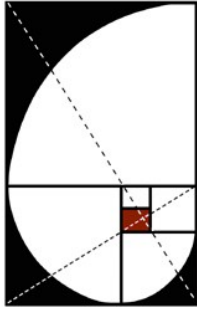


October 2017



THOMAS MACLAREN SCHOOL

College Counseling Newsletter

Dear parents,

Happy Fall! This Time of year is jam-packed for all MacLaren Students. Seniors are working diligently toward their college application deadlines, Juniors and Sophomores are taking PSAT and pre-ACT tests, and Freshmen are better understanding the academic expectations of high school and learning to manage their time. Please click the links to the right for information specific to your child. As always, feel free to contact me anytime with questions.

Sincerely,

Amy Cooper. College Counselor

acooper@maclarenschool.org

CLASS SPECIFIC NEWS

[SENIORS](#)

[JUNIORS](#)

[SOPHOMORES](#)

[FRESHMEN](#)

Financial Aid Night for Parents and Students

Mrs. Fruh will be presenting information on Financial Aid as it relates to paying for college. We will meet in a classroom at MacLaren on November, 11 at 6:30pm —mark your calendars!

This evening is intended to provide you with helpful information as you navigate how to pay for college. This evening is open to any parents of high school students who wish to know more about this process.



SENIORS

At this time, seniors should be honing their college lists into a well-balanced (both in terms of selectivity and financial aid) group to which they are ready to apply. If your child is working toward an early application deadline, consider the following checklist in order to support their efforts:

- 1) Has my child communicated their earliest deadline to teachers and Mrs. Cooper/Mrs. Fruh? Supporting documents (letters of recommendation, transcript, school report) must be sent for students.
- 2) Have I completed the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and the CSS Profile (if applying to private colleges)? These applications should be sent in conjunction with admission applications. Be aware of deadlines.
- 3) Has my child submitted his or her test scores (either the SAT or ACT)? These will need to be received by the deadline.
- 4) Is my child working through the details of the applications, such as the background information on the Common Application, activities sections, essays, and supplements?

TIP: Complete the net price calculators for each college to which your child is applying. Colleges are required to have NPC's on their websites to give families a better understanding of the financial cost of that college, if the student is admitted. They can be found on the financial aid portion of each college's website. As an example, here is [Colorado College's NPC](#).

JUNIORS

This month, all Juniors took the PSAT/NMSQT at school. This test serves two purposes:

- 1) Provides practice for the SAT that your child will take in April. The SAT is used as a college entrance exam and scores can influence eligibility for merit-based scholarships.
- 2) This particular PSAT is used as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (hence the NMSQT in the name). Students are only eligible for the National Merit Scholarship if they take the PSAT in the Fall of Junior year. You will be contacted by the National Merit Scholarship program in December if your child is a semi-finalist.

Scores on the PSAT/NMSQT are not reported to colleges like SAT or ACT scores are reported. For most students, this test serves as an indicator for predicted performance on the SAT in April and can reveal areas of weakness. This can be helpful when choosing to prepare for the SAT in the future. Once scores are released, students can link their College Board accounts to [Khan Academy](#) for free SAT practice that is individualized to each student's areas of weakness.

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

Last week, all sophomores took the pre-ACT, a practice test which allowed them to engage in a standardized test in a low-stakes testing environment. The pre-ACT is in a similar format to the ACT, which students may take in the junior year. While shorter in length than the actual ACT, the pre-ACT covers the same material (English, Math, Reading, and Science). Results will be available in two to four weeks.

Sophomores have had a number of ICAP sessions with Mrs. Cooper already this year. Students have updated their academic plans of study, taken a personality assessment that helps clarify their strengths and career interests, and completed a values-clarification exercise. Ask them about their work!



FRESHMEN

Priorities for freshmen at this time include continuing to do their very best work in the classroom. They should be reading on their own, deepening their relationships with peers and teachers, and exploring the ways in which they can contribute to the larger MacLaren community, as well as their own communities. Have they considered joining a club or a sport? Have they thought of ways to become active and engaged citizens as they develop their interests as high school students?

Freshmen have met with Mrs. Cooper a number of times this fall to work on their ICAPs. Students have created their academic plans for the next four years and have taken a fun personality assessment in class. Ask what they've been up to with Mrs. Cooper!