



McNicholas High School Curriculum Guide



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CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

McNicholas High School is pleased to present this resource to guide students and parents in exploring the curriculum that we have to offer at McNicholas High School for the 2025-2026 school year.

We strive to offer a personalized curriculum pathway for our students to inspire faith formation and academic excellence, become compassionate leaders and grow toward full stature in Christ. Our curriculum guide outlines the academic programs and course offerings available to students during their four years of secondary education. It provides a structured framework for the courses students will take in core subjects such as English, mathematics, science, social studies, and physical education, as well as elective options in fine and performing arts, technology, and business.

Thoughtful choices about core course levels and electives should begin in freshman year and adapt during the remaining years of high school as students' preferences about post-secondary education and career evolve. This planning will ensure that students satisfy the graduation requirements for McNicholas as well as for their next steps after high school.

In some instances, teacher recommendations or prerequisites are necessary for students to be placed in a class. If a student would like to take a class but does not have a teacher's recommendation, the student and parent need to affirm that they take responsibility for the decision to take the class.

Each student is provided with course information, teacher recommendations for placement, college requirement updates, and a meeting with their counselor to facilitate the scheduling process. The school counselors are available at 513.231.3500 x 5128.

We invite you to carefully consider course options in light of the following information about:

- Requirements for a McNicholas High School Diploma
- College Entrance Requirements
- Planning for a Balanced Life
- Course Levels
- Paths to college credit at McNicholas
- Curriculum Course Pathways
- Credit Flexibility

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR A McNICHOLAS DIPLOMA

In addition to completing the course requirements, students must satisfy these requirements for a diploma

1. Complete 40 hours of approved service work
2. Participate in a junior retreat and participation in a Senior Encounter retreat
3. Complete a senior capstone project
4. Per the [Ohio Department of Education](#), students must meet three components for graduation.
 1. [Course Completion](#)
 2. Earn the McNicholas High School minimum number of credits including subject-area requirements
 3. [Demonstrating Competency](#)
 - Students will demonstrate competency in the foundational areas of English language arts and mathematics or through alternative demonstrations, which include College Credit Plus, career-focused activities, their ACT or SAT scores, or military enlistment.
 4. [Demonstrating Readiness \(Seals\)](#)
 - Students will demonstrate readiness for their post-high school paths by earning two diploma seals(one must be state defined) that allow them to demonstrate important foundational and well-rounded academic and technical knowledge, professional skills, and leadership and reasoning skills.

Approved Service Work

- 20 hours must be completed by the end of sophomore year
- 20 additional hours must be completed before the end of senior year
 - These hours must be working with economically disadvantaged communities

Days of Renewal and Retreats

- Freshmen and Sophomore engage in Days of Renewal
- All students participate in a Kairos Retreat during their junior year and choose a retreat during their senior year

Senior Capstone

- All seniors participate in a Senior Capstone project that is directed during their senior Theology classes – Catholic Social Teaching

Course Completion Requirements

The number indicates the required number of full years (two semesters) of study. Total of 24 credits.

4	Theology
4	English
4	Math <i>Including Algebra II or an Algebra II equivalent course</i>
3	Social Studies <i>Including 1 Government, 1 American History, 1 World History</i>
.5	Financial Literacy (can count as an additional elective)
3	Lab Science
1	Fine Arts
.5	Health
.5	PE or PE Waiver <i>2 semesters of PE equals .5 credit</i>
4	Additional Electives - .5 Financial Literacy

Financial Literacy (.5) can count as a substitute for a .5 elective requirement.

* The following courses offered by McNicholas High School fulfill the fine arts requirement













Percussion Techniques	Animation	Independent Studio
Instrumental Music	Architecture I & II	Photography I & II
Music Appreciation	AP 2D (Architecture)	AP 2D (Photography/Digital Media)
Music Theory	Art Appreciation	Portfolio Development
Musical Theatre I & II	Art History CCP	Sculpture
Musical Theatre Dance	Ceramics I	Yearbook I & II
Guitar Techniques	Ceramics II	New Media Art
Rocket Chorale	AP 3D (Ceramics)	Design Module
Rockapella	Drawing and Painting	Fine Art Module
Beginning Piano I & II	AP Drawing	Graphic Design Module
Theatre Appreciation and	Game Design	Foundation of Art
Performance I & II	Acting and Directing	Acting Styles
Theatre Practicum	The Production Classroom	Technical Theater I & II

Demonstrating Competency

Students at McNicholas High School must pass applicable state testing. At McNick, students take the IOWA standardized testing in lieu of the state's End of Course Assessments. To receive a diploma in Ohio, students must earn the minimum score required for each of the state tests. If a student does not pass the IOWA the first time, remedial support is offered, and the student will retest until they earn a passing score.

Demonstrating Readiness – Ohio Graduation Seals

Students must earn two seals to graduate. One of these seals must be state defined.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take an approved assessment and earn the appropriate score in junior or senior year language course 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn an approved score on the Social Studies IOWA OR Earn a B in American Government course OR Earn a 3 or higher on a social studies AP Test or B or higher in CCP social studies course
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn one of the six honors diplomas 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn an Industry-Recognized credential that is aligned to a job
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the OMJ Seal Form to demonstrate proficiency in 15 identified profession skills validated by three mentors across two of three environments (community, work and school) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn an approved score on Science IOWA OR Earn a B or higher in an advanced science course OR 3 or higher on a science AP test or earn a B or higher in CCP science course
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn B or higher in CCP Early IT course or Engineering CCP OR Earn a 2 or higher in a tech AP course OR B or higher in two semesters of a non CCP/bilateral Early IT course 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate in school sponsored athletics, clubs, organizations, or leadership opportunities for two years/seasons. In the same organization preferred. Student must complete Student Engagement Seal form with counselor, a reflection of how the experience was meaningful to them (if they have not already earned a PE Waiver)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn remediation-free scores on the ACT or SAT 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enlist in the military
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete 60 hours of community service 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn two Fine Arts credits

Ohio Honors Diploma

High school students can gain state recognition for exceeding Ohio's graduation requirements through an honors diploma. To meet honors diploma requirements, students challenge themselves by taking and succeeding at high-level coursework and in real-world experiences. In the descriptions below for each honors diploma, students must meet all but one of the following criteria. At McNicholas, we do not offer the courses provided for a Career Tech Honors Diploma. **Students may only receive one honors diploma per the Ohio Department of Education.**

Ohio students have the opportunity to choose to pursue one of six honors diplomas:

1. Academic Honors Diploma
2. International Baccalaureate Honors Diploma
3. Career Tech Honors Diploma
4. STEM Honors Diploma
5. Arts Honors Diploma - *includes dance, drama/theatre, music and visual art.*
6. Social Science and Civic Engagement Honors Diploma

Students must meet general graduation requirements and complete the requirements outlined below to qualify for an honors diploma. Students may replace one requirement of their World Languages, GPA or ACT/SAT with a "Student Strength Demonstration".

To learn more about Ohio Honors Diploma Options & Criteria, please use the resources below:

- [Ohio Honors Diploma Information](#)
- [McNicholas High School Honors Diploma Information & Options](#)

GRADES AND CREDITS

Credits Earned in Middle School

Credits may be earned at the middle school level if the grade school designates the course for high school credit and adheres to state curriculum guidelines. High school coursework completed at the middle school level will count toward minimum graduation requirements and high school GPA if:

1. The course is taught by a teacher that is licensed or certified for teaching the course in high school, **and**
2. The course meets the high school curriculum requirements designated by the Board of Education.

Please reach out to your grade school if you have questions about credits earned at the high school level.

McNicholas High School McMath Program

We offer an accelerated honors Algebra I course for current 8th graders that counts as high school credit. Students are recommended by grade schools that we partner with to come to McNicholas High School five days a week at an earlier start time and are instructed by one of our high school math teachers.

Grade Scale

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	GPA POINTS	HONORS/ AP/ CCP
A	93-100	4.0-4.33	4.24-4.59
B	84-92	3.0-3.9	3.18-4.13
C	75-83	2.0-2.9	2.12-3.07
D	70-74	1.0-1.9	1.06-2.01
F	69 or below	0	

GPA Calculation

Grade point averages will be calculated and rounded to two decimal places. Weighted classes include Advanced Placement, College Credit Plus and Honors level courses. Only quarter GPA's are used to determine quarter honor roll. College Credit Plus (CCP) classes cannot be counted in honor roll for quarter GPA because students do not earn quarter grades for CCP classes. If a student transfers from another school, the grades and grade point averages will be converted to McNicholas High School's grade scale.

Top Ten Information

Class rank will not be reported to students and parents and will not be included in the school report that accompanies post-secondary education applications. An exception is when a particular institution or scholarship program requires class rank. In our student population, small differences in academic averages can result in disproportionately large and, therefore, misleading differences in rank. We do recognize students in the Top Ten in May of the student's graduating year.

EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

Course Offerings

Our Course Directory information is updated yearly. Please refer to McNicholas's [Course Directory](#) for a list of courses, descriptions and prerequisite information.

Course Levels

College Level courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) and College Credit Plus (CCP) are designed for academically gifted students who possess a strong academic background, advanced research skills, and consistently high levels of motivation and willingness to self-start and work independently. The content is college level, demanding the highest levels of critical thinking -- analysis, application, evaluation, decision making, and complex problem solving -- both individually and in group situations.

Honors courses challenge students with an in-depth, accelerated curriculum of reading, writing, speaking, problem-solving, research, and technological and laboratory skills. The course content is above grade level, and the pacing is faster than that of courses in the COLLEGE PREP levels. Students are required to read and write critically, engage in challenging problem-solving activities, and display higher levels of thinking.

College Prep I courses are designed for students whose needs are best met by a standard college prep curriculum on grade level. These courses fully meet the basic standards required by most universities and post-secondary areas of study. The courses incorporate language skills, research, and technological and problem-solving skills.

College Prep II and III courses cover the same essential material as College Prep I and also meet the standards required for most university and post-high school areas of study. However, they are designed for students who will benefit from more systematic and continuous attention to strengthening basic skills in particular subject areas.

PATHS TO COLLEGE CREDIT AT McNICHOLAS

Advanced Placement

Advanced Placement is a national program providing college-level courses for secondary school students. Students qualify for college credit based exclusively on the result of the AP exam administered in May. Families are charged a fee of \$98 or \$146 for the exam. Individual colleges make their own decisions about the AP exam scores for which they award credit and/or advanced placement. Students enrolled in an AP course are expected to take the AP exam at the end of the course. McNicholas teachers offer an impressive array of AP courses. Registration for these online courses requires prior approval by the Director of Curriculum. In addition to preparing for the AP exam by taking courses, students may prepare on an individual basis for an AP exam. Students interested in this self-study approach should see the AP Coordinator in the Counseling Department by the end of September to order an AP exam. [McNicholas AP Courses](#) are taught on-campus by McNicholas teachers.

AP Biology	A P French Language and Culture
AP Calculus AB/BC	AP 2-D Art and Design: Architecture
AP Chemistry	AP 2-D Art and Design: Drawing
AP Computer Science A	AP 2-D Art and Design: Media Design
AP Research	AP 3-D Art and Design: Ceramics
AP Seminar	AP Physics 1 & 2
AP Government and Politics	AP English Language and Composition
AP World History: Modern	AP English Literature and Literature
AP Psychology	AP Spanish Language and Culture
	AP United States History

If a student has an interest in an Advanced Placement course that is not listed above, please reach out to your school counselor to discuss additional online or pathways to college credit (CCP). Additional fees will apply for students taking online courses.

College Credit Plus

The College Credit Plus Program sponsored by the State of Ohio gives qualified high school students the opportunity to earn high school and college credit simultaneously by taking courses offered by Ohio colleges or universities. Colleges usually require satisfactory scores in math and English placement exams. Tuition is free if the student takes classes offered by a public college and if the state allocates tuition to the student. Grades for these courses appear on college transcripts and thus become part of a student's permanent educational record. Thanks to Ohio's Transfer to Degree Guarantee, many entry-level courses earned at an Ohio public college are guaranteed to transfer to any other Ohio public college. Please check the transfer status of a course before registering for it. McNicholas teachers, as adjunct faculty members of colleges, offer the following courses on the McNicholas campus:

University of Cincinnati Information Technology Pathway	Cincinnati State College Courses
Fundamentals of IT	Algebra III/Trig
Fundamentals of Web Development	Art History
Computer Programming 1	Statistics
Database Management	
Systems Administration	University of Cincinnati
	Foundations of Engineering I & II
	Elementary Latin
	English Composition

In addition, there are other online or on-campus options available for College Credit Plus. Please visit the [College Credit Plus website](#) for more information.

Dual Credit

Through agreements that McNicholas maintains with selected universities, students may earn college and high school credit simultaneously. Universities make their own decisions about the college transfer courses that they will accept. Students and parents are advised to check whether prospective universities will accept these courses for transfer credit. Families are responsible for the college credit fees. Students apply for this funding by completing a brief application form at course registration time.

The following dual credit courses are available:

[Mt. St. Joseph University](#)

Biblical Literature I, Biblical Literature II

- These courses are taught in person on the McNicholas campus. There is a \$150 per semester course.

Scheduling

Please reflect thoughtfully and realistically about yourself – your capabilities, your interests, and your goals – as you decide on your courses. Find the course workload that will stretch you but not overwhelm you.

Choosing the right mix of courses for YOU depends on you knowing YOU. How much time will you need for other parts of your life to stay in balance: sports, clubs, service, family, church, friends, part-time job? Copying a classmate's course choices is not a good strategy because your classmate's overall life is different from yours. None of this is meant to dissuade you from pursuing lofty goals and stretching your ability to cope with stress. Stress is part of daily life and isn't going away. If you want to go for a spot in any competitive post-secondary program, you will have to do substantial work. Just make sure it's the RIGHT work to help you reach your goals and that it's the RIGHT type and level of work for you.

Your teachers and counselors are here to help you. Please don't hesitate to ask them about the realities of the workload for certain courses. We depend on you to make good choices about your commitments next year because everyone at McNick will benefit from having the best balanced YOU on campus next year.

Course selection begins in the second semester. Students are given scheduling information including their course selection sheets and recommendations in late January/early February. Students are given time to meet with their teachers to determine course recommendations for the following year and turn their form back in with a parent signature by early February. Counselors meet one on one with students to schedule their courses.

All schedule change requests are due to Counseling by June 1 of the preceding academic year. Any schedule changes over the summer will be addressed beginning on August 1. If there are immediate concerns over the summer, please reach out to the Director of Curriculum.

A student may change a McNicholas course within the first week of a class under these conditions:

- The student has obtained the [Course Scheduling Change Form](#) from the Counselor's Office
- The student no longer needs the class as a graduation requirement
- The student needs to change the level of the course they are currently enrolled in
 - The student has parent permission to change the class
 - The student has had a conversation with the teacher
 - The student's counselor has approved the change

Any schedule changes beyond the first week of classes is subject to a fee of \$50 with the exception to level changes for placement purposes. If a student drops a yearlong class after the end of first quarter, a "Withdraw Fail" will be posted on a student's transcript as a record of their course history and be calculated into their GPA.

Credit Flexibility

“Ohio’s plan for credit flexibility is designed to broaden the scope of curricular options available to students, increase the depth of study available for a particular subject and tailor the learning time or conditions as needed. In these ways, students can customize aspects of their learning around more of their interests and needs...The key to this option is that the student drives the request as well as the plan to earn the credit. A specific interest or credit need of the student should be the basis for the request.” ([Ohio Department of Education website](#)).

Through Credit Flexibility, students may propose a plan to pursue college preparatory academic work outside of McNicholas classrooms, whether for an individually designed program, a course offered at McNicholas, or a course or experience not offered at McNicholas or through a partner course provider. For the sake of accomplishing the formational and social aspects of education essential to the school’s graduation outcomes, the student ordinarily must be present in the McNicholas school building, or present at educational programs sponsored by or officially affiliated with McNicholas, for at least 80% of the time during which classes are held each week.

To receive credit at McNicholas for this work, a student must

- Submit a [Flexible Credit Proposal Application](#) to the Director of Curriculum by May 15 of the year preceding the implementation year (exceptions may be granted by the Director of Curriculum)
- Obtain the approval of the Director of Curriculum for the proposal
- Demonstrate mastery in the proposed area of study according to the plan approved by the Director of Curriculum

The Director of Curriculum will review the request with the assistance of the appropriate Department Chair or his/her delegate in order to render a decision about whether the school finds merit in the proposal. The school may accept the proposal as submitted, communicate additional requirements and/or modify the proposal, or deny the proposal. If accepted or modified, the school will then decide on the unit of credit to be awarded at the completion.

It is required that a McNicholas credentialed educator oversee the student’s progress on any approved plan. The student is responsible for all fees related to the learning plan. In order for a credit to be issued for a graduation requirement, all required course content as outlined in the McNicholas graded course of studies must be met. The designation of whether the credit issued is for a graduation requirement or an elective credit is at the discretion of the Director of Curriculum. When the student completes the stipulated work and demonstrates mastery, the credit will be posted on the student’s transcript and the grade will be determined and included in the GPA.

While “seat time” is not mandated for credit, it might provide a useful guide for the student in developing the learning plan. The Director of Curriculum, in consultation with the adult supervisor/mentor, will assign a grade upon completion. It is a policy of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati that religion classes may not be taken in this manner. McNicholas does not permit students to graduate in less than four years. There is an additional fee of up to \$500 per credit based upon the extent of a McNicholas teacher’s responsibility in the educational option plan. Please see your school counselor for more information.

Physical Education Flex Credit

Credit Flexibility is a program offered by the state of Ohio that allows a student to receive High School (HS) credit for education realized through experiences outside of the classroom. Credit for required Physical Education (PE) can be earned by pairing out-of-school sporting activities with Ohio grade-level PE standards. (OH PE requirements: .5 credits in PE, normally achieved through taking two .25 credit PE classes, each 1 semester long. At McNicholas High School, students can take these two classes anytime between 9th and 12th grade). Please click [here](#) to access the PE Flex Waiver and reach out to your school counselor for more questions.

Physical Education Waiver

To qualify for the [Physical Education Waiver](#), a student must complete two full seasons in one or more qualifying activities. Once successfully completed, the two Physical Education classes required to meet McNicholas High School graduation requirements will be waived. Daily participation paralleling the official sport season must be successfully completed and approved by each respective coach/director.

Key Considerations

- PE Waivers cannot be awarded retroactively
- Students cannot be awarded a partial waiver
- Students can participate in different activities in different seasons

Senior Study Hall

During a student's senior year, they qualify to schedule for a senior study hall allowing the student to arrive late or leave early during block schedule days. Students will have the opportunity to sign up for a Senior Study Hall during the scheduling process. This will indicate the interest for a student to either have late arrival or early release. During the scheduling process, we try our best to accommodate all scheduling requests but there may be conflicts that do not allow for students to have a Senior Study Hall. Students and parents must agree to the terms below as well as sign and return the Senior Study Hall Permission Form.

The purpose of the Senior Study Hall allows for:

- Develops personal responsibility in our students as they work toward Full Stature in Christ.
- Gives seniors an additional opportunity before graduation to practice self-regulation in the area of personal responsibility and the use of one's time.
- Expresses our respect for our seniors as developing adults.

Your senior's participation in the plan is entirely up to you and your family. If you choose to not have your senior participate, he or she can continue to report to study hall as usual. Please read the details below and, if you choose to have your senior participate, complete the permission form below.

1. Seniors placed in a Senior Study Hall during A or E bell are permitted to arrive late to school and Seniors with a D or H bell are permitted to leave school after C or G bell. This only applies to Block Schedule days. Any day we have an 8-bell day or special schedule (ex. Mass days) is not included in this opportunity.
2. The following stipulations apply:
 - If there is a school activity at the beginning of the day or the end of the day for all students, seniors are to arrive on time for the activity or remain for it. (ex: mass, speaker, pep rally)
 - If a senior has study hall during the first bell of the day, they must arrive at school prior to the start of whatever bell is next. This means they are checked into the office before the bell rings for class change.
 - Students MAY NOT change their schedules to allow for a late start or an early dismissal.
 - Parents must assume responsibility for the whereabouts of their student when they arrive at school later than 7:40 a.m. and after they leave the school premises prior to 2:40 p.m.
 - This privilege may be revoked at the discretion of the administration if misused or for academic or disciplinary reasons.
 - If an adjusted schedule applies to the day, seniors are responsible to make the adjustment and be at school at the appropriate time.
 - Seniors are allowed to be off campus for a maximum of only one study hall bell per day.

Online Course Options

Quality online courses are available to McNicholas students through one of our participating online vendors. These classes are only for high school credit.

The following guidelines apply:

- If McNicholas offers a regular face-to-face course, students are expected to take the face-to-face course rather than the online course.
- Any Junior or Senior student taking an online course for English (including CCP), will be highly encouraged to take the summer College Essay Workshop.
- The Student Handbook expectations for regular McNicholas courses apply to online courses.
- Students taking an online course will follow all policies that apply to courses already taught at McNicholas. Additionally, the policies of the online course will apply.

McNicholas provides funding that enables a limited number of students to take online courses through these partner organizations at no additional cost to the family. Students apply for this funding by completing a brief application form at course registration time. Please reach out to your school counselor for more information.

Summer School

Summer school options vary year to year depending upon the needs of our student population. McNicholas offers limited educational opportunities for students during the summer months. Students are able to enroll in original credit courses and/or recovery credit core courses that were taken during the academic year. Options will be provided for the student if they are in need of taking a credit recovery course. Please click [here](#) for more information about Summer School. Additional fees are required for summer courses

COLLEGE PREPARATION

College Entrance Requirements

Admission requirements for post-secondary educational institutions vary. Many require specific “college preparatory” subjects for admission and often have additional requirements for a particular program. Each school and/or program that a student may be considering should be checked for specific requirements early in the student’s high school career to ensure that the student is taking the appropriate high school courses.

Private, two-year technical, and community colleges have individual requirements that may differ from the Ohio state-supported college requirements. Many colleges require at least two years of foreign language and competitive programs such as the University of Cincinnati Design Art and Architecture Program (DAAP) require a year of physics and a year of calculus or precalculus. As soon as you become interested in a particular college or college program, please find out about its entrance requirements. Your school counselor will be able to assist you in the process.

Counselor College Process

Academic Advising	Person and Social Support	College & Career Readiness
Our students receive assistance in academic planning and course selection through individual meetings with their counselors and consultation with teachers and parents. School counselors are available to support students with time management, study, and organizational skills.	Our school counselors promote personal and social development in all students. We encourage participation in extracurricular activities, meet with students individually, facilitate small counseling groups, and provide crisis intervention counseling and mental health referrals.	Career readiness begins with students exploring their strengths and interests. Our counselors facilitate career development opportunities for our students at each grade level. School counselors also support students through the college application process.

College Entrance Tests (ACT/SAT Opportunities)

College Entrance Tests are given several times throughout the year at various locations and dates that are set by the testing company. Students should be aware of the testing requirements for individual colleges that they are interested in. Reach out to your school counselor if you have questions. Please click the links for more information about registering for the [ACT](#) or [SAT](#).

At McNick:

- Sophomores take the **PreACT (Practice American College Test)** which allows sophomores to have a unique ACT test practice scenario where scores provide insight into the students’ predicted performance on the ACT.
- Juniors should take the **ACT (American College Test)** by April or June of their junior year. State law requires districts and schools to administer the state-funded ACT or SAT to all grade 11 students in the spring of their junior year. Additionally, juniors take the Practice ACT in the fall of their junior year to prepare for the spring test.
- Juniors are invited to take the optional **PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test)** by registration only. If a student meets annual benchmark, they have the opportunity to qualify for National Merit and/or National Achievement and/or National Hispanic Scholar Award
- If students wish to take the **SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)** they should do so by May or June of their junior year or if necessary, in the fall of their senior year.

- In the past, we have offered the **PSAT-10 (Preliminary SAT 10)** which is a standardized test that is typically taken by 10th-grade students. It is designed to help students prepare for the SAT, which is a college admission test. The PSAT 10 is a practice version of the SAT and offers a similar format but is not used for college admissions.

Students are able to sign up for the Torch Prep ACT bootcamp in the summer. Additionally, we offer a College Essay Writing Workshop to all incoming seniors who wish to work on their college essays. All students work on their college essays in the fall of their senior year to align with the college application process. The English department has a guest speaker who specializes in College Essay Writing to kick off the process.

Future Focus

Every year in the fall, students have the opportunity to learn about higher education options from a variety of college representatives. College reps present information about their respective institutions, including academic programs, campus life, admission requirements, financial aid options, and more. Students can ask questions, gather brochures, and get a better understanding of what different colleges offer. This helps students make informed decisions about their next steps after high school, whether they're thinking about applying to college, exploring different fields of study, or looking into scholarship opportunities. It's a chance to explore various options and start planning for the future.

Career Day

Every other year, McNick hosts a Career Day in the spring where professionals and alumni from various fields are invited to speak with students about their careers. During the event, these guests share their career journeys, describe their job responsibilities, and offer advice on how to succeed in their fields. Students have the opportunity to ask questions, learn about different industries, and gain insights into the education and skills needed for various careers. The goal is to expose students to a wide range of professions, help them explore potential career paths, and provide them with real-world perspectives on what different jobs are like. It's a valuable experience for students to get inspired and think about their future goals.

Students Preparation for College at McNick

<h3>Naviance</h3> <p>McNicholas uses Naviance, a college & career planning resource, to assist our students in the college and career process. Naviance is a comprehensive website that students and their parents can use as a tool in planning their future. Some of the benefits of using Naviance include transcript requests, submit college application documents, research colleges, access career exploration and planning tools, resume builder, and engage in self-discovery assessments to determine career interests.</p>	<h3>College Visits</h3> <p>Students are encouraged to go on college visits to get a feel for the environment, culture and facilities of the campus. These visits help students explore the campus atmosphere, meet current students or faculty, and learn more about academic programs, student life and campus resources. During our school year, we host fields trips where we have students visit various colleges such as UC Linder College of Business, UC College of Pharmacy and the UC School of Information Technology.</p>
<h3>Career Clusters</h3> <p>Students complete their Career Clusters assessment tool that helps students explore different career options based on their interests, skills, and values. The inventory typically asks a series of questions about what students enjoy doing, what they're good at, and what types of tasks they prefer. Based on their responses, the inventory suggests specific career clusters—groups of related careers—such as health sciences, business, engineering, or arts and communication. This helps students identify areas they might want to explore further and guides them in choosing potential career paths that align with their strengths and interests.</p>	<h3>Job Shadowing</h3> <p>Students are encouraged to spend time with a professional in a specific field to observe and learn about their day-to-day responsibilities. Job shadowing gives students a firsthand look at what a particular job or career is really like. The goal is for students to gain insights into the skills, tasks, and environment involved in that career, helping them make more informed decisions about their future career paths. Reach out to our Alumni Manager for more information if you are interested in connecting with an alumni for a certain field.</p>
<h3>Parent Meetings</h3> <p>Counselors holding parent meetings during the junior and senior years which are designed to guide families through the postsecondary process, such as college applications. These meetings typically cover key topics such as preparing for college, understanding application deadlines, and navigating the various steps in applying, including writing essays, gathering recommendation letters, and completing financial aid forms. Counselors also provide advice on selecting the right colleges, managing stress during the application process, and understanding scholarship and financial aid opportunities. Please visit our school calendar on our website for dates for these meetings.</p>	<h3>Guest Speakers</h3> <p>Throughout the school year, we invite guest speakers to come in and talk to students during class time to share their expertise, experiences and insights on various topics. These speakers may come from different professions, industries, or academic fields, providing students with a wide range of perspectives and real-world knowledge. The purpose is to expose students to new ideas, help them connect classroom learning to real-world applications and inspire them by hearing from professionals or experts in subjects they might be interested in.</p>

College Application Process

At McNicholas, our school counselors work with students from the start in guiding their post-secondary plans. Below is a brief overview of the College Application Process. During the junior meeting, counselors advise students to have a planning process when they return in August. Students should have an idea where they are applying so they know when to start the application process as well to be knowledgeable of the deadlines.

1. Application Submission: Counselors meet with seniors during their senior class meeting to discuss the college application process and then meet individually with students. Students begin to fill out the Common App or specific college applications.
2. Essay/Personal Statement: Students work in their senior English classes on their college essays and/or personal statements. Seniors have the opportunity to complete this during the summer in the College Essay Workshop summer camp.
3. Letters of Recommendation (if needed): Students submit their letters of recommendation through Naviance.
4. Standardized Test Scores: Depending on the school, students may need to submit ACT or SAT scores, though some schools are moving toward test-optional policies.
5. Transcripts: High school transcripts are submitted through Naviance showing academic performance and coursework are submitted to provide a picture of the student's academic record.
Financial Aid & Scholarships:
 - a. Begin filling out the FAFSA application. At McNick, we host a meeting in the fall for more information about FAFSA
 - b. Be on the lookout for scholarship information from our Counseling office
 - i. [CollegeBoard Big Future Scholarships](#)
 - ii. [FastWeb Scholarships](#)
 - iii. [Guidance Page on our school website](#) – *coming soon*
6. Application Review & Decision: The admissions team at the college reviews the entire application, considering academic achievements, extracurricular involvement, personal statements and letters of recommendation. Applicants then receive a decision, which could offer an admission, waitlist or rejection. Please be sure to be aware of application deadlines.

Please reach out to your school counselor at any point during the college application process.

Four Year College Sample Planning Timeline

The college planning process spans four years of high school and involves academic preparation, extracurricular involvement, standardized testing, and application tasks. Freshmen start by focusing on building a solid academic foundation, while sophomores begin exploring potential colleges and taking on leadership roles. Juniors intensify their college preparation by taking standardized tests and researching schools, while seniors finalize their college applications, apply for scholarships, and make decisions on where to attend. This timeline offers an insight as to what we do at McNicholas High School to help guide students through a structured approach to ensure they meet all important milestones along the way.

FRESHMEN	SOPHOMORE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial individual meeting • Grade level meetings • Scheduling Information sessions • Strengths inventory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial individual meeting • Grade level meetings • Scheduling Information sessions • Career Clusters Inventory • Sophomores take the PreACT • Engage in job shadows • Research colleges and careers of interests through Naviance • Consider summer camp offerings such as Torch ACT Prep
JUNIOR	SENIOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual meetings • Grade level meetings • Scheduling Information sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to do your best in classes! Transcripts sent to colleges will include grades through the end of junior year • Participate in Future Focus • Take advantage of career exploration field trips (Mercy Health, Lindner College of Business) • Juniors take the practice and state ACT • Engage in job shadows and college visits • Research colleges and careers of interests through Naviance • Participate in Career Day (every other year) • Build your resume • Consider summer camp offerings (College Essay Workshop) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial individual meeting • Grade level meetings • Begin college application process using the Common App or school specific application • Complete and return the Transcript Authorization Form and fee to counseling • Obtain necessary documents for college application such as teacher recommendations • Attend the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Form • Apply for scholarships and check financial aid websites of schools you applied to for scholarship opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submit any scholarship/ grants offered to you to Counseling