

College Readiness Panel Q&A

1. Who is the AmeriCorps Team?

- The AmeriCorps Team makes up our Team of College Readiness Coaches.
- 2022-2023 AmeriCorps Members: Alex, Ally, and Camille.

2. What does AmeriCorps do?

- AmeriCorps members serve 1 year of service with Take Stock in Children.
 - AmeriCorps members serve as College Readiness Coaches and are assigned a caseload of students at various High Schools within Palm Beach County Schools in conjunction with the Take Stock Program.
 - Students have the same College Readiness Coach throughout the school year.
- The mission of AmeriCorps is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

3. What does a College Readiness Coach do?

- College Readiness Coaches advise High School students on various topics related to academics and college readiness within the TSIC Program.
- We do not influence a student's post-secondary decisions and choices, but we do provide support to ensure the student is navigating processes appropriately and making informed decisions.
 - College Readiness Coaches support and assist students with career exploration. College Readiness Coaches may utilize career explorations platforms and/or do research to share with the student.
 - College Readiness Coaches also provide support regularly through text messaging which allows students to reach out to their coach with additional needs outside their regularly scheduled monthly meeting.
- College Readiness Coaches serve as another layer of support within the TSIC Program. Each College Readiness Coach has a caseload of students at Palm Beach County Schools and they meet with each student on their caseload 1x/month.
- College Readiness Coaches provide additional college readiness resources through the Google Classroom that students gain access to upon entry into the Take Stock Program. Google Classrooms are specific to the student's grade level.
 - There is a dedicated website through Take Stock Palm Beach that provides additional resources for students which include: community service opportunities, scholarship information, and important reminders about upcoming events and workshops.
- Middle School students are all assigned to Ms. Marilyn Schiavo as their College Readiness Coach.
 - Middle School College Readiness Meetings occur virtually on a monthly basis.

4. What does a typical 1:1 College Readiness Meeting look like?

- College Readiness Coaches prepare their individual meetings beforehand by pulling academic information from the school database.
- Coaches check in with the student related to academics, college and career portfolio progress, mentor meetings, and extracurricular activities.
- College Readiness Coaches utilize grade-level road maps to connect with students about specific "check points" for that month.
- College Readiness Coaches guide Seniors to additional scholarship resources through the Google Classroom.
- College Readiness Coaches reinforce additional resources available to students which include: Google Classroom, Resource Website, Career Exploration, Paper Tutoring, Schoolhouse, Khan Academy, etc.

5. What happens in the After School Club Meetings? What is the college and career portfolio?

- Club Meetings are facilitated by the Johnson Scholars Program and AmeriCorps College Readiness Coaches.

- Meetings are once a month and explore a specific theme with an added focus on a college and career readiness portfolio outcome.
- The college and career readiness portfolio is an e-binder designed to prepare students for High School graduation by guiding them through milestones related to various tasks including a resume, a personal statement or essay, college applications, scholarship applications, and career exploration.
 - Students work on this portfolio all four years of High School, making contributions throughout each grade.

6. What is the Johnson Scholar and Take Stock collaboration?

- The collaboration between JS/TS is two organizations joined as one program.
- Students receive one (1) Scholarship upon Program completion and graduation, not two.

7. What are road maps and how are they used?

- Grade-level road maps serve as an outline to guide conversations between students and their college readiness coach and/or mentor.
- Road maps illustrate the common theme of the month and paint a picture for everyone about what is happening in various areas of the program.
 - Road maps outline topics being covered in After School Club Meetings, College Readiness Meetings, Portfolio check points, and provide additional resources for mentors to support students and guide conversation during mentor sessions.
- In order to know what your student should have completed based on their grade level, Mentors may access road maps and grade-level resources in the Mentor HUB to identify various “checkpoints” based on the students grade.
 - Mentors also received a “Semester Roadmap” and “Grade Level Tasks” this evening.

8. How can I check how my student is doing in the program & academically?

- Mentors can check in with their students by simply asking about their academic standing. Additionally, mentors can ask about the college and career portfolio or other aspects of the student’s life.
- Mentors can assume that if the student is not on probation, then they are in good standing with the TSIC Program.
 - If a student is on probation, it means that the student is not meeting minimum program standards.
 - A student and their family receives a probation letter to communicate changes in probation status. About a week later, the student’s mentor will receive a letter.
 - Mentors do not need to become alarmed if their student receives a “warning” or “watch” letter. This is essentially a warning to student that they are being monitored and should they continue to not meet program requirements, their status will be changed again.
 - There are multiple levels to probation and status changes before a student receives a “recommendation for termination” letter.
 - Mentors should continue supporting their student to get back on track when a student receives a probation letter.

9. What is dual enrollment and how can a student become involved in dual enrollment?

- Dual enrollment means that a High School student is enrolled and actively taking college level courses.
- The grades that a student receives in these courses reflect on their college transcript.
- If a student meets the minimum requirements for dual enrollment, they need to schedule a meeting with their School Guidance Counselor and complete the dual enrollment process.

10. How does the scholarship work?

- The TSIC Scholarship is a tuition-only 2-year Florida Prepaid Scholarship, equivalent to 60 credit hours at the State rate.

- The scholarship can be used anywhere, however, like the “Stretching your Scholarship” Activity, you can see that the scholarship goes further at a State College versus a private or out-of-state University.
 - The scholarship can be used at a trade school for a certificate, a State College for an AA, a 4-year institution for a Bachelor’s.
- Since our scholarship is tuition only, students are encouraged to apply for additional scholarships to help cover additional expenses and costs associated with college.
- Students are encouraged to complete the FAFSA promptly on October 1st when it opens to be eligible for the most money in additional scholarships and grants.
 - More money is available when students complete the FAFSA early.

Additional Q&A

1. When does SAT/ACT prep begin?

- TSIC offers SAT and ACT workshops multiple times throughout the school year and over the summer. Students receive notification about these workshops via text message. Workshops occur virtually.

2. What if your student does not know what they want to major in or is having trouble deciding what to major in?

- College Readiness Coaches often engage students in discussions about their interests and assist the student with exploring majors that they may be interested in.
- Students have access to various career planning websites where they can take quizzes to get an idea of different professions that may interest them.
 - My Career Shines: <https://www.floridashines.org/>
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

3. How can I help my mentee with college applications and/or scholarship applications?

- Students are encouraged to utilize The Common App when applying to schools.
 - Students are able to begin the application and save their progress for completion at a later date.
 - Students need to be exact with the information they provide (example: number of courses in a specific subject, grades, etc.) Students can pull their unofficial transcript from their SIS account to assist them with filling out the application.
 - *You should only be assisting your mentee if they request your assistance! Do not pressure them!*

4. How do I make sure my mentee is taking advantage of all the opportunities presented to them?

- The best way to support your mentee is to simply ask and trust that they are telling you the truth. Remember to meet your mentee where they are and provide support and guidance rather than pressure.
- Remind your students of available resources through TSIC like their college readiness coach, google classroom, after school clubs, etc.
- As a mentor, you should utilize the Mentor HUB regularly to stay up-to-date with various resources, deadlines, program offerings, workshops, etc.

5. Is the grading system different for AP courses compared to other courses?

- AP Courses provide a unique learning experience that promotes college readiness. Through these courses, students may take an AP exam and be awarded college credit for the course.

- AP Courses in Palm Beach County Schools are weighted. If a student is concerned with their grade, they should schedule a meeting with their School Counselor.
- Additional information about AP Courses can be found on the School District's Website.
 - https://www.palmbeachschools.org/students_parents/school_counseling/high_school_counseling_college_readiness/college_readiness/advanced_placement_courses

6. What should I help my mentee with as he/she prepares for High School graduation?

- If you mentor a senior, you can support your student by talking with them about the various processes they may encounter including the following:
 - Completing their FAFSA (Application opens October 1st).
 - All students, regardless of financial situation need to complete a FAFSA.
 - Applying to College(s)
 - Completing their College & Career Portfolio
 - Reminding them to pay a housing deposit, if necessary.
 - Ordering their Graduation Cap & Gown
- Always remind your mentee to check in with Mr. George before they spend money on dorm deposits, ACT/SAT, etc. to ensure they are utilizing the available benefits in our Program.

7. What is the best time to begin applying to college?

- Similar to the FAFSA, schools are able to award more scholarship money the earlier a student applies. So in short, the earlier the better.
 - The Common App opens August 1st.
- Be aware of deadlines for early decision and early action.
- At the end of Junior year, students should have a "target list" of schools they want to research and apply to so they are prepared when the time comes to apply. A "target list" should include up to 10 schools.

8. How do mentors, TSIC Coaches, and High School counselors work together to help the student with their college applications?

- As a whole, all invested parties within TSIC serve to support the student on their journey to post-secondary success.
- Mentors may assist by supporting the student when they verbalize that they need assistance. Checking in with the student and simply asking where they are in the process or if they need help, is one good way to help the student.
- TSIC College Readiness Coaches meet monthly with students and provide support regularly through text messaging should the student need assistance outside of a regularly scheduled 1:1 meeting. College Readiness Coaches guide seniors through the application process and remind them of important deadlines.
- Students may schedule meetings with their School Counselor for additional support.

9. What are the requirements for different schools for early admit?

- Different colleges and universities have different deadlines so it's best to check the school's website for specific and up-to-date information.
- You can refer to the Florida State University System flier to identify specific deadlines.

10. Do you have a follow-up with students after they go off to college?

- Through our State Office, students may utilize additional support and services through Take Stock in College. At the Senior Summit event each Spring, Seniors are introduced to Take Stock in

College representatives where they learn how to stay connected and request appointments with TSIC Staff.

- Take Stock Palm Beach has an Alumni Ambassador who communicates with Alumni from Take Stock Palm Beach and provides reminder text messages for upcoming/important information or events as well as resources that alumni may utilize throughout their post-secondary journey.