WHITKO JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL

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2024-25 SENIOR PARENT NEWSLETTER

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

This will be a very busy year for your family as you assist your senior in making plans for the future, whether that includes a two or four-year college, trade or technical school, military, or the workforce. This first parent letter covers some general information, based on questions that senior parents tend to ask that we feel will be helpful to you. Let us know if you have other questions or needs that we can address.

SAT/ACT Testing

We recommend that any senior who hopes to attend a four-year college or university take the SAT or ACT, though it is not required by all colleges. Colleges DO NOT have a preference as to which test is taken. Both organizations prefer that students register online. Registration for the SAT is at www.sat.org/register and the ACT is www.actstudent.org.

Last spring we gave the SAT to all juniors. Now as a senior, if you want to retake the SAT (to try to earn a higher score) you will need to sign up for an alternative day on your own. The SAT given this upcoming spring, at WJSH, is only for current juniors. We do have a study packet available for students, if you are interested in retaking the test. Local libraries offer more extensive study materials as well. Students taking the ACT and hoping to attend a college in Indiana should take the ACT + Writing test. Students taking the SAT and hoping to attend a college in Indiana should take the SAT with an essay. There is a cost involved when retaking these tests. Do not hesitate to contact us to help you with test registration.

---------- FINDING RESOURCES TO HELP PAY FOR COLLEGE ----------

1. ***Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)***

All seniors are now required to complete the FAFSA as part of graduation requirements, regardless of whether or not they plan on attending college. A separate letter with FAFSA details will be mailed to families. Please read through that letter when it arrives and contact the guidance office with questions. The FAFSA application was new last year, so it is the same as last year, but different from previous years. Additionally, the FAFSA will not open this year until December 31st and it must be submitted before April 15th to qualify for state aid.

To complete a FAFSA, a student may visit the following:https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafs

If the FAFSA is not completed correctly and on time, you will **NOT** receive any state aid to attend college. Also, many scholarship committees require a completed FAFSA. The FAFSA must be completed every year your child attends college.

We have two nights planned to help you complete the FAFSA. We look forward to having you both nights!

- The first night is **Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 6:30**. This night is to provide information on the FAFSA as well as help you create your FSA ID. Both the student and parent should attend.

- The second FAFSA Night is **Thursday, February 13, 2025** from 5:00-7:00. InvestED will be here to provide you with in-person support in completing your FAFSA. This night is a continuation of the first night. Both the student and parent should attend this as well.

2. **You can find a helpful 12th grade checklist,** suggested by the Indiana Department of Education at https://studentaid.gov/resources/prepare-for-college/checklists/12th-grade

3. **www.BIGFUTURE.ORG** - This FREE site from the College Board has excellent resources to help students find colleges, explore careers, and pay for college. We strongly recommend all seniors pay a visit to this site! It is extremely helpful, especially if you are looking for a particular type of college, a college that has specific majors and/or colleges that offer certain sports or extracurricular activities.

4. ***Scholarships***

There are basically three main ways to become aware of scholarships:

The College

When your child becomes interested in attending a specific college, be certain to visit the college. Make an appointment to meet with or call their financial aid department about scholarships they offer. Many colleges will have scholarships for students pursuing a specific major as well. Most scholarships are merit based (i.e. students with high GPA's, test scores, etc. have the best chance of receiving money.) Be sure to check college websites early for scholarships and scholarship deadlines offered to students.

The High School

Various organizations in the area will often offer scholarships for local students. We make every effort to continually update these scholarships on the school's website at whitko.org. This is found on the WJSH page under 'Guidance'; Scholarship Opportunities. This section of our website lists scholarship opportunities which include current scholarships and are available throughout the school year.

Whitko Seniors will receive an email from the WJSH Guidance Department each time a scholarship opportunity comes to our attention. This email will have either the application attached or the link needed to apply online. Parents and students are encouraged to use these resources to see scholarships for which students are eligible to apply. Many of the scholarship applications listed on our website are available online and are designated 'OL' at the end of the scholarship summary. If you have questions regarding scholarships, please direct those questions to Mrs. Rider, Whitko Guidance Counselor.

Individual Searches

Students can create an account with www.fastweb.com, a free scholarship search. This site will make you aware of scholarships across the nation that your child might be able to receive based on a questionnaire your child completes. Students can also go to the www.bigfuture.org website and click on the 'Pay for College' tab. In addition to searching for scholarships, students will become MUCH more familiar with the financial aid process by visiting this site.

Please be aware and throw away material you receive in the mail or online requiring a fee for financial aid searches. Any information they give you is free elsewhere. Many times they 'guarantee' being able to get you 100% of the money you need for college, but the fine print states this guarantee includes loans!

5. ***Additional Tips for Cutting Costs***

- Many seniors have earned Ivy Tech credits while in high school. It is imperative that students get their Ivy Tech transcript in June 2025 to give to the college they will be attending! Request your Ivy Tech transcript at ivy.tech.edu/registrar. There is a minimal cost. Also, be certain to ask the college you'll be attending about testing out of classes. For instance, many colleges accept CLEP examinations. CLEP tests can be taken at Huntington University (800-642-6493), Purdue-Fort Wayne (260-481-6600), and Ivy Tech Fort Wayne (260-482-9171).

- If you are a 21st Century Scholar, you must attend college within one (1) year of high school graduation to take advantage of this full-tuition scholarship. You must complete the FAFSA as a 21st Century Scholar, even if you are not attending college right away. If you are a 21st Century Scholar

you may qualify for additional Indiana college scholarships, which may cover the costs of attending beyond tuition. For instance, Indiana University covers all fees (room/board, etc.) for 21st Century Scholars, which can be up to approximately $19,000.00 a school year!! Be sure to ask!!

- Finally, if you are a 21st Century Scholar in the Class of 2025, you **MUST** complete the 2 Scholar Success activities to be eligible for the scholarship. Please read very carefully any mail you receive or emails you receive from the 21st Century Scholars program.

- If you have questions about 21st Century Scholars, please make an appointment with Miss Cooper, our WJSH Guidance Counselor and 21st Century Liaison.

---------- COLLEGE VISITS/APPLICATIONS ----------

Visits

Seniors are given two (2) 'excused' school days during their senior year to take college visits. Please bring a parent note at least one week prior to the visit to Mrs. Hall to excuse the absence. If needed, the guidance office can help with college contact information. We encourage parents to attend with their senior. This helps with answering a multitude of questions.

Applications

It is important not to wait too long to begin completing college applications. Almost all colleges charge a fee (usually $20-$75) to apply, so it is wise to be selective in completing applications. A general rule of thumb is to try to have college applications submitted by November 1st, as this is a priority deadline for many colleges and gives you the greatest chance at acceptance and scholarships. You MUST check with the individual colleges to know specific deadlines. Also, most applications have a portion that the student's guidance counselor must complete. Please direct this portion of the application to our guidance counselor, Mrs. Rider.

Parchment.com

Colleges will require a high school transcript after the student completes an application. Students need to create an account at parchment.com to have their transcript sent electronically to any college. It is FREE to send a transcript to any college in Indiana. PLEASE keep record of your Parchment username/password, as this service can be used for years to come. The process is straightforward, but if you require assistance, please contact our counselors.

College Credits

Whitko Jr/Sr High School is offering multiple dual-credit courses which will result in college credits for our students if the course is successfully completed. A helpful website to check out would be www.transferIN.net to see how these credits will transfer to your college.

Please call us at 260-723-5146 if you have other questions as your family continues this journey.

Sincerely,

Ms. Jodie Clark *Mrs. Cristina Rider*
Principal *School Counselor*

HELPFUL WEBSITES

FAFSA	**To apply for Federal/State Financial Aid online --- https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafs**
College Board	**(SAT) Registration and Prep - www.collegeboard.org**
ACT	**Registration & Prep - www.actstudent.org**
SAT	**Registration & Prep - www.collegeboard.org**
Indiana Commission for Higher Education	**State Grants, Scholarships, 21st Century Information - https://learnmoreindiana.org/**
Search for Scholarships	**www.fastweb.com** **www.bigfuture.org** **https://www.investedindiana.org/preparing/finding-scholarships/** **https://www.petersons.com/scholarship-search.aspx**
Peterson's College Search	**https://www.petersons.com/college-search.aspx**
College websites contain valuable information. (Here are a few. Google search for others.	**Purdue: https://purdue.edu/** **PFW: https://www.pfw.edu/about-pfw** **IUFW: https://fortwayne.iu.edu/admissions/index.html** **IU: https://bloomington.iu.edu/about/index.html** **Ball State University: https://www.bsu.edu/** **Indiana State University: https://indianastate.edu/** **Trine University: https://www.trine.edu/** **Ivy Tech Community College: https://www.ivytech.edu** **University of Indianapolis: https://uindy.edu/**

Asking questions and reviewing information is a key part of the college-search process. Using the technology that you have at your fingertips, you have a wealth of information available to you.