



# CARY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Junior College Counseling: January 2024



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

# CARY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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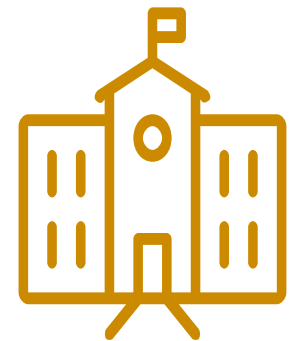
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# Welcome and Topics

- We are going to cover:
  - College Admission Updates
  - PSAT Results
  - College Admission Testing
  - Individual Junior Meeting
  - Upcoming College Counseling Events
  - College Lists and Visits
  - Specialized Recruiting
  - Summer Activities
  - Resumes
  - Additional Support Available

# College Admission Updates – January 2024

- While many colleges remain test optional, I recommend having a test score that supports your GPA and academic ability.
- Even though applying to college may be test optional, test scores may be used in determining scholarships.
- More colleges are doing some sort of a holistic review.
- Some colleges require self-reported grades (SRAR) and test scores. Accuracy matters. Be sure to follow the instructions on the college admission website.
- Nationally, students are applying to more colleges.
- Admission rates are fluctuating. Some schools are becoming more competitive while others are admitting more students.

# PSAT Results

Students access their score results online via [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

If the student completed the PSAT/NMSQT as a junior, they are technically in competition.

National Merit Index:  $2(\text{Reading} + \text{Writing} + \text{math}) = \text{Index}$

National Merit Scholars are determined by state. Previous years in NC Index has been 218-222.

One measurement that is reported with the PSAT or SAT score is a benchmark which is the likelihood of earning a C or better in a corresponding college class.

According to College Board, *“Students are considered college and career ready when their SAT section scores meet both the Math and English/Writing benchmarks. It’s important to note that college readiness is a continuum-students scoring below the SAT benchmarks can still be successful in college, especially with additional preparation and perseverance.”*

I have already emailed students and parents for those who didn’t meet the benchmarks. I highly suggest tutoring in those areas.

For everyone, I highly suggest linking to Khan Academy for FREE test prep geared to your strengths and weaknesses.

# CCS Juniors PSAT Results October 2023

- National Average: 978                      RW: 494                      Math: 484
  - **CCS Juniors: 1111**                      **RW: 578**                      **Math: 533**
  - Benchmarks for 11<sup>th</sup> grade              EBRW: 460                      Math: 510
- 
- What the Benchmarks Mean according to College Board: The College and Career Readiness Benchmarks for the 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.
  - When reviewing a score report, areas in green reflect a student's strengths. Areas that are yellow or red reflect areas for a student to prioritize for additional work.

# College Admission Testing

## Understanding the Terminology

**Test Optional** – Test scores are not required but can be included with a student’s application. (UNC System, UVA, VT, Liberty, and Wake Forest to name a few.)

**Test Required** – College admission test scores are required. (The Florida College System, US Service Academies, GT, UGA, MIT, and others.)

**Test Blind** – The college will not consider a test score even if it is submitted. (California System, Catholic University, Dickinson College, and others.)

### Notes:

1. CCS students have better success at Test Optional colleges when they have a test score that supports their GPA.
2. Some colleges that are test optional or test blind may still require a student to submit a test score upon enrollment.



# College Admissions Testing- see calendar in your folder

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

Four sections: Reading, writing, science, and math. Each section is worth 36 points. A 36 is a perfect score. Strongly consider ACT if English > Math by 70 points on SAT or in general. ACT had planned to introduce a single section retest before the pandemic. That has been put on hold. Reports are that it will remain a paper test for the near future.

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

Part of the SAT Suite of Assessments which include the PSAT and SAT.

Two sections: TWand Math each worth 800 points. Scores are added together. A 1600 is a perfect score. Strongly consider SAT if Math > English by 50 points on SAT or in general.

They discontinued the SAT II (aka SAT Subject Tests.)

SAT has moved to a Digitally Adaptive test effective 2024 in the USA. It has two sections Reading/Writing and Math. Each will adapt based on the student's performance midway through the test. It lasts about 2 hours.

**CLT:** [www.cltxam.com](http://www.cltxam.com)

New, classical test which aligns well with a classical, Christian education.

Scores on a 1 - 120 scale. It is all digital. In general, the CLT is more widely accepted at Christian colleges than public universities. It is significant to note that the Florida College System now accepts the CLT for admission.

At this point, I do *not* recommend oscillating back and forth on tests. Pick one and stick with it.

# College Admissions Testing cont.

Be prepared!

- Don't go into a test cold! Do test prep! Juniors, you are in your sweet spot for college admissions testing! Make a plan and work it.
- *It is better to study for 15 minutes a day for 2 months than to cram for 4 hours the week before the test.*
- Through ACT Academy, ACT offers some free test prep and fee-based options.
- SAT offers Khan Academy at no charge and has fee-based options.
- A list of Test Prep Tutors is available as a handout today or outside my office.
- Reminder, if you didn't meet the PSAT benchmark in Math, English, or both, get a tutor!
- Recommended timing-take the ACT or SAT by March. Retest as needed to get the score that supports your GPA or helps you reach your goal. Ideally you will wrap up testing before senior year.
- A free practice ACT is being offered by Compass Prep on January 27, 2024. See link in Knightly News.

# Individual Junior Meeting

Student and parent meeting in person or via Zoom

- The student must be present. Parents are encouraged to attend.
- Students must check with their teacher if missing class.
- To schedule: <https://calendly.com/lsmithccscollegecounseling/60min>
- Prior to the meeting, the student must complete PrinciplesYou and the Rising Senior Survey in Scoir. It is recommended that students “follow” 5 to 8 colleges in Scoir prior to the meeting.
- Parents must complete the Parent Brag Sheet.
- This personalized meeting is designed to help you be prepared for life after CCS.
- Meetings will take place during Third Quarter. Book now to be sure you get the time you desire.

# Junior Individual Meeting cont.

## Other things to consider before your Individual Junior Meeting

Review your transcript. Make sure that it is accurate and reflects your CCS activities. If you have corrections, make notes and turn your transcript into me at the meeting or in a folder outside my office. (Note: clubs from this year will be added at the end of the school year.)

Graduation requirements: have you taken a semester of art, music, and PE/sport?

Start the conversation about AP Classes for next year. Currently we offer AP Physics, AP Statistics, and AP Calculus AB. Registration for those will take place in the next couple of months.

College Lists, summer activities, etc.

# Junior Individual Meeting cont.

## Other things we will consider at the Individual Meeting

- We plan to continue offering Dual Credit Classes through Colorado Christian University
- Enrollment for those will be in the Fall
- Current offerings for seniors include American Literature, Physics, AP Calculus, Spanish 3 and 4, and Apologetics

# Upcoming College Counseling Events

Mark your calendars!

- **Individual Junior Meetings** January 16 until February 29  
<https://calendly.com/lsmithccscollegecounseling/60min>  
Students must complete Principles You and the Rising Senior Survey in Scoir and parents need to complete the Brag Sheet prior to the meeting.
- A **free practice ACT** through Compass Prep on January 27, 2024. See link in Knightly News
- **Late Registration for AP Exams is February 9 to 16**  
Signup information in the Knightly News. (\$180 including late fees. Additional fees apply if you are changing a current registration.)
- **College Admissions Panel is Wednesday, February 21 at 7 pm** in the theater  
Featuring: Furman University, NCSU, Samford University, and the University of South Carolina.
- **Career Connection is Friday, February 23.** Parents, if you are interested in participating, please let Mrs. McGinnis know.
- Drop in **College Counseling Lunch and Learns** for students and parents, Wednesdays in April from 12:20-1 pm in the Commons Area. Open to all Rhetoric students and parents.
- **AP Exams are May 6 through May 17. All AP Exams will be on campus. Details in the Knightly News in Q4.**  
See College Board for dates and times. (No exams will be administered on graduation day.)
- **College Essay Bootcamp July 22 - 26** taught by Mrs. Clarkson and Ms. Smith. It includes writing the Common App Essay and School Specific Essays. Signup via Knightly News in Q4. (\$275)

# College Lists and Visits

College is a match to be made, not a prize to be won

- Students should be following schools in Scoir.
- Students should have visited at least 3-5 schools. NCSU, Peace, Meredith, Shaw, Duke, UNC-CH, and Campbell are all nearby and a good place to start.
- Make your own college lists—do not use the same one as your friend. You have different gifts and talents.
- At this point, I suggest having a good mix of private, state, secular, and Christian schools. Many private colleges offer great academic scholarships which make them affordable.
- Most lunch-time college visits are held in the fall. We have the College Admissions Panel on February 21, 2024 at 7 PM that will let you compare four different schools: a large public, an out-of-state public, private college, and Christian college.

# College Visits

## Questions to ask

- What are the top five majors, academic support, when you need to decide on a major, and any restrictions for selecting a major?
- What is your graduation rate, retention rate, percent of students working, in a grad school after graduation, and career counseling?
- Tell me about campus culture, Christian ministries, dorm life, weekend activities, percent of students who live off campus, campus safety, and Greek life.
- Why did the tour guide choose this college? If the tour guide could change anything about the school, what would it be? (If the answer is food in the cafeteria, ask for what else they would change.)
- Students, make notes after you visit a school on your phone, use our form, or a spreadsheet. Consider taking a picture or two to help you remember it. (Do not video that whole tour.)
- Take advantage of Open Houses. Ask to meet with students or professors who are in your potential department.
- If looking at a lot of colleges, create a spreadsheet to help keep track of visits, pros and cons, etc.



# Community College, Trade School, or Gap Year

## Other post-graduate options

- **Community College** – This can be an end-goal of its own or a gateway to a four-year college or university. In many cases, it can be a cost affordable option for students to earn their four-year degrees.
- **Trade School** – This can be within the community college system or a stand-alone school.
- **Gap Year** – This can be a great way to explore and mature. These can allow a student to grow in faith, explore career options, or work in meaningful areas. There are structure programs, or you can create your own.

# Summer Activities and Volunteering Ideas

- Volunteer Activities-Dorcas Shop, Habitat for Humanity, local hospitals, YMCA, Miracle League, Teen Court, tutoring, etc.
- Jobs ideas- Fast food (Chick-fil-A, Wendy's, Panera, etc.), retail, lifeguard, mow lawns, nanny, etc.
- Go on a mission trip or attend a church camp.
- College Classes or Camps – You can explore potential majors or careers. Learn new skills. (NCSU Engineering Camp, Elon Emerging Journalism Program, PHC, Hillsdale College, JHU class, etc.) See binder outside of my office for ideas.
- 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.

# Specialized Recruiting

Pick up applicable handout at the front of the room

- Thinking about a United States Service Academy? Service academy summer session applications open and close in January.
- Do you want to play sports in college? Student athletes should register on the NCAA clearinghouse if interested in playing D1. Do you have a recruiting video? Are you signed up for ID camps?
- Are you interested in pursuing the arts in college? Have you started to create an art portfolio? Are you going to audition for music or theater?

# Resumes

- I have been in Rhetoric Classes with the juniors teaching them how to make a high school resume. It has been great to see the wide range of activities and accomplishments they have.
- Students began creating them in Scoir. Then their polished, finished product is being done in Word or Google Docs. They are due tomorrow, Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup> when they walk into Rhetoric. (Final copy, rough draft, and assignment sheet.)
- Resumes are very helpful for filling out college applications, applying for scholarships, and applying for jobs.

# Additional Support Available

Income based – please ask if this applies to you.

- **SAT Fee Waivers** – SAT fee waivers are available to low-income 11th- and 12th-grade students in the U.S. or U.S. territories. <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/registration/fee-waivers/fee-waiver-eligibility>
- **ACT Fee Waivers** – ACT® offers a test fee waiver program to eligible students that covers the regular registration fee and provides additional benefits. <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/FeeWaiver.pdf>
- **Common App Fee Waivers**– Common App and our colleges want to make sure that application fees do not pose a barrier for any student. If you meet certain qualifications, you can request a Common App fee waiver. <https://appsupport.commonapp.org/applicantsupport/s/article/What-do-I-need-to-know-about-the-Common-App-fee-waiver>
- **Questbridge** – If you are a high-achieving, low-income high school student, you are in the right place. We believe that attending a top college can be affordable, and we are committed to helping you attain the college education you deserve. We have partnerships with the country’s best colleges, all of which are actively seeking successful students that have experienced long-term financial hardship. All of our programs are designed to connect you with top educational, professional, scholarship, and life opportunities. <https://www.questbridge.org/high-school-students>

# Summary of the Action Items

Now is the time to be thinking ahead

Action points:

- Plan and register for college admission testing. Make a test prep plan on your own or hire a test prep tutor/company.
- Complete the Rising Senior Survey and Principles You in Scoir. (Parents, complete the Parent Brag Sheet)
- Follow 5 to 8 colleges in Scoir.
- Sign up for your Individual Junior Meeting.
- Visit colleges.
- Read your emails in Scoir and in general.
- Research summer opportunities.



# THANK YOU

Cary Christian School College Counseling Presentation