

Port Jervis High School Planning Guide for SENIORS

Grade 12



School Counselors

For 2023, Seniors keep their counselor from last year.

Mrs. Laurie Kahmar (A-E)	LKahmar@pjschools.org
Mrs. Julie Balogh (F-Mam)	JBalogh@pjschools.org
Ms. Cathy Lane (Mann-Rod)	CLane@pjschools.org
Mr. Chris Stellato (Roe-Z)	CStellato@pjschools.org

Ms. Kate Oldham - Guidance Coordinator KOldham@pjschools.org

Guidance Secretaries

Mrs. Nancy Costello & Mrs. Denise Lefberg
Guidance Phone: 858-3102 option: 5
www.pjschools.org ->high school ->guidance

College Admissions and Future Planning for Students in the 12th Grade



Much of this information has been compiled from the official SAT website, www.collegeboard.org.

Here you will find a wealth of information that will help guide you and your parents through your higher- ed planning, preparing, and applying.

School Counselors will be meeting with students individually to assist them in researching and planning in support of attaining their future goals.

School Counselors are also available during scheduled evening meetings to provide information and to answer your questions.

**All 4-year college applications
should be completed and
submitted by November 9th**

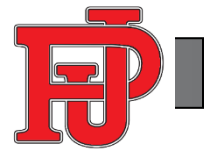
Submitting your applications at this time (or earlier) can give you a distinct advantage over other applicants.

September/October of Senior Year

- College & Career Fair: Oct 12, 2023 @ PJHS during lunch periods for students
- Senior/Parent information night: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 @ 6pm PJHS
- Financial Aid Info-session: Thursday, October 26, 2023 @ 6pm PJHS

- Please be sure that you know how to communicate with your counselor through email - this is important!! Check your email twice daily (at least.)
- Create a PERSONAL email address (do not use your school email for anything outside of PJHS communications with PJHS staff)
- Get organized: use a planner, calendar, reminders on your phone, etc
- Know your Stats:
 - School Name: Port Jervis High School
 - School CEEB Code: 334590
 - School Address: 10 Route 209, Port Jervis, NY 12771
 - School County: Orange
 - Your date of entry: 09/2020 (unless you are a transfer)
 - Date of graduation: 06/28/2024
 - Counselor name and email: listed on the front of this packet
 - Counselor phone number (office): 845-858-3102
 - The following information can be *found on your transcript* that you can request from the Guidance Secretaries:
 - Class Rank (our rank on the transcript is *weighted*)
 - Graduating Class size: the second number of the rank
 - Cumulative GPA: *weighted* on the transcript
 - GPA Scale: 100
 - Are you a *first-generation* college student?
 - Do either of your parents have a bachelor's degree? If only one or neither have their 4-year degree, then you can be considered a *first-generation*.
 - Do you qualify for EOP or HEOP?
<https://www.nysed.gov/postsecondary-services/higher-education-opportunity-program-heop>
 - Qualifying students may receive support services such as academic, career and personal counseling; tutoring and supplemental instruction as well as financial assistance

Next Steps....



- ❑ Become familiar with www.commonapp.org, www.naviance.com, <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>, www.payscale.com, www.bigfuture.org, <https://www.raise.me/join/port-jervis-senior-high-school>

What is Common App? The Common Application is a not-for-profit organization that serves students and member institutions by providing an admission application that students may submit to over 800 colleges. **Why use it?** It is completed online and copies of the Application for Undergraduate Admission can be sent to any number of participating colleges. The same is true of the School Report, Optional Report, Midyear Report, Final Report and Teacher Evaluation forms. This allows you to spend less time on the busywork of applying for admission, and more time on what's really important: college research, visits, essay writing, and senior year coursework.

- ❑ If you are applying to 4-year schools using Common App: (most SUNY schools also use Common App)
 - Create a user ID for <https://www.commonapp.org/> (keep your login info in a safe place)
 - Complete the Education section
 - Add at least one college to the college list using “search and add schools”
 - Click “My Colleges” tab and click “Recommenders and FERPA”
 - Click “Release Authorization” and complete the FERPA waiver
 - Login to NAVIANCE
 - Click the “Colleges” Tab
 - Click: “Colleges I’m Applying To”
 - Select: “Match Accounts” and this will match Naviance to Common App
- ❑ Create/update Raise.Me profile: <https://www.raise.me/signup/hs-student> (personal email address)
- ❑ Visit Colleges / Trade Schools (make appointments: virtual or in-person - page 6)
- ❑ Make an Activity Sheet/Resume - use Canva.com - it is free for students and it looks great!
- ❑ Narrow your college/trade school list to 5-8 schools: target, reach, and likely schools
- ❑ If you haven't picked out 5-8 schools, do a search on www.bigfuture.org
- ❑ Stay aware of college entrance exam test dates and deadlines:
 - ACT- www.act.org SAT exams- www.collegeboard.org
- ❑ Start filling out your college applications, especially for early decision or early action programs
- ❑ Pay attention to your s.pjschools email: appointments with your counselor will be scheduled through your email
- ❑ Request letters of recommendation from 2 teachers (1 should be CORE subject) (see pg. 5)
- ❑ Follow up those requests with thank you/reminder notes
- ❑ Request UNOFFICIAL copy of your transcript from the guidance secretaries: ncostello@pjschools.org or dlefberg@pjschools.org
- ❑ If you applying to a 4-year college and/or will be applying for scholarships - ask your counselor for a letter of recommendation in September/October.
- ❑ Letters of recommendation should be completed by **October 30th**
- ❑ Listen to morning announcements for visits from college representatives & military recruiters
- ❑ Get started on your college application essay
- ❑ Athletes for DI or DII schools: https://web3.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp
- ❑ Financial Aid forms: in order for your child to be eligible for most college scholarships and any other financial aid, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be submitted
- ❑ Submit FAFSA as soon as possible after **December 1st** www.FAFSA.ed.gov
- ❑ Do your colleges require the CSS Profile? If so, complete this online at www.collegeboard.org
- ❑ Know the rigor of your course load. Colleges will compare the list of classes that we offer at PJHS to the list of classes you completed. Challenge yourself.

Terminology and Letters of Recommendation



Terminology:

- Associates Degree - 2 years
- Bachelor's Degree - 4 years
- Master's Degree - usually 6 years
- Major - your concentration (ie: Business)
- Minor - a second concentration
- Undergraduate - a college student who has not yet earned their Bachelor's degree
- Prospective student - someone looking to go to a college (you)
- Deadline - the last possible date that something is due
- Early Decision - A legally binding agreement that if you are accepted to that particular college, you will rescind all other applications
- Early Action - You apply to the college early, and you will find out if you are accepted earlier.
- Tuition: the cost of attending a full-time schedule of courses in college (does not include dorm room, board (food), or books)
- SUNY: State University of New York (public schools)
- CUNY: City University of New York (public schools)
- HESC: Higher Education Services Corporation (NY financial aid)
- FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (federal financial aid)
- Test optional/Test blind: SAT/ACT scores are either optional or not considered for application

Letters of Recommendation

Request letters of recommendation from your teachers/advisors beginning as early as March or April of your Junior year. We suggest that students request at least two letters from teachers. Please utilize NAVIANCE to request for common app applications. *Follow up these requests with a nice thank you note* (this note can serve as a "Reminder note" also).

Step 1: Ask a teacher in person if they would be willing to write a letter of recommendation for you. If "yes", move on to step 2.

Step 2: Write a reminder/thank you note to the people who have agreed to write a letter for you:

"Dear ____, Thank you very much for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation on my behalf...etc. My intended major is ... Could you please highlight _____ (something that that person knows about you first hand). Please turn in your letter to my School Counselor, ____ by October 24th. You may also receive an e-mail requesting that you upload my letter directly to NAVIANCE. Would you also please provide me with a letter that I could use for scholarships? Sincerely, _____"

Note: Your Counselor also writes a letter for your application file. It is required for most four-year schools. The School Counselor letter sets the context in which your application will be reviewed. It is important that you have a strong working relationship with your School Counselor so that s/he can write the most effective letter on your behalf.

December of Senior Year

- Career Research
- ROI: Return on Investment
- Scholarship Applications



- Attend college & career fairs and college info-sessions... some are virtual
- Be aware of college standardized test dates and deadlines (SAT, ACT)
- Be aware if your college choices still require standardized test scores - test blind / test optional.
- Maintain a strong work ethic - seek extra help if you need it
- Be sure to send your SAT and ACT scores directly through these testing agencies to the schools you are applying to. (Not sure if this is required? "OFFICIAL SCORES" = must be sent from SAT or ACT)
- Have an honest discussion with your parents about the cost of college - use the EFC/SAI calculator
- Do you need to attend a college interview? Find out... See your counselor for more information
- Make yourself aware of the PJ scholarship process**
- Stay organized during this hectic month! Speak with your parents or counselor to clear up any questions or concerns that might come up.
- Make sure you have submitted all of your college applications that are due while we are on Winter Recess (many applications are due by January 1, so they must be turned in two weeks before we go on break!)**
- Stay aware of college entrance test dates and deadlines
- If you still have not applied to college, it may not be too late!
 - Make appointment with your School Counselor ASAP
 - Do a college search on your own at www.collegeboard.org

Spring of Senior Year

- Four weeks after submitting FAFSA, look for your Student Aid Report (SAR). Review and submit all additions and/or corrections
- Keep asking about scholarships!
- After receiving your acceptance letters, re-visit the colleges and surrounding areas. Check with the school's admissions office if you can arrange for an overnight visit in one of the dorms.
- As you receive acceptance letters, inquire with each school's financial aid office if there are any scholarships offered from the school.
- Parents- use offered scholarships as a bargaining tool with other schools!

- Most admissions decisions and financial aid award letters arrive this month
 - If you haven't heard, call the college and inquire about the status of your application
 - If you were waitlisted contact the director of admissions to reiterate your interest in the school. Talk with your School Counselor as well.
 - If you were not admitted to any schools, talk to your counselor immediately.
Together, you will find a college with a deadline that has not passed.
- Pay attention to reply deadlines and respond in a timely fashion
- Review your financial aid packages
- Send enrollment form and a deposit check to the college of your choice.
- Finalize your summer plans- internships, jobs, or volunteer opportunities
- Send thank you notes to any scholarship program as well as anyone who has helped you along the way
- Ask the guidance secretaries to send your final transcript to the college that you will be attending
- Thank your families/guardians for all their love, help, guidance, and support
- ENJOY GRADUATION, YOU DESERVE IT



The Differences between the SAT and the ACT

“Test Blind” means that the college will not consider an applicant’s test scores even if they are submitted.

“Test Optional” means students are not required to submit any standardized test scores as part of their application, applicants have the choice to submit scores or not.

SAT:

Scholastic Aptitude Test

- **Measures** academic aptitude in verbal, numerical reasoning, and writing skills.
- **Cost:** \$ 60.00 (without essay)
- **Scores:** No points are deducted for wrong answers. Score based on the amount of right answers.

ACT:

American College Test

- **Measures** academic achievement in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning (writing section optional).
- **Cost:** \$ 68.00 (without writing)
\$ 93.00 (with writing)
- **Scores** are based on number of correct answers. No penalty for guessing.





College Visits: In-person or Virtual (log ALL your visits into Raise.me)

Make appointments, get business cards, and send follow up thank you notes. If you visit a private college, **ask them if they will waive your application fee since you are there on a visit.** (Most college applications have a processing fee associated with them; anywhere between \$25-\$75 per college application.)

Plan to visit colleges the spring of your junior year and fall of senior year **while they're in session.** Be sure to **schedule an appointment** before you go. Many colleges keep track of how many times you visit or contact the college (it shows a measure of your interest).

Questions to Ask a College Representative: PJHS College Fair is Oct 12, 2023

A smile and eye contact show respect and interest. Dress appropriately for meeting with representatives. Speak clearly and confidently. Ask them for their business card and/or contact information and follow up with a thank you note; thanking them for taking the time to speak with you.

1. What grade point Average (GPA) do I need to be considered a good candidate for acceptance to your school?
2. What SAT scores do I need to be considered a good candidate for acceptance to your school? Do I need to take the SAT Subject test/ which ones do I need?
3. (For SUNY schools) Do I need an advanced regents diploma or certain regents exams?
4. Do you hold interviews as part of the admissions process?
5. What is your protocol for standardized testing? Test blind, test optional?
6. What is the total cost per year to attend?
7. Are applicants automatically matched to scholarships based on their application file?
8. What kind of services does your school provide? (tutoring, mentoring, Freshman Experience, etc.)
9. Are there any programs for minority students?
10. What is the typical Freshman class size?
11. Will I be assigned an advisor right away?
12. How many applications did you receive last year?
13. What kinds of internship (or study abroad) experiences would be possible if I majored in...?
14. How many students from last year's senior class went on to graduate or professional schools?
15. What are some of the challenges and even weaknesses of *This College*?



Introduction to Naviance

Naviance is a web-based technology program that will be used by the guidance department to help manage the college admissions process. Family Connection is the website that students and families will use to access and share information with their counselors as they develop their post-secondary plans. Using Family Connection, students can research careers & colleges, take assessments & surveys, create goals & to-do's and eventually, submit requests for transcripts & recommendations directly to their counselor.

College Lookup

If you want to get information and statistics for a specific school, go to "College Lookup". Naviance will provide general facts about the school, including information on Admissions, Financial Aid, and Student Life. You can also check the "Majors & Degrees" link when looking at a specific school to make sure it has your program of interest.

Colleges I'm Thinking About

As your child adds colleges to their list of possibilities, Naviance will keep track of the schools they're considering in an easy format, which lists the application deadlines for each school. Students are encouraged to add possible schools they're interest-ed in so they can review them with their guidance counselor.

About Me Tab

Under the "About Me" Tab, there are many useful tools for your child. Students can set goals and set reminders to tasks that need to be completed. One of our favorite tools is the resume function. Here, students can use the template to create a great resume to list awards, activities and clubs, outside jobs, and much more. Sending resumes to colleges is definitely suggested.

Other College Resources

Naviance is a great tool for college planning. There are several other functions not discussed in this brochure which can be helpful in exploring college options. While Naviance does provide great information, please remember to always check out the specific college website for the most up-to-date data. Start your college planning early and visit as many college campuses as possible to get a feel for what your child wants in a college. And always re-member: your best college resource is your school counselor!



Excelsior Scholarship Program

The Excelsior Scholarship, in combination with other student financial aid programs, allows students to attend a SUNY or CUNY college tuition-free.

An applicant must:

- be a resident of NYS and have resided in NYS for 12 continuous months prior to the beginning of the term;
- be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen;
- have either graduated from high school in the United States, earned a high school equivalency diploma, or passed a federally approved "Ability to Benefit" test, as defined by the Commissioner of the State Education Department;
- have a combined federal adjusted gross income of \$125,000 or less;
- be pursuing an undergraduate degree at a SUNY or CUNY college, including community colleges and the statutory colleges at Cornell University and Alfred University;
- be enrolled in at least 12 credits per term and complete at least 30 credits each year (successively), applicable toward his or her degree program through continuous study with no break in enrollment except for certain reasons that can be documented;
 - if attended college prior to the 2020-21 academic year, have earned at least 30 credits each year (successively), applicable toward his or her degree program prior to applying for an Excelsior Scholarship;
- be in a non-default status on a student loan made under any NYS or federal education loan program or on the repayment of any NYS award;
- be in compliance with the terms of the service condition(s) imposed by any NYS award that you have previously received; and
- execute a Contract agreeing to reside in NYS for the length of time the award was received, and, if employed during such time, be employed in NYS.

A recipient of an Excelsior Scholarship may receive up to \$5,500.

To determine the award amount, the resident tuition rate charged by SUNY (currently \$6,470) or CUNY (currently \$6,330) will be reduced by the amount of certain other student financial aid awards which an applicant has or will receive for the academic year, including a NYS Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award and/or federal Pell grant. The Excelsior Scholarship will cover any remaining tuition liability up to \$5,500; and a tuition credit will cover any remaining tuition expenses not covered by the Excelsior Scholarship.

****Note: Any award payment received may have tax implications. Any questions regarding this should be directed to a tax professional, the Internal Revenue Service, or the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance.***

Duration

A recipient of an Excelsior Scholarship is eligible to receive award payments for not more than two years of full-time undergraduate study in a program leading to an associate's degree or four years of full-time undergraduate study, or five years if the program of study normally requires five years, in a program leading to a bachelor's degree.

Google: "HESC Excelsior" for more information



KEEP CALM AND WRITE THE ESSAY

The Do's and Don'ts of the College Application Essays...

Your college essay, regardless of topic choice, should demonstrate your character and your background. It helps to set a context in which your application will be reviewed. Personal statements are just that: **personal**. College essays are not usually used to test your vast vocabulary or your knowledge of literary works. Readers of your essay should not need an encyclopedia or dictionary to decipher what you are trying to say.

What you should do...	What not to do in your college essay...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should use an essay format that works best for your story. • Write about something that is important to <i>you</i> instead of writing why it's important to <i>all</i> people. • Your essay should portray your own voice and personality • Get some advice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Don't forget that the advice given still has to portray your own voice • Reflect on your experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What did you learn from it and how did it change you? • Start your paper early! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Writing several drafts is expected. ○ If you get frustrated, take a few days then go back to it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not write a generic essay, you want to stand out to the admission counselor. • Do not be a cliché • Do not overuse the thesaurus and diminish your own voice while writing the essay. • Don't overthink the topic, colleges are not looking to read an over-the-top impressive essay. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Googling essay prompts will not clarify what to write. The colleges want you to be authentic. This is your chance to tell them who you are. • Don't let other people's essays make you second guess your topic.





Below is the full set of Common App essay prompts for 2023-24.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Common App will also retain the [optional COVID-19](#) question within the Additional Information section.

Senior Check List

- ❑ Register for SAT / ACT
- ❑ Follow this Senior Planning Guide - use the checkboxes
- ❑ Create an Activity Sheet (Resume) and revisions - Canva.com
- ❑ Request letters of recommendation from teachers and counselors
- ❑ Thank you notes / reminders
- ❑ Narrow your college search to 7 or 8 schools (target, reach, likely)
- ❑ Complete the FAFSA (Opens Dec 1)
- ❑ Use the EFC (SAI) calculator on each college's website to find out the true cost
- ❑ Make appointments and VISIT colleges - get them to know you
- ❑ Complete your applications
- ❑ Essay - have a teacher and/or counselor review it before you send it
- ❑ Free/Reduced lunch form - let your counselor know if you qualify
- ❑ **Students of the Arts** - portfolios/auditions
- ❑ **Athletes** - NCAA.org
- ❑ November/December - scholarships
- ❑ Communicate with those helping you
- ❑ Show gratitude to those who have helped and supported you through this process
- ❑ **KNOW YOUR DEADLINES FOR EVERYTHING**



Counselor Email Addresses:

cstellato@pjschools.org
jbalogh@pjschools.org
clane@pjschools.org
lkahmar@pjschools.org
koldham@pjschools.org