

COLLEGE PLANNING INFO

**PARENT
MEETING**

**JUNIORS
SOPHOMORES**

OCTOBER 19, 2009

Contents

- Action Plan
- Financial Aid Info
- SAT/ACT Info
- Graduation Requirements
- Transcript/GPA

Action Plan: Your Sophomore Year

Now that your sophomore is in the swing of things, it's time to put the pedal to the metal and get serious on building up academics. From taking challenging electives to discovering extracurricular activities, there are many important steps your child should take this year.

Fall

- Your child should review his four-year academic schedule with his school counselor. He may want to ask questions such as:
 - Am I fulfilling my minimum requirements for college admissions?
 - Are the electives I'm enrolled in challenging enough?
- Help your child update his four-year extracurricular and athletic activity schedule. Encourage him to think about new sports, instruments, or other activities he may be interested in exploring.
- Contact the school counselor about whether or not your child should register for the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), given in October.
- Meet with your child's teachers for a brief chat at the beginning of the school year.

Winter

- Read the latest news on today's college costs and how financial aid works.
- Use the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Calculator (http://apps.collegeboard.com/fincalc/efc_welcome.jsp) to estimate how much your family can reasonably be expected to pay toward college.
- Use the College Savings Calculator to see how much money your family will need for college, whether you're on track to save enough, and what you need to do to reach your goal.
- Read! Read! Read! Remember, reading helps prepare your child academically for college, while developing his interests, expanding his knowledge, and improving his vocabulary and reading comprehension skills needed for college and for standardized tests, such as the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT®, and SAT Subject Tests™. Get ideas for reading from **101 Great Books**.

Spring

- Many colleges require or recommend one or more of the SAT Subject Tests for admission or placement. Your child can take SAT Subject Tests when he has successfully completed the corresponding course in high school study (B+ average or better). He should talk to his teachers and counselor about which tests to take.
- Encourage your child to keep up the good work in subjects he's strong in, and help him set goals for improvement in weaker areas.
- Your child should meet with a school counselor to discuss possible AP® courses to take during junior year.
- Encourage your child to start making summer plans. Consider jobs, internships, volunteer opportunities, or athletic programs.
- Your child can check with a school counselor and search online for summer learning programs offered to high school students at colleges and other institutions.

Summer

- Your child should finalize summer plans.
- Help your child register online early for fall SAT tests.
- Review your child's summer reading list. Ask teachers for recommendations. Encourage him to read at least four books this summer.

Action Plan: Your Junior Year

Junior year is a whirlwind of activity, from studying for SAT[®] tests and AP[®] Exams to considering colleges to apply to and visiting campuses. On top of all that, it's important that your child keeps up good grades and continues to participate in extracurricular activities. Phew! To keep on track, follow the action items listed for each season below.

September

- This year the PSAT/NMSQT[®] counts! Taking it can qualify your child to receive a National Merit Scholarship. Be sure your child is signed up to take the PSAT/NMSQT this October.
- Your child should pick up a copy of the PSAT/NMSQT Student Guide at the school's guidance office, and take the enclosed practice test. For further practice, your child should use the online PSAT/NMSQT Preparation Center.
- Encourage your child to meet with the school counselor to compare the academic requirements for each of his target schools and his own course schedule. If necessary, he should adjust his schedule.

October

- Your child takes the PSAT/NMSQT. Be sure he checks 'yes' for Student Search Service[®] to hear from colleges and scholarships.
- Your child should visit the SAT Preparation Center[™] to take a free practice test and get materials to focus his practice where he needs it most.
- Take your child to college fairs in your area. (Wake County has a huge college fair at the McKimmon Center in late September of each year – on a Sunday afternoon.)

November

- Fall is a good time to start the college search! Encourage your child to brainstorm a list of characteristics that are important to her (e.g., location, size). By plugging criteria into College Search your child can find schools that suit his needs. He should contact the colleges to request applications and financial aid information.
- Help your child identify test requirements for his target schools, including scores for the SAT, SAT Subject Tests[™], ACT, and others. His PSAT/NMSQT scores can give

him an idea of what he would score on the SAT and help him focus his practice for it.

- Tap resources at your child's high school, in the community, and online to learn how your family can finance your child's target colleges. Learn about today's college costs and how financial aid works.
- Use the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Calculator to estimate how much your family will be expected to pay.

December

- Help your child register online for the SAT and SAT Subject Tests, which are offered several times during the year. Many colleges require or recommend one to three Subject Tests for admission or placement. If your child is planning to apply early decision, he should be sure to complete required tests by the end of junior year.
- Encourage your child to find out about college firsthand from friends who are home from college for the holidays.

January

- Help your child organize a file for college brochures and information. Before you know it, they'll start pouring in.
- Use our online Scholarship Search to find aid that matches your child's skills and interests. Talk to the school counselor with your child about local scholarship opportunities.

February

- Your child can visit the SAT Preparation Center to focus his practice for upcoming SAT tests.
- Plan to visit college campuses with your child this spring while classes are in session. Schedule interviews with admissions officers.

March

- Most students take the SAT in spring of junior year and/or fall of senior year. Help your child register online for spring and summer SAT tests.
- Your child should meet with her counselor to discuss AP courses to take senior year. He may want to consider taking a course at a local college, especially if he's interested in a subject for which his school doesn't offer AP courses.
- Now is a great time for your child to start looking for a summer job, internship, or volunteer opportunity. Real-world experience can give your child a preview of careers in which he's interested. This may help him focus his studies in college and when he's selecting a major.
- Encourage your child to meet with his school counselor and search online for summer learning programs offered to high school students at colleges.

April

- Attend local college fairs with your child.
- If applicable, your child should prepare writing samples, portfolios, audition tapes, and other material for the fall application season.

May

- Your child can take SAT Subject Tests when he has successfully completed the corresponding high school course (B+ average or better).
- Help your child make a resume of her accomplishments, activities, and work experience.
- Suggest to your child that he start a summer reading list. He may want to ask his teachers for ideas.

Summer

- Visit college campuses with your high schooler. Call ahead for tour and open house schedules.
- If your child is planning to take the SAT in the fall, he should register online now.
- Discuss different college majors with your child that relate to his interests and career goals.
- To help your child start thinking about life after high school, access MyRoad™. Your child will take MyRoad's questionnaire to get a detailed report on his personality type. Then MyRoad will connect him to in-depth information on careers and majors that are right for him. Learn about MyRoad.
- By the end of summer, your child should narrow his college list to five to eight schools. The list should include "safety" schools as well as "reach" and "match" schools.
- Help your child prepare drafts of application essays for his target schools.
- If your child plans on competing in Division I or Division II college sports and wants to be eligible to be recruited by colleges, he must register with the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse.
- Together with your child, mark a calendar with important application and financial aid dates and deadlines for senior year. Start planning for dates and deadlines with the College Application Calendar and the Financial Aid Calendar.

How Financial Aid Works

And How It Makes College Affordable for You

Financial aid is intended to make up the difference between what your family can afford to pay and what college costs. Over half of the students currently enrolled in college receive some sort of financial aid to help pay college costs.

In a Nutshell

The financial aid system is based on the goal of equal access—that anyone should be able to attend college, regardless of financial circumstances. Here's how the system works:

- Students and their families are expected to contribute to the cost of college to the extent that they're able.
- If a family is unable to contribute the entire cost, financial aid is available to bridge the gap.

Who Decides How Much My Family Is Able to Contribute?

The amount your family is able to contribute is frequently referred to as the Expected Family Contribution, or EFC. The figure is determined by whomever is awarding the aid—usually the federal government or individual colleges and universities.

The federal government and financial aid offices use need formulas that analyze your family's financial circumstances (things like income, assets, and family size) and compare them proportionally with other families' financial circumstances.

What the EFC Figure Means for Most Families

First, most families can't just pay the EFC out of current income alone. But, not to worry—the formulas assume that families will meet their contribution through a combination of savings, current income, and borrowing.

Second, financial aid is limited. The formulas therefore measure a particular family's ability to pay against other families' ability to pay.

Three Main Types of Financial Aid

Financial aid is any type of assistance used to pay college costs that is based on financial need.

Grants and Scholarships

Also called gift aid, grants don't have to be repaid and your child doesn't need to work to earn them. Grant aid comes from federal and state governments and from individual colleges. Scholarships are usually awarded based on merit.

Loans

Most financial aid comes in the form of loans, aid that must be repaid. Most loans that are awarded based on financial need are low-interest loans sponsored by the federal government. These loans are subsidized by the government so no interest accrues until your child begins repayment after graduation.

Work

Student employment and work-study aid helps students pay for education costs such as books, supplies, and personal expenses. Work-study is a federal program which provides students with part-time employment to help meet their financial needs and gives them work experience while serving their campuses and surrounding communities.

Don't Rule Out Colleges with Higher Costs

Say your child's EFC is \$5,000. At a college with a total cost of \$8,000, your child would be eligible for up to \$3,000 in financial aid. At a college with a total cost of \$25,000, your child would be eligible for up to \$20,000 in aid. In other words, your family would be asked to contribute the same amount at both colleges.

College Entrance Tests – ACT or SAT

Did Your Child Take the PSAT/NMSQT?

With My College QuickStart™, your child can:

- View a detailed online PSAT/NMSQT score report
- Prepare for the SAT using a study plan based on PSAT/NMSQT results
- Connect to detailed profiles of suggested colleges, majors, and careers

SAT: What It Means for Your Child

The SAT is a 3-hour-and-45-minute test that measures the critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills that students need to do college-level work.

What Is the Test Like?

The test's three sections are divided into nine subsections, including a 25-minute essay, which are timed separately:

Section	Tests Ability To
Critical Reading (3 sections)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Understand and analyze what is read.▪ Recognize relationships between parts of a sentence.▪ Understand word meaning in context.
Mathematics (3 sections)	Solve problems involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Algebra and functions▪ Geometry and measurement▪ Number and operations▪ Data analysis, statistics, and probability
Writing (3 sections)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use Standard Written English.▪ Identify sentence errors.▪ Write an essay and develop a point of view.

There are several breaks between sections, during which your child is welcome to eat or drink any snacks she has brought.

How Can My Child Prepare?

- Find resources to help your child prepare. Choose from collegeboard.com's online SAT preparation or SAT preparation books. All include SAT questions, tips, and strategies from the test makers.
- College Board Online Store - Visit the College Board online store to browse other test-preparation and college- planning resources.
- SAT Prep/College Planning Class at CCS
- www.cfnc.org – College Foundation of North Carolina has free test prep resources.

How Does the Scoring Work?

The SAT is designed so that a student who answers about half the questions correctly receives an average score. Each SAT section is scored on a scale of 200-800. The average score on the SAT is about 500 on the critical reading portion, 500 on the mathematics portion, and 500 on the writing portion. Some of the questions are easy, and some are hard, but the majority are of medium difficulty. Medium-difficulty questions are answered correctly by about 1/3 to 2/3 of students.

How Important Are SAT Scores?

The most important factor for college admissions is your child's high school transcript—judged by grades received and the rigor of the courses. SAT scores are intended to supplement your child's record and other information, such as extracurricular activities and recommendations.

When Should My Child Take the SAT?

Most students take the SAT at national administrations during their junior or senior year in high school. However, there are no age or grade restrictions for taking the test.

At least half of all students take the SAT twice—in the spring of junior year and in the fall of senior year. What's more, most students improve their scores the second time around. Research shows that taking the test more than twice won't significantly improve a student's score. The online score report and the report sent to your child's high school (if the high school code was provided) show the current test score in addition to scores for up to six SAT and six SAT Subject Test administrations.

What is Score Choice™?

Students have the option to choose which scores (by test date for the SAT and by individual test for SAT Subject Tests) to send to colleges—in accordance with an institution's stated score-use practice. They can choose scores from one, several, or all SAT test dates.

Register for the ACT at <http://www.act.org>.

Register for the SAT at <http://www.collegeboard.com>.

CCS SCHOOL CODE: 341-764 (also known as CEEB code)

Use this school code when registering for testing so that we receive an official score report for your student.

Some schools prefer SAT; others ACT; some don't mind which one you do. YOU MUST RESEARCH TO FIND OUT FROM YOUR COLLEGES WHICH TEST THEY ARE LOOKING FOR. If you need help registering for the first time for either the SAT or ACT, make an appointment with Mrs. Choplin. You will need a form of payment (debit card, credit card) for the online registration. If you would prefer to register with a paper registration, you may get one from Mrs. Choplin's office. You will need to make sure your registration packet is postmarked by the deadline date for your test or the late fees apply.

Our CEEB Code: 341-764

Fall 2009: New Minimum Admission Requirements

These new standards for GPAs and test scores will be implemented incrementally between Fall 2009 and Fall 2013, as indicated in the table below. These scores are minimums and do not guarantee entry at any UNC institution. Students not meeting these minimum requirements may complete the A.A., A.S., or A.F.A. degree or the 44-hour general education core at a North Carolina community college to be eligible for transfer consideration to a four-year public university.

Entering Term	Minimum GPA	Minimum SAT*	Minimum ACT	Exceptions Per Campus
Fall 2009	2.0	700	15	1%
Fall 2010	2.0	700	15	1%
Fall 2011	2.3	750	16	1%
Fall 2012	2.3	750	16	1%
Fall 2013 and beyond	2.5	800	17	1%

*Min. SAT in this case refers to the sum of the Critical Reading score and the Math score only (not the Writing score).

Recommended Classes – collegeboard.com

A Great Schedule Leads to College Success

Your child should take at least five solid academic classes every semester. The following subjects and classes are standard fare for success in college and beyond, whether your child attends a four-year, two-year, or technical school.

English (Language Arts)

Students should take English every year. Traditional courses such as American and English literature will help improve your child's writing skills, reading comprehension, and vocabulary.

- Literature
- Writing / composition and/or speech

Math

Your child needs algebra and geometry to succeed on college entrance exams, in college math classes, and in most careers. Students should take them early on in order to enroll in advanced science and math in high school—and to show colleges that they're ready for higher-level work.

- Algebra
- Geometry
- Algebra II
- Trigonometry, calculus, and/or statistics

Science

Science teaches students to think analytically and apply theories to reality. Laboratory classes let students test what they have learned through hands-on work. Six semesters are recommended.

- Two semesters in biology
- Two semesters in chemistry and/or physics
- Two semesters in earth/space sciences, advanced biology, advanced chemistry, or physics

Social Studies

Students can understand local and world events by studying the culture and history that has shaped them. Social sciences round out your child's core curriculum.

- Two semesters in U.S. history
- One semester of U.S. government
- One semester in economics
- One semester in world history or geography
- One additional semester in the above, or other areas

Foreign Languages

Solid foreign language study shows colleges your child is willing to stretch beyond the basics. Many colleges require two years of foreign language study, and some prefer more.

The Arts

Research shows that students who participate in the arts often do better in school and on standardized tests. The arts help students recognize patterns, discern differences and similarities, and exercise their minds in unique ways, oftentimes outside a traditional classroom setting.

Computer Science

More and more college courses and jobs require at least a basic knowledge of computers. Computer skills also can help students do research and schoolwork better and faster. Your child should take advantage of resources available at school to become familiar with computers and the Internet.

Advanced Placement Program® (AP®)

Your child can try out college-level work in a variety of subjects while mastering valuable skills, and, with satisfactory grades, can receive college credit. More than 3,000 colleges and universities award credit based on satisfactory AP Exam grades.

Dual Enrollment (Concurrent Enrollment)

Many schools do not have an AP program in place, but students have access to local community colleges that allow high school students to take courses tuition-free (student pays for student fees & textbooks) that give them college-level credit while in high school. Most community colleges require the student to apply for admission and complete a Dual Enrollment form.

Independent Study

Many schools allow motivated students to pursue independent study of subjects that are not being taught at their school, often with a teacher as an advisor.

Calculating Your GPA

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Indicates a student's overall scholastic performance. It is computed by assigning a point value to each grade.

A = 4 points

B = 3 points

C = 2 points

D = 1 point

F = 0 points

Add all points for your classes and divide the total by the number of classes. That's your GPA.

Your GPA is on your transcript.

Transcript Requests

If you need transcripts sent to a college, please fill out the Transcript Request Form (available in front office and on our website) and turn in to Kelly Choplin, Academic Counselor. Make sure you don't wait til the last minute to do this; Mrs. Choplin also teaches and will need some time to generate, doublecheck, and mail your transcript. Colleges usually want the transcript sealed and mailed directly from CCS to their Admissions, but you can request an unofficial copy for yourself, if you need it.

You may fax the Transcript Request Form to (252) 431-0333, hand deliver it to the school, open it from the school website, save it as Word document, and email it as an attachment to kchoplin@ccscolts.org, or mail it to the school at PO Box 249, Henderson, NC 27536.

Contact Info

Kelly Choplin

252-431-1333, x2109

kchoplin@ccscolts.org

College Planning Info

- www.ccscolts.org > College Planning link
Links to resources and a College Planning Handbook for CCS students.
- www.collegeboard.com
- www.cfnc.org