

WHITKO JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL

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2023-24 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. We have collected some information that we hope will be helpful to you. In the next few paragraphs we have tried to cover some general information based on questions that senior parents tend to ask. This letter is the first of two designed for parents. Let us know if you have further questions or needs so we can address them.

SAT/ACT Testing

Any senior who hopes to attend a four-year college or university, it is recommended that they take the SAT or ACT, though it is not required by some 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. We were able to give the SAT here at Whitko during the spring of last year to all of our juniors. However, if you want to retake the SAT then you will need to sign up for an alternative day on your own, the SAT given in the spring this year will only be for current juniors. We have a study packet available for students and each local library offers more extensive study materials. 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. Please do not hesitate to contact us to help you with test registration. The SAT with essay and/or the ACT + Writing tests are recommended. There is a cost involved.

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

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

New to the Class of 2024, **all** seniors *must* complete the FAFSA as part of graduation regardless of whether or not they plan on attending college. A separate letter with details has been mailed to families. Please be sure to read through that letter and contact the guidance office with questions. Some important things to note are, the application is new so if you filled out the FAFSA in years past, it will not be the same. Additionally, the FAFSA will not open this year until December and like in years past, it must be submitted before April 15th to qualify for state aid.

To complete a FAFSA, a student may visit the studentaid.gov website:

<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafs>.

You can find a 12th grade checklist suggested by the Department of Ed which you may find helpful. For the checklist, go to <https://studentaid.gov/resources/prepare-for-college/checklists/12th-grade>

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. The first is **Monday, November 27 at 6:00**. This night is to provide information on the new FAFSA as well as help you create your FSA ID.

The second planned FAFSA Night is **Wednesday, February 7, 2024** from 5:00-7:00. InvestED will be here to provide you with in-person support in completing your FAFSA. We look forward to having you here on both nights!

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!

Scholarships

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

1. The College

When your child becomes interested in attending a specific college, be certain to ask their financial aid department about scholarships they offer. Many colleges will have scholarships for students pursuing a specific major as well. These scholarships are usually 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 their students.

2. 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'; Info for Seniors; Scholarships. Listed are scholarship opportunities which include our current scholarships. Whitko Seniors will receive an email each time an available 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 high school 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. Other scholarships listed which are **not** accessible online may be obtained in the guidance office. This website is available throughout the school year. If you have specific questions regarding scholarships, please direct those questions to Mrs. Whiteleather.

3. 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 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 - - The fine print always states this guarantee includes loans!

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 2024 and give it 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. Also, 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, many Indiana colleges offer additional scholarships which may cover the costs of attending beyond tuition. For instance, Indiana University covers all fees (room/board, etc.) for 21st Century Scholars. Be sure to ask!!

Finally, if you are a 21st Century Scholar in the Class of 2024, 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, please make an appointment with Miss Cooper.

----- **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. Kessie to excuse the absence. We can help with college contact information. Also, if a parent can accompany their child on a visit, that is usually very beneficial.

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. Whiteleather.

Parchment.com

Colleges will require a high school transcript after the student completes an application. To simplify this process, students can create an account at parchment.com and 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 if you have questions as your family continues the journey. The high school number is 260-723-5146.

Sincerely,

*Amy Evans
Principal*

*Shelby Whiteleather
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
State Student Assistance Comm. of Indiana	State Grants, Scholarships, 21st Century Information - www.in.gov/ssaci/
Search for Scholarships	www.fastweb.com www.bigfuture.org www.INvestEdIndiana.org/Scholarships
Peterson's	College information - www.petersons.com

All colleges also have web pages with lots of valuable information. Just log onto a search engine (such as Yahoo or Google) and type in the name of the institution in which you are interested.

Use FastWeb to enter an excellent scholarship base.

Asking questions and reviewing information is a key part of the college-search process. With using your smartphone or your computer you have a wealth of information at your fingertips.