



College Advising  
Summer 2019

## **11<sup>th</sup> Grade Packet**

Included in this packet:

- Letter from College Advising
- 11<sup>th</sup> Grade College Advising Overview
- Standardized Testing Overview
- Information About PSAT Testing on October 19



Dear 11<sup>th</sup> Grader and Family:

Summer, 2019

Greetings from Seattle Academy College Advising! We hope you are having a great summer and you also enjoy a good start to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. In an effort to preview, but not to distract from the start of, next year, the following is an overview of the portion of 11<sup>th</sup> grade dedicated to College Advising along with accompanying documents to save for your reference. Please remember that you are welcome to email us questions as needed. While our understandable focus in the fall is on the 12<sup>th</sup> grade (something for which you'll be thankful in future months), please don't let any "senior hubbub" frighten you off.

College Advising always gives a great deal of thought to the most effective and strategic approaches for working with all students. We capture all of the following on a calendar accompanying this communication. Once again this year, we will meet with 11<sup>th</sup> graders during a regular class meeting in December to **kick off their college process formally**. To provide parents the same information and to ensure everyone is on the same page, we will hold an **11<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Meeting on Tuesday, December 10 at 7 PM** in the Theater.

Prior to this, however, we hold several other events. The first two are for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students and families specifically; the second two are open to the upper school:

- Because we know that there are always questions that precede our December meeting, we hold two **general information events** – one for juniors in October at a class meeting during the school day and one for **11<sup>th</sup> grade parents the evening of Tuesday, October 1 at 7 PM in the Theater** – to preview the work we'll all do together and to answer common questions. The combination of various information sessions for all members of the family will arm 11<sup>th</sup> graders and their families with complete and well-timed information going forward.
- As we said above, College Advising also offers two fall events open to all upper school families. The first is an annual **college financing meeting on Tuesday, September 11 in the Theater** (we offer this event every year, so fear not if you can't make it this year). The second event, on **Thursday, October 10 in the Theater** is an **overview of standardized testing** by Matt Steiner, Senior Director at Compass Education Group, who will present to 9<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grade families the role of testing in the college admission process, effective strategies for exam planning and preparation, and the varied landscape of testing policies (e.g. test-optional, score choice, "superscoring," Subject Tests, etc.). Matt has worked in the testing industry for over twelve years and currently teaches graduate level lectures for the UCLA, UC San Diego, and UC Irvine college counseling certificate programs. In their public speaking, Matt endeavors to demystify standardized testing and dispel anxiety about the topic. We realize that Matt's schedule necessitated speaking during a week with an unusual schedule; if you can't make it, we plan to send afterward a summary of Matt's information.

The above October meeting also aligns with the **11<sup>th</sup> grade PSAT held at Seattle Academy on Saturday, October 19** (please see the accompanying memo about the PSAT). The information gained from the PSAT, coupled with a start to this year that focuses importantly on students' transcripts and extra-curricular activities, provides a rich set of information for College Advising to begin its individual meetings with members of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

11<sup>th</sup> graders should also try to complete the following college-related tasks during the year ahead.

- As grades are the number one factor in college admission, keep your grades steady even as your classes might become a bit more challenging. Once you steady your grades, work to inch them upward such that the grade trend is positive.
- Continue to reinforce relationships with their teachers, who write important college recommendation letters next fall. Applicants will generally, but not exclusively, select recommenders from students' 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, in two different academic subjects.

- Sit in on a Seattle Academy visit from a college representative (if interested), to get a sense of what those meetings do and don't do. 11<sup>th</sup> graders must get prior approval from their teacher if they must miss class, and class should always take precedence. When school resumes, all 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders also receive a weekly email every Sunday from College Advising which lists forthcoming college reps and other timely reminders. We also post a list of these visits in the College Advising area.
- Following our conversations in October (which will explain this in helpful detail) and the PSAT, 11<sup>th</sup> graders generally prep for and take standardized tests. Details are on a testing information sheet accompanying this letter. One additional note about testing: Most students do not need to prep for the October PSAT. Once we receive practice materials from the College Board in the early fall, however, we do reach out to all 11<sup>th</sup> graders and particularly those whose sophomore PSAT indicates they are within striking range of National Merit consideration. In this case, it can be useful for a student to re-familiarize themselves with the PSAT beforehand.
- Visit colleges, if possible, either specific colleges of interest or to geographically accessible "prototype" colleges to get an idea of what large research universities, mid-sized research universities, medium-sized urban private universities, and selective small liberal arts colleges are like. Here in Washington State, students can visit the following with a minimum of expense and travel: the University of Washington, Western Washington University, University of Puget Sound or Whitman College.
- Go to one or two college fairs in the area (see "Eleventh Grade Overview," enclosed). Note the annual Seattle Area Independent Schools Fair in October, exclusively for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders from Seattle Academy, Bush, Forest Ridge, Northwest, Eastside Prep, Overlake, University Prep, and Rainier Scholars. This is a very popular event every year!
- Register now with the NCAA Clearinghouse at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net) if they plan or hope to play Division I or II athletics in college, then communicate the next steps to College Advising for future processing. Ensure that NCAA is listed as a destination for your test scores, an NCAA requirement of potential DI or DII athletes. If you are a student athlete contacted already by college coaches or in a recruiting conversation with your school or club team coaches, feel free to email [collegeadvising@seattleacademy.org](mailto:collegeadvising@seattleacademy.org) for more information.
- Continue to save work, as recommended in previous grade-level correspondence. It is worthwhile and strategic to save on your computer résumé fodder, samples of writing, and creative work.

We add here briefly a preview of information available later this summer. While most Seattle Academy students don't take nor need to take Advanced Placement (AP) exams, a handful do each year. These are more commonly taken in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade year. Regardless, College Board is changing the registration procedure for AP tests. When we have more information we will share it with the class and post it on the SAAS 11<sup>th</sup> grade page.

We are also pleased to announce that on April 21 and 22, 2020, Seattle Academy will once again partner with several area schools/programs (Bush, Northwest, University Prep, and Rainier Scholars) in offering "**case studies**" (**admission committee simulation**) programs at which 11<sup>th</sup> graders and their families can participate in a mock admission committee led by admission officers who help reveal how admission decisions are made. We will share more information about this program at the various aforementioned meetings. In the meantime, we ask that **all 11<sup>th</sup> families mark their calendars for one of the two nights** (all participating 11<sup>th</sup> graders will be able to choose whether they attend a case studies event on the 21st held at the Bush School or on the 22nd held at University Prep). This is a program we expect all 11<sup>th</sup> graders to attend. Past participants felt this event illuminated and advantaged their eventual applications.

We have a great deal to anticipate together this year but in the meantime please have a healthy and productive start to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Parents and guardians, please mark your calendars for the above October and December events which tend to answer many questions our experience suggests are common at this time. If you find the October meeting does not answer your fall questions, please email a member of the College Advising staff. Best wishes for a good continued summer and an excellent beginning to 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

Melanie Reed, Dave Thomas, Misa Kabashima, Stacie Cone, and Taylor Kanemori  
Seattle Academy College Advising



## College Advising 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Overview

August 1, 2019	Colleges that Change Lives information session and fair; program starts promptly at 7 PM; pre-registration possible but not required; <a href="http://www.ctcl.org">www.ctcl.org</a>
Early September	College visits and information sessions begin and continue through Thanksgiving. Posted on the wall in College Advising and sent out to 11 <sup>th</sup> graders in weekly email.
September-October	College Advisors meet with 11 <sup>th</sup> grade as a large group during the school day to provide a general overview of the next two years in College Advising and next steps.
<b>September 11, 2019</b>	<b>Guide to College Financing with Bryan Gould, Associate Director of Student Financial Services (and former college admission officer), 7 PM, Theater</b>
September 17, 2019	Seattle Performing and Visual Arts Fair, Fisher Pavilion at Seattle Center, 6:30-8:30 PM; Google for info.
<b>October 1, 2019</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> grade parent meeting, largely college-related, 7 PM, Theater</b>
<b>October 6, 2018</b>	<b>Seattle Area Independent School Fair, Seattle University Connelly Center, 3-5 PM</b>
<b>October 10, 2019</b>	<b>Standardized Testing Overview with guest speaker Matt Steiner, 7 PM, Theater</b>
<b>October 19, 2019</b>	<b>PSAT at Seattle Academy. Arrive regular school time and no later than 8:15 AM</b>
November 1-2, 2019	National (NACAC) College Fair, Washington State Convention & Trade Center. Check specific times at <a href="http://www.nacacnet.org">www.nacacnet.org</a> . College reps unable to interview during fair.
November 9, 2019	National Portfolio Day; <a href="https://nationalportfolioday.org/event/seattle-wa-november-9th/">https://nationalportfolioday.org/event/seattle-wa-november-9th/</a>
<b>December 10, 2019</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> Grade College Night for Parents/Guardians only, strongly recommended, 7 PM, Arts Center</b>
January 10, 2020	Deadline for February ACT registration (don't wait this long to register).
February 8, 2020	February ACT administration
February 13, 2020	Deadline for March SAT administration. (Don't wait this long to register.)
February 17-21, 2020	Mid-winter break, College Advising closed during this time, consider visiting colleges during this break
February 29, 2020	Deadline for April ACT administration (don't wait this long to register).
March 14, 2020	March SAT administration.
March 26-27, 2020	11 <sup>th</sup> grade retreat
April 4, 2020	April ACT administration.
April 9 (noon) – 17, 2020	Spring Break, College Advising closed for work and personal travel Monday April 6-Monday April 19. Also, <b>April 2</b> is the deadline to register for the May SAT. Don't wait this long to register.
April 21 and 22, 2020	All 11 <sup>th</sup> graders expected to attend <b>Application Case Studies</b> (mock application review) <b>Program</b> one of two nights (choose from April 21 at The Bush School or April 22 at University Prep, details forthcoming)
Spring TBD, 2020	PNACAC College Fair, Connolly Center, Seattle University, Connolly Center. This event is not organized by Seattle Academy and families need not register beforehand.
May 1 – end of school	11 <sup>th</sup> graders seek teacher recommendations during this window after consultation with College Advising.
May 2, 2020	May SAT administration.
May 6, 2020	Deadline for June SAT administration. (Don't wait this long to register.)
May 8, 2020	Deadline for June ACT administration. (Don't wait this long to register.)
May 19, 2020	<b>Senior Parent Speak-Out: Advice to 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents for Managing All-Things 12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b> , 7 PM, Upper Learning Common. This is an event for 11 <sup>th</sup> grade parents and not for students.
June 6, 2020	June SAT administration.
June 13, 2020	June ACT administration.
Summer 2020	College Advising Summer Assignments: We'll discuss extensively with the Class of 2021, and mail home additional information about, various tasks to complete over the summer that make senior fall better.

Although the College Board has confirmed SAT test dates for 2019-20, it has yet to confirm all of the SAT registration and score release dates.

**Please confirm any updates to testing and testing registration dates at:**

<http://www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html>

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-us-dates>



## Standardized Testing Overview

### **How does test prep work?**

Research shows ideally students should not take standardized tests, apart from those practice tests we administer, nor generally prep for them for the first two years of high school. It is best strategically if most test prep can wait until eleventh grade. While this is a hard line to hold, most early prep tends to be inefficient and unproductive. When it's actually time to prep, coaching toward tests works *until it doesn't*, meaning that students should give the tests their due – with appropriate and smart prep for a finite period of time – and not one second more. Test prep can be one-on-one, small group, or online through something like Khan Academy/College Board, which is free to users. Because students do not have unlimited time and motivation for test prep, studies show that applying time and energy **to homework first** pays the greatest dividends in college admission (and sometimes carries over to standardized tests).

### **What are the different standardized tests most college applicants take?**

When the time comes, students ideally take a practice test that determines whether one or the other of the following is “their test.” For less than half of the students, however, will there be a clear choice between the following (ACT or SAT) which colleges accept equally. Still, one may feel more comfortable in terms of structure, pacing, and cadence. Ultimately the student should avoid testing whiplash by picking a test and sticking with it.

**ACT** – Has at least equal market share with the SAT; colleges accept it and SAT equally. The ACT is most like the practice test Seattle Academy students took in ninth grade. Like all tests it requires some prep - not ad nauseam, but perhaps in the eight weeks preceding the actual administration. Though some colleges are eliminating the “writing” portion, for the time being register for it “with writing.”

**SAT** – Like the ACT, colleges accept it equally. The SAT is most like the practice test Seattle Academy students take in October of tenth and eleventh grades. Like all tests it requires some prep - not ad nauseam, but perhaps in the eight weeks preceding the actual administration. In case one or more of your colleges requires it, elect to do the essay section.

**SAT II** – Fortunately, because of the considerable prep involved for any student from any high school, the SAT IIs or “subject tests” are less and less required by colleges. As of the last draft of this document, only thirteen colleges required subject tests. These requirements change frequently and College Advising monitors them. Students should not assume they have to take subject tests nor that it is in their best interest to take them or to spend time prepping for them. You will determine this individually with your college advisor when you work together in your junior year. Note: A few students taking pre-calc as early as sophomore year may elect to take the SAT II “Math 2” exam at the conclusion of that course. All other students can wait to discuss the SAT II until junior year conversations with College Advising.

### **Again, shouldn't I just take the SAT subject tests to cover my bases?**

Because all students from all high schools require extra, sometimes extensive prep on the subject tests (which can distract from other schoolwork, activities, and regular test prep) it is wise first to see if you need them. Especially if you are a student with high testing but low grades, spend the energy instead on your transcript. Fewer and fewer colleges outright require them and you want to have as much time available for application-strengthening grades, activities, and life. Your College Advisor can put this into perspective and you can also check regularly updated SAT II requirements at:

<http://www.compassprep.com/subject-test-requirements-and-recommendations/>

### **When do students test and how many times?**

Typically students take one SAT and one ACT in the winter or spring of junior year. Some test prep providers can also “diagnose” which test is the exam of focus. Students prep during junior winter/spring or during the summer before senior year, focusing especially on the test that felt or went better for them, and retaking that test in the fall. It is not recommended to test more than three times on a single exam, and for most students two attempts is sufficient.

### **When the time comes junior winter/spring, how do I register for tests and what do I do if I have accommodations?**

Families register for the tests at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) (ACT) or [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) (SAT), setting up accounts with usernames and passwords you'll need to save and re-access when you send your scores to colleges in the fall. Especially for summer administrations which can fill up, early registration is important to ensure preferred testing location. If you know or believe you will use accommodations but have not yet checked with Learning Support, contact Jaymie Lewis at [jlewis@seattleacademy.org](mailto:jlewis@seattleacademy.org).

### **When is the last time I should test during my senior fall?**

Most of the Class of 2019 had at least one application due on or before November 1, meaning that the October test dates were the most useful to and generally latest advisable for them. Not waiting to test too far into the fall and making use of August, September and October test dates are good ideas. Some students also retested in November, using subsequent scores to strengthen regular admission applications.

### **What is test optional admission and how is it useful to me?**

Around 1000 colleges outlined at [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org) openly weigh other factors than testing more strongly when reviewing applications, sometimes do not require tests at all, or allow students to substitute other work (graded paper, etc.) for standardized testing. The good news is that many test optional colleges are already favorites of Seattle Academy students. Test optional admission is ideal when one's transcript is quite strong and testing doesn't quite match.



To: 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents  
From: Melanie Reed, Dave Thomas, Misa Kabashima and Jaymie Lewis  
Date: Summer 2019  
RE: PSAT Testing and Schedule for Saturday, October 19, 2019

Greetings from Seattle Academy! We write with news of the forthcoming PSAT for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders. For nationwide PSAT administrations in 2019, College Board has made two dates available, only one of which (the Saturday administration on October 19) is workable for Seattle Academy to preserve as much in-class time as possible.

As a result, all of Seattle Academy's 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders will take the PSAT at school **on Saturday, October 19. We assume each of our 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders will test and we automatically register each student for the exam.** As with all PSATs, College Board does not provide an alternative or "make-up" date for students.\*

**10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders** should arrive outside the Gym at the usual time (8:15 AM) on Saturday, October 19, and expect to be involved in testing and test-related activities for about three and a half hours. **Each student should bring his/her usual Seattle Academy-required calculator and two sharpened pencils to use in the exam.** Teachers and administrators will proctor the exam administration according to College Board guidelines. Jaymie Lewis will reach out individually with additional information for students who will test with accommodations that day.

When available, College Advising will alert 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders via email to practice tests available in the College Advising office. College Advising will also ensure 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders receive additional information about the exam. The College Board partnership with Khan Academy also has free prep resources available for the revised SAT/PSAT at <http://tinyurl.com/onkf8sj>. If students fill out their materials correctly on testing day, College Board plans to email them score access information during the winter. In the past this information from College Board has been available before winter break.

The PSAT is important to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders in different ways. **For 10<sup>th</sup> graders**, the PSAT is an opportunity to practice standardized test-taking under official College Board testing conditions. **For 11<sup>th</sup> graders**, the test serves another purpose: it is the route through which some enter the National Merit Scholarship Program, an annual process by which especially high testers may qualify for some college undergraduate scholarships. If an 11<sup>th</sup> grader scores high on this PSAT, they qualify as a National Merit Semifinalist or Commended Student, two designations for college-bound students. (The strong student who has an off-day in the PSAT and does not qualify need not worry; the test works in positive ways but not negative ones for college admissions.)

**We strongly recommend all 11<sup>th</sup> graders determine which of the SAT or ACT is the test on which they plan to focus, either by taking one of each in the winter or spring of 11<sup>th</sup> grade (followed by a retest on whichever they prefer) or by taking a diagnostic exam through a test prep provider.** Students for whom this presents a financial challenge will talk about strategies for this starting in December with their college advisor. Dates for both exams are available on the College Board and ACT websites. **We will also discuss these topic at evening meetings in October.**

**For all 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade families**, please be sure that your child has a good night's sleep and a nourishing breakfast before the October 19th test. If a student brings snacks or water with her/him to the test, we will ask that the student place the food and beverage away from the test to avoid spilling on their test (exceptions are made for students with known medical conditions). Per College Board regulations, students will not be allowed to leave the premises to get snacks during the test. As we said above, students with diagnostic evaluations that recommend accommodations on standardized tests may be eligible for PSAT test accommodations. If your student is eligible, you will hear separate details from Jaymie Lewis in Learning Support.

\* **Very occasionally, if a student has a significant conflict with the PSAT date, they have done the following:** called directly other schools in Seattle to see if any of them are offering the test on Wednesday, October 16, *the only other date option authorized by the College Board*. Only after checking with Seattle Academy teachers to determine whether the student can miss Wednesday the 16th (grades being more advantageous than a practice standardized test, the scores of which colleges don't see) is the student allowed to test at an alternative location. This is up to the student/family to arrange. If this is the case for your student, please notify Melanie Reed at [mreed@seattleacademy.org](mailto:mreed@seattleacademy.org), Dave Thomas at [dthomas@seattleacademy.org](mailto:dthomas@seattleacademy.org), or Misa Kabashima at [mkabashima@seattleacademy.org](mailto:mkabashima@seattleacademy.org) after you or your student made arrangements with another school *and with Seattle Academy teachers* so College Advising knows your student will not test at Seattle Academy on October 16. Thank you!