

College Planning Night

Class of 2026

January 14, 2025

Fairfax High School

~ Agenda ~

Welcome, Opening Remarks & Introductions

Ashley Anderson, Director of Student Services

Panel Presentation

Jeannine Lalonde, Associate Dean of Admission
University of Virginia

Kevin Murray, Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions
Drexel University

Luis Portillo, Associate Director for Regional and National Recruitment
University of Wisconsin

John Pulley, Senior Assistant Director of Admissions
James Madison University

Fairfax High School Student Services Department

| Student Last Name | Counselor | Email |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
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| BU-DO | Nikki Bender | NSBender@fcps.edu |
| DR-HER | Meg Perepiczka | MKPerepiczk1@fcps.edu |
| HES-LA | Tiffany Haddock | TDHaddock@fcps.edu |
| LE-NAS | Dara Markenson | DMMarkenson@fcps.edu |
| NAT-P & AVID | Liz Velazco | ECVelazco@fcps.edu |
| Q-STO | Bertha Mensah | BNMensah@fcps.edu |
| STR-Z | Tracy Hartley | THartley@fcps.edu |
| Multi-Language | Jeanna Squif | JMSquif@fcps.edu |
| College & Career Specialist | Maureen Kim | MHKim@fcps.edu |
| Director of Student Services | Ashley Anderson | ABAnderson@fcps.edu |

Upcoming Opportunities for FHS/FCPS Students

(Look out for emails from Ms. Kim, or the FHS Career Center News, for details or more info)

Fairfax County Public Schools Annual Gap Year Fair

Tuesday, January 28, 2025 (Snow Date: January 29, 2025 - same time/location)

6:00-8:30 pm

George C. Marshall High School, 7731 Leesburg Pike Falls Church, VA 22043

This event is for high school students and parents who are interested in learning more about the growing array of gap year opportunities. The evening will begin with a presentation in the auditorium from 6:00 to 6:45 p.m. Immediately following, the program fair will be held in the cafeteria from 6:45 to 8:30 p.m., with representatives from over 30 programs offering gap year opportunities. Students and their families are encouraged to meet the representatives and learn about the variety of experiences available.

•Students are encouraged to pre-register for this event: [Fairfax USA Gap Year Fair 2025 Registration, Tue, Jan 28, 2025 at 6:00 PM | Eventbrite](#) or <https://www.fcps.edu/event/fairfax-county-public-schools-annual-gap-year-fair>

U.S Service Academy/ROTC Night for Fairfax, Oakton, Madison, Marshall and Woodson High Schools

Wednesday, February 26, 2025 (Snow Date: March 6, 2025 - same time/location)

7:00 pm

Fairfax High School - Cafeteria, 3501 Lion Run, Fairfax, VA 22030

Representatives from the following military academies and ROTC programs are scheduled to attend: US Air Force, US Army, US Navy & Marine Corps, US Merchant Marine, and US Coast Guard, as well as a representative from Congressman Gerry Connolly's office to talk about the nomination process.

No registration required.

Paying for College - The Financial Aid Process for Underclassmen by College Access Fairfax

Spring Dates TBD - visit <https://collegeaccessfairfax.org/> for updates

This program is designed to help current underclassmen (Grades 9-11) and their families understand the financial aid process. Information provided includes understanding when to apply, types and sources of financial aid, forms and financial information required, and how need is determined.

See recordings of previous workshops under "CAF Seminar Recordings" on their website:

<https://collegeaccessfairfax.org/resources/>

Northern Virginia Regional College Fair

Wednesday, April 9, 2025 @ 6:30-8:30 pm

George Mason University

Registration not required but encouraged: <https://events.admissions.gmu.edu/nvrcfstudents/>

FHS Junior Focus Day

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Lion Time (9:45-11:15 am)

This program is exclusively for the FHS Class of 2026 and will be held during the school day. Juniors will be able to choose sessions to help them prepare for a variety of post-secondary options. More details will be sent in the Spring!

NOVA Vision 2025 - Virtual Event

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

NOVA-Annandale Campus

FCPS and Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) are offering an opportunity for students with disabilities, and their families, to learn about available options. This event includes presentations from Accommodations and Accessibility Services, a mock NOVA classroom experience for students, a tour, and a NOVA student panel with Q&A session.

Registration link: <https://tinyurl.com/56fhzxxv>

College Planning Timeline

End of Junior Year into Senior Year...

Admissions Testing

- Register/prepare to take the SAT and/or ACT Test (FHS CEEB Code is 470-785)
- SAT: <https://www.collegeboard.org/> FHS is a testing site for March 8, 2025
- ACT: <http://www.act.org/>
- On Free or Reduced Lunch? Email Ms. Kim in the Career Center for a fee waiver.
- Utilize free online prep resources: [Khan Academy for the SAT](#) and [Varsity Tutors](#)

College Research

- Use **Naviance**, every FCPS student's online college and career planning tool, which includes FHS specific admissions data (Look up a college, click on Admissions tab, scroll down for scattergram)
- **Visit colleges:** Attend information sessions/college tours/open house events at individual colleges of interest. Hard to visit campuses? Sign up for virtual information sessions, or virtual tours, on college admissions' websites. **Plan to attend the [Northern Virginia Regional College Fair on Wednesday, April 9, 2025 from 6:30-8:30 pm at George Mason University.](#)**
- Complete the **Net Price Calculator** for each college on your list in order to get an estimate of the financial aid you would receive, or for a quick estimate, use: <https://myintuition.org/>

Make summer plans

- Check out Naviance's Enrichment Programs (under Colleges). This is a database of summer, leadership, career and internship opportunities that the county maintains. Opportunities are added throughout the school year.
- Volunteer, visit college campuses, take a summer course at a college campus, get a job to help pay for school, learn a new skill, and/or study for the SAT or ACT. Keep reading the "FHS Career Center News" emails that Ms. Kim sends out for opportunities.

College Recommendations

- Think about which teacher(s) you will ask to write a letter of recommendation and consider asking those teachers before you leave for the summer.
- When it becomes available, complete the **FHS Class of 2026 Counselor Letter Recommendation Questionnaire Google Form** in order for your School Counselor to write a letter of recommendation.

College List/Applications

- Finalize your list of colleges and be prepared to share your list with your School Counselor in the fall. Enter your list in Naviance Student - Colleges I'm Thinking About, so you will automatically be notified if one of your schools schedules a fall visit to FHS.
- College applications for 2025-26 will be available online on August 1, 2025. Over 1,000 colleges use the Common Application: <https://www.commonapp.org/> Colleges may also use their own application. Look at application requirements, deadlines and get organized!
- Brainstorm possible essay topics and plan to return to school in August with at least a solid draft of your personal statement/essay. If your colleges have many college-specific essays (called supplemental essays), get a jump start on them before returning to school.



Ms. Kim's Tips for Creating Your College List

📌 Keep an open mind!

There are over 3,000 four-year colleges and universities in the United States. This means there are many schools where you can get a great education and thrive. Just because you have never heard of a school does not mean it may not be a good school for you. Remember college is what you make of it, no matter where you go.

📌 Expand your thinking of what is a “good” college.

A good college is one where you will be happy and most importantly, GRADUATE! All colleges are challenging so figure out what factors you need to be successful and look for colleges that meet your needs vs. just looking at name schools, or the most popular schools in Virginia.

📌 If you are a strong student, look at Honors Colleges at the less selective schools on your list.

Honors Colleges offer many benefits such as: nicer housing/dorms, small class sizes, special scholarships, priority registration, priority housing assignments, special Advisors, and they serve as a pipeline for advertising post-graduate opportunities like Fulbright, Peace Corps, Rhodes Scholars, and other merit awards for undergraduates.

📌 Put one small school and/or one “less popular with FCPS” school on your list.

Although most FHS students are comfortable with a large school environment, consider visiting one school with less than 3,000 students. Small schools offer many benefits, like close-knit communities and personal relationships with professors. See what happens when you apply to a school that doesn't receive thousands of applications from FCPS students. Your application may stand out!

📌 Do NOT rule out private colleges because of the total costs.

Very few people pay the full cost of attendance at a private college or university. In fact, if you attend a Virginia private college or university and you are a Virginia resident, you will receive the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant – known as the **TAG Grant** – which is \$5,250/year (for 2025-26) off the total cost of attendance. For more information on the Virginia TAG Grant, see: [Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant Program | Virginia State Council Of Higher Education, VA](#)

📌 Every student, regardless of their grades, has options!!

If you don't know what your options are, or just want some additional ideas for your college search, schedule an appointment with Ms. Kim, the FHS College & Career Specialist: MHKim@fcps.edu, or your School Counselor.

Recommended Books:

Where You Go Is Not Who You Will Be by Frank Bruni

Colleges That Change Lives by Loren Pope

Who Gets in and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions by Jeffrey Selingo

Electronic resources: [National Association for College Admissions Counseling's Guide to the College Admissions Process](#) & [ECMC Opportunities Preparing for College Guide & Workbook](#)

Podcasts:

The Truth about College Admission - Hosts: Brennan Barnard & Rick Clark

Future U Podcast - The Pulse of Higher Ed - Hosts: Jeff Selingo & Michael Horn

GET THE MOST OUT OF A CAMPUS VISIT IN 6 STEPS

1 DECIDE WHERE AND HOW

See if your school arranges group trips to colleges or if you could get a group of friends together and visit the campus. A family trip is another option and allows you to involve your family in the process.

2 PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

Before you set out, get a map of the college campus and pick out places of interest. Call the college's admission office to schedule a guided tour of the campus.

3 TAKE YOUR OWN TOUR

Just wandering around the campus on your own or with friends can be the best way to get a feel for what a college is like.

4 EXPLORE THE FACILITIES

Finding the spots on campus where students gather or asking a student where the best place to eat is can give you a feel for the character of the college. Visit the library and check out the gym or theater. Ask an admission officer if you can tour a dorm and a classroom.

5 MAKE CONNECTIONS

Talk to current students. Ask the students at the next table or sitting nearby what they like best about the college.

6 TAKE NOTES

During your visit, write down some notes about your experience. What did you see that excited you? Are there aspects of the college that you don't like? If so, what are they?

Questions to Ask During Your Visit:

ASK TOUR GUIDES/STUDENTS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- What's it like to go from high school to college?
- What do you do in your free time? On the weekends?
- What do you love about this college?
- What do you wish you could change about this college?
- Why did you choose this college?
- What is it like to live here?
- What does the college do to promote student involvement in campus groups, extracurricular activities, or volunteerism?

ASK PROFESSORS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- Can a student be mentored by professors, graduate students, or upperclassmen?
- How are professors rated by the college? Does the college think mentoring and meetings for project guidance are important?
- How does the college help students have access to professors outside class? Do professors join students for lunch, help with community service groups, or guide student organizations?
- How many students do research or other kinds of projects for a semester or more?

ASK FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

- How much has your total college cost for each student risen in the past year?
- How much do your students usually owe in loans when they graduate?
- What is the average income of graduates who had the same major that interests me?
- Will my costs go up when your tuition goes up, or can we use the same tuition rate I started with so I'll know the costs for four years? What should I expect in terms of increases in living expenses?
- How many students usually graduate in the major that interests me? How long do these students usually take to get their degrees? In what ways does the college help students graduate in four years?

DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU?

Regular Decision

DEFINITION:

Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Rolling Admission

DEFINITION:

Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Early Action (EA)

DEFINITION:

Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Early Decision (ED)

DEFINITION:

Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll and withdraw all other applications. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.

COMMITMENT:

BINDING

Restrictive Early Action (REA)

DEFINITION:

Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.

Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.



U.S. SERVICE ACADEMY & ROTC NIGHT

February 26, 2025 | 7:00pm

@ Fairfax High School

(Snow Date: March 6, 2025 @ 7 pm)

**Please join Madison, Fairfax, Woodson, Oakton and
Marshall High Schools for this informative event!**

**Representatives from the following Military Academies
and ROTC Programs are scheduled to attend:**

U.S. Air Force

U.S. Army

U.S. Navy & Marine Corps

U.S. Merchant Marine

U.S. Coast Guard

&

**A representative from
Gerry Connolly's Office will talk
about the nomination process**

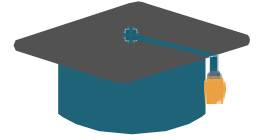
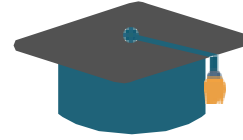
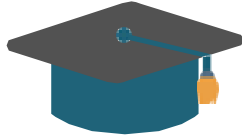
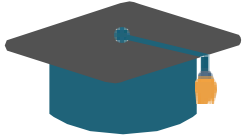


For more information, contact:

Maureen Kim, FHS College & Career Specialist, at MHKim@fcps.edu



Virtual Postsecondary Event Recordings



In October 2024, FCPS students and families had the opportunity to attend 10 virtual sessions related to postsecondary success. The recordings of the sessions are listed below. To access, click the linked below the title of the session or enter the URL into your preferred internet browser.

Paying for College

<https://youtu.be/LU5fSRPID-8>

Scholarship 101

https://youtu.be/_SQz3xIb49Q

Considerations for Students with Disabilities in High School v College

<https://youtu.be/x6oBbqhpj24>

Advanced Placement AP, Dual Enrollment DE, and International Baccalaureate IB in FCPS

<https://youtu.be/V6iFMXbbehg>

NOVA La Opción del Colegio Comunitario

https://youtu.be/_v6c8tF3G3c

Exploring Naviance Student

<https://youtu.be/UeHle5nX7AI>

Standardized Testing in the College Process

<https://youtu.be/x-FFVvbaAH0>

Are you Common App Ready?

<https://youtu.be/gxL7Ki70Xvw>

NOVA The Community College Option

<https://youtu.be/P6R7HfiLjIY>

NOVA Certificates & Workforce Development Programs

<https://youtu.be/G0iH9jla7QE>

For more information visit: <https://bit.ly/fcpspostsecondary>

SAT vs. ACT

OVERVIEW

| | Digital SAT | Paper ACT |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Format | Digital only via a College Board app | Paper-and-Pencil |
| Timing | 2 hours and 14 minutes | 2 hours and 55 minutes |
| Accommodations | All timing accommodations are available. Students whose accommodations require a paper test will still be able to take a paper-and-pencil test. | For information on how to request testing accommodations, visit www.compassprep.com/accommodations-requests-sat-vs-act |
| Structure | Stage Adaptive The difficulty of a section's second stage is based on performance in the first stage; the test tailors the second stage to the student | Static The test does not change based on a student's performance |
| Sections | 2 Sections, each with 2 Stages Reading and Writing Combined R&W Stage 1 (32 min, 27 items) Combined R&W Stage 2 (32 min, 27 items) Math Math Stage 1 (35 min, 22 items) Math Stage 2 (35 min, 22 items) | 4 Tests English (45 min, 75 items) Math (60 minutes, 60 items) Reading (35 min, 40 items) Science (35 min, 40 items) Optional Essay (40 minutes, 1 item) |
| Equating or Unscoed Questions | Both the Reading and Writing and the Math tests will have 4 unscoed questions mixed in with the scoed questions | Students often receive a fifth section of unscoed questions that are used for equating purposes |
| Test Scores | 400–1600 Total Score 200–800 Reading and Writing 200–800 Math Digital SAT scores are equivalent to paper SAT scores. No new SAT-ACT Concordance is necessary. | 1–36 Composite Score (rounded average of test scores) 1–36 each test: English, Math, Reading, and Science |
| Other Scores | No subscores or cross-test scores | Provides raw performance on content areas such as Conventions of Standard English, Algebra, Craft & Structure, and Interpretation of Data |
| Score Reports | Available days after the exam Students no longer have access to their questions and answers | Available 2 weeks after the exam Student can order Test Information Release (TIR) to receive a digital copy of the multiple-choice test questions for certain administrations |
| Security | Students have unique tests—an algorithm builds question sets out of a large pool of questions tagged based on qualities ranging from content area to difficulty. | A limited number of form codes are used each administration. Students sign an agreement to keep test questions confidential and are prohibited from using recording devices. |

READING AND WRITING/ENGLISH

| | Digital SAT | Paper ACT |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Timing | 64 minutes, evenly divided between 2 stages | English: 45 minutes Reading: 35 minutes |
| Passage Format | 54 passage & question sets One short reading passage (25-150 words) per question | English: 5 medium-length passages with 15 questions each Reading: 4 long passages with 10 questions each |
| Reading Organization | Reading questions are in the first half of each stage and are organized by domain and then question type: 1. Craft and Structure (Words in Context, Text Structure and Purpose, Cross-Text Connections) 2. Info and Ideas (Central Ideas and Details, Command of Evidence, Inferences) | The four passages come in the same order and from the same categories: 1. Literary narrative or prose fiction 2. Social sciences 3. Humanities 4. Natural sciences |
| Question Organization | Difficulty increases within each question type | Random |
| Writing/English Organization | Writing questions are presented in the second half of each Reading and Writing stage and are organized by domain and then question type: 1. Standard English Conventions 2. Info and Ideas (Rhetorical Analysis, Transitions) | The five passages are written to appear like typical high-school level writing Topics range from history reports to personal narrative |
| Question Organization | Difficulty increases within each question type | Chronological |

MATH AND SCIENCE

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Timing | 70 minutes, evenly divided between 2 stages | 60 minutes |
| Format | 44 questions (including about 11 student-produced response questions) | 60 questions |
| Content Areas | Math content has not changed from the paper SAT but domains have been renamed: 1. Algebra 2. Advanced Math 3. Problem Solving and Data Analysis 4. Geometry and Trigonometry | ACT organizes questions into 3 overlapping areas and 5 question types 1. Preparing for Higher Math: Number & Quantity, Algebra, Functions, Geometry, and Statistics and Probability 2. Integrating Essential Skills 3. Statistics & Probability |
| Question Organization | Difficulty increases within each stage | Difficulty increases within the section |
| Calculator Use | Approved calculators or the testing application's built-in calculator can be used on all math questions | Approved calculators can be used on the Math Test only |
| Science | Reading, Writing, and Math questions ask students to interpret graphs and data tables | 35-minute section: 6 long passages with graphs and 40 questions |