

Dear Class of 2022 Students and Families,

As we close out what has certainly been an extraordinary school year, it must be hard to imagine that you are now halfway through your high school career. We sincerely hope that all in all, it's been a positive year for you. We are writing to provide you with a review of highlights from our guidance programs and resources that should serve as a foundation for what's to come.

Spring Guidance Programs

This spring, a series of programs were conducted virtually to provide introductory information to sophomore students and families regarding post-high school planning:

- *Introduction to Post-High School Planning* presentation with SHS school counselors
- *College Admission Panel* with representatives from Hamilton, Syracuse, UConn, and Wash U
- *College Admission Testing Webinar* with Summit Educational Group

Recordings of each program can be found on the [SHS Guidance website](#) and/or posted in [Schoolology](#). For those looking to dig deeper, you will find additional information on our website, including our [2020-21 Guide to Post-High School Planning and College Applications](#).

Naviance Inventories and Resume Development

Earlier this year, school counselors visited sophomore classrooms, and students did an assessment called *Career Interest Profiler*, which through a series of questions, matches student interests with potential careers. *Career Interest Profiler* and *Do What You Are* personality inventory results from ninth grade can both be found in [Naviance](#) under the "About me" tab. We encourage you to review these assessment results together as you continue to learn more about individual interests, strengths, and goals.

To best prepare for post-high school planning during junior year, this summer students are encouraged to (1) start a resume and (2) fill out the Post-High School Experience survey for their school counselor, both in Naviance. Follow the instructions in the screencasts posted in Schoolology.

Standardized Testing

As of now, Staples will hold the PSAT for juniors on Saturday, October 17. This test is recommended for college-bound students. Registration will take place through Staples High School in the fall, with more details to come.

With the demand on space from the class of 2021, students in the class of 2022 should plan to test later next school year and not this fall or early winter. For more information, visit the [standardized testing](#) page on the SHS Guidance website and view the recording from the Summit webinar held in April linked in Schoolology.

Students who receive accommodations at Staples through an IEP or 504 plan and have not yet provided their school counselor with their [Student Eligibility Worksheet for Standardized Testing Accommodations](#) should complete and submit to shsguidance@westportps.org this summer.

Planning to Finance College

If you have not already done so, now is the time to have an honest, realistic conversation about your family's financial situation as it relates to future options. Visit the [financial aid](#) page on our website, and use that as a jumping off point to the many helpful resources available to families. Download the presentation notes from last year's session with financial aid guru Bill Smith (who we plan to have return to Staples this coming year!). Also, while it's primarily geared toward senior parents, our *College Financial Aid Application Night* in the fall is a program you may wish to attend (in person or virtually - we'll see...) for an in-depth look at the FAFSA and financial aid application process with Julie Savino, Executive Director of Financial Assistance at Sacred Heart.

Exploring Post-High School Pathways

While many Staples students are focused on a four-year college experience, as school counselors we understand and fully embrace that this is not the possible, desired, and/or most appropriate path for all students. For those considering a gap year, PG year, community college, technical school, employment, or the military, we have various programs throughout junior and senior year, ongoing individual counseling, and [resources on our website](#) to begin exploration and ensure all students graduate from Staples well-prepared for their next step.

Junior Year and Schoology as a Resource

Junior year, post-high school planning begins in earnest in December through classroom lessons with students. In January, we will hold our College Kickoff Night for Juniors and Families (2020 video linked [here](#)), covering the various components of the search and application process. Throughout second semester, we will hold individual family meetings to discuss each student's plans and goals as well as offer a series of classroom lessons, Connections activities, and workshops for students.

The Guidance Department created a Schoology course specific to each grade level in preparation for the summer and next school year. (Parents, you have access to your child's Schoology as well; here's a [link to instructions](#) if needed.) Throughout next year as you get further into the post-high school planning process, we will add other resources and refer to Schoology when we meet individually and through Connections and classroom activities.

If you should need to reach us this summer, follow this [link to a google form](#) posted on our website, and a member of our staff will respond as soon as we are able. Without certainty of

what's ahead, know that even if we have to shift our approach, we will be there every step of the way as you navigate your high school career and future planning.

In the meantime, we hope you find this information helpful and have a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,

Staples Guidance Department

<http://shs.westportps.org/departments/guidance>

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