



Deerfield Parent Network: Getting Ready for Junior Year

- Junior year can be a stressful year for everyone, especially the student, but actually the whole family. Your student has a lot on their mind with classes, homework, grades, tests and projects, sports and activities, ACT/SAT tutoring, friends, social media et al. Your student may not be able to do much more than they are already doing.
- Use the resources of the high school. The College and Career Resource Center (CCRC) at DHS provides so much in the way of help and support, starting with the College Night for Juniors program in November covering the post-high school planning process.
- College counseling appointments begin second semester. Have your student make their appointment with the college counselor early.
- Students are encouraged to connect with a DHS college counselor in January/early February, in addition to their school counselor, to discuss appropriate classes for senior year to be sure they are meeting the minimum admissions requirements.
- As you look towards senior year registration, not everything needs to be taken at the AP level. It is important to have balance and for your student to stay healthy. There will be much to do in their senior year including some lengthy college applications so it is important to build in time to do those well.
- After the college counselor meeting, pull out your calendar and start to pencil in all of the possible trips between MLK day junior year and Columbus Day of Senior year. You will have the challenges of working around winter, spring and fall sports schedules, summer schedules and various other activities.
- Let your student drive the search. Ask them which campuses they are interested in visiting. This will help with the search buy-in process.
- Students should take advantage of all of the workshops we offer at DHS their junior year like MaiaLearning, Essay writing and Common Application workshops and College Groups for Juniors. They will feel much better prepared going forward.

- Expect junior year that they might want to go far, far away, but senior year, sometimes that changes, so always put a few schools on the list that are driving distance away.
- Help your student create a list of negotiable and non-negotiable characteristics the school needs to have for them to enjoy going to school there . Rank these characteristics in order of importance. This list could change often, and is likely to change often. This is ok as your student sees and learns more about each of the schools and as they narrow down their list of schools.
- It is never too early to have a conversation about college costs and family finances with your student. It is a good idea to know what you can afford so that your student knows the budget. Some schools are more generous with financial aid and scholarships so you can't always go by their "sticker price." If financial aid doesn't come through with enough money, attending that school may not be possible. It's tough to have your student fall in love with a school that does not fit your budget. Better to have that conversation in advance.
- When you do go on campus, try to attach yourselves to the perkier tour guide they have, especially if you want your child to like that school. The enthusiasm of the tour guide most certainly makes a difference.
- Try to find a DHS alum on every campus. Take them out for a meal and they will tell you everything you want to know about that school.
- Always wait for your student to give you their perspective on the school first before you share yours. Keeping a journal is also a very good idea because it is hard to remember what you saw at which school, the more schools you visit.
- Think about your student attending a summer program at the college campus they are most interested in. This will be a great way for your student to decide if they like the campus enough to apply there the following fall.
- Your student may not want to look at U of I or other midwestern schools because they have been going to school with the same kids for 12 years. And then they do change their mind and want to go with some DHS kids for the comfort of it.
- Have your student start their application process in the summer between junior and senior year, especially the essays because even before senior year starts, they are incredibly busy with their activities. They will appreciate having them done earlier in the school year.
- Try to visit the favored campuses twice-for sure before a final decision is made because you and your student will see things differently the second time. This second visit will most likely help to solidify their choice(s).
- Enjoy this process with your student. You will learn so much about what is important to them as they make one of the biggest decisions of their lives.

