



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



# CARY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Freshmen and Sophomore College Counseling  
November 2023

# CARY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Laura Smith

Director of College Counseling

[lsmith@carychristianschool.org](mailto:lsmith@carychristianschool.org)

919-303-2560 x248

Dickinson College, BA in Political Science and Policy Management Studies

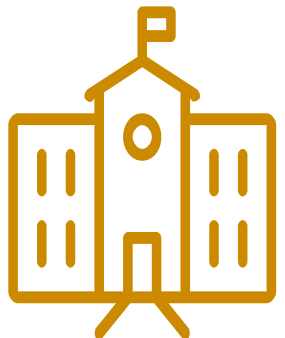
Hood College, MBA

University of California Riverside, Certificate in College Counseling

Teshia McGinnis

College Counseling Administrative Assistant

[tmcginnis@carychristianschool.org](mailto:tmcginnis@carychristianschool.org)



# Topics

College Counseling at CCS

Knightly News and College Counseling Component Page on Veracross

Freshman Year is Foundational

Sophomore Steps to Success

College Admission Landscape

Transcripts

Testing

Scoir

Summer Activities and Volunteering

Future College Counseling Activities

# What does College Counseling involve at Cary Christian School?

- Grade appropriate college counseling with grade-wide meetings for students and parents.
- In class grade appropriate college counseling activities starting with one in class time in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades and increasing throughout high school.
- College Counseling Component Pages in Veracross and regular emails, usually quarterly.
- Scoir
- Career exploration via Career Connections and PrinciplesYou in Scoir.
- PSAT and AP Exam Administration.
- Individual Student/Parent/College Counselor meetings 2<sup>nd</sup> semester Junior Year.
- Individual college and scholarship application help senior year.
- Practice interviews for colleges and scholarships.
- NC Governor's School and scholarship application process.

# Your Cary Christian School Education prepares you well for your future

- Our curriculum meets or exceeds the admissions requirements of the University of North Carolina System (all 16 colleges and universities.)
- Our school profile is sent with each transcript when a senior applies to college to showcase our academics and opportunities available for Rhetoric students at CCS.
- Our students are well prepared to succeed.
- Our students have matriculated to many highly selective colleges and universities.
- We have an intentional college counseling program.
- We encourage students and parents to follow the college counseling process.

# Knightly News Communication and Component Pages

## How to keep current on CCS College Counseling

Please read the **Knightly News** on a weekly basis to find events, meetings, and what is up and coming for Freshman students.

1. Click on the Knightly News link
2. Click on the College Counseling section

**College Counseling Component Pages** are in Veracross in the parent and student portals.

1. Sign in to your Veracross account
2. College Counseling
3. This is where you will see the different grade levels with specific information for that specific grade

# Freshman Year is Foundational

- All the doors for your future are open to you!
- Middle school grades do not carry forward. You entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade with a blank slate. Make the best of it.
- Grades matter.
- Develop good study skills.
- Participate in extracurricular activities at CCS, in the community, and at church.
- Explore summer activities; jobs, entrepreneurship, summer camps, or classes.
- Scoir information





## Look to the Future for a Minute

Who do you want to be?

Who is your role model and why?

What character traits do you admire in others?

How do you develop those character traits?

# Role Models

Is your role model a.....

- Professional athlete?
- Church leader?
- Older sibling or student at your school?
- Teacher?
- Blogger?
- Musician?
- Author?
- Parent?
- Scientist?



# How do you get there?

- Use a planner or organizer.
- Keep track of your assignments.
- Do your assignments.
- Ask your teacher for help if you don't understand something.
- Incorporate noble character traits.



# Sophomore Steps to Success

- Be well rounded.
- Get involved with a mix of activities.
- Your grades matter and should reflect your academic ability.
- Be responsible about your schoolwork by using your planner, completing your work, and turning it in on time.
- Learn to advocate for yourself.
- **College admission testing** should start second semester sophomore year.
- **Complete PrinciplesYou** in Scoir during second semester sophomore year.
- **Begin touring colleges.**

# New things on the College Admissions Landscape

- Most colleges are doing some sort of holistic review. Holistic review includes looking at grades, courses, test scores, activities, teacher letter of recommendation, and counselor evaluation.
- This means starting in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, you should work hard so that your grades reflect your academic ability.
- Get involved in activities at school, in church, or the community.
- Many colleges are “test optional” but not all.
- However, that could change for you. Therefore, you should plan to test for the first-time towards the end of Sophomore year. ACT and SAT are the big two. CLT is a distant, but up-and-coming third.
- Testing still matters for some of our regional colleges and highly selective and elite schools.
- Increasingly more schools are doing self-reported grades and test scores.

# Transcripts

- College Admissions documents include transcripts not report cards.
- On your transcript, grades are reported on a semester basis that include your semester final exam and have a yearly grade.
- *Final grade matters.*
- Classes are reported with credits. For example, History for a year is 1 credit.
- Electives are graded by semester and earn .5 credits per semester. They do not count towards your GPA.
- Seminar is an Honors course and graded, but the grade does not get included in your GPA.
- CCS uses a rigorous Honors curriculum which is on a 5-point GPA scale.
- AP Classes are on a 6-point scale. Passed AP Exams are listed on your transcript, and you can receive a GPA boost. (See AP PowerPoint for more information on that.)
- CCS activities are listed on your transcript after you have made the roster or fulfilled the club requirements.

# Transcripts cont.

- If a student was not present at this meeting, the student must complete the form at the front before picking up the student's transcript/folder from Mrs. McGinnis or Ms. Smith.
- Please verify that all the personal information is correct. If it isn't correct, a parent can correct it through the parent portal.
- Note: the phone number on your transcript needs to be the main number in Veracross. Most likely it is a home phone number or a parent's cell phone number. That is okay.

# College Admissions Testing

- Due to the pandemic, many colleges are still test optional for students applying for Fall 2024 admission (current seniors.) However, that is changing! Some state systems, including Florida and some of the universities in Georgia require them. Therefore, current sophomores should have college admission test scores.
- Why? Because testing is a standardized way to gauge a student's academics. While colleges typically value the student's transcript above test scores, they can glean valuable information from the test scores.
- Some honors colleges and scholarships require them even if the college itself is test optional.
- For sophomores, I recommend that you prepare before you take a test by doing self-studying on the testing website. Junior year is when you should consider hiring a tutor, if necessary.
- Suggested time frame: one test 2<sup>nd</sup> semester sophomore year (or before the start of junior year), two or three times during junior year, and, if necessary, senior year.
- ACT, SAT, and CLT are the three college admissions tests.



# ACT

ACT: [www.ACT.org](http://www.ACT.org)

Four sections: Reading, writing, science, and math. Each section is scored on a 36-point scale. A 36 is a perfect score.

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

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

ACT is offered once a month in September, October, December, February, April, June, and July.

ACT offers free ACT Academy and offers test prep that you can purchase.

# SAT

SAT: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

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

Two sections: EBRW and Math. Paper tests through December and then moving to an online digitally adaptive test in 2024.

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

SAT is offered once a month in August, October, November, December, March, May, and June

SAT offers Khan Academy for free and offers test prep that you can purchase.

SAT no longer offers SAT II's (Subject Tests) or the Essay (Writing).

Coming 2024, online digitally adaptive testing with a shorter SAT.

# CLT

- [www.CLTEXAM.com](http://www.CLTEXAM.com)
- The Classical Learning Test is also a digital test.
- We administer the **CLT 10** to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders as our required standard testing in the spring. Students can get their results by logging into their CLT accounts. Information on creating a CLT account will come in the spring.
- The CLT is a distant third in college admissions testing. Starting this year, the Florida college system approved the CLT for Florida colleges. Many Christian colleges also accept it. Check the CLT website a complete list.

# Digital Adaptive SAT and PSAT

## How the Digital SAT and PSAT is Structured

The digital SAT is composed of two sections: Reading and Writing and Math. Students have 64 minutes to complete the Reading and Writing section and 70 minutes to complete the Math section for a total of **2 hours and 14 minutes**.

Each section is divided into 2 equal length modules, and there is a 10-minute break between the Reading and Writing section and the Math section. The first module of each section contains a broad mix of easy, medium, and hard questions. Based on how students perform on the first module, the second module of questions will either be more difficult or less difficult.

Compared to the ACT<sup>®</sup>, the SAT provides 68% more time per question: Most of the questions are multiple choice, though some of the math questions ask you to enter the answer rather than select it. On all questions, there's no penalty for guessing: if you're not sure of the answer, it's better to guess than leave the response blank.

# How CCS Prepared for the first Digitally Adaptive PSAT

- We administered the test on a school day.
- We upgraded the internet in the gym to support the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- We gave instructions on how to prepare student's devices for the test and did a pre-administrations test.
- We gave 9<sup>th</sup> grade a practice PSAT through Compass Prep so that the students could become familiar with digital testing.
- Ms. Smith recommended to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students practice on Khan Academy prior to the test in October.

# CCS has provided Scoir for you

- Scoir is designed to offer a user-friendly solution for students, parents, and college counselors to navigate through the college search and application process.
- Students can like, follow, and eventually apply to colleges via Scoir.
- Scoir offers a well-regarded aptitude test called *PrinciplesYou*.
- Ms. Smith recommends that students complete this aptitude test second semester sophomore year.
- [www.Scoir.com](http://www.Scoir.com)

# What should freshmen and sophomores do in Scoir?

- Update your profile and add a picture.
- Be sure your parents are in Scoir. Invite them to your account if they aren't already.
- Upload awards or portfolio pieces into "My Drive" in Scoir.
- Follow a couple of colleges.
- Complete the survey in your Scoir account by November 30<sup>th</sup>.
- I recommend waiting until second semester sophomore year to complete *PrinciplesYou* in the Career Assessment section.

# Summer Activities and Volunteering Ideas

- Volunteer Activities-Dorcas Shop, Habitat for Humanity, local hospitals, YMCA, Miracle League, Teen Court, tutoring, etc.
- Mission Trips
- Jobs
- Camp Counselor or Counselor in Training (CIT)
- College Camps – explore potential majors or careers or learn new skills.
- Governor’s School
- Boys’ State, Girls’ State, 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.



# Summary of Freshman Year is Foundational

- All the doors for your future are open to you!
- You entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade with a blank slate. Make the best of it.
- Grades matter. Let them reflect your academic ability.
- Develop good study, organizational, and time-management skills.
- Participate in extracurricular activities at CCS, in the community, and at church.

# Summary of the Sophomore Steps to Success

## Second Semester Sophomore Year

1. Complete the Steps to Success Survey in Scoir by November 30<sup>th</sup>.
2. Sign up and take either the SAT or ACT second semester sophomore year or before the start of your junior year.
3. Do the character and career test PrinciplesYou in Scoir second semester sophomore year.
4. Start visiting colleges.

# Looking to the future

- For sophomores, AP Exam Only registration deadline for 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades extended until Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. Note, since it is past the November 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, a \$25 CCS Fee has already been applied to each Exam. Students must complete both steps to be registered. See Knightly News from September 21<sup>st</sup> for the College Board Joining Codes and CCS payment information. Since we are beyond the deadline, **students must email Ms. Smith and Mrs. McGinnis to let us know they have registered.**
- Save the date for the **CCS College Admissions Panel** on February 21<sup>st</sup> from 7 pm to 8:30 pm.
- **Career Connections is Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.** Be sure to indicate careers that interest you in the survey on Scoir.

Looking further into the future:

- AP Exams will be administered May 6<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please note, CCS is administering **AP Biology on the late testing date of Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> due to CCS graduation.**
- AP Classes (AP Biology for Sophomores, and AP Physics and AP Calculus AB **or** AP Statistics for Seniors.)
- Dual Enrollment for Juniors and Seniors will be Fall 2024.



# THANK YOU

Cary Christian School College Counseling Presentation