



## Winter Quarterly Update

For 2020-2021 Juniors

**College Admission Updates.** In response to COVID conditions, colleges and testing organizations have instituted several changes involving standardized college admissions tests that may affect your college applications. Most colleges will be test optional for the 2021-22 admissions cycle, meaning they may consider but do not require test scores from applicants. The SAT subject tests will no longer be administered by the College Board. And, the optional SAT essay will no longer be offered. As a result of these changes, students' academic record (GPA and course choices) will carry more weight in the admissions process, and extra-curriculars, essays and recommendations may also matter more. This is a good time to narrow down the list of colleges you intend to apply to and research the admissions policies of your highest priority schools so you can plan and prepare accordingly.

### Making School Count

- **Choose your courses for 2021-2022!** Counselors will be sending information soon with details about how to plan and register for next year's classes, but it's not too soon to review and update your 4-year plan. The [RSD curriculum planning website](#) offers links to the [RSD High School Course Catalog](#), with descriptions of all high school classes, and the district's **4-Year Planning Tool**, which provides curriculum guidelines based on your college and career track (you'll need a user login to use the 4-Year Planning Tool). Remember that colleges look for students who have taken advantage of some of the most academically challenging courses their high schools offer.
- **Do's and Don'ts of choosing classes.** Your grades and the strength of your curriculum matter when it comes to college admissions. Find out why course selection is important and learn [how to create a rigorous but balanced schedule](#).
- **Consider AP courses.** Advanced Placement classes offer an important opportunity for students to challenge themselves, improve college admissions chances, earn college credits, win scholarships, and arrive at college better prepared. Learn more about [why students should take an AP class](#) and check out this [complete list of AP courses and tests](#), including data on course popularity and passing rates. (Note that your high school may not offer all of these AP courses.) Read this blog for guidance on [how to choose your AP courses](#).
- **Athletes who intend to play college sports.** NCAA requires [core high school courses for college athletes](#) – check out the requirements and talk to your counselor if you have any questions about your projected eligibility.
- **Explore dual enrollment.** Dual enrollment is a program in which students can earn college credit by taking college-level classes in high school in partnership with a local or regional university. Learn more about the [requirements and benefits of dual enrollment](#) and talk to your counselor if you are interested.
- **Other ways to gain college credits in high school.** The [Running Start program](#) offers eligible high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to enroll in college classes at [Columbia Basin College](#) or [WSU Tri-Cities](#) and receive both high school and college credit.

## JUNIORS – HANFORD HIGH SCHOOL

- **Learn, earn and get school credit.** Worksite Learning offers options to get school credit with on-the-job training opportunities, and some internships also give you a college admissions advantage. Check out [Worksite Learning opportunities](#) on the HHS Career Center website. Be aware that applications for internships next year may be due as early as the end of this month!
- **National Honor Society (NHS).** NHS recognizes juniors and seniors who demonstrate excellence in scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Gaining membership in NHS is a great way to build your college credentials and gain access to national college admissions resources. [Learn about NHS membership](#) here.
- **Feeling stuck on extracurriculars?** COVID has severely limited extracurricular activities for most students. Read here for inspiration on [how to create your own online extracurricular initiative](#).

### Looking Ahead to College

- **Using your PSAT results.** If you took the PSAT in January, your scores provide valuable information to help you understand if you are on track for the SAT later this year. Here's a [good video to help interpret your PSAT results](#).
- **Get your personal free SAT study plan.** Your PSAT/NMSQT results come with a free, online SAT study plan. This customized plan is based on your PSAT results and helps you address areas you need to work on. Use your College Board login credentials to visit [My College QuickStart™](#), and then go to "Practice for the SAT Using Your PSAT/NMSQT Scores."
- **PSAT results explained.** [Sage College Prep Services](#) will coordinate with HHS counselors to explain how students can use their PSAT results to prepare for the SAT and answer questions about SAT scores and college admissions. Stay tuned for the date, time and Zoom link.
- **Create/Update your college admissions test plan.** It's useful to have a testing plan as you head into testing season (for most juniors, that begins this spring). Learn more [about college admissions tests here](#), keeping in mind that information about SAT optional essay and subject tests is now irrelevant. For updated tips on how to think about your test prep plan, review this [SAT and ACT Planning Strategy](#).
- **Wondering whether to take the SAT or ACT?** Learn [how the ACT and SAT differ](#), take a look at an [ACT practice test](#) and [SAT practice test](#), and then check out free [ACT test prep resources](#) and free [SAT test prep resources](#) to find out which test might be best for you. Colleges accept either or both ACT and SAT scores. Read this blog for insight into [which test might be better for you](#).
- **Register for college admissions tests.** Most juniors take the SAT and/or ACT during the spring semester (towards the end) of their junior year. You can find 2021 test dates on the [SAT](#) and [ACT](#) websites. Once you know what tests you will take and when you will take them, **register early** - seats at Hanford High School and other local sites fill up quickly!

**Call Sage for professional tutoring!** Sage College Prep services offers prep classes for both the SAT and the ACT, in which we teach both content and strategies for success. [Visit the Sage website](#) for more details.

### Finding Colleges for You

- **Update your college list.** Identifying your learning and living preferences — for example, college location, size, and available majors— helps keep your search focused on what you want and need in a college. This online tool provides a great way to [start your college search step-by-step](#).

## JUNIORS – HANFORD HIGH SCHOOL

- **Get to know colleges.** Visiting colleges is an important step in selecting the right college and we encourage you to do this as best you safely can! Here are [10 tips for college tours](#) and [118 great questions to ask](#) on a college tour. For those schools that don't make the travel cut or when COVID conditions restrict your access to colleges, virtual tours are a good way to get a feel for schools without stepping on campus - most college websites offer a virtual campus tour or [tap into a long list of virtual campus tours here](#).

### Applying to College

- **How colleges use admission tests.** Here are [8 things to know about how colleges use admission tests](#).
- **Are you on track to get in?** Are you on track to meet college application requirements, or do you need to adjust your plan? How do you compare to students who enrolled at the colleges you're interested in? [Use this Academic Tracker tool](#) to find out where you stand and what you might need to do differently to get into the college of your choice.

### Paying for College

- **Calculate your estimated price for a college.** Once you have a preliminary list of colleges, you can get an estimated cost based on your financial circumstances. Use the College Board's [Net Cost Calculator](#) (and other calculator tools) to search for your target schools by name or state; note that not all schools have their calculator available through this tool, but you can usually find it directly on the school's website.
- **Know your financial aid options.** Did you know that most students get help paying for college? Financial aid includes money that students don't have to pay back as well as loans and options to work part-time during school. Here's some information about [how financial aid works](#).

### Mark Your Calendar!

- **March 13, 2021 – SAT Testing.** [Register here](#). Additional spring testing dates in 2021 are on May 8 and June 5. *Interested in help with test preparation?* [Visit the Sage website](#) for more details.
- **April 17, 2021 – ACT Testing.** [Register here](#). Additional spring/summer testing dates in 2021 are on June 12 and July 17.
- **Updated 2021 AP Testing Schedule.** The College Board has updated its [2021 AP testing schedule](#) to allow more options for its administration, including more test dates (May 3-17, May 18-28 and June 1-11). Check with your AP teacher(s) to learn what schedule your high school is following.



SageCPS.com • 509.375.5555

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