

Freshman and Sophomore Parents' Meeting October 19, 2018

Introduction

Please read counselor bios [here](#).

The College Office Model

- We have three college counselors and two staff assistants for roughly 100 students.
- The counselors split the class into three groups but work collaboratively as a unified voice.
- The counselors have years of experience working in college admissions, college counseling, and school life.
- The counselors live in dorms and are committed to boarding school life.
- Our office is committed to developing relationships with colleges. Over the spring and summer, we connected with 58 different institutions via college visits and conferences. This fall, we had approximately 100 colleges visit our office.
- We represent MX through leadership and membership with National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC), Boston Independent Schools College Counseling Association (BISCCA), Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools (ACCIS), College Board, SAT Committee, and the Fiske Guide Advisory Board.

Academic Review

Student advisors, the Academic Office, and the College Office work collaboratively to review and approve underclassmen course selection in the spring.

Standardized Testing

For families of Freshmen and Sophomores:

- PSAT results will be available online to sophomores in December. Scores will be available on December 10th, in the midst of a review day prior to exam week, so we will communicate with parents about accessing online scores in the spirit of not adding pressure during a sensitive time of year.

For families of Sophomores:

- This summer, we will send home a diagnostic testing packet that we coordinate with Advantage Testing. There will be a diagnostic practice SAT and ACT and a survey to complete. We ask that students take both diagnostic tests and fill out the survey, then send all back to us in a pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelope. Advantage Testing will score both tests and provide analysis on what test to focus on moving forward. The idea is to identify which test is the better test early on to mitigate the number of tests each student ultimately takes. Students that did not complete diagnostic testing are having to take more practice tests on Sundays during the school year to determine which test is best for them, which is not ideal.
- Advantage Testing offers an on-campus prep course that overlaps the December and March SAT test dates, and the February and April ACT dates.

- Score Choice allows students to select the specific SATs and Subject Tests they want a college to see. Most colleges allow Score Choice for SAT.
- Most colleges “super score” (take the highest sections over several tests) for SAT, and an increasing number for ACT.
- Practice SATs and ACTs are offered once a month on Sundays on campus.
- Depending on classroom performance and feedback from the teacher, sophomores may opt to take the AP World History exam.

Subject Tests

- Subject tests are subject-specific, hour-long tests that most colleges require.
- Some schools ask for two subject tests, most will use strong subject tests as helpful supplemental testing.
- Despite the fact that many colleges are deemphasizing Subject Tests, we like to encourage students to take them when they are curricularly best prepared.
- Most students will take subject tests in their junior spring, but for some freshman and sophomores, there are appropriate tests they can take in concert with their curriculum.
- We will communicate with students and parents of students whose curriculum and performance align well with available subject tests.
- June Subject Tests: **Math Level I** for students doing B+ or better in Math 32. **Math Level II** for students doing B+ or better in Math 49. **Biology or Chemistry** for students doing B+ or better in the honors sections of biology and chemistry. **World History** for students doing B+ or better in World History

Athletic Recruiting:

- The collegiate athletic recruiting process can begin very early. Our goal is to help students navigate an earlier process if necessary.
- The office starts with students when their recruiting process begins in the spirit of helping facilitate opportunities. The office at times this summer felt like a Sports Agency, working with the MX coaches, college coaches, and admissions offices to make sure our student-athletes are protected in the process.
- Bottom line: don’t go it alone, we have tons of experience!

Summer Plans

- There is no one “magic” summer experience that will benefit students in the college process. The key is being authentic to the student’s interests.
- Athletic Camps: MX coaches can recommend showcase and skill camps.
- Summer Jobs: always a good choice, respected by college admissions offices.
- Academic Programs: college courses, music camps, writing workshops, etc. are wonderful opportunities, but should align with student interests.
- MX faculty can make suggestions for summer programs in their fields.
- Link to summer program opportunities [here](#).

Visiting colleges:

- Is it too early to visit colleges? Yes and no. It's a fine idea to visit a college on a long weekend, trip, or near your house.
- Info sessions and tours are posted on the colleges' websites.
- Don't start by visiting the most selective schools you can think of. Try for a balanced group representing big, small, urban, and rural.
- Don't visit 10-20 schools! A school or two right now can be helpful to give our child some perspective on what is out there.

Focus on the here and now

- The most important thing to a freshman or sophomore should be simply being a Middlesex student: academics, healthy friendships, activities, and athletics.
- It's completely normal for a high school freshman or sophomore to not want to discuss college quite yet.

Sophomore Presentation

- There will be a presentation put on by the Deans' Office in February to discuss extracurricular involvement, meaningful ways to contribute, and how to lay the groundwork for leadership positions.
- This is essentially the first of many conversations about leadership that your child will have as they move through their years at MX.

Financial Aid Net Price Calculator

We recommend that families concerned about college costs to explore the Net Price Calculator on the colleges' websites or on the College Board website. This is an opportunity to start determining college costs and get a ballpark sense of what a need-based financial aid package might look like. We recommend the College Board's Net Price Calculator (NPC) as a starting place, visit it [here](#).

Communication

- Keep your eyes open for mailings and emails from the College Office with more information about testing and other programming.
- Please visit and "like" our Facebook page: facebook.com/mxcollegecounseling
- Visit our website [here](#) for access to all of our mailings, information on our calendar, college visits, and other helpful information.