

The Miami Valley School



College Counseling

Sophomore Handbook

Sophomore College Counseling Handbook

For all Sophomore Students and their Families

Purpose: To acquaint all students and parents with information that will lead to continued success in laying the foundation for a successful college selection process.

WELCOME MVS SOPHOMORES and FAMILIES!

The mission of The Miami Valley School is to challenge young people of promise to become self-sustaining learners and compassionate global citizens.

Five core values are integral to our success in achieving this mission:

- **Excellence:** MVS summons all students to their full potential of mind, body, and spirit, by inviting and encouraging them to seek distinction in their endeavors.
- **Caring Community:** MVS values a nurturing environment where each student is known and loved, and finds joy in belonging.
- **Experiential Learning:** MVS believes that students thrive from opportunities to experience life and to learn while broadening their knowledge of self and kindling intellectual passion and curiosity.
- **Celebration of Individual Gifts:** MVS believes that fostering appreciation for unique talents, capabilities, and differences nourishes individual growth and enriches the community.
- **Character:** MVS insists upon and fosters integrity, respect, personal responsibility, teamwork, and empathy for others – qualities of character that are inherent in leadership development.

The MVS College Counseling Team encourages our students to use these core values to lay the foundation for strong academics, to follow passions outside the classroom, and to develop good citizenship. A strong background in these areas will undoubtedly lead to not only a growing experience at MVS, but also contribute to a successful college selection process. As a sophomore, it is important to continue building on the foundation that you built as a freshman. It is never too late to begin that foundation if your freshman year was not all that you wanted it to be. As always, do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding how a class or activity may relate to your college process. The door to the College Loft is always open.

Most Sincerely,

Colin Dunnigan
Director of College Counseling

SOPHOMORE YEAR

CONTINUED FROM FRESHMAN YEAR:

Maintain the strongest possible academic record by enrolling in the most challenging courses appropriate for you. Work hard on your academics. Make good grades. Continue to READ – READ - READ! Reading improves many skills including vocabulary and critical thinking. Make sure to take the time to read outside of class.

FALL TRIMESTER:

- Continue your extra-curricular involvement and building your portfolio of activities, awards, and accomplishments. Keep STRETCHING and PUSHING yourselves! **REMEMBER:** *Depth and quality of involvement are MORE important than the number of activities in which you are involved.*
- Add to your folder in which you are placing a record of your activities, accomplishments, strengths, and positive qualities. This information will be useful in completing college applications, preparing for campus visits and college interviews, and providing background material for those who write your letters of recommendation.
- Take the PSAT in mid-October for practice. The PSAT for sophomores and juniors is administered on the same day. It is imperative that you take this test seriously as it is great preparation for future standardized tests.
- Make sure you are ‘on top’ of your academic work.
If you get in trouble or fall behind with your studies, it is IMPERATIVE that you seek out assistance from your instructors, your Academic Advisor, or your College Counselor. That last thing you want to do is dig a deeper hole by not seeking help.
- Begin to research colleges by attending local college nights in the fall and spring at the University of Dayton (fall) and Centerville High School (spring) and talking with college representatives who visit The Miami Valley School.
- Save your best work in academic courses and the fine arts for your portfolio.
- In Early January you will receive your PSAT scores. You will receive both the score report and the actual test that you completed so that you may see where you excelled and where you need improvement (the College Counseling Office provides a meeting for students and parents to better understand the test scores).

WINTER/SPRING TRIMESTERS:

- Keep Studying! Your academic record is of utmost importance.
- Look for volunteer and school activities to develop your interests. Continue to build your extra-curricular resume with activities in which you are passionate.

- In the spring, select appropriate courses for 11th grade with the help of your family and Academic Advisor. Be sure to select courses for your junior year that will meet your academic needs and the requirements for college admission.
- If you are an athlete, know the OHSAA (Ohio High School Athletic Association) requirements for high school eligibility (see athletic director) & and the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) requirements for college eligibility (<http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net>).
- Explore summer enrichment opportunities. Make your summer productive.
- READ-READ-READ!

IF A SELECTIVE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY CONTINUES TO BE A POSSIBILITY:
(A 'Selective' college/university can be defined as any institution admitting less than 60% of their applicant pool.)

- Keep the lines of communication with your parents open about the idea.
- Continue to share your ideas with your Academic Advisor and your College Counselor.
- Continues working with your Academic Advisor to develop a course schedule that will enable you to achieve this goal.

WHAT COLLEGES WANT IN AN APPLICANT:

- **STRONG ACADEMIC PREPARATION**
(See the above recommended Academic Preparation list)
- **INVOLVEMENT OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**
REMEMBER: QUALITY not QUANTITY
 - Good Examples of Involvement are:
 - After-school/weekend job
 - Clubs and Activities at MVS (taking on leadership roles)
 - Playing multiple sports (taking a leadership role is important)
 - Acting/Dancing/Drawing (concentrating and developing in any area of Fine Arts)
 - Tutoring here at MVS or in other local schools
 - Community Service
 - Volunteering
 - Church Activities
- **GOOD STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES**
The best preparation for standardized testing is challenging yourself in the classroom. Also, you want to make sure you are reading, not only for school but for pleasure as well. This will help with vocabulary development.
- **STRONG PERSONAL QUALITIES**
Colleges are looking for students who have learned and displayed qualities such as:
 - Character
 - Integrity
 - Determination
 - Leadership ability
 - Honesty

- Adaptability
- Friendly/One who can interact and get along well with others

These qualities can be developed through interaction and involvement on all levels. Make sure you are picking good role models to learn from and doing your best to always 'do-the-right-thing'.

If you have any questions about this information, please see the Director of College Counseling. The door to the College Loft is ALWAYS open!