

**PETERS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL**

# **College Planning Guide**

**2012-2013**



**PROVIDED BY THE PTHS SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT**

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## 2012-2013 School Year

Dear Students:

Welcome to Peters Township High School. Your school counselors look forward to working with each of you in preparation for your four years here and especially for your life after high school. This is an exciting time as you get ready to take advantage of the numerous opportunities available to each and every student.

During your time at PTHS, it is imperative to maintain a balanced approach to academics, extracurricular activities, and your social life. All three play a vital role in your growth and development into adulthood, and they will help articulate your dreams and goals for the future beyond PTHS. Your four years here offer a chance to continue your success or begin developing these important areas. It is never too late to learn how to learn, become involved in school, or meet new people.

**Junior year is an especially important and busy year.** There are many increased responsibilities that accompany your status as an upperclassman. You will have the opportunity to meet a number of college representatives who visit in the fall. You will have the opportunity to practice for the SAT by taking the PSAT. Beginning in the fall, you and your parents will continue discussing future plans by meeting with your school counselor at the PIP (Post-Secondary Individualized Planning) meetings. All students, especially juniors, should plan to attend College Planning Night in April.

You will encounter many other activities and responsibilities along the way that will challenge you to examine where you are in the future planning process. We recognize this process evolves differently for each individual and encourage you to embrace new challenges and growth opportunities. This planning guide has been developed to help you through this process. Because this process is fluid, it is very important to consult this guide throughout each year to remain informed and up-to-date about your responsibilities. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to meet with your school counselor.

Good luck and have a great school year!

Sincerely,  
PTHS School Counselors

### School Counselor Assignments for Grades 9-12

Counselor	Student Last Names	Email Addresses	Phone Extensions
Mrs. Cunningham:	ABC	<a href="mailto:cunninghamv@pt-sd.org">cunninghamv@pt-sd.org</a>	x5232
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Mrs. Laux:	HI, IJKL	<a href="mailto:lauxg@pt-sd.org">lauxg@pt-sd.org</a>	x5517
Mrs. Prinsen:	Mc, NOPQRSa	<a href="mailto:prinsenh@pt-sd.org">prinsenh@pt-sd.org</a>	x5220
Mr. Sudol:	Sc, TUVWXYZ	<a href="mailto:sudolj@pt-sd.org">sudolj@pt-sd.org</a>	x5238

**724-941-6250 (office)**

**724-942-3863 (fax)**

**CEEB CODE 390-535**

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To fulfill graduation requirements, students must earn a minimum of 26 credits and complete a Graduation Project. Graduation Project information is available on Counseling Services page of the PTHS website.

Required credit distribution includes:

<b>PTHS Requirements</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Recommended by Colleges</b>
4.0 credits	English	4.0 credits
4.0 credits	Social Studies	4.0 credits
4.0 credits	Science	4.0 credits
4.0 credits	Mathematics	4.0 credits
1.0 credit	Arts & Humanities	2.0 + credits in Language
0.5 credit	Personal Wellness	
1.0 credit	Drivers Theory/Speech	
0.5 credit	Physical Education	
0.5 credit	Technology Course	
6.5 credits (0.5 online)	Electives	

Course sequences have prerequisites and minimum grade requirements before a student can proceed to the next level. Advanced Placement and Honors level courses are available to qualified students. All students are to carry a minimum 6.5 credits each year.

### ACTIVITIES

Students are encouraged to become involved in school activities. The extent to which you are involved in a few select activities is more important than the sheer number or scope of activities to which you belong. Activities provide students with the opportunity to explore their interests and be social at the same time. A list of school activities can be found on the PTHS website. It is never too late to get involved!

## POST SECONDARY OPTIONS

Up to this point, your educational path has been micro-managed by parents, teachers, and administrators. This is the point in your life where much of that changes. Ultimately, it is you who decides the future and the first step is to make a plan for after graduation. What is your plan?

**2 year college** \_\_\_\_\_

**4 year college** \_\_\_\_\_

**Trade/ Technical School** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employment** \_\_\_\_\_

**Military** \_\_\_\_\_

**Undecided** \_\_\_\_\_

## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

### **TIMELINE: Grades 8 and 9**

The following is meant to be a general timeline. Every student will be at a different point in this process from now until graduation.

#### **GRADE 8: Winter/Spring**

- Plan your course selections for grade 9 by meeting with teachers and counselors to determine appropriate placements
- Begin career exploration
- Set preliminary goals for high school
- Consider course selections for future grades along with those for grade 9
- Explore and select extra-curricular activities that interest you
- Work on maintaining or improving your grades and study skills

#### **GRADE 9: Fall**

- Complete career goal-setting activity, Career Interest Matchmaker Survey, and reflection paper for graduation project
- Create a Career Cruising profile
- Build strong academic, language, mathematics, and critical thinking skills by taking challenging courses
- Work on academics and ask for support if needed (Support services include SHARP [Student Help and Remediation Program], peer tutoring service, teacher help sessions, and referrals to adult tutors)
- Get involved in at least one extra-curricular activity
- Begin your resume in Information Technology course

#### **GRADE 9: Winter/Spring**

- Practice goal setting strategies
- Use Career Cruising to begin searching for career and post-secondary options
- Plan your course selection for grade 10 by meeting with teachers and counselors to determine appropriate placements
- Take district's 9<sup>th</sup> grade local assessment(s), PSSS exam, and/or Keystone Exams if applicable
- Consider going on the field trip to Western Area Career and Technology Center if you are exploring this curriculum for next year
- Complete your resume in Information Technology course
- Maintain Career Cruising profile for graduation project

#### **GRADE 9: Summer**

- Consider enrichment and remedial summer school programs
- Continue extracurricular activities and interest
- Get involved in community service work

## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

### **TIMELINE: Grade 10**

The following is meant to be a general timeline. Every student will be at a different point in this process from now until graduation.

#### **GRADE 10: Fall**

- Concentrate on academic preparation and continue to develop basic skills.
- Register to take the ASVAB Test to explore careers and military career options
- Maintain involvement in at least one extra-curricular activity and aim for a leadership position
- Take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test) in October
- Consider investigating and applying to the summer enrichment programs, leadership seminars, etc.
- Maintain Career Cruising Profile for graduation project

#### **GRADE 10: Winter/Spring**

- Plan your course selections for grade 11 by meeting with teachers and counselors to determine appropriate placements – take both challenging and diverse courses to investigate career interests as indicated by test results
- Begin considering post high school options
- Take Keystone Exams if applicable
- Take Advanced Placement exams in May, if appropriate
- Attend career fair, if applicable
- Complete a job shadowing experience
- Maintain Career Cruising Profile for graduation project

#### **GRADE 10: Summer**

- Add to your resume additional activities, community service, and part time jobs
- Consider enrichment and remedial summer school programs
- Continue extra-curricular activities and community service work
- Work to strengthen reading, writing, and mathematics fundamentals

## **COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE**

### **TIMELINE: Grade 11**

The following is meant to be a general timeline. Every student will be at a different point in this process from now until graduation.

#### **GRADE 11: Fall**

- Continue to improve your academic record and make significant contributions to extra-curricular activities
- Complete a job shadowing experience
- Attend a career fair, if applicable

#### **AUGUST**

- Conduct a post-secondary college/career search
- Begin the college selection process. Consider characteristics that are important to you when researching colleges. For example the type of student body, location, campus, travel abroad options, etc. Create an initial list of schools to research based on some of these characteristics.

#### **SEPTEMBER**

- Meet with college and technical school representatives who visit PTHS throughout the year. Students are responsible for all missed work. Ultimately it is a teacher's decision to allow a student to miss class for these visits.
- IEP and 504 students who are eligible for SAT and ACT testing accommodations for standardized testing should contact their school counselor if they have not yet applied for such accommodations.

#### **OCTOBER**

- Take the PSAT in October to be eligible for National Merit Scholarship competition and to give an indication of projected SAT scores
- Attend junior PIP (Post-Secondary Individualized Plan) meetings
- Attend the annual PTHS College Fair

#### **NOVEMBER**

- Attend junior PIP (Post-Secondary Individualized Plan) meetings
- Register to take the ASVAB Test to explore careers and military career options.
- Begin to investigate scholarship and summer program/internship opportunities

## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

### **TIMELINE: Grade 11 (continued)**

The following is meant to be a general timeline. Every student will be at a different point in this process from now until graduation.

### **GRADE 11: Winter**

- Use the Career Resource Center (CRC) resources to complete college, career, and scholarship searches
- Attend Pittsburgh Area College Fairs

### **DECEMBER**

- Complete any unfinished Graduation Project Requirements and turn in reflection papers
- Take the ASVAB Test to explore careers and military career options
- Look at the registration dates and test dates if you plan on taking the SAT I, SAT II or ACT Tests in the spring. Aim to take the SAT and/or the ACT at least once by the end of your junior year. Remember that senior year offers you opportunities to test again, but be aware of deadline dates for college applications.

### **JANUARY**

- Revise your resume
- Review your PSAT results and to prepare for SAT
- Prepare for the SAT by using test prep materials or taking test prep classes
- Demonstrate proficiency on the Keystone Exams, if applicable.
- Plan your course selections for senior year by meeting with teachers and counselors to determine appropriate placement and assure fulfillment of graduation requirements

### **FEBRUARY**

- Course selection time begins. Be certain to check academic required/recommended courses for college acceptance

### **MARCH**

- Begin to consider teachers who you might ask to write your letters of recommendations for college
- Continue to refine your list of schools and use any scheduled breaks to visit colleges
- Register to take AP exams
- Take the SAT I at least once during the Spring



## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

### **TIMELINE: Grade 11 (continued)**

The following is meant to be a general timeline. Every student will be at a different point in this process from now until graduation.

#### **GRADE 11: Spring**

- Use the Career Resource Center (CRC) resources to complete college, career, and scholarship searches
- Attend Pittsburgh Area College Fairs
- Attend College Planning Night

#### **APRIL**

- Present Graduation Project presentation to panel of faculty and staff
- Demonstrate proficiency on the Keystone Exams, if applicable.
- Look ahead at your standardized testing schedule and final exam schedule. Students are very busy in the spring and proper planning can alleviate a lot of stress

#### **MAY**

- Take AP Exam
- Take the SAT I at least once during the Spring
- Take the SAT II (subject test) if you are considering admission to selective colleges(some colleges require certain tests)
- If you are considering playing a sport at the collegiate level, you need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center for your **initial** eligibility.
- Approach teachers/counselors to personally request a letter of recommendation
- Prepare carefully for final exams as post high school institutions review the final grades closely for admission

#### **JUNE**

- Do well on finals. This is the last chance you have to impact your final grade and cumulative GPA
- Take the SAT II (subject test) in the Spring if you are considering admission to selective colleges(some colleges require certain tests)

#### **GRADE 11: Summer**

- Refine your resume
- Visit colleges when possible, take tours, and have interviews
- Gain work and volunteer experience
- Consider summer school enrichment or remedial programs
- Continue to identify characteristics you want in a college and update your college list. Make an honest assessment of your academic and personal profile. Select a reasonable range of realistic and appropriate colleges to research based on academic requirements, majors offered, geographic area, athletics/extracurricular offerings, size, financial considerations, college philosophy/ mission and your personal philosophy.
- Research majors and career choices

## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

### **TIMELINE: Grade 12**

The following is meant to be a general timeline. Every student will be at a different point in this process from now until graduation.

#### **GRADE 12: Fall**

- Finalize post-secondary plans
- Register to take the ASVAB Test to explore careers and military career options
- If applying to college, determine schools with your counselor including a “safety school”
- Consider early action/early decision options and plan for those deadlines
- Attend the annual PTHS College Fair Attend sessions with college/technical school representative who visit PTHS
- File college applications in advance of deadlines
- Visit colleges and obtain interviews when needed
- Repeat the SAT if warranted or take the ACT as an alternative if recommended
- Take SAT II (subject tests) if appropriate
- Maintain academic record for first quarter and first semester review for admission and through to final review and graduation
- Finalize your resume
- Repeat Keystone Exams or enroll in a course if applicable
- Investigate scholarship opportunities announced at school
- Re-present the Graduation project if necessary

#### **GRADE 12: Winter/Spring**

- Apply for need-based and merit-based financial aid
- Compare financial aid award packages
- Send tuition deposit to the school of your choice by May 1 unless you were an early decision candidate
- Notify other school(s) that you decline their offers of admission if applicable
- Continue to apply for scholarships, especially through local organizations
- Take AP exams in May if applicable
- Complete the Final Transcript and Scholarship Surveys through the Counseling Office for completion of the commencement program

## WHERE DO I START?

### Step One: Know Yourself

Choosing a college is not always simple. This is a time in your life when being reflective, patient and thoughtful will really help in your decision making process. It is necessary to devote time and energy when deciding which college(s) to consider, and the process begins with self-analysis and research. Self-assessments can be difficult and sometimes uncomfortable; however, it is really the most important place to begin in this process. Begin by asking yourself the following questions which pertain to you as a person and student:

1. What matters to me?
2. How would a friend describe me? How would I describe myself to someone who doesn't know me?
3. Why do I want to further my education? Why am I choosing to pursue a college education? What interests do I want to pursue in college?
4. What degree of academic challenge and setting is best for me? How important is the prestige/ academic reputation of the college I attend? What size of college and class size will work best for me?
5. How much structure and direction do I need through advisement?
6. How often do I want to be able to go home, or have family visit me? How close or how far away from home do I want to be?
7. What kinds of surroundings are essential to my well being? Are there certain places, activities, terrain, weather or pace of life which make me happy? Do I prefer a fast paced environment where something is happening most of the time? Do I prefer an organized environment where I can join a wide variety of planned activities? Do I prefer a more relaxed environment where I can go my own way?
8. How would I feel about going to a university where the other students were quite different from me? Would I prefer to be with people who share my viewpoints and lifestyle or who challenge me to make and question my perspectives?
9. If I am considering playing sports at the collegiate level, what is my vision of this? Do I have an understanding of the program's expectation of me as a student and an athlete?

### Step Two: Research Possibilities & Create a List:

There are endless resources in print and on the internet to use when researching colleges. Students should use these resources to research both career and college data. Do not limit your search by using only one search engine.

Keep an open mind and take advantage of the wide variety of university representatives who visit our school. It is important to make a personal connection with the college, and you can start by talking with the representatives of the universities. They can give you first-hand information regarding their school, and also give you ideas of other colleges, parallel programs or career opportunities after graduation. Remember, many of the college representatives who visit our school are the representatives who read your applications and can add significant input to the admissions committee discussions.

Ultimately, the goal is to find the right fit at the end of this process. When students are able to find this fit, they are more likely to be successful academically and personally. Finding the right fit can be both enriching and empowering for a student. You may begin to discover your hidden potentials and positives attributes, and eventually begin to meet and overcome your challenges.

1. Given my academic profile and personal qualities, what colleges and universities are realistically within my reach?
2. If I know what I want to study, which colleges offer that major or program of study?
  - a. Are there important differences in this major among the colleges I am considering?
  - b. Would I be admitted directly into this major or are there additional screening steps once I have been enrolled?
  - c. If I am unsure about my major, will that impact my opportunities to select specific majors in the future? Which majors require me to begin with that designated major? If I don't know what I want to study, what should I do? (Almost ALL colleges encourage students to apply as undecided or undeclared applicants.)

## GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGE VISITS

Visiting the college is probably the most important factor in this entire process. The purpose of visiting a campus is to see the real life version of the institution and gauge whether or not you could “see” yourself there. Colleges are looking for qualified students who “fit” their institutional priorities. As a student, you need to find a college that matches your personal and academic priorities. A visit provides a reality check.

We have developed this guideline to help you remember all the qualities and characteristics of a campus which may impact whether or not it could be an eventual fit for you. Remember that just as a school is reviewing your qualities for admission, you are reviewing the college’s qualities for applying and possibly enrollment. It is highly recommended that you limit the number of schools you visit within the same day. Be sure to allocate enough time to absorb all of the aspects necessary to make a sound and insightful decision.

### PRE-VISIT CHECKLIST:

College: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Fill out Educational Leave Request Form if missing any school days*

Tour Time/ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact/ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Do I have the necessary directions?      Yes                      No

Do I need a parking permit?              Yes                      No

**Do some preparation work.** Consider doing a virtual tour prior to your visit and make note of the specific areas which you would like to see. Make sure to read the college website FAQ’s. Avoid asking questions which you should have already researched and know the answer to. Some schools will request that you bring an unofficial transcript with you to the college visit. Unofficial transcripts are available in the Counseling Center. Decide what you want to learn about and put together a list of questions. For example:

- What majors are offered and what are the course selection requirements?
- What is the average class size?
- Are there freshman orientation programs?
- What is the role and availability of academic advisors?
- Does the college have up-to-date technology and facilities? (For example: science labs, theatres, smart classrooms?)
- What are the operating hours of important places such as the library and computer labs?

### THE ACTUAL VISIT:

When on campus, there are several formal and informal ways to evaluate the college.

#### **Formal**

- Take a campus tour
- Have an interview (*information about the interview process is on the Counseling Services page of the PTHS website*)
- Participate in a group information session at the admission office
- Sit in on a class
- Talk to a coach in your chosen sport
- Talk to a student or counselor in the career center
- Spend the night in the dorm with a current student
- Attend an event on campus
- Talk to a professor in your prospective major(s)

### ***Informal***

- Eat in the cafeteria
- Ask a student why he/she chose this college
- Walk around the campus by yourself
- Search for your favorite book in the library
- Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus
- Ask a student what he/she does on weekends
- Browse in the college bookstore
- Listen to the college's radio station
- Try to see a dorm that you didn't see on the tour
- See if you can imagine yourself at this college

### ***Places to See & Questions to Ask***

- Bookstore
- Financial Aid Office
- Health center (hours and services)
- Places of Worship
- Fraternity/Sorority houses
- Student Union Center
- Counseling and Disability Services Office
- Library- What are the hours and resources available to students?
- Classrooms- are they up to date and user friendly?
- Dining facilities- can I eat here?
- Dorms- can I live here?
- Career placement office- what services are provided for students before and after graduation?
- The local community- is there a positive relationship between the school and community?
- Read the student newspaper- even the ads. Try to find other student publications, department newsletters, alternative newspapers, or literary reviews. What interests the student body? What is the climate of the community?
- Read the bulletin boards in the student union. What is the "talk" on campus? Read the bulletin boards in the academic department you're interested in. Is it useful and relevant? Anything exciting or resourceful?
- Check out the Student Event Calendar, what type of entertainment do they bring to campus?
- Does the college offer an application fee waiver for students who have visited the campus?

### **POST VISIT FOLLOW-UP:**

- Take notes on what you saw or what you didn't see
- Make a pro and con list
- Send a handwritten thank you note to a specific person (for example, the admissions tour guide, coach, admissions officer)

## APPLICATIONS, TRANSCRIPTS, TESTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Most applications are available online, and admissions offices often prefer you access the online application. There are two basic types of applications which a student can use to apply to college:

1. Common Application- [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
2. School designated application

Online applications are very convenient; however you must be certain to **pay close attention to the directions and details of each application**. Each school will have specific application requirements and it is up to the student to know and follow the specific directions for each application. Students are required to complete their part of the application online and submit it directly to the institution either through the Common Application or the school designated application. In addition to submitting application materials, students must request school documents to be sent by the School Counseling Department.

### PAPER APPLICATIONS

Hardcopy applications are still available for almost all schools. Paper applications can be requested by either contacting the Office of Admissions at your chosen college or by ordering an application on the university's website. Limited quantities of paper college applications can be found in the Counseling Center. Although colleges do not discriminate between electronic and hardcopy applications, realize that paper applications may take longer to process. Whereas the personal data found in electronic applications are processed almost immediately, paper applications must be processed and recorded by hand. It is acceptable to apply by paper unless otherwise stated by the school.

### TRANSCRIPT REQUEST PROCEDURE

Unless a student is 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must sign a Transcript Release Form. This needs to be submitted with the first application only. Additionally, every transcript request must be accompanied by a college application checklist, an addressed 8 ½ x 11 envelope with four stamps, and a resume if a counselor recommendation is needed.

1. Gather all paperwork to be sent by the school counseling office. This may include: one Transcript Release Form, College Application Procedure Form, School Report/Counselor Recommendation Form (downloaded from the college website), Resume, Note of special circumstances (if applicable)
2. Put all items in your envelope, which has been addressed to the admissions office of the school to which you are applying
3. Apply four (4) stamps to the envelope
4. Bring to the counseling office
5. Enter your name, date, and college to which you are applying on the Transcript Request Log. Write only one college per line. You must also write your name and date on each line you use.
6. Drop your envelope into the College Application Drop Box
7. Applications will be processed in the order in which they are received
8. Requests may take up to ten (10) school days to process. Please be certain that you are submitting your information at least ten (10) school days before a deadline.
9. Requests submitted less than ten (10) school days before the due date cannot be guaranteed to be sent before the date requested.
10. Adhering to these guidelines will ensure that all transcripts are sent in a timely and efficient manner

## STANDARDIZED TESTS

Please refer to the college application requirements regarding standardized test score requirements. The student is responsible for contacting the appropriate testing agency and having the scores sent. There are three common standardized tests which colleges may require as part of the application. They include the SAT I (Reasoning) Test, SAT II (Subject) Test and the ACT. Students should research the option(s) which is best for them, and determine the appropriate test(s) based on admission requirements and personal preference. Keep in mind when planning your test date schedule to consider college deadlines, especially for early decision, early action and scholarship opportunities. It is also important to plan for test dates because of extracurricular activities and family obligations which may conflict with testing dates. Fee waivers for the cost of the standardized tests are available through the School Counseling Office if financial need is determined. IEP and 504 Students who are registering for the SAT and receive special testing accommodations by the College Board will need their eligibility code when registering for the SAT. Students considering the ACT will need to see their school counselor to apply for testing accommodations at least 8 weeks prior to the selected test date.

Please refer to the Counseling Services page of the PTHS website for more detailed information about standardized tests.

## SCHOOL PROFILE

The school profile is a description of Peters Township High School used by colleges as a point of reference when evaluating our students' applications and transcripts.

## LETTER(S) OF RECOMMENDATION

The letter of recommendation can be a vital part of a student's application. Schools have **different requirements** regarding recommendation letters, and we suggest you follow the application directions. Typically, colleges require a minimum of two letters of recommendation from junior or senior year teacher(s) who taught you in academic subjects as well as a counselor recommendation. To obtain a letter of recommendation from a teacher, please consider the following:

- How well does the teacher know you? It is a good idea to pick a teacher with whom you've worked with closely so that he/she is able to comment on your growth and progress
- What grade did you earn in the class? Select a class in which you were successful
- When you ask a teacher, be prepared to give them a copy of your resume, personal statement, and a stamped envelope that is addressed to the college
- Ask the teacher at least two or three weeks before it needs to be sent. Discuss the deadline when you talk to the teacher. Some teachers get many requests and may need additional time to complete your letter
- Talk to the teacher about your college plans, what you are thinking about studying, and what traits or characteristics you would like him/her to highlight in the letter
- Check back with the teacher to let him/her know when you have applied to a specific school
- Write the teacher a thank you note and update him/her on your college process. He/she will invest a good amount of time help you and will be interested in hearing how things turn out

## SUPPLEMENT(S)

Please be aware that many schools require supplemental materials as part of the application requirements. Applications are not considered complete until all supplements are completed and submitted. When using the Common Application, students must consult the colleges' application requirements listed within the Common Application website.

## ESSAY OR PERSONAL STATEMENT

This is one of your greatest opportunities to be heard by the members of the admissions committee. This is your chance to honestly portray who you are. Therefore, time should be taken before you compose your personal thoughts and feelings. The admissions committee is not only judging you by the content of your response, but also by your use of English and your ability to express yourself. It is recommended that you ask to have your essay read by a school counselor and proofread by a teacher.

Some other things to consider when writing your essay:

- Write your OWN essay in your OWN voice
- Admissions officers can easily spot an essay that is too polished and not a student's own writing.
- Don't try to second guess the essay and write what you think they want to hear. Be honest, creative and thoughtful. This is one way the admission committee can gauge who you are, how you think and if you are a match for their school. Many prompts and questions are autobiographical in nature. Do not disown yourself by evading what is often times the subject- YOU.
- Take creative risks, but be sure it is done correctly. Feel free to appropriately display your sense of humor, intellectual curiosity, interesting experiences or personal perspectives. Be who you are- if you are funny, be funny. If you are not, don't try to be. Admissions officers read thousands of essays, and it is refreshing when an applicant does something different; just make sure it is appropriate and accomplishes the given task.
- Write clearly, concisely and to the prompt. Do not use the essay for numerous schools if it doesn't fit their prompt. Write to the actual college- be sure to make sure you send the right essay to the right college.
- Make sure the essay has been proofread and edited- it is a reflection of you the student and person.
- It is not about telling them who you are, but **showing** them what you have done. Create the story for them, bring it alive and invite them to be part of the personal experience. Explain that "ah-ha" moment where something significant resonated with you and challenged or perhaps even changed your pattern of thinking.
- Use details from your college visit to specify how you would benefit most from and contribute the most to that particular college.

Remember that the admissions committee is trying to "get to know you" through your application, and the essay is considered the most valuable tool. A neatly typed and accurately expressed essay will communicate to an admissions office that your interest is genuine. The essay itself must be your own work, but you are encouraged to solicit constructive criticism of your grammar and written expression before submitting your application.



## SCHOLARSHIP PROTOCOL

This protocol ensures that scholarship applications requiring official school documents are processed accurately and in a timely manner. Our monthly scholarship bulletin includes local community and PTHS specific scholarships. The scholarship sponsors have contacted the School Counseling Department with specifics relating to advertisement, selection criteria, due date, and submission instructions.

**If the selection criteria requires an official transcript or counselor evaluation and the student is responsible for submitting the application packet to the sponsor:**

- Students must submit their completed application packet with a stamped envelope to the provided sponsor address to the GREEN SCHOLARSHIP DROP-OFF BOX LOCATED IN THE COUNSELING OFFICE. If the scholarship packet includes several pages, an essay, recommendation letter, we strongly suggest using a large envelope and affixing 4 stamps to ensure proper postage. If your application was submitted online and you need to have an official transcript forwarded to the sponsor via mail, then a business size envelope and one stamp would be appropriate.
- **Please be aware of deadlines. Some applications may state “post-marked” while others must be submitted by the due date. As our transcript request procedure states, it may take up to ten days for your request to be processed and mailed. It is the student’s responsibility to adhere to our protocol and plan accordingly.**

**For scholarships included in our monthly scholarship bulletin and due to the School Counseling office:**

- If the sponsor prefers that the school collects the applications and pre-screen applicants, the scholarship bulletin shall indicate that the scholarship applications will be due to the School Counseling office by a certain day. The scholarship committee will follow criteria outlined by the sponsor that may include selecting one nominee to represent PTHS. If so, the scholarship committee will score each applicant with a rubric of designated selection criteria. Mrs. Spalaris will coordinate and mail the application as well as the necessary supplemental components to complete the application. This may include an official transcript, counselor recommendation, principal verification, etc.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact:  
Mrs. Cunningham at [cunninghamv@pt-sd.org](mailto:cunninghamv@pt-sd.org) or Mrs. Spalaris at [spalarisk@pt-sd.org](mailto:spalarisk@pt-sd.org)

## COLLEGE TERMS

**Associate's degree:** A two- year degree, students may apply credits from a two- year program to a four-year program

**Bachelor's degree:** A four-year degree

**Binding Decision:** If you are accepted, you must attend that college (ED)

**The Common Application:** An application that many colleges subscribe to, which is filled out once and can be used to apply to one or multiple colleges. [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

**Deferral:** An EA or ED application may be deferred for review with the regular applicant pool

**Early Action (EA):** An application deadline as early as November 1st, which will generally provide a nonbinding response from the college by December 15th. Students may apply to multiple EA colleges. Early Action/ Single Choice: A handful of colleges offer this option which restricts students to a single, nonbinding EA application

**Early Decision (ED):** An application deadline as early as November 1st, which will generally provide a binding response from the college by December 15th. Students may apply to only one college ED. If accepted, a student must withdraw applications sent to all other colleges

**Liberal Arts College:** A liberal arts college is an institution of higher education found in the United States, offering programs in the liberal arts at the post-secondary level. They encourage, and often require their students to take a substantial number of classes in topics which may not directly relate to their vocational goals, in an effort to provide a "well-rounded" education

**Official Testing:** Standardized admissions testing (SAT's or ACT's) which students must request to be sent directly from the College Board or ACT to the college or university

**Post-Secondary:** after high school

**Regular decision:** This application will have a deadline and set time for review. Notification of a decision will generally arrive home in the first week of April

**Rolling Admissions:** Applications are reviewed according to the date by which completed materials are received. Submitting a rolling application early is advisable

**Supplements:** When using the Common Applications, schools may require, in addition to the electronic application, supplementary materials- Teacher Evaluation, School Report, Mid- Year Reports or an additional form for the student to complete

**Undergraduate degree:** It is the first level of university degrees, for example, a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business Administration or Bachelor of Science. Higher levels of university degrees are the master and doctoral levels, also referred to as graduate degrees. ([www.nipissingu.ca/documents.cfm](http://www.nipissingu.ca/documents.cfm))

**Wait list:** A regular applicant who cannot be offered acceptance at decision time, but may be offered an acceptance at a later date

## VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**Jobs for the Future:** Official Site- Creating Strategies for Educational and Economic Opportunity

<http://www.jff.org/>

**BCTE- The Bureau of Career and Technical Education**

[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/bureau\\_of\\_career\\_technical\\_education/7334](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/bureau_of_career_technical_education/7334)

**Education Planner:** One stop career and college-planning website for students

<http://educationplanner.com>

**PA Statewide High Priority Occupations**

[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/high\\_priority\\_occupations/12910](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/high_priority_occupations/12910)

**Team Pennsylvania Career Link:** Pennsylvania Career Link is a cooperative effort to provide con- stop delivery of career services to job seekers, employers and other interested individuals

[www.cwds.state.pa.us/](http://www.cwds.state.pa.us/)

## MILITARY OPTIONS

Several different opportunities exist for students interested in pursuing a military career or military service after graduation. Military academies offer a very selective and physically rigorous program for highly motivated students. Please refer to each individual Academy's website for the most accurate and up-to-date information.

- United States Military Academy (West Point): <http://admissions.usma.edu>
- United States Air Force Academy: <http://academyadmissions.com>
- United States Naval Academy (Annapolis): <http://www.usna.edu>
- United States Merchant Marine Academy: [www.usmma.edu](http://www.usmma.edu)
- Coast Guard Academy: [www.cga.edu](http://www.cga.edu)

### Academy Application Timeline:

- **September/ October**
  - Attend Academy Night
- **November**
  - Continue to investigate military obligation and commitment
- **December/January/February**
  - Application process begins for optional Summer Leadership Seminars at each Academy
- **March/April/May/June**
  - Open your Academy file by completing a Preliminary Application online
  - Attend optional Summer Leadership Seminar
  - Write to your Congressman, Senators and the Vice President to receive a Nomination packet (Nominations are only required for admittance to West Point, Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy)
- **July/August/September/October (Senior year)**
  - Complete Academy application online
  - Complete and submit Nomination applications by indicated deadline
  - Follow directions (received after application is processed) to schedule and complete your
  - Candidate Fitness Assessment and DODMERB medical exam
- **November/December (Senior year)**
  - Interview with Congressman and Senators' staffs to compete for a Nomination
- **December – May (Senior year)**
  - Notification of Nomination
  - Notification of Offer of Appointment
  - If accepting appointment, begin process of obtaining background criminal checks to receive military clearance
- **June (Senior year)**
  - Immediately following graduation, report to Academy to begin summer training

**Non-Academy military options:** Opportunities exist to obtain a civilian education with a military component.

- Schools like VMI, The Citadel, Texas A&M and Norwich University have an integrated Corps of Cadets program that provides students with a liberal arts education concomitant with military, physical and leadership training. Approximately 40% of the student body/Corps of Cadets choose to enter the military upon graduation.
- ROTC is a scholarship program providing tuition and fee assistance for students interested in committing to pursue a military career after college. Students designate ROTC campus selections, BUT receiving an ROTC scholarship does NOT guarantee acceptance to that college or university. Additional information can be found on each service's ROTC website.

### Military enlistment

- Students can contact a military recruiter and enter either Active Duty or Reserve (National Guard) duty upon receipt of their high school diploma or GED.