org (ACT).

Most of the highly competitive colleges recommend that students complete SAT II Subject Tests. These one hour subject area tests are offered in the areas of English, math, history, world language and science. Depending on the college, the results of the tests may be used for admission and/or 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.

REMAINING SAT/ACT DATES FOR 2019 - 2020

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

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Test
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, 2019	May 8, 2020	SAT I & II
June 13, 2020	May 8, 2020	ACT
July 18, 2020	June 19, 2020	ACT
August, 2020	TBD	SAT I & II

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 in 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 course to another will not be considered. Students may, within the same study hall period add a second semester course by **Friday, February 7th, 2020**. As noted in the Sept. newsletter, Friday Sept. 27th was the final deadline to make level changes to English 12.

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 after September 23rd 2019.

Level changes for math, English, science and social studies (when appropriate) will be addressed and considered on an as needed basis within the following time frames:

1st semester

Sept. 23rd, 2019—Jan 21st, 2020

2nd semester

Wednesday Jan. 22nd, 2020 to Friday, February 7th, 2020

- * A Level Change Form must be completed with the appropriate signatures required (student, teacher, counselor and parent), and turned into the Counseling Office within the time frames listed above or they will not be considered. Please note that students must carry the minimum number of credits as defined in the WCASD course catalog.
- * The last date to drop a course to prevent a Withdraw Pass (WP) or Withdraw Fail (WF) from appearing on a student's permanent record is two weeks *before* the end of the second marking period, **January 8th, 2020**. The WP or WF will be based upon the cumulative average for the year at the time of the drop. **The dropped course and appropriate designation of WF or WP will appear on the transcript. Only the WF will negatively effect the GPA.**
- * There will be no level changes after **February 7, 2020** for the duration of the school year.

A LOOK AHEAD

Second Marking Period (November 2- January 22, 2020)

- Individual Senior Conferences continue.
- Individual Junior Conferences begin in January after the Junior large group PSAT presentation in late December. Counselors focus on course selection and researching post secondary plans. **Parents are welcome to attend individual junior conferences with their student. Please contact your child's counselor to find out when their conference is scheduled.**
- Individual Freshman Conferences begin in December and continue throughout the remainder of the school year.
- Possible Student Support Groups for the second and third marking periods : Stress Management, Grief Support, Healthy Relationships, and vaping cessation. Contact your counselor if you are interested in one of these supports for your child.