

EdTalk: October 8, 2021

Dr. David Leach, WVCSD Superintendent of Schools

It's that time of year when most high school student seniors submit their college applications. The college application process may be very stressful for both students and their parents, and their relationship. Warwick Valley High School's counselors look to alleviate this tension through thoughtful planning and increasing students' and parents' knowledge of the college application process. Breaking down related tasks by high school year helps to relieve some of the anxiety. Like everything else in life, having a plan helps you remain on course, organized, and less anxious.

High school counselors offer ongoing support for post-high school preparation to all students, regardless of their post-high school goals. Individual meetings, college and career fairs, college admissions, and financial aid seminars are just a few of the ways students and families can get assistance. So, below are some examples of the services offered by our high school counselors to assist our students.

The "College Kickoff" on September 30th was a lecture for parents and guardians interested in learning more about the college admissions process. Counselors provided general information about college applications, letters of reference, college visits, essay writing, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act waiver, and the NCAA clearinghouse to participants.

A presentation on financial aid was held on October 12th where the Associate Director of Financial Services at Marist College explained the financial aid process and how it works in college financial aid offices. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), types of financial aid and the anticipated family contribution were also discussed. Don't let the initial costs be the sole deciding factor. Many private colleges offer generous financial aid packages to entice students from all socioeconomic backgrounds, making them as accessible, at times, as less expensive public universities.

Visits from more than 70 college representatives are scheduled throughout the year. Students can meet with representatives from colleges and universities from across the country in person during their lunch and electronically after school. These representatives often review their applications and make admission decisions.

Students in the 10th and 11th grades will take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) on October 16th at 7:45 am. It is planned for juniors and sophomores who want to learn more about standardized testing and how it relates to college admissions. Students who take the PSAT will receive a score report that breaks down the test by topic, allowing them to see where they need to improve before taking the SAT. College Board and Khan Academy have teamed up where students who receive a code with their PSAT score report can obtain individualized SAT practice through Khan Academy. For juniors, PSAT scores are used to determine eligibility for

the National Merit Scholarship Program. Students received information about signing up for the exam in their English classes a few weeks ago.

Parent Information Night on January 26th will provide information on local scholarships. Typically, a large portion of a student's financial support comes from the federal government and the university. However, community organizations in Warwick have been generous with their support through granting local scholarships. For many years, a low percentage of students apply for these local scholarships.

There isn't a perfect university. Students will be more engaged in the application process if they have a variety of options and not focused on one school. Students should also know they do not have to figure out what they want to be when they grow up. Majors are typically switched two or three times during college, and college graduates often change careers several times during their lifetime.

The Warwick Valley High School staff is willing to help and able to answer many of your questions. We're here to support our students and families!