

**PETERS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL**

# **College Planning Guide**

**2017-2018**



PROVIDED BY THE PTHS SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

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Welcome to Peters Township High School!

This resource has been developed as a guideline to help you navigate the post-secondary planning process. We look forward to working with you during your high school career, both individually and in a group settings. This is an exciting time as you should take advantage of the numerous opportunities available. Your counselor will meet with you at various times throughout your high school career to support your ongoing growth and development towards post-secondary planning. A more detailed timeline of events is included in this planning guide. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact your counselor at any time throughout the year.

We offer an excellent web-based career research tool that all students have access to: Naviance/Family Connection. At the beginning of 9<sup>th</sup> grade, students are introduced to Naviance/Family Connection through the Counseling Curriculum. Parents also have the opportunity to activate their accounts. Naviance/Family Connection is a comprehensive career and college readiness program for high schools that helps align student strengths and interests with post-secondary goals. Naviance is the name of the full program, and the side of the program that the high school faculty utilizes. The parent and student side of the program is titled Family Connection. Naviance/Family Connection is an excellent career & college research tool, organizational tool, and college application tool.

Good luck and have a great school year!

Sincerely,  
PTHS School Counselors

#### School Counselor Assignments for Grades 9-12

<u>Counselor</u>	<u>Student Last Names</u>	<u>Email Addresses</u>	<u>Phone Extensions</u>
<b>Mrs. Cunningham:</b>	Last names: A-Di	<a href="mailto:cunninghamv@pt-sd.org">cunninghamv@pt-sd.org</a>	x5232
<b>Mrs. Wawrzeniak:</b>	Last names: Dj-Kl	<a href="mailto:wawrzeniakh@pt-sd.org">wawrzeniakh@pt-sd.org</a>	x5234
<b>Ms. Simmons:</b>	Last names: Km-M	<a href="mailto:simmonsa@pt-sd.org">simmonsa@pt-sd.org</a>	x5517
<b>Mrs. Prinsen:</b>	Last names: N-Sk	<a href="mailto:prinsenh@pt-sd.org">prinsenh@pt-sd.org</a>	x5220
<b>Mr. Sudol:</b>	Last names: Sl-Z	<a href="mailto:sudolj@pt-sd.org">sudolj@pt-sd.org</a>	x5238
<b>Mrs. Steffen</b>	Dean of College & Career Readiness	<a href="mailto:steffenl@pt-sd.org">steffenl@pt-sd.org</a>	x5213
<b>Mrs. Bennett</b>	Counseling Secretary	<a href="mailto:bennetta@pt-sd.org">bennetta@pt-sd.org</a>	x5518

#### SCHOOL INFORMATION

Peters Township High School  
264 East McMurray Road  
McMurray, PA 15317  
<http://www.ptsd.k12.pa.us/>  
724-941-6250 (office)  
724-942-3863 (fax)  
CEEB CODE 390-535

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To fulfill graduation requirements, students must earn a minimum of 26 credits.

Required credit distribution includes:

### PTHS Requirements

English:	4.0 credits
Social Studies	4.0 credits
Science	4.0 credits
Math	4.0 credits
Arts & Humanities	1.0 credit
Personal Wellness	0.5 credit
Physical Ed	0.5 credit
Technology Course	0.5 credit
Electives	7.5 credits

### Recommended by Colleges

4.0 credits
4.0 credits
4.0 credits
4.0 credits
2.0 + credits in World Language

In addition to the credit requirement for graduation, students will need to demonstrate proficiency on the state approved Keystone Exams in Algebra I, Literature, and Biology. Our course description book is updated annually and available on the high school website. [Course Description Book](#)

## GRADES

How to calculate final grades: [Final Grades](#)

How to calculate your Weighted GPA: [GPA](#)

Academic Award Levels: [Academic Awards & Honors](#)

## ACTIVITIES

Activities allow you to explore interests and expand your social circle, they also serve as important resume builders. Colleges are looking for students whose resumes include a variety of activities, community service hours, and leadership experiences. It is never too late to sign up! A list of school activities and the names of sponsors can be found on the PTHS website: [Activities](#)

## POST SECONDARY OPTIONS

Once you enter high school, you will want to start thinking about your plans after graduation. Up to this point, your parents, teachers, and administrators have guided you along the path to adulthood. By the end of high school however, you will have to decide which path is right for you. Some potential options to explore are:

- 2 year College
- 4 year College
- Trade/Technical School
- Employment
- Military

# COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

## TIMELINE: Grades 8 and 9

The following was created to be a general and flexible timeline. A student's own experiences will determine their readiness, as well as, an appropriate timeline to reach their postsecondary goals.

### GRADE 8: Winter/Spring

- Plan your course selections for grade 9 by meeting with teachers and counselors to determine appropriate placements.
- Set preliminary goals for high school.
- Consider course selections as a four-year plan or map of courses to graduation and beyond.
- Explore and select extra-curricular activities that interest you.
- Work on maintaining or improving your grades and study skills.

### GRADE 9: Fall

- Activate your [Naviance/Family Connection](#) account.
- Complete in-class career goal-setting and exploration activity in Naviance/Family Connection with Counselor.
- Build strong language/writing, mathematics, and critical thinking skills by taking challenging courses.
- Work on academics and don't be afraid to ask for help (NHS peer tutoring service, teacher tutoring sessions in the Library, and referrals to outside tutors or agencies).
- Get involved in at least one extracurricular activity.
- Begin your resume, utilizing the resume builder in your Naviance/Family Connection account.
- Set up [Khan Academy](#) account to begin practicing for PSAT and SAT testing.
- Take PSAT 8/9

### GRADE 9: Winter/Spring

- Use Naviance/Family Connection to begin researching for career and postsecondary options. RoadTrip Nation videos are really helpful.
- Plan your course selection for grade 10 by meeting with teachers and counselors to determine appropriate placements. Think about challenging yourself with an honors course or a new elective area.
- Investigate the Western Area Career and Technology Center: [WACTC](#). Certified technical training programs and job placements.
- Meet individually with your counselor during your TAM (Transitional Academic Meeting) to review your first quarter grades, transcript, gpa, goals, and pre-scheduling for sophomore year.

### GRADE 9: Summer

- Consider enrichment and remedial summer school programs.
- Continue extracurricular activities and interests.
- Get involved in community service work.
- Complete any Honors/AP Summer Assignments.

## **TIMELINE: Grade 10**

The following was created to be a general and flexible timeline. A student's own experiences will determine their readiness, as well as, an appropriate timeline to reach their postsecondary goals.

### **GRADE 10: Fall**

- Concentrate on academic priorities, improving study skills, organization and time management.
- Sign up to take the ASVAB Test to explore your skills, strengths and aptitude relating to careers. This assessment is a requirement for enlistment to any military branch.
- Maintain involvement in at least one extracurricular activity and volunteer to lead a project or activity.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test) in October, continue to practice with Khan Academy.
- Consider investigating and applying to the summer enrichment programs, leadership seminars, etc.
- Attend the College Fair (Peters Township/Mt. Lebanon/Upper St. Clair/Bethel Park).
- Participate in the Sophomore Career Planning classroom presentation during American History class utilizing Naviance/Family Connection.

### **GRADE 10: Winter/Spring**

- Plan your course selections for grade 11 by meeting with teachers and counselors to determine appropriate placements – taking both challenging core classes and diverse elective courses to investigate career interests.
- Begin considering post high school options.
- Take Keystone Exams if applicable. [Keystone Exam Information](#)
- Take Advanced Placement exams in May, if appropriate.
- Take the [SAT Subject Tests](#), if appropriate.
- Consider a job shadow experience (see your counselor if interested).

### **GRADE 10: Summer**

- Update your resume with additional activities, community service, and/or part time jobs.
- Consider enrichment summer school programs.
- Continue extracurricular activities and community service work.
- Work to strengthen reading, writing, and mathematics fundamentals.
- Continue working with Khan Academy online to practice for standardized testing.
- Complete summer assignments for Honors/AP classes.

## TIMELINE: Grade 11

The following is meant to be a general timeline. A student's own experiences will determine their readiness, as well as, an appropriate timeline to reach their postsecondary goals.

**Junior year is an especially important and busy year.** You will have the opportunity to meet a number of college representatives who visit in the fall and to practice for the SAT and qualify for the NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) by taking the PSAT. During the second quarter, you and your parents will continue discussing future plans by meeting with your school counselor at the PIP (Post-Secondary Individualized Planning) meetings.

### AUGUST

- Set your academic goals for the year, in order to continue to improve your academic record and make significant contributions to extracurricular activities.
- Begin the college selection process (See page 10 for specific steps).

### SEPTEMBER

- Check Naviance/Family Connection for visit dates for college/technical school representatives. Sign up to attend; check with your classroom teacher first. Students are responsible for all missed work. Come prepared with questions.
- Look for College Financial Aid Nights offered at the Peters Township library & area high schools (offered throughout the fall).

### OCTOBER

- Attend the College Fair (Peters Township/Mt. Lebanon/Upper St. Clair/Bethel Park). It will always be held in the fall at one of these high schools, so check to see where it is being held during your junior year.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October to be eligible for the National Merit Scholarship competition and to practice for the SAT test. Continue to practice in [Khan Academy](#).

### NOVEMBER

- Begin to investigate scholarship and summer program/internship opportunities. Start your research through Naviance and on the PTHS Counseling Website.  
Summer Opportunities: [Summer Programs](#)  
Scholarships: [Scholarships/Financial Aid](#)

### DECEMBER

- Register for the SAT and/or ACT Tests. Aim to take the SAT and/or the ACT at least once by the end of your junior year. Remember that senior year offers you opportunities to test again, but be aware of deadline dates for college applications.
- Schedule/attend Junior PIP (Post-Secondary Individualized Plan) meeting with your counselor along with your parents/guardians. These meetings typically are scheduled during the second marking period.

### JANUARY

- Update your resume (in Naviance).
- Review your PSAT results and prepare for the SAT. Link your PSAT scores to your Khan Academy account for customized practice tools.
- Demonstrate proficiency on the Keystone Exams, if applicable.
- Plan your course selections for senior year by meeting with teachers and counselors to determine appropriate placement and assure fulfillment of graduation requirements.
- Schedule/attend Junior PIP (Post-Secondary Individualized Plan) meeting with your counselor along with your parents/guardians. These meetings typically are scheduled during the second marking period.



## **FEBRUARY**

- Schedule/Attend Junior PIP (Post-Secondary Individualized Plan) meeting with your counselor along with your parents/guardians. These meetings typically are scheduled during the second marking period.
- Attend College Planning Night, held annually in February.
- Attend the annual PACAC College Fair held in downtown Pittsburgh

## **MARCH**

- Sign up to take the ASVAB Test to explore your skills, strengths and aptitude relating to careers. This assessment is a requirement for enlistment to any military branch. [ASVAB](#)
- Course selection begins! Engage in conversations with your teachers, counselors and parents for recommendations considering your postsecondary goals. Use your Career Interest Survey results to brainstorm elective choices.
- Use Naviance/Family Connection to research academic required/recommended courses for college acceptance
- Begin to consider teachers who you may ask to write your letters of recommendations for college admissions (See page 16 for details).
- Continue to refine your list of schools and use any scheduled breaks to visit colleges, continuing to add college choice to your “Colleges I’m thinking about” folder in Naviance.
- Register to take AP exams.
- Take the SAT I at least once during the Spring. [SAT](#)

## **APRIL**

- Plan ahead for your spring standardized testing schedule. Students are very busy in the spring and proper planning can alleviate stress and late registration fees.
- Ensure you have addressed any conflicts and allowed for preparation time for final exams.

## **MAY**

- Demonstrate proficiency on the Keystone Exams, if applicable. [Keystone Exam Information](#)
- Take AP Exam(s).
- Take the SAT, if needed.
- Take the SAT Subject Tests if you are considering admission to selective colleges (some colleges require certain tests). The SAT II exam tend to correlate with the AP exams for example AP Chemistry and the Chemistry [SAT Subject test](#).
- If you are considering playing a sport at the collegiate level, you need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center for your initial eligibility. [NCAA Eligibility](#)
- Approach teachers/counselors to personally request a letter of recommendation. Once you have done so, open your Naviance Account by adding them as a recommender. Under the “Colleges” tab, choose the “Letters of Recommendation” link and update your college/teacher recommendation requests.
- Prepare carefully for final exams as post high school institutions review end-of-year grades closely for admission.

## **JUNE**

- Prepare and Study for final exams. This is the last chance you have to impact your final grade and cumulative GPA.
- Take the SAT Subject Test(s) in the Spring if you are considering admission to selective colleges (some colleges require certain tests). [SAT Subject Tests](#)

## **GRADE 11: Summer**

- Format your resume for college and scholarship applications. Your community and work experiences are typically important criteria.



- Identify characteristics or “preferences” you want in a college and update your college list.
  1. Make an honest assessment of your academic and personal profile.
  2. Select a reasonable range of realistic and appropriate colleges to research based on academic requirements, majors offered, geographic area, size, financial considerations athletics/extracurricular offerings, college philosophy/mission and your personal preferences.
  3. Continue to research majors and career choices.
  4. Visit colleges when possible, take tours, and have interviews.
- Research college essay prompts on Common Application and/or college web pages.
- Transfer colleges from your “Colleges I’m thinking about” folder to your “Colleges I’m Applying To” folder in Naviance/Family Connection. From this point forward, any college that you decide to apply to will need to be added to this folder.

## TIMELINE: Grade 12

The following is meant to be a general timeline. A student's own experiences will determine their readiness, as well as, an appropriate timeline to reach their postsecondary goals.

### GRADE 12: Fall

- Participate in the Naviance/Family Connection: College Application Process presentation given by the counselors. This typically occurs during the first couple weeks of school in your English class. Ask questions and take notes!
- Continue to add schools to your "Colleges I'm Applying to" folder and request transcripts via Naviance/Family Connection. Allow 10 days for transcript processing.
- Indicate teacher recommendations in Naviance/Family Connection in addition to having a face-to-face conversation with teachers, if applicable.
- If applying to college, consider the selectivity of the colleges in your final application list, making sure to have a selection from each admission level (Safety, Good Match, Reach)
- Look for College Financial Aid Nights offered at the Peters Township library & area high schools (offered throughout the fall)
- Attend the FAFSA completion night scheduled annually at the high school in November
- Consider early action/early decision options and plan for those deadlines
- Attend the annual PTHS-USC-MtL-BP College Fair. It will always be held at one of the high schools, so check and see where it is being held for your senior year.
- Submit college applications in advance of deadlines. Also keep in mind that it takes a college days/weeks to download your transcripts and add them to your admission file.
- Visit colleges and obtain interviews when needed.
- Repeat the SAT or ACT, if warranted
- Take SAT Subject Tests, if appropriate [SAT Subject Tests](#)
- Maintain your grades and rigor of courses for first quarter/first semester and through to graduation, as they may still affect your college admissions
- Investigate scholarship opportunities via "Scholarship List" in Naviance/Family Connection

### GRADE 12: Winter/Spring

- Apply for need-based and merit-based financial aid and compare aid award packages
- Send tuition deposit to the school of your choice by May 1 unless you were an early decision candidate
- Notify other school(s) that you decline their offers of admission, if applicable
- Continue to apply for scholarships, especially through local, community organizations
- Take AP exams in May if applicable.
- Complete the Senior Exit Survey via Naviance/Family Connection for completion of the commencement program.
- Indicate in Naviance/Family Connection your college outcomes (accepted, waitlisted, denied).

## HOW DO I START MY COLLEGE SEARCH?

### Step One: Self-Analysis (Needs and Wants)

It is often recommended to search for a college that "matches" your characteristics to reduce the influence that rankings, such as those published by *U.S. News*, appear to have on a student's college choice. Robert Morse, *U.S. News's* director of data research, says rankings, which are based on many factors such as graduation rates, should be just one component in a student's college search. You can find many colleges that "fit" or you can be happy and get a great education. The college search is about exploring who you are and what you want and then finding colleges that will meet your preferences and goals. It is necessary to devote time for research, conversations and visits when deciding which college(s) to consider. As anytime you make a major decision or make a significant purchase, the process begins with self-analysis (your needs and wants) and research. Self-assessments can be difficult and sometimes uncomfortable; however, it is really the most important place to begin in this process. Begin by asking yourself the following questions which pertain to you as a person and student:

- What characteristics do you feel you must have to be comfortable at a college?
- On which factors are you flexible?
- What do you want to accomplish in college?
- Do you want to train for a specific job or get a wide-ranging education?
- If you have a major in mind, do the colleges you are considering specialize in that major?

### Step Two: Research Possibilities and Create a List:

Students have many tools available in Family Connection to complete their college research. These tools are:

**Colleges I'm Thinking About list:** as students complete their college research and find schools of interest, they can add them to the Colleges I'm Thinking About list in Family Connection.

**College Visits:** shows students which college visits are coming up and allows students to indicate if they plan to attend a visit. To sign up for a college visit, the student should click View All Upcoming College Visits and click Sign Up next to the college visit he or she plans to attend.

**SuperMatch™:** a visually-based search that helps student find the right fit for college. Students select from a list of college decision factors and rank their importance. As the student makes selections, the best-match colleges appear with information about why the college(s) is a good match. Students can save their searches and add colleges to the Colleges I'm Thinking About list from here.

**College Match:** this tool uses colleges on the student's application list and shows colleges that match those colleges. There are three components: Colleges Looking for Students Like You, which compares the student against the college's application qualifications; Colleges Other Students Like, which compares against in the Naviance Network; Colleges That Have Accepted Students Like You, which compares against students at the high school.

**College Compare:** allows students to choose colleges from the Naviance database and compare scores and GPA to students at the school or district who applied to the college. In order for this tool to work, Naviance needs to pull from historical data.

**College Lookup:** this tool allows students to find specific colleges. From here the student can view the college profile, which has the same valuable information that you can view in Naviance.

**College Search:** an advanced search tool that enables students to create searches that focus on college criteria that is important to them, such as costs, campus surroundings, available majors, etc. Students can save college searches.

**College Resources:** provides a list of web resources about colleges, financial aid and other key topics in the college admissions process.

**College Maps:** shows students where colleges are located. The map tool is MapQuest. A visual representation can give students insight into colleges they are interested in. The College Maps tool shows colleges on the map using the College Groups feature in Naviance.

**Scattergrams:** visually shows students their data compared to other students at the school who applied and received results to the same college. If there is not enough data, the scattergram may not show results. In order for this tool to work, Naviance needs to pull from historical data.

**Acceptance History:** shows students a list of colleges that students from the school have applied to and enrolled in over a certain period of time. You can adjust the period of time in Naviance. From the acceptance history, students can link to a map that represents where alumni attend college or view college profiles. In order for this tool to work, Naviance needs to pull from historical data.

**Enrichment Programs:** students can find enrichment programs entered in Naviance or those in the Naviance database of enrichment programs by browsing by letter or selecting a topic.

**Scholarship Match:** shows students a list of scholarships that are a suitable match for them based on criteria entered in Naviance. For example, a student can be matched on GPA, gender, ethnicity, etc.

**Scholarship List:** a list of all the scholarships in your school or district database. Students can: filter scholarships by category, filter the list using the column names, view only the scholarships added or updated since the last visit. Scholarships lists can also be found in document library on the Home Screen of your Naviance/Family Connection Account.

**National Scholarship Search:** a service provided through a partnership with Sallie Mae. Students can edit their profiles to find matches, add scholarships to the favorites lists, or delete scholarships they don't want to apply for.

## COLLEGE RESEARCH

As you begin your research, you should:

KEEP AN OPEN MIND: Although it's good to have some ideas in mind about what sorts of colleges will be right for you, stay open to all the possibilities at the beginning of your search.

TALK TO PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU: Tell parents, teachers, relatives, friends, and your school counselor about your goals, and ask if they can suggest colleges that may be a good fit for you.

DON'T LIMIT YOUR SEARCH: At the start of this process, you may want rule out colleges because you think that they are too expensive or too hard to get into, but this may not be the reality. Remember that financial aid can make college more affordable, and colleges look at more than just grades and test scores.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK: Once you have a list of schools, it's time to do some research. To learn more about the colleges you're considering, add the colleges to your Naviance/Family Connection account. Naviance provides a detailed profile for each college and/or university. Admissions profile and data (gpa and test scores), PTHS historical applicant data, college comparison charts and much more are available at your fingertips. Gathering this information early will allow you to form meaningful questions that will impress college admissions counselors during visits, college fairs and interviews.

## COLLEGES VISITS AT PTHS

It is important to make a personal connection with the college, and you can start by talking with the representatives of the universities. Keep an open mind and take advantage of the wide variety of university representatives who visit our school.

- They can give you first-hand information regarding their school, and also give ideas on other colleges, parallel programs or career opportunities after graduation.
- Remember, many of the college representatives who visit our school are the representatives who read your applications and can add significant input to the admissions committee discussions. Be prepared to ask questions.
- Ultimately, the goal is to find the right fit at the end of this process.
- When students are able to find this fit, they are more likely to be successful academically and personally.
- Sign up for visits through your (student's) Naviance/Family Connection Account

## GOING ON A COLLEGE VISIT

Visiting a college campus helps you get a sense of what a college — and life at that college — will be like. This can help you decide whether the college is right for you; find out what you need to do to apply; and see if the college's course and major offerings are what you want:

- Take part in a group information session at the admission office
- Interview with an admissions officer
- Pick up Financial Aid forms
- Sit in on a class that interests you. If classes aren't in session, ask to see a classroom.
- Meet a professor who teaches a subject or major that interests you.
- Talk to students about what they think of their classes and professors.
- Get the names and business cards of people you meet so that you can contact them later if you have questions.

In the search for a college that matches your personal and academic priorities; a visit provides a real life connection beyond a website or brochure. A visit allows you and your family to consider personal preferences in housing, travel, food, health/medical concerns. Academic criteria and specifics are typically discussed further during a visit or interview; such as criteria for selective majors and other academic requirements not spelled out in informational brochures. Scholarships and financial aid options are also discussed with visiting candidates.

## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR COLLEGE VISIT

- Decide where and how: arrange a family trip to involve your family in the process, especially if they will be helping you financially
- Prepare for your visit: before you set out, get a map of the college campus and pick out places of interest. Call the college's admissions office to schedule a guided tour.
- Take your own tour: just wandering around the campus on your own or with friends can be the best way to get a feel for what the college is like. If possible, eat in the cafeteria, sit in on a class, or attend an event on campus.
- Explore the facilities: finding the spots on campus where students gather or asking a student where the best places to eat are can give you a feel for the college's character. Visit the library and check out the gym/theater/dorms.
- Make connections: talk to current students. Ask the students nearby what they like best, or why they chose this college and what their classes are like. Some colleges even have programs where prospective students are allowed to spend the night in a dorm with a current student.
- Take notes: during your visit, write down some notes about your experience. What did you see that excited you? Are there any aspects you didn't like?

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What majors are offered and what are the course selection requirements?
- What is the average class size?
- Are there freshman orientation programs?
- What is the role and availability of academic advisors?
- Does the college have up-to-date technology and facilities? (For example: science labs, theatres, smart classrooms?)
- What are the operating hours of important places such as the library and computer labs?

## POST VISIT FOLLOW-UP:

- Make a pro and con list
- Send a handwritten thank you note to a specific person (for example, the admissions tour guide, coach, admissions officer)

## APPLICATIONS, TRANSCRIPTS, TESTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Most applications are available online, and admissions offices often prefer you access the online application. There are two basic types of applications which a student can use to apply to college:

1. Common Application- [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
2. School designated application (available directly on the school website)
3. Coalition Application - <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>




Online applications are very convenient; however, you must be certain to **pay close attention to the directions and details of each application**. Each school will have specific application requirements and it is up to you to know and follow the directions for each application. You are required to complete their part of the application online and submit it directly to the institution either through the Common Application, Coalition Application or the school designated application. In addition to submitting application materials, you must utilize Naviance/Family Connection to request school documents to be sent by the School Counseling Department.

The Common Application's Youtube channel has a variety of resources to help guide students through each step of the process: [Common App How-To](#)

## TRANSCRIPT REQUEST PROCEDURE


Unless a student is 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must sign a Transcript Release Form. This should be completed during your junior year PIP meeting. A blank copy is attached to the end of this document.

### Through Naviance/Family Connection (electronically):

1. A signed transcript release form should be completed and signed during the Junior PIP.
2. Begin your college application either through the Common Application, Coalition application, or by utilizing the specific college's application.
3. Using your Student account, add these schools to the "Colleges I'm Applying To" section of Family Connection. Make sure to indicate the type of decision (rolling, early action, early decision, etc.), check the box next to "I have submitted my application" and "request transcript."
4. If you are using the Common Application ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)), make sure that you match your Common Application and Naviance Accounts. The Step-by-Step process is explained here: [Common App & Naviance](#)
5. **Very important:** Some schools will accept either the Common Application, Coalition Application, or their own Online Application. **For these schools, please indicate YES or NO by completing "How Are you Applying?" in Naviance/Family Connection.**
6. Transcripts will be sent electronically when the icons , , and  are displayed in the "submissions" column. Please allow ten (10) days for the Counseling Office to process transcript requests that the college

requires. It is important to keep deadlines in mind when entering requests into Naviance/Family Connection. Even though your records will be sent electronically, your transcripts will not instantly appear on an Admission Officer's Desk. Once transcripts are sent electronically, they are downloaded by the college registrar office, who then needs to put your documents into your admission file. This process could take days, even weeks, depending on the time of the year that you are applying. Once the college downloads your transcript, our office receives a receipt code.

7. Supplemental documents are required by some schools. This could include a counselor recommendation, school report or resume. Please allow ten (10) days as well. These will also be submitted electronically.
8. All test scores must be sent directly through the College Board and/or ACT. Unofficial test scores can be released with the student's transcript upon written request. Most schools will only accept official school reports. [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) or [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

**For paper copies:** For schools that will not accept electronic submissions, you will see a  in the "submissions" column in Naviance. We must submit these transcripts via postal mail.

1. Provide a 9x12 stamped envelope, with four stamps, addressed to the college or university.
2. Include any other supplemental documents that the school requires, including school report form, resume, etc.
3. Include blue coversheet available in the Counseling Office.
4. Bring into Counseling Office and log in the transcript request log.

### STANDARDIZED TESTS

In October, all 10th and 11th grade students will take the [PSAT/NMSQT](#). This is a practice SAT exam. For our 11th grade students, the score will count toward the National Merit Scholarship. Freshman students will take the [PSAT 8/9](#) exam. No registration is necessary-all students will take the exam.

Please refer to the college application requirements regarding standardized test score requirements. The student is responsible for contacting the appropriate testing agency and having the scores sent. There are three common standardized tests which colleges may require as part of the application. They include the [SAT](#) Test, SAT [Subject Tests](#) and the [ACT](#). Students should research the option(s) which is best for them, and determine the appropriate test(s) based on admission requirements and personal preference. Keep in mind when planning your test date schedule to consider college deadlines, especially for early decision, early action and scholarship opportunities. Fee waivers for the cost of the standardized tests are available through the School Counseling Office if financial need is determined. IEP and 504 students who are registering for the both the SAT and/or ACT may apply for special testing accommodations. Please see your counselor for specific information regarding the processes well in advance of the test date.

The College Board has publicized a partnership with the [Khan Academy](#) to offer free online test prep services for all students. The offerings include four full-length practice tests, personalized practice recommendations tied to specific test skills, thousands of practice questions, video lessons, quizzes and more. You can access these services online by clicking the hyperlink above.

**SAT Test Dates:**

Date	Test	Regular Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline
August 26, 2017	SAT & SAT subject Tests	July 28, 2017	August 15, 2017
October 7, 2017	SAT & SAT Subject Tests	September 8, 2017	September 27, 2017
November 4, 2017	SAT & SAT Subject Tests	October 5, 2017	October 25, 2017
December 2, 2017	SAT & SAT subject tests	November 2, 2017	November 21, 2017
March 10, 2018	SAT <u>ONLY</u>	February 9, 2018	February 28, 2018



May 5, 2018	SAT & SAT subject tests	April 6, 2018	April 25, 2018
June 2, 2018	SAT & SAT subject tests	May 3, 2018	May 23, 2018

### **ACT Test Dates**

September 9, 2017	ACT	August 4, 2017	August 18, 2017
October 28, 2017	ACT	September 22, 2017	October 6, 2017
December 9, 2017	ACT	November 3, 2017	November 17, 2017
February 10, 2018	ACT	January 12, 2018	January 19, 2018
April 14, 2018	ACT	March 9, 2018	March 23, 2018
June 9, 2018	ACT	May 4, 2018	May 18, 2018
July 14, 2018	ACT	June 15, 2018	June 22, 2018

### **SCHOOL PROFILE**

The school profile is a description of Peters Township High School used by colleges as a point of reference when evaluating our students' applications and transcripts. The school profile includes our GPA calculation explanation, AP and Honor course offerings and standardized test score statistics. This is sent with each student's transcript.

### **LETTER(S) OF RECOMMENDATION**

Whether it is required for a college application or a scholarship, a letter of recommendation can be a vital part of a student's application. Schools have **different requirements** regarding recommendation letters, and we suggest you follow the application directions. Typically, colleges require a minimum of 2-3 letters of recommendation from high school teacher(s) who taught you in academic subjects and possibly an outside "character" reference.

#### **Guidelines for Letters of Recommendation:**

- You may want to ask your teachers for letters in May or June of your junior year. This will give your teachers time to plan and prepare, and you time to prepare the teacher recommendation form. Discuss the deadline when you talk to your teacher. Some teachers get many requests and may need additional time to complete your letter. We suggest allowing 4 weeks, minimum two weeks from your request to the letter submitted.
- Early decision applications might require letters much earlier; you should plan accordingly.
- Pick a teacher with whom you've worked with closely so that he/she is able to comment on your academic growth and progress in that subject.
- Select a class in which you were successful, or in which you struggled but overcame the obstacle.

#### **Requesting Teacher Letters of Recommendations through Naviance/Family Connection:**

- Research the number of recommendations needed, if any, by the college or university. Keep in mind some schools require letters from specific subject area teachers. For example, a math/science major may require one math and/or one science teacher.
- Request your letter in person from your teacher and/or counselor. Provide a completed teacher recommendation form to your teacher and a completed resume to your counselor. Upload your resume in Naviance by clicking on **My Journal** and share.
- From the Family Connection homepage, click on the **Colleges tab**. Click on **Letters of Recommendation**. Click on **Add Requests**. You will be able to complete this step starting on **August 1**.
- From the scroll down menu, find and select the teacher who will be writing your letter of recommendation.
- Select the college/colleges that this request is for.
- Include a personal note to remind your teacher of specifics to include in your letter.
- Click **Save**. A dashboard will track your recommendation letters requested and received.
- Check back with the teacher if you have specific questions.

## ESSAY OR PERSONAL STATEMENT

This is one of your best opportunities to be heard by the members of the admissions committee. This is your chance to honestly portray who you are. Therefore, time should be taken before you compose your personal thoughts and feelings. The admissions committee is not only evaluating you by the content of your response, but also by your use of English and your ability to express yourself. It is recommended that you ask to have your essay read by a school counselor and an English teacher.

Key Points the Admission Officers Look for:

- A command of the basics of good writing
- A direct answer to the essay question
- A strong opening paragraph that captures the reader's attention
- A comprehensive argument or narrative-make your point and stick to it
- A style that is comfortable for you and that is appropriate for the subject matter
- Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- Correct data: check your facts, dates and names
- Succinctness – pay attention to the recommended length

Things to keep in mind:

- Be authentic: Admissions officers can easily spot an essay that is too polished and not a student's own writing.
- Show, don't tell. Give readers such convincing evidence that they will come to the conclusion that you want. Provide detailed examples instead of listing things.
- Don't try to second guess the essay and write what you think they want to hear. Be honest, creative and thoughtful. This is one way the admission committee can gauge who you are, how you think and if you are a match for their school. Many prompts and questions are autobiographical in nature.
- Take creative risks, but be sure it is done correctly. Feel free to appropriately display your sense of humor, intellectual curiosity, interesting experiences or personal perspectives. Be who you are- if you are funny, be funny. If you are not, don't try to be. Admissions officers read thousands of essays, and it is refreshing when an applicant does something different; just make sure it is appropriate and accomplishes the given task.
- Make sure the essay has been proofread and edited- it is a direct reflection of you.
- Use details from your college visit to specify how you would benefit most from and contribute the most to that particular college.

Remember that the admissions committee is trying to "get to know you" through your application, and the essay is considered one of the most valuable components. A neatly typed and accurately expressed essay will communicate to an admissions office that your interest and abilities are genuine. The essay itself must be your own work, but you are encouraged to solicit constructive criticism of your grammar and written expression before submitting your application.

## SCHOLARSHIP PROTOCOL

All scholarships are posted and updated in Naviance/Family Connection. The Counseling Office will also send scholarship announcements and reminder emails through Naviance/Family Connection. Go to the Colleges Tab-Scholarship List for an updated list: [Scholarships](#)

Paper copy applications may also be available in the Counseling office.

**If the selection criteria requires an official transcript or counselor evaluation and the student is responsible for submitting the application packet to the sponsor:**

- Complete a scholarship transcript request form available in the Counseling office. If the application requires an official transcript, we will provide it in a sealed envelope. Do not open the envelope, it must be sealed to be considered “official”.
- **Please be aware of deadlines. Some applications may state “postmarked” while others must be submitted by the due date. It is the student’s responsibility to plan accordingly and allow for up to ten days to prepare supplemental materials such as recommendation letters, etc.**

**For scholarships indicated “due into the School Counseling office”:**

- If the sponsor prefers that the school collects the applications and pre-screen applicants, the scholarship application shall indicate that the scholarship applications will be due to the School Counseling office by a certain day. The scholarship committee will follow criteria outlined by the sponsor that may include selecting one nominee to represent PTHS. If so, the scholarship committee will score each applicant with a rubric of designated selection criteria. Our office will coordinate and mail the application as well as the necessary supplemental components to complete the application. This may include an official transcript, counselor recommendation, principal verification, etc.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact:  
Mrs. Cunningham at [cunninghamv@pt-sd.org](mailto:cunninghamv@pt-sd.org)

## COLLEGE TERMS

**Associate's degree:** A two- year degree, students may apply credits from a two- year program to a four-year program

**Bachelor's degree:** A four-year degree

**The Common Application:** An application that many colleges subscribe to, which is completed online and can be submitted to apply to one or several colleges. [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

**Coalition for College Access Application:** An application that some colleges subscribe to, which is completed online and can be submitted to apply to one or several colleges. <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>

**Deferral:** An EA or ED application may be deferred for review with the regular applicant pool

**Early Action (EA):** An application deadline as early as November 1st, which will generally provide a nonbinding response from the college by December 15th. Students may apply to multiple EA colleges. Early Action/ Single Choice: A handful of colleges offer this option which restricts students to a single, nonbinding EA application

**Early Decision (ED):** An application deadline as early as November 1st, which will generally provide a binding response from the college by December 15th. Students may apply to only one college ED. If accepted, a student must withdraw applications sent to all other colleges and attend that particular school

**Official Test Scores:** Standardized admissions testing (SAT's or ACT's) which students must request to be sent directly from the College Board or ACT to the college or university

**Regular decision:** This application will have a deadline and set time for review. Notification of a decision will generally arrive home in the first week of April

**Rolling Admissions:** Applications are reviewed according to the date by which completed materials are received. Submitting a rolling application early is advisable

**Supplements:** Schools may require, in addition to an electronic application, supplementary materials- Teacher Evaluation, School Report, Mid- Year Reports or an additional form for the student to complete

**Undergraduate degree:** It is the first level of university degrees, for example, a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business Administration or Bachelor of Science. Higher levels of university degrees are the master and doctoral levels, also referred to as graduate degrees. ([www.nipissingu.ca/documents.cfm](http://www.nipissingu.ca/documents.cfm))

**Wait list:** A regular applicant who cannot be offered acceptance at decision time, but may be offered an acceptance at a later date

## VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- **Jobs for the Future:** Official Site- Creating Strategies for Educational and Economic Opportunity  
<http://www.jff.org/>
- **BCTE- The Bureau of Career and Technical Education**  
[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/bureau\\_of\\_career\\_technical\\_education/7334](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/bureau_of_career_technical_education/7334)
- **Education Planner:** One stop career and college-planning website for students  
<http://educationplanner.com>
- **PA Statewide High Priority Occupations**  
[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/high\\_priority\\_occupations/12910](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/high_priority_occupations/12910)
- **Team Pennsylvania Career Link:** Pennsylvania Career Link is a cooperative effort to provide con- stop delivery of career services to job seekers, employers and other interested individuals  
[www.cwds.state.pa.us/](http://www.cwds.state.pa.us/)
- **Community College of Beaver County Aviation Academy**  
<http://www.ccbc.edu/aviationacademy>

## MILITARY OPTIONS

Several different opportunities exist for students interested in pursuing a military career or military service after graduation. Military academies offer a very selective and physically rigorous program for highly motivated students. The **five U.S. military academies** are the United States Military Academy (West Point), the United States Naval Academy, the United States Air Force Academy, the United States Coast Guard Academy and the United States Merchant Marine Academy. Military Academy candidates should begin the application process during EARLY SPRING OF JUNIOR YEAR!

- Meet eligibility requirements: Applicants must be citizens of the United States, at least 17 but younger than 23 by July 1 of the admission year, unmarried and without dependents, and not pregnant. Noncitizens may be eligible through a special agreement between the government of their country and the United States.
- Submit a preliminary application (also called a Candidate Questionnaire) in the spring of your junior year: Each academy makes this application available for completion or download online, or you can request that a copy be mailed to you.
- Apply for a nomination in the spring of your junior year: Every applicant must obtain an official nomination to qualify for admission to an academy. Those qualified to nominate candidates include the President and Vice President of the United States, U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators.
  - Check your representatives' websites, which often contain nomination forms. You may also call the offices directly. *CALL EARLY* to begin this process, as representatives have a finite number of nominations; if you are too late in calling, you will not be able to pursue an academy application.
  - Be sure to provide *all requested information far in advance of the deadline*.
- Take the college admissions tests. The academies require high scores on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT).
- Complete a thorough medical examination. All candidates must meet strict medical requirements in order to be considered for admission.
- Take the Candidate Fitness Assessment. Due to the rigorous nature of the academy programs, candidates must be in top physical condition. This assessment consists of physical tests designed to check your stamina and movement.
- Submit all academic documentation, letters of recommendation, and college admission test scores.
- Wait for your status. The academy will make a decision when it has received every part of your application package.

Please refer to each individual Academy's website for the most accurate and up-to-date information.

- United States Military Academy (West Point): [West Point](#)
- United States Air Force Academy: [Air Force](#)
- United States Naval Academy (Annapolis): [Naval Academy](#)
- United States Merchant Marine Academy: [Merchant Marines](#)
- Coast Guard Academy: [Coast Guard](#)

**Non-Academy military options:** Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) is a college-based program for training commissioned officers of the United States armed forces. Under ROTC, a student may receive a competitive, merit-based scholarship, covering all or part of college tuition, in return for an obligation of active military service after graduation. ROTC students attend college like other students, but also receive basic military training and officer training for their chosen branch of service, through the ROTC unit at the college or university. The students participate in regular drills during the school year, and extended training activities during the summer. Terms of military service, scholarship applications, benefits of ROTC, participating postsecondary schools, and other details vary depending on the branch of ROTC in which a student participates.

### Military enlistment

- Students can contact a military recruiter and enter either Active Duty or Reserve (National Guard) duty upon receipt of their high school diploma or GED.

## FINANCIAL AID TIPS

College is usually more affordable than many families think, thanks to financial aid. The tips below can help you navigate the financial aid process and get the most money possible for college. For the most up-to-date information, visit the federal student aid website at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov). There will be some upcoming process changes for the 2017-2018 college school year. Please see the following information: [FASFA Changes](#).

- **Attend a financial aid presentation** at your local high school or Library. Learning about the financial aid process as early as possible is very helpful.
- **Ask financial aid questions when you visit a college campus.** Ask the school representative if it's possible to visit the institution's financial aid office (if necessary, call ahead to make an appointment).
- **When in doubt, ask a financial aid professional.** Call a financial aid office of any college in your area when you have a question, even if your son or daughter does not plan to attend that institution. Financial aid officers can answer many general questions and are happy to help.
- **Keep all tax records and documents up-to-date** and helpful when speaking with a financial aid officer. If your financial situation changes (health issues, loss of job, etc.), alert your financial aid officer immediately. Income tax forms should be filed as soon as possible (preferably in January) in order to provide accurate data on financial aid forms. Some colleges have early February deadlines.
- **The FAFSA application includes a feature called the Data Retrieval Tool (DRT)** that allows you to transfer your tax return information to the FAFSA. Information is available on the FAFSA and IRS websites.

# Peters Township High School

## McMurray, PA 15317

I hereby request & authorize Peters Township High School to release the following school records for \_\_\_\_\_ (student name) who is in grade \_\_\_\_\_ or Graduated in \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

\_\_\_\_\_ Transcript, including scholastic record, attendance data, and standardized achievement test results (Keystone Exams).

\_\_\_\_\_ Transcript including PSAT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests, and ACT exams (will only be sent to specific schools by request of the student).

Records are to be sent to: Any college or scholarship for the 2018-2019 school year

Or

Specific Request: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship if under 18

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Mrs. Cunningham (A-Di): [Cunninghamv@pt-sd.org](mailto:Cunninghamv@pt-sd.org)  
Mrs. Wawrzeniak (Dj-Kl): [Wawrzeniakh@pt-sd.org](mailto:Wawrzeniakh@pt-sd.org)  
Ms. Simmons (Km-M): [Simmons@pt-sd.org](mailto:Simmons@pt-sd.org)  
Mrs. Prinsen (N-Sk): [Prinsenh@pt-sd.org](mailto:Prinsenh@pt-sd.org)  
Mr. Sudol (Sl-Z): [Sudolj@pt-sd.org](mailto:Sudolj@pt-sd.org)  
Office Fax: (724) 942 - 3863

## PARENT BRAG SHEET

Please share the below information with your student's counselor. The completed form will be helpful when writing letters of recommendation and filling out any school reports that colleges may require along with a transcript. You can drop this form off, have your son/daughter bring it to their counselor or e-mail/fax it back (contacts above).



Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What do you consider to be your child's most outstanding accomplishments in the past 3-4 years? Why?
2. Which areas do you think your child has shown the greatest growth and development since 9th grade?
3. Describe an activity to which s/he has devoted extensive time and effort.
4. Which classes has your child enjoyed the most? In your opinion, has this influenced their postsecondary plans at all?
5. What are your child's most outstanding personality traits? Describe a situation in which these qualities were present.
6. Describe a particular challenge which s/he handled effectively on their own.
7. Are there any unusual circumstances which have affected your child's educational or personal accomplishments? If so, please explain.
8. Please list specific colleges s/he is considering, and some of the reasons behind these choices.
9. Which activities/athletics does your child plan to pursue at the collegiate level?

## Teacher Recommendation Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Recommender: \_\_\_\_\_

Course/activity completed with this recommender: \_\_\_\_\_ Final Grade \_\_\_\_\_

My school counselor: (circle)      Cunningham   Wawrzeński   Simmons   Prinsen   Sudol

### How to Request Recommendation Letters through Naviance/Family Connection:

1. Research the number of recommendations needed, if any, by the college or university. Keep in mind some schools require letters from specific subject area teachers. For example, a math/science major may require one math and/or one science teacher.
2. Request your letter in person from your teacher and/or counselor. Provide a paper copy resume to your counselor upload your resume in my journal and share. You can also create a resume using Family Connection.
3. From the Family Connection homepage, click on the Colleges tab. Click on Letters of Recommendation.
4. Click on Add Requests.
5. From the scroll down menu, find and select the teacher who will be writing your letter of Recommendation.
6. Select the colleges this request is for.
7. Type a personal note to remind your teacher of specifics to include in your letter.
8. Click Save. A dashboard will track your recommendation letters requested and received.

I acknowledge that as the student, it is my responsibility to officially request the letter of the recommendation through Naviance/Family Connections after September 1. I understand that the recommender cannot complete the recommendation until I have submitted my request in Naviance/Family Connections.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Student Initials)

The effort and detail you put into completing this form can affect the recommendation that is written for you. On a separate sheet of paper, please consider and answer the following questions.

1. Of all your teachers, why did you select me to write your letter of recommendation?
2. Think about the class you took with me as a whole. What is distinct about you that you may want me to emphasize in my letter?
3. What was your favorite part of the course or activity you participated in with me and why?
4. What was the most challenging part of my class or activity for you and how did you respond? How will those characteristics make you a successful college student?

## Teacher Recommendation Form continued

5. What methods of teaching engage your interest and effort the most? Please explain and/or describe.
6. What are three adjectives that you would use to describe yourself? Give a brief example of each.
7. How and why did you choose the colleges you are applying to? Explain what you feel your connection is to those schools or what you are looking for in those schools.
8. If you were to write a letter of recommendation for yourself to a college, what would you be certain to include?

Please give this completed form to the recommender at least four (4) weeks, *minimally two (2) weeks*, prior to the date by which the recommendation needs to be completed and uploaded to Naviance/Family Connection.

## APPLICATION PROCESS CHECKLIST

<b>BEFORE APPLYING:</b>	<b>COMPLETED ON:</b>
Attend your Junior PIP meeting with your counselor.	
Finish up SAT/ACT and SAT subject tests, if applicable.	
Check Naviance/Family Connection for visit dates from college/technical school representatives. Sign up to attend.	
Complete and return the Transcript Release Form to the Counseling Office.	
Update your resume & share with your counselor.	
Add to "Colleges I'm Applying To" in Naviance/Family Connection. Be sure to indicate both application type (Rolling, EA, ED, etc) and whether or not you plan to use the Common Application or Coalition Application, if applicable.	
Make a list of application and scholarship deadlines.	
Fill out the Teacher Recommendation form and give it to the teacher whom you are asking to write a letter. Confirm deadlines with the teacher.	
Add the Teacher into your Naviance/Family Connection account, under the "Colleges" tab.	
Organize and fill out any supplemental forms that the college may require in the admissions process. Be sure to speak to your counselor about any forms that you are unsure of.	
Request your transcripts (if electronic: via Naviance/Family Connection. If paper, bring envelope into the counseling office along with any necessary supplemental documents. Allow 10 days for processing).	
Send your official SAT/ACT scores to your prospective colleges.	
<b>AFTER APPLYING:</b>	
Check your application's status on the college's website, if applicable. If not listed, call the office of undergraduate admissions to confirm status.	
Look for potential scholarships via Naviance/Family Connection.	
Make a list of important scholarship/financial aid deadlines.	
Attend FAFSA Completion Night with your parents (typically held in the fall) and complete the FAFSA online.	
Notify your counselor of the admissions offices' decisions and update your status in Naviance/Family Connection for each college.	
Send tuition deposit to the school of your choice by the deadline.	
Take the Senior Exit Survey in Naviance/Family Connection.	