

9th & 10th Grades – Preparing for College

Your journey through high school should include preparation for college and the best time to start is now!

Start asking questions:

How much do we think we can afford?

What can we do today to help us with the college-admissions process during senior year?

When are we taking traveling vacations and are there colleges nearby that we can visit?

Have we spoken with a financial planner to see if there's anything we can do now to help with our financial-aid application (uses the prior year's tax information)?

What people do we know who work in fields that might be of interest? Let's have them over for dinner!

Please don't try to put off talking about life after high school just because you don't think you're ready! And not all our graduates choose to go to college, but it's best to plan for that option and then decide the senior year, rather than scrambling to figure things out at the last minute.

When evaluating a student's application, admissions reps typically look at five main things: GPA, SAT/ACT scores, community service/jobs/extra-curricular activities, essays, and having family member who are alumni (Legacy applicants).

It is important to work hard at maintaining a solid GPA, but it's also good to show that you can be more than just a student. Logging community-service hours, having a regular job, or participating in after-school activities such as sports, music, drama, art, etc. are all great ways to accomplish this. Several years ago, Stanford turned down something like 38 applicants with perfect SAT scores, because that was all those students had to offer the college. When the admissions committee has several candidates with similar GPAs and essays, the one with more than just strong academics will be its first choice! Also, college reps are

pursuing all our seniors – not just those with straight A's. They know that our courses are considered Honors level and they want incoming college freshmen who have had a liberal arts education such as that offered at Veritas, as well as the Protocol training which makes you much more desirable to those companies hiring college graduates.

Start now keeping track of all your activities, awards, jobs, etc. There are places on all college applications that ask for these things, and it's SO much harder to try and retrieve that information your senior year!

If you're thinking you want to go into engineering or medicine, talk with your science and math teachers about studying to take the AP exams in their subjects the years that you have them, e.g. biology in 10th, chemistry in 11th. Also, check with Mrs. Magill about credit for CLEP tests (though please keep in mind that not all colleges accept AP/CLEP/ACT scores for course credit. Each school is different. If you have a few favorite colleges you're considering, go to their websites and see what test scores they do accept for credit.

Take the PSAT your sophomore year to help prepare you for the one you take as a junior, since that will be the test that counts toward numerous scholarships, including National Merit.

PARENTS: PLEASE do not contact college-admissions departments for any reason. I know you want to help, but colleges truly frown on this. They want to know that it's the child wishing to attend there, and not the mom or dad :) And our students tend to really shine on the phone and in e-mails. This will give them a very positive connection with their reps that will add great "weight" to their applications. Students: If you do e-mail or call, have your questions written out in advance (proof read e-mails carefully) and don't ask anything that is easily found on the college's website.

And know that you can always contact me if you have ANY questions during this exciting process! The Lord knows EXACTLY where you need to be the fall after your senior year. Just work diligently, develop the gifts He has given you, serve others, and entrust your future to our wise and loving God. And please know that I'm praying for you...