

Geneva High School

Memorandum

To: Dr. Barrett, Superintendent

From: Doug Drexler, GHS Associate Principal
Shari Klatt, GHS Counseling & Advising Chair

Date: February 15, 2026

Subject: Recommended adoption of SchooLinks College and Career Software

Background and Summary:

Since the 2011-2012 school year, Geneva High School has been utilizing Naviance software to help support students as they navigated the college and career search process. At the time of adoption, Naviance was essentially the only software product in existence that comprehensively addressed this need, and it has been a useful resource for our students over the past 15 years. Fast forwarding to 2026, there are now multiple software products that address this need. After a thorough review of available options, we are recommending a transition from Naviance to the SchooLinks software platform.

SchooLinks is designed to help students discover their interests and strengths, explore a variety of college and career options, create a personal graduation plan that best reflects their post-secondary goals, and track their experience at GHS towards these goals.

SchooLinks implementation will help support the Career and College Pathway portion of the district's strategic plan.

Evaluation Process:

Multiple software products were reviewed and evaluated by a team of counselors, administrators, and technology staff. Evaluation criteria included variables such as:

- Student engagement with exploration and planning resources for both college and career readiness
- Management of college application processes
- Data reporting capabilities for state reporting
- Integration with existing district data systems
- Level of training and support provided
- Potential for middle school to high school continuity
- Cost effectiveness
- Positive references from similar school districts

When the field of contenders was narrowed to two products, members of the team were able to utilize demonstration accounts to dig into the finer details of both platforms. Additionally, reference checks were conducted with schools/districts using both of these products. In all evaluation areas, review team members felt that SchooLinks demonstrated a more robust, accessible, and engaging approach for students and families than our current platform.

Implementation timeline:

We are planning for a July 1, 2026 implementation, aligned with the timeline for the district's migration to Synergy. GHS counselors will be engaged in summer training for SchooLinks so that it can be rolled out to students and parents in August. The August 2026 rollout to students, parents, and staff will include the following features:

- College planning tools and college application manager
- A variety career interest inventories and goal setting exercises
- Career cluster information, career profiles, and career mentor videos
- Scholarship and Financial Aid features

Students will be able to easily track all of their college applications, deadlines, and requirements in one place. Students will see what they have already submitted along with what still needs to be completed. Counselors and parents will be able to support students by monitoring progress to make sure everything is on track to meet deadlines.

References and Student Feedback

SchooLinks has a significant and growing footprint in the Chicago area, and we spoke with a number of school districts who are very pleased with their adoption of SchooLinks. Common themes from references included students finding SchooLinks to be engaging and easy to navigate, and SchooLinks providing effective training and customer service.

Once the review process led us to conclude that SchooLinks was likely the best option for us, we wanted to confirm all of this with actual Geneva students. Two focus groups were held with current GHS seniors, all of whom had been through the college and career search process with our current software. Students were provided with demonstration accounts and asked to replicate some college and career tasks they had previously done in Naviance. Student feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Common themes from students indicated that they believe that when compared to Naviance, SchooLinks is more engaging, better organized, easier to navigate, and contains more helpful information.

Costs:

Aside from the initial training and implementation costs, SchooLinks is comparably priced to our current Naviance expenditure. If we were to continue with Naviance, the 2026-27 cost would be approximately \$9,300. The SchooLinks costs are broken down as follows:

Base product cost	\$8,000	Annual
Tech implementation/integration	\$2,000	One-time
SchooLinks-provided training	\$2,250	One-time
Total SchooLinks expenditure 26-27	\$12,250	

The initial term of the contract will be 3 years. In addition to the SchooLinks expenditures, there is a need for compensated implementation time to get the GHS counselors trained; we anticipate that 3 days per counselor will be needed.

Potential for future expansion:

The July 2026 implementation is for the core SchooLinks platform for students in grades 9-12, which essentially duplicates the tasks currently supported by Naviance but in a more effective way. SchooLinks does offer multiple optional add-on modules, none of which we are recommending at this time. Some of these optional modules may be duplicative of features in the new Synergy platform. As we get more comfortable with the new Synergy platform, we will be in a better position to evaluate the potential value that would be added by these optional SchooLinks modules. Additionally, in future years we may want to consider adding one or more middle school grades to SchooLinks platform so that students can work with some of the career-awareness tools that would then follow them to high school.

Conclusion and next steps

Shifting to SchooLinks will provide Geneva High School students and families with improved tools to manage the college and career search processes. With 90% of GHS graduates college-bound and 100% of GHS graduates career-bound, having an updated software platform is an important tool to help support these needs.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of SchooLinks adoption, we plan to conduct student, parent, and staff satisfaction surveys, examine usage data, and gather implementation feedback from the Counseling & Advising Office. Once SchooLinks is up and running, we would be happy to conduct a “live” walkthrough at a future board meeting to showcase the college and career resources that our students are using.

We look forward to the implementation of SchooLinks on July 1. Please let us know if you have any questions about this exciting initiative.