



FLHS

FEBRUARY 2019

# Counselor's Corner

The School Counseling Department at Fort Lee High School is a driving force in the development of college and career readiness and plays a crucial role in the social-emotional wellness of the students. The purpose of the Counselor's Corner Newsletter is to update all parents and students on the activities and events that have taken place since September, as well as to inform the school community as to what exciting events will transpire during the second half of the school year.



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# Counseling Department Activities

## September to February

**The Counseling Department has hosted multiple events during the first half of the school year to assist students with college and career preparation as well as to enhance student social and emotional well-being.**

- Beginning in September, students participated in periodic online surveys that focused on the students' social and emotional needs during the pandemic. Students were offered the option to request counseling from their school counselor and/or the high school student assistance counselor. School counselors across the district have also been providing counseling before and after school in order to reach as many students as possible.
- On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, all students attended Orientation. During the orientation, students had the opportunity to meet administrators, counselors and teachers. Students were given an overview of the policies and procedures of the high school. On September 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> ninth grade students had the opportunity to do a walk-through of their class schedule in order to familiarize themselves with the building.
- On September 15<sup>th</sup>, school counselors held a Senior Planning Night for all seniors and their parents. Counselors and administrators shared information about what to expect during the college application process, the Common Application and the use of Naviance. A video recording of this presentation was emailed to families and posted on the School Counseling website.
- On September 17<sup>th</sup>, school counselors held Financial Aid Night. A representative from College Funding Services walked all families through the FAFSA & CSS process. The following topics were discussed: how to maximize financial eligibility, how to qualify, how to present assets, tips and timelines for FAFSA and a Q&A session. A video recording of this presentation was emailed to families and posted on the School Counseling website.
- On September 18<sup>th</sup>, the department distributed information on virtual college fairs. They were hosted by the National Association of College Admission Counseling: [www.virtualcollegefairs.org](http://www.virtualcollegefairs.org); College Fairs Online: [www.collegefairsonline.com/calendar](http://www.collegefairsonline.com/calendar); the NJ Association of Counseling: [www.njacac.org/virtualfair](http://www.njacac.org/virtualfair). These online college fairs are still taking place. Check the websites for participating colleges and dates.
- On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the ninth grade parent breakfast was held. Mrs. Serulle-Green explained how courses, grades, and credits all become part of a student's transcript and are used to determine a student's final GPA in senior year. She also reviewed Fort Lee High School's 120 credit graduation requirements. In addition, parents navigated the Fort Lee website, [www.flboe.com](http://www.flboe.com), and were shown how to locate announcements, calendars, and teacher pages. Parents were also given a tutorial on how to log into the Genesis Parent Portal, which allows parents to monitor student attendance, grades, and assignments. Students were highly encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and to begin acquiring community service hours. A video recording of this presentation was emailed to families and posted on the School Counseling website.
- In October, Fort Lee High School in conjunction with the Fort Lee Municipal Alliance Committee highlighted the town-wide Stigma Free initiative by offering virtual Stigma Free related activities to students in all grade levels. The goal of the Fort Lee Stigma Free initiative is to generate an open and non-judgmental discussion regarding mental illness as well as to create a culture within our community in which individuals feel supported by those around them and are empowered to seek treatment. The activities occurred during Week of Respect, School Violence Prevention Week, and Red Ribbon Week.
- Beginning in October, parents participated in two webinars hosted by Pure Edge. These webinars aimed at keeping caregivers informed about a wide variety of topics related to the social and emotional health of students. The first seminar was hosted on October 21<sup>st</sup>. It discussed the importance of self-care as well as sought to help caregivers gain a deeper understanding of stress. The second seminar was on October 28<sup>th</sup> and covered building resilience in families and the six critical healing factors.

- In October, juniors and seniors participated in a pair of lessons as part of the School of Balance mindfulness program. The goal of the program is to increase student self-awareness as well as to bolster their repertoire of coping skills.
- In October, freshman participated in a virtual assembly run by the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office. This presentation informed students about the dangers of opioid abuse as well as discussed the common pathways that lead to opioid addiction.
- On October 16<sup>th</sup>, the School Counseling Department held the tenth grade parent breakfast. The theme of the meeting was the importance of extracurricular activities in the lives of the students and what 10<sup>th</sup> graders should be focusing on for college planning. The following topics were addressed: what colleges look for in an applicant, grades & GPA, the SAT vs ACT, community services, letters of recommendation, college entrance essays and reducing stress. A video recording of this presentation was emailed to families and posted on the School Counseling website.
- In November, students and parents participated in a virtual presentation about internet safety and cyber-bullying by Melissa Straub. Melissa is a retired police officer, school counselor, computer forensics specialist and certified private investigator. In the student assembly, students learned about the importance of, and practical strategies for, staying safe while using the internet and social media. The definition, ramifications, and consequences for cyber bullying were also addressed. In the parent presentation, Melissa discussed the different types of social media, connectivity and devices, digital detoxing, social networking, trends and dangers, how to talk to children about technology, the psychological fallout from constant connectivity and much more.
- On November 9<sup>th</sup>, parents were emailed two family-orientated virtual workshops. The first event was the showing of the film Screenager NEXT CHAPTER: Uncovering Skills for Stress Resilience. In the film, filmmaker and physician Dr. Delaney Ruston takes the conversation around screens and teens to the next level with a 90 minute movie that examines the science behind emotional challenges during adolescence, the role of social media in adolescent development, and most importantly, what can be done in our schools and homes to help them build crucial skills to navigate stress, anxiety, and depression in the digital age. The second event, was a webinar titled, The Challenges of Parenting during COVID-19. Techniques for addressing the chronic stress that colors our lives in this COVID-19 climate, when to act on your concerns about your child's mental health, local resources available for assessment & treatment and how to manage your family time in a more productive and constructive manner were discussed.
- On November 13<sup>th</sup>, the School Counseling Department held the eleventh-grade parent seminar. A "Junior Year To-Do List" was presented along with expectations for post-graduation success. The differences between the SAT and ACT, the two standardized college entrance exams required by most U.S. colleges and universities were discussed. Most of the event focused on Naviance, our college and career readiness program used by the counseling team to match students to their post-secondary goals. Important features of Naviance were highlighted such as the college search, creating initial college lists, overlap schools, scattergrams, Super Match, resume builder and the pre-college survey.
- Fort Lee High School hosted the SATs on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We hope to hold additional ACT & SAT tests in the spring.
- In December, parents were emailed resources for distance learning and the Bergen County Parenting and Family Guide. Included in the document were a wide array of support groups for all ages, private counseling, hotlines, parenting classes, youth programs and much more.
- In January all students and parents were emailed a multitude of free SAT prep resource and college planning virtual lessons. These can be found on the **School Counseling Google Classroom (join code uvd7lxs)** and website.

# STUDENT ACTIVITIES BY GRADE LEVEL

## Seniors

Since the beginning of the academic year, counselors have been working very closely with seniors in order to prepare college applications and letters of recommendation, which is a very lengthy, but important process. All senior parents were invited to meet with their child and guidance counselor to discuss college options during September and October. Parents were also given login access to Naviance and shown a financial aid presentation by a College Funding Services. Additionally, counselors have been assisting students with completing their FAFSA application upon request. By the end of February, all seniors will have applied to higher education institutions. It is also important to note that student scholarship opportunities are posted on Naviance so that students can review and apply.

## Juniors

In December and January, Mrs. Acosta, Ms. Caddell, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Lawlor have conducted virtual classroom lessons in order to train all 11th grade students on: how to begin their college search on Naviance and CollegeBoard, the difference between SAT vs ACT, how to complete the pre-college survey, and gave an overview of the college letter of recommendation process. To date, all juniors have log-ins and passwords to our Naviance program and should be actively using it. We encourage you to sit down with your child and explore Naviance with them as it is an excellent college planning resource. You may also view these lessons our website.

## Sophomores

All 10th grade students will have met with their new counselor by the end of January. These informational sessions are focused on goal setting, choosing the right extracurricular activity, completing different tasks in Naviance such as the Personality Assessment and/or Career Pathway Activity, and planning schedules and/or discussing the criteria for college. It is important to note, that at-risk sophomores will have met with their counselor a minimum of two to three times each marking period.

## Freshmen

All 9th grade students met with Mrs. Serulle-Green, the 9<sup>th</sup> grade School Counselor. They were informed about graduation requirements and explored options offered at the high school for extracurricular activities and community service. These meetings gave students the opportunity to ask questions about high school and also served to ease the transition from the middle school. In December, Mrs. Serulle-Green guided students on how to create a username and password to log into Naviance Family Connection website. This is a comprehensive website that students can use to help in making decisions about courses, colleges, and careers. We can track and analyze data about college and career plans and provide up-to-date information that is specific to our school. During Freshman year, Mrs. Serulle-Green will only focus on the "About Me" tab and complete the Career Interest Profiler. Freshmen students were trained to complete the Career Interest Profiler, a feature offered on the Naviance website. This online tool helps students learn more about their personality and strengths. It also helps students explore the occupations that match their interests. The results of this inventory are used in subsequent years by Mrs. Acosta, Ms. Caddell, Mrs. Lawlor and Mrs. Brown to assist students in creating post-high school plans, a process which the counselors are currently working on with the sophomore, junior, and senior classes.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Counseling Department will host multiple events during the second half of the school year to assist students with college and career preparation. Please try your best to attend!**

- **College Panel Assembly:** In the Spring during the academic school day, six to seven colleges will be at the high school to answer panel questions on what they look for in a student application. This event will give students an inside look on how college and universities perceive college applicants.
- **Classroom Lessons:** All students in grades 9 through 11 will be signed up for Raise.Me. This motivational program assists students in building scholarships from 200+ colleges as early as freshman year. Each college has different standards but most will award scholarships for the following: A in a course (\$100 - \$1,000), B in a course (\$50 - \$600), participate in a school club or sport (\$25 - \$250), etc. Check out Raise.Me on the web! Encourage your children to update their profiles after each marking period.
- **SAT:** Fort Lee High School will be (tentatively) hosting the SATs on March 13<sup>th</sup>, May 8<sup>th</sup> and June 5<sup>th</sup>.
- **ACT:** Fort Lee High School will be (tentatively) hosting the ACTs on, April 17<sup>th</sup> and June 12<sup>th</sup>.
- **SAT/ACT Test Prep:** The School Counseling Office encourages all sophomores and juniors to take advantage of Kaplan's free ACT and SAT practice tests and test prep to help determine if the SAT or ACT is the right test for their learning style. Please visit <https://www.kaptest.com/sat/free/events>. Kaplan also offers free SAT and ACT Bootcamps via the same website. Please see the last page with additional free SAT resources.
- **DUI Assembly:** In June, seniors will (tentatively) participate in a DUI reenactment assembly. Students will witness first-hand the potential negative ramifications of driving under the influence.
- **After the Fire Presentation:** All seniors will (tentatively) participate in an assembly given by Alvaro Llanos and Shawn Simons, survivors of the Seton Hall dormitory fire in 2000. Their story is one of survival, perseverance, inspiration, hope, courage and friendship. They inspire to motivate students and professionals that life will give you many obstacles while promoting dormitory safety and responsibility.

# UPCOMING EVENTS BY GRADE LEVEL

## Seniors

For the rest of the year, seniors will be engaging in additional one-to-one counselor meetings to discuss college selection, wait-listed applications, financial aid packages, and any other concerns that arise. In February, an online scholarship application will be posted on the guidance website for all seniors to complete to apply for the Academic Awards Dinner Scholarships.

## Juniors

In the months of January and February all juniors will have one-to-one scheduling meetings with their counselors to plan their schedules for the 2021-2022 school year. Student course requests can be viewed by their parents via the Genesis Parent Portal after this meeting. In the months of April & May, all juniors and their parents will have one-to-one college planning meetings to discuss the college search process and to complete the pre-college survey which assists counselors in writing college letters of recommendations in senior year. We also encourage all sophomores and juniors to take advantage of Kaplan's free ACT and SAT practice tests and test prep to help determine if the SAT or ACT is the right test for their learning style. Please visit <https://www.kaptest.com/sat/free/events> Kaplan also offers free SAT and ACT Bootcamps via the same website.

## Sophomores

In the months of January and February, all sophomores will have one-to-one scheduling meetings with their counselors to plan their schedules for the 2021-2022 school year. Student course requests can be viewed by parents via the Genesis Parent Portal after this meeting. Sophomores will also participate in counselor facilitated classroom lessons on the SAT, ACT & SAT Subject tests, as well as in group activities that assist students with interpreting their Naviance Career Interest Surveys from last year. We also encourage all sophomores and juniors to take advantage of Kaplan's free ACT and SAT practice tests and test prep to help determine if the SAT or ACT is the right test for their learning style. Please visit <https://www.kaptest.com/sat/free/events> Kaplan also offers free SAT and ACT Bootcamps via the same website.

## Freshmen

In the months of January and February, all freshmen will meet with Mrs. Serulle-Green to plan their course schedule for the 2021-2022 school year. Student course requests can be viewed by parents via the Genesis Parent Portal after this meeting. In addition to scheduling, Mrs. Serulle-Green will begin classroom lessons for all ninth grade students to assist them in creating a portfolio for Raise.Me. Raise.Me is a platform that helps students prepare for college by earning scholarship money for their achievements in high school. Students can start to earn money as early as freshman year by simply following colleges that they are interested in attending and adding their achievements, such as high grades and sports.

# SCHOOL COUNSELOR HIGHLIGHTS

## **Ms. Serulle-Green's Highlights 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor**

- All freshmen students participated in Mrs. Green's classroom lessons and created a profile on Naviance. This survey allowed students to gain more insight into their personal development. The results provided each freshmen student with a suggested occupation based on the personality type revealed.
- One of Mrs. Serulle-Green's students received Honorable Mention All-League in soccer.
- One of Mrs. Serulle-Green's students was named 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-League Offense in Football.
- One of Mrs. Serulle-Green's students was named 2<sup>nd</sup> Team All-League in Soccer.

## **Mrs. Acosta's 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor**

- One of Mrs. Acosta's seniors is a runner up for the National Merit Scholarship based on their PSAT scores.
- One of Mrs. Acosta's juniors was nominated by the faculty to apply for the Governor's School of Engineering and Technology.
- Two of Mrs. Acosta's juniors have been nominated for the New Jersey Scholars Program this summer.
- One of Mrs. Acosta's seniors has been awarded a 95% scholarship to Seton Hall.
- Mrs. Acosta's seniors have already been accepted into some wonderful universities. Among them are: Fordham, Villanova, Temple, Siena College, Rutgers, Rutgers School of Engineering, NJIT, Montclair, Stony Brook, Pennsylvania State, West Virginia, University at Buffalo, University of Pittsburgh and William Paterson are only a few.

## **Ms. Caddell's Highlights 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor**

- One of Ms. Caddell's seniors has been accepted to University of Albany and was offered a \$50,000 scholarship and the \$10,000 "Engaged Community Award". Student was also granted acceptance into the Honors College as a direct admit.
- One of Ms. Caddell's seniors has been an integral part of the FLHS Debate Team since freshman year and currently is tied with Bergen Academies for the #1 spot in the league. Most recently, this student led the team to victory- winning 7 out of 7 speaker awards.
- One of Ms. Caddell's seniors earned the Presidential Scholars Program Merit scholarship at Montclair State University.
- One of Ms. Caddell's seniors was awarded the Presidential Scholarship at Montclair State University in the amount of \$20,000 a year-\$80,000 total.
- One of Ms. Caddell's seniors was accepted into Drew University and was awarded The Francis Asbury Scholarship in the amount of \$25,000 a year- totaling \$100,000.
- One of Ms. Caddell's juniors has been nominated for the Governor's School in Science-represented by Drew University

## **Mrs. Lawlor 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor**

- Many of Mrs. Lawlor's seniors have already been accepted into fantastic universities! Rutgers, Penn State, Fordham, Drexel, Rowan, Temple, University of Delaware, Ithaca, SVA, Pratt, Parsons, University of Rhode Island, UMass Amherst, and Seton Hall are only a few.
- Many seniors are anxiously awaiting their decisions from early action deferments to University of Chicago, Georgetown, Brown, Tulane, University of Georgia, and University of Vermont.
- One of Mrs. Lawlor's seniors was accepted to Columbia through early decision.
- Four of Mrs. Lawlor's students were commended in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program.
- Two of Mrs. Lawlor's students were named National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalists.
- One of Mrs. Lawlor's juniors participated in the Barnard Pre-College program over the summer.
- Many students have adapted and adjusted to the current pandemic situation by securing part-time employment to help with their family's financial situation. Others have stepped up by taking on more responsibilities at home with their younger siblings. In this uncertain time, many are finding ways to make a difference.

## **Mrs. Brown's Highlights 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor**

- Two of Mrs. Brown's seniors earned the distinction of "Commended Student" in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program
- One of Mrs. Brown's students received the Academic All-American award from the National Speech and Debate Association
- One of Mrs. Brown's students published online the first two chapters of an original fictional story.
- One of Mrs. Brown's students was awarded first place in the Bergen County Math League
- One of Mrs. Brown's students delivered food to the health care workers on the front lines during the height of COVID in the Spring
- Last spring, one of Mrs. Brown's students delivered PPE to the local hospitals and the Fort Lee police department.
- One of Mrs. Brown's students was named 1st Team All-League in Cross Country.
- Three of Mrs. Brown's students were named 1st Team All-League in Football.
- One of Mrs. Brown's students was named 1st Team All-League in Soccer.
- One of Mrs. Brown's students was named 1st Team All-League in Tennis.
- Two of Mrs. Brown's students were named 2nd Team All-League in Soccer.
- One of Mrs. Brown's students was named Honorable Mention All-League in Football.

# SCHOOL COUNSELING VIRTUAL LESSONS

## 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Lessons:

- **SAT VS ACT:** Are you questioning which college entrance exam is right for you? Watch this video for guidance! [SAT VS ACT Video](#)
- **How to Begin Online Searches for Colleges:** How to start your college search using Naviance and Collegeboard and how to move colleges to “Colleges I am thinking about on Naviance”. [College Search Video](#) & [Tips for Starting Your College Search](#)
- **Letters of Recommendations:** How to obtain letters of recommendation for your college applications. [Letters of Recommendation Video](#)

## 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Lessons:

- **Creating a Resume:** Are you interested in creating a resume on Naviance? We highly suggest you begin your resume early on in high school. This will help you keep track of all your accomplishments and help your teachers write your college letters of recommendations. [Creating a Resume on Naviance Video](#) & [Sample Student Resume](#)
- **SAT VS ACT:** Are you questioning which college entrance exam is right for you? Watch this video for guidance! [SAT VS ACT Video](#)

## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Lessons:

- **Creating a Resume:** Are you interested in creating a resume on Naviance? We highly suggest you begin your resume early on in high school so when you ask your teachers to write your college letters of recommendations they have documentation of all the things you have accomplished and can properly brag about! [Creating a Resume on Naviance Video](#) & [Sample Student Resume](#)
- **Career Interest Survey:** The purpose of this career interest survey is to self-reflect on your personality traits and to begin thinking of careers. [Career Interest Survey on Naviance Video](#)

# FREE SAT & ACT PREP

## **SAT Practice on Khan Academy** <https://tinyurl.com/khan21>

Get personalized SAT prep on Khan Academy® by taking a full length mock SAT. This is extremely similar to taking the PSAT. Your answers will automatically be scored at the end of your test, and the timer will keep you on track with section time limits. You can also download the app for daily questions and tips and strategies for testing—it's all free! Taking a full-length SAT practice test is one of the best ways to simulate test day. Eight official SAT practice tests are available for free, both online and on paper. Created by the makers of the SAT, each practice test has the same types of questions you'll see on test day. Six of the practice tests have even previously been given as actual SAT exams. <https://tinyurl.com/satfullpractice>

## **SAT Practice from CollegeBoard**

CollegeBoard offers an abundance of resources to help students prepare for the SAT such as practice tests, sample questions and guides on how to set up study groups with friends. <https://tinyurl.com/satpractice21>

## **SAT Sample Questions**

Get to know what the SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, and PSAT 10 is like by practicing with these sample questions. <https://tinyurl.com/satsample21>

## **How to Link Your CollegeBoard and Khan Academy Accounts**

Step-by-step guide on how to link College Board and Khan Academy accounts for a personalized SAT practice plan. <https://tinyurl.com/linkingkhan>

## **Additional Free Test Prep Links**

**Varsity Tutors:** Free ACT & SAT practice tests: <https://www.varsitytutors.com/free-sat-act-prep-course>

**The Princeton Review:** Free SAT Practice Tests & Events: <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/free-sat-practice-test#!practice>

**Kaplan:** Free ACT Prep: <https://www.kaptest.com/act/free/act-free-practice-test>

Free SAT Prep: <https://www.kaptest.com/sat/free/sat-practice>

Free Events including SAT Bootcamp: <https://www.kaptest.com/sat/free/events>

# CLASS OF 2020 COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

Acadia University	Loyola University of Chicago	Rochester Institute of Technology
Arizona State University	University of Maine	University of Rochester
University of Arizona	Manhattan College	Roger Williams University
Bard College	Mannes College of Music	Rowan University
Baruch College	University of Maryland	Rutgers University
Bentley University	University of Massachusetts, Amherst	Sacred Heart University
Bergen Community College	Merrimack College	Saint Mary's University
Berklee College of Music	University of Miami	Saint Peter's University
Binghamton University	Michigan State University	San Diego State University
Boston College	University of Michigan	University of San Francisco
Boston University	Monmouth University	Savannah College of Art and Design
University of California - Irvine	Montclair State University	School of the Art Institute of Chicago
City College	University of Nevada-Las Vegas	School of Visual Art
Coastal Carolina University	University of New Haven	University of the Sciences
University of Connecticut	New Jersey City University	University of Scranton
Cooper Union	New Jersey Institute of Technology	Seton Hall University
University of Delaware	The College of New Jersey	University of South Carolina
Drexel University	New York Institute of Technology	University of South Florida
Duke University	New York University	Southern Connecticut State University
Emerson College	Northeastern University	Southern New Hampshire University
Emory University	Nova Southeastern University	St. Francis College
Fairleigh Dickinson University	Otis College of Art and Design	St. John's University
Fashion Institute of Technology	Pace University	Stevens Institute of Technology
Florida State University	Pennsylvania State University	Stony Brook University
Fordham University	University of Pittsburgh	SUNY, University of Albany
George Washington University	Pratt Institute	Syracuse University
Georgetown University	Princeton University	University of Tampa
University of Hartford	Purchase College	Temple University
Hobart William Smith College	Queens College	Texas A & M University
Hofstra University	Quinnipiac University	The New School
Hunter College	Ramapo College	The Ohio State University
University of Illinois at Chicago	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	University of Buffalo
Indiana University	Rhode Island School of Design	Vanderbilt University
John Jay College of Criminal Justice	University of Rhode Island	Virginia Polytechnic Institute
Kean University	Rider University	West Virginia University
Lehigh University	Ringling College of Art and Design	University of Wisconsin, Madison

\*This is not a full list of acceptances\*

