Important Dates

Monday, January 1
SDP Closed for New Year's Day

Tuesday, January 2
SDP No School for Students

Monday, January 15
SDP Closed for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Greetings, Scholars and Families -

Happy New Year! The 2024-25 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) was released on December 31. All high school seniors should get started asap by logging on to studentaid.gov. Note: During the Department of Education's soft launch of the FAFSA, there may be periods of time when the form is unavailable to allow for technical updates. Click here for more details.

Read on for information on our FAFSA-focused College Corner session for students and parents, high school truths for middle school students, and more!

Have questions or need assistance? Email us any time at vpse.talentsearch@upenn.edu.

College Corner: FAFSA and Rolling Admissions
High school seniors are invited to join Talent Search Counselor Ms. Sofia for two College Corner sessions this month.

**Wednesday, January 10**
6:00 to 7:00 pm  
FOCUS: FAFSA Workshop (Parents and guardians encouraged to attend!)

**Wednesday, January 24**
6:00 to 7:00 pm  
FOCUS: Rolling Admissions

Join on Zoom: [https://upenn.zoom.us/j/92476792898?pwd=UHlmZlhvdFU2NTUrUzB5VEVJbVdZdz09](https://upenn.zoom.us/j/92476792898?pwd=UHlmZlhvdFU2NTUrUzB5VEVJbVdZdz09)

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**Differences Between Middle & High School**

7th and 8th graders, you might be wondering what high school will be like. Here are some key differences between middle and high school.

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**Independence**

High school students will be expected to handle their workload on their own, and teachers are more likely to be hands off.
**CHOICE**

High schoolers have much more choice in what classes they will take. Whenever possible, take advanced classes in subjects you like.

**CLASS SIZE**

High schools tend to be larger, with bigger class sizes and more students. Finding community is very important!

**PEER PRESSURE**

High schoolers might face pressure to engage in risky behaviors. Be careful in choosing friends, and always stay true to yourself!
Opportunities for Talent Search Scholars

**Penn Academy for Reproductive Sciences**

FREE to **10th through 12 grade students** in Philadelphia area schools, Penn Academy for Reproductive Sciences incorporates a mix of small-group discussions, demonstrations, and hands-on lab activities to explore current research topics in reproductive health.

Topics include: female reproductive anatomy and physiology, fertilization, embryo development, stem cells, genetics, epigenetics, and oncofertility. Students will also dive into a journal article, discuss ethical decision-making, and prepare for **future careers in science and medicine**!

PARS will run four consecutive Saturdays (March 2, 9, 16, and 23), from 9am-1pm each day at the University of Pennsylvania. Participants must be able to attend all four sessions of the workshop to apply and be eligible for the paid summer internship starting the end of June through the beginning of August.

**Click here to learn more and apply by January 19.**

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**Urban Conservation Crew Program**

In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MobilizeGreen offers an Urban Conservation Crew Program at The John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum for **Philadelphia area students ages 15 to 18**.

Crew Members will work in teams to complete conservation projects around the wildlife refuge, including improvements to hiking trails, wildlife habitat and visitor infrastructure. Members will also have the opportunity to participate in environmental education and outdoor recreation activities lead by crew leaders and Fish and Wildlife staff.

Spring Crews meet 12 Saturdays during the spring. Program hours are roughly 9am-4pm.

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**John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Essay Contest**

The Profile in Courage Essay Contest challenges **9th-12th grade students** to write an original and creative essay that demonstrates an understanding of political courage as described by John F. Kennedy in his book *Profiles in Courage*.

Students should describe and analyze an act of political courage by a U.S. elected official who served during or after 1917, the year John F. Kennedy was born. Include an analysis of the obstacles, risks, and consequences associated with the act. The
Benefits include:
- Paid work experience
  - $65/day stipend fall and spring
  - $350/week stipend for summer
- Develop collaboration and leadership skills
- Work with other high school students from across the region
- Explore outdoor and recreation activities such as biking, hiking, boating, wildlife viewing and fishing
- Learn about natural resource management careers

Click here to learn more and apply!

Essay may concern an issue at the local, state, national, or international level.

The first-place winner receives a $10,000 cash award. If the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation holds the 2024 Profile in Courage Award event in person, the winner and their family will be invited to travel to Boston to accept their award in May. Travel and lodging expenses will be paid for the trip to Boston for the winning student and their parents.

Click here to learn more and enter by January 12.

Follow us on social media and visit us online at https://vpse.upenn.edu/ets!