

HHS JUNIOR NEWSLETTER

Volume 13, Issue 1 / September, 2011

From the Guidance Office

Throughout the year, we will forward information to you regarding academics, colleges, career information etc. This spring we will be visiting English classes to present information and resources regarding the college planning process. Please take the time to follow through on information which pertains to you. Also, please share the information with your parents so they can best assist you in your educational, career, and personal decisions.

Mr. Tasker and Ms. Reichart

Counselors

PSAT / NMSQT

In order to enter the competition for Merit Scholarships to be awarded in 2012, Juniors **must** take the PSAT/NMSQT in 2011 and meet published requirements for participation. We will be administering the test on **Wednesday, October 12, 7:45 – 11:15 a.m.** at Highland High School. Interested Juniors should register with Mrs. Gamauf in the Guidance Office. The cost is \$15.00 per student payable upon registration (make checks out to “Highland High School”). **THE DEADLINE IS 3:00 P.M., WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5th. You are encouraged to register early as registration is limited.**

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test is a multiple-choice test that measures critical reading, math reasoning, and writing skills. The 2011 PSAT / NMSQT has five sections containing two 25-minute critical reading sections containing 48 questions, two 25-minute math sections containing 38 questions, and one 30-minute writing skills section containing 39 questions. The test questions require 2 hours and 10 minutes (plus approximately 35 minutes for pre-test administration). Total time for the test is approximately three hours. The test gives juniors the opportunity to:

- * Practice for the SAT
- * Gain feedback on important college-related verbal, math, and writing skills
- * Forecast their SAT scores from the results
- * Intervene and learn from their mistakes
- * See how their academic skills compare with those of other college-bound students across the state and nation
- * Assess their potential to be national Merit Scholars (when taken in the Junior Year, the PSAT also serves as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)

Individual results are also helpful in identifying and intervening in academic weaknesses, choosing classes for the senior year, and improving test-taking skills. **All test takers are encouraged to complete the full length practice test using tips and strategies about calculators, guessing, pacing, etc. which they will be given upon registration.**

Helpful Hints On Post Secondary Education Admissions

What are colleges and trade or technical schools looking for? The majority of schools rank the following factors in order of importance: GPA, high school courses (senior year especially), ACT/SAT scores, class rank, counselor/teacher recommendation, extracurricular activities. Your job during the junior year is to do the best you can in as strong an academic schedule as you can handle!

Post Secondary School Admissions

The Junior year is critical for college and technical/trade school admissions preparation. Now is the time to begin selecting schools, furthering career choices, preparing for College Entrance Exams, and investigating financial aid. The following information should help you in this process.

College Admission Materials

To access the most current information regarding admission requirements, application procedures and deadlines, selection criteria, transfer policies, tuition/room and board costs, etc., you are strongly encouraged to visit the website of the college/university in which you are interested. (See Directory) The Guidance Office also has handouts and catalogs available for many of the state schools in Ohio as well as many private schools in the surrounding region. Juniors are encouraged to utilize the Guidance Resource Room during a study hall to research college & career information. The internet version of **OCIS (Ohio Career Information System)** is an excellent resource for additional information regarding colleges and training programs, financial aid and much more. User name and password information may be obtained in the Guidance Office or Media Center. Information about Ohio's public and private colleges and universities may also be found at www.ohiopriatecolleges.com and www.opuac.org

College Visitations

All Juniors are permitted two days of excused absence per year for the purpose of making college visits. You are strongly encouraged to schedule these during days off school (Sept. 19, Oct. 14, Nov. 4 & 28). Also, you must follow procedures by picking up a College Visitation form in the Guidance Office to be signed by your parent/guardian and the college representative with whom you meet. The form is to be returned to the high school office when you return to school. To get the most out of your visit, follow the suggested guidelines on the visitation form. You should also be aware that most colleges have special visitation days of a general nature and for specific college majors. Check with the admissions office to find out when these are being held and plan accordingly. (See Directory)

College Fair

The **2011 Medina County College & Career Fair** will be held on **Wednesday, October 12**, from 6:30 to 8:00 at the Medina County Community Center, 735 Lafayette Road. Plan to attend, visit with college reps, pick up some materials, etc. Bring your parents!

College Entrance Exams

It is strongly recommended that students planning to attend college take the ACT and/or the SAT in the **spring of the Junior year (April through June)**. The choice of the test should be based on the admissions and scholarship requirements of the school(s) where you are planning to apply. The choice of the date should be based on availability (are you going to be here?) and on preparation (is material from your junior classes going to be tested...particularly in math). The following is a listing of some possibilities to consider in preparation for the tests:

***Use the free practice materials provided with the registration packet.

*** Take a practice test online. Full-length practice tests for the ACT/SAT are available through the Learning **Express Library** from INFOhio Electronic Resources for Students. Login from home- it's free, very user friendly, and provides immediate score feedback. Check with the Library Media Specialist for access information.

*** ACT /SAT software. . . check it out at the Library or go to **www.act.org** or **www.collegeboard.org** and download a demo version of the newest test prep software.

***When you take your exams in the spring, order a copy of the test items, study the items you missed, identify your weaknesses, and seek help with the material.

***Take a course. Check the Guidance Bulletin Board for information on upcoming classes that are held at: ACT courses are offered at Medina County Career Center, Strongsville High School and Medina County University Center. Kaplan also offers ACT/SAT preparation. A few guidelines for successful courses include:

- * Does the course teach how the entrance exam is structured and scored?
- * Does it teach test-taking skills you can absorb in a few weeks?
- * Does it include questions from real entrance exams?
- * Can it target strengths and weaknesses?
- * For a course, what is the track record? What percentage of students improve their scores and how much?
- * What guarantees does the course offer. . . some will continue to work with you until you are satisfied.

Attention Athletes !!!

Any student who wants to participate in NCAA Div. I or II athletics must be **certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse**. Certification includes: (1) graduation from high school; (2) meeting NCAA coursework and GPA/ACT-SAT requirements; (3) submitting a Student Release Form to the Clearinghouse; and (4) coding 9999 as one of the

choices of college and scholarship codes on the ACT or SAT registration. Visit ncaaclearinghouse.net to view the **2010-2011 Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete** detailing requirements and registration information.

Financial Aid Information

Now is a good time for parents and students to be thinking about what they can do to enhance their chances for financial aid. The fiscal year prior to your entry year into college will affect your financial aid for your first year of college! Some tips. . . get organized in collecting necessary tax information so you can file early. Plan to attend the Financial Aid meeting in January for a detailed overview of Financial Aid.

Online Financial Aid Information:

FAFSA EXPRESS: Free Application for Federal Student Aid	www.fafsa.ed.gov
Financial Aid Need Estimator	www.act.org/fane
FastWEB: Financial Aid Search Through the Web	www.fastweb.com
FinAid: The Financial Aid/Scholarship Information Page	www.finaid.org
OASFAA: Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators	www.oasfaa.org
State Grants & Scholarships [Ohio Board of Regents]	www.regents.state.oh.us
Student Financial Assistance Information [U.S. Dept. of Education]	www.ed.gov/finaid.html

Scholarships

Not all scholarships allow you to apply as early as junior year, but many do. The earlier you begin your [scholarship search](#) the better. You will find that many of the universities that you are interested in offer scholarships for matriculating freshman. While most college scholarships are based on merit, there are others available for race, religion, and students with unique circumstances or special talents. Many essay and sweepstakes scholarships allow students to apply during their junior year, so you may want to make these types your first priority.

- Visit any out of state universities.
If there are a few out of state colleges on your list that you are still considering, now is the time to check them out. Make sure that when you critique out of state universities during your visit that you factor in the difference in price. Unless an out-of-state institution extends a generous [financial aid](#) package, it will almost always be less expensive to attend a college in your state and the difference in cost is worth taking into account.