PVRHSD

Guidance & Counseling Newsletter

Summer 2020

**Please check the school website at www.pascack.org for school counselor availability over the summer. This information can be found on the Guidance & Counseling Services tab.

In This Issue:

	Page #
Important Dates for the 2020-2021 School Year	2
2020-2021 ACT & SAT Dates and Registration Deadlines	3
Information for 9th Grade Students & Parents	4
The Importance of Extracurricular Activities	5
Information for 10th Grade Students & Parents	6
PSAT Information	7
ACT & SAT Information	8
Information for 11th Grade Students & Parents	9
Helpful Tips for Selecting Colleges	10
Information for 12th Grade Students & Parents	11
Summer Wellness Tips	12



Mark Your Calendar!

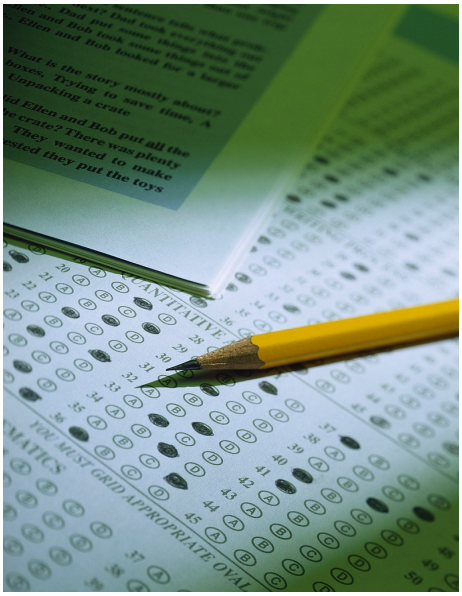
Important Dates for the 2020-2021 School Year

**** Please note all programs are subject to change based on current conditions at the time of the event***

Date	Event
September 16, 2020	Bergen County Directors of Guidance College Fair Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, NJ 6:00-9:00 p.m.
October 7, 2020	Financial Aid Night Pascack Hills High School 7:00 p.m.
October 15, 2020	PVRHSD/NVRHSD College Fair Pascack Valley High School 6:00 p.m.
October 17, 2020	PSAT—Grades 10 & 11 only
October 22, 2020	Selective College Admissions Night Pascack Hills High School Auditorium 7:00 p.m.
April 8, 2021	Trends in College Admissions Program Pascack Hills High School 7:00 p.m.
May 3-14, 2021	Advanced Placement Exams

SAT Dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline
August 29, 2020	July 31, 2020
October 3, 2020	September 4, 2020
November 7, 2020	October 9, 2020
December 5, 2020	November 6, 2020
March 13, 2021	February 12, 2021
May 8, 2021	April 9, 2021
June 5, 2021	May 7, 2021



Go to www.collegeboard.org to register!

CEEB Codes: Pascack Hills 310823 / Pascack Valley 310540

ACT Dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline
September 12, 2020	August 14, 2020
October 24, 2020	September 18, 2020
December 12, 2020	November 6, 2020
February 6, 2021	January 8, 2021
April 17, 2021	March 12, 2021
June 12, 2021	May 7, 2021
July 17, 2021	June 18, 2021

Go to www.actstudent.org to register!

9th Grade Students and Parents

Dear Parents:

Our focus in the freshman year is to ensure our students make a successful transition to high school. Moreover, the school counseling department recognizes the importance of making sure our students and parents are aware of the school-based and community resources available. We aim to accomplish this through individual and group counseling sessions, school day and evening programs, informational newsletters and outreach from our wellness center.

Best wishes in the school year ahead.

Sean Struncis, Ed.D
District Supervisor of Guidance & Counseling Services



Ninth Grade Parent and Student Conferences
In the late summer and early fall, the counseling staff will conduct individual conferences for all Grade 9 students and their parents. This counseling program is designed to help counselors, students and parents begin a good working relationship and to discuss matters unique to each student. Students and parents will be given their individual NAVIANCE password at this time. NAVIANCE is a web-based college and career planning software program.

School Counseling webpage
The school counseling webpage can be found on the district's website (www.pascack.org). You can access the site by clicking on either Pascack Hills or Pascack Valley and then the link. By accessing the site you will be able to find information on colleges, careers, scholarships, access Naviance, and much more.

Get Involved
Pascack Hills and Pascack Valley High Schools offer a variety of athletics, clubs and activities for students to become actively involved. Visit the Pascack Hills website or the Pascack Valley website to learn more about the many extra-curricular offerings!

The Importance of Extracurricular Activities

Colleges Care

Colleges pay attention to your life both inside and outside the classroom. Yes, your academics come first, but your activities reveal a great deal about you, such as:

Have you made a meaningful contribution to something?

What are your non-academic interests?

Whether you can maintain a long-term commitment.

Whether you can manage your time and priorities.

What diversity you bring to the student body.

Maintaining a Balance

Keep in mind most colleges are not interested in seeing you "do it all."

"We're looking for a commitment to and a passion for an activity outside of the academic setting -- we're looking for depth rather than breadth." *Nanci Tessier, College Admission Director*

Colleges don't have a checklist of requirements when it comes to extracurricular activities-- they want to see your individuality -- and your consistent commitment.

Getting Involved

Lots of school, community, and religious organizations give you chances to explore your interests and talents. If you have not felt drawn into something yet, there's no shortage of opportunities for you to explore.

School Activities

It is easy to find out about activities available at school. Once you start exploring, sometimes the challenge is figuring out how much to do. Here are some quick tips:

Most importantly, when you find something you like to do, stick with it.

If you're interested and have extra time, try to excel in more than one area. For example, write for the paper and volunteer but make sure you're giving your all to each activity, and, most importantly, to your school work.

Don't worry about being president, or captain. Leadership is important, however, the key is whether you have done something significant, center stage or behind the scenes.

Work Experience

Work experience -- paid or volunteer, year-round or summer -- can help you identify career interests and goals, gain work experience, and apply classroom learning to the real world. It is also a great way to earn money for college, of course. Consider arranging for an internship or to shadow someone at his or her job.

Community Service

You can also gain skills and experience through volunteer work, such as tutoring elementary school children or spending time at a local hospital. The possibilities are endless. Connect with your counselor to further discuss opportunities.

10th Grade Students and Parents

Dear Sophomore:
Your first year in high school is now complete. The sophomore year affords you a unique opportunity to accomplish the many things which you wanted to do as a freshman. If you were not satisfied with your grades, you can improve them. If you wanted to join a team or club but never got around to it, you can do it now. Your sophomore year will be a year in which you become more active academically and socially, a year in which you will accept more responsibility for your own actions, a year when you continue or begin to make plans for the future, and a year that will bring more challenges and excitement.

We hope you take full advantage of the excellent opportunities that are available to you in the high school. Get involved, ask questions and seek the assistance of your counselor, the faculty and administration.

Best wishes in the school year ahead.

Sean Struncis, Ed.D
District Supervisor of Guidance & Counseling Services



School Counseling Career Education Program

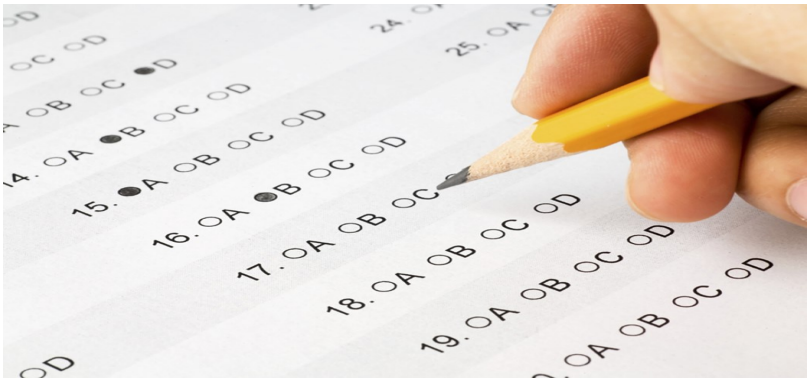
One of the components in our school counseling program is the 10th grade Career Education Program. In the spring, all sophomores will be participating in our group counseling program to discuss career interests and the job market. Each sophomore will take a career-interest survey "Do What You Are," in Naviance. We strongly encourage all grade 10 students to take the career-interest survey and share the results with parents and counselors.



THE PRELIMINARY SCHOLASTIC APTITUTE TEST (PSAT)

All sophomores are encouraged to take the PSAT on Saturday, October 17, 2020 at 8 a.m. Juniors are encouraged to sign up to take the PSAT on the same date. Look for more information in September.





Understanding and Preparing for the PSAT

Spending your school years taking challenging academic courses and reading is the best way to get ready for the PSAT/NMSQT. The new PSAT/NMSQT will include the same types of reading, math, writing and language skills as the new SAT® Reasoning Test.

Reading Test

- All Reading Test questions are multiple choice and based on passages.
- Some passages are paired with other passages or informational graphics, such as charts, graphs and tables.
- No mathematical computation is required.
- Prior topic-specific knowledge is never tested.

Math Test

- Most math questions will be multiple choice, but some will be student-produced responses (grid-ins).
- The Math Test is divided into two portions: Math Test-Calculator and Math Test–No Calculator.
- Some parts of the test present students with a scenario and then ask several questions about it.

Writing and Language Test

- All Writing and Language Test questions are multiple choice and based on passages.
- Some passages are paired with informational graphics such as charts, graphs and tables.
- Prior topic-specific knowledge is never tested.
- No mathematical computation is required.

For more information on the new PSAT, visit the College Board website at www.collegeboard.org.

ACT/SAT Program– Attention All 10th & 11th Grade Students

Description of the ACT (From www.actstudent.org)

The ACT (No Writing) consists of four multiple-choice tests: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. The ACT Plus Writing includes the four multiple-choice tests and a Writing Test.

Test			Content
English	75 questions	45 minutes	Measures standard written English and rhetorical skills.
Mathematics	60 questions	60 minutes	Measures mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of grade 12.
Reading	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures reading comprehension.
Science	40 questions	35 minutes	Measures the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences.
Optional Writing Test	1 prompt	40 minutes	Measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry-level college composition courses.

Description of the SAT (From www.collegeboard.org)

The SAT doesn't test logic or abstract reasoning. It tests the skills you're learning in school: reading, writing and math. Your knowledge and skills in these subjects are important for success in college and throughout your life.

- The **critical reading** section includes reading passages and sentence completions.
- The **writing** section includes a short essay and multiple-choice questions on identifying errors and improving grammar and usage.
- The **mathematics** section includes questions on arithmetic operations, algebra, geometry, statistics and probability.

11th Grade Students & Parents

Dear Junior:

The junior year in high school is a crucial year in your academic career. This year will afford you the opportunity to demonstrate your academic ability in more advanced, higher-level courses. Challenge yourself to have your best year yet! Colleges and employers are consistently looking for young adults who have a proven track record, such as success in course work and school-related activities.

The junior year should be one in which you look at yourself objectively. Are you building a good record? Ask yourself: "What do I want after high school?" Set goals and develop a plan to reach them. Do not hesitate to ask for help. Throughout your junior year, your counselor will spend time with you on college and career planning. Do not wait; begin your own planning and investigations. Use your parents, teachers, counselors and friends as resources. The counselors are willing to help you, but you should keep in mind that you must make your goals known. Initiate a conference. Yes, counselors are busy, but never too busy to make time for you.

Best wishes in the school year ahead.

Sean Struncis, Ed.D
District Supervisor of Guidance & Counseling Services

Junior Parent/Student Conferences

Toward the middle of the year, counselors will provide parents and students with an individualized college/career conference. This very popular and valuable counseling service will provide parents and students with a clear direction as you move through the college admissions process.



Standardized Testing Timeline

For juniors, the recommended testing dates for the ACT/SAT's are March, April, May or June. If required by the college, the SAT Subject Matter Exams should be taken in January, May and/or June. Registration for any of these exams can be done online. See your counselor to discuss your testing plan and to discuss all possible options.

Selecting Colleges

After navigating NAVIANCE and other valuable online resources you should begin to develop a preliminary list of colleges which fulfill your needs, interests and aptitudes. You should arrange to meet again with your counselor. At this time, you'll need to reduce your list to a more workable number for further investigation. In order to do this, the following steps are recommended:

Explore college websites – take the "VIRTUAL TOURS" offered on most college websites.

Make informal visits to different college campuses. Attend campus tour days, open-houses, etc. Make sure you sign and complete registration cards, if available. Most colleges keep track of your visits.

Attend college fairs, college nights, etc. and complete cards for each college admissions person you speak with.



<u>Helpful Hints</u>:
When you attend college fairs, college nights and individual meetings with college representatives, the following questions are a sample of important areas to discuss:

- Does the college offer the major/minor you are interested in pursuing?
- Is the location of the school rural, urban or suburban? Is public transportation available?
- How many students attend the college full-time/part-time?
- What is the average class size for freshmen?
- What are the admissions criteria?
- What are the application deadlines?
- How much is tuition? How much is room and board?
- What types of financial aid are available? What scholarships are available, academic and/or athletic?
- What counseling services are available? What tutoring or other support services are available?
- What is unique about the college?
- What percentage of students graduate in four years/five years?
- What percentage of freshmen return for sophomore year?
- What internship opportunities are available for students?

12th Grade Students & Parents

Dear Senior:

Our counseling staff hopes your senior year will be most enjoyable, successful and memorable. This is the year that you should be involved in school, academically and socially. This is also the year to look beyond high school to your future. Contrary to the popular belief, your senior year is a measure of your growth and maturity. Seniors who "let up" or arrange for an easy year are misinformed. Colleges and employers are looking for young adults who remain challenged and motivated. We hope the information we have provided in this and other guidance publications will help you in pursuing your future plans.

Best wishes in the school year ahead.

Sean Struncis, Ed.D
District Supervisor of Guidance & Counseling Services

Transcript Requests

Requests for transcripts to be sent to schools of higher education should be submitted to your counselor well in advance of any application deadline dates. Approximately FIFTEEN SCHOOL DAYS should be allowed for the guidance department to process the applications, transcripts, counselor recommendations, etc. It is of utmost importance that adequate time be allowed in order to ensure proper handling. Remember that it is your responsibility to request transcripts to be sent for each application -- including initial, mid-year and final transcripts.

A Transcript Request Form must be filled out for each application that you submit. The forms are available on the guidance webpage or in the guidance office.

Scholarship Information

Scholarship information will be available to all seniors beginning in October. You will be able to access scholarship information by visiting NAVIANCE.





Summer wellness tips

Take a hike
Sure, trekking burns calories but being out in nature and away from our hectic and busy lives improves happiness levels and curbs depression. Research also shows spending time outdoors increases attentions spans and creative problem-solving skills by as much as 50%.

Separate from your smartphone
Can you go 1 hour per day without checking your smartphone or using social media? I bet you can't. Schedule phone breaks and notice how it feels to be fully engaged in the moment. Feels weird, right?

Sleep more (or at least more consistently) Late summer nights and lazy summer mornings sounds ideal, but it actually lowers your energy and mood. Set a consistent sleep schedule to feel good and be your best.

Find gratitude – Life can be hard. Whatever situation or life circumstance is your reality right now - focus on the GOOD. Recognizing negative thoughts and paying attention to the positive aspects of your life can be incredibly transforming.

Volunteer – "The essence of life is serve others and do good" Aristotle
Volunteerism makes you happy; try it and see.

Develop a self-care routine
Self-care is everywhere and why not try something new? Meditation, yoga, mindfulness practices... Good inner energy is just as important as a healthy outer body.



Best wishes for a restful and enjoyable summer vacation!



We hope to see you in August!