



January

Exams

Mid-January is exam time at Zeeland High School. In most classes, exams are cumulative tests of all the material learned the previous semester in a course and are worth 15-20% of a student’s overall semester grade. Simply put – exams are a big deal and exam time can be stressful. Therefore, it is important for students to organize their materials and their time in advance of studying for exams.

It is recommended that students sit down prior to exam week and complete the “Exam Success Plan” below. For each class, record the following information:

- Class: The name of the class
- Grade: What your current grade is for that class
- Weight: What your exam is worth (points, percentage of total grade, etc. – this may vary by teacher)
- Priority: Rank your five classes 1-5 with “1” being the class you need to spend the most time studying for
- Study Plan: List what you will need to study in order to do well on your final
- Materials: List the materials you will need in order to study for your final. Circle any items you currently do not have and will need to get in order to study properly.

Class	Grade	Weight	Priority	Study Plan	Materials
1 st :					
2 nd :					
3 rd :					
4 th :					
5 th :					

6 th :					
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Scholarship Reminders

As we move into the winter months, our scholarship database is constantly updated with new scholarship opportunities for students. All of the scholarships that we receive information about get published on our website - <http://counseling.zps.org>. In particular, many local scholarships start being advertised this time of year. One organization that acts as a “clearinghouse” for many of the local scholarships that are available to our students is the Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland area. Students and parents can peruse the large list of local scholarships made possible through the generous efforts local families, organizations, and businesses at <http://www.cfhz.org>. Click on “Scholarships” in the menu bar at the top of the screen and then along the left hand side, select “Find a Scholarship.” Locate “Zeeland East and Zeeland West Scholarships” to see the multitude of opportunities available. The deadline to apply for these scholarships is **Wednesday, March 1**. Please wait until **Monday, February 6** to start filling out the application form. The reason behind this is the fact that the application requires students to submit their cumulative GPA through first semester senior year. We will not have updated GPAs available until early February, and because students can only save their application for 7 days, starting any earlier could cause students to fill out the application twice. Please feel free, though, to click on “Apply” along the left hand side of the page to review the general application guidelines and a list of information needed to fulfill the application. You will notice that there is one common application for almost all scholarships, and students will need to select the scholarships that they are eligible to apply for. As students prepare for February 6, please do the following in advance to make the application process as smooth as possible:

- After reading through each of the scholarship descriptions, make a list of scholarships the student is eligible to apply for. Many have specific criteria that not all students qualify for.
- File the FAFSA, if you have not done so already and desire to see if you qualify for any need-based financial aid for college. Any scholarship that asks students to demonstrate financial need will be required to submit their Student Aid Report (SAR), which is generated as a result of completing the FAFSA. The FAFSA is based on a family’s financial information from 2015, so there is no need to wait until 2016 tax data is available! Because the SAR takes a few weeks to generate, completing the FAFSA now will help avoid application delays later. More information is available at <http://fafsa.ed.gov>.
- Gather the necessary information (ex. extracurricular activities, honors/awards, etc. - listed on the website) and prepare the standard short essay question in advance to cut down on the time spent later.
- Ask for letters of recommendation now. Two online recommendations are required, and it is imperative to ask the recommenders well in advance of the deadline to submit information on the student’s behalf.

Please feel free to contact your counselor with any questions!

Senior Schedule Changes

(information taken from a newsletter sent out by Michigan State University)

A student's senior schedule plays an important role in the evaluation of their application for admission. If a student is considering dropping or adding a class, please make sure that they're aware of the effect this may have on their application. Taking four or five core classes during the senior year is strongly encouraged in order for applicants to remain competitive for admission. Dropping core courses is not encouraged.

Dropping and adding courses really becomes an issue when students are switching from a core academic course to a non-academic course (i.e. electives). There may be many reasons why students wish to adjust their senior year schedules. Students may provide the Office of Admissions with a written explanation of their situation to ensure that it is added to their file. Our office, however, does not approve such changes, and the potential effects of schedule changes are not known until our senior year review committee convenes during the summer.

Winter/Spring Calendar

This information was sent out in September's newsletter as part of a year-long calendar, but because a few months have passed since that information has been distributed, it might be appropriate to read through it again to make certain the necessary steps are taking place to ensure graduation and, if applicable, college matriculation.

Winter 2016-17

- ★ As 1st semester ends in January, make sure you have passed the courses required for graduation.
- ★ Most regular decision college applications are due in January; be sure all the necessary materials have been sent and received. Remember, though, that although colleges may have official application deadlines, your chances are often better if you apply earlier. Additionally, to be considered for merit-based scholarships at a college, students typically must have applied by November or December.
- ★ Register for a FSA ID so you can complete and sign the FAFSA online at <http://www.fafsa.gov>
- ★ Do your taxes and submit the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) online (<http://www.fafsa.gov>) as soon as possible. Check with colleges for their deadlines for submitting the FAFSA. Most colleges require you to submit by March 1. The State deadline is also March 1.
- ★ Check with your prospective schools about any additional financial aid application forms and requirements.
- ★ Continue searching and applying for scholarships. Local scholarships offered through the Holland/Zeeland Community Foundation generally become available in early-mid February. Information will be provided on the counseling office website (<http://counseling.zps.org>).

Spring 2017

- ★ Look for your Student Aid Report (SAR) from the federal government detailing financial aid information. Also, watch e-mail/mail for acceptance letters (if you haven't received them already) and financial aid award letters from colleges. Compare financial aid packages.
- ★ Make an official decision on what to do after graduation and let the proper parties know of your decision. (This generally needs to be done by May 1.)
- ★ Take AP tests if you registered for them.
- ★ Do **NOT** allow senioritis to kick in. Most schools review final grades and may rescind an offer of admission if senior year grades slip.
- ★ Plan for college registration, orientation, and housing, and mark your calendar with important dates.
- ★ Complete the senior survey informing ZHS of your post-high school plans and of any scholarships you may have received.
- ★ Be aware of any college summer orientation sessions that you must attend at the school in which you will enroll, and make plans accordingly.
- ★ For students attending college, final high school transcripts should be submitted to the college you are planning to attend and to the NCAA if planning on playing Division 1 or 2 athletics. This request can be made through your Parchment account at <http://www.parchment.com>.