



# COLLEGE COUNSELING

## FAMILY HANDBOOK 2022-2023



# *A Match to Be Made:* PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT



- 3 *Philosophy Statement*
- 4 *Find Your Compass*
- 5 *Chart Your Course*
- 8 *Admission Applications*
- 10 *Find Your Financial Fit*
- 12 *Standardized Testing*
- 14 *Collegiate Athletics*
- 15 *Learning Differences*

Covenant Parents,

It is our hope that this handbook serves as a source of clarity and encouragement as your child graduates from Covenant and continues his or her calling in Christ. May God grant you real joy in this season full of both cherishing and launching. It is a delight to serve you in the process.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Meadows".

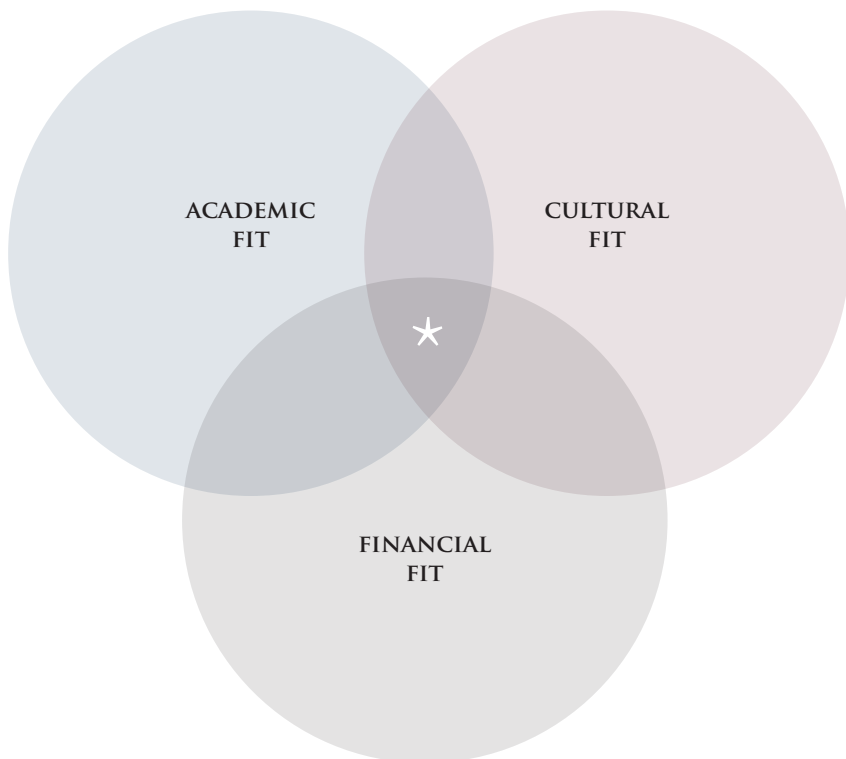
Jennifer Meadows  
College Counselor

# *A Match to Be Made.* PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

## OUR PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT:

In pursuit of our broader school mission, College Counseling at CCS partners with Covenant families and students as they prepare for higher education. We do so joyfully as students continue their educational pursuits for the glory of God in a context that best fits their unique talents, priorities, interests, and goals. We advocate for a college application process that is Kingdom-minded, exploratory, and reflective. Walking alongside students and parents through their four years of Rhetoric School, we seek to equip parents and students with objective, current information concerning the college landscape in order that they might be well-equipped and confident in their post secondary plans. We remind ourselves throughout the application and matriculation process that the college admissions process is a match to be made, not a prize to be won.

We examine post-graduation plans and college fit as the best overlap of these three factors: Academic Fit, Cultural Fit, and Financial Fit.



# Resources & Research: FIND YOUR COMPASS

Up until now, 6th Grade has followed 5th Grade, Junior Year has followed Sophomore Year. Rhetoric Graduation is a milestone that marks the end of that year-to-year formula, and is a rite of passage for launching into adulthood. It's a time to apply yourself in new and deeper ways.



## TEXTS TO GUIDE THE WAY

Within the wide range of texts that address finding your purpose and calling, here are some we recommend:

*The Call* by Oz Guinness

*The Proximity Principle* by Ken Coleman

*Start* by Jon Acuff

*Don't Waste Your Life* by John Piper



## RESEARCHING & BUILDING A COLLEGE LIST

Also during your Junior Year, you should begin to research in earnest and build a college interest list through SCOIR. This list can have as many or as few schools and programs on it as you like, but a healthy starting range is between three to eight institutions. Once you have created your list, continue to learn about different schools through the institutions' websites, conversations in person, by email, phone, or text with their admissions office, and most valuably, by visiting campuses.

# *Year-to-Year Steps*: CHART YOUR COURSE

## FRESHMAN & SOPHOMORE YEARS

Dream with your children about life after graduation as it fits with your other priorities. When traveling consider taking a half day and tour a nearby campus. Continue to educate your children about your own profession and connect your child with a friend or family member to shadow for a day. This is a part of the big-picture conversation that you have had with your children all along – what it means to follow the Lord in obedience as an adult, to have a calling, and how God has uniquely gifted them. By having these conversations, you are helping them to orient their movement into adulthood around their values, strengths, and desires – all of which are foundational as you help them consider the next steps for their lives.



### ACTION STEPS FOR FRESHMAN & SOPHOMORE YEARS

- 1) Discuss family financial guidelines early and often.
- 2) Consider a summer job or professional shadowing experience.
- 3) Prioritize deep, long-lasting investment of your student's time and talent. Fewer, deeper investments can better represent a student compared with shallow investments in a wider range of activities.
- 4) If interested in NCAA athletics, register with the NCAA Eligibility Center by the end of Sophomore year.
- 5) The best way that your child can spend their time now is by engaging their teachers and working diligently in their classes. Keep in mind that college applications are submitted early in Senior Year, so the transcript sent only includes Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior Years.

# Year-to-Year Steps: CHART YOUR COURSE

## JUNIOR YEAR

Junior Year may include aptitude and ability testing and several practical action steps. For many of our students and families, this is also the year when the idea of graduating and launching becomes real. Anticipate “the great boomerang” as students process what it means to launch and be independent. Students may love the independence of a summer job, show great maturity in leadership on a sports team leading younger teammates, then lose their car keys at a friend’s house and ask you to make them a peanut butter sandwich . . . all in the same day.

Enjoy the “boomerange years” of Junior and Senior Year. While you navigate these frustrating lapses, you will also see the fruit of seeds planted long ago. It is also very important that both you and your child understand that he or she is responsible for post-graduation plans, and that you are serving in a consultant role.



### ACTION STEPS FOR JUNIOR YEAR

- 1) Schedule and sit for any standardized tests.
- 2) Build a list of potential colleges within SCOIR.
- 3) Schedule times for official campus visits, beginning with one from each end of the spectrum of your college list.
- 4) Consider outside aptitude and ability testing.
- 5) Plan for summer jobs, internships, job shadowing, and/or camps.
- 6) If interested in NAIA athletics, register in the NAIA Eligibility Center.
- 7) By February, set up your SCOIR account. Create your resume and deliver with letter of recommendation requests. Request two official faculty letters of recommendation.
- 8) If interested in the United States Service Academies, consider one of their summer intensive experiences.

## JUNIOR-TO-SENIOR SUMMER

This is last block of time before your student begins submitting admissions applications. The action steps suggested below can be completed during the fall semester of his or her Senior Year, but it is unwise to do so. The combination of

Senior Thesis, admissions applications (including additional applications for honors programs, specific academic programs, and scholarships), any remaining standardized testing and campus visits, and the typical level of social and extracurricular activities in the Fall semester necessitate the admissions process be started as early as possible.



### ACTION STEPS FOR JUNIOR-TO-SENIOR SUMMER

- 1) Complete any campus visits not possible during the school year.
- 2) Participate in a summer job, internship, job shadowing, class, program, and/or camp.
- 3) Complete admissions application personal essay.
- 4) Update and polish your resume and add this summer's activities.

---

### SENIOR YEAR (ACTION STEPS ON NEXT PAGE)

Senior Year brings home the reality of graduation, creating both practical steps and reflective moments. While college applications and plans will need to be regular topics of conversation, take care that it does not become the only focus of your time together. Many families find that scheduling a time to weekly review and discuss the application process keeps this topic from overtaking family time. And whether you find yourself cheering on your child's upcoming launch or realizing that the lyrics of Fiddler on the Roof's, "Sunrise, Sunset" are perpetually running through your head, we hope that this is a joyful season for your family.

# Opportunity to Shine: ADMISSION APPLICATIONS



## IMPORTANT DEADLINES TO REMEMBER

- August 1* – Common App and most other applications open
- October 1* – FAFSA & CSS Open
- November 1* – many admissions applications due
- February and March* – many housing deposits due
- Mid-March* – most acceptances communicated
- March through May* – financial aid and awards communicated
- May 1* – nationwide due date for student decisions
- May* – CCS Graduation and final transcripts sent
- June* – college orientations and enrollments begin



## ADMISSION APPLICATION OPTIONS

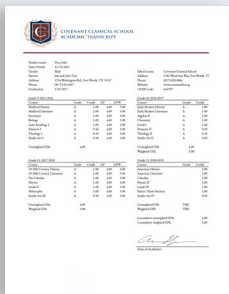
*Early Decision* – A binding contract between the student and the institution, stating that if admitted, the student is bound to attend that university.

*Early Action* – Non-binding application, and student has until May 1 to decide. Students receive their admissions decision earlier.

*Restrictive Early Action* – Non-binding application, and student has until May 1 to decide. However, student may not apply to any other private institution under an early decision, early action, or restrictive early action plan, or to a binding early program at a public university.

*Rolling Decision* – Non-binding application, and applications are reviewed and announced throughout the admission cycle.

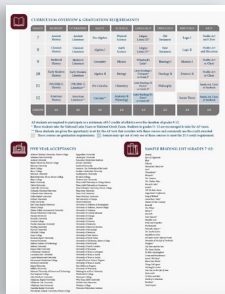
*Regular Decision* – Non-binding application, and can involve a later application deadline and lower admission rates than Early Decision or Early Action.



Transcript



School Profile





## PIECES OF THE ADMISSIONS APPLICATION



### *Transcript –*

- *Official Transcript* – Copy sent directly by CCS to the applying institution upon request. To request an official transcript, please contact registrar@covenantfw.org.
- *Unofficial Transcript* – Any copy of a student’s transcript which is handled in any way (physically or electronically) by the student or his or her parent.
- *SRAR (Student Reported Academic Record)* – An unofficial data entry requested by some institutions. To request a copy of your transcript to aid in this, please contact registrar@covenantfw.org.

*School Profile* – Details the nature and rigor of your CCS transcript, and is sent directly by CCS to the applying institution and automatically accompanies the official transcript.

*Activities Section* – Details the student’s investments of time and talent during the high school years. Should be thorough, but not necessarily exhaustive.

*Counselor Evaluation* – Letter written by the College Counselor and sent by CCS directly to the applying institution.

*Letter(s) of Recommendation* – Letters from CCS Faculty, employers, community member, or other adults written on your behalf. These are sent from CCS directly to the applying institution and not viewed or handled by students.

*Personal Essay* – A personal narrative or reflection that offers a window into your character, life experiences, and writing style.

*Resume* – A succinct description of investments of time and energy during the high school years written in a traditional job resume format.

*Performing Arts Portfolio* – Used when applying to fine arts or design programs, including painting, architecture, sculpture, music performance, performing arts, photography, film, or media production.

*Admissions Interview* – In-person, video-based, one-on-one, or panel interview performed by an institution’s admissions department, or by faculty or alumni from an individual program or major.

# Ethos & Expectations: FIND YOUR FINANCIAL FIT

Handling finances once a child graduates can be very challenging and usually includes discussions about post-graduation parental support, independence, ownership, financial resources, educational expectations, and career expectations. Open, early conversations about family ethos and expectations in all these areas leaves the most room for a process that brings you together versus one that causes conflict, and can also serve as an excellent opportunity to apply financial literacy lessons.



## RECENT UPDATES ON FINANCIAL AID

“The published cost of average tuition and fees for private institutions has risen from \$19,360 in 1992 to \$38,070 in 2021, and from \$4,160 to \$10,740 for public. To add confusion, the conversation is that currently private institutions discount 54.5% of their published costs.”  
*NACUBO, Tuition Discounting Study, May 2022*

“All Ivy League schools, as well as several other very selective schools like Stanford, MIT and Caltech, do not give any academic merit scholarships. No matter if you discovered a cure, created the world’s greatest invention, won an Academy Award or an Olympic gold medal,” says Mande Heller Adler, founder and president of International College Counselors. While they don’t offer merit aid, Ivy League schools are known to be generous with meeting full financial need.”  
*US News & World Report, February 2021*



## NET PRICE CALCULATOR

Visiting [www.collegecost.ed.gov](http://www.collegecost.ed.gov) provides the best ballpark estimate for determining actual cost of attendance before students receive their financial aid packages late in the spring of Senior Year.



## FINANCIAL AID KEY TERMS

*Financial Aid Package* – Often communicated in the spring of Senior Year, this includes merit scholarships, need-based scholarships, grants, work-study opportunities, subsidized loans, unsubsidized loans, total amount of attendance, total financial aid offered, and total needed after financial aid.

*Financial Aid* – Any finances coming from a source that is not directly from the student/family. This includes various types of merit scholarships from within the institution, merit scholarships from outside the institution, federal loans qualified for, grants, other loans available, and work study income.

*COA (Cost of Attendance)* – The total cost for an academic year including tuition, fees, room and board, books, supplies, transportation, and personal expense.

*FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)* – A requirement for any form of federal financial aid, as well as most state aid. Also used by many colleges to determine eligibility for institutional, school-based aid.

*CSS Profile* – This College Scholarship Service Financial Aid Form is required by many, mostly private colleges in addition to the FAFSA.

*EFC (Expected Family Contribution)* – The amount of money that the federal and institutional formulas determine a family can afford to pay for college. Soon changing to the Student Aid Index (SAI).

*Demonstrated Need* –  $COA \text{ minus the EFC} = \text{Demonstrated Need}$ .

*Merit Awards/Scholarships/Funds/Money* – Any money awarded based on merit, including specific initiatives, programs, populations, athletics, academics. Not need-based. Does not need to be paid back.

*Grants* – Need- or merit-based aid. Does not need to be paid back, and the term can be used interchangeably with scholarships.

*Loans* – Need-based or non-need-based money borrowed by the student. Paid directly to the institution by lender and must be paid back.

*Federal Direct Loan* – Federal loan formerly known as the Stafford Loan.

*Subsidized Loan* – Interest does not accrue until after graduation.

*Unsubsidized Loan* – Interest accrues from point of loan origination.

*Net Price Calculator* – Tool for estimating COA that factors in both possible merit- and need-based aid.

*Parent Plus Loan* – Loan taken out in the parent's name only.

# Prep & Perspective: STANDARDIZED TESTING

Research for decades bears out that the biggest factor influencing student test scores is leaning into a rigorous classroom experience over several years. However, test prep *can* be helpful if used correctly. We recommend initial testing early in your Junior Year with little, if any, test prep. Test prep can then be strategic and targeted. Remember also that students may sit for most exams more than once and, for most insitutions, have the freedom to choose which, if any of their test scores universities will see.



## STANDARDIZED TESTING KEY TERMS

*Test Optional* – Students may apply for admission with or without submitting their test scores.

*Test Blind* – Students’ test scores receive no recognition of any kind in the admissions process, and if submitted, will be removed from the application before review.

*Test Required* – A test score is a required piece of the admission application for a specific institution.

*Test Flexible* – Institution allows for a wide range of options for what types of test scores may be submitted in addition to the SAT/ACT. May include CLT and/or AP scores.

*Super Score* – A test score some schools accept that combines a student’s highest scores from the various, individually scored sections of an exam.

*PSAT* – Given once per year in the Sophomore and Junior Years. The Junior Year score serves as the metric used for for determining National Merit Scholars. Score not included as part of the college application.

*SAT* – Stanford Achievement Test, a standardized test usually taken in the Junior and Senior Years. May be taken multiple times and students often can select which, if any, scores to send to schools.

*ACT* – American College Testing, a standardized test usually taken in the Junior and Senior Years. May be taken multiple times and students often can select which, if any, scores to send to schools.

*CLT* – Classical Learning Test, a standardized test taken once in Junior Year and once in Senior Year. Accepted at over 200 schools nationally and often tied to specific merit scholarships at accepting schools.

*AP Tests* – Advanced Placement tests, subject-specific and can be taken in the spring for college credit.

*Dual Credit* – Courses that are offered to current high school students for high school credit *and* college credit at a sponsoring two- or four-year institution. Reasons for taking dual credit (or direct college credit) as a high school student include: 1) desire to shorten the time-to-degree for the post-secondary experience; 2) desire to demonstrate a pursuit of rigor/academic challenges for admissions; and 3) intellectual curiosity and desire for deeper or more focused study. If the first reason for dual credit is experienced, careful research is needed to ensure that any credits earned would be honored by the future area of study within the matriculating institution.

# Continuing in Competition: COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

Continuing as an athlete after high school can take many forms and can help you further develop and express the gifts you have been given. Finding your bearings in the process can prove challenging as the range of options is highly varied and there are many voices wanting to speak into the process. We encourage conversations centered on your child's "why" for collegiate athletics to encourage both clarity and direction. Some arenas of collegiate athletics are an addition or supplement to their academic pursuits, some are truly recreational, while others require time and focus commitments akin to a full-time job.



## ONLINE RESOURCES

[http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility\\_center/Student\\_Resources/CBSA.pdf](http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Resources/CBSA.pdf)  
*NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete, 2023*

<https://www.naia.org/findyourpath/highschool/index>  
*NAIA Resource Page for Future Student-Athletes*

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/ncaaf/2022/02/02/college-football-recruiting-how-high-school-kids-can-avoid-scams/6569952001/>  
*USA Today Article on College "Recruiting Services" Scams*



## COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS KEY TERMS

**NCAA** – Governing body of collegiate athletics including more than 1,100 institutions and consisting of three divisions:

- *Division One* – Highest level of competition and eligible for athletic scholarship.
- *Division Two* – Next most competitive level and eligible for athletic scholarship.
- *Division Three*: Ineligible for athletic scholarship.

**NAIA** – Governing body of collegiate athletics including around 250 institutions, of which 82% are private and 65% are faith-based. Eligible for athletic scholarship.

**Junior College** – Two-year institutions that can serve as preparation for more competitive programs.

Post-secondary academic environments typically involve less access to instructors, no required differentiation of instruction, less repetition or reinforcement of ideas, a wider range of concepts covered in a single course, evaluations over material that may not have been directly taught during classtime, very early or very late class times that may conflict with optimum medication schedules, larger class settings, lower level of structure in daily class schedules, lower external accountability, and fewer, but higher stakes assessments. As you progress toward academic independence, add student support factors to the college search.

## TEXTS & ONLINE RESOURCES TO GUIDE THE WAY

Covenant recommends:

*Transitioning to College: A Guide for Students with Disabilities* by E. Hamblet  
*7 Steps to College Success: A Pathway for Students with Disabilities* by E. Hamblet  
*K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Differences* by Princeton Review  
*The Dyslexia Empowerment Plan* by Ben Foss

[www.LDadvisory.com](http://www.LDadvisory.com)



## ELIGIBILITY FOR ACCOMMODATIONS & ACTION STEPS

Colleges and universities are *not* required to provide accommodations to students with diagnosed disabilities. Colleges and universities that accept federal funding are subject to civil rights laws (ADA, Section 504) which prohibit the discrimination against individuals with disabilities who qualify for admission into their schools, but this does not apply to instruction. Once students are admitted, eligibility for accommodations is considered at the discretion of the institution and the supports offered vary widely.

Action steps as you advocate for yourself can include researching individual institution's services, and working with the CCS Student Support Department to create a plan for the transition toward greater academic independence after graduation. If accommodations will be pursued in college, be sure that your student's testing is current.





Mrs. Jennifer Meadows, College Counselor  
[jmeadows@covenantfw.org](mailto:jmeadows@covenantfw.org) • 817.820.0884 ext. 8206

---

Covenant Classical School  
1701 Wind Star Way • Fort Worth, TX • 76108  
[www.covenantfw.org](http://www.covenantfw.org)