

SENIOR Perspectives & NEWSLETTER

September 2009

PLHS SCHOLARSHIPS

There's a link on the district website! Every scholarship opportunity that is mailed to us will be available as the year progresses, with deadlines updated as we receive new information.

SENIOR NEWSLETTERS will be available most months of the year. This is where I will print out the latest news from this office and information about what your student needs to be doing to be involved in the post-secondary vocational and academic world. They are online, unless you need a printed copy.

Senior Interviews... That's a stuffy way to say that I will be calling each of you up to talk about where you are in your thoughts for the future and what you're planning for this year and beyond, and how I can help!

ACT registration
deadline:
Sept. 18
Test: October 24

YES, you do need to take the **ACT** if there's any chance you will go to a four year college! For scholarship purposes you should take the ACT no later than the December test. The sign up for the October test is Sept. 18.

To register go to: www.actstudent.org

If any of you are thinking of putting off going to college for a year or so it's probably better to take the ACT now when your education is fresh.

SCHOLARSHIP SEARCHES (you don't ever need to pay!)

www.fastweb.com www.scholarships.com www.finaid.org

- Another good website is www.kacrao.org KACRAO is a College Registrars and Admissions organization and they have an info page for high school students. The page has a TON of websites that could just mean more opportunities for you!

For any of you hoping to win scholarships from any school or national or local organization you will need to have **a list or resume of all your activities**, honors, leadership positions and community activities. We are really lucky that the front **office keeps a list** on file that each of you has updated every year. This is totally useful when the pressure is on in April and May to remember the last 4 years!

GO VISIT!

**PLHS allows EXCUSED
DAYS for college/post-
secondary school/
military visits!!**

**You must get a form
from me for it to be
excused!**

If you are interested in a Service Academy, **West Point, Air Force Academy, Anapolis** etc. and wish to apply for acceptance, know that you are quickly running out of time! These colleges don't cost any money to attend but do require a military commitment. The deadline to have all nomination application materials in to Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins is November 1. You must request the application materials and would be running very late to get everything in on time.

The Perils of Senioritis

While there is room for electives during a senior year, a senior schedule should reveal a student who remains excited about an academic challenge. The bottom line is that students should enroll in the most rigorous set of classes in which they feel comfortable and confident of being successful. Here are four tips:

1. **Make the grades.**
Strong grades in a challenging senior schedule can often compensate for weaker marks that were earned previously.
2. **Remain involved without getting overwhelmed.**
Involvement at the expense of one's grades is never a worthwhile trade-off!
3. **Stay focused.**
Seniors still need to maintain their grades, even after being admitted to college.
4. **Enjoy the experience.**
Students who resist "senioritis" will be able to balance the academic, extracurricular, and social aspects of senior year.

Excerpted from Counselor's Canvas, Fall 2005 Volume X Issue 1, Washington University

FACT TO PONDER: In Kansas, **60% of all high school graduates go to college** after high school. Of that number only **30% earn a bachelor's degree**. The bottom line is that **70% of all high school graduates do not earn college degrees**. We know further education after high school is important, but maybe many of us need to re-think the 4-year college as the only option. Community colleges and vocational schools offer many educational options that should be explored.

Qualified admissions standards are in effect. Most of you are very aware of the classes you need to meet these requirements. **59 of you, or 63% of your class, are scheduled to complete these requirements by the end of this year.** You can also qualify with a 21 or higher on the ACT or by being in the top 1/3 of your class ranking. See me if you have questions about Qualified Admissions.

27% of your class is scheduled to complete the course requirements for Kansas Scholar as of right now.

To be designated a State Scholar:

- The average ACT score of State Scholars is 28 or higher and the average GPA is 3.90.
- Designation is based on **ACT scores**, completing the **Kansas Scholar Curriculum** and a **3.00 cumulative GPA**
- Scholarships are awarded based on financial need.

October 14, interested seniors and juniors will be able to travel to the **College/Career Fair, in Oskaloosa**. Transportation will be provided. This should provide an excellent opportunity for examining different schools. We are only taking one bus so sign up early!

Some of you who are considering out-of-state schools may need to take the **SAT** (Scholastic Aptitude Test). Make sure to check on the tests required and when results must be on file at the school.

If you have certain ACT scores and a certain GPA you could be required to take certain remedial classes in college. ACT scores will determine placement. This will be something you need to research as you look at schools. Example: You must have at least a 22 on the ACT to take College Algebra at K.U. and at HCC.

SHOULD I TAKE THE ACT AGAIN?!

You should definitely consider retesting if:

- You had any problems during the test, such as misunderstanding the directions or not feeling well.
- You aren't satisfied that your scores accurately represent your abilities.
- You see a discrepancy between your ACT scores and your high school grades.
- You have completed coursework or an intensive review in subject areas of the ACT since you were tested.

How will you do on a retest? ACT research shows:

- 55% increased their composite score
- 23% decreased their composite score
- 22% had no change in their composite score

MORE ACT INFO:

Colleges are typically divided into categories based on admissions standards. The following list indicates the ACT scores typically looked at first by these schools.

- 16-19 Liberal
- 20-23 Traditional
- 24-27 Selective
- 28-36 Highly Selective

A fact to be very aware of is that SENIORS WHO WIN SCHOLARSHIPS WORK VERY HARD. Even students with really high ACT scores and perfect grades need to work to get their names and info out there to scholarship groups. It is true that the higher your scores and grades the easier it is to get scholarships BUT many groups also want to see that you are a contributing citizen and will also look at your accomplishments. There IS money out there but you have to work hard to find it

SHOULD I SIGN-UP FOR WHO'S WHO?

Please pay careful attention to the following article **from** the September 2009 **KSHSAA** Activities Journal concerning "**Who's Who**," "Distinguished," etc. (The following paragraphs are reprinted from a section of the publication NASSP Advisory List of National Contests and Activities.)

Commercial Recognition Programs

- The committee does not list organizations or programs which claim to honor outstanding students through publication of student names in volumes usually titled "**who's who**," "outstanding," "distinguished," etc., and which **derive their revenue from the sale of these publications to students**. The Committee views any recognition accorded to students through mere inclusion in such a publication as of **little or no tangible value**. Furthermore, such recognition is unlikely to provide any future educational or personal benefit for students.
- The selection criteria used by most commercial recognition programs are often ambiguous and flimsy. Even when stated the organization is unlikely to be able to verify that students actually measure up to the selection criteria, since nominations ordinarily come from a number of sources. These may include individual staff members associated with a school or individuals in the community at large.
- Most of the organizations sponsoring these programs and known to the committee are **profit motivated and are not related to educational, philanthropic, or professional associations**. The organizations often solicit students and their families to purchase the publication or some other type of "award." The source of the income is usually the recognition program itself. That is, recognition is being sold at a profit in the form of publications, which list student names. *****



Also it is important to know that scholarship organizations and colleges do not want to see Who's Who on applications. It is considered a waste of space on the forms because of the reasons given above.

NCAA Eligibility!! Set up an account at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

What do I do on a college visit?!



SCHEDULE A CAMPUS VISIT

Meet with admissions people
 Meet with financial aid people
 Visit with a professor in the academic area of interest
 Take a campus tour
 Set up special appointments.... talk to the band people, visit sororities and fraternities, etc.

How do I schedule a visit?

Go online or call at least a week or two ahead!

Get a visit form from the counselor!

There's no way you can make any type of serious post-secondary school decision without visiting the school and asking questions.

College Prep Calendar

September

Register to take your college entrance tests (ACT) asap.
 Make a timeline which lists all deadlines. Refer often to this timeline and post what is completed.
 Maintain or improve academic grades during your senior year. Colleges look unfavorably upon falling grades.
 Meet with reps when they visit your school.
 Start planning your visits to your top school choices.

October/November

Complete a resume of your high school work, activities, etc.
 See your counselor when you have questions or need help.
 Ask your counselor to send your transcripts and other required forms to the college to which you apply.
 Make sure you allow ample time for the counselor to complete tasks before deadlines.
 Attend college fairs. Meet with reps when they visit your school.

HAPPENINGS AND INFORMATION

Washburn University sponsors the **Garvey Competitive Scholarship** program in November 22 and December 6. PLHS students have won Washburn scholarship money by taking this exam. Must have at least a 3.0 GPA and be registered to attend Washburn. Register for the Garvey online at www.washburn.edu by mid November.

Pittsburg State has an Honors College that accepts students with a minimum 3.5 GPA and at least a 28 ACT. Presidential Scholars receive a "full-ride" and will join the Honors College. There are benefits to Honors programs!

*Highland Community College Allied Health Courses Fall 2009 Perry will have a **Certified Medication Aide Course** sometime between Oct- Dec. The dates aren't out yet.

Missouri Welding Institute, Inc. wishes for you to be aware of their program. www.m-w-i.com

*Kansas Health Information Management Association wishes to let you know about two associate's degree programs in healthy information technology, one at Washburn University and the other at Hutchinson Community College. People in these fields are responsible for the coordination, processing, data quality and security of a patient's healthcare information. This is a good field for students interested in computers, information technology, business, law or medicine. To learn more go to: www.khima.com

Colby Community College offers Veterinary Technology and Pre-Veterinary Medicine programs www.colbycc.edu or call 785.460-5466

Obviously you can't apply for this position yet but maybe you know someone this could help, or you could remember it for next year for yourself. **Consider a career with the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office.** Must be at least 18 with a diploma and no felony convictions, no DUI convictions or diversions. No experience necessary. 17 weeks classroom/on the job paid training. Apply online at www.hrepartners.com

Southeast Community College has various campuses in Nebraska. They offer a new program called Major Appliance Professional Technology. Graduates can expect to make \$25,000 to \$60,000 annually. Learn more about SCC at <http://www.southeast.edu/discover/milford.asp>.

Constitution Day Poster Design contest. Go to www.govdocs4children.pbwiki.com for links and ideas.

Disney College and Career Start Program is for students who have graduated from high school and who are looking for a new experience that will provide them more than just a job. This would apply to your class after graduation in May. If you'd like to learn more go to www.disneycareerstart.com

K.U. Independent Study. More than 150 KU classes are available through distance learning. Work at your own pace. www.continuinged.ku.edu

You can view your admission status at K.U. by going to www.admissions.ku.edu/status



I have some cool career and college books that you are welcome to borrow from my office! I've tried to order books about areas people ask about. Please, please, if you borrow a book just return it after a few days.

Recommended Web Sites

www.fastweb.com

www.mycollegeoptions.com

www.wiredscholar.com

www.fafsa.ed.gov

www.studentaid.gov

www.actstudent.org

scholarships

college choices

scholarships

financial aid

“ “

register for the ACT/other good information

GAP YEAR??

A few students through the years have talked of **taking a year off before going to college**. Sometimes students do it to earn money or make up their minds about college. Many people feel that being out of school for a year makes it tough to go back. However, some students in the U.S. take a "gap year" after high school and before college and do something like traveling or volunteering. There's AmeriCorps or City Year which are volunteer programs where you earn some money. Some of these programs could be really helpful in helping students mature and figure out what they really want to do in college. Many colleges allow you to defer your entrance for a year after being accepted so it is good to do all of your college admission work before you leave high school. Check out some of these websites if you want to learn more! www.americorps.org www.ciee.org www.cityyear.org www.gap-year.com www.studyabroad.com www.statravel.com

Financial Aid

Tips for students and parents (copied from Washington University Financial Aid Services memo in Counselor newsletter Fall 2003)

The impact of scholarships cannot be overlooked in helping families reduce the cost of education at colleges and universities. Here are tips to help students get started on their scholarship search:

- Scholarships can be based on academic achievement and potential alone (also known as academic, or merit-based scholarships) or on a combination of academic achievement and potential and the family's financial circumstances.
- Outside scholarships are funded by organizations outside the university such as corporations, foundations, service clubs, and local organizations.
- As you search for outside scholarships, try to narrow the search to increase the "odds" in your favor. One example would be to apply for scholarships for high school seniors who are sons and daughters of labor union members. There are many other examples, as well.
- Apply online whenever possible. This method will save weeks in processing your information, and you'll get a speedier response.
- If you use one of the free internet scholarship searches, find out how your address will be used. Anticipate the mail you might receive as a result of using the free search service.
- Before hiring a consultant to help you get scholarships, contact the financial assistance office at the college or university that interests you. You'll be surprised at how much information and help you'll receive for free!
- Be sure you understand the guidelines and expectations governing scholarships. Are scholarships automatically renewable for all four years of college? Is there a minimum GPA requirement to remain eligible for a scholarship? Are there service requirements after graduations, such as with the ROTC programs?



Kansas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers strongly recommends that parents are educated on the following ways you can save on your income tax bill.

Hope Scholarship Credit

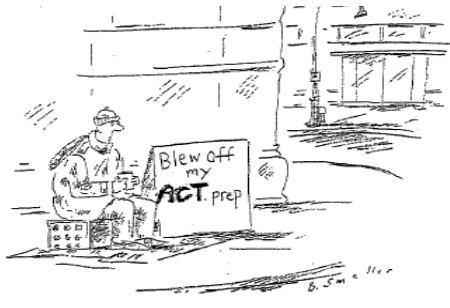
Up to \$1500 credit per eligible student

Available ONLY for the first two years of postsecondary education.

Available only for 2 years per eligible student

Students must be pursuing a degree or other recognized educational credential

Student must be enrolled at least halftime for one academic period beginning during the year



Internet Etiquette: Do's and Don'ts for Your Students

E-mail, blogging, Facebook, My Space ... electronic communication and social networking Web sites are becoming a normal part of students' everyday communications. E-mail is often the preferred way to get in touch with colleges and universities. The nature of Internet communication is informal compared to standard business mail, but when is informal too informal? Here are a few "do's" and "don't's" to help your students with their electronic communication.

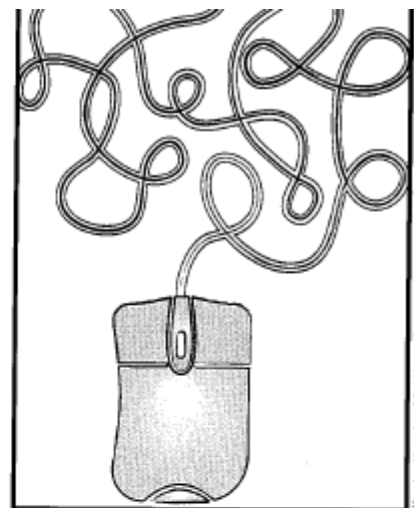
Do:

- Remember that your e-mail messages may be added to your admissions file.
- Choose an appropriate e-mail address. You may want to rethink addresses like partygirl@gmail.com or hatetostudy@yahoo.com.
- Give your full name, address, phone number, and high school on each message.
- Spell check your e-mail, and use proper punctuation.
- Use salutations, e.g., Dear Admissions Officer.

- Be as polite and respectful in an e-mail as you would in a face-to-face meeting or telephone conversation.
- Use the "reply with history" function to help schools remember the questions you asked in previous e-mails.
- Before sending an e-mail with a lot of questions, check the school's Web site and publications for answers. If you still have specific questions, it is better to call schools so their admissions staff can have a conversation with you.
- Monitor what is posted on your social networking Web sites (e.g., Facebook, My Space, blogs) to ensure that photos and comments are appropriate and respectful. Although Admissions Officers may not specifically check student profiles or blogs, it is best to follow these guidelines given the open and accessible nature of the Internet.

Don't:

- Don't use all lowercase or all uppercase letters in an e-mail. Lowercase is difficult to read, and uppercase feels as if you are SHOUTING.



- Don't use "IMPORTANT INFORMATION!!!!" or "Please read" as subjects for your e-mail. These are commonly used for "junk e-mail" or viruses.
- Don't send blanket e-mails to a lot of schools at once. Do some research and then ask specific questions, indicating genuine interest.
- Don't "friend" an Admissions Officer or your student interviewer on social networking Web sites. It is in your best interest to keep your communications professional during the admissions process.
- Don't post inappropriate or offensive messages about any university on any Web site (e.g., collegeconfidential.com).

— Julie Shimabukuro and Julie Kling

Scholarship Scams: What to Know



www.fastweb.com

Recognizing the Scammer

How can you tell the good from the bad?

A scammer:

- States you've won an award for which you didn't apply.
- Does not supply valid contact information.
- Guarantees you will win an award.
- Requires personal financial information (such as credit card numbers or checking account numbers) to "verify" or "hold" a scholarship.

A legitimate scholarship service:

- Sends information about awards when you request it.
- Makes contact information available upon request.
- Does not guarantee you will win an award.
- Should not direct you to a fee-based provider because they know that financial aid information is readily available for free.

**Search over \$1 billion
in scholarships -
for FREE!**

www.fastweb.com

Quick Scam Warning Signs:

- A fee.
- A "money-back guarantee."
- Requests for your credit card or bank account.

Popular (But False!) Claims

"For a small fee, we'll give you a list of scholarships."
Never spend money on a fee-based matching service. The biggest and best award databases are available for free on the Internet, including FastWeb: www.fastweb.com.

"\$6.6 billion in scholarships went unclaimed last year."
Statements about unclaimed awards are misleading. They generally refer to tuition reimbursements that aren't available to the public. Scholarships are competitive and are awarded.

"You are guaranteed a minimum of \$1,000 in awards."
A service can't guarantee any scholarships because they have no control over the scholarship judge's decisions.

"We have a 96% success rate."
These false success rates indicate the percentage of students they've successfully matched with the database, NOT the number of students who actually receive money.

"We'll need a bank account/credit card number to verify your information."
Your bank account and credit card information is confidential. A legitimate scholarship provider won't ask for this information.

"We will do all the work for you."
To win a legitimate scholarship, you must submit your own applications, write your own essays and solicit your own letters of recommendation. There is no way to avoid doing the work.

What If You Suspect a Scam?

1. Save all forms you receive from the suspect company. Keep copies of written details about the offer and any correspondence, e-mails or other paperwork. Make sure all materials are dated.
2. Take notes during any seminar or phone conversations. Record the date, time, phone number and the person's name with whom you spoke. Also include a detailed account of your conversation.
3. Report the suspected scammer to any of the following organizations:

National Fraud Information Center (NFIC)
Ph: 800-876-7080 Web: www.fraud.org

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
Ph: 877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) Web: www.ftc.gov

State Attorney General's Office
Call information or visit your state's Web site to obtain state attorney general's contact information. Ask them about filing a complaint with the Bureau of Consumer Protection in your state.

Better Business Bureau (BBB)
Ph: 703-276-0100 Web: www.bbb.org

United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)
Ph: 800-654-8896 Web: www.usps.gov/postalinspectors/fraud