

Welcome to Junior Parent Night 2017



PRESENTED BY THE WHS SCHOOL COUNSELORS



School Counseling Staff



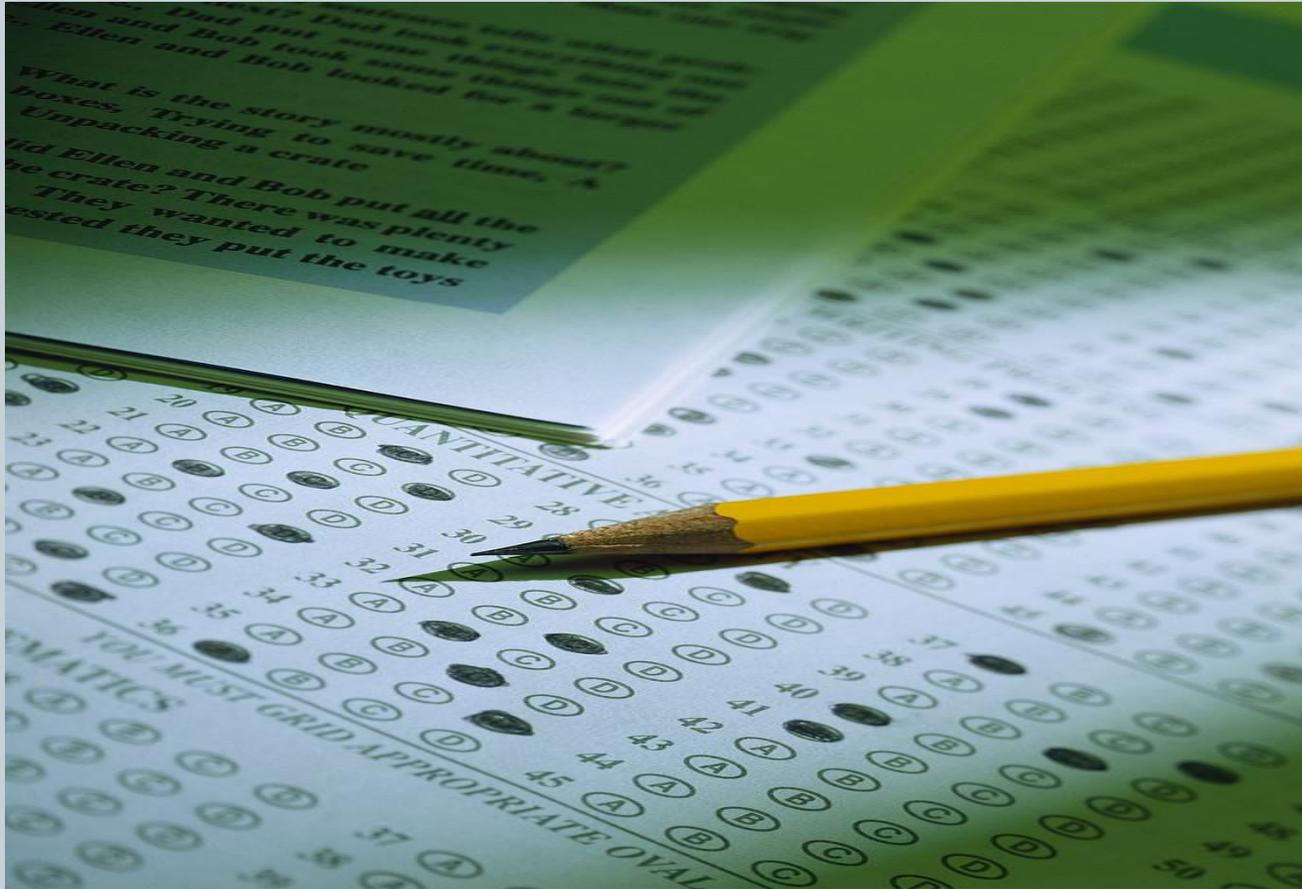
- **Jessica Keating**; *School Counseling Coordinator*
(Last Names A-Ch)
 - **Christine Sales** (Last Names Ci-I)
 - **Meghan Robinson**(Last Names J-Pa)
 - **Megan Chunis** (Last Names Pb-Z)
- **The power-point presentation will be available on the counseling website for your reference**

Graduation Requirements



- **English-** 4.0 Credits
 - **Math-** 3.5 Credits (to include 1/2 computer)
 - **Social Studies-** 3.5 Credits (to include one year of Civics and Making of a Nation and one year of 20th Century American History)
 - **Science-** 2.0 Credits (to include 1 year of Biology and 1 year of Physic Science)
 - **Vocational Education, Technical Education, or the Arts-** 1.0 Credit
 - **Physical Education-** 1 Credit
 - **Health** - .5 Credits
 - **Electives-** 7.5 Credits
 - **23 Credits Total**
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- Even though a world language, a fourth year of math, or more than two years of science are not required for graduation- we **STRONGLY** encourage these to be taken in order to be marketable for a competitive college.
 - Most schools look for (or require) at least 2-3 consecutive years of a foreign language, four years of a math, and at least two lab sciences. Make sure to check your prospective college's course requirements as you plan your senior year.
 - Reminder - community service requirement can be reached through completing 20 or more hours of community service. Students can pick up community service forms in the counseling office.
 - Reminder- 1 credit of Capstone is also required for graduation

Standardized Testing Information



PSAT



- This year all Juniors took the re-designed PSAT in October. Results were reviewed with them during SSP and students linked their scores to Khan Academy.
- The scoring is as follows:
 - Two sections
 - ✦ **Evidenced Based Reading and Writing (EBRW)- 120-720**
 - ✦ **Math- 120-720**
 - ✦ *Total Score- 240-1440*
 - ✦ PSAT and SAT are scores on the same scale- your score on the PSAT will predict how you might score on the SAT test.

SAT



- All juniors will be taking the SAT School Day test on April 5th, 2017
 - 2 sections- Math and Evidenced Based Reading and Writing
 - Essay is optional
 - Less critical thinking and more curriculum based
 - Scores ranging from 400-1600
 - No penalty for guessing
- Recommended taking at least once again in the spring of your junior year and then at least once again in the fall of your senior year. Next test dates are in March, May, and June (all offered at WHS)
- Register online at www.collegeboard.org. Contact CollegeBoard if you need your username and password. Remember you can sign up for four free score report submissions to colleges of your choice.
- If your child receives free or reduced lunch, he or she will be eligible for a fee waiver. See your counselor for details.

ACT



- Curriculum based test designed to measure students' college readiness and academic achievement in four skill areas: English, Math, Reading, and Science (an additional section that is not tested on the SAT)
- The writing portion of the ACT is optional
- Most schools will accept either the ACT or the SAT
- Scale score is 1-36 on each section
- Register and prepare online at ACTstudent.org
- If your child receives free or reduced lunch, he or she will be eligible for a fee waiver.
- WHS will offer the ACT in April and October

More tests....



- **SAT 2 Subject Tests**

- Required by some selective colleges for admission and/or for placement purposes once the student enrolls
- Check college websites for requirements
- Students can take up to three subject tests on one test date
- Register at www.collegeboard.org

- **AP Exams**

- Taken in May by students enrolled in Advanced Placement Classes. Some colleges will accept a certain score on an AP exam as a college credit.

- **ASVAB**

- A military placement exam, but also an interest inventory that all students can take to help determine career choice. Given at WHS a couple times per year (next test is in March). See Mrs. Robinson to sign up.

How do I send my standardized test scores to the schools I am applying to??



- It is the student's responsibility to send scores directly through the testing agency.
- When a student signs up for the SAT, they are allowed to enter four schools free of charge to have their scores directly sent to. Even if they are unsure of schools they will be applying to, they should definitely take advantage of this. After a student takes the SAT, they only have 9 days to enter schools free of charge and after that you must pay a fee to send scores (just thought I would enter in this little money saving tip- seems fitting with the cost of college these days!)

NAVIANCE



NAVIANCE! WHS's College and Career Planner



- **What is Naviance?**
 - Comprehensive Online Program providing access to both students and parents
 - Each student has a personal account
 - Increases communication among student, parent, and counselor
 - Tracks every college application that enters and leaves the office
 - Provides admissions data from previous years
 - Also offers a very comprehensive college search and college match function, as well as interest inventories and a career search engine.
 - Provides scholarship information

How do I access Naviance?



- Website:
<https://connection.naviance.com/watertownhs>
- The link is also on the main page of the Watertown High School Webpage
- Your child has received their login information (can see their counselor if they forgot information)

What does Naviance have to offer?



- **College Research**
 - College Search
 - College Lookup
 - College Match
 - Scattergrams/Acceptance History
- **My Colleges**
 - Colleges I'm Thinking About
 - Colleges I'm Applying to
 - Upcoming College Visits at WHS
- **Scholarships**
 - Scholarship List

How to choose a plan that is right for you



Evaluate your Education Options



- Decide on your post-secondary plan
 - ✦ Decide what type of school you would like to attend
 - Four year (Bachelor Degree)
 - Two Year (Associate Degree)
 - Vocational/technical (Certificate Program)
 - Specialized Program (ie. music, art)

Think about your most important criteria and weigh your options



- ✦ Admission selectivity
- ✦ Size
- ✦ Location: Urban, Suburban, Rural?
- ✦ Distance from home
- ✦ Cost
- ✦ Academics
- ✦ Majors
- ✦ Special programs
- ✦ Student diversity
- ✦ Campus Housing
- ✦ Admission requirements
- ✦ Extracurricular offerings
- ✦ Study Abroad
- ✦ Service learning opportunities
- ✦ Sports/Intramurals

Things to think about when choosing a school



- **Start with who you are now and where you would like to be in the future**
 - You need to examine yourself and your reasons for going to college before you begin your search.
- **You can afford to go to college**
 - If you make the assumption that you cannot afford a college based on the sticker price of tuition, you will miss out.
 - There are always many opportunities for scholarships, grants, and financial aid. (many times applications are automatically reviewed for potential scholarship and grant awards without the applicant filling out any additional paperwork)

More things to think about...



- **A name brand college does not guarantee your success**
 - Think about the people who are happy and successful in your life and ask where they went to college
 - You will most likely find that success in life has a lot less to do with the choice of the college than with the experiences and opportunities you encountered while you were there. It truly is what you make of it!
 - Employers and graduate schools look more at your outstanding skills and experience, and less at the college you attended.

Last Words of Advice...



- **The most important factor in choosing a college is *fit***
 - Choosing a college because your friends are going there or because of where it ranks on a list does not take into account who you are and who you want to become.
 - Check the school's website to find out the admissions officer that is assigned to your region. Send them an email to ask about getting in touch with students from your area or identifying a few with interests similar to yours

WHS College Planning Timeline



- **Winter/Spring of Junior Year**
 - Meet with your counselor to discuss the process and begin an initial college search (Junior Meetings are currently taking place with all students- parents please contact your child's counselor if you would like to attend)
 - Take the SAT at least once and consider taking the ACT.
 - Start thinking about who you will ask for letters of recommendation (should ask teachers at the very beginning of senior year)
 - Begin attending information sessions and college tours at any schools of interest. See college websites for more information.
 - Attend local college fairs; Hartford National College Fair Field Trip in the spring.
 - Research admissions criteria, tuition estimates, and academic requirements.
 - Get organized! Create a college file and a college calendar to write down deadlines. Naviance is a great tool for this.

College Planning Timeline Continued



- **Summer before senior year**
 - Get involved in a summer internship, enrichment program, volunteer, or work a part-time job
 - Mark your calendar for important dates and deadlines. Be aware of early action/early decision deadlines- some fall as early as October.
 - Continue to visit college campuses
 - Continue to narrow down your list of colleges (safety, target, and reach)
 - Review college application requirements and essay prompts
 - The more you can do before the senior year, the easier things will be!

College Planning Timeline Continued



- **Fall of Senior Year**

- Meet with your counselor to finalize plans (Your counselor will schedule a senior meeting in September/October- parents are welcome to attend)
- Take the SAT and/or ACT again, and check to see if any of the schools you are applying to require SAT Subject Tests
- Sign up through Naviance to meet with college representatives at WHS
- Continue to attend college tours and information sessions
- Secure teachers who will be writing recommendation letters (both in person and through Naviance)
- Finalize college essay
- APPLY!
- Start to think about scholarships and financial aid (Financial Aid Night in October 2017)

The College Application Process



Where do I begin??



- Organize yourself! Create a folder or file with all pertinent information. Naviance is a very helpful organization tool.
- Decide on a variety of schools that you want to apply to
 - ✦ We suggest at least 2 **target** schools (typically better than a 50/50 chance of being accepted)
 - ✦ At least 2 **safety** schools (schools you are somewhat overqualified for and have a very good chance of being admitted)
 - ✦ At least 2 **reach** schools (Schools that you are somewhat under-qualified for and will be difficult to get into)

What materials are typically included in an application packet??



- All schools will have different requirements, but these are typically the basics...
- **Application**
- **Application Fee**
- **Transcript**
- **Standardized Test Scores** (these are sent by the student through the testing agency)
- **Essay** (essay question(s) can be found on the application)
- **Letters of Recommendation** (typically 2-3)
- **Optional, any other materials you would like to include** (newspaper articles, special awards, writing samples, portfolios etc.)

Applying Basics



- **The Common Application**
 - First, check www.commonapp.org to see if the schools you are applying to are members. Many schools are members and this is an easy way to complete one application for all schools you plan on applying to. The Common Application is an easy and streamlined way of organizing your college applications.
 - If a school uses The Common Application, we highly recommend you use this form to apply.
- If one or more of your schools do not accept the Common Application, check their individual websites for requirements. The website will typically have an online link to their application.

The WHS Application Process



- Students will have a senior meeting with their counselor in September/October and they will go over all of the pertinent information together. A few key points include:
 - ✦ Students will ask their teachers for recommendations and once the teachers are done they will upload their letter into the student's Naviance Account.
 - ✦ It is important to ask teachers for recommendations AT LEAST three weeks prior to applying.
 - ✦ Students will apply to the schools on their list (online preferably). Once they have applied, and ONLY once they have applied, they must come to the counseling department and meet with their counselor to inform them that an application was sent.
 - ✦ Counselors will then forward supporting materials (transcript, recommendation letters and any other supplemental materials that are required or extra).

Early Action Vs. Early Decision



- Many schools will offer one or both of these options. It is important to check these deadlines, as many of them fall very early in senior year.
 - *Early Action*: Recommended for schools you are very interested in. You can apply early action to as many schools as you wish. This is a non-binding contract and if you are accepted you do not have to attend the school.
 - *Early Decision*: Typically not recommended unless you are absolutely positive of the school you want to attend. You can only apply early decision to one school. This is a binding contract and if you are accepted you must attend regardless of financial aid, scholarships, etc. This should only be used for your TOP CHOICE school.

The College Essay



- Your essay is about YOU- not a generic high school senior. Be creative!
- Pretend you are meeting with an admissions representative- what do you want them to walk away knowing about you?
- Follow the directions: adhere to page requirements, minimum word requirements, not required=not required
- Make sure you proofread! It is often helpful to have your high school english teacher and/or your counselor review your essay.

The College Interview



- If a college offers an interview as an option, you should take advantage of it especially if you are unable to visit the campus in person.
- Colleges often offer alumni interviews in the area if you are unable to travel to the campus.
- This is a great time to “sell yourself” to an admissions counselor, especially if it is your top choice school.
- If a college does not offer interviews, go above and beyond to show your demonstrated interest (emails, phone calls, campus visits, college fairs, personal thank-you notes to admissions reps, etc.) A little outreach can go a long way!

A quick word about college athletics...



- If playing a Division 1 or Division 2 sport is top on your list:
 - It is absolutely mandatory that you sign up with the NCAA Clearinghouse at http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.html
 - We recommend you complete this process during junior year so you will be all set going into senior year
 - Students will create an account and provide information about courses, grades, athletic history, etc.
 - Touch base with your coach about your future plans
 - Ask your counselor if you need more information

Okay...I applied...now how do I pay???!!!



Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)



- You can apply for the FAFSA (free application for federal student aid) anytime after October 1st of senior year. You can apply online at www.fafsa.ed.gov
- WHS hosts a financial aid night in the fall to help you with this process.
- College Goal Sunday- Offered every fall in the area. This is a program designed to help families fill out the FAFSA. Be listening for information on this- we strongly encourage you to attend.
- Keep in mind that some schools will also require the CSS Profile, which is often due much earlier than the FAFSA- check individual school websites for more information

Scholarship Information



- Scholarships start to become available in the counseling office in the early winter. Seniors can apply for as many as they wish.
- Seniors will receive the Local Scholarship Booklet in March, which includes MANY scholarship opportunities
- Online websites such as www.fastweb.com www.finaid.org and www.collegeboard.org are helpful scholarship search sites.
- Be very careful of online scholarship websites other than these—there are many that are SCAMS! As a general rule, any site that asks you to pay to apply for scholarships is not legitimate.
- The Counseling Office offers a series of Scholarship Workshops throughout the winter/spring of senior year to help support students in the scholarship search and application process.

Take a breather...



- It is really not as stressful as it sounds- we promise! Counselors will be on hand to help you and your child through the entire process. Please do not hesitate to ask us any questions you might have!
- An extensive Junior Planning Packet is available on the WHS Counseling Webpage. Please refer to this as often as you wish. It includes all the information you will need to successfully navigate through the college planning process!