

College Bound Students - Freshmen/Sophomores/Juniors/Seniors-----A Suggested Timeline

DVHS College and Career Center

Fall – Freshmen/Sophomores

- **Plan for the Year Ahead – All years.....Maintain good grades.** Most colleges expect a “C” or better (i.e. “D” is not considered a passing grade). Get help when needed. Be proactive...seek teacher help, peer tutoring through CSF, etc. Do this ALL 4 Years! **Freshmen:** While our CA public schools (CSU and UC) do not use the grades from freshman year in their GPA calculation for admission eligibility (except for Cal Poly SLO), they DO look at the grades in the application process. **Sophomores:** Grades from sophomore year courses are used in GPA calculation for college admission.
- **Stop by the College and Career Center to get familiar with its resources.** Find out the required courses and tests of colleges that you might be interested in attending. Sophomores: Log onto Naviance Family Connection take assessments and research colleges and careers. Counselors will be visiting your classrooms in spring of Freshman year to introduce Naviance Family Connection to you and provide your personal log on information.
- **Consider Taking the PSAT/NMSQT for practice.** Sophomores: Sign up for the PSAT/NMSQT at DVHS in mid-October. Registration will be via the web store in September. Go to www.collegeboard.org to access free on line practice for the PSAT. Keep in mind this is intended to be a test given to juniors, so is just practice for sophomores. They cannot qualify for the National Merit Scholarship competition yet.
- **Attend DVHS campus club fair.** Join a club! Find ways to volunteer! Get involved in campus activities.
- **Start a COLLEGE INFO FILE** to keep important information regarding college applications (i.e. this checklist, volunteer log, personal resume--see sample on school website under “Private Colleges”, list of awards/honors, job history, test scores, etc). Once you have access to Naviance Family Connection, you can save your information there electronically and access it when you need to create a resume or complete a college application.
- **Create an e-mail** that contains your name (no nicknames) to use for college application process. Most colleges maintain contact with prospective students via e-mail. Plan to keep this e-mail for all 4 years of high school and check it regularly.
- **Plan to go to college fairs** and begin to learn about colleges and the college admissions process (fall=SRVUSD College fair; spring=East Bay College Connection @ St. Mary’s in Moraga). Watch school loop for announcement of others.
- **Pay attention to** school e-mails, the Daily Bulletin, School loop and the DVHS website for important information, events, dates and deadlines.

Winter – Freshmen/Sophomores

- **If you took the PSAT in October,** remember to use the access code on your PSAT/NMSQT score report to sign in on the College Board website (www.collegeboard.org) to My College QuickStart. Prepare for the SAT using a study plan based on your PSAT/NMSQT results and explore lists of suggested colleges, majors, and careers. This is a GREAT prep tool!
- **Talk to your teachers/counselor about taking SAT Subject Tests in your strong subjects** this spring. Take Subject Tests while the material is still fresh in your mind. UC’s do not *require* them to be considered for admission, but certain majors will recommend them! Research campus websites.
- **Begin to learn about colleges and college finances.** Learn about college costs and how financial aid works. Pick up a brochure in the College and Career Center (available in early January)
- **Use a web-based College savings calculator:** Example: (http://apps.collegeboard.org/fincalc/college_savings.jsp) and check out FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> to learn more about college financing. Talk to your parents about paying for college (this should be an on-going conversation throughout high school). Financial Aid brochures from California Ed Fund available in the College and Career Center.
- **Visit colleges** while they are in session, If possible.
- **Find out about college firsthand from college friends** who are home for the holidays. Stop by the College and Career Center to hear from alumni who are home for the holidays (Dec. and Jan.)
- **Prepare for your finals!** Get help where needed. Keep your grades strong!

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Spring – Freshman/Sophomore

- **Stay Focused---Maintain your grades!!**
- **Counselors will be visiting classrooms** in early spring to discuss the DVHS course registration process. Plan to enroll in challenging classes that will help you prepare for college. Know the A-G requirements for California Public Colleges (UC's and CSU's). See information in the DVHS Course Catalog. (Note: sophomore and junior grades are used in the GPA admission calculations for CSU's and UC's, but many private schools also look at freshmen grades.)
- **Freshmen and sophomores can take SAT Subject tests**, but keep in mind that these are best taken at the completion of a school year (May or June) in subjects for which student shows particular strength. See www.collegeboard.org or information on what tests are available, and what level of coursework should be completed prior to taking them to be most successful. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Although the UC's do not require SAT Subject tests for admission, but an application to some more selective areas (i.e. Engineering and many sciences) might be enhanced by SAT Subject test scores. See individual UC websites for more information. View sample test questions per subject on the College Board website or stop by the College and Career Center to pick up a pamphlet.
- Sophomores: **Consider taking a combination ACT/SAT test** or full length PRACTICE SAT or ACT test to “test the waters”. Practice tests are unofficial and will not be reported to colleges. Practice tests (if available) will be offered by DVHS Academic Boosters as a fund raiser.
- **Plan to attend the East Bay College Fair** at St. Mary's College in Moraga (late April or Early May?)
- **Explore Summer Opportunities.** Look for a great summer opportunity— job, pre-college or study abroad program, internship, or volunteering. Check out the postings under “College and Career Center” on the DVHS website, plus announcements in the daily bulletin and on school loop. Look for community opportunities through recreation centers, local businesses, hospitals, etc.
- **Check college websites for potential summer school opportunities for high school students.** Offerings vary, but many CA and out state campuses offer summer programs!
- **Log on to Naviance Family Connection to find summer enrichment opportunities, research colleges, take assessments and begin to build your resume.**

Summer – Freshman/Sophomore

- **Explore Summer Opportunities-make the most of your summer break!**
- **READ!!!!!!** Increase your vocabulary. Learn something new.
- **Visit college campuses while on vacation.** Take tours or wander on your own. Talk to students and stop by department offices to inquire about specific programs. Record your impressions for future reference.
- **Learn something new...** a new sport? New skill? New language?
- **Take a course or two on a 4-year college campus or at a community college.** Meet with your counselor to ensure it compliments your 4-year high school plan for coursework (especially if you hope to advance in a particular subject). Also, many 4-year colleges have pre-college programs for high school students (that may or may not gain you college credit, but will give you a “taste” of college life.) Stop by the Career Center or counseling for more information. If you plan to attend DVC or another community college, be sure obtain appropriate approvals from DVHS Counselors/administration.
- **Go abroad for a language immersion program.** Travel! Get out and Explore!
- **Search College Board** (www.collegeboard.org) and ACT (www.actstudent.org) websites for helpful information to begin preparing you for your future (spring of junior year) SATs, SAT Subject Tests, and/or ACT college entrance exams. Read about the PSAT on College Board's website to help you understand what lies ahead in October (if you decide to take the PSAT).

Summer – Pre-Junior Year

- **Consider taking a summer test prep class.** Or doing self-prep. Read to increase vocabulary. View SAT or ACT websites and do practice tests to get a sense of the format and material covered on the tests.
- If you haven't already, **create a new e-mail address** that you will use for your college search and check it often.

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Colleges stay in contact with students via e-mail.

- If you haven't already, **create a college application file**. In it keep your brochures, college communications, test score reports, scholarship information, etc.
- Update your information on Naviance Family Connection.

Fall – Junior Year

- **Maintain good grades.** Junior grades are calculated in the College Prep (CP) GPA for CSU's and UC's. AP and honors courses are given an extra point for grades of "C" or above (i.e. an A = 5, B = 4, etc). Most colleges expect a "C" or better (i.e. "D" is not considered a passing grade). Get help when needed. Be proactive...seek teacher help, after school tutoring, peer tutoring through CSF, etc. Do this ALL 4 years! Make sure to repeat academic (A-G) courses with grades lower than a "C". See your counselor for more information.
- **Consider taking an "Introduction to Testing/PSAT Prep Seminar"** class if offered on the DVHS campus by Academic Boosters in partnership with a local test prep company. Understand what lies ahead, and explore test prep options for the future. Note: This is only a suggestion for students who wish for additional preparation. The PSAT is designed to be a "practice" for a future SAT and does not *necessitate* additional preparation (beyond reviewing the book that is available during test registration), but some students wish to have the introduction.
- **Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October at DVHS.** Sign up via the web store (Sept.) to take the PSAT/NMSQT offered at DVHS. Juniors can potentially qualify for the National Merit Scholarship, National Hispanic or National Achievement competition. Preparation tips available at <http://www.collegeboard.org/student/testing/psat/prep.html>. Information on potential scholarships for NMSQT qualifiers is at <http://www.collegeboard.org/student/testing/psat/about/scholarships.html>
- **Move into leadership positions in your activities.** Become an officer or team captain, or lead an activity.
- **Attend College visits in the College and Career Center.** Sign up on Naviance Family Connection and be sure to have a pass signed by your teacher to miss class.
- **Attend Regional College events** for colleges not visiting DVHS. Details on Naviance (when known about) or college websites.
- **Read school loop and listen to daily bulletin** announcements for college information.
- **Continue Your College Search** (pick up a "blue sheet" of helpful websites in the Career Center). Get to know the Naviance Family Connection. The log in portal is on the Counseling page of the DVHS website or go to: www.dvhigh.net/counseling. See your counselor if you have forgotten your log in information.
- **Make lists of your abilities,** preferences, and personal qualities. List things you may want to study and do in college. Take interest/skill assessments on Naviance Family Connection (Do What You Are & Career Interest Profiler)
- **Read about majors and careers.** Go to: http://www.collegeboard.org/student/csearch/majors_careers/ or access Naviance Family Connection. Or stop by the College & Career Center to peruse the "Book of Majors".
- **Use College Search on the College Board** website or access Naviance to find colleges with the right characteristics that match your preferences. Many other search engines are available on the Internet as well. www.collegeweeklive.com offers virtual college fairs.
- **Consider 2 and 4 year college options, military academies, ROTC, vocational schools.**
- **Start Thinking about Financial Aid.** DVHS will host a financial aid informational night in December or January for seniors and their parents. Juniors welcome as well.
- **Talk to your counselor and your parents about your college plans.** Plan to attend SRVUSD College Night (Sept/Oct) and financial aid night at DVHS (Dec./Jan) and the College Fair at St. Mary's College in April/May.
- **Stop by the College and Career Center** to look at college view books, guidebooks and catalogs. Sign up to attend College visits on Naviance or in the College and Career Center.

Winter – Junior Year

- **If you took the PSAT, pick up your PSAT score report from the Career Center** in Dec/Jan. Be sure use the access code on your PSAT/NMSQT score report to sign in to My College QuickStart to view an analysis of your scores. This

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can help you prepare for the SAT using a study plan based on your PSAT/NMSQT results.

- **Consider taking a practice SAT or ACT** offered by Academic Boosters in winter. Score results of a *practice test* will not be reported to the colleges.
- **Plan Your Spring Testing Schedule.** Consider taking an official SAT and an ACT test in spring, to determine your strongest performance. Request a score report, do some preparation and plan to retake your strongest one in later spring or early fall (of senior year). Register for either test on line 4-6 weeks ahead of the test date to get the closest testing location. SAT www.collegeboard.org or ACT www.actstudent.org
- **NOTE:** You can take either the SAT Reasoning Test or up to three SAT Subject Tests on one test day. Plan your testing schedule carefully if you want to take both types of SAT. Subject tests are best taken at the end of the course in May or June. (UC's do not *require* SAT Subject Tests but specific majors (more competitive) majors may recommend them. Taking SAT Subject tests show academic strength in a particular subject area, so the general recommendation is to take two (or more) if applying to competitive UCs. Be sure to look at UC websites to see if particular majors request particular tests. If you plan to take a Math SAT Subject test, be sure to take Level 2 (not Level 1). CSU's do not require Subject tests and will not look at them in the admissions evaluation, but some private colleges do, so check websites). If you take the ACT, plan to take it "with writing" since many colleges require it. (UC's and many privates, do require the writing section, CSU's do not).

Spring – Junior Year

- **Get Ready for the SAT or ACT.** Continue to prepare for either the SAT or ACT on their registration websites. Sign up for the Question of the Day from College Board (also on the DVHS website).
- **Explore Colleges.** Start visiting local colleges: large, small, public, and private. Get a feel for what works for you. Develop a list of 15-20 colleges that you want to learn more about. By the time you apply, you should have reduced this list to about 8-10 including some reach, some target and some safety schools. Use published GPA and test score ranges to help you decide where you might fit in a particular college's admissions pool (info. from previous year's freshman application pool).
- **Continue Your College Search** (pick up a "blue sheet" of helpful websites in the Career Center) Get to know the Naviance Family Connection website: www.dvhigh.net/counseling. Contact your counselor if you (or your parents) have forgotten the access code information.
- **Sign up on college websites to request admissions information.** Many colleges encourage students to show a "demonstrated interest". They will also contact you if they will be visiting our school or hosting a regional admissions event. Attend the St. Mary's College Fair (April/May). Attend regional events offered by colleges.
- **Attend the College Information evening for Junior Parents** hosted by the DVHS Counseling dept. Keep in mind you will get more out of this evening if you have already begun your college search.
- **Register and Prepare for AP Exams** if enrolled in AP classes. Certain scores from AP exams may earn students college credit as determined by each college campus. Although students can report AP scores on college applications, they are not typically used in the admission process. For more score information and test prep information go to <http://www.collegeboard.org/student/testing/ap/about.html>
- **Plan Ahead for the Summer & Senior Year.** Counselors will be coming to your classes in the spring to talk about course selection for fall, and new courses being added. Plan to challenge yourself with honors and AP classes in your senior year. Colleges expect students to continue the rigor of their course loads in senior year.
- If applicable, **identify teachers who might write letters of recommendation for you.** You will need to download a private school packet from the DVHS website under the Counseling tab (see bottom left of page). As of fall 2012, this packet may also be available on line via the Naviance Family Connection account.
- **Consider making an appointment to review your senior year class schedule with your counselor.** Talk to her about your plans for college to ensure you are signing up for the required/recommended courses. Take rigorous courses. Check college websites for expectations.
- **Download college application information** from the DVHS website under "Counseling/College and Career Center".
- **Plan summer activities early.** Enrich yourself by volunteering, getting an interesting job or internship or find a summer program. The College and Career Center has many resources for summer planning, in addition to the listings on Naviance Family Connection (see Enrichment on the "Colleges" tab).
- **If you are an athlete planning** to play a sport in a D1 or D2 college, register with the NCAA (<http://www.ncaa.org>).

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Read about the requirements and timeline. Contact college coaches to express interest. Talk to club and high school coaches to get their support.

- **Start to post your potential college list on Naviance Family Connection** (Colleges I am Thinking About). This list will assist the College and Career Center to extend invitations to these colleges for a fall visit to DVHS.

Summer – Pre-Senior Year

- **Visit colleges.** It is best to tour when college is in session to get a true picture of a campus, but that is not always feasible. So, make the most of any summer visit opportunity. Take campus tours, and at colleges you're serious about, schedule interviews with admissions counselors if possible. Be sure to bring a copy of your resume and transcript for private colleges. Talk to students, visit a dorm--eat a meal in the cafeteria. Picture yourself attending each college...is it the "right fit" for you?
- **Book tours ahead of time to ensure access.** Plan to attend the admissions overview if possible. Ask about last year's freshman class admission profile. Who was admitted? What was their background? Take notes!
- **Begin to complete the Common Application** (usually on line by Aug.1) if the colleges where you plan to apply, use the Common Application. Check important dates; some universities have early dates or rolling admissions. Consider Early Action/Early decision (ED) applications if applicable. Remember that ED represents a binding agreement; Early Action does not.
- **Begin to brainstorm essays.** UC's require responses to two prompts. Private application essay requirements vary. Pick up information regarding essay writing in the Career Center before summer.
- **Get organized!** If you did not start an information file previously, do so now to store your application information. Include your test scores, a transcript from each high school or community college you have attended, a list of awards and honors you have achieved, a personal log of your volunteering, correspondence with colleges (if any), sports participation, summer programs, etc.; anything that might be reported on a college application.

Fall – Senior Year

- **No Senioritis! Maintain your grades!!** Colleges expect that students will maintain their class schedule, rigor and grades in senior year. If grades drop too much in senior year (i.e. D's or F's) colleges have been known to rescind their offer of admission. In most cases admission offers are "conditional" with the assumption that the student will maintain their schedule and grades. If things do change, all colleges where student has applied need to be notified of the change (i.e. "D", dropped class)
- **Attend College visits in the College and Career Center.** Talk to reps. Learn about academics, finances and campus life. Sign up in Naviance Family Connection or in Counseling and print or pick up a pass to if the visit is during class time. Attend Regional College events for colleges not visiting DVHS.
- **Read school loop and listen to daily bulletin** announcements for college information.
- **College Applications.** Narrow your list of colleges to between 6 and 10 and review it with your parents and your counselor. Be sure to have a collection of "reach", "target" and "safety" schools. Research application and financial aid info regarding each college. Visit as many as possible.
- **Enter your list of colleges in Naviance to help you track the application process.**
- **Make a master calendar and note the following:** << *Parents can help here!*
 - Test dates, fees, and deadlines (scores sent? UC-send SAT/SAT Subject &/or ACT scores to one campus and they will all have access to them; CSU – Send to code 3594 (CSU Mentor, Long Beach/ACT send scores to one CSU campus and use ACT to manage sending to other CSU's) or send to other private and out of state public schools individually)
 - College application due dates (CSU=Oct 1-Nov. 30; UC=Nov. 1-Nov. 30; others vary)
 - Financial aid/scholarship opportunities and their deadlines. Consider school based aid and private scholarships. File FAFSA beginning Jan. 1 (and by March 2)
 - Deadlines of recommendation letters, transcripts, and other necessary materials.
 - DVHS's deadlines for application requests, such as requesting transcripts and recommendation letters (request at least 2 weeks prior to deadline).
- **Download private application information from the DVHS website** (www.dvhigh.net), Select "Curriculum, Counseling and Career Center" link. Prepare this packet for those who will be writing you letters of

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- recommendation. (Beginning Fall 2012, this information will also be available on Naviance)
- **Request necessary recommendation letters from counselors and teachers** (CSU's and UC's do not require them). Give each person necessary documentation from the above packet, a stamped, addressed envelope, and any required forms. If you use the Common Application, recommendations should be completed online. Download Private Application packet from DVHS website (or Naviance beginning fall 2012). Submit completed packet to counselors *AT LEAST TWO (2) WEEKS* prior to application deadline.
 - **Finish writing application essays** (that you started during the summer), attend DVHS workshops and ask teachers, parents, and friends to read first drafts. Be sure to write them yourself. Colleges can tell if you don't.
 - **Attend the SRVUSD annual college fair** (Sept. or Oct.)
 - **Oct. 1-Begin working on UC and CSU applications.** UC= <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/> and CSU= www.csumentor.edu . You can submit CSU applications anytime between Oct. 1 and Nov. 30, and UC ones can be submitted between Nov. 1 and Nov. 30. Both systems HIGHLY recommend that students submit BEFORE Nov. 30.
 - **Attend Counselor workshops and drop in help days for Common application, UC application and CSU application.**
 - **Applying Early Action (not binding) or Early Decision (binding) to a school?** November 1 (often): For early admission, colleges may require test scores and applications in early November. Be sure to request that your test scores (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests) get sent to the schools where you plan to apply. Up to 4 free requests can be made when you register for the test. Additional scores may be sent for an additional fee.
 - **Research Financial Aid Info-college websites and scholarships!** Ask if your college offers an early estimate of financial aid eligibility to help you plan your finances. All have financial aid "calculators" on their websites.
 - **Plan to attend DVHS Financial Aid night December** (check school loop for date).
 - **Complete CSS Profile if needed** for private schools and some out of state public schools. (www.collegeboard.org).
 - **Scholarships** -Review scholarship books, search on Naviance and stop by College and Career Center to learn more about scholarships. Also, check individual college websites.

Winter – Senior Year

- **Non-UC/CSU Applications.** Many (non-UC/non-CSU) regular applications are due between January 1 and February 15. Keep copies of everything you send to colleges. Some use the Common Application, some have institutional applications on their websites. (For a college that offers both, either is equally accepted in the process and online is usually preferred over paper).
- If required, **request a transcript to be sent to colleges** from DVHS counseling. Be sure to also send transcripts from community college (DVC?) or other high school attended, if applicable.
- **Contact colleges to make sure they've received all application materials.** Most likely they will send you an e-mail confirming receipt. If they do, SAVE THIS EMAIL in case you need it for future reference!
- Look at each campus' **housing** website. Note application deadlines. Some ask you to apply for housing before you know if you are accepted.
- **Financial Aid: Apply beginning Jan. 1 (until March 2) for most schools. The earlier the better is recommended, as colleges cannot determine financial aid packages without this form. You and your parents can sign up for a "pin" prior to Jan. 1 to get started. (a pin is your electronic signature on the form). www.fafsa.ed.gov**
- For 2 or 4 year college applicants: Submit your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as soon after January 1 as possible. Men 18 or older must register for the selective service to receive federal financial aid.
- **Many priority financial aid deadlines fall in February.** To get the most attractive award package, apply by the priority date. Keep copies of everything you send.
- In order to be eligible to be considered for a **Cal Grant**, you must submit your application by March 2. CSU's and UC's have the same deadline, but private and community colleges might vary. Check financial aid pages on particular college websites. See your counselor about the DVHS method for sending GPA verification.
- If admitted Early Decision to a college, a student is required to withdraw all other outstanding applications. Contact individual college campuses to determine their preferred procedure (but typically colleges request students to send an e-mail to the college stating that "they wish to withdraw their application as they plan to attend another college."

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Spring – Senior Year

- **Admissions letters.** You should receive acceptance letters by April 1, and financial aid offers by mid-April at the latest. Some colleges will reply sooner. **In most cases you have until May 1** to decide and submit your “Statement of Intent” to register.
- **Compare financial aid awards** from different colleges. Questions? Talk to financial aid officers at the colleges. Not enough aid? Ask if other financing plans are available.
- If you haven't already, **visit your final college before accepting.** Look for your “right fit” college. You will be spending the next four years there.
- **May 1: Making Your Final Choice.** You must tell every college of your acceptance or rejection of offers of admission or financial aid by May 1. Send a deposit (if required) to the college you choose to attend. Follow all of their enrollment instructions. Are there assessment tests to be taken? Orientation dates to register for? Housing?
- **Wait-listed?** If you will enroll if accepted, follow the college’s instructions to remain on the wait list. Each campus can vary in their waiting list procedure. Some might ask for an additional letter, or a transcript. Do what you can to tell the admissions director your intent and ask how to strengthen your application. Need financial aid? Ask if funds will be available if you're accepted. Also, inquire about housing. If you are offered a space on a waiting list and wish to accept that offer, be sure to respond by their deadline. Please note: **It is highly recommended that a student also submit an “SIR” to another school where admitted, in case the wait list does not clear** as in most cases colleges do not admit from wait lists until after May 1. If the wait list does clear, and you wish to change schools, you will most likely lose your original deposit. Ask.
- **Be sure to stay on top of required placement testing deadlines.** UC’s have an English placement test in early May that applicants must take if not exempt by other means (see acceptance letter from UC), and the CSU’s require students to pass (or become exempt from) their English or Math placement tests. Many colleges offer placement tests during summer orientation, but students should ask.
- **Community College.** If planning to attend community college, be aware of priority dates. Some offer “early admission” for high school seniors in order to obtain priority registration dates. Both DVC and Las Positas offer early admission priority to graduating seniors. Information is typically available in January.
- **Community colleges also require placement tests.** Check the college’s website to be sure of dates and procedures. DVHS will most likely offer placement tests (Math and English) for DVC. Students planning to attend Las Positas will need to complete assessment tests ON their campus.
- **Request that counseling send your final high school transcript to the college you plan to attend** (by their deadline). If you attended DVC or another community college, make sure that you request your transcript to be sent from there as well. This is typically done as part of the “senior check out” procedure.
- **Ensure that your AP scores are sent** (Procedure is listed on College Board website).
- **Complete DVHS Senior Exit Survey in Naviance.** What are your post high school plans?
- **Complete a Pennant for the Map in Counseling! We want to celebrate the diverse plans of our DVHS Seniors-US College? Military? Overseas education? Overseas Travel? Work? Let us know!**

CONGRATULATIONS – “OH THE PLACES YOU WILL GO”

Summer – Senior Year

- **Start preparing for the year ahead.** Pick up a dorm packing list from the College and Career Center before you leave DVHS.
- **Attend (required?) College Orientations!** Often students can register during these events.
- **Consider writing thank you notes** to those who helped you with your application process (i.e. wrote recommendation letters for you)
- **Enjoy your summer with friends and family.**