

PTSA ACADEMIC BOOSTER PROGRAM NOTES

Amy Thompson, College and Career Counselor 4-4-2019

In a discussion about the recent college admission scandals, it brings forward the reality of the inequity of the admission process in general, not just the small number of students admitted thru cheating schemes. While all students have the same opportunity for a high quality education at York, they don't all have access to the same benefits, whether it's test prep, outside tutors, etc. So how do we level the playing field? It is also a matter of counseling students that no matter what college they attend, what they make of it is what determines their success!

A future film screening recommendation is *The Test and the Art of Thinking*.

The national average on the ACT is 20. Here at York 58% scored a 24 or better and 25% scored a 30 or better. Our kids do well, but how much value do students and parents place on these numbers. Perfect scores and grades are not the only factor that will get a student into college.

SAT is the official IL test and is required to be taken during junior year; it is given in April currently. Students may opt to take it on their own as well, with test dates available before and after this date. The ACT test is also an option.

SAT - generally allows more time per question, good for students doing well in math and has some free response answers.

ACT - is a faster paced test, overall the math only counts for 1/4 of the score, and is all multiple choice.

Test prep is available privately - it is a business so make sure the practice tests given are leveled so as to not show a manufactured improvement because the first test given was at a harder level.

Khan Academy is a free online resource that is available. It can link SAT test results from a student's College Board account to customize test practice in a student's Khan Academy account.

As far as sending test scores to schools, this is available for free to up to 4 schools of choice. It is not required, but generally fine. Schools look at the highest score. If this will cause stress for your student to perform well, scores can be sent later. Some schools are no longer requiring test scores at all. Some will let students self-report scores and provide proof upon admission.

There are companies that will assist with the college application process such as Partners for Achievement, they offer more one on one assistance from test prep and essay writing to helping with scholarships, creating the list and filling out FAFSA reports. This is all for a fee, of course, and may not be necessary if you're not looking at more elite colleges. Don't discredit the importance of students learning to be their own best advocate.

Amy Thompson is the designated college and career counselor. All counselors at York are able to help students. Amy is the expert on the process and leads the major programming and is the go to person for more specific questions regarding the process. A few key highlights are:

- There is a parent meeting for junior parents in October, and there have been group meetings with juniors now. Amy will meet with any junior student or younger and their parents after January.
- The fall is reserved for seniors. A letter will go to senior parents in July giving a timeline of all the upcoming programming for senior year.
- Wednesdays are reserved for drop in appointments for any students during lunch periods.
- If a personal letter of recommendation is required there are forms for students and parents to fill out to help with information. This is done at the beginning of senior year. But if interested, juniors can start working on this in the summer.

What do colleges want? It's a moving target to pick classes for a particular college, because those requirements change and all schools are different. Recommends having the student take what they want. There is a school for them!

PTSA-Academic Boosters "Life After York Q&A" event in February is geared for parents of sophomores and juniors but open for parents of younger students as well. In particular, if starting as a freshman parent, attend only selected table sessions can be helpful.

Tables available are: Creating the list, College visits, Essays, Scholarships, and Applications

Specialty tables are: Divorced parents, Highly selective, Military, Alternatives to 4 year colleges, IEP/504

"Life After York Q&A" table topic summaries are all available online.

Helpful links are: PTSA -Academic Boosters year by year guide

Links to CCRC website as well.

Recommended reading:

The Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life by William Deresiewicz

Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much by Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir