

It has been another successful and busy start to the semester in the Career Centre. September saw our school host another successful Educational Liaison Association of Alberta event. Students engaged with Alberta post secondary institutions from around the province to discuss programs and entrance requirements. This organization also provides a [resource](#) for students and parents of Alberta institution application dates, open houses and application fees.

Applications for most Alberta post secondary institutions Fall 2020 programs opened October 1. Students who are planning on attending post secondary after graduation are encouraged to create an [Apply Alberta](#) account and will need their Detailed Academic Record from [MyPass](#) to create their profile. Please encourage your student to connect with me for support in the application process.

During this time of year, many students and parents begin to ask about scholarships. Where to find them, how to apply, and what scholarship providers are looking for. I do recommend that all students look into creating a [ScholarTree profile](#) and follow ScholarTree's facebook page and [blog](#). This website can help match students' profiles to scholarship criteria and also provides tips on writing scholarship essays, [avoiding common scholarship application errors](#), and enjoying the most of the post secondary experience. Students are encouraged to visit [SJHS Scholarship page](#) for a list of common scholarship providers. SJHS school award applications are available in May. Please encourage your student to connect for a scholarships appointment to learn of the resources available or to preview an application.

“What are you doing after graduation?”

This well intentioned (and often asked) question can provoke anxiety in graduating students. Developmentally, the teenage brain is still under construction in the areas of long term decision making, time management, and recognizing long term consequences. This process usually is completed when a student reaches their 20's (Giedd et al., 1999). This can be a source of frustration for parents but rest assured, is **totally normal**.

It is common to meet with students who feel overwhelmed with too many choices and a sense that all their peers are on track, but they are not. I welcome the alliance with parents to encourage students that it is ok to not know and there is support in place through a Career Centre appointment. An initial Career Centre appointment is a great start to a series of conversations that support informed decision making and discovering a good fit for students as they transition from high school.

My student says they are taking a Gap Year. Now what?

Some students decide to take a semester or year break prior to attending post secondary. The common misconception is that students will postpone to the point of never attending, never leaving the family home, or cornering themselves into limited work possibilities. Research from the [Gap Year Association](#) identifies that 90 percent of students who take a gap year return to post secondary

within a year. Students who plan their gap year can gain work experience skills, travel, or access the additional year to developmentally mature. This can [save students tuition costs](#) when the time is spent to make informed choices on post secondary programs versus dropping out or switching majors. The key to a successful Gap Year is planning and discussing with your student expectations around the structure of their Gap year.

The Career Centre is **not** just for graduating students. The first semester's appointments are primarily dedicated to ensuring grade 12 students are on track to graduate and support students who are applying for post-secondary. Students who are in grade 10 and 11 are strongly encouraged to be proactive in their career planning and access appointments in semester 2. The earlier and more frequent students meet to explore career options, the more opportunities there are to address fears and inform students to make well guided choices.

What Career Centre services are available to SJHS students:

- Discuss graduation requirements and tracking
- Career exploration and investigation resources
- Development of quality resume, cover letter, and interview skills
- Part time work search
- Arranging job shadow opportunities
- Post secondary program information, entrance requirements and competitive averages
- Financing your post secondary education
- Labour market information and trends

It is a highlight of my role to meet with students and help them recognize transferable skills they were never aware of! A common resource I refer students to while investigating career options is the [ALIS website](#). This website allows students to research career options, discover the average provincial income for career choices, and post secondary program offerings in the province to successfully path students. Students are also directed to [truity](#), which has a selection of career tests that can generate topics for career appointments.

I welcome parents to connect for information and resources that prepare our students for high school transition. Further information on Career Centre updates can be accessed through <https://www.stjosephhigh.ca/career-centre>.

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