OHS SENIOR CHECKLIST

from your Counselor and Career Coach



-Spring Semester-

FOR ALL STUDENTS:

☐ **Stay informed:**
- Stay on top of your personal and school emails for important senior information this spring!
- Make sure you follow the **College and Career Team's socials**: @oneonta.college.career on IG and *Oneonta College and Career Team* on FB.
- Start preparing to learn to live on your own: learn how to budget, cook, do laundry, etc.

□ **Take advantage of your Job Shadowing and College Preview Days.** Seniors have two job shadowing days and two college preview days. We can help with job shadow placement. Access the College Visit absence form here.

□ **If you missed the FAFSA deadline in December, you can still complete the FAFSA or sign the opt-out waiver. Remember that doing one of these two things is a GRADUATION REQUIREMENT!**
- **Steps for completing your FAFSA:**
  - Create an FSA-ID (login) at https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account
  - Complete your FAFSA using your FSA-ID at https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa
  - **Parents and their students must have DIFFERENT FSA-IDs.**
  - To fill out the FAFSA, you/your parent will need your prior-prior year's tax returns (like 2023 for the 2025-26 form), W-2s, 1099s, bank statements, and records for other income (like child support) or assets (investments, business). It is easier to consent to using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) on the FAFSA website to pull tax info directly, but have your actual documents ready if that's not possible or if you're selected for verification. It also makes it easier if the parent creates his/her own separate FSA-ID BEFORE beginning the FAFSA. We assisted students with creating their FSA-IDs during Gov't class.
  - You can always set up an appointment with one of us for FAFSA help.
  - **Submit your FAFSA Completion Confirmation to Mrs. Tolbert by**
  - **Some aid is distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis, so apply ASAP!**
- If you are not college-bound or prefer not to complete the FAFSA, reach out to Mrs. Tolbert for the waiver.

□ **Change your YouScience email address**
- You will have access to your YouScience dashboard and results for up to ten years from the day you took the original assessment as freshmen. However, after graduation, you will no longer have access to your OHS email. So you need to go into YouScience and change your email address on your account to a personal email address.
- While you're there, update your YouScience interests to access your incredible, personalized results.
- Use YouScience to enhance your resume/essay writing, interviews, and career/major/program clarification.
- Don't remember how to get there? Go to **signin.youscience.com**. Select "Aptitude and Career Discovery."

□ **Do you have your CCRI? This is a GRADUATION REQUIREMENT too!**
Every senior **must** graduate with **AT LEAST ONE College and Career Readiness Indicator (CCRI).**
- **Benchmarking on the ACT** (18 English; 22 Reading; 22 Math; 23 Science)
- **Enlisting in the Military**
- **Earning an Industry Credential** (this can be done through many career tech courses and pathways)
- **Earning Dual Enrollment Credit** (students who earn an 70 or higher in a dual enrollment course)
- **Earning a Qualifying Score on an AP Exam** (scoring a 3 or higher)
- **Benchmarking on the ACT WorkKeys** (Scoring a 4 or higher on each of the 3 WorkKeys subtests. We will be administering the WorkKeys Assessment here at school later this semester.)
- **Being a CTE Pathway Completer** (Earn 3 credits with a 70+ grade in CTE courses *from the same pathway*)
- **Completing a Youth Apprenticeship**

FOR COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS:

- □ **Fight senioritis!** Final transcripts should be sent to colleges in May after graduation, so yes, this second semester does count! Colleges can rescind scholarships or admissions.
- □ Request letters of recommendation. Ask for letters at least 3 weeks before deadlines.
- □ **Keep up the Scholarship Search!**
  - o Prioritize local scholarships. Keep following the College and Career Team social media accounts so you don't miss these opportunities. We will also email and parent square these opportunities.
  - o Once you're admitted to a college or university, then you can apply for their school-specific scholarships. You can apply for more than one university's scholarships. This is how you will compare who will offer you the most money, which may be a deciding factor for you.
  - o Assess your individual connections and experiences. There are private scholarships for just about anything: girls in computing, people who love their pets, minority students, first-generation students, legacies, boys who are 6'2", future artists, your parents' workplace may have a scholarship, your church or community organization, etc. Think about what makes you YOU and use it to your advantage in your scholarship search!
  - o Do not avoid scholarships that require an essay. These have a low competition pool because people don't want to put in the extra work.
  - o Treat your search like a class: do your scholarship "homework" multiple nights a week. The more you put into your scholarship search, likely the more you'll be rewarded. It is not easy or everyone would do it! I wish we could wave a magic wand and give every student a scholarship, but sadly we cannot–you have to put in the work yourself!
  - o Create a free profile at **goingmerry.com or unigo.com** for a national scholarship search.

- □ **Make your decision!**
  - o Monitor the status of all of your applications.
  - o Compare financial aid packages from the colleges that received your FAFSA information
  - o Determine if you are going to need to accept student loans through FAFSA.
  - o **Start communicating with your College Admissions Department and Financial Aid Department to ensure you have all documents submitted.**
  - o Let the school you choose know you will be attending. Contact your admissions rep.
  - o **Inform us of your school choice and of your offered scholarships so that you can be recognized at Awards Day!**
  - o Send your final transcript to the school you will attend through **parchment** in May after graduation!
  - o Submit any deposits needed by your school by their deadlines. Just be very aware of your deadlines.
  - o Apply for campus housing (normally due the first week of March). Or, look for a place off campus.

- □ **Make the most of your summer!**
  - o Apply for a summer job and save up for school!
  - o Sign up for College Summer Orientation.

FOR WORKFORCE-BOUND OR MILITARY-BOUND STUDENTS:

Show initiative

- o Find a mentor who will give you advice, someone you admire with a career that interests you.
- o Research companies you're interested in and contact their HR to see if they have short-term intern programs or job shadow days.
- o Continue to work toward **obtaining necessary training, experience, certifications, and credentials.** Look into local community colleges for their free or cost effective training programs.

Look for upward mobility opportunities.

- o Consider entering a company's entry-level position. Many large companies offer upward mobility, tuition assistance or reimbursement programs, or apprenticeships.
- o These opportunities will allow you to move up into higher positions as you establish experience and impress them with your work ethic and positive attitude.

Improve your soft skills.

- o Network and practice interviewing.
- o **According to a Leadership IQ study, almost half of new hires (48%) fail within 18 months. Just 11% of those failures are due to a lack of technical skills and knowledge, but 89% stem from a lack of soft skills.**
- o Examples of soft skills: adaptability, active listening, integrity, work ethic, time management, empathy, communication, dependability, critical thinking, leadership, conflict resolution, etc.
- o Clean out your Social Media closet: You can bet that employers are looking at this.

If you are military, discuss enlistment with your recruiter. Know your dates and prepare for basic training.