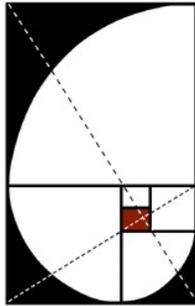


December 2017



THOMAS MACLAREN SCHOOL

College Counseling Newsletter

Dear parents,

Happy holidays! It is hard to believe that the fall semester is nearly over, and soon, students and faculty will depart for a well-earned break.

As you consider your child's successes this semester, be they a strong orchestra performance during assembly or mastery of Latin verb conjugations, consider too the successes more difficult to quantify. Your ninth grader is beginning to understand and put into practice the habits of mind that will allow him to be successful in high school and beyond. Your tenth grader is better understanding her strengths and is voicing her skills as a leader in the classroom. Your eleventh grader has identified areas of academic interest and is talking with you about potential colleges and careers. Your twelfth grader is nearing the end of a challenging semester and has learned the true meaning of "time management." Whatever the success, they have learned more about themselves, their aptitudes, and their areas for growth.

Take the time to commend your child for a job well done and to identify areas for continued growth and planning. I hope that this newsletter aids in that goal. Please read on for important college-related news.

Sincerely,

Amy Cooper, College Counselor

acooper@maclarenschool.org

In the News

[Along the Autism Spectrum, a Path Through Campus Life.](#)

The first generation of college students with an autism diagnosis is fanning out to campuses across the country.

[A College Admission Dean Learns Something New As His Son Starts](#)

[Looking at Schools.](#)

Ken Anselment is Dean of Admission and Financial Aid at Lawrence University.

[Finally, the College Board Makes It Easier For Students with Disabilities to Get SAT Accommodations.](#)

"Educators, students, and families have asked us to simplify our process, and we've listened."

CLASS SPECIFIC NEWS

[SENIORS](#)

[JUNIORS](#)

[SOPHOMORES](#)

[FRESHMEN](#)



SENIORS

Students who submitted an early action and/or early decision application will likely receive a decision in mid-December.

If the decision is an **acceptance**, celebrate! The first college acceptance is a celebratory event and students should feel affirmed that their hard work has paid off. Please encourage your child to celebrate respectfully and sensitively, as their peers may not have received similar news.

If the outcome is a **denial or deferral**, allow your child space to process the decision. Many hours of work went into applications and it can feel devastating to experience a rejection. After a day or two, encourage your child to reach out to Mrs. Cooper to begin working on a thoughtful plan for future deadlines. Remember that rejection is the norm in this process and most students will experience it. Often the most rewarding college journeys come after a student experiences a denial. Rebounding successfully will require thoughtful planning and communication.

“You have your life ahead of you. How you deal with challenges forms the person who you are and will be. Life is much more than a brand. What do **YOU** do with the opportunities presented **TO** you? What opportunities do you **MAKE** with the realities in front of you?”

- *Don't Trust Your Friends' Advice on Getting Into College—and Other Tips from Admissions Experts (Washington Post, 8.11.16)*

SENIOR CHECKLIST: DECEMBER

- Check individual college portals** to receive admissions news for any early applications. If admitted, colleges should also communicate where, when, & how to review your financial aid award letter.
- Ensure all financial aid documentation (FAFSA and/or the CSS Profile) is received** by the financial aid office for all early applications.
- Review** upcoming admission & financial aid deadlines: what is left to do in January?
- Communicate** all admission & scholarship information & upcoming admission deadlines to Mrs. Cooper.
- If it's important to you, start **researching** additional scholarship opportunities.



JUNIORS

PSAT SCORES. PSAT scores will be released to students **December 11th**. If students reported an email address to the College Board on test day, they will receive an email notification alerting them that their score is posted. While students are considered for the National Merit Scholarship program as a result of taking the PSAT, the more important reason students take it is to prepare for the SAT, which all juniors will take at MacLaren in April.

To receive PSAT scores:

- 1) On or after December 11th, log in [here](#) (make sure your child uses the same email address that they reported on their PSAT answer sheet)
- 2) If you can't access your scores after attempting to log-in, contact Mrs. Cooper.
- 3) Paper score reports will be handed back at parent evals in January.

Resources for understanding PSAT scores (click for link):

[Understanding Scores](#)

[Free SAT test prep through Khan Academy & the College Board](#)

The college process begins in earnest next semester. Throughout the spring semester, we will build a list of colleges for your child to research, dig into standardized testing (ACT, SAT), review how admission decisions are made, discuss the Common Application, explore the college essay and letters of recommendation, and review financial aid and scholarships. It is my goal that your children and you are well-prepared to engage the college process in a thoughtful manner. I look forward to getting to know and guiding them in this exciting journey!

TIPS FOR FRESHMEN & SOPHOMORES TO PREPARE FOR THE COLLEGE PROCESS

Encourage students to **do the best they** can in their classes and to develop the habits of mind (time management, organization, persistence, self-advocacy, etc) that they will need to be successful in high school and beyond.

Encourage students to **contribute meaningfully** outside of the classroom, whether it be a position of leadership on a team or club or a volunteer opportunity within their church or community.

Encourage students' academic and career interests. Are they interested in medicine? Nudge them to speak with Mrs. Cooper about volunteer and internship opportunities at local hospitals. Connect them with a family member or colleague who is an engineer, doctor, lawyer, or teacher to learn more about specific fields in which they are interested.

SOPHOMORES

Sophomores' pre-ACT test scores as well as a guide for using the scores will be handed back to parents during evals in January.

Please review your child's scores with him or her. Very similar to the ACT, which your children will likely take as juniors, the pre-ACT provides a score from 1-35 and sub-scores in four areas: English, math, reading, and science. The score report also includes a predicted ACT score range and a more detailed breakdown of your child's performance in the four sub areas.

Please remember that the pre-ACT is not a high stakes test, and it will not be submitted to colleges. It is a practice test that sophomores take in order to prepare for the ACT, which will likely be taken in the junior year. If students are stressed about their results, encourage them to take the long view and continue their very best work in their classes, which will naturally prepare them for next year's ACT.



FRESHMEN

All freshmen have worked with Mrs. Cooper throughout the semester on their ICAPs (Individual Career and Academic Plans). All students have created an academic plan for graduation, completed a personality assessment that identifies their aptitudes, and learned more about themselves and their goals. All students have an ICAP account at www.collegeincolorado.org. Sit with your child over the break and explore the tools available in CiC, as well as the work they have already done!

Thank you for reading! Have a wonderful break and see you in the new year.