

Freshmen – Sophomore Parents

I. Look What's Coming!

- A. ACT testing through Cambridge Company, PSAT testing (optional)
- B. It is suggested that the first time ACT test assessment is done is no later than February or April of junior year; end of sophomore year recommended
- C. College Fairs – go to them
- D. Financing college costs [you do not have to do all of this yourself!]
- E. Visit [Overview of Academic Planning](#) page and [Planning For College](#) on the counselor's main website.

F. Sophomore Year

- 1. Often, kids will be thinking that “all this college stuff is way down the line”
- 2. Academics are usually much harder than freshman year; therefore, better study habits are necessary
- 3. Smatterings of the junior year “attitude”

G. Junior Year

- 1. Attitudes vacillate
 - a. enthusiasm, fear, excitement, anxiety
 - b. college choices often center around distance from home and climate
 - c. apathy, withdrawal, “I can't wait to get out of here” can prevail
- 2. “Mom / Dad: I have no idea what I want to do.... or where I want to go” [see Roman Numeral III below]. Such an outcry is not unusual because:
 - a. It threatens their comfort zone
 - b. It means they have to eventually make a huge decision & kids don't relish this
 - c. It makes them think about the future which is a bittersweet moment
- 3. Junior College Information Night for parents if it can be scheduled (first part of February) – see the SPX calendar (anyone can come; it is not limited to Juniors)
- 4. Campus visits encouraged (one excused) – see the link on “Campus Visits” on the Planning for College page
- 5. Parents need to talk to your kids about this decision and establish parameters in picking schools, such as:
 - a. Location
 - b. Money
 - c. What they really want to study; if undecided, listen and encourage them to explore options. Nowadays, the primary source of information for any type of schools is on their websites
 - d. Campus safety
 - e. Kids have to “see themselves there”

H. Senior Year

- 1. Semester 1 “resistance” – “I don't want to deal with this...”

2. Complete Applications (3-5 schools; completed by Thanksgiving)
 - a. These entail demographic information
 - b. These entail high school coursework, and sometimes grades in their high school courses
 - c. SPX does not send transcripts unless tuition and / or community service hours are current (45 hours for semester 1, 52.5 hours for semester 2)
3. Do some Campus visits (two excused)
4. Take care of NCAA [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) or NAIA <https://play.mynaia.org/> Clearinghouses, if applicable
5. FAFSA [have your previous years' taxes done ASAP or do estimates as accurately as possible]
6. Senior FAFSA FRENZY events at Maple Woods Community College (on the College Counseling calendar)

II. Parents: Monitor and Understand This

- A. Community service and extracurricular activities for your kids
- B. Student schedule: solid core curriculum, AP/ACCP balance if applicable, challenge, graduation requirements. Do not encourage easy classes senior year...
- C. FYI: students' GPA for college applications:
 - a. It is cumulative in terms of consideration for admission
 - b. Improvement after a rough year as (an underclassman) will, most likely, be considered favorably [student might need to include referencing this as part of application]
 - c. Colleges look at core GPA the strongest (English, math, science, social studies, and foreign language]
- D. FAFSA: www.fafsa.ed.gov
- E. Financial aid websites <https://spxkc.org/financial-aid>
- F. Suggested site to consider: [Community American Credit Union College Planning](#)
- G. Know how ACT is used: admission, course placement, advisement, career counseling, career assessment, scholarships
- H. SPX "College and Academic Planning" page has several documents and links of importance, namely "Ask Murph or Mariza" FAQ, "Planning for College", "A Manual for Student and Parents"
- I. ROTC option

III. What Kids Can Do

- A. Study, get good grades, read & write beyond the classroom, be involved in extracurricular activities, participate in summer enrichment activities, workshops, and forums
- B. Research college websites [they end in .edu]
- C. Perform valuable community service
- D. Talk to school counselor(s)
- E. Career assessment: www.mymajors.com [Career Information](#)
- F. Do ACT prep: classes or www.actstudent.org [click on "test prep"]. The free materials are at the bottom of the page

- G. Students take practice ACTs through the Cambridge Company who issues a detailed report back to SPX within ten days
- H. Set up accounts for scholarships searches
<https://spxkc.org/scholarship-station-1>
- I. As a senior, complete your own applications, essays, research, and applications for scholarships
- J. As a senior, complete and polish your own college resume

IV. What We Do

- A. Mrs. Cascone's underclassmen career project
- B. Send timely emails about the entire college application process
- C. Meet with each student, construct 4-year plans, follow up as needed
- D. Help seniors construct résumés
 - a. Senior English classes
 - b. Includes career objectives, educational history, extracurricular activities, honors and awards, community service, employment history, and references
- E. Write letters of recommendation; provide guidelines for teachers to do so as well
- F. Send transcripts, test scores to colleges as requested; if a school tells you specifically that the ACT scores has to come directly from ACT, then the student needs to request this unless they indicated specifically on an ACT testing that they designate a score to go to a particular college or university
- G. Communicate via school announcements, classrooms, emails, parent newsletter. Scholarships are posted on the "Scholarship Station" submenu.