



College Planning Parent Newsletter

August 2015

Parents of the Class of 2016:

Senior year is a busy and exciting time, as your student plans for life after high school. For college-bound seniors, this may mean visiting campuses, writing college essays, filing applications, interviewing, and seeking scholarships, all while successfully completing senior year coursework and extracurricular commitments. At times these demands may seem overwhelming, but careful planning can lessen the stress. The key to **start early and stay organized**. As the College Counselor at JHHS, I am here to provide the resources and encouragement that you and your students need as they go through the college application and financial aid processes.

This newsletter is intended to give parents an overview of what to expect in the coming year. This newsletter includes:

- A timetable for senior year
- Suggestions on building a college list
- A schedule of upcoming college fairs
- A description of application procedures
- An overview of the financial aid process
- A calendar of college planning events

During the school year, more in-depth information will be provided in JHHS Parent University nights, Coffee with the Counselors, District college programs, and email updates. Please make sure that our school has your updated email address so that you are kept informed.

I look forward to assisting you and your senior plan for life beyond high school. Please feel free to contact Mrs. Volpe or me with any college or financial aid questions.

All the best,

Nancy Davis

College Staff:

Nancy Davis
College Counselor
847-718-4846

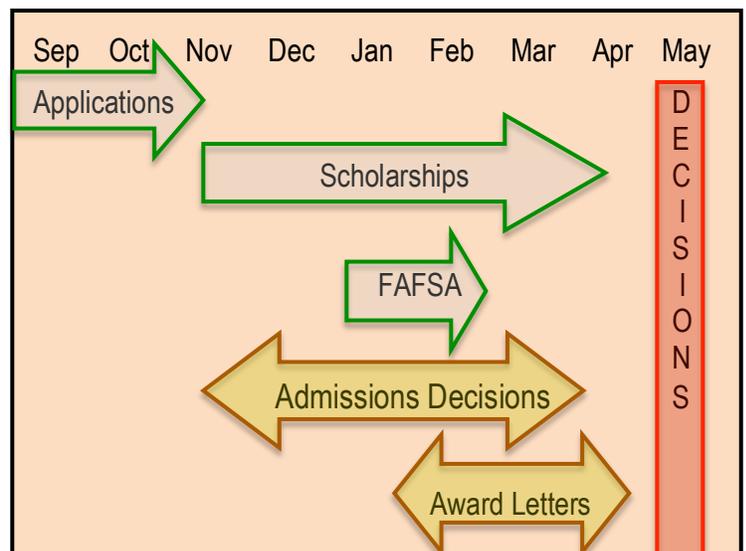
Paula Volpe
College Career Assistant
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Timetable for College-bound Seniors

Listed below are the steps for filing college and financial aid applications and a suggested timetable. Keeping to this schedule should help your student stay organized and meet deadlines.

- 1) Seniors should come to school this fall with a list of where they are applying and a completed Naviance "Counselor Rec Survey".
- 2) In the second week of school, we meet with all seniors to explain the steps for completing college applications.
- 3) Seniors should aim to complete all college applications by November 1st and no later than Thanksgiving.
- 4) Once college applications are complete, seniors turn their attention to searching for scholarships. This process continues into the spring.
- 5) Between January 1st and mid-February, families should file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Some schools may also require additional financial aid forms.
- 6) Between February and April, students consider their offers of admission and financial aid award letters.
- 7) National Decision Day is May 1st, the day that colleges and universities expect your student's final decision of where they will attend next year.

Senior Year Timetable



Building a College List

Is your son or daughter still adding to their college list? Here are a few ideas of how to find schools that are a good fit.

- **Campus Visits** – There is no substitute for touring a college campus to learn what general college traits appeal or if the particular school is a good fit. This fall, we have five days off from school that can be used for college visits: 9/7, 9/14, 9,23, 10/12, and 11/2. If missing school for a college visit, please notify the attendance office in advance and be sure to bring evidence of your campus visit to the JHHS Attendance Office.
- **College Fairs** – Meet with admission representatives from a variety of colleges around the country and learn about course offerings, college life, admission and financial aid. See the list of upcoming college fairs below.
- **College Representative Visits** – Admissions representatives from over 100 colleges will visit the JHHS College Career Center this fall. Once the school year begins, a list of upcoming visits will be posted outside the College Career Center, in Naviance and in morning announcements. This list is updated frequently, so encourage your student to check often for schools of interest and take advantage of these great opportunities.
- **Career Exploration** – Encourage your child to explore possible careers at District 214 Career Nights, Career Treks or internships. Contact JHHS's Career Advisor at 718-4838 for more information.
- **Naviance** - Use Naviance to search for colleges based on career interests or specific college traits, perform in-depth research on a particular school or study scattergrams to determine if your student is likely to be admitted to a particular college.

Your senior's final list is likely to include a combination of schools. If your student wishes to apply to "reach" schools where there is a low probability of being accepted, this should be balanced with "target" and "safety" schools where the student's GPA and ACTs are at or above the average of students accepted. In addition, a final list should include at least one "financial safety" school that you know your family can afford, even if you receive no financial aid or scholarships.

How long a list should you have? It depends! Last year the average John Hersey High School senior applied to 4 schools. BUT...if your senior is happy with schools where they are very likely to be admitted, then the final list can be shorter. If your student has several reach schools, the number may be higher. We recommend that all students should have at least one financial safety school and at least one school where they are likely to be admitted. If your student needs help in building a balanced list, please set an appointment with the college counselor.

Fall 2015 College Fairs

"Colleges That Change Lives" College Fair

Sunday, August 23, 5 – 7 p.m.
Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center
1551 Thoreau Drive, North Schaumburg, IL

NACAC Performing and Visual Arts Fair

Sunday, September 20, 1 – 3:30 p.m.
DePaul University – Theatre School
2350 North Racine Avenue, Chicago, IL

NACAC College Fairs

Saturday, September 26, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Navy Pier
600 East Grand Ave, Chicago, IL

OR

Sunday, September 27, 12pm – 3 pm
Wisconsin Center, Exhibit Hall A
400 West Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee, WI

Directions Special Needs College Fair

Tuesday, September 29, 6 – 8:30 p.m.
Forest View Educational Center
2121 S. Goebbert Road, Arlington Heights, IL

Chicago National Portfolio Day

Sunday, October 18, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
280 S. Columbus Drive, Chicago, IL

Spanish Speaking College Fair

Wednesday, October 14, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Palatine High School
111 North Rohlwing Road, Palatine, IL

District 211 College Fair

Wednesday, October 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Palatine High School
111 North Rohlwing Road, Palatine, IL

Application Procedures

The key to managing the college application process is to **start early and stay organized**. Completing applications early can give your son or daughter a better chance of being admitted, receiving scholarships, getting on campus housing, registering early for coursework, and being selected for special programs such as honors or leadership programs. The goal should be to **complete all applications by November 1st** and certainly no later than Thanksgiving.

- 1) **Get Organized!** Your student will be given a college organizer during senior guidance in late August. They can use this to list their colleges and the due date for each application. This organizer will also help them track the materials required as part of the application at each school, such as application fees, transcripts, secondary school report or counselor recommendation, teacher recommendations, or test scores. Looking at due dates will help students set deadlines for sending each of the needed materials.
- 2) **Complete the Application.** Colleges and universities today prefer online applications, which can be found on college websites. Students are encouraged to use the Common Application if this form is accepted by more than one of their schools. A complete list of colleges accepting the Common Application is found at http://jhhs.d214.org/student_resources/senior_resources1.aspx.
- 3) **Turn in an Application Notification and Request Form (ANR).** For every application submitted, students must file an ANR in the College Career Center. This form allows JHHS to track all the applications pieces needed to complete a student application and allows students to request official transcripts. Since most applications require JHHS to send an official transcript and transcripts requests take 15 business days to fulfill, your student should complete Application Notification and Request (ANR) Forms **3 FULL WEEKS** before the application deadline. There is no charge for sending transcripts to colleges or scholarships.
- 4) **Send ACT and/or SAT Scores.** JHHS can NOT send test scores to colleges. Students should log into their ACT and SAT online accounts and send their test scores directly to their colleges. It is not too late to take an additional ACT or SAT test to improve test scores. Some private schools also require SAT II subject tests for admission. Students should carefully check the test requirements for each school and be sure to take any needed tests early this fall. Students should send test scores directly to the colleges, allowing at least 4 weeks from the test date to the application deadline.
- 5) **Request Counselor Forms or Recommendations.** Some applications require the counselor to complete a form indicating your student's class rank, coursework rigor, academic ability and character. Others require a counselor letter or recommendation. Students must print out any required form, bring it to the CCC and attach it to the Application Notification and Request Form (ANR). Students should also complete the "Counselor Rec Survey" in Naviance BEFORE making a counselor request, so that your counselor has the information needed to write a strong recommendation.
- 6) **Request Teacher Recommendations.** Some colleges require one or more teacher recommendations. If required, seniors should ask the teacher in person and provide the teacher with a Recommendation Request Form, listing all colleges needing the teacher's recommendation. Some teachers also require a Student Information Form to write a strong letter of recommendation. Both forms are available in the CCC. Students also need to add recommendation requests to their Naviance account, so that their teachers can upload and transmit online recommendations. Please allow at least 3 weeks for our teachers to write a letter of recommendation.
- 7) **Register with the NCAA.** If you want to play DI or DII athletics in college, you must be cleared with the NCAA or NAIA Eligibility Centers. Eligibility applications are available online at www.eligibilitycenter.org or www.playnaia.org. In addition to the application, your student must send transcripts and direct the ACT or SAT to send official scores to the eligibility centers to certify the student-athlete's initial eligibility.

Financial Aid & Scholarships

Financial aid refers to merit and need-based monies that can be used to pay for college. There are many types of financial aid, including scholarships, grants, Federal work study, and loans, which can come from the Federal or State government and private sources. Most scholarships and financial aid are competitive and require applications. Listed below are suggestions for how to apply for financial and scholarships.

Fast Facts About Financial Aid

Where do I start? The most important step in securing financial aid and scholarships is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You will find this on the web at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Do NOT use the commercial site www.fafsa.com, which will charge a fee. You should never pay for financial aid or scholarships.

When should we file? This form should be completed sometime between January 1st, when the form becomes available, and early February. Since financial aid funding is greatest at the outset of the year, do not wait until your family completes their income tax return to complete the FAFSA. Instead, make careful ESTIMATES based on last year's taxes. You can make corrections once your taxes are complete.

Who should file the FAFSA? We encourage families of seniors to fill out FAFSA, even if you do not think you will qualify for Federal aid. The FAFSA is also used by Illinois for State aid and by colleges and universities across the country as the starting point for determining school-specific financial aid and scholarships.

Who should NOT file the FAFSA? Undocumented students (i.e. those in the U.S. without a proper visa) are not eligible for federal or state funding and should NOT complete the FAFSA. An undocumented student may still be eligible for college or private scholarships. We have scholarship information for undocumented students on the JHHS College Resources web page.

How can I get help completing the FAFSA? District 214 will host a FAFSA Completion Night on February 2, 2016 in the Wheeling High School Library. Two sessions will be available by appointment, at 6.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

When will I hear if my student qualifies for financial aid? Each college will send your son or daughter a Financial Aid Award letter, usually in March or April. On April 11th, JHHS will host Award letter Day for families seeking assistance comparing financial aid award letters from different schools.

Finding Scholarships

Step 1: Complete all non-FAFSA financial aid applications. Some schools may require the CSS Profile at <http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile> or their own Scholarship/Financial Aid application as a first step in qualifying for school scholarships. Check the Financial Aid website at each school where your student is applying to determine if any documents are required.

Step 2: Apply for college scholarships. If a student's college requires applications for their scholarships, they will be posted on the admissions or financial aid pages of college websites. Some schools provide scholarships automatically based on grades and test scores, so no applications are needed.

Step 3: Apply for local scholarships. Scholarships from local businesses, charitable foundations, or local groups are announced in the JHHS morning announcements, posted on monitors throughout the school, and added to Naviance. This list includes each organization's name, a scholarship description, website address and an estimate of this year's due date. After you have identified scholarships, come into the College Career Center to pick up any paper applications.

Step 4: Apply for national scholarships. A list of reputable, free scholarship search engines are listed on the College Resources page of the JHHS website. These search engines will match your personal information to merit and need based scholarships around the country.

Final Tips:

- Pay close attention to scholarship deadlines.
- If the scholarship requires a transcript, an Application Notification & Request Form should be turned into the JHHS College Career Center at least FIFTEEN SCHOOL DAYS in advance of the deadline date.
- If recommendations are required, ask the writer at least three weeks in advance of the transcript deadline so that they have time to write a thoughtful recommendation.

College Counseling Events for the Class of 2016

DATE	EVENT	TIME & PLACE	TARGET AUDIENCE
August			
Sunday 23	40 Colleges That Change Lives Liberal Arts College Fair & Info Session	5 - 7 p.m. at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center 1551 Thoreau Dr., North Schaumburg	Parents & Students
Monday 31	Senior Forum Seniors meet with the College Counselor to learn about the college admissions process	During the School Day in the JHHS Theatre	Students
September			
Tuesday- Wednesday 1-2	Senior Guidance Seniors meet with their counselors for college career planning	During the school day	Students
Wednesday 2	University of Illinois Night An admissions officer from the University of Illinois in Urbana Champaign will talk about the 2015-16 application process	7 p.m. in the Forest View Educational Center Theatre	Students interested in attending UIUC & their Parents
Thursday 3	JHHS Parent University The JHHS College Counselor discusses the college admissions and financial aid process with parents of seniors.	7 p.m. in the JHHS Theatre	Parents
Monday 7	No School. This is a great opportunity for a campus visit. Call ahead for a tour.		Parents & Students
Wednesday 9	Coffee with the Counselors Includes a brief overview of the application timetable and procedures	7:15 a.m. JHHS Titre Room	Parents
Monday 14	No School. This is a great opportunity for a campus visit. Call ahead for a tour.		Parents & Students
Sunday 20	NACAC Performing & Visual Arts College Fair	1 – 3:30 p.m. DePaul University Theater School	Parents & Students interested in the arts
Wednesday 23	No School. This is a great opportunity for a campus visit. Call ahead for a tour.		Parents & Students
Saturday 26	NACAC College Fair Over 200 colleges in attendance	11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Navy Pier, Chicago	Parents & Students
Tuesday 29	Directions College and Career Fair Meet with specialists in learning disabilities and college admission officers to find evaluate post high school options.	6 – 8:30 p.m. Forest View Field House	Parents & Students with Special Learning Needs
October			
Tuesday 6	Career Night: Arts & Communications/ Human Services	6:30 - 9 p.m. Elk Grove High School	Parents & Students
Monday 12	No School. This is a great opportunity for a campus visit. Call ahead for a tour.		Parents & Students
Wednesday 14	District 211 Spanish-speaking College Fair	6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Palatine High School	Parents & Students
Thursday 15	Harper College Open House	5:00 – 8 p.m. Harper College Wojcik Center	Parents & Students interested in Harper College
Thursday – Friday 15-16	Application Completion Events Students are encouraged to drop by to complete applications and essays	Periods 4, 5, 6 The Computer Lab In Room 153	Students

DATE	EVENT	TIME & PLACE	TARGET AUDIENCE
October			
Sunday 18	National Portfolio Day Art School professionals review student portfolios and talk about their programs	10 a.m. – 2 p.m. School of the Art Institute of Chicago	Parents & Students interested in the visual arts
Wednesday 21	Career Night: Health/Natural Resources	6:30 - 9 p.m. Prospect High School	Parents & Students
Wednesday 21	District 211 College Fair	6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Palatine High School	Parents & Students
November			
Monday 2	No School. This is a great opportunity for a campus visit. Call ahead for a tour.		
Wednesday 11	Career Night: Engineering & Industrial Technology/Business & Computers	6:30 - 9 p.m. Wheeling High School	Parents & Students
Monday 16	Advising The Student Athlete A representative from the NCAA talks about college athlete recruitment, NCAA eligibility, and scholarships.	7:00 p.m. @ Forest View Educational Center Theatre	Potential college athletes & their parents
December			
Tuesday 8	Senior Financial Aid Seminar A College Financial Aid Director demystifies the Financial Aid Process	7:00 p.m. @ Forest View Educational Center D100 Rooms	Parents & Students
Tuesday 15	Senior Guidance Counselors talk with seniors about Financial Aid/ Scholarships	During the school day	Students
January			
Saturday 30	Gap Year Fair Students investigate options for a year off between high school and college	1 – 3:00 p.m. New Trier High School Winnetka Campus Cafeteria	Parents & Students
February			
Tuesday 2	FAFSA Completion Night Financial Aid experts will help you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)	6:30 p.m. & 7:45 p.m. Wheeling High School Library	Parents & Students
April			
Monday 11	Award Letter Day Compare financial aid offers and understand the financial impact of your college choice.	By appointment only Call Nancy Davis at 847-718-4846	Parents & Students
Thursday 28	Final Senior Guidance Seniors learn about finalizing their post-high school plans, graduation, and transitioning to the next phase of life.	JHHS Computer Labs	Students
Friday 29	National Decision Day Party Students should stop by the CCC to celebrate their post high school plans wearing their college colors or t-shirt.	College Career Center Periods 4, 5, 6	Students
May			
Friday 3	Graduation Rehearsal		Students
Sunday 5	Graduation		Parents & Students