



**SUSSEX COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL**  
**COUNSELING DEPARTMENT**  
105 North Church Road Sparta, NJ 07871

February 9, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

NJ STARS is a program that was created in 2004 by the State of New Jersey to provide access to higher education for the State's highest achieving students. The programs provide free tuition and approved fees at their home county college. Recently there has been significant changes to the New Jersey STARS I and II programs that occurred this year, which are outlined on the back of this letter. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA- <http://www.hesaa.org>) is the New Jersey authority that provides students and families with the financial and informational resources for students to pursue their education beyond high school. One of the most popular scholarship programs is the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship, also known as the NJ STARS Program. Essentially, seniors who graduate in the top **15%** of their class are eligible to receive free tuition and approved fees at their local county college.

This information is also posted on our website, <http://www.sussex.tec.nj.us/>. The NJ STARS programs have recently gone through some legislative changes. The new information will be posted shortly. Should you have questions regarding the NJ STARS programs, please call the Hotline at 1-800-792-8670. Below is the Fact Sheet for June 2009 high school graduates. Please contact your child's guidance counselor if you have any questions or if you require additional information. For your reference, the alphabetical breakdown for each student's last name is as follows:

Counseling Department

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Child Study Team Case Managers

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Sincerely,

Joseph D. Armstead  
Vice Principal



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**ATTENTION PARENTS**

**Changes to NJ STARS starting with the **Class of 2009****

**NJ STARS Fact Sheet for June 2009 High School Graduates**

The New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) Program is an initiative created by the State of New Jersey that provides New Jersey's highest achieving students with free tuition and approved fees at their home county college.

**NJ STARS Benefits**

The NJ STARS award covers the cost of tuition and approved fees, less any State and/or Federal grants and scholarships, for up to five semesters. The award covers these costs for up to 18 credit hours per semester.

**Fees**

The following list includes examples of approved and excluded fees:

**Approved Fees: Excluded Fees:**

- General Fees Application and Insurance Fees
- Student Service/Activity Fees Late Fees and Library Fees
- Technology Fees Testing and Licensing Fees
- Required Course Fees and Equipment Criminal Background Checks

**Student Eligibility**

New Jersey residents, who graduate in the top 15 percent of their 2009 high school class, complete a rigorous high school course of study **and** achieve the required score on a college placement test to determine college readiness may be eligible. Students who do not achieve the required score on the placement test will be able to take appropriate courses while still in high school to improve their skills or they can attend remedial courses at the county college while enrolled in high school. Students who graduate from high school and do not demonstrate college readiness will be given up to one year to gain the skills they need to be college ready. Students who do not demonstrate college readiness by September 1, 2010 are no longer NJ STARS eligible. **NJ STARS does not cover costs for remedial coursework.**

All students must enroll in a full-time course of study no later than the fifth semester following high school graduation. Students must enroll full time in a degree program at their home county college, unless the student demonstrates that the home county college does not offer the desired program of study or the program is oversubscribed for at least one year. Students must take a minimum of 12 college-level credits per semester. NJ STARS covers up to 18 college-level credits per semester. Students and parent(s) must be permanent New Jersey residents pursuant to regulations established by HESAA.

Students must be U.S. citizens or eligible non-citizens **and** legal New Jersey residents for a minimum of twelve consecutive months prior to high school graduation. Students must apply for all forms of State and Federal need-based grants and merit scholarships and submit any requested documentation to complete and verify application data within established State deadlines.



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### Application Process

- Apply for admission to your home county college.
- Meet all admission and application requirements established by the county college.
- File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually within established State deadlines.

### 2009-10 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Filing Deadlines:

- Students who did not receive a Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) during the 2008-09 academic year:
- October 1, 2009 – fall & spring terms
- March 1, 2010 – spring term only
- June 1, 2009 for students who received a TAG award during 2008-09

Meet the NJ State deadlines below for submission of additional information requests, such as:

- Applicant Information Requests (AIR's)
- Verification documents
- College choice changes
- Corrections to ineligible conditions

### 2009-2010 State Deadlines for Submitting Additional Information:

November 15, 2009- Fall 2009

March 15, 2010 – Spring 2010

**Please Note: County colleges notify students of NJ STARS eligibility.**

### Renewal Eligibility

Students must attain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher at the start of the third semester of enrollment at the county college to remain an NJ STAR. Summer courses are included in determining the GPA. Students must maintain continuous full-time enrollment unless on a medical leave, approved by the county college, due to the illness of the student, a member of the student's immediate family, or a family emergency. The only other exception to continuous full-time enrollment applies to NJ STARS students called to partial or full mobilization for State or Federal active duty as a member of the National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States. Students may receive the scholarship for up to five semesters, including summer sessions.

### NJ STARS II Program

NJ STARS recipients who earn an associate degree from a county college with a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher, have a family income (taxable and untaxed income) less than \$250,000, **and** meet all other program eligibility requirements may be eligible to receive an NJ STARS II award to transfer to a New Jersey four-year public college or university to earn a baccalaureate degree.

- Students who earn 3.25 – 3.49 will receive \$6,000 per year. Students who earn a 3.5 or better will receive \$7,000 per year.
- Students must complete their degree in 4 semesters.
- They must maintain a 3.2 GPA in their junior year at the 4-year level to remain in the NJ STARS II Program.
- To establish initial eligibility for the NJ STARS II Program, a student's family income must be less than \$250,000.
- Under NJ STARS II all community colleges credits are fully transferable, allowing students to begin at the 4-year institution as juniors.

### Additional Information

Contact the financial aid office at your home county college for additional information.

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