

## You're a junior! Now what?

Ok, so you've made it to the "solid & confident" year – you are no longer the youngest in high school, you're in charge of prom, and you don't have to think about college for another whole year. It's a feel-good, worry-free year, right?

### *A busy fall...*

In **August**, your college admissions counselor will provide you with a career interest inventory exercise to help you identify the jobs you might imagine yourself doing in a few years. This exercise will also help you figure out the education/training you would need to get those jobs. Even though you are a year away from college applications, it's a good time to touch base with your counselor about what you should be doing to reach your goals. Your counselor will also give you practice guides for taking the PSAT in October. All CCS juniors take the PSAT.

The fall is a good time to begin attending college fairs and visiting college campuses to get a feel for the type of college you might like. You should be researching colleges through their websites, college fairs, admissions representatives and applications, books, and college guides.

In **September**, your counselor will arrange for the North Carolina Early Mathematics Placement Testing (NCEMPT) to take place in your math classes. You will have the opportunity to take it again in the spring so you can compare your progress. The NCEMPT program is free and offered through East Carolina University and is aimed at identifying math weaknesses early so students can be more prepared for college-level math, reducing the need for remedial courses once they get to college.

The counselor at CCS usually plans at least two college visits and attendance to a local college fair in **September** and **October**. Each year, students are exposed to a variety of types of post-secondary choices: public, private, community college, military, and trade schools. However, these visits are meant to show students what to look for and to encourage them to explore *on their own with their parents* at the colleges of their choice.

Two websites you should definitely check out are these:

- **CFNC.org (College Foundation of North Carolina):** <http://www.cfnc.org> - This statewide site has tons of resources here for high school, college & career planning. All the info you need on all the public universities & colleges, private colleges, and community colleges in North Carolina. Great videos on paying for college, too!
- **College Board's Big Future site:** <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/?navid=gh-cp> – This nationwide database of info covers more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the U.S. This site also has links to help students research financial planning, careers, colleges, and majors. College Board is the site where you go to register for the SAT.

**In October**, all juniors take the PSAT at Crossroads at no additional cost to the student. By taking the [PSAT/NMSQT](#), you gain practice at taking a college entrance standardized test (specifically the SAT, but the skills carry over to any type of test like this like the ACT or COMPASS). Taking the PSAT will also make you eligible for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. For more info about the PSAT at Crossroads, visit the PSAT page under Standardized Testing.

### *In the spring...*

In **January**, as soon as we get back from Christmas break, your college counselor will meet with all sophomores and juniors to help set up College Board accounts and review the PSAT scores. PSAT scores generally arrive during our exam week in December.

You may also want to consider registering for the ACT or SAT offered in the spring of your junior year. Usually you will find May and June dates that will work for you. If you aren't pleased with your score, you will still have another opportunity your senior year to take the test again. You will also be placed on the mailing lists of various schools' that you select when you register.

Don't forget to consider military options for a higher education. Review websites and meet with military representatives when they visit your school or visit the schools. Most military academies and colleges start the admissions process earlier than traditional colleges and universities. You may need to take the ASVAB test as part of the admissions process. Your counselor will set up ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) testing in the spring of the year for all 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders. An armed services representative will visit the school to interpret the scores with students and show how they can be indicators of performance for the SAT or ACT.

**March, April, or May** all offer testing dates for the SAT or ACT. Study for these college entrance exams before you take one so you are not wasting your testing fee! You can find many advice tutorials on YouTube, free full-length practice tests on the College Board or ACT websites, as well as lots of tips and tricks for taking these tests. Do your research. You should be able to stop by your counselor's office and pick up a practice booklet, too.

### *Smart Moves for Your Junior Year*

- **Create a resume.**

Your resume should talk about yourself outside of school. Your colleges will already know your grades and test scores since these are included on your school transcript. Items that should be included are these:

- school activities,
- community activities,
- community service,
- sports,
- awards and recognition,
- hobbies, and
- work experience.

You can use this resume to give to teachers when you ask for a teacher recommendation letter. Some colleges require these, and the information on your resume can help your teachers write some solid recommendations on your behalf! Your college counselor also has a document called a Teacher Recommendation Cheat Sheet that can help you develop a resume.

- **Stay active in extracurricular activities.**

While your grades in high school are important, colleges also look at what you do outside the classroom. They like to see that you are involved in sports, student government, and community activities, and that you take on leadership roles when available.

- **Discuss college finances with your family.**

When performing your college search, you need to know how much your family will be able to contribute towards your college education. Always remember that just because a college may seem expensive and out of your reach, never assume anything. There are several types of financial aid that may enable you to attend a college that may seem too expensive. Often, through financial aid packages, students find they can attend a private college for less money than a public one, so never discount the independent schools without checking first!

- **Enjoy being a junior!** It will go by fast – take part in all the activities you can and enjoy being with your family. You have this year and the next, and then you'll be moving away to college!