

Lakeview High School
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Dear Parents:

I have been talking with seniors encouraging them to get their college applications completed. I've also gotten questions from parents about the financial aid process, and what they have to do to apply. Here is a short list of "Things To Do" as you get ready to apply for financial aid. Also, remember that you can call me at the high school anytime if you have questions about college or financial aid.

First, in order to apply for federal, state, and college scholarships, you and your student must fill out a form called the FAFSA. The federal government strongly encourages families to file their FAFSA on-line. Worksheets to help you will be available in the counseling office after Christmas. The FAFSA cannot be submitted before January 1st, but it must be submitted by March 1st. The FAFSA will ask for specific information from your 2008 tax return. So, **the first thing** you need to do to get ready to apply for financial aid is to complete your taxes early this year. If you usually have an accountant prepare the forms, you should schedule an appointment with him for the end of January or first week of February. If you do your own taxes, you should start gathering all your information so you can complete the forms by the first week in February. You don't have to send in the tax forms that early, but you need to have them figured out, if possible.

Next, mark on your calendar the date of Tuesday, January 13 at 7:00 pm. This is the date for our annual financial aid workshop. Mrs. Rebecca Powell, a college financial aid director, will be here at LHS to go through the FAFSA form line by line with parents. Information regarding local scholarships will also be available at this meeting. If you can't attend on the 13th, call me for the dates of other workshops in the area.

Third, all financial aid is processed by the student's social security number. Now is the time to locate your student's social security card and be certain of the number. Also, you should fill out the FAFSA using the student's name the way it is printed on the SSN card.

Finally, filing the FAFSA electronically requires pin numbers, and now is the time to sign up. The student and one parent need to get PIN numbers of their own. Go to this website: www.pin.ed.gov You will need your social security number and your student's social security number. Follow the directions on the screen to apply for your PIN numbers. Think carefully about whether you want to give an email address. If no email address is given, then information will be mailed to the address you enter on the screen. This will take a little longer to receive, but you will have an actual paper copy for your records. If you or your student enter an email address, then the PIN number will be emailed to you. This will be faster, but if you accidentally delete the message thinking it is junk mail, you have lost your PIN number.

Also, when you complete the FAFSA form, you will be asked for an email address. If you leave this part blank, a student aid report telling you how much financial aid you qualify for will be mailed to you. If you put in either the parent's email address or the student's email address, the student aid report will be emailed and no paper copy will be sent. Again, if you choose to give the financial aid people an email address, be careful to read all the email you get! The student aid report is an important document and you need it for financial aid.

If you'd like to get an early estimate of how much financial aid you might qualify for, go to this website: www.finaid.org/finaid/calculators/estimate.html You can put in estimates of your income and assets and the computer will estimate your financial aid. Also, the website www.finaid.org has a lot of general information as well as a scholarship search.

The State of Michigan has some helpful websites as well. For information on the MME test and Promise Award, go to www.michigan.gov/promise. For information about financial aid from the State of Michigan, go to www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid For information about federal financial aid, go to www.studentaid.ed.gov. The website to fill out your FAFSA form online is www.fafsa.ed.gov , but remember you can't fill it out until at least January 1st.

Applying for financial aid can be confusing at first, but the system actually works pretty well once you get into it. If you have questions, call me at the high school. I can answer a lot of questions, and if I can't answer it I'll help you call the person who can.

See you on January 13th

Kathleen Marshall
Senior Counselor

PS: This newsletter will be posted on Lakeview Schools website under "High School" and then "Student Links" and then "Just for Seniors". You will be able to click any of the links printed here to go quickly to the websites. The School website is www.Lakeviewschools.net