

Dear Class of 2025 Students and Families,

Welcome to Junior Year! The Counseling office is reaching out to inform students and families about upcoming programming and events pertaining to Juniors. Please read through this email thoroughly.

ASVAB TESTING:

Sun Valley will be administering the ASVAB exam on September 28, 2023 for Juniors interested in pursuing a career in the military. [Please sign up using the google form link here](#) if you are interested in taking this exam. Sign-ups will be open until September 25th.

PSAT TESTING:

Sun Valley will be holding PSAT's on October 11th starting at 7:30 am for students in grades 9-11. Students will be registered by Sun Valley for this exam. The PSAT's are now in a digital format and students will test on their school issued Chromebook for this exam. Students will need to be sure to fully charge their Chromebook the night before testing. Testing is two hours and fifteen minutes in length and will be given a ten minute break about halfway through the test. Students and parents can [watch this video](#) to see what students can expect from the NEW digital PSAT/NMSQT.

STANDARDIZED TESTING:

Students that are interested in applying to a four year college are highly encouraged to take the SAT or ACT exam during their Junior Year. These are the most common standardized tests used by colleges for admission and colleges have no preference for one test over the other. The ACT offers a science section, which is unique to the ACT. One of the other major differences is the scoring sections, the SAT composite score is half math; however, math is only one of the four sections that make up an ACT composite score. ****Starting in March of 2024 the SAT will be offered in a new digital adaptive format.**

What are the changes to the SAT exam?

The December 2023 SAT will be the last paper-and-pencil test offered by the College Board. Starting in March of 2024, the SAT will be offered in a digital adaptive format. All tests can be taken on a laptop or tablet. The test will be 46 minutes shorter and will be stage adaptive (the difficulty of second Math and second Reading and Writing sections will be based upon the performance on section one). Other changes include shorter reading passages, the ability to use a calculator throughout the math sections, and scores with the new test will be available the next day instead of waiting two-to-three weeks for results. A one page review of the changes is attached.

How might this impact my decisions about testing?

While those familiar with testing see this as a drastic change, many students have little point of reference to the norm other than perhaps an older sibling. Therefore, for the majority of students, there will be little change. For these students, the advice remains the same, explore the SAT and ACT, and decide which to spend time preparing for through practice tests, free tools, and perhaps tutoring.

However, there will be a group of students and families that decide earlier on a path for greater clarity and peace of mind. Below are some choices students may make:

- Test Early - We would only recommend this for students with advanced math standing (taking AP Calc, Honors Calculus, or Honors PreCalc in the junior year). There are three testing opportunities between now and the end of the present paper-and-pencil test (October, November, and December).
- Focus preparation on the ACT - Testing uncertainty with the new SAT may lead some to gravitate to the ACT, which will continue to only be offered as a paper/pencil exam.
- Take all the tests - This is not recommended; however, some students will see the new test as another opportunity to find what best suits them. We believe a student can over-test, wasting time and resources that could be invested wiser and healthier. Also, it is unknown if schools will super score the SAT paper test with the SAT digital test.
- Apply Test-Optional – [Fairtest.org](https://www.fairtest.org) is a website that complies a list of all colleges that are test optional should a student decide not to take a standardized test or to apply without scores.

Where can I find out more information?

Compass also has a detailed review of the new test, “[The New Digital SAT](https://www.compass-test.com/the-new-digital-sat/),” along with other excellent resources on their site. [Khan Academy](https://www.khanacademy.org/) is partnered with the College Board to provide free resources and test prep for all SAT products.

While the role of testing in college admissions has significantly changed over the past four years, it still can play some role in admission decisions at most colleges and universities. Our goal is to keep you educated and assist students and families in making the best decisions for each student.

FAFSA NIGHT 2023:

The FAFSA Simplification Act reflects changes in how federal student aid will be awarded to students beginning in the 2024-25 application year and beyond. Please join us for our webinar with Fran McKeown from the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) on November 15, 2023 at 6:30 pm to learn more about the upcoming changes when applying for financial aid. A webinar link will be emailed to students and families closer to the event.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR CLASSROOM VISITS:

The School Counselors will be facilitating classroom lessons beginning tomorrow with Juniors during English classes to review Naviance for post-secondary planning by showing students how to research college and career information in Naviance. In addition, Juniors will learn how to

sign up for rep visits with colleges, trade schools, and military recruiters that will be visiting Sun Valley this fall. For parents and guardians, you will be receiving an email from Naviance this Thursday with your parent account log in information so you can also access Naviance to help support your child in the post-secondary planning process. Please be sure to check your spam and/or junk folder as sometimes the email may be filtered with your email provider.

COLLEGE AND CAREER FAIRS:

Please save the date as Sun Valley High School will be hosting a college and career fair on March 20, 2024. We plan to have two and four colleges, trade schools, local unions, and local employers in attendance. There are also several regional college fairs scheduled this fall. The programs listed below are open to all students and are wonderful opportunities to talk to admission representatives from colleges and universities from around the country and in the case of the NACAC fair, even around the globe.

- The Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling's (PACAC) Delaware County College Fair is at PSU Brandywine on Thursday, September 28 from 6:30 – 8 pm. Students can register and see a list of participating colleges [here](#).
- The National Association for College Admission Counseling's Philadelphia National College Fair is at the Pennsylvania Convention Center on Saturday, October 14 from 11 am to 3 pm. Students can register for the fair and see a list of colleges that will be in attendance [here](#). This will be the largest college fair in the region.

Wanting to tour a post-secondary institution? Juniors who wish to take a tour of any post-secondary institution with their parent on a school day should stop down in the Counseling Office to pick up a college visit form. Students are limited to two visits per year.

Please stop by and meet your child's school counselor at Back to School Night this Thursday, September 21st during your child's scheduled lunch period. We will have a table with information and handouts located outside the cafeteria. We look forward to seeing you then!

Sincerely,

The Sun Valley Counselors

Attachments:

[The New Digital SAT.pdf](#)