

Dear Parents of Seniors,

I hope you are having an enjoyable summer, experiencing God's peace in your lives. It is important for you, as parents of seniors, to be planning for your child's post-secondary options. Consider visiting that favorite college campus as soon as possible.

Many of last year's juniors took either the ACT or the SAT, in the spring or summer. But for those who haven't or who want to re-take a test, they will be offered in Fergus Falls in October and November. Go online for applications and information- ACT: www.actstudent.org, SAT: www.collegeboard.com.

College admission is based primarily on one's high school grades, but most schools will look at your test scores. Most junior colleges and technical schools have what they call "open admission", where they will accept anyone regardless of their grades and test scores. This does not mean they are academically inferior; they just have different admissions criteria. There is a school for everyone. I would really like to encourage the students to get training in some area. You may want to check out the technical, vocational, and business schools if your child has an interest in the areas that they offer. They are very competitive in the job market and often have a high job placement rate.

When you visit the schools under consideration, talk to the admissions counselor and financial aid officer and then discuss what you believe to be the best post-secondary option for your child. Even if you are planning on a 2 year college to start, it is a good idea to know where they might go afterwards so you can check to make sure they are getting the required courses. When I meet with your son or daughter in the fall, I will ask them, "What would your parents like you to do after high school graduation?" I will then encourage your child to listen to your advice, as you know them best, and want the best for them.

I will meet with all the seniors during the first few months of school, helping them get information on schools they are interested in and completing the application and scholarship process. It is my recommendation that they apply to the school(s) of their choice by December 1, 2011 as we have had students turned away from their first choice because they delayed the application process. This is especially important at more selective schools (consider Nov. 1).

We do receive national scholarship information. Past experience shows that only if you have very good test scores will you receive a national scholarship. The private schools usually offer much better scholarships than the state schools but the cost to attend is also greater. In the past years our seniors have received scholarships ranging from \$200, at a community college, to an ROTC Full Tuition Scholarship to any approved college. I would encourage you to check in your local community for scholarships such as Target, Wal-Mart, banks, service clubs, Dollars for Scholars, etc.

The internet is also a source of a great deal of scholarship information. Your child has internet access here at HLA if you have granted written permission. A good source is to type in "college scholarship" on one of the search engines. Colleges and universities have web sites too.

The government financial aid application, the FAFSA- Free Application for Student Aid, (<https://www.fafsa.com>), will be sent to us in December. They are not very complicated, but you cannot fill them out until you have your 2011 tax information. The earliest date they can be e-mailed is January 1. They will inform you of your eligibility for a Pell Grant, or other government sponsored aid. Most schools want you to fill these out even if you don't qualify for government aid, but to help determine what their financial aid package might be which usually includes work study, grant money, scholarships, and loans. Some schools will provide you with an estimate of what your package would be and ACT does provide a service whereby you can fill out a form and also receive that information. These forms are available online.

There are many big decisions ahead of you. I will be praying with you and your son or daughter to discover what path God would have them follow. My advice to the students is to make applications to their dream school as well as the real practical one that they know they can get into and afford.

I will be available to help in any way I can. My hours at Hillcrest Lutheran Academy first semester are as follows:

Monday-Friday 1:00-5:00 PM.

In Christ's love,

Greg Hayek
Guidance Director
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