

PATHFINDER

West Chester B. Reed Henderson High School Counseling Department Newsletter

September 2020

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GENERAL NEWS

The Henderson High School counselors are excited and ready to begin the 2020-2021 school year in spite of the challenges it poses. While our delivery of services may be remote much of the time, our role remains the same; to help students focus on academic, career and social/emotional development so they achieve success in school.

In an effort to help all students achieve their potential, WCASD school counselors are committed to ensuring ethical, equitable, and inclusive school environments. We believe that we share the responsibility with other educators to end systemic racism and to be an important part of creating a safe and embracing school culture for all of our students regardless of their many differences. As in past years, we continue to follow the guidance and standards of the American School Counselor Association in addressing equity, access, racism and bias; and to participate in ongoing professional development opportunities to improve our knowledge and skills in this area. Visit https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/AntiracismStatement_1.pdf to read ASCA's statement regarding violence and systemic racism.

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. 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. Details regarding upcoming informational events for parents and communication in general are provided on the following pages.

GENERAL NEWS CONT.....

WCASD high school counselors will be hosting a virtual “College Application Process” informational presentation for students and parents in mid- September, and a “Financial Aid Night” for parents on October 19, 7pm. In the second semester we will host a “College Planning Night” for parents (date, “location” and time TBD). Parents will receive emails and students can view information on Naviance’s homepage and the Counseling Dept. Schoology page announcing all of these annual events. As the school year progresses, we will continue to use Naviance first with our Seniors, then Freshmen, Juniors and Sophomores and their parents.

Parents and guardians who have any questions about the National School Lunch Program or need assistance with connecting with community resources are encouraged to email our school caseworker Mrs. Fran Laughlin at flaughlin@wcasd.net

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 Schoology and to their parents via parents’ email and the counseling department website (link from the Henderson website home page) <https://www.wcasd.net/site/Default.aspx?PageType=1&SiteID=518&ChannelID=549&DirectoryType=6>

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. Counselors will continue to be accessible within the school day during which students and parents can meet or speak with virtually.

COLLEGE PLANNING

Utmost on many students’ and their families’ minds is the college admissions and planning process—especially as it is affected by the pandemic. Be assured that colleges understand that there are limited opportunities for students to take a college entrance exam due to the pandemic. Most colleges are not requiring a test score for the upcoming admissions cycle. While almost all still accept scores, most are being flexible for students who submit scores later or who did not have a chance to test more than once. You should check the college’s website for the most updated information on their application requirements. The most recent changes in college admission testing (SAT and ACT) can be found on these websites: <https://pages.collegeboard.org/sat-covid-19-updates> and <https://leadershipblog.act.org/search/label/COVID-19>.

Young Men and Women In Charge (YMWIC)

YMWIC Foundation, Inc.’s **mission** is to empower and prepare economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented youth to excel and become leaders in (STEM) careers through academic tutoring, mentoring and financial assistance programs, accomplished by leveraging alliances with K-12 school districts, universities, corporations, and the Foundation’s committed partners. This mission is accomplished by embracing a family model that provides individually targeted services: academic support and tutoring, leadership development, public speaking, junior mentoring, scientific research projects, college readiness and industry experiences in many STEM-related careers. Register for their Sept. 3 Open House (English and Spanish sessions) at <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07eh91100t0c154e33&oseq=&c=d9eff720-e7fa-11e4-9767-d4ae527599c4&ch=d9f415d0-e7fa-11e4-9767-d4ae527599c4>

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 usually administered to all 10th and 11th graders once in October every year. The WCASD is planning to administer the PSAT this fall but the date and format are “to be determined” at this time due to the evolving pandemic. Students are not required to register or pay for the test. As always, the 2020 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 unless the College Board changes that practice due to the pandemic.

SAT I Reasoning Test ~ ACT ~ SAT II Subject Tests

The following information is for planning purposes relevant to college bound Juniors and Seniors and is subject to change based on college admissions requirements as the pandemic evolves. Keep in mind that most colleges and universities have waived or delayed their admission test requirements for current seniors.

The decision to take either the SAT I or ACT will depend upon the requirements of the college of your choice. Check multiple college 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 if those exams are offered during the 20-21 school year. 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. If offered, 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 2020-2021

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 if required or optional **unless waived due to the pandemic**.

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Test
October 3, 2020	September 4, 2020	SAT I & II
October 10, 17, 24, 25, 2020	September 17, 2020	ACT
November 7, 2020	October 7, 2020	SAT I & II
December 5, 2020	November 5, 2020	SAT I & II
December 12, 2020	November 6, 2020	ACT
February 6, 2021	January 8, 2021	ACT
March 13, 2021	February 12, 2021	SAT I only
April 17, 2021	March 12, 2021	ACT
May 8, 2021	April 8, 2021	SAT I & II
June 5, 2021	May 6, 2021	SAT I & II
June 12, 2021	May 7, 2021	ACT
July 17, 2021	June 18, 2021	ACT

COLLEGE FAIRS and COLLEGE REP. OUTREACH

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 on the HHS website daily. Students can sign up to attend a virtual group meeting with a college rep. via Naviance. In addition, we support local college fairs and encourage students to attend. In lieu of in-person college fairs this year the **PA Association of College Admission Counseling (PACAC)** is offering the Keystone Virtual College Exploration Program. The program will consist of **college knowledge panel sessions** (with 3 or more unique institutions) created and presented by admission counselors at 2pm and 3pm each weekday to support school counselors and students in the college search process during the school day. The program will also feature **individual college information sessions** from a wide variety of colleges and universities. All sessions in the Keystone Virtual College Exploration Program are **FREE** to students. Once the sessions are finalized, PACAC will publish the schedule on their website and share ready-to-use resources with counselors and students. Registration for students/counselors opens on Thursday, September 17 at Noon EST: <https://www.pacac.org/college-fairs>.

The National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC) is also offering a series of virtual college fairs throughout the fall. More than 600 colleges and universities across the country will be online to talk with high school juniors and seniors and their parents for **FREE** on each of 4 dates this fall. Registration is required: <https://www.nacacfairs.org/attend/attend-virtual-college-fairs/students/>

The Chester County College Fair (presented by the C.C.I.U) will be held virtually on October 28, 5pm-8: <https://www.cciu.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=385>

SENIOR CONFERENCES & HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

As part of the WCASD developmental counseling program, **counselors have tentatively planned a virtual meeting with their seniors in a large group format for Wednesday Sept. 9th at 3:30pm** to discuss general post secondary information such as the college application process, Naviance, NCAA eligibility requirements, scholarships, and college entrance exams. Seniors should check their Naviance homepage and the counseling dept. Schoology page for the Zoom link. In addition, school counselors will meet virtually 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, 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 Henderson High school counselors will be hosting a virtual "College Application Process" informational presentation for students on September 9th at 3:30pm (also recorded for parents to view later). Parents and students will receive an email announcing this annual event. Check the Counseling Dept. website for possible changes

AND

The WCASD high school counselors will be hosting a virtual "Financial Aid" informational presentation for students and parents on Monday, October 19th at 7:00pm. Parents and students will receive an email announcing this annual event. Check the counseling Dept. website for possible changes

During the college application process, the student should take the lead and assume the responsibility of gathering information, meeting deadlines, and communicating with 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 (if required or optional) 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 virtually 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 use Naviance to 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. 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 electronic copy of their transcript and extracurricular activities list to their recommender (unofficial copies of transcripts can be obtained electronically from a counseling office administrative assistant listed on p. 1 of this newsletter). 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" feature in Naviance.

Recommendations by non-Henderson staff: Recommendations written by adults not employed at Henderson (ie: employers, youth leaders) should send their letter directly to the college(s) in an addressed, stamped envelope provided by the student to the adult (the recommender should use their own return address). If this is not feasible, the student may speak with their school counselor about other possible options for sending electronically.

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, 2021** receipt is **December 18, 2020** 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) and Priority deadlines.**

Naviance: An abbreviated version of directions for seniors' use of Naviance is on the last page of this newsletter. Seniors will be emailed this newsletter via Naviance and given a demonstration in the **Sept. 9th large group meeting**. Parents are encouraged to attend their child's individual 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 2020/2021

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 between **September 21, 2020—January 22, 2021**, and then again between **January 26—February 12, 2021**. **Level changes up will be considered prior to September 21 with teacher and parent input.** All level changes for full year courses must be completed no later than February 12. All level changes for semester courses including English 12 hon. and English aca. lit. levels must be completed no later than October 2, 2020.

Deadlines for adding electives to existing study halls are September 11 for first semester and full year courses, and February 12th for second semester courses. Schedule changes must be initiated with your child's counselor or teacher within the time frames listed above or they will not be considered.

CAREER EDUCATION

Ms. Ashley Kleckner is in her second year as Henderson's Career Education Counselor. Our Career Education Program is fluid to meet the demands of the 21st century as it evolves. Currently our program focuses on providing high-school students opportunities to learn about and engage in the future world of work. Please visit our website to learn more about our Virtual Opportunities (Career Fairs, Tours, Events) and College/Career related Resources for grades 9-12. WCASD Career Education Google Site: <https://sites.google.com/wcasd.net/careereducation/home> Please do not hesitate to reach out to Ashley with any questions.

SUPPORT GROUPS and MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Our Intervention Counselor, Ms. Candy Jakubowski will continue to co-facilitate several support groups (virtually to start) with and without outside agencies throughout the year at Henderson. Students receive support with a variety of issues such as substance abuse recovery, grief, and stress/anxiety management. For more information contact Ms. Jakubowski at cjakubowski@wcasd.net or at (484) 266-3408. For additional supports, check out our **WCASD Counseling Resource Library**: <https://sites.google.com/wcasd.net/wcasdcounselingresourcelibrary/home>

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 current school year student WCASD network password

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 YOU 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. **It is critical that you indicate the type of application that you are using.** 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.