

New Trier Township High School
Post-High School Counseling Office
Considerations for Sophomores

Now that my student is on the Winnetka Campus, what access does he have to the post-high school counselors?

The formal college search process begins junior year; however, post-high school counselors visit sophomore adviser rooms to respond to questions about junior-year registration. Your student is also welcome to consult with your counselor on drop-in Mondays as well, and parents may call or email with specific registration questions.

In January, parents of sophomores will be invited to a curriculum night, and at the end of the main session will be a break-out session with your individual, assigned post-high school counselor. The emphasis for postsecondary planning remains with academic performance, finding co-curricular opportunities your student finds rewarding, and developing independent living skills. Sophomores only have two to three semesters of high school level work under their belts, so the post-high school counselors function as generalist counselors dealing with curricular and co-curricular issues of adjusting to high school.

My neighbor has talked about a career/college program at New Trier. How does my son become involved with this?

In the late fall and early winter of the sophomore year, the school's career counselor will meet with students in each advisory. That is when your son will be registered on Naviance, the program utilized at New Trier for career and college searches and resume building. Career Counselor Ms. Thorngren provides continuing career information to students in groups. Individual appointments with her help students assess their interests and talents in light of the career opportunities that exist.

When should my student be taking college admission tests?

The ACT is an achievement test designed for students who are near the end of the junior year curriculum, so students are advised to take that test in the middle to the end of the junior year. Taking the test too early may yield results that undermine a student's confidence, particularly in light of the fact that the test is designed for the end of the junior year.

The SAT, formerly an aptitude test, is now an achievement test quite like the ACT.

Colleges and universities will accept results from either test for admission consideration.

Don't worry about these tests this year; from April of the junior year through the fall application process, students usually have six to seven opportunities to take the ACT alone!

My student has accommodations due to a documented disability. Does that change anything about this process?

Students with disabilities and who pay attention in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings should actually know a great deal about how they learn. The parents and special education department teachers should be focusing on the same skill set: determining how to be an effective and successful learner, developing self-advocacy skills, and finding activities that are rewarding and enjoyable.

The process for postsecondary school admission is exactly the same unless a student wishes to apply to a specific program for students with disabilities; working one-on-one with the post-high school counselor will individualize the process for students with and without disabilities.

Do you have any advice specifically for students who might wish to pursue the arts in college?

Certainly! First, each prospective music, theater, dance, or art student should keep a file folder of all activities and awards earned from freshman year forward. That will make it easier to construct a resume in the fall of the senior year, and might help in completing college applications. Additionally, students should seek opportunities to continue their craft, whether that is through community theater or summer music camps.

As a parent, you might wish to become involved in the New Trier Fine Arts Parent Association and check out their website.

I understand that potential student athletes can be approached by college coaches at the end of the sophomore year.....how do we need to prepare for that?

Yes, the NCAA rules do allow contact at the end of the student's sophomore year now. Your student's job is to remain the best learner in the classroom as possible so that the unofficial transcript that you may share with the college coaches actually helps that coach move your student's credentials successfully through the admission office. Eventually, every recruited athlete has to fill out the application for admission and be "green-lighted" through the Office of Admission. The sway of each coach depends upon the college, the sport, and the admission office.

In your response to the first question, you mention "independent living skills." What did you mean by that?

New Trier students don't drop out of college and university settings because they can't handle the academic demands placed on them; the larger issues that affect NT students' persistence in college concern their independent living skills. The post-high school counselors believe that as early as the sophomore year, students should begin to become increasingly self-reliant.

Some examples include:

- Getting him/herself out of bed in the morning
- Going through the school day without texting, emailing or calling a parent
- Structuring his or her own free time productively –
 - managing varying homework demands,
 - setting academic goals and following through to reach them,
 - attempting to solve study problems on his or her own before asking for assistance,
 - finding time for relaxation, and
 - participating in an activity of interest

Additional opportunities for independence include money management, making meals, doing laundry and doing chores without parental prompting

You keep focusing on academics, activities and now independent living skills. When can we talk about college????

In the beginning of the sophomore year, your student had only finished two of eight semesters of high school. Let's focus on making the most of New Trier before we move on to college!

Having said that, if your student wishes to begin to research future colleges that fit his or her interests, promote the Naviance college search. From that list, move into the individual websites of each particular college into areas like "majors" and "departments" to see the depth and breadth of courses of interest to your student.