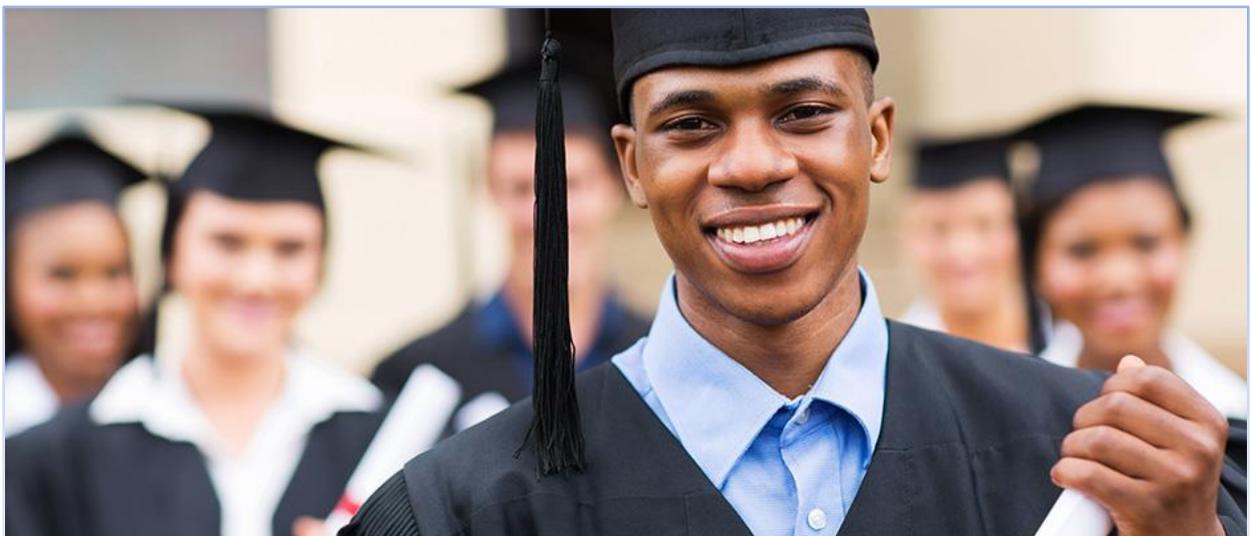


College Planning and Readiness Seminar Booklet #2



“Helping students be inspirationally charged and mentally focused for college, using an enthusiastic and hands-on approach.”

Created for:

SMART SCHOLARS: Early College Program at Niagara Falls High School



A Message from Your Instructor

Hello Students,

I hope you are doing well and working on your various class assignments. As part of your College Planning and Readiness Seminar, I have created a series of informational booklets (*assignments included*) you will find useful as you continue to navigate the college planning process.

The following topics covered in this booklet include:

1. Taking the Right Mix of High School Classes
2. The Admissions Decision: What Are Colleges Looking For in a Prospective Student?
3. What You Can Do NOW to Get a Jump Start on The College Application Process
4. Creating a Winning Essay
5. Time Management

All booklets will be released once a month—and posted on Ms. Cuddahee’s webpage. Go to webpage and click on “NFHS Early Scholars” tab, then click on “assignments/resources link.

Please feel free to contact me at bookercollegeplanning@yahoo.com should you have any questions.

Stay safe!

Allen P. Booker, M.S.
NFHS Early College Program Instructor
Booker College Planning



Taking the Right Mix of High School Classes

Preparing for college involves a number of key factors, including the importance of taking a balanced set of classes that will challenge you. According to BigFuture.org, college admission officers want to see a solid foundation of learning that you can build on in college. To create that foundation, take at least five solid academic classes each semester. Start with the basics, and then move to challenging yourself in advanced courses. The course list below should prepare you for success in college and beyond:

- English
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Foreign Language
- The Arts
- Challenging Course Work

For a full description of the recommended courses, please visit:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/your-high-school-record/high-school-classes-colleges-look-for>

What classes are you taking in your junior or senior year?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

NOTE: Don't forget to discuss your junior / senior year class schedule with your school counselor!



The Admissions Decision: What Are Colleges Looking For in a Prospective Student?

Each year, college admissions representatives have the difficult task of reviewing hundreds of applications from students around the world. As a student, you must often wonder “What are the key factors admissions representatives are looking for that will help me gain admission? Are my grades viewed as the most important part of the application process?” Please remember that there’s no “one size fits all” approach to making an admissions decision. Many factors are considered in making a decision to accept or deny a student.

According to CollegeData.com, factors that rank as the most important to colleges include:

- Overall high school grades
- College prep course grades (AP and Honors)
- Standardized test scores
- Essay
- Extracurricular commitment
- Demonstrated interest
- Special talent
- Letters of Recommendation
- Class rank

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, admissions representatives will also utilize student interview sessions and supporting documents as part of the admissions decision.



What You Can Do NOW to Get a Jump Start on the College Application Process

Whether you're a high school sophomore or junior, getting a jump start on the college application process can give you an edge over your peers who might not be thinking about starting the process so early. Although the college application process generally starts during your senior year, it's important to utilize this time to research the various documents required in order to submit an official application. Learning this process now will help you avoid any future red flags that could jeopardize your chances of gaining admission into college.

ACTIVITY- 1

Select 2-3 colleges you are considering—then go to their website and look up the application requirements for each college.

Here is a list of items included in a typical college application:

- Application (The Common App, The Universal App, Individual College App, Shared Application for a System of Colleges, i.e. SUNY, and The Coalition App.) For a full description of the various applications, please visit: <https://www.mefa.org/understanding-different-types-college-applications/>
- Transcript / School profile
- Test scores
- Letters of Recommendation
- List of Extracurricular activities (volunteer, leadership, employment, sports, etc.)
- Essay
- Optional sample of creative work. Some college majors require auditions, portfolios, and/or writing samples.



Creating a Winning College Essay

The college essay is one of the most important pieces in the college application process! Whether it's a Common Application essay, personal statement or supplemental essay, this aspect of the college application should not be underestimated — as they can be the deciding factor for admission.

Developing an essay requires you to find your voice. Bigfuture.com offers the following tips for writing an effective essay:

1. Choose a Topic That Will Highlight You
2. Keep Your Focus Narrow and Personal
3. Show, Don't Tell
4. Use Your Own Voice
5. Ask a Teacher or Parent to Proofread

For a full description of the various essay tips, please visit:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays/tips-for-writing-an-effective-application-essay-college-admissions>

ACTIVITY- 2

Write a 450-650 word essay on one of the following Common Application essay topics:

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma—anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

For additional essay tips, please visit the following websites:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays/sample-college-application-essay-1>

<https://www.petersons.com/blog/7-effective-application-essay-tips-to-take-your-essay-from-meh-to-amazing/>

Please email your essay to Mr. Booker at bookercollegeplanning@yahoo.com by May 22nd.

Time Management

As we continue to adjust to the “new normal,” maintaining balance and order in our lives has become more important than ever before. According to Forbes Magazine, students with good time management skills will make the most of their days and create a schedule for themselves, ensuring that they will keep up with their studies and finish their school work. Use the schedule below to map out your daily routine and adjust it, as needed.

My Daily Time Management Schedule

(Place the appropriate letter code next to the time the activity will be performed.)

B= Breakfast	E= Extracurricular activities (volunteer, leadership, sports, etc.)	L= Lunch
C= College Planning research	H= Household chores	P= Personal Time
D = Dinner	J= Job	S= School work / study
5 a.m.		
6 a.m.		
7 a.m.		
8 a.m.		
9 a.m.		
10 a.m.		
11 a.m.		
Noon		
1 p.m.		
2 p.m.		
3 p.m.		
4 p.m.		
5 p.m.		
6 p.m.		
7 p.m.		
8 p.m.		
9 p.m.		
10 p.m.		
11 p.m.		

“Your future is created by what you do today, not tomorrow.”

Anonymous