

# COLLEGE COUNSELING NEWSLETTER



Dear parents,

We hope the new year has gotten off to a smooth start for you and your families. Here in the college counseling office, our seniors are busy completing their final applications, reviewing their financial aid award letters, and inching closer to a decision on their colleges of choice. Our juniors will soon complete preliminary college interest forms, begin the process of researching their options, and reflect upon their goals, interests, and priorities for life after high school. Our sophomores and freshmen have completed a strong fall semester and will meet with the college counselors to review the college admission process and set academic and extracurricular priorities for long-term college planning. Please read on for important information about your child.

Sincerely,

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## In the News

[Colleges Still Accepting Applications After January 1](#)

[What Are Your Goals For 2020?](#)

[After A College Applicant Hits Send](#)

## Quotes of the Day

“The main thing to get out of college is a thirst for knowledge. College should teach you how to be curious. Most people think that college is the end of education, but it isn't. The ceremony of giving you the diploma is called *commencement*. And that means you are fit to commence learning because you have learned how to learn.” - *Vincent Price*

“Do what you have to do until you can do what you want to do.”

- *Oprah Winfrey*

## Class Specific News (click for links)

[News for Seniors](#)

[News for Juniors](#)

[News for Sophomores & Freshman](#)

## News for Seniors

In meeting with seniors this week, we realized that a certain kind of stress has set in for many of them. In the fall, students were busy completing applications, retaking the ACT or SAT, and ensuring application deadlines were met. While that was a stressful experience, students are now waiting on application decisions and financial aid award letters and are experiencing a general sense of unease about the next steps. *What if I don't get in? What if my family can't afford it?* These are the kinds of questions we hear in our office these days. It is an altogether different kind of stress. You can help your child navigate this uncertainty. We advise the following:



- 1) Ensure all application materials (test scores and financial aid documentation) have been received by colleges.** Sometimes, colleges misplace these items, which might result in a delay or cancellation of the application. Most colleges have an online portal whereby students can check the status of the application. Please follow up with us so that we can send any missing documents.
- 2) Continue to have open and honest conversations around affordability.** Review financial aid award letters together and help your child understand the implications of taking on student debt. The college counselors will support your family's financial reality. Please be in touch with us so that we can support your child as they navigate the ins and outs of the resources available to them. We also advise that students share their financial aid award letters with their counselor so they understand the full details of the cost of attendance. Additional resources follow below.
- 3) Remind students that they don't need to make rash decisions.** Unless a student has applied and been accepted early decision, students have until May 1 to deposit at their college of choice. Some students feel that they want to make their decisions now to "get it over with." While we understand the desire to close the book on the admission process, we want students to review all of their decisions and award letters before making a final decision.
- 4) Talk to us if you are concerned about your child.** Please don't hesitate to reach out if you are concerned about your child's wellbeing, the admission process, or financial aid. We have heard from several families who asked for clarity around aid award letters and the process of asking for a second review of the award. Please reach out so that we can guide you through this process.

### Financial Aid Resources

- 1) FSA ID and FAFSA.** It is recommended that all students submit the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) so that they may be considered for institutional and federal aid. [CLICK HERE](#) to access the FAFSA website. Students and one parent will need an FSA ID prior to completing the FAFSA. [The FSA ID website can be found by clicking here.](#)
- 2) CSS PROFILE.** Many private colleges require this document, a secondary financial aid application. Check with the colleges on your child's list to see if they require it. [CLICK HERE](#) to access the CSS Profile.
- 3) COLLEGE OPPORTUNITY FUND (COF).** Colorado resident students seeking to stay in Colorado for college are eligible for the COF, a stipend that can be applied to the costs of tuition on a per-credit basis. [CLICK HERE](#) to apply for the COF.
- 4) COMPARING FINANCIAL AID AWARDS.** [CLICK HERE](#) for a tool to compare financial aid offers.
- 5) Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) Program.** WUE allows certain students to pay 150% of the cost of in-state tuition at certain public institutions in the Western region. [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

## News for Juniors

**There will be a mandatory meeting for parents of juniors Wednesday, January 29, at 5:30 P.M. in the library. We will review all aspects of the college admission and financial aid process so that you are well prepared to support your child as they begin thinking about the college process.**

The spring semester of the junior year is an exciting one. The college process kicks into full gear and your child will now spend much more time working with us in preparation. You can expect that your child will receive:

- Personal recommendations for colleges of best fit, as determined by the information they and you provide to us as well as our extensive experience with colleges and the admission process.
- Strong preparation for college admission testing (SAT, ACT, AP, SAT subject tests) and a thoughtful long-term testing strategy.
- Clear, concise, and relevant information regarding the college admission decision making and financial aid processes.
- Excellent instruction on writing the college essay and requesting teacher letters of recommendation.
- Personal care and attention from a compassionate, knowledgeable college counseling team. Your child will be well known and cared for and will receive sound college-going information and advice.

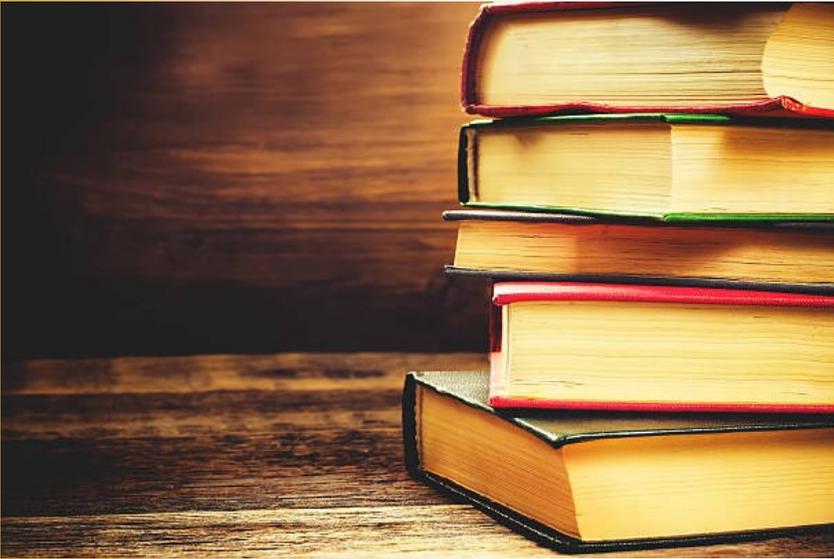
### **INDIVIDUAL COLLEGE COUNSELING MEETINGS for JUNIORS and THEIR PARENTS**

It is important that a team approach is taken between the student, parent(s), and college counselor. In order to best advocate for and support your child, we must work together to understand your child's background, needs, and goals. To this end, we require an individual meeting between the parent, child, and college counselor in the junior year. The college counselors will initiate contact with all parents to schedule meetings, but if you would like to reach out beforehand and get on the books, please email one of us at [Avery.Mcglenn@TheVanguardSchool.com](mailto:Avery.Mcglenn@TheVanguardSchool.com) or [Jill.Custer@TheVanguardSchool.com](mailto:Jill.Custer@TheVanguardSchool.com).

**TESTING:** Students are encouraged to take both the ACT and the SAT in the junior year to achieve a solid testing foundation. Most students will retake one or both tests in the fall of the senior year.

**ACT:** The next ACT is offered at various local high schools on Saturday, February 8 (late registration up to January 17). Students need to register and pay for the test themselves (\$68.00). We encourage students to take the test WITH writing. The college counselors have fee waivers available for eligible students. [CLICK HERE](#) to register.

**SAT:** All juniors will take the SAT at school on Tuesday, April 14 as part of our state testing. This test will be free of charge. For students who wish to take the writing portion of the SAT, the college counselors will communicate the process for doing so.



## News for Sophomores and Freshmen

### TIPS FOR PREPARING FOR THE COLLEGE PROCESS: 9th and 10th GRADE

**The transcript is the single most important element in the college admission process.** The grades students receive and the level to which they challenge themselves will be critical to their success in the college admission process and in college itself. Review fall semester grades with your child and encourage them to identify academic strengths, areas for improvement, and goals for the spring semester. We encourage you to think beyond simply identifying goals for grade achievement; rather, help your child brainstorm the skills they need for success in a rigorous environment: self-advocacy, communication with teachers, resilience, and time management.

**Begin preparations for standardized testing.** Freshmen and sophomores will take the state-sponsored PSAT at school on Tuesday, April 14. These tests begin a solid foundation for testing in the admission process. Encourage your child to take them seriously and become familiar with the format. More information on SAT and PSAT preparation can be found by [clicking HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

**Help your child to develop the whole self.** Academics matter greatly in this process, but so does your child's interest in and commitment to their development outside of the classroom. Encourage your child to find ways to further their academic interests outside of class, such as with a job shadowing experience or summer program. Likewise, encourage them to find ways to contribute meaningfully to their school and community, be it sports, theater, service, their church, or through leadership. Long-term, meaningful extracurricular commitments matter much more than the quantity of activities on a student's resume.

**The college counselors will meet with all sophomores and freshmen again this spring to discuss these concepts and help students set long-term goals.**

Thank you for reading!