

# MCNEAL SAMS COLLEGE CONSULTING NEWS AND NOTES

## WHAT TO DO NOW CHECKLIST

**FINISH STRONG!** We're approaching the end of the school year, and it may feel like it's not a moment too soon! The more you can keep your focus until you reach the finish line, the better. Which studying approaches work best for you? (Take our Learning & Productivity assessment to know for sure!) What is left in terms of long-term projects? Do you have a schedule for exam review?

Maybe it's obvious, but finishing with strong grades in both freshman and sophomore year is hugely to your benefit. It strengthens your GPA and gives it a foundation that can be tough to recoup if you get a later start. It demonstrates your consistency and tenacity. In the end, strong grades (and we understand that these vary from person to person!) are money in the bank - an account you can draw on when it's time for college applications. Hang in there!

## APRIL BRINGS MORE THAN SHOWERS ...

In our second quarterly newsletter, we will be focusing on helping you finish the school year strong, making the most of your summer, and remembering to save a little time for yourself to reflect, refine, and refresh.

## CAMPUS VISITS:

Summer presents an ideal opportunity to conduct some "sample college" campus visits. With studying, activities, sports, and more during the school year, time is scarce. And while we know that some people would prefer to visit colleges when they are in session (and bustling with students), don't count the summer out! It is a great time to familiarize yourself with different types of schools. Urban, suburban, rural; private and public; religious and secular; right around the corner or far from home.

Be sure to take notes and photos—it's all useful in helping you gain a greater sense for the kind of place that will meet your future academic and personal needs.

In terms of arranging a visit, it's as simple as Googling the name of the college and the words "campus visit." That will take you to the information you need on tours, information sessions, directions, and more. And as always, talk with your MSCC counselor to get travel ideas! We even have sample travel itineraries available for various parts of the country.

## DIGITAL SAT: IT'S COMING SOON!

Starting with the October 2023 PSAT, the College Board will begin to offer the SAT and PSAT only in a digital format. The SAT is currently only offered in a digital format internationally; and, it will begin as a digital format exclusively in the US as of March of 2024. That means all of you who choose to take the SAT will take it digitally.

Curious? ArborBridge, has created a series of very short videos - under 4 minutes each - to introduce you to the new format and answer your questions. **[You will find the library of videos here.](#)**



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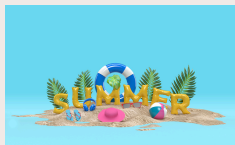
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# NEWS AND NOTES

## TALK AROUND TOWN

Some items we have found interesting recently:

Article: [7 Tips for Making the Most of Your Summer](#) by Jonathan Alpert



Podcast: Inside the Admissions Office: Advice from Former Admissions Officers by InGeniusPrep



Reading Recommendation: Any of the "[101 Great Books Recommended for College-Bound Readers](#)". List compiled by Good Reads. And, yes, there are even some that would make good beach reads!

## KINDNESS CORNER: MONEY MATTERS

Money matters - yes, it does indeed! According to the Education Data Initiative, the average yearly cost at a four year public university for an in-state student is \$25,707; for an out of state student, that figure jumps to \$44,014 for an out-of-state student attending a public university. If you choose to enroll at a private college or university, your average annual cost is \$54,501. In other words, regardless of what type of four year college you may choose to attend, your degree will likely cost between \$100,000-\$200,000.

For families for whom financing a college education is a concern, or for families who want to plan for the future, may we recommend conversations about money now, well before the time of finalizing a college list and applying is upon you. Knowing how much you can or are willing to spend on college, whether or not student and or parent loans are an option for you, and what everyone's expectations and hopes are now will be a strong foundation from which to build your list and make your decisions.

Unsure what particular schools will cost your family? Go to a school's website and search for the "Net Price Calculator". While not 100% accurate, most will provide a reasonable estimate of what you can expect to pay at that school.



## PLANNING FOR SUMMER

School's out for summer! What are you going to do now? Certainly you deserve a break from homework and tests, but the summer is also an ideal time for new activities. Perhaps you've already arranged for a part-time job—good for you! It shows initiative and a sense of responsibility. You might also consider service opportunities; speak with your MSCC counselor about options that connect you with a community need. Maybe you'll choose an educational opportunity like a college program. It can broaden your horizons and help you explore an independent academic interest.

No matter what your summer consists of, it should include reading. And we don't just mean books on the summer list from your school. Check out audiobooks! Try some beach reading! Indulge an interest in science fiction or fantasy literature; ask us for suggestions! We'll check with our author friends to find you some great titles!

Summers are also a good time to explore career options. You can start by completing our AchieveWorks assessment or by meeting with our Career Specialist. You can also make a list of people in jobs and careers that interest you, construct a short list of questions to ask them, and gather information that will guide you. We can help!