

September 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians of CDH Juniors:

We are writing both to introduce ourselves to those of you whom we have not yet met and to provide you with some information regarding your junior's postsecondary planning. As your CDH College Counselors, we are looking forward to working with your sons and daughters this year as they explore the many postsecondary options open to them.

The process of applying to colleges and universities can seem daunting - especially if it is your first time through it. While the staff in the Counseling Department is always available to answer your individual questions, we thought it might be useful to review the steps that we recommend for the junior year. This outline is meant to provide you with the "big picture" for the junior year as well as some concrete steps to take and important dates to remember.

- **Begin discussions** with your student about plans for life beyond CDH. Will those plans involve further education? What qualities and characteristics would be important in a school to provide the best learning and living environment for your son or daughter? (Size of school? Rural or urban campus? How close to home?) Is higher education the best option for your student at this time? Does your student have tentative career goals in mind?
- Encourage your junior to sign up to see the admissions representatives that visit CDH in the fall. These **high school visits** provide an opportunity for your student to get personal attention and up to date information on schools of interest to him or her. It also gets your student connected early to the school's mailing lists for further updates and information. Your student can come to the Counseling Department to get a pass for whatever visit he or she would like to attend. CDH teachers give the final approval for missing a class period. Check the CDH website for the college visit schedule. Juniors can also go to individual college websites for virtual tours. Making that individual connection with the admissions officer is an important step to take to show interest in the school and to get individual questions answered. Instructions for attending virtual college fairs happening this fall are attached.
- CDH juniors will take the **PSAT/NMSQT** or the Preliminary SAT and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test this fall. This test is designed to give students practice for the SAT and is used to qualify students for the National Merit Scholarship program. Scores from this test are intended for use in counseling students about

college plans and not for use by colleges as admission criteria. The expectation is that all CDH juniors will take the PSAT/NMSQT. Exceptions may be allowed under certain academic circumstances by contacting Mona Passman, Principal at 651-696-3331 at least one week prior to the test date.

- Plan **college visits** for Thursday, October 21 or Friday, October 22, 2021. Many schools will have on-line programs planned on these days for prospective students and their parents. Some campuses are holding in-person tours with enhanced safety measures, but reservations are required well in advance. Contact the admission offices for further details.
- College admissions testing is in a state of flux due to the pandemic. Over half of all colleges and universities are “test optional” for the current admissions cycle and this may be extended for current juniors depending on COVID-19 circumstances. Discuss with your son or daughter which **college admissions tests** he/she may need to take.
 - Most students take the ACT or the SAT during the spring of their junior year. Both the SAT and the ACT have an “optional” writing section. We recommend that you go online and check testing requirements for schools your student is interested in to see whether or not the writing section is required as a recent trend has been to drop it as a requirement for admission.
 - Both the SAT and the ACT can be retaken and schools generally will count only your student’s highest scores. As mentioned, there are also many colleges that are “test optional” meaning students can choose whether or not they want to submit test scores for review. List of test optional schools can be found at fairtest.org.
 - Testing descriptions and deadlines, information on review courses, and registration materials are available online at act.org or collegeboard.org.
Students must register online with the testing agency to sit for the test.
- On **Tuesday, December 7, 2021** we will host a “**Post High Planning**” program for junior students and parents. More information will be coming later this fall.
- You will be invited to schedule an **individual postsecondary planning meeting** with your son or daughter and a college counselor sometime during the second or third trimesters of the junior year. This family meeting is designed to answer your individual questions or concerns and to set a strategy for the future. Of course, you may schedule these appointments at any other time during the year depending on your needs.
- The **CDH Education Fair** is currently scheduled in the Joe Mauer Field House in the student activity center on Tuesday, April 5, 2022, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. and we hope to be able to hold this annual event but obviously it will depend on COVID circumstances this spring. We generally host over 100 schools and it is a convenient, efficient way to continue to gather information on postsecondary options.

- The **summer months of 2022** will be a good time to get a head start on the senior year. Gather admissions materials for schools to which your student is interested in applying. Plan summer campus visits if available. Prepare for the ACT/SAT tests if your student plans to take them again senior year. Have your son or daughter work on a rough draft of any college essays he/she may be required to write.

Postsecondary decisions can be confusing, overwhelming and time consuming and this year complicated by COVID-19. Starting early and breaking the process into manageable steps can help make it more enjoyable and exciting - both for you and your son or daughter. If any one of us in the Counseling Department can be of assistance to you, please don't hesitate to call us at 651-696-3312. We are looking forward to meeting and working with the class of 2023.

Sincerely,

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