

January 9, 2012

Dear Junior Parents,

Happy New Year! In January, your junior student will begin the college search and application process. I am delighted to be your child's college counselor and advocate. I can't stress enough how welcome you are to call me at (805) 686-0649 with your questions or thoughts. The college process is a family affair and I am here for you as much as your children.

Applying to colleges requires organization, a sense of self, and attention to many details and deadlines. While certain deadlines are hard and fast, there is no single right way to approach college applications. When it comes to gap years, transfer paths, college visits, SAT and ACT testing, and many other matters, please consider what fits your child and your family. There are as many routes to college as there are students!

Dunn School focuses on **making the right match** between a student and college. We want each child to develop an appropriate and balanced list of colleges that fit their goals, preferences and needs. I will work with each child to refine these lists, and to make sure their applications and essays present their achievements and unique personalities in meaningful and understandable ways to college admission readers. It's a pleasure to advocate for Dunn students, and to write their counselor letter.

STUDENT MEETINGS

Students are most successful and satisfied when they develop their own well-thought priorities, and take ownership of the process. To ensure every student understands the multiple facets of the college search process, I'll meet with each junior *individually* twice during this semester – once in January to develop a personal plan, and again in May to go over summer responsibilities. Of course, students are always welcome to see me whenever questions arise.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

I am emailing a questionnaire for parents to complete on behalf of your child. This is a valuable window into your son or daughter. Your answers will help me provide personalized college counseling that reflects your family's priorities. Please return that questionnaire to Jessie Brumfiel by January 30, 2012. jbrumfiel@dunnschool.org.

SPRING TIMELINE

Immediately after winter break, each junior will meet individually with me. Following those conferences, juniors will begin to work on a college 'think list' during college counseling class, and start

to craft pieces of their future college applications. The think list is just that: a personal list of college ideas to further research and consider. I have a series of college-application activities planned for juniors during the spring that will ensure they're well prepared for the senior year.

January: Individual conferences with the college counselor; complete college questionnaires; parent questionnaire due; update high school resume in Naviance; chart a plan for standardized tests

January 27 -29: San Francisco Bay Area college trip (full)

February: Begin writing drafts of common application short-answer essays in college counseling class; learn the universe of college research tools; begin a think list of colleges

February 19-23 Seattle and Portland area college trip (optional – sign up required)

March: Begin writing drafts of common application long-answer essays in college counseling class; complete a draft of the Common Application activities sheet

April: Work on college interview skills; continue to develop a think list of colleges; Southern California area colleges trip planned (optional – sign up required); consider visiting colleges with family over spring break

May: Mock college admissions panel with college admission officers; individual meetings with college counselor to go over summer responsibilities

SUMMER PLANS

I've prepared a list of summer programs (certainly not all-inclusive!) that can be a source of ideas for summer planning. I've included it in this mailing to you.

I look forward to working with your child throughout the college admission process. This should be a positive, exciting time for your child. If your child is especially anxious over college applications, please alert me so I can talk with him or her. Students almost always feel calmer, happier and more in control after a short meeting. We should always help students keep things in a healthy perspective.

Please don't hesitate to be in touch at any time, with questions or ideas.

Best wishes,

Jessie Brumfiel, College Counselor

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(805) 686-0649