

2019-2020



PLANNING
GUIDE FOR
SENIORS

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Vernon-Verona-Sherrill High School

Guidance Department
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Verona, NY 13478
Phone: (315) 829-2520
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High School CEEB Code: 335 725

Guidance Website:
<http://vsschools.schoolwires.net/Domain/48>

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Senior Class Advisor ~Mr. Thomas rthomas@vsschools.org or #829-7493

Remember to check out the Career Center website for scholarships and college visits.

Date	Event
Sept 26	College & Financial Aid Night- LGI
October	All seniors should begin College Apps
Oct 01	1 st day to apply for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA)
Oct 03	Deadline to Register for Nov SAT
Oct 10	Oneida High School College Fair
Oct 15	FAFSA Night in Media Center 6:30 pm
October	Senior Planning meetings with your counselor
Oct 21-22	Cap and Gown orders during lunches
Nov 2	SAT Exam
Nov 8	Deadline to register for Dec SAT and ACT
Dec 7	SAT Exam
Dec 14	ACT Exam
Dec 13	College Applications due to your counselor
Dec 18	Post grad visit
Jan 22-25	Regents Exams www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/schedules/schedule-hs.html
Mar 16-17	National College Fair, OCC, SRC Arena
Apr 1	Senior Scholarship Meeting for students
Apr 24	Senior Scholarship packets due by 2:30 NO EXCEPTIONS
May 06-14	AP Exams https://professionals.collegeboard.org/testing/ap/about/dates
May 29	Honor Grad Dinner 5:30 pm (Café)
May 29	Senior Award 6:30 pm (Aud.)
June 4-11	Local Exams given- contact teacher for more information
June 16	Senior Walk and Fun day
June 18-25	Regents Exams www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/schedules/schedule-hs.html

COLLEGE FAIRS

PLACE	DATE	TIME
SUNY College Fair @ Onondaga Community College	9/17/19	6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
RFA High School	10/9/19	6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
Oneida High School	10/10/19	10:30 am to 12:30 pm
Syracuse National College Fair, OCC (SRC Arena)	3/16/20 3/17/20	5:00 pm to 7:30pm 9:00 pm to 11:30 pm

College & Financial Aid Night - Sept. 26th @ 6:00 pm in the Auditorium

*Need help filing the FAFSA? VVS will be hosting a FAFSA night on Oct 15th at 6:30pm in the Media Center. We will have a representative from:

SUNY Morrisville Financial Aid Office

To complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you will need:

- Your Social Security Number
- Your Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Your most recent federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned. (**Note:** You may be able to transfer your federal tax return information into your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.)
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
- An FSA ID to sign electronically.

2019-2020 ACT/ SAT TEST DATES

ACT National Test Dates		SAT National Test Dates	
Test Dates	Registration Deadline	Test Dates	Registration Deadline
10/26/19	9/27/19	11/2/2019	10/3/2019
12/14/19	11/8/2019	12/7/2019	11/8/2019
2/8/20	1/10/20	3/14/20	2/14/2020
6/13/20	5/8/20	5/2/20	4/3/2020
7/18/20	6/19/20	6/6/20	5/8/2020

How to register for the tests

- Students should register online **SAT** - www.collegeboard.com
ACT- www.actstudent.org
- You must upload a picture when you register
- You can choose to submit your scores directly to the colleges of your choice when you register
- If you want us to include your scores on your transcript, you must submit our school code

VVS School CEEB Code is 335 725

ACT (with no writing) Fee = \$52.00

SAT Fee = \$49.50

ACT (plus writing) Fee = \$68.00

SAT (Plus writing) Fee=\$64.50

ACT Late Fee= +\$30.00

SAT Late Fee = + \$30.00

SAT Subject= \$26.00 (Each)

Responsibilities ... Whose Job Is It, Anyway?

STUDENT

We expect that the student will:

- Do the best academic work of which you are capable.
- Your senior year matters-continue with a challenging course load through your entire senior year.
- Engage in thoughtful, honest reflection and analysis of your aspirations, hopes, goals, strengths and weaknesses and apply this knowledge of yourself to your advantage in the application process.
- Use Naviance as a tool to engage in post-secondary planning.
- Do the research to find and apply to colleges that seem to be a "good fit" for YOU.
- Be aware of and meet the deadlines for admissions, scholarships and college entrance assessments.
- Communicate with your counselor on your progress.
- Seek help, if you need it, for completing applications, writing essays (senior English classes complete essays in class) and securing recommendations. The Guidance Office and the College and Career Center are designed to fulfill this need.
- Senior planning meeting with your counselor

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

We expect that a parent will:

- Encourage your child to challenge themselves with rigorous classes. Colleges are looking for students who make the most of senior year. An "easy senior year" is a red flag.
- Encourage your child to explore a variety of options when selecting colleges or universities.
- Participate in college research with your child, especially the campus visit and interview process required by some of the admissions offices.
- Encourage your child to ask questions of financial aid and admissions personnel themselves.
- Allow your child to complete the applications with your support. **DO NOT DO IT FOR THEM!**
- Keep the counseling staff informed of any information that affects post-secondary plans (illness, economic changes, grief issues).
- Attend parent information sessions

SCHOOL COUNSELOR and CAREER CENTER COORDINATOR

The primary responsibility of your child's counselor in the college planning process is to help students (and parents) navigate through the maze of the application process and matriculate into post-secondary study. The counselors are available to:

- Guide students through the Naviance system to determine the links between career interests, college choices and high school courses.
- Guide students through the application process including appropriate standardized tests, visits by college representatives and important deadlines for both admissions and scholarships.
- Offer opportunities for assistance with the online application, essay revision, resume critique, interview preparation, etc.
- Write letters of recommendation as requested for college applications and scholarships.
- Provide information on college affordability and the financial aid process.

Types of Institutions

There are many different types of institutions represented among the more than 4,000 colleges and universities in the United States. Here are the basics on types of colleges:

Public colleges - are funded by local and state governments and usually offer lower tuition rates than private colleges, especially for students who are residents of the state where a college is located.

Private colleges - rely mainly on tuition, fees and private sources of funding. Private donations can sometimes provide generous financial aid packages for students. The final cost of private schools may be very comparable to public schools after

Four-Year colleges - offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These include universities and liberal arts colleges.

Two-Year colleges - offer programs that last up to two years that lead to a certificate or an associate degree. These include community colleges, vocational-technical colleges and career colleges. Community colleges offer two-year associate degrees that prepare you to transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor's degree. They also offer other associate degrees and certificates that focus on preparing you for a certain career. Community colleges are often an affordable option with relatively low tuition.

Liberal Arts colleges - offer a broad base of courses in the liberal arts, which includes areas such as literature, history, languages, mathematics and life sciences. Most are private and offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

Universities - often are larger and offer more majors and degree options (bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees) than colleges. Most universities contain several smaller colleges, such as colleges of liberal arts, engineering or health sciences. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

Vocational-Technical and Career Colleges - offer specialized training in a particular industry or career. Possible programs of study include the culinary arts, firefighting, dental hygiene and medical-records technology. These colleges usually offer certificates or associate degrees.

Questions to Consider about Colleges

Review the following questions and choose those factors that are most important to you and will help refine your college list.

Academics

- Does this college have the major/programs I am interested in?
- What is the reputation of the department or major I am interested in?
- What is the student/faculty ratio for undergraduate courses?
- How many courses do most undergraduate students take each term?
- Who teaches introductory courses - faculty members or teaching assistants?
- What is the average class size of freshmen introductory courses?
- Is there an honors program?
- Are there exchange programs with other colleges?
- What opportunities are there to study abroad?
- Are internships available in my field?
- What percentage of students are accepted into the graduate program of their choice?

Admissions

- What standardized tests are required for admission to this school (SAT I, SAT SUBJECT TEST, ACT)?
- When is the admissions deadline?
- What percentage of applicants were accepted last year?
- What is the average rank/grade point of currently enrolled freshmen?
- What were the average SAT, ACT, or TOEFL test scores for last year's freshman class?
- How selective are the admission standards at this institution?
- What is the recommended high school academic preparation program for this school?
- Does this school require letters of recommendation?
- Does this school require a personal essay?
- Does this school offer Early Decision/Action admissions?
- When and how are students notified of admission decisions?

Student Body

- What is the size of the freshman class?
- What is the total enrollment for this school?
- How diverse is the student body?

Student Services and Programs

- Will I be assigned an academic counselor or a faculty advisor to help me choose my courses?
- Is there a career counseling center for help with resume writing, interviewing and job placement?
- Is there a personal counseling center available?
- Will I have access to health care on campus?
- What is the job placement rate for students who earn a degree?

Student Life

- What types of activities are offered for students outside of the classroom?
- Are intramural sports available?
- What percentage of students live on campus, and what percentage commute?
Do most students stay on campus for the weekend?
- How prevalent are fraternities and sororities?
- What is the campus crime rate?
- Can I have a car on campus?
- How do students get to and around campus? (public transportation, bikes, parking availability)
- What is the campus honor code?

Housing and Dining Facilities

- Are the dorms co-ed or single sex?
- Are apartments available for off-campus housing?
- Will dorms be available after my freshman year?
- How close are the dorms to the classrooms and dining facilities?
- Are there any "special" dorms available (languages, honors, international, major specific, etc.)?
- Are most freshmen dorm rooms single, doubles, triples or quads?
- How are roommates assigned?
- Are there a variety of food plans available?

Campus Facilities

- What resources and services are provided by the library?
- What academic support does the college offer (tutoring, disability support, writing center)?
- What recreation and sport facilities (gyms, tracks, pools, etc.) are available?
- How accessible are the computer labs?

Cost and Financial Aid

- What is the total cost to attend this college/university (tuition, room and board, books and supplies, travel expenses and living expenses)?
- Are there any special fees for my particular program or major (lab fees, material cost, etc.)?
- Does this school offer scholarships?
- Are there opportunities to find on-campus jobs?
- Does this school offer tuition payment options?
- Are there work study opportunities?

What Do Colleges Look For in an Applicant?

Each year colleges build a new freshmen class. This means they are looking for students with good credentials and will contribute to making the college a more interesting and diverse place. What do you bring to the table?

Proven Academic Achievement

The most important factor in the college admissions decisions is your academic transcript. Colleges are looking for strong grades in an academically challenging program. Specifically, they will be looking at the types of courses you have taken, the number of courses, the level of courses and the grades you earned. Did you take the most challenging academic program that you are capable of handling? How did you perform in the courses you have taken? Did you maintain high performance in your senior year?

Standardized Test Scores

The amount of weight placed on standardized test scores in the admissions process varies from college to college. Standardized scores provide colleges with a measure to compare students from different schools. As a general rule, the more selective the college the more important test scores are due to the rigorous and academically challenging programs offered at selective institutions. It's important to remember that standardized test scores are only one of many factors that college admissions officers consider when evaluating an application. We recommend taking both the SAT and ACT tests. Colleges usually choose the score that works in your favor.

Extracurricular Involvement/Work Experience

Here the emphasis is on quality rather than quantity. College admissions officers are not interested in a list of ten activities with little time commitment and involvement. Admissions officers are looking for those students who have invested their time, energy and commitment to pursuing one or two activities in-depth. In short, admissions officers are looking for those individuals who will make a genuine commitment/contribution to their college community.

Application

The content of the application will reflect a great deal about you. It is very important that you invest time and thought into each application, as some schools have the application double as a scholarship application.

Essays

This is the part of the application that students often rush to complete. The essay is a critical factor in the admissions decision, and it is entirely under your control. Take the time to think about and write an essay that demonstrates your writing ability and makes your application "come alive." The essay is your golden opportunity to let them know more about you, your values and your goals. Students in senior English classes will write an essay in your class, use this time wisely. Counselors are also available to give feedback on content.

Interview

Some colleges require or recommend an interview while others do not. For some schools, the interview is provided solely to inform you about the college and provide you with an opportunity to ask questions. For other schools, the interview provides admissions officers with additional information about you and your future goals. Depending on the school, this information may or may not be used during the application decision-making process.

School Recommendations

The school recommendation is written by the student's counselor. As your primary advocate, the counselor attempts to present an assessment that is fair and accurate and that emphasizes personal qualities. The purpose of this comprehensive letter is to provide information that is not included elsewhere in the application. All recommendations remain confidential to ensure integrity.

Teacher Recommendations

Each college has its own specific requirements for teacher recommendations, but when requested, two are usually required. Some colleges are very specific and ask for recommendations from teachers in certain disciplines. The teachers you choose to write your recommendations should be from your junior and/or senior year courses and should be able to speak to your abilities and accomplishments in the academic setting.

Outside Recommendations

These recommendations can sometimes be helpful if they speak to an aspect of your life not otherwise related in the application. Feel free to use the school forms for outside recommendations.

Automatic/Guaranteed Admission

Even if your academic record guarantees your admission to your chosen university, it is imperative that you complete all steps in the application process. The application and essay may be used for scholarship consideration, honors college selection, and determining your major.

NAVIANCE FAMILY CONNECTION

Naviance Family Connection is a comprehensive website that you can use as a tool to help you in making decisions about colleges, scholarships and careers.

Naviance Family Connection will allow students to:

Get Involved in the Planning and Advising Process - complete on-line surveys, and manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges and careers;

Research Careers - Naviance Family Connection offers the "Career Interest Profiler" as an on-line career interest assessment for students based on Holland's Interest codes. Students may also link directly to the college database to find colleges that offer an educational path to each career;

Take a Personality Profile - "Do What You Are" The feature begins with a personality inventory and concludes with a report describing the student's personality type, potential careers, and related majors. The results link students directly to detailed career profiles, which include educational requirements, salary data, and in some cases even multimedia presentations.

Research Colleges - College Supermatch is a great tool on Naviance for finding colleges that match your interest and career goals.

College Visits - Find out which colleges are visiting our school and sign up to attend those sessions.

Communicate with your Counselor - You can use the site to send your counselor an e-mail message. If you have further questions about Naviance

Family Connection, please contact your counselor.

Other Helpful Search Tools:

College Board www.collegeboard.org Big Future college search

Common Application - you can do a college search for those schools that accept the Common App.

APPLYING TO COLLEGE:

Applications: Limit number of applications (3-5). Apply to at least one “stretch” and one “safety” school.

Deadlines: We ask you to complete your college applications by December 13.

Early Decision – is a binding contract with a college that you will attend that school if you are accepted.

Early Action – you apply to a school by an earlier date and they will notify you at an earlier date of their decision – not a binding contract.

Letters of Recommendation:

Requests must be made to your counselor at least two weeks before the due date of your application. (The earlier the better!) Applications with a January 1 due date need to be given to your counselor by the first week of December.

Who to ask: teachers, counselors, clergy, employers and coaches.

Have your personal resume of activities ready to give to the person.

You will need to meet with your recommender to ask for a letter and let them know you will be inviting them to submit it online. **At that time make sure you have their correct email address.**

Talk with your teachers before inviting them to submit a letter online.

Talk to your teachers now. Get an idea of who you would ask and give them plenty of time to write your recommendation.

Most 4 year colleges ask for 2 recommendations from teachers and usually one from your counselor.

Ask the teachers to keep copies of your recommendations and to save them on the computer, because most scholarships ask for recommendations. (especially when you apply online)

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

The fastest and easiest way to apply to college is online through a shared application website such as the Common Application.

~ WE RECOMMEND YOU USE THE COMMON APPLICATION IF POSSIBLE ~

Common Application: www.commonapp.org

The Common Application allows you to complete one application online and submit it to several schools of your choice. Over 500 colleges and universities accept the Common Application. Each college will have an application fee.

The SUNY Application: www.suny.edu/attend/apply-to-suny/how-to-apply/

The SUNY application allows you to complete one application online and submit it to several SUNY schools.

There is an application fee of \$ 50.00 **per** SUNY College that you apply to.

Specific college application

Found on each college website or arriving by mail either as a promotional tool for the college or requested/downloaded by you.

Some schools offer free applications if you use their online applications, for example MVCC and Utica College.

Look on the Admissions section of the college you're interested in. There you will find specific directions on how to apply to their college.

If the college you are interested in has its own application and PREFERS to accept only their document you will not see options on the admissions section of their website.

Teacher and Counselor Recommendations Online

You can also invite teachers and counselors to submit letters of recommendations and high school transcripts online. You will need the email address of each recommender. The counselor's emails are:

Adrienne Murphy amurphy@vsschools.org

Karen Holton kholtan@vsschools.org

Kristofer Sullivan ksullivan@vsschools.org

All faculty emails are the first letter of the first name, followed by the last name @vsschools.org.

FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

All students will need to complete the FAFSA to receive any aid or federal loans. If you do not apply, you will not receive aid!

Financial Aid:

FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid: this is the foundation for many kinds of aid.

Website to process FAFSA www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov.

FAFSA forms can be submitted **October 1st**—submit as soon as possible after that date.

FAFSA website has a link to the **TAP** application for New York students.

To complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you will need:

- Your Social Security Number
- Your Alien Registration Number (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Your most recent federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned. (**Note:** You may be able to transfer your federal tax return information into your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.)
- Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
- An FSA ID to sign electronically.

FINANCIAL AID NIGHT – 9/26 @ 6 PM

FAFSA NIGHT – 10/15 @ 6:30PM in MEDIA CENTER

CSS PROFILE – Application for financial aid required by some private colleges: can be submitted as early as possible.

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay../how-to-complete-the-css-financial-aid-profile>

Some colleges require their own financial aid applications; check each college you apply to.

There are basically three types of federal financial aid:

1. Grants: monies that are not paid back and work much like scholarships.
2. Work Study Program: jobs for students that allow them to help meet educational expenses. Work Study funds are not calculated against them when applying for future aid.
3. Loans: monies that are paid back with interest

TIP: The Financial Aid Office at the specific university you plan to attend is a great resource for your financial aid questions.

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

September

- Have a frank and open discussion with your parents about college plans.
- Meet with your counselor to discuss tentative college plans.
- Make a list of schools you are applying to. Be sure to include a stretch school and a safety school.
- Meet with College Admissions Representatives who are visiting your school.
- Make a list of admission tests needed (SAT, SAT Subject Test, ACT), registration deadlines, test dates and fees, college application deadlines, financial aid applications, and deadlines.
- Remember, you should take standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT at least six weeks before so scores may be submitted to colleges.
- Register for the ACT and SAT online.
- Ask college admissions representatives if their college requires SAT II Subject Tests.
- College Night – Sept 26th in the LGI

October

- Preview the FAFSA website with your parents
- FAFSA opens on Oct. 1st
- FAFSA night, Oct. 15th
- Visit your top school choices. Interview students, faculty and staff, if possible.
- Attend special programs such as Open House, college fairs, and financial aid nights.
- Find out which financial aid applications your college choices require and when the forms are due. (Everyone will do the FAFSA, but your school may require the CSS profile in addition to the FAFSA)
- Begin asking teachers, school counselors, and employers for letters of recommendation for your admissions and/or scholarship applications. Give them a copy of your resume or activity sheet.
- Register to take/retake SAT/ACT.
- Start your college essay. Look at Common App for essay questions choices.
- If you plan to apply for Early Decision, read applications closely. Early Decision deadlines are usually Nov 1st—Nov 15th
- Check out the Career Center website for scholarships that are available

November

- Attempt to process your FAFSA no later than November 1st.
- Read college material carefully to determine what information is required and when the applications are due.
- Work on application essays.
- Seek help from teachers and school counselors.
- Make note if your college requires specific forms.
- Prepare your college applications.
- Ask your counselor if you qualify for application fee waivers.
- Check with the colleges to find out when materials are due.
- Check out the Career Center website for scholarships that are available.

December

- Complete and submit college applications.
- Check out the Career Center website for scholarships that are available

January

- Get your income tax returns prepared early. Schools may request them to prove eligibility for financial aid.
- Respond to the Express TAP Application sent to you by HESC.
- Look for your Student Aid Report (SAR)
- Look it over carefully for errors or updates. If corrections need to be made, contact the Financial Aid Office to determine how to make them.
- Respond in a timely manner to any requests for information. If you do not receive your Student Aid Report within four weeks of submitting your FAFSA, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (319) 337-5665
- Respond to any TAP information or change requests.
- Check out the Career Center website for scholarships that are available

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

February

- Check to see if your mid-year transcripts have been sent to the schools to which you have applied.
- Rank your finalized list of colleges.
- Check out the Career Center website for scholarships that are available

March

- Receipt of an Award Notification varies by institution. Contact each school to make certain that your application is complete. Find out what else you need to do to establish and maintain your eligibility for financial aid.
- Respond in a timely manner to any requests for information. If you do not receive your Student Aid Report within four weeks of submitting your FAFSA, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (319) 337-5665.
- Look for the senior scholarship packet at the end of March or first week in April.
- Check out the Career Center website for scholarships that are available

April

- Watch the mail/online accounts for college acceptance notification.
- Compare the financial aid awards you receive.
- Make your final decision and send in the deposit by the deadline.
- Check with your college of choice about the details of returning financial aid award letters.
- Complete the Senior Scholarship packet and return to Guidance by the deadline of April 24. No exceptions will be made for late application.
- Notify the other schools that you will not be attending.
- Watch for important deadlines at your college of choice (housing, financial aid, etc.)
- Notify VVS guidance office of which college you plan to attend and any scholarships you have been awarded.
- Check out the Career Center website for scholarships that are available

May

- Notify the Financial Aid Office of any scholarships you may have been awarded. This information is important for finalizing your award package.
- Check out the Career Center website for scholarships that are available

Pay attention to scholarships available in the Career Center (Guidance Office). Scholarship opportunities will be posted on the Career Center website, Peachjar and read over the morning announcements throughout the school year.