



CARY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Sophomore College Counseling: October 2022

PROVIDING AN EXCELLENT *classical* EDUCATION, FOUNDED UPON A *biblical* WORLDVIEW



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CARY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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Welcome and Topics

We are going to cover:

1. **Changes in the College Admission Landscape**
2. Testing
3. PSAT
4. Upcoming college counseling events
5. College Tours
6. Specialized recruiting
7. Scoir
8. Summer Activities

Changes in the College Admission Landscape

For the current admission cycle, most, but not all colleges are test optional. This means that they are doing holistic review of applications.

Holistic review: evaluating student's transcript for both courses and grades
application including the Common App Essay and short answer essays
teacher letters of recommendation
school profile
activities, sports, jobs,
outside learning opportunities
using test scores where applicable
counselor letters of recommendation (aka written evaluation)

What holistic review means for you

- **Your transcript and grades matter. Colleges use transcripts, not report cards.** Students, work hard in your classes. Get help if necessary. Most colleges put heavy emphasis on your junior grades.
 - Develop good study and organizational skills.
 - If you haven't fulfilled your elective requirements try to do that by the end of sophomore year.
 - Explore things. Take electives beyond the required ones. I suggest at least one elective a semester.
 - Be involved at our school and in the community.
 - As you get to be upper classmen, take on leadership roles.
 - Be a reader! Read books beyond the required books for your class.
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- Note: even when some schools require test scores, others will still be doing a holistic review. **Always**, your transcript is the single most important thing for college admission.

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Testing

- Due to the pandemic, most colleges are test optional for students applying for Fall 2023 admission (current seniors.) While some schools will stay test optional for Fall 2024 admission (current juniors), others have announced that they will be requiring tests (SAT, ACT, or in some cases CLT.) I think that current sophomores will need college admission test scores.
- Why? Because testing is a standardized way to gauge a student's academics. While most all schools value the student's academic record (transcript) above test scores, they can glean valuable info from test scores.
- Students should plan to take those tests.

What does that mean to you?

- **I suggest that sophomores have one college admissions test completed before the start of their junior year.** There are a couple of reasons for this: students being closer to algebra, ability for students to do free practice for tests, and avoiding the stress that comes with not having a test score. I recommend that sophomores test once during the 2nd semester.
- There are trade-offs with testing sophomore year. While students are closer to algebra, there are math topics that won't be covered until the end of Algebra II or in 11th grade including logarithms, rational functions, and an in-depth study of trigonometry. Let's balance testing with the student's overall well-being.
- **Suggested testing time frame: students try to take a college admissions test once 2nd semester sophomore year (or before start of junior year), two to three times junior year, and, if necessary, senior year.** *Proper preparation is necessary before each sitting.*

College Admissions Testing

ACT: www.ACT.org

Four sections: Reading, writing, science, and math

36 perfect score

Note: pre-pandemic, they had announced a single section retest would be available. That has been delayed.

SAT: www.collegeboard.org

Part of the SAT suite of assessments which include the PSAT and SAT.

Two sections: EBRW and Math

1600 perfect score

Moving to digital testing. More info on that in the next section on the PSAT.

CLT: www.clt.org

New, classical test. There is a limited but growing college acceptance

Strongly consider ACT if English > Math by 70 points on SAT.

Strongly consider SAT if Math > English by 50 points on SAT.

If not sure which to take, consider the ACT for 2nd semester sophomore year.

ACT Superscoring

- This shows a student taking the ACT three times with the student's highest composite score of 22.
- The student's superscore is actually 22.5 which rounds up to 23.

TEST DATE	ENGLISH SCORE	MATH SCORE	READING SCORE	SCIENCE SCORE	COMPOSITE SCORE
APRIL	19	20	23	21	21
JUNE	22	22	20	22	22
SEPTEMBER	20	23	21	21	21

SAT Superscoring

Date	EBRW	Math	Score
August	550	620	1170
September	620	550	1170
May	590	670	1250
Superscore	620	670	1290

Test Prep

“By failing to prep, you are preparing to fail”..... maybe not quite, but you aren’t preparing to succeed either

- ACT offers the ACT Academy for free and charges a fee for other services.
- SAT links with Khan Academy and is free.

Don’t go in cold to a test! Do test prep!

- **For sophomore testing: I recommend self-studying for the SAT or ACT with either one of the free online resources, the Barron’s study guide for the ACT or the SAT, or the official ACT or SAT study guide.**

Start with 30 minutes a day, 3 times a week for the two weeks leading up to the test if you have already taken the PSAT. If you didn’t take the PSAT, a whole practice test is worthwhile.

- A list of Test Prep Tutors is available outside of my office. I recommend waiting until Junior year until hiring a test prep tutor, if you choose to do that.

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PSAT Results-Last year's class

If a sophomore took the PSAT in October, those results will be available in December.

Last year's results:

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| • National Average | EBRW: 506 | Math: 488 | Total: 994 |
| • CCS Juniors | EBRW: 643 | Math: 588 | Total: 1231 |
| • Benchmarks for 11th grade | EBRW: 460 | Math: 510 | |
- What the Benchmarks mean: The College and Career Readiness Benchmarks for the current SAT predict a 75% likelihood of achieving a C or higher in related first-semester, credit-bearing college courses. The benchmarks are set at the section level, so there is a benchmark for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and a benchmark for Math. Score reports for the PSAT include grade-level benchmarks based on how students grow from year to year toward the SAT benchmarks.
 - Last year, all CCS Juniors met the benchmark for EBRW.

Understanding your PSAT answer sheet

These will be available around the second week of December.

- Approaching Benchmarks
- Answer keys-Go over your answers and learn what you got incorrect. That is the way to work towards improvement.
- Link to Khan Academy for FREE test prep! Most students will benefit from developing a test prep routine and habit. **If your son or daughter did not meet the benchmarks, I recommend tutoring and test prep.**
- Peer Tutor list in the Knightly News. I have a list of test prep tutors outside of my office.

PSAT/NMSQT for next year

Junior year PSAT is also the National Merit Standardized Qualifying Test

- When they are Juniors, they will have the opportunity to take the PSAT/NMSQT to qualify for National Merit Scholarships.
- The PSAT will be digital. Usually, it is the second Wednesday of October (during break.) Dates will be announced by College Board.
- We will partner with a test prep company, Compass Prep, to offer a practice digital PSAT. Date TBD.

Timeline for the digital PSAT and SAT for current Sophomores

October 2022: PSAT Paper
Spring 2023: SAT Paper or ACT Paper

1st Semester Junior Year
October 2023: PSAT/NMSQT Digital
October 2023: SAT Paper or ACT Paper

2nd Semester Junior Year and beyond
SAT Digital or ACT Paper
1st Semester Senior Year

	October 2022	October 2023	March 2024
PSAT			
SAT			

More on the digital SAT

From Compass Prep https://www.compassprep.com/digital_sat/

- **Stage Adaptive, The Basics**
- The adaptive nature of the exam is critical to making it a much shorter test.
- When a student connects the app to the internet and starts a test, the app downloads three sets of questions (modules) per section to the testing device.
- Each section is broken into two stages:
 - Reading & Writing contains two stages of 27 questions in 32 minutes
 - Math contains two stages of 22 questions in 35 minutes
- All students take the test in the following order: Reading & Writing Stage 1, Reading & Writing Stage 2, Break, Math Stage 1, Math Stage 2
- The SAT is **not** item-adaptive where every question varies based on performance (like the GMAT). Rather, it is stage-adaptive (like the GRE). It will only adapt once for Reading & Writing and only once for Math. This lowers the stakes on any one question and also preserves the ability to go backward and forward within a stage.
- The first stage of each section is not adaptive (item difficulty will not “adapt” to a student’s performance) and it contains a full range of question difficulty.
- At the end of the first stage, the test will choose which of the two remaining sets of questions (modules) is an appropriate level of difficulty: one module will be on average, easier and the other module will be on average more difficult. This shift in difficulty is critical to getting to an accurate score on a shorter test.

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Upcoming College Counseling Events

Sophomores

- AP Exam Only Registration Deadline: Friday, October 28th
- See Knightly News from September 22nd for AP PowerPoint and AP Exam Only Registration information. Remember it is a two-step process:
 1. Register on College Board using the Joining Codes
 2. Pay on Veracross. The easiest way to do so is by clicking the link in the Knightly News
- College Counseling class time with Sophomores-2nd semester
- Career Connection Day-2nd semester
- Anticipated College Panel Discussion-2nd semester
- Register for a SAT or ACT in 2nd semester
- Create Scoir account (more info on that in the next section)

College Counseling Food for Thought

Dual Enrollment

- CCS is partnering with Colorado Christian University to offer Dual Enrollment Classes
- Dual Enrollment = earning college credit for a class while still in high school
- They are available to Juniors and Seniors
- See info in the September 22nd Knightly News for the CCU PowerPoint

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College Tours

Finding the right college is a match to be made, not a prize to be won.

- In an ideal world, sophomores would begin visiting colleges and maybe even have been on a college tour already.
- If your child hasn't been on a college campus recently, I suggest letting them see NCSU, Peace, Meredith, Shaw, Duke, UNC-CH, or Campbell since all are nearby. You can drive through the schools and get a feel of urban (NCSU, Peace, or Shaw), college town (Carolina—Go Heels!), small/rural (Campbell), small (Meredith), and insulated in a city (Duke).
- At this point, I suggest looking at a mix of private and state schools. Some private schools offer great academic scholarships, have managed to be in person this fall, and provide more personalized education.
- Will your fall/spring break or summer travels take your near colleges? If so, include a tour or two. *In junior year, make an earnest effort to tour campuses.*

Why to consider a Christian college

- As parents, you have invested in your child's classical Christian education. Your children have a good foundation. The secular culture at public colleges is moving further away from a Biblical worldview. What influences do you want professors and students to have on your child?
- Look at the college's goals, purpose, and culture. What do they value? What do they promote?
- Most Christian schools have cultures that support the Gospel. But you still must do your due diligence.
- Look at the retention rate, graduation rate, % going to medical and law school, % employed in 6 months after graduation. Sometimes Christian schools have higher percentages than some well-known large public schools. Consider the intangibles such as a culture that supports the Christian faith.
- From Grove City's website: Students leave here prepared to thrive. *The Princeton Review* ranked Grove City College #8 in the country for its career services office and for internships. Also, 96% of our graduates are employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation—going on to earn salaries that rank us in the top 13% in the nation for alumni earnings.

If not a Christian school, suggestions for growing in faith at a secular school

(These are also appropriate suggestions for students at Christian schools as well.)

- When looking at a secular school, pay attention to what the admissions reps are espousing about their campus. Know what you are up against. Parents and students, I encourage you to have real conversations about those things. Parents, campuses are not what they used to be. (Expect an influx of Wokeness.) Students, campuses are not as good as you think. Talk and pray through these things.
- I encourage students to get connected with Christian organizations. Look at campus ministries such as Cru, Young Life, RUF (Reformed University Fellowship), Baptist Student Ministry, etc. The most important things from my perspective are to find one that is Gospel centered and where the student connects well with others. Ask on tours about campus ministries. If the tour guide is not aware of any, that tells you something.
- I also encourage students to find a local church.

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Specialized Recruiting

- Thinking about a United States Service Academy?
- Summer Session is usually for the students who are between junior and senior year. Sports camps are available.
- Want to play a sport in college? Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Consider summer sports camps. Talk to Mr. Poore or Mr. Cathy for suggestions.

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We have transitioned to Scoir

- www.scoir.com
- Scoir is designed to offer a user-friendly solution for students, parents, counselors, and colleges to navigate through the college search and application process.
- Students can like, follow, and apply to colleges via Scoir.
- Scoir has partnered with The Coalition Application to allow students to apply via Scoir.
- Scoir offers a well-regarded aptitude test called YouScience

Scoir and YouScience

Why Aptitude Matters?

- Most secondary career guidance solutions rely solely on interest and personality surveys. Only **YouScience** Discovery combines psychometrically valid brain game-like exercises that uncover students' aptitudes with an interest inventory.
- Analyzing the results of Discovery assessments supports that interest-only assessments reinforce biases and fail to give students an accurate picture of what they can do or will find satisfying.
- An aptitude-based assessment coupled with career matching, however, lets students self-discover their talents, gain self awareness, and find career opportunities that align with those talents. It strips away the biases and exposes students to careers they did not know about, did not think they could do, or perhaps, had never considered. It shows them careers they are wired to do well at and will find satisfying because mastering the skills needed will be natural rather than stressful.

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YouScience Student Ability Report P. 5

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Summer Activities and Volunteering Ideas

- Volunteer Activities-Dorcas Shop, Habitat for Humanity, local hospitals, YMCA, Miracle League, Teen Court, tutoring, etc.
- Mission Trips
- Jobs
- College Camps – explore potential majors or careers. Learn new skills. See my bulletin board!
- Summer Sessions for Service Academies
- Summer sports camps
- NC Governor's School for students in dance, choral music, and instrumental music for sophomores
- Boy Scout High Adventure opportunities, Venture Scouts, Civil Air Patrol, etc.
- Possible goals: broaden your horizon, serve the community, serve the disadvantaged population, make money, learn a new skill, explore, etc.

Conclusion

Questions and Answers



THANK YOU

Cary Christian School College Counseling Presentation

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