

# POST-HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING SOPHOMORE NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024

## NEW FOR CLASS OF 2026:

MaiaLearning

Post High School Counseling is pleased to report that MaiaLearning, our new web-based college and career resource platform for students, is well underway for the Class of 2026! Maia includes a full suite of resources, tools and databases which will provide additional support to students and parents as they navigate the college, career, scholarship and financial aid research and application process. Click on the titles below to watch brief videos highlighting two key features of the platform:

- [College search features](#)
- [Career planning tools](#)

## TESTING BASICS & UPDATES

Our recommendation remains firm that it's best to take the ACT and/or SAT in late winter or early spring of junior year. Students will have the option to take the PSAT on October 19th, and all students are required to take the Illinois State ACT in April 2025. It's worth noting that many colleges now have a test-optional policy. To see the current list of colleges offering this option, please click [here](#). Students looking to get acquainted with the test format can access practice tests and free preparation materials on ACT Academy and Khan Academy (for the SAT). If you have further inquiries, consider watching our December program, "Navigating a Rapidly Evolving Testing Landscape." Click [HERE](#) to watch.

## WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

### THE ROAD AHEAD

Congratulations Class of 2026 as you conclude your sophomore year and look ahead to a healthy, productive and relaxing summer. Please know we are proud of the growth, optimism and persistence you have been able to employ navigating your first two years at New Trier. With regards to post-high school planning, we recommend prioritizing a strong finish to your sophomore year and enjoying a restful, rejuvenating summer in preparation for next school year.

Our department is ready to support all students as the post- high school planning process unfolds in different ways relative to each student's academic performance, extracurricular involvement, social/emotional growth and unique, evolving narrative. We are dedicated to providing students with the best guidance from our wide network of resources in the college admissions community. Likewise, colleges remain committed to supporting and informing prospective students in their college search and application process. While we are not advising sophomores to conduct a full-blown college search, as students find themselves with available time, they can take advantage of the robust online virtual resources that colleges provide to help inform prospective students about their campus life and programs. Additionally, many colleges offer in-person, on-campus tours and information sessions. Whether virtual or in-person, tours and information sessions can be a good use of time for a student who wants to engage in such explorations. Some students may not yet feel ready to do so and that is perfectly fine.

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## SUMMER, SUMMER, SUMMERTIME!

### NEED SOME SUMMER PLANS?

Consider the wide variety of ways you can use your time constructively this summer...

- Consider finding a part-time job, pursuing volunteer work, or learning a new skill. Check out the New Trier Job Board (keep scrolling to link to it!). It can also be found on our website or the Resources page in MaiaLearning and in PHSC Canvas.
- Look for ways to help! Be a mentor to a sibling; do chores around the house (without being asked!); help an elderly neighbor with their yard work. Think of ways you can contribute. It will mean the world to someone else, and you will learn more about yourself in the process. If you don't know how to do your own laundry or cook your own meals, take the time to learn now. Come freshman year of college, you'll be glad you did.
- Check out all the experiential learning opportunities being provided by colleges and organizations around the country. Investigate options for some of the schools on your list to see what opportunities are available. Visit the Enrichment tab in MaiaLearning to discover the possibilities.
- Want to stretch your brain but not your budget? Explore taking a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) through providers such as [edx.org](https://edx.org) or [coursera.org](https://coursera.org), offering thousands of different courses from top institutions worldwide.

## COLLEGE VISITS

### EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR HOW TO RESEARCH COLLEGES

Check each college website for availability of on-campus or virtual visit options, such as:

- Admission information sessions
- Chat sessions with your local representative
- Virtual tours

By registering for and attending on-campus and virtual sessions, colleges will be able to know you're actively researching all they have to offer. Utilizing virtual offerings can be a useful way to prioritize where you will want to visit when you are ready.

Follow schools on social media to get a feel for their unique environment.

## LOOKING AHEAD...

### ON THE HORIZON FOR JUNIOR YEAR

Most notably, as sophomores become juniors, we will be engaging each student in their post-high school planning process with advisory visits in the fall and an evening program in November. We will introduce and guide each junior through the completion of a student reflection and data form which will be due in December. Individual family meetings will begin in January of junior year and continue throughout the rest of the school year.

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## FINANCIAL AID

If you are interested in getting a better handle on the cost of college and what aid you may qualify for, there are a few tools you will want to check out.

### NET PRICE CALCULATOR

All colleges are federally mandated to have a Net Price Calculator on their website. To find this on a school's site, simply type "Net Price Calculator" into the search bar. To access a comprehensive listing of all college calculators, click [HERE](#).

Completing this 15-20 minute exercise will provide you with an early read on what need-based or merit-based aid you might qualify for at this institution.

### FEDERAL STUDENT AID ESTIMATOR

While the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Aid) cannot be completed until fall of the senior year, you can complete the Federal Student Aid Estimator now to get an estimate of your eligibility for federal aid. On average it takes 5-10 minutes to complete. Please click [HERE](#) to visit the site.

## NEED HELP? JUST ASK...

Contact your post-high school counselor for help. Counselors work with the following adviseries:

Jill Cervantes: cervantj@nth.s.net	Lau, Shedroff, & Wysocki
Cassandra Barca: barcac@nth.s.net	Branahl, Lombardi, Malia, Parks, & Yang
Heather Ecklund: ecklundh@nth.s.net	Birazian, Chao, de Serpa, & Mersch
Kristen Graf: grafk@nth.s.net	Jackson, Loris, L., Phillips, & Rothschild
Michael O'Connor: oconnorm@nth.s.net	Burns, Kenney, Landes, & Salisbury
Daniel Rogan: rogand@nth.s.net	Cristofani, Goodman, Loris, R., Sowa, & Van Den Berg
Thomas Shorrock: shorroct@nth.s.net	Finck, Nichols, Vinson, & Yoon
Gretchen Stauder: stauderg@nth.s.net	Antonini, Maxman, O'Connor, & Twadell
Robert Zigmund: zigmundr@nth.s.net	Calmes, Colgrove, Kirschbaum, Romano, & Watson

For general inquiries, contact [phsc@nth.s.net](mailto:phsc@nth.s.net) or call 847-784-2234.

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

Your post-high school counselor (PHSC) was assigned to you in December. Counselor advisery assignments are listed below.

A sophomore class webinar to preview junior year and testing timelines was delivered on February 1, 2024. Please click [here](#) to view that webinar.

The Post-High School Planning Guide was mailed home in April. A digital copy can be accessed on our Canvas page, PHSC website [www.newtrier.k12.il.us/phsc](http://www.newtrier.k12.il.us/phsc) or by clicking [here](#).



LOOKING AHEAD AT

# JUNIOR YEAR

Here are some of the key events to anticipate coming up:

## COLLEGE VISITS

Meet one of the 200+ college representatives that visit our school every fall. Details will be posted in MaiaLearning and on our PHSC webpage. Junior students are allowed to attend visits occurring during a free period or lunch period.

## OCT. 8

A partnership between local high schools, the **CHOICES Fair** is a post-secondary planning night for students with learning differences who are college bound. Click [here](#) for more details.

## NOVEMBER

**Junior PHSC Program**; our kick-off event providing an overview of the college search timeline and our services. Counselors will also be visiting adviseries throughout 2nd quarter to share important information.

## JANUARY-JUNE

At your **PHSC initial appointment** come ready to talk about your dreams and we'll discuss how we can support you in reaching your goals.

## FEBRUARY

PHS Counselors will be making **junior advisery visits** to provide guidance on **selecting senior year courses**.

## OCT. 19

Scheduled national test date for the **PSAT/NMSQT**. Visit the "**Testing**" section of our [webpage](#) for other standardized testing resources. Watch for a summer mailing from the testing office with registration details.

## 2ND SEMESTER

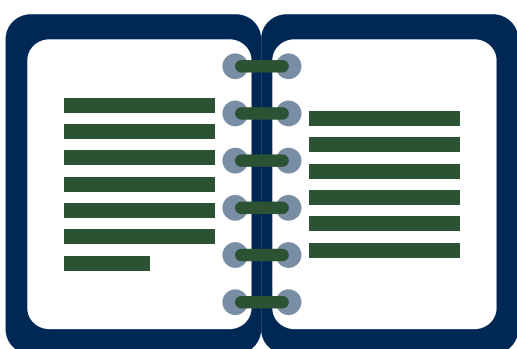
Schedule your **PHSC initial appointment**. Meetings begin second semester and continue through the end of the year. Instructions will be provided on how students can book their appointment after we return from winter break.

## EXPLORE A GAP YEAR

New Trier will again host the country's largest **Gap Year Fair** on **January 25th**, at the Winnetka campus. Come learn about all the exciting opportunities!

## APRIL 9

**State ACT for Juniors** (an Illinois state-mandated graduation requirement). More information will be shared by the testing office as it becomes available.





# JOB BOARD

*Part-time, Summer, Internship,  
and Volunteer Opportunities*

Contact Ms. Barca  
with questions at  
[barcac@nthsh.net](mailto:barcac@nthsh.net)

SCAN  
HERE



POST-HIGH SCHOOL  
COUNSELING