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**Guidelines**

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**Guidelines is available only online:**
http://academics.tjhsst.edu/dss.html

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**Course Selection for the 2010-2011 School Year**

Throughout the months of March and April counselors will be meeting with students for academic advising. Freshmen will be meeting with their counselors through IBET classes, sophomores through Health and PE 10, and juniors through Physics. The **course selection schedule will be as follows:**

- **Sophomores** March 8-19
- **Juniors** Mar. 22-April 9
- **Freshmen** April 6-16

Once all students have selected their courses, the data collected will assist us in our decisions about how many teachers we need, which courses will be offered, and which courses are under-enrolled. Additionally, with the proposed budget cuts, it is even more important than ever to have accurate data. Therefore, we have asked all students to utilize the online scheduler [https://information.tjhsst.edu/dss/schedule/](https://information.tjhsst.edu/dss/schedule/) in addition to meeting with their counselor. This online scheduler will enable students to identify alternative elective choices in the event that schedule changes must be made. Therefore, we have asked all students to utilize the online scheduler [https://information.tjhsst.edu/dss/schedule/](https://information.tjhsst.edu/dss/schedule/) in addition to meeting with their counselor. This online scheduler will enable students to identify alternative elective choices in the event that schedule changes must be made.

**However, please be aware that because of budgetary constraints, we anticipate limited flexibility with staffing and course selections and therefore limited ability to make schedule changes.**

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**2010 TJHSST Summer School Information**

Dates for summer school, as well as times and course offerings, have been decided. Please note that some course selections may change due to faculty availability and student interest or even lack of enrollment. The specific details of cost and a complete list of course selections are still being developed and will be shared as soon as they are finalized. Please rest assured that as soon as we have more definitive details about summer school at TJHSST, we will utilize a variety of formats in order to disseminate this information.

Summer school will run from July 6 to August 6. All courses will be offered at TJHSST, but unfortunately, transportation and lunch are not provided and therefore the responsibility of the parent and student.

There will be two different types of courses offered at TJ this summer: for-credit and enrichment courses (which include the Summer Tech Institute). All TJ summer school information will be found on the TJ website: [www.tjhsst.edu](http://www.tjhsst.edu) under “News”, then “Summer School”. Descriptions and details of each of the courses and programs, as well as where to locate this information will be available at TJ and on the TJ website.

TJ Summer courses are offered to students interested in the possibility of exploring additional course options. No student is required to attend TJ Summer School and no student is guaranteed a place in any TJ Summer School program.
Final course enrollments are based on student enrollment and resources. Information concerning tuition will be posted on the TJ website as soon as it is available.

**MATH & COMPUTER SCIENCE**

Several questions and concerns related to math and computer science courses often arise as the school year progresses.

First of all, students should think very carefully about attempting to place out of a course by taking a placement test. Learning an entire year’s work on their own is very difficult even for the best students. Please consider this carefully. Unless there is a valid reason to accelerate (for example, in order to co-enroll in AP Physics), this option should not be considered.

**Precalculus**

The only math course that a student may attempt to place out of is Precalculus. In order to attempt this, a student must have met the following requirements:

1. Earned A’s in all previous math courses.
2. Earned a 97% average in his/her most recent math class.
3. Obtained his/her math teacher’s verification that he/she is a good problem solver and independent thinker.

Each year approximately 5 or 6 students apply to take this test and approximately one-half pass the test (minimum score required: 90%). Please remember that the test allows placement, not credit.

The test date is Friday, August 27 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon in room 236. (Please note: If a student is also taking the Precalculus placement test, they will take both on this test day.)

All information and necessary forms for the placement will be on the TJHSST website (http://academics.tjhsst.edu/mathcs.html) in March.

**Freshmen who have completed Advanced Algebra 2, but not Trigonometry or Data Analysis**

These freshmen have a few options. First, they may choose to study the material on their own during the summer and take a placement test on Friday, August 28 proving their mastery. Students must earn an 84% in order to prove mastery. Students who do not pass the placement test or do not want to study on their own during the summer, may elect one of the following options: enroll in our Trigonometry semester course or take the online Trigonometry course over the summer. Either way, students will receive one-semester of credit.

However, when students new to TJ first register, they must sign-up for the semester course of Trigonometry. Counselors are notified once students pass the test and schedules are changed to enroll students in Precalculus. Students who would like to attempt the placement test should visit the TJHSST website and click on “Academics” and then “Math and Computer Science.” Under the Mathematics program, there is information about placement testing. Additionally, a listing of the Trigonometry topics that are necessary to master will be provided on the TJHSST website. Furthermore, the Data Analysis I and II packets that are included in the placement test are available for downloading. The placement test request form must be returned to Mrs. Jennifer Allard by May 28.

**Preparing for next year’s math course**

It is not unusual for one’s math skills to get rusty over the summer. There are skill inventories posted on the math and computer science webpage http://academics.tjhsst.edu/mathcs.htm. Currently there are skill inventories for students entering Geometry or Advanced Algebra 2/Trigonometry where they can ascertain if they need to review any Algebra 1 topics for the fall. They can be downloaded and, once completed, solutions can also be downloaded so that students can check their results. It is strongly suggested that all students complete the appropriate skill inventories. Students who need to review any particular topic before September should visit the many websites available with tutorials.

**SENIOR STUFF**

**FAFSA Information**

In order for college students to be considered for financial aid you will need complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Loan – www.fafsa.ed.gov/). Completing FAFSA requires information from your most recent Federal Income Tax
(2009). Application forms and information are available at the FAFSA website. You may need to check with your student’s prospective colleges or state to see if additional financial aid forms are required. If so, contact the college's financial aid office directly. Additionally, your student’s counselor may be able to assist in this process, so you may choose to contact him/her as well.

Once you submit the completed FAFSA form, you should receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) within four weeks. Review the SAR carefully and check for any inaccuracies. Make any necessary corrections and return the SAR to the FAFSA processor. However, if a college transmitted your information directly, you should notify the college of any change(s).

If more than four weeks have passed after sending in your FAFSA and you have not received an acknowledgment, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (319) 337-5665. In order to identify you, please provide your name, social security number, address, and date of birth exactly as it is written on the FAFSA.

Scholarships

Don’t forget about scholarships! Students may be eligible for more scholarships than they think, so they should spend some time researching the scholarship opportunities available. Check Mrs. Kobick’s CCC website (http://academics.tjhsst.edu/careercenter) on a regular basis. Do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Kobick or your student’s counselor if you have any questions.

Has senioritis arrived?

Bet you didn’t know that colleges can revoke an admissions acceptance of a student if he/she does not finish senior year the way he/she started it. Senioritis, can take on the form of many symptoms – laziness, slipping grades, and generally slacking off once the college acceptance letter arrives. Most acceptance offers are conditional – meaning that students are expected to complete their senior year with the same quality of work achieved during the first semester. Students are expected to fulfill their obligations in high school. When a student “slacks off” it appears to admission officers that the student will arrive at college unprepared to complete college work. Official transcripts of accepted students are sent to colleges at the end senior year not only as proof of successful completion of senior year and graduation, but also to inform colleges of completion of any prerequisites for an intended major (if applicable).

If the final semester grades start to slide, many admission officers will contact the student or the school counselor to find out the reason. Summer remediation classes or support services at the college may be recommended as a method to rectify the situation. A mid-year change in course load can also affect entry into a top-choice college. College officials will review the final transcripts, so the motivation to continue to maintain a strong academic record should continue. Preparing and learning for college while in high school will assist in making the transition to college life an easier experience.

Student’s Rights and Responsibilities in the College Admissions Process

If a Student is Offered Admission:

• Students have the right to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until May 1.
• Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission and/or financial assistance prior to May 1 must clearly offer the student the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1. Colleges must grant this extension and this request may not jeopardize one’s status for admission or financial aid. (This right does not apply to candidates admitted under an Early Decision program who have signed a contract to attend the college upon early acceptance.)

If a Student is placed on a Wait List or Alternate List:

• The wait list/alternate letter should provide a history that details the number of students on the wait list, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing.
• Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of remaining on a wait list.
• Colleges are expected to notify the student of the resolution of his/her wait list/alternate status no later than August 1º.

If the Student Accepts Admission to a College:

• Students must notify each college that offered them acceptance as to whether or not they will accept or reject its offer. Students should make these notifications as soon as they have made a final decision, but no later than May 1. It is understood that May 1 is the postmark date.

• Students may confirm their intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college. The only exception to this is if a student is put on the wait list at another college and is later admitted to that institution. The student may accept this new offer and send in a deposit. However, the student must immediately notify the college to which he/she had previously indicated his/her intention to enroll.

Graduation is quickly approaching...

Is your student ready for graduation? Please make sure that all deadlines have been met for cap and gown orders, All Night Graduation Party tickets, and other senior related functions. Students should not forget to thank all of their teachers, past and present who have helped them along the way.
See the College and Career Center section of this newsletter for more information about:

* The college waitlist
* Financial aid helpful hints
* Financial aid “award” letters

Junior Journey

2010 brought with it not only the start of a new year, but a new semester. We hope our juniors keep a positive mindset during the second-half of this important year and put forth their best effort as they delve into their coursework and participate in extracurricular activities. The Student Services Department continues to offer programs designed to help juniors gain a better understanding of the college admissions process. The “junior interview,” the traditional one-on-one meeting between student and counselor, ensures that every junior receives individual attention tailored to his/her specific needs/preferences. This is an exciting time as we embark on a new chapter in working together to formulate a plan for their future after TJ.

Here are some highlights of some recent programs offered:

Alumni Visit

In January the Student Services Department hosted a college panel of recent TJ alumni who are currently college freshmen. The panel spoke to our TJ sophomores and juniors about the college admissions process, college life, and academics. The graduates represented sixteen colleges and universities across the country. It was heartening to learn that our TJ grads feel very competent to handle college-level work. They emphasized that the TJ curriculum prepares all our students for future academic success. Overjoyed to suddenly have “free time” on their hands, our alumni spoke with confidence about how they are managing their time wisely and maintaining a balance between academic rigor and a social life. Eager to learn and do well, they firmly stated the importance of attending classes (even if attendance is not mandatory), independently studying for courses, and making responsible personal choices. It was evident that our alumni are scholars who are also enjoying their lives on campus outside of the classroom. The counselors and teachers were delighted to see their former students and very proud of their smooth transition to college life. They set a wonderful example for our current TJ students!

College and Career Center Lunch Information Sessions

At the start of the third quarter all juniors were invited to attend an informative lunch period in the College and Career Center with their counselor and Mrs. Kobick, the College and Career Center Specialist. Counselors reminded students to be prepared to devote many hours completing their applications next fall.

The College and Career Center is an incredible resource for our students and Mrs. Kobick continually updates information about scholarships, college, careers, and summer opportunities. We encourage students to research all their options carefully. If you would like to explore this information, please visit to the College and Career Center website at [http://academics.tjhsst.edu/careercenter/](http://academics.tjhsst.edu/careercenter/).

Additionally, all students should maintain a current email address in their BlackBoard account so that they will receive up-to-date information about scholarships, college reps visiting our school, and emails from their counselors. Also, Family Connection, a component of BlackBoard enables students to view scattergrams of recent TJ college data, as well as research colleges.

Junior Interviews/College Planning Meetings

Counselors at Thomas Jefferson are experienced and eager to help students find their way through the college admissions maze. Students should be actively engaged in the “Junior Journey.” One important way of doing this is for students to contact their counselor in order to sign-up for their “Junior Interview/College Planning Meeting.” The focus of this meeting is to ensure that the counselor and student converse about educational planning, priorities, and the statistics that point to the likelihood of admission. It is a very important time for the counselor and student to continue to get to know each other. Parents are invited to attend this session as well. If you would like to attend, please be sure to coordinate this with your student and his/her counselor.

This spring juniors and their parents will be asked to complete the College Planning Packet which will be distributed sometime in March to juniors in TA. The information provided in the college planning packet by both the student and parents will help the counselor write a complete and accurate college recommendation in the fall.

Upcoming Events

April 16 is our College Admissions Panel Night. Please see page 2 for more information.

Upcoming responsibilities and activities in the college process include:

1. Signing up for SAT or ACT, as well as SAT Subject Tests as required by the colleges.
2. Selecting which teachers to ask to write a letter of recommendation and “securing” that letter by speaking with the teacher sometime during 3rd quarter or early in 4th quarter.
3. Planning trips to see colleges in order to obtain first-hand impressions and information. These trips, ideally, should be planned and executed before school begins next September 2010.

4. Continuing to do as well as possible in junior year courses. At the end of this school year, the students’ cumulative GPA will be calculated, and this is the GPA initially reported to colleges. At the end of the 7th semester of senior year, the GPA is once again re-calculated and sent to colleges to which the student has applied. Students are reminded that the most important factors in college admissions are their grades and the rigor of the courses they have taken.

5. Continuing to actively participate in activities, as well as expanding commitment to research and/or extracurricular activities.

6. Choosing enriching, enjoyable summer opportunities.

7. Completing the College Planning Packet and handing it in to your counselor.

Counselors are eager to assist in identifying colleges that match students’ accomplishments and priorities. We look forward to being a partner to students and their families, as our juniors move into the exciting arena of college planning.

that all students obtain the classes they requested.

The good news is that rising juniors have the most options available to them. For many, this provides the first opportunity to take AP classes, but for all there are many elective courses available to meet the requirements for the TJ diploma, as well as enroll in a prerequisite or two for the senior research laboratories. In any case, careful planning, communication, and thoughtfulness is necessary to make the best and most appropriate decisions.

In an effort to guide students and parents with course selections, the Department of Student Services offered Curriculum Night on Tuesday, March 2 at 7:30 pm. Parents of sophomores had the opportunity to hear an overview of TJ Diploma requirements, as well as speak with representatives from all curricular areas in order to address more specific questions.

The updated TJ Course Selection Guide for 2010-2011 goes online the first week of March. In conjunction, on Friday, February 19 the Curriculum Fair was held during 8th period. This fair provided students with the opportunity to visit teachers in various locations throughout the building and learn more about course offerings in their department or division. This was a great opportunity for students to find out information on any electives they are thinking about taking. Official course selection during one-one-one meetings between counselors and sophomores will occur between March 8 and March 19. However, please be aware that because of budgetary constraints, we anticipate limited flexibility with staffing and course selections and therefore limited ability to make schedule changes.

One frequently asked question by sophomores and their parents is: “How many AP's are advisable?” Both counselors and college admissions staff answer this question similarly: A student should only take as many AP courses as he or she can comfortably manage and perform well in. Students are encouraged in their junior year to expand their extracurricular opportunities to include leadership experience and community service. Additionally, colleges are much more impressed by strong performances in one or two AP classes than lower grades in several AP classes. A good rule of thumb is if a student can manage a B or above, they should take the AP course. Remember, a student’s physical & emotional well-being are much more important than taking an exceptionally tough academic load. Most of our students do take 2 – 3 AP courses in the 11th grade, again depending on the course level they are in, as well as their interests and aptitude. TJ counselors are very skilled at helping students make these choices and are happy to meet with families to discuss the possibilities. Remember the key here is finding a good balance of challenging courses, keeping grades up, and participating in meaningful extracurricular activities.

Building the Junior Schedule

While enjoying the flexibility they have to choose from the many quality courses available, Juniors will at the same time need to focus on completing requirements for graduation. All juniors are required to take Hum II (English 11 & AP or non-AP US History) and the next level of math in the math sequence which leaves three remaining periods to fill. (Students are required to complete Computer Science before entering junior year.) Most will take one or two of the recommended or required courses for the senior research labs in which they are interested. There is a very helpful chart on pages 97-98 of the Course Selection Guide detailing the prerequisite and recommended courses for each research lab. A very high percentage of our students also take a fourth year of foreign language in the 11th grade, while others complete the third year of required foreign language. College admissions officers repeatedly stress the value in taking a fourth year of a language. Other attractive options for TJ students are completing the fourth social studies requirement or taking

Greetings sophomores...a.k.a. rising juniors!! Can it really be that time of year already? Indeed it is – time to pick courses for next year! In the next few weeks, all TJ students will be selecting courses for the 2010-2011 school year. The data we collect from course selection plays an instrumental role in determining staffing and materials for next year. It is our mission to get the most accurate numbers early on in order to ensure
other classes because of interest, talent, or commitment, such as band, orchestra, chorus, art, or theatre.

**SAT Subject Tests**

Second semester is the time to begin thinking about the College Board SAT Subject Tests. For students in AP courses, regardless of grade level, it is recommended to take the SAT Subject Test in that area following the AP exam in May. Upon completion of Precalculus, students are encouraged to take the Math Level 2 Subject Test. Although our Chemistry program is very rigorous, data indicates that students do best in the Chemistry SAT Subject Test after taking AP Chemistry.

SAT Subject Tests are one hour long exams. Students can take three Subject Tests in one sitting. Subject Tests are designed to measure specific knowledge in various subject areas such as history, foreign language, mathematics, and science. The more selective colleges usually require the SAT along with two or three SAT Subject Tests. The scores earned are often used in by the colleges in the admissions process and/or for placement purposes. Throughout the junior year, counselors will talk much more about college admissions testing.

**Planning Even Further Ahead!**

Parents and sophomores are invited to attend the College Admissions Night (date TBD) in the Auditorium. Admissions representatives from a variety of colleges and universities will discuss what they are looking for in prospective applicants to their colleges.

**Freshmen Focus**

It may be hard to believe, but we are more than half-way through the 2009-2010 school year. Your freshman will soon begin registering for their sophomore year courses. Counselors will conduct the registration process through their IBETs, so each group may follow a slightly different timetable. However, most, if not all freshmen, will register for next year’s classes between April 6 and April 16. Hopefully, most, if not all, of your questions regarding your student’s sophomore year have been answered by the information provided in the Course Selection Guide. Additionally, students had an opportunity to learn more about courses at the Curriculum Fair held during 8th period on Friday, February 19. The Student Services Staff understands how important it is for you and your student to feel comfortable with the registration and decision-making process, so please do not hesitate to call or email your student’s counselor if you have any questions.

In general, all sophomores take the following courses:

- English 10 (Hum 1)
- World History and Geography 2 (Hum 1)
- Chemistry
- Health and PE 10
- Math
- Foreign Language
- Elective

Additionally, rising sophomores may opt to fulfill one of the additional requirements for the TJ diploma which includes computer science; a fourth social studies credit; an additional math, science, or technology credit; or a fine/practical art credit. **(Please note: AP European and AP Psychology do not fulfill the fourth Social Studies requirement.)**

While it is not recommended for all freshmen, some may opt to take Chemistry in summer school and then AP Biology or AP Chemistry during their sophomore year. It should be noted that Chemistry is an important building block for students' scientific foundation and understanding. Naturally, most students will have a stronger knowledge base by taking the yearlong course. Not every sophomore is ready for the workload that comes with an advanced level college course, like AP Biology or Chemistry. AP courses are truly college courses utilizing college textbooks and teaching methods. The collegiate approach and expectations can provide unexpected challenges and stresses even for our community of exceptional learners. Parents are encouraged to work with their student’s counselor to assess whether their freshman possesses the work ethic, study skills, and time management necessary to be successful in such an advanced course. Please keep in mind that these courses may be taken later on during Junior or Senior year.

**Additional scheduling notes:**

Physics is a junior year course. Computer Science must be completed before the beginning of the student’s junior year.

However, please be aware that because of budgetary constraints, we anticipate limited flexibility with staffing and course selections and therefore limited ability to make schedule changes.

Furthermore, throughout the next few weeks, freshmen may be visiting the College and Career Center where their counselor and Mrs. Kobick, the College and Career Center Specialist, will introduce them to career and college materials, as well as computer search programs. While in the College and Career Center, students are provided with hands-on activities using these wonderful resources. As counselors we encourage students to visit the College and Career Center throughout their high school years, not only to continue their college and career research, but also to research the many summer opportunities available to them.

Happily, with one semester under their belt, the vast majority of freshmen are adjusting well to life at TJ. They are adopting new study strategies for handling the rigor and homework demands of their courses, exploring and participating actively in 8th period activities, and expanding their network of friends. However, the Student Services Staff realizes that freshmen
are still new to high school life, so if you have concerns regarding your student, we encourage you to contact his/her counselor. If you would like to have a conference with a teacher, please call or email your student’s counselor to arrange this meeting. Conferences are held at 8:00 am during the school week, except for Thursday, which is our JLC day.

College and Career Center News

How to Handle the College Waitlist

In the fall of 2006, high school seniors sent more than 6.3 million applications to four-year colleges and universities, according to College Spotlight (December 2008). This number of applications is only expected to continually increase, especially this current school year. Unfortunately, this deluge of applications has caused average admission rates at colleges to decline. Schools are putting more applicants on waiting lists as a means of protecting themselves from falling short of admission goals.

High school seniors are requested to commit to a college by May 1. However, with colleges putting so many applicants on waitlists (and then taking up to two months to determine how many students to pull off of these waitlists) puts many students at a disadvantage. Waitlisted students risk not being admitted to any college or having to rush to enroll at local college that may not be as selective. Here are a few tips for students to cope with being on a waitlist and possibly get off of it:

- **Create a back-up plan.** Only 30% of waitlisted students were admitted by colleges in 2007, according to the National Association for College Admission Counseling. It is a good idea to make sure you are accepted to at least one back-up college to ensure that you will be able to start your education in the fall. This might involve paying a non-refundable deposit to the school, but it is worth it if you don't get pulled off the waitlist by your preferred college(s).
  - **Demonstrate interest.** If you are truly committed to a particular school, let the admissions officers know that you would relish the opportunity to be pulled off of the waitlist and attend their institution.
  - **Keep the college updated of your status.** Be sure to update the college about your grades and achievements, but don't overwhelm the colleges with too much information. Multiple emails, phone calls, visits, and letters that ask about your acceptance status or detail every minor achievement that you have made since the last contact may not serve to you well in your mission to get off the waitlist.
  - **Learn how the college's waitlist works.** Every college handles its waitlist differently. Some rank students in order of possible acceptance; others reassess the entire group when it comes time to fill vacant spots. Some randomly pick students from the waitlist to fill empty spots in the school's marching band or sport team. Knowing how the waitlist works will help you gauge your chances of acceptance and, if necessary, encourage you to move on to other colleges.
  - **Handle the correspondence on your own.** The college wants to talk to you – not other people who contact them on your behalf.

The College and Career Center will have available a list of colleges with extended application deadlines for students who have been waitlisted and need to apply to other colleges. This list will be available for students in March.

**Helpful Hints When Applying for Financial Aid**

Admissions and financial aid professionals are good resources for students and families. The process of applying for admission, scholarships, need-based financial aid, loans, etc. can be complex and confusing. Take advantage of the admission and financial aid staff at the colleges that you are considering. They can help you through the complex web of forms, policies, and procedures. When in doubt, always apply for financial aid. Don't assume that because your neighbor or best friend did not qualify for need-based aid that you won't either. And if your income is above a certain arbitrary level, don't assume that you won't be eligible. Factors other than income are important in need analysis. Each family's situation is unique and will be reviewed as such. Additionally, the information you submit is confidential.

Policies, deadlines, and requirements for admission, scholarships, and financial aid vary from college to college. Be sure to observe them. Furthermore, it is essential that you comply with the deadlines for financial aid and scholarship applications. Colleges with limited resources may not be able to meet the financial needs of students who submit financial aid forms late. Carefully follow instructions for all financial aid and scholarship forms.

It is important that you submit accurate information on your applications for need-based financial aid. The more accurate the information, the less likely it is you will be required to correct these documents later. The correction process is time-consuming and can cause delays in consideration of your financial aid application. Current federal tax returns are your best financial references when completing need-based financial aid applications. Keep copies of everything you submit...
to any school or agency. This includes applications for admission, scholarships, need-based financial aid, and/or loans.

All costs should be considered and compared with the types of aid, not just the total amount awarded. Remember that financial need varies with college costs and that financial aid packages will vary from college to college. When you compare need-based aid packages, be sure you are considering all costs to attend a particular institution and are comparing the types of aid offered in the aid package, not just the total amount of financial aid or scholarships offered.

Understanding Your Financial Aid Award Letter

Once you have been accepted for enrollment at any college, as well as applied for financial aid by completing the FAFSA form, CSS PROFILE form (if required by the college) and any other financial aid forms mandated by the college, you and your family will receive a financial aid award letter. This letter will detail the amount of financial support the college is able to provide you with for the upcoming college year. You might even receive the award letter along with your notice of acceptance, but some colleges make the award letters available online. Check with your colleges to see how each distributes the award letters.

Read your award letter carefully to ensure you understand all of the terms and conditions so you can decide if you want to accept any, or all of the aid offered. Closely read the instructions for the next step(s). You may need to complete additional paperwork, such as a loan application. Determine if grants or scholarships are available for more than one year, and if so, what are the applicable conditions? As you compare financial aid awards, consider the final out-of-pocket cost for you. An award containing loans may have a higher ultimate out-of-pocket cost than an equivalent award that contains mostly grants.

The most common sources of financial aid include: scholarships (which do not have to be repaid), grants (which do not have to be repaid), work study (on-campus or college affiliated employment), and loans (which must be repaid). Do not hesitate to contact the financial aid office to ask if the financial aid package can be reconsidered, especially if another school has offered a better financial aid package.

If you believe that the award and your family savings are not enough to cover all of your expenses, don't panic! There are other options for getting the money you need to attend the college of your choice. Research other sources for private scholarships, such as the College and Career Center scholarship webpage at www.tjhsst.edu/careercenter/supporting/college/scholar.htm.

Check to see if there is a national association affiliated with your major that might offer a scholarship. Consider any potential benefits from your parent's place of employment. Check if your college offers a payment plan that allows tuition expenses to be spread out over the year.

Notify the college(s) immediately of any significant change of family financial circumstances due to loss of job, death of the wage earner, or any other reason. A special family circumstance may require providing additional documentation on the part of the family – tax returns, trust agreements, and/or medical bills. When possible, financial aid packages may be reconfigured to take into account the new circumstances. It advisable to wait until all the award letters have arrived from all the various colleges that have accepted the student before deciding which one to accept. If there are any questions, wait until all answers from the financial aid offices are received before a final decision is reached.

Facebook: An Impact on College Admissions?

High school students should be very careful about what they post on blogs, wikis, podcasts, online video, message boards, and networking sites (such as Facebook). The Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research at the University of Massachusetts surveyed 435 colleges and found that 26% of the schools used search engines to research potential students and 21% used social networks such as Facebook.

College admissions officials are finding surprising and negative information about prospective students. In some instances inappropriate videos, photography, and text, as well as profanity or controversial and/or racist or sexist statements are discovered that contradict the “official” story students present in their college applications and essays.

Many students believe the information that they have posted on these websites is private, but colleges can access many of these websites via a simple Google search or by utilizing other methods. Other students are more aware of the possible negative repercussions of using social media and utilize private settings or screen names in order to reduce the chances of a college discovering potentially embarrassing material. Of course, the best way to avoid these issues is to post only information, photos, video, and text that are appropriate in any setting.

Students should reconsider what type of information they post via social media and be sure that their “private” profile matches their “official” one. Doing this will help them avoid possible surprises and disappointments in the college admissions process and even in future job searches.

There are numerous materials about summer and volunteer programs available in the summer and volunteer files in the College and Career Center. All of the programs from the summer and volunteer databases are accessible
on the College and Career Center webpage under Summer Opportunities and Volunteer Programs at: www.tjhsst.edu/careercenter/supporting/tjsummrpg.htm.

Another useful tool can be found in the two large white binders on the file cabinet of the summer and volunteer files. The notebook titled “TJ Best of Summer 2009” consists of current TJHSST student evaluations of their previous summer experiences. The College and Career Center also posts summer employment on a “Jobs” bulletin board, as well as lists summer job opportunities in a binder. Local employers may contact us to advertise for part-time and full-time summer employment.

A weekly feature of the College and Career Center is the highlighting of a different summer program for the Summer Program of the Week. The programs selected provide unique experiences for TJHSST students. The programs chosen offer exceptional opportunities in the areas of community service, study abroad, science, engineering, and international relations. Checkout the bulletin board in front of the College and Career Center and/or on the website for this week’s featured program(s).

### College Tidbits

**Did you know...?**

- The Northern Virginia Spring College Fair will take place on Wednesday, April 21st at George Mason University’s Patriot Center in Fairfax, VA from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Over 150 colleges and universities will be in attendance. The spring college fair is geared for juniors and sophomores starting the college process. The George Mason University website can provide more information at: http://admissions.gmu.edu/rsvp/attending.asp.

- The College and Career Center is once again displaying the College Jewels exhibit this winter and spring. The program features colleges and universities which are hidden treasures that deserve more national recognition. The intention of the program is to educate the TJ community and expand the horizons of TJ students and parents in their college search. The College Jewels offer a wide array of exceptional academic programs, as well as merit scholarships for outstanding students. The colleges we highlighting this school year are: Worcester Polytechnic Institute - WPI (MA), Lehigh University (PA), and the University of Richmond (VA). Check out the exhibit on the bulletin board outside the College and Career Center which features information on the campus, statistics, sports, academics, FYI, and extracurricular activities. A table inside the College and Career Center illustrates the college memorabilia, maps, view books, fast fact sheets, and a presentation of the area attractions.

- The College and Career Centers of TJHSST, Lake Braddock, Robinson, West Springfield, and South County High Schools will sponsor a Military Night on March 16th. The event will take place at TJHSST at 7:00 pm in the cafeteria. Representatives from all five service academies and ROTC programs will attend and present their programs. In addition, a representative from Congressman Connelly’s office will discuss congressional military appointment to the academies. All interested students and parents are invited to attend the program.

- Are you planning to visit colleges during spring break? If so, you should check out the deal that Amtrak is offering prospective college students and their parents. Amtrak has partnered with Colleges to make visiting campuses affordable. Buy one; get 50% off campus visit discount program enables high school juniors and seniors to purchase tickets and check out their top choice colleges. Reservations are required at least 3 days prior to departure date and a parent must travel on the same itinerary. Some blackout days apply and reservations must be made online so do visit the Amtrak website. Students may apply online at www.campusvisit.com/amtrak in order to complete the form and receive the special discount code. This promotion is not valid on Acela Express trains. Once received, this code should be used when making travel reservations online at www.amtrak.com or by calling 1-800-USA-RAIL.

- The process of applying to British colleges may often be daunting due to the differences in requirements. In order to assist American students with the process, an online simulator has been developed by UCAS and can be accessed by going to: www.britishcouncil.org/usa-education-study-in-the-uk-how-to-apply.htm. Additional information regarding the UCAS application form can be found as www.britishcouncil.org/usa-about-us-faqs-ucas-questions.htm.

- According to College Spotlight, December 2009 issue, the state of college admissions report was recently released by the National Association for College Admissions Counseling. The weak economy is affecting students’ college plans. Almost 60% of high school counselors report an increase in the number of students planning to enroll in public colleges instead of private colleges. Tough economic times are also causing more students to apply for financial aid. Nearly 90% of colleges reported an increase in the number of requests for financial aid. The report also noted that the number of applications submitted by students continued to rise. According to the 2009 State of College Admissions report from the National Association for College Admission Counseling, the most important factors used by
admission officers to evaluate college applicants were: grades in college prep classes, strength of curriculum, overall GPA, scores from standardized admissions tests, strength of the application essay or writing sample, counselor and teacher recommendations and student's level of interest in attending.

Study Skills websites that may be useful:
- http://www.d.umn.edu/kmc/stud/loon/acad/strat/
- http://www.how-to-study.com/
- http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html

STANDARDS OF LEARNING (SOL) SPRING TESTING SCHEDULE

The Standards of Learning (SOL) tests will be given to students in grades 9-12 from May 17 - May 21. A formalized schedule has yet to be approved. Please ask your student to check the TJ Intranet in early May for the official testing schedule. These end-of-course tests are not timed and are administered in the following subjects:

- Biology: Grade 9
- Geometry: Grade 9
- Algebra 2: Grades 9 & 10
- World History: Grade 10
- Chemistry: Grade 10
- English 11: Grade 11
- Geosystems (Earth Science): Grade 12

These SOL tests are required for graduation. Please make note of which tests your student will be required to take and do everything you can to ensure that he/she is present on the day of testing. In the event that your student has an unavoidable conflict please contact his/her counselor ASAP so that we can develop a make-up schedule. It is our hope that any appointments currently scheduled at this time will be moved in an effort to accommodate this state required testing. With your help, we will successfully complete over 3,000 tests in seven days.

In addition to the English 11 Reading and Literature test in May, juniors will also take the first part of this two-part SOL by completing the Writing SOL in March. The Multiple Choice section will be given on Monday, March 1 and Tuesday, March 2 in English class. The Direct Writing or Essay section will be given to every junior on Wednesday, March 3 at 8:30 am. These SOL tests are also not timed and are required for graduation.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) TESTING

Once again, Fairfax County Public Schools will be paying the registration fees for all students currently enrolled in AP courses. Students who wish to take an AP exam for a class in which they are not currently enrolled may do so using the following guidelines:

- Students must bring a check for $90 made out to TJHSST to Adam Wong, our testing coordinator, in office A-8 (across from the Principal’s conference room) before February 26. Please make sure the student’s name and ID number are on the check.
- No late registrations can be accepted after February 26.

Some additional guidelines regarding AP registration should also be noted:

- Students with an IEP or 504 Plan who regularly use testing accommodations during the school year must see Mary Stetson, our special education resource specialist, in order to apply for the same testing accommodations for AP exams. A separate application to the College Board is required.
- If a student is scheduled to take two tests during the same time period he/she must inform Adam Wong, our testing coordinator, as soon as possible, in order to enable him to schedule an alternate testing time with the College Board for one of the exams. The notification must be made no later than February 26. After February 26 all AP registrations must be complete.
- Students who know in advance that they will be requesting an alternate date for an exam due to circumstances beyond their control will be charged an additional $40 per exam. Only students who are affected by extreme hardship may test late. A written request detailing the hardship must be given to Adam Wong who will then seek approval from the College Board AP Program. He will share the decision with the student directly.
- If a student wishes to cancel their registration for an AP exam, he/she must submit a written request to Adam Wong as soon as possible. The refund check will be mailed in late June for the amount of $77 per exam.

Pre-registration will be done in early April in preparation for the exam administration in May.

Information regarding the AP Test Administration can also be found on the College Board website at www.collegeboard.com. However, if you have specific questions, please feel free to contact Adam Wong at adam.wong@fcps.edu or 703-750-8372.

*** The AP Exam Schedule for 2010 will appear at the end of this newsletter. Please mark your calendars now!***

CALENDAR

Mar. 8-19 Academic Advising: Counselors meet with Sophomores
Mar. 1-3 SOL Testing: English 11
Mar. 2 Mentorship Fair
Mar. 16 Parent Program: Military Night at TJHSST Cafeteria
7:00 pm
Mar. 12 Third quarter interims sent home
Mar. 13 SAT Test only
Mar. 22-Apr. 9 Academic Advising: Counselors meet with Juniors
Apr. 6- Apr. 19 Academic Advising: Counselors meet with Freshman
Apr. 9 Third Quarter Ends
Mar. 27-Apr. 4 Spring break
Apr. 16 Third quarter report cards sent home
Apr. 5 School resumes after break
Apr. 24 Summer Opportunities (8thpd, A/B Block)
May 1 SAT and SAT Subject Tests
May 3-14 AP Exams
May 1 Fourth Quarter interims sent home
May 18-21 SOL Testing
May 21 Student Advisory Board meeting, 7:30 pm in the library
May 31 Student Holiday

June 2 TjStar & J-Day
June 4 Senior Parent Program: Transitioning to College at 7:30 pm, Auditorium
June 4 Senior Prom at Westwood Country Club, Vienna, VA
June 5 SAT and SAT Subject Tests
June 11-15 Senior Exam schedule
June 11 Graduation Rehearsal and Senior Picnic
June 19 Graduation at GMU Patriot Center, 8 pm
June 15 Underclass Exams, Dismissal at 12:50 pm
June 16 Underclass Exams, Dismissal at 12:50 pm
June 17 Underclass Exams Dismissal at 12:50 pm
June 22 Last Day of School, Dismissal at 10:50 am
June 30 Last Day for Counselors

TJHSST CEEB CODE 470 054

2010 ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAM SCHEDULE

Monday, May 3
8:00 a.m. US Government
12 noon French Language
Tuesday, May 4
8:00 a.m. Comp Sci/ Span. Lang.
12 noon Statistics
Wednesday, May 5
8:00 a.m. Calc AB/ Calc BC
12 noon Chinese Lang.
Thursday, May 6
8:00 a.m. Eng. Lit / Germ. Lang.
12 noon Japanese Lang.
Friday, May 7
8:00 a.m. U.S. History
12 noon European History

Monday, May 10
8:00 a.m. Biology
12 noon Physics
Tuesday, May 11
8:00 a.m. Chemistry / Enviro Sci
12:00 noon Psychology
Wednesday, May 12
8:00 a.m. English Lang. Comp
Thursday, May 13
8:00 Macroeconomics
12 noon Microeconomics
Friday, May 14
8:00 a.m. Spanish Literature
12 noon Latin; Virgil