

Hello Juniors & Their Blue Dragon Families,

It has been so great to be back to school with your students!

This is the year we incorporate a lot of college and career planning information into the learning that students are doing. Last we chatted about timelines: tests, college and tech school applications, and so much more. Ask your student about why today is important.

We have a couple of career planning events that you will want to have on your calendar for this semester:

September 21: High School Planning Day We will take the juniors on field trip to a college & recruiting fair called High School Planning Day. We hope everyone will take full advantage of this day to explore the many opportunities available to them once they have completed their high school education. At High School Planning Day there are representatives from many institutions to answer student questions about their programs and about ways to fund their future education. There will be reps from a variety of both in state and out of state colleges, universities, technical institutions. Some of our nation's Military Services will also be present. Financial Aid organizations will be present too. We've blocked out time during the school day for all of our students to get online, explore and chat with the recruiters and college reps.

October 12: PSAT/NMSQT This test is considered the practice SAT. It is also the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Only scores from the student's junior year will count for the National Merit Scholarship. Skills in reading, writing, language, and math will be measured for college and career readiness. It is given during the school hours on a national test date determined by College Board. It is not required. Cost is \$18.

See the College Board site for details:

- <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt>

Good sites to practice with are:

- Methodize – students can access this for free through their SD MyLife account.
- KhanAcademy.org

November 16: ASVAB Test and Career Exploration This test is a good one to take to explore your strengths and career interests. It is given by the military and scores are used to determine what job you will qualify if you chose a career in the military. It is also good career information even if you are not planning on going into the military. This test will be offered during the school day and is free. Scores are typically available within a week or two of taking the exam. We will host a score interpretation and career seminar after your results are ready.

See the ASVAB website for details.

- <https://www.asvabprogram.com/>

A good site to practice with is:

- March2Success.com

ACT: Typically, students sign up for the ACT in the spring of your junior year. We are not an ACT testing site. You have to sign up to take it on your own. The ACT is offered at bigger schools in the area several times throughout the year. Most of the time the test is offered on a Saturday morning. The ACT is a test given to predict your readiness for college. Most colleges in the midwest look for an ACT score of around 19-21 to be admitted. Scores on the ACT are also used to determine some scholarship eligibility. There are ACT prep courses offered in Garretson Academy, study guides in the library and ACT has both free app and an ACT prep course on their website. There is a cost to their ACT prep class on their site. Students that have put the time into it have seen increased test scores. There are other ACT prep sites out there. Be cautious of ones that charge a fee. There are plenty of free ones out there. If you have any questions about a program, feel free to ask me and we can research it together to see if it is worth it. ACT scores are typically made available within a few weeks of taking the exam. ACT will contact you directly and we will keep a copy of your scores in your student cumulative file. Student scores can also be put on their high school transcript with your permission.

See the ACT website for details.

- <https://www.act.org/>

Good sites to practice with are:

- Methodize - students can access this for free through their SD MyLife account.
- KhanAcademy.org
- ACT has good materials on their site for a fee:
<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation.html>
- More info on my website:
<https://michellepliska.wixsite.com/mysite/tests>

Spring: South Dakota's State Assessments These assessments in English Language Arts and Math are given to all juniors. This is the state's assessment of learning. The testing platform the state uses is Smarter Balanced Assessment. Your student has taken this before, but they haven't had to take it since 8th grade. The scores that you get on SBA are also used to determine your placement in college courses and readiness for college. It is smart to take it seriously.

Below is a link to learn more.

- <https://doe.sd.gov/assessment/>

I've been told that my website can be helpful to families as well. Be sure to check out my "Academic and Career Planning" page on the site. Next year, I you will find the "Scholarship and Financial Aid" page to be helpful too.

- <https://michellepliska.wixsite.com/mysite/academic-career-planning>

Please, feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions about any of the info or if you have information you want to share. I am here to support all of our students with all of their career and college readiness, academic goals and social and emotional learning. I am proud to be in it together with you!

Respectfully,

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