

College News

May 2015



Important College Dates & Deadlines for the Seniors (Class of 2015):

- **May & June, 2015:** are critical months for seniors because last semester grades do count! Spring semester classes (that were listed on the student's admission application) that are dropped or not passed with at least a "C" may result in a college rescinding its offer. Most competitive universities expect seniors to maintain at least a 3.0 GPA in the senior year



Important College Dates & Deadlines for the Juniors (Class of 2016):

- **Saturday, April 25, 2015 (9 –11 am in G9).** College Application Writing workshop by Mrs. Schultheis. [Click here for more information and to download the registration form](#)
- **May 14, 6:30pm-8pm (Pavilion):** Junior Class College Advisement Parent Night. Mrs. Hawkins and the OPHS Counselors will update parents on what they should be doing to assist their juniors about the college application process in their senior year.
- **May 18, 19, 20 (1:15-2:30pm in G-9):** Mr. McLelland (Ni-Z), Ms. Heeney (A - GL) & Ms. Stasiefski (Gm-Nh) will be meeting with their respective Juniors to prepare them for the college application process in their senior year.



What should Juniors be doing now!

You can view all of the following information at the following link on our website:

<http://www.oakparkusd.org/Page/1099>

Juniors are faced with their most intense academic experience. All OPHS juniors will experience the high expectations of a college prep curriculum which anticipates that students have begun to emerge as young adults who are organizing their time and prioritizing their interests in order to put their best foot forward. Besides the challenging coursework, juniors have to pay attention to participating in a testing sequence that will enable them to take advantage of the admission options they will encounter as seniors. It is also the time when they begin to define their "lists" of colleges that change and evolve over the course of the year.

The "To Do" list for juniors is much more detailed than the first two years of high school:

- Students should be even more focused on their extracurricular activities this year, reaching for leadership and excellent performance in their chosen interests.
- This summer between the junior & senior year is the last opportunity you have to make up any "D" grades you may have earned in college preparatory courses. Remember, even though a "D" earns credit for high school it is unacceptable for most colleges and universities!
- The OPHS Counselors will be putting on a "Junior Class College Advisement" in the spring semester to prepare students further for the upcoming college admissions process in the senior year. This meeting is typically held in February or early March during 7th period in the Pavilion. All college bound juniors should make plans to attend - dates & times will be announced in the school bulletins and on our website.
- Stay organized. During this year, especially after taking the PSAT, colleges will begin to send large amounts of material to you. It helps if you file information alphabetically or by state in a file cabinet or large container.
- The spring of the Junior year is "testing mania" time. This is the time for students to be taking the SAT Reasoning Test and/or the

ACT along with the SAT Subject Tests if you plan to apply to a UC. Much more detail follows lower on this web page.

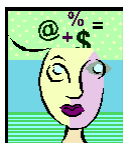
- If you are interested in a military academy or ROTC, the process should begin in the fall of the junior year by contacting your local state representative who has the nomination papers and an outline of the procedures.
- Seriously begin the process of visiting colleges over the summer. Try to incorporate these visits with your family vacations.



[College & Career Center](#) Become a frequent visitor to the College & Career Center located in C-6, next door to the OPHS Student Store. The center has accumulated many guide books as well as scholarship opportunities, post-graduate options, and computers dedicated to college & career searches.



[AP & Honors Information](#) For students who have genuine passion for a particular subject and have done well (i.e. 'A' grades) should consider taking an Honors or AP class. The OPHS "**AP & Honors Information Page**" will give you more information about these courses as well as how they factor into the college admission decision process! Resist the temptation to sign up for multiple AP/Honors courses because it seems to be required for a particular university - this strategy will backfire when the combined workload of multiple advanced courses begins to crush a student's spirit. Ultimately, there is a college out there for every student based on their unique combination of skills, abilities, SAT's, extracurriculars, & academic transcript!



For more information on the variety of ways your high school GPA is evaluated and calculated outside of Oak Park High School click on the following hyperlink: [GPA & Class Rank](#) Also, click here for more information about [GPA vs. Course Rigor in College Admissions](#)



[OPHS Campus Clubs](#) It's not too late to get involved with any of our Campus Clubs. They provide students with a wide range of interests to meet other like-minded students, as well as community service & leadership opportunities!



Even if you haven't done much Volunteer or Community service up until now - it's not too late! We have a webpage devoted to community service leadership & volunteer programs which you can access by clicking on the following hyperlink: [Community Service, Leadership & Volunteer](#)



[The PSAT](#) All college bound juniors should sign up to take the PSAT, which also includes a section called the "NMSQT" (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test). The PSAT is a practice test for the SAT, but the NMSQT is a separate organization that determines the highest level testers in the United States. Qualification at this tier can mean special recognition and scholarship opportunities for students. For more information on the PSAT, click on the "PSAT" hyperlink.



[SAT & ACT Information](#) The SAT and/or the ACT Test should definitely be taken at least once (preferably twice) during the spring semester of the junior year - usually in April and/or May. There are June test dates available, for those who need a back-up date. However, the June date is primarily used by students who need to take the SAT "Subject tests" (see below). Both the SAT Test and the ACT Test are accepted equally by virtually every college & university in the country. Click the link above to learn more about the differences between the SAT and the ACT, and the new "Redesigned" SAT known as the R-SAT"



Students can actually improve their overall chances by taking both the ACT and the SAT! The ACT is a three-hour multiple-choice examination of four major curriculum areas: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. Usually, students whose worst subject is Math do better on this test! It was designed to be taken by High School students towards the end of their Junior year. The four sections scores are converted to scaled scores between 1-36. Virtually all colleges and universities (with the exception of Caltech in California) accept it as a qualifying entrance examination. It may be re-taken without penalty. For more information on the ACT click on the following hyperlink: [ACT Test Details](#)



SAT Subject Tests: Many colleges & universities require additional tests beyond the SAT or ACT. As a result, many students will also need to take the SAT Subject Tests. For example, most juniors will probably be most prepared to take the US History, Math, Chemistry or Literature tests in June of this school year. It is an ideal time to take these three tests since it is immediately after final exams and studying for the finals is great preparation for these tests. It is possible to take as many as 3 of these Subject Tests in one sitting! For more information click on the "SAT Subject Tests" hyperlink. Even though the UC's made these tests optional beginning with the class of 2012 it is still highly recommended that students sit for these tests just to keep their options open.



Test Preparation The results of the PSAT come in late December or early January. Based on the results, students may decide they would like to enroll in a SAT prep course. All students should consider doing some form of test preparation prior to taking the SAT Reasoning Test or the ACT in the spring of their Junior year. At the very least, students should work through one of the many "test prep" books or CD's that can be purchased at any bookstore. Many of the most reputable test preparation services are accessible via our "Test Preparation" web page. The Oak Park PFC also sponsors several "Mock ACT & SAT" test opportunities. For more information click on the [Mock ACT & SAT](#) test hyperlink.



[University of California Admissions](#)

- Complete 15 UC-required college-preparatory ("a-g") courses, with 11 of those done by the end of 11th grade,
- Maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better (weighted by honors/AP bonus points) in these courses, and
- Take the ACT with Writing or SAT Reasoning Test
- SAT Subject Tests are now be optional
- Eligibility in the Local Context status is offered to student's in the top 9 percent of their class (this does not guarantee admission to a specific campus).



The (CSU) California State University system has established a system wide homepage that provides hotlinks to all CSU campus homepages. School comparisons by region, SAT/ACT scores, major, and GPA are available. CSU applications are also be submitted through this site! You must disable your "pop-up" blocker to use the application feature. It can be accessed at: csumentor.edu



NCAA & College Sports Athletes who want to play at a NCAA university need to register with the NCAA, a process called certification by the NCAA Clearinghouse. This should be done after the spring semester of the junior year. The NCAA will also need the grades from the second semester the junior year, as well as a student's SAT scores to complete the certification process). Athletes should also become familiar with recruiting guidelines which can be found on the NCAA website. Links to both the NCAA & the NAIA can be found at our NCAA link.



Early Action/Decision Juniors should become acquainted with the concepts of Early Decision, Early Action and Regular Decision application options which will be available to them as seniors. This will be especially true if they are applying to private schools, especially the very competitive ones. The dates are very early (some as early as September or October of the senior year). So students well need to be ready to act quickly! Click on the OPHS "Early Action/Decision" web page above to find additional information about how these programs work.



Financial Aid & Scholarships Students should begin having mature conversations with their parent(s) about what they observe and hope for in their future. Make sure to address issues like college location and costs. If the cost of a college is a concern, parents & students should log onto one of the many websites that will help provide the family "EFC" (estimated family contribution). This is a financial aid term which means, after evaluating the needs of the family, that the family will be expected to pay "X" amount of money, no matter what the cost of

the college. In other words, the family will be expected to pay, say, \$15,000 whether the college costs \$16,000 for tuition, room and board or \$30,000. These estimates can be helpful prior to submitting applications to unrealistic choices.



[Private, Independent & Highly Selective Colleges](#) If you're interested in Private, Independent, and Highly Selective colleges this page on our website has information specific to the admissions process for these unique types of schools!



Summer Enrichment: Students who are planning to apply to highly selective universities should strongly consider doing something of significance over the summer between their Junior and Senior years. It should be related to their intended college major so as to demonstrate passion and commitment to the student's field of study. This can be done by taking a college class or participating in a summer enrichment program. **FYI** - Naviance has one of the most comprehensive "enrichment program" data bases in the world - see below!



If you do not logged into Naviance yet contact the College & Career Center ASAP. You will need to become very familiar with this program as this will be the primary vehicle you use to research colleges, careers, request recommendations, and to order transcripts. In preparation for the Senior year application process, junior should complete/respond to the following sections:



Electronic Do's & Don'ts

- ➡ Email is still the standard for communication in the professional world - so you need to get used to checking it regularly!
- ➡ Don't... use an overly cute or suggestive e-mail name. You want them to think of you as being intelligent and mature!

- Do... take the online tour. Before you start your application, walk through each step of the application on the virtual tour most online application sites now provide. When available, it's also a good idea to download a PDF version of the application to use as a worksheet before inputting your application online.
- Do... create a user name and password that you'll remember easily. Record it and keep it in a safe place.
- Do...disclose your (SSN) Social Security Number in college applications and to the College Board! Your SSN is one of the critical items colleges use to match your applications to your SAT and/or ACT scores. Your college applications, the College Board & the ACT are all secure websites. So, as long as your computer has a functioning anti-virus program, and you are using a secure computer connection (i.e. not using the Wi-Fi connection at Starbucks. There is a great deal of warranted paranoia about identity theft online these days. However, your college applications and the College Board are some of the few places where you should
- Do... disable pop-up blockers on your browser in order to view the online instructions that will be displayed in pop-up windows.
- Do... use the correct browser. Most online applications functions only with Internet Explorer 7.0 or higher when using a Windows operating system. Or for Apple users: Mozilla/Firefox, Chrome or Safari. College online applications are highly secure; so older browsers are not usually equipped to handle the necessary level of encryption.
- Do... enable Java Script. Most online applications also use JavaScript web page functionality. Make sure JavaScript is enabled on your browser.
- Do... check your e-mail service's spam or junk mail settings. Make sure that you have set your e-mail service so that it will not block e-mail from the colleges you are applying to!
- Do . . . be very cautious about what you have posted online (i.e. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.... Colleges and employers now routinely review these as part of their background checks!

colleges:

resources - This area includes a link for ordering transcripts, as well as a link for inputting your SAT, ACT & AP scores.

college research - Under this bar you will find a range of state-of-the-art research tools to help students find the right schools for them.

- **SuperMatch™ college search** lets you search for your best college match based on 23 criteria. Click on a search option, such as "Tuition and Fees," to enter your preferences. For a more accurate match, tell us how important the criteria are to your search-kinda, very, or must have-by clicking the radio buttons. Results update in real time as you enter your preferences, showing a percentage match for each school. You don't have to fill in every search option, but the more you tell us, the more accurate your results may be. To learn more about a school, click its name. The expanded view will explain the percentage score and also provide ways to connect with the school.
- **college search** is the link where students can perform an advanced search for colleges using criteria that matter most to them. Select factors in any or all of the categories to help narrow down a list of colleges that match your interests. At the end of each page, you can either click **Show Matches** to generate a list OR click **Next** to continue to pick more factors. You will notice that the number of schools that matches your criteria constantly appears near the top of the page as you move through the selections. If you end up with too many schools on your list and you need to narrow your list, simply select more factors. You should use the **Previous** button at the bottom of the page if you want to go back to earlier pages/factors. On the other hand, if you end up with too few schools, go back and deselect some of your factors. In order to save your list of colleges, you must save each one. To do this, click the **pick** link next to that school on your list of generated schools. That school will show up in the **Hand-Picked List** box. Once you've selected all of the schools from your college search that you want to save, click the **Add to My Colleges** button directly under the box labeled **Hand-Picked List** box.
- **College Match** - This tool will allow you to use historical GPA and test score information about students from OPHS and their college applications to match you with colleges that you may want to consider adding to your list. Please note that there are many factors which can affect admissions decisions and the results of this search do NOT guarantee in any way whether or not you will be accepted at a particular college. If a particular college never appears in the results, it may be because no one from Oak Park has ever applied to it.
- **college compare** – this tool allows you to compare average grade point averages and test scores for accepted students from OPHS at up to ten colleges. School averages are displayed in green when your number is higher and in red when your number is lower. Your PSAT score, if available, has been converted to the equivalent SAT score and compared to the average single SAT score of an accepted student. The column labeled "Accept" shows the number of students accepted out of the number of students that applied.
- **college resources** - this link has a comprehensive range of resources on the following topics: **College and Careers, Financial Aid, Test Preparation, College Athletics, and the Military.**
- **scattergrams** – this amazing tool allows you to visually see how you compare to other OPHS students who have applied to these colleges based on your grade point average and ACT or SAT score.
- **acceptance history & college maps** – Check out these links to see how many OPHS students have applied, been admitted, and are now attending specific colleges and universities around the United States. FYI - Since last year was the first year for OPHS using Naviance, its data base only has historical GPA and test score information from the class of 2009. However, we do have comprehensive statistics going back to the class of 2000 at the following hyperlink on our website: [College Acceptance Statistics](#)
- **enrichment programs** - Students should look forward to the summer as an opportunity to pursue interesting, challenging summer courses, or internships, jobs, travel or other engaging activities. These are important components to a student's resume and there is a huge array of options available to students. To help you find the right opportunity, check out the wide range of programs posted at this link. The most reputable and useful have been linked to this page.

my colleges - As you find colleges that interest you, you will add them to your personal list and begin to research the schools in more detail in this section.

- **colleges I'm thinking about** is the section where you save colleges initially while you research them before deciding to apply, or not.
- **colleges I'm applying to** is the section you move the colleges to that you've actually decided to apply to. Once you have moved schools to this category section Naviance will help you track the status of all the application milestones for each college.

careers:

what are my interests? - in this section students will complete the personality type assessment, and the career interest profiler.

explore careers - Once students have completed the two assessments they will be able to explore their favorite careers by cluster type.

about me:

interesting things about me - This section pulls everything together that students have researched for the start of their Senior Year. This section will be their point of reference throughout the Senior Year to monitor the application process from beginning to end. It includes links to:

- **favorite colleges**
- **favorite careers and clusters**
- **personality type**
- **journal**
- **game plan**
- **resume - students should continue to record their extracurricular, community service, and volunteer activities in this section.**

This section also includes school-generated surveys & resumes that will be required of all students during their senior year such as:

- **counselor's recommendation questionnaire**
- **parent questionnaire**
- **teacher's recommendation questionnaire**
- **senior survey**
- **counselor's task list** - This section includes a link to the task list that has been assigned to you by your Counselor, as well as an opportunity for you to set personal goals for yourself. See more information about the task list below.

official things -

- Students can update their contact information & email address at the profile link
- Students can change their account login at the account link.
- Students can update their SAT, ACT, PSAT, and AP test scores at the test scores link.
- Students can download the Naviance Mobile App



NAVIANCE For more information about Naviance click on the Naviance logo.