



CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS NORTH STAR READING PARTNERS INITIATIVE

Encourage, Challenge, Support and Celebrate

Mentors working with 12th grade students may use the following information as a tool for guiding conversations with potential high school graduates. The goal is that each senior will graduate from high school with a clear plan aligned to their postsecondary goals. Whether the student is headed toward college, career and/or military enlistment, the mentor will **encourage, challenge, support and celebrate** students as they progress toward graduation. Thank you in advance for your efforts in ensuring that CMS graduates are future ready!

General Guidelines

CMS has outlined procedures for mentors as found on the district's website. It is imperative that all mentors read this information as it contains important tips and guidelines:

<http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/vp/Pages/MentoringTips.aspx/>

During your sessions with students, sensitive topics may arise (e.g., child abuse, suicidal ideation or homelessness). A member of the school's Student Services team (i.e., counselor, psychologist or social worker) should be contacted immediately. If the student is expressing suicidal ideation, the student must never be left alone. Please escort the student to a member of the school's Student Services team immediately.

Because of the high stakes associated with the senior year (e.g., graduation and postsecondary planning), it is imperative that the mentor collaborate with the student's counselor. The counselor is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the student meets graduation requirements and completes steps for their specific postsecondary plans. Extreme caution is to be used in advising students in these areas.

This timeline is intended to guide your conversations with your mentee. Understand that disclosures during any given session may alter your focus during that session or during subsequent sessions. You may exercise flexibility in how you proceed through these talking points, but there are key topics included that are beneficial for you to address so that your student has a successful senior year. Though some items are listed only once, the recommendation is that these topics be revisited on an ongoing basis. Examples include periodically checking grades and attendance in PowerSchool or getting status updates regarding progress toward postsecondary plans.

Guided Conversations: August - September

WEEK 1: August 24 – 28

- ✓ Attain a copy of the student's schedule once you are assigned a Senior Mentee.
- ✓ Meet with your senior to introduce yourself and your role as mentor. Find out more about the student's plans and goals after high school.
- ✓ Inquire about the student's highlights and challenges in previous high school years. Encourage the student to reflect upon and share with you areas in which your assistance may be most beneficial throughout the senior year.
- ✓ If the student has not already done so, have him or her confirm that the senior year schedule includes all courses that are required to meet CMS graduation requirements. If all graduation requirements are not reflected on the schedule, please have the student confirm that a plan is in place for fulfilling the necessary requirement(s). For general information, a chart depicting CMS graduation requirements may be found in your resource packet. This chart is for your general information only. Mentors are not to advise students regarding graduation requirements. Questions or issues related to graduation requirements, or the senior's status in meeting requirements, are to be referred to the student's counselor.
- ✓ Encourage school and class attendance on a consistent basis. Discuss any barriers that the student may be experiencing that would affect attendance. Job? Children? Other responsibilities?
- ✓ For any senior who may be a mid-year graduate, confirm that all necessary mid-year graduation plans and documents have been completed. If not, encourage the student to contact their school counselor to determine the next steps in the process. Documents must be completed and submitted to the school counselor by September 30th.

WEEK 2: August 31 – September 4

- ✓ September 3 – Deadline to register for the October 3rd administration of the SAT
- ✓ Discuss with your student their experience during the first week of school. Ask if the student anticipates any major challenges with course requirements for the first semester. Is their schedule finalized or are they awaiting a schedule change? Remind students to seek help early from a teacher or counselor if there are challenges or difficulties.
- ✓ Encourage your student to use an agenda or calendar for recording homework assignments, CMS Graduation Project tasks, appointments, college application deadlines, ACT / SAT deadlines and dates, scholarship deadlines and/or any tasks related to school success and postsecondary planning. At many junctures of the senior year, there are various responsibilities that require the student's attention. Organization and effective time management are critical to the student's success. Some high schools may require an agenda or have one available for purchase. If one is not available at the school, the student may purchase one at any store that sells school supplies. Questions to ask: How are you organizing your schedule of assignments and due dates? Is it working well for you? How often are you making updates? Have the student share their organizational tool with you, explain the features and their process for updating.
- ✓ College-bound students may still need to register for college admissions tests and it is recommended that the tests are taken during the fall to ensure that students meet college admissions deadlines. Students may sign up for October or November SAT administrations, or for the ACT, and have scores sent to colleges. Registration details are available at www.collegeboard.org or www.actstudent.org, respectively. Fee waivers are available in Student Services for eligible students. Discuss setting a deadline for registering for the needed tests and continue to check with the student as the deadline approaches.
- ✓ Khan Academy provides free SAT preparation as offered through the College Board website. Encourage your student to prepare for the exam by taking the diagnostic quizzes and practicing skills as needed.

- ✓ Have your student create or update his or her résumé. The résumé is a list of extracurricular activities in which the student has been involved throughout high school, and it may also include honors and awards received by the student. This document often accompanies a student's college and scholarship applications, and is extremely helpful to anyone who is asked to write a recommendation on the student's behalf. Support your student by reviewing drafts of the document and providing assistance if needed.

WEEK 3: September 7 – 11

- ✓ September 7 – Labor Day Holiday
- ✓ September 12 – ACT administration (August 7th registration deadline)
- ✓ Remind your student to follow the procedures for signing up for a senior conference with the assigned school counselor. Together they will confirm the student's progress in meeting graduation requirements and they will further discuss the student's postsecondary plans.
- ✓ Support college-bound students by encouraging them to check with School Counseling and other support staff, admissions offices, and appropriate websites for information about college applications, admission requirements, scholarships, and financial aid. Encourage your student to use the agenda or other organizational tool of their choice to monitor pertinent tasks and deadlines related to postsecondary planning.
- ✓ Have the student identify the colleges to which they plan to apply. If your student is primarily considering postsecondary institutions in North Carolina, recommend that the student create an account with the College Foundation of North Carolina: www.cfnc.org. CFNC is a free service that helps students plan, apply and pay for college.
- ✓ For students considering institutions outside of North Carolina, a recommended resource is The College Board: www.collegeboard.org.
- ✓ For students who have not yet identified colleges of interest, a college search is an ideal way to generate a list of colleges that match specific criteria. This may be done together, using www.cfnc.org or www.collegeboard.org.
- ✓ Admissions representatives regularly visit area high schools to meet with prospective students. If your student is applying to colleges and universities, these college representative visits are an excellent way to learn more about postsecondary institutions. Ask your student how the representative visits are announced, and encourage attendance at those in which the student may be interested. Check in with the student during subsequent sessions about college representatives with whom they have spoken and the information gained.
- ✓ Students considering participation in athletics at the collegiate level should be sure to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center: www.eligibilitycenter.org. If your student has not done so, please have them register as soon as possible. This is mandatory for student-athletes aspiring to play collegiate sports.
- ✓ For students interested in enlisting in the military directly after high school, have the student find out when the representatives of the appropriate military branch(es) will be visiting campus. Encourage the student to inquire with military personnel about opportunities for continuing education beyond high school. Inquire as to whether the student has taken the ASVAB or when they plan to take this test.
- ✓ College visits are essential. Talk to your senior about the importance of visiting each college they are seriously considering. Students are encouraged to not apply to a college if they have not visited the campus. Warn students to not rely on social media or others' recommendations about a college. Nothing replaces a visit to the campus as it allows the student to experience that college's environment and make an informed decision based on their own experience. Encourage your student to schedule one or more college visits during the months of September and October.

WEEK 4: September 14 – 18

- ✓ September 18 – Deadline to register for the October 24th administration of the ACT
- ✓ Facilitate discussion with your student about community resources that the student may use for support. Inquire about and assist the student in finding out about resources such as the local branch of the public library, community centers and/or agencies that might provide after-school tutoring or other academic support.
- ✓ Have your student log into the PowerSchool Student Portal to monitor course progress. Encourage your student to do so on a consistent basis so that there are no “surprises” when progress reports and report cards are distributed. With your student’s permission, you and your student may periodically do this together. By reviewing information for each course, you and the student may view grades and attendance. Questions to ask: Are there any missing assignments? What is the course average? If the student is failing the course, discuss strategies for improving grades.
- ✓ Join your student in reading a text that may be required for English IV or another course on the student’s schedule. Suggest a reading plan or timeline which allows dialogue with the student about various aspects of the book. Ideally, the discussions would take place prior to any assignments, tests or projects that may be anticipated in the English (or other) course. Feel free to select a book that is not required, but may be of interest to the student. The school media specialist or an English teacher may be able to offer suggested reading material as well.
- ✓ Invite your student to share information with you regarding the topic chosen for the CMS Graduation Project, and consider joining your student in reading or researching additional material related to the topic. The intent of this dialogue is to foster the student’s enthusiasm and passion for the subject and build confidence as the student prepares for the presentation. Feel free to begin this process even if your student does not have English IV until the second semester.

WEEK 5: September 21 – 25

- ✓ September 23 – Teacher Workday (no school for students)
- ✓ Mid-quarter progress reports will be distributed on September 24th and 25th. Ask your student if there are academic issues or concerns that need to be addressed before the end of the quarter. Celebrate success as the student strives to meet academic goals.
- ✓ The College Board’s CSS/Financial Aid Profile is an online application that collects information used by numerous colleges and scholarship programs to award financial aid from sources other than the federal government. After the application is completed and submitted, the College Board will forward a report to colleges and scholarship programs as designated by the student. Not all institutions require the Profile. As your student conducts college research, encourage him or her to find out if this application may be required for any campus-based sources of financial aid. Additional information is available through the College Board website at www.collegeboard.org.

WEEK 6: September 28 – October 2

- ✓ October 3 – SAT administration (September 3rd registration deadline)
- ✓ Many seniors begin preparing and submitting college applications during October, depending upon the application and notification deadlines of the respective institutions. Most applications will be submitted electronically. If your senior is applying to colleges, encourage them to keep a copy of applications submitted and/or save a copy of the confirmation notice if applying electronically. Encourage the student to continually monitor deadlines, allowing sufficient time to compile a comprehensive application. It is also recommended that the student have someone proofread the application, particularly any essays that may be required. If you feel that this is an area of strength for you as mentor, you may proofread the application and review it with the student.

- ✓ Ask your senior to obtain an unofficial copy of his/her transcript and review to determine its accuracy. Questions to ask: Is the transcript accurate? What is the weighted GPA? What is the unweighted GPA? How many credits have you earned to-date?
- ✓ Remind your student to give the School Counseling staff sufficient time to process any requests for transcripts, secondary school reports, counselor statements and/or recommendations. Have him or her find out in advance if there is a specific timeline/deadline required for processing requests. Students need to allow enough time for documents to be prepared and to meet college and scholarship deadlines. Encourage your student to record pertinent tasks and deadlines in the student's organizational tool.
- ✓ Have your senior to review your school's scholarship bulletin and/or announcements for information about current and future scholarship opportunities. Assist your student in applying for scholarships.
- ✓ Most high schools will schedule a fall senior assembly or class meeting to distribute information about cap and gown orders for graduation. (The timeline for this will vary from school-to-school.) Have your student find out when the meeting is scheduled for the senior class. Once the date is determined, have the student note important dates and deadlines regarding this process in the student agenda. Questions to ask: What is the deadline for ordering your cap and gown? Have you ordered your cap and gown? If not, why not? If the student discloses any financial constraints, advise the school counselor.