

## Postsecondary Exploration and Planning at New Trier Township High School Sophomore Parent Newsletter from New Trier's Post-High School Counseling Office

New Trier's approach to college and career guidance is developmental in nature. During the freshman and sophomore years, students are getting acclimated to the demands of high school and are determining how to be the most effective learners possible. They are also trying various activities to see how they want to spend their free time productively. They are finding friends and handling new social situations. In short, they are figuring out who they are, how they define themselves and what has meaning to them individually.

At this stage post-high school guidance is general in nature, relating to an individual's academic achievement. The post-high school freshman liaison offers guidance to the freshman advisers and is available during registration for questions from students and parents.

In the sophomore year, specific post-high school counselors are assigned to adviseries. The assigned counselors visit sophomore adviseries three to four times during the year to take questions and offer advice regarding activity involvement, class registration, and how to approach challenging studies. In addition, New Trier's career specialists are available to meet with students to investigate more specific career options.

What is Naviance? It is a computer program that utilizes New Trier-specific information and tracks college and career information. It provides career and college search engines, and offers the post-high school counseling office a way to send monthly newsletters to juniors, seniors and their parents. It tracks New Trier transcripts sent to colleges and tracks New Trier's admission statistics at colleges where students apply. It offers an easy method of creating a resume, corresponding with admission counselors, and confidentially tracks an individual's transcript submission. New Trier has used this program since 2004, and Naviance has earned positive reviews from students and parents alike.

Parents will obtain their own access to their student's Naviance account in the fall of the junior year. Until then, you may use your student's log-in to explore the program. Sophomores should each have logged into Naviance last winter when their individual registration codes were distributed by post-high school counselors in the adviseries.

Remember that right now your student only has one and one-half years of high school grades. Statistics in Naviance are based on the final, eighth semester of high school work, which makes the listed, weighted grade point average significantly higher than a freshman could attain. You are therefore strongly cautioned against comparing your student's mid-year, sophomore year GPA with what is listed on Naviance; it is way too early to make inferences about admission now!

What you can do is help your student use Naviance to investigate career options and begin to build a resume. The resume will help students assess their freshman and first-semester sophomore years in terms of their curricular and extra-curricular strengths. When the post-high school counselors talk about the concept of fit between a student and potential future options, the first step is having the student look at a resume of accomplishments or interests to see what potential directions might be considered for the future. This provides parents with the chance to discuss what the student finds rewarding about specific activities, what the student might change if in a leadership position, and how involvement in various activities has changed the student for the better, or what characteristics this involvement has helped develop.

The parental role here is to help the student find balance and meaning in his life choices. It is to help students determine rewarding ways to spend their free time, and how to develop an appreciation for their individual academic and extra-curricular talents. The parental role is not to use Naviance as a comparative tool for admissions yet; parents who restrain themselves from engaging in conversation about college admission as an end product of all of these decisions find their students make more genuine, authentic decisions and that they enjoy a less stressful relationship with them. This process allows parents to listen to their children to see how they perceive their current challenges, strengths, and their aspirations.