

From Career Exploration to University Success:

*A Program to Engage Students in Work That Provides
Insight and Informs Their Decisions About Their Future*



REGIONAL INSTITUTE

Middle East & North Africa 2025

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Phil Abraham

- 8 years HS Counselor ACS Abu Dhabi (Gr 10-12)
- IACAC member since 2017
- 13 years as comprehensive school counselor
- Teaching and Social Work background starting in CPS



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Key Takeaways

- Career Exploration because it's important
- Career exploration as a starting point that progresses through other key content delivery in support of university admissions
- Data collected to inform decision making via a student profile within a College and Career Readiness Platform

Career Exploration and the Progression Towards Admissions

- Career Exploration with Grade 10
- Character Development with Grade 11
- Junior Project/Interview with Grade 11
- College Essay/Personal Statement Workshop with Grade 11
- Senior Retreat with Grade 12

Day 1 of Career Exploration

- Orientation to College & Career Readiness Platform
- Personality Assessment
- Read Results
- Turn & Talk
- Introduce students to the Interest Profiler Assessment (Holland) and assign as homework for Day 2

Assessment Results

All Assessments

 Interest Profiler

You have not taken this assessment yet.

 Work Values

You have not taken this assessment yet.

 Personality

You have not taken this assessment yet.

 Skills

You have not taken this assessment yet.

Your personality type is ISTJ:

Open each section below to learn more about it.

Introversion		Extraversion	 ▼
Sensing		iNtuition	 ▼
Thinking		Feeling	 ▼
Judging		Perceiving	 ▼

Your Personality Profile

Quiet, realistic and practical, you communicate in a style that is clear, simple and direct. A careful observer, you notice details that interest or relate to you and have a good memory for past experiences. You think things through before sharing your insights and are cautious about change. Responsible and steady, you strive to do your best in every situation.

Conscientious and logical, you like to make sensible decisions and keep things orderly and efficient. Organized and productive, you have a great

Day 2 of Career Exploration

- Personality review/explanation with emphasis on not good nor bad, the results just provide “Insight to Self”
- Direct students towards the “View Careers” blue button at the bottom of the screen on their Your Personality page - Note “Career Clusters”, “Outlook” & “Education”
- Students consider “Careers/Occupations” from the list in Maia, add to their Career List and explore information in Maia’s career database and complete the Personality Assessment Reflection survey for homework

Introversion - Extroversion

How do we interact with the world, or
expend/direct our energies and how do we
recharge our energies/batteries

Extroversion

1. **Enjoying Group Work**
 - You feel energized when working on projects with classmates and like brainstorming ideas out loud rather than working quietly on your own.
2. **Speaking Up in Class**
 - You're quick to raise your hand to share answers, ask questions, or add to the discussion, even if you don't have the "perfect" response.
3. **Seeking Social Interaction**
 - You like spending time with friends during lunch, breaks, and after school, and usually prefer being around others rather than being alone for long periods.
4. **Taking the Lead in Activities**
 - You naturally step forward to organize a group, welcome new members to a club, or cheer people on during sports or events.
5. **Recharging Through People**
 - Instead of needing quiet time after a long day, you feel more energized by hanging out, going to practice, or talking with friends.

 Learning



 Work and Productivity



 Communication



 Working with Others



 Career and Pathways



VIEW CAREERS 

The careers listed below are all linked to your assessment results, with the careers at the top being the best match for your profile.

CAREER CLUSTERS ▼

EDUCATION ▼

OUTLOOK ▼

MINIMUM SALARY

RATING ▼

SEARCH

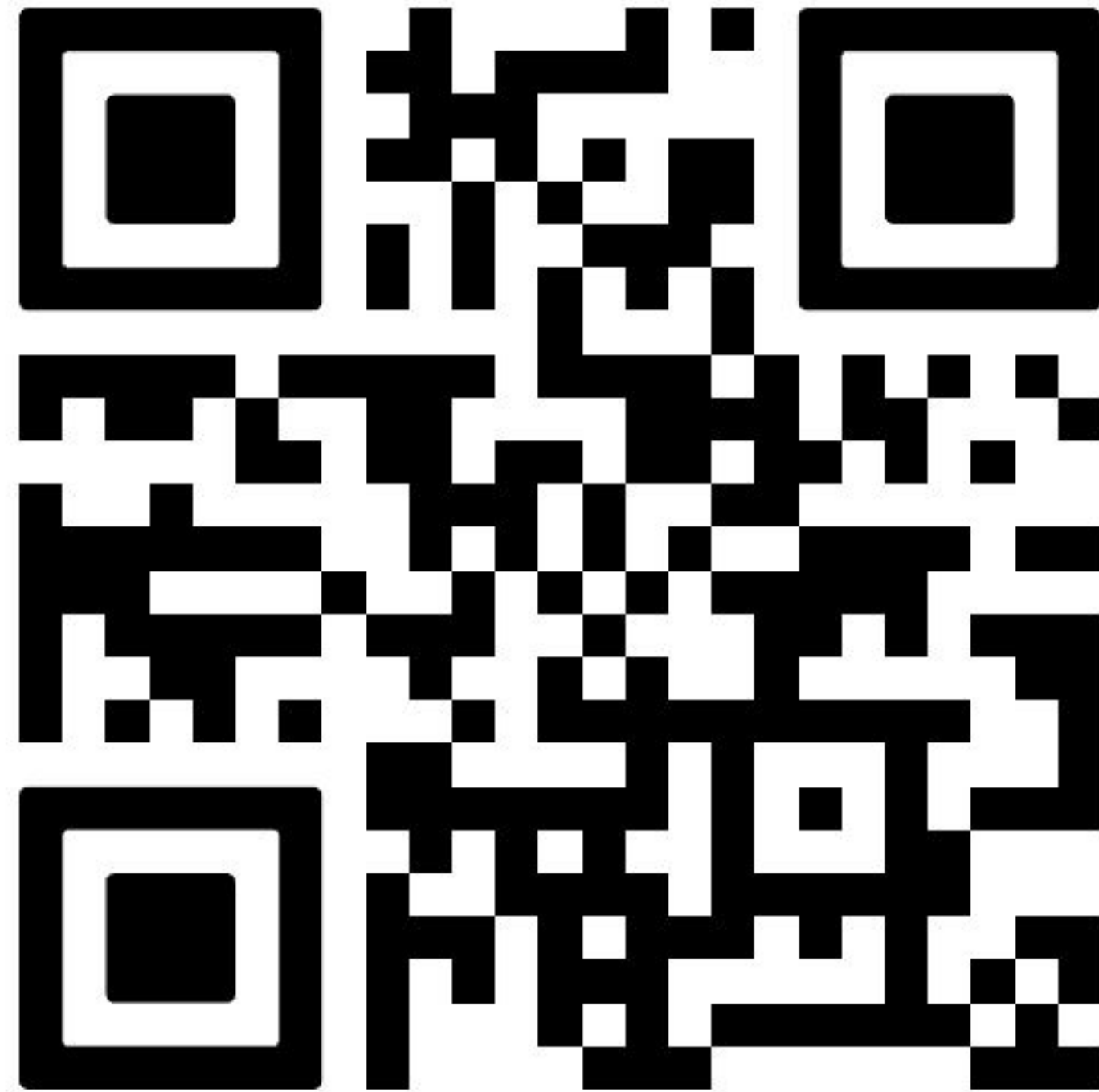


PERSONALITY RESULTS

ALL CAREERS

CAREER TITLE	CAREER CLUSTER	EDUCATION	OUTLOOK	RATING
Energy Auditors	Business Management and Administration	 	 	
Hydroelectric Production Managers	Business Management and Administration	 	 	
Quality Control Systems Managers	Business Management and Administration	 	 	
Biomass Power Plant Managers	Business Management and Administration	 	 	
Wind Energy Operations Managers	Business Management and Administration	 	 	

Personality Assessment Reflection



Still on Day 2

- Brief explanation of John Holland's Career Theory and their Interest Profiler results
- Direct students to go to O*Net
- Show them what is under the 'Find Occupations', 'Adv. Search', 'O*Net Data' and 'Crosswalk' tabs
- Students can use the search bar for the career/occupation they want to search
- Go to O*Net Data and find "interests", have them select their #1 Holland personal code then their second and third if they have it and see how the career/occupation lists refine. Sometimes it's better to just use the top two

Now that we did one together

Time to complete the other survey on Work Interest. Go to “Character” and at top, left corner find “Interest Profiler”. Complete this before the next class

Artistic

People with Artistic interests like work that deals with the artistic side of things, such as acting, music, art, and design. They like creativity in their work and work that can be done without following a set of rules.

Conventional

People with Conventional interests like work that follows set procedures and routines. They prefer working with information and paying attention to details rather than working with ideas. They like working with clear rules and following a strong leader.



0.2

Enterprising

People with Enterprising interests like work that has to do with starting up and carrying out business projects. These people like taking action rather than thinking about things. They like persuading and leading people, making decisions, and taking risks for profits.



5.2

Investigative

People with Investigative interests like work that has to do with ideas and thinking rather than physical activity or leading people. They like searching for facts and figuring out problems.



1.6

Interest Profiler Result

Enterprising

People with Enterprising interests like work that has to do with starting up and carrying out business projects. These people like taking action rather than thinking about things. They like persuading and leading people, making decisions, and taking risks for profits.



5.2

Investigative

People with Investigative interests like work that has to do with ideas and thinking rather than physical activity or leading people. They like searching for facts and figuring out problems.



1.6

Career Interest

Day 2 -

- Holland codes (Artistic, Enterprising, Investigative, Conventional, Realistic and Social)
- Holland's RIASEC Hexagon



Day 3

- After selecting a Career/Occupation from O*Net they explore the information presented
- Introduce the Grade 10 Career Exploration Exit Ticket and have them complete
- The survey questions are arranged in the same order as the information they will discover after having selected a Career/Occupation in O*Net
- We introduce Character Development for grade 11 and show the video, “The Science of Character”
- Career Exploration Series is complete

CHARACTER STRENGTHSREPORT

Character strengths are described as the capacities humans have for thinking, feeling, and acting in ways that are considered virtues or human goodness. VIA views each person as having a unique set of strengths based on the VIA Classification. Some strengths are easier and more natural for the individual to express in certain particular situations where they are needed (phasic strengths), and other strengths are expressed more consistently (trait strengths). Watch now.



Grade 10 Career Exploration Exit Ticket (Survey)



Character Development

- Three - 45 minute sessions
- Introduction to Character Development with the Via Institute; “The Science of Character”
- Have the students complete the “Strengths” assessment in Maia Learning
- Guide students to review the full descriptions provided on their top 5 core character results
- Survey assignment - Where are these five character strengths evidence in “family” life, “school” life and “social” life?
- Journal assignment - Who do you admire and why?
- AI assignment, using prompts to generate the connections between character strengths and their engagements

SEL Standards & Outcomes

- SE:A1:1 Identify personal values, attitudes, and beliefs
 - a. Explain their values, attitudes, and beliefs, describing the influences that have shaped their development and how these insights enhance self-awareness.
- SE:A1:7 Identify personal and social identities
 - a. Form a coherent and continually developing sense of identity that incorporates various facets of who a person is within their social context.
- SE:A1:14 Describe the growth and development process
 - a. Explain how physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being are connected in overall development, and reflect on their own growth journey.
- SE:A2:7 Identify strengths, assets, and areas for self-improvement in relation to working collaboratively
 - a. Demonstrate self-awareness by identifying strengths, assets, and areas for improvement in complex collaborations, and describe how personal strengths enhance team success.

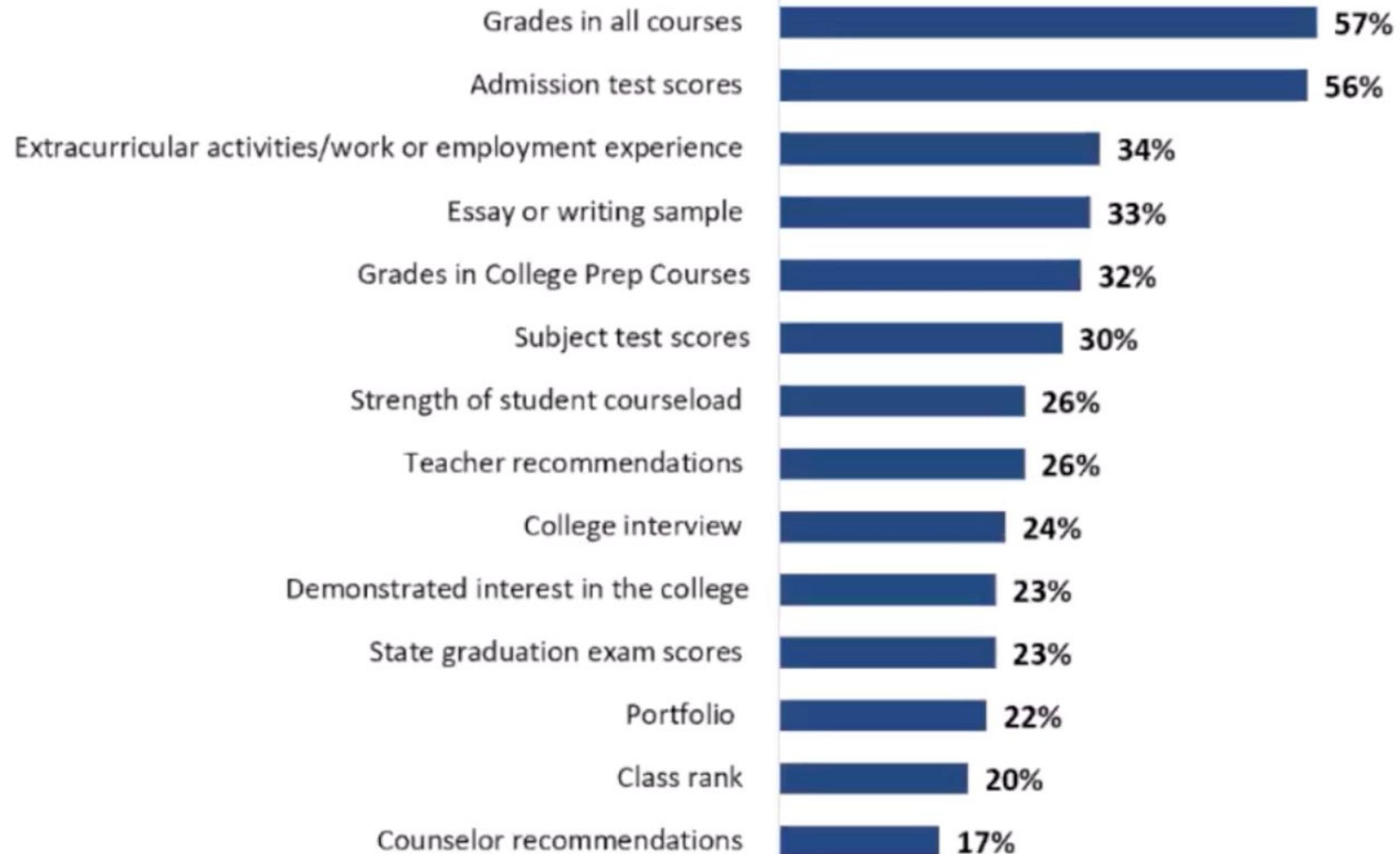
SEL Standards & Outcomes

- C:A1:1 Draw connections between personal abilities, skills, interests, and potential career options
 - a. Evaluate personal abilities, skills, and interests to generate a list of aligned career options.
- C:B1:2 Apply decision-making skills to course selection, postsecondary, and career planning
 - a. Apply decision-making skills to create and/or revise a four-year high school course plan which aligns with careers of interest and future goals.
- C:B1:1 Use a variety of resources and tools to research and enhance career planning and assessment tools
 - a. Engage in in-depth career exploration, drawing from a variety of resources and experiences.
- C:A2:3 Locate, evaluate, and interpret career information
 - a. Research potential careers to locate, evaluate, and interpret information such as job descriptions, working conditions, earnings, educational requirements, etc.

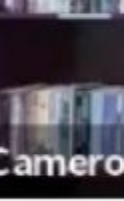
Factors In Admission Decisions According to Students

What Matters Most to Colleges when Making Admission Decisions

Select up to 5 responses



Factors in Admission Decision



	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Grades in college prep courses	185	76.8	15.1	4.9	3.2
Grades (all courses)	185	74.1	18.9	5.4	1.6
Strength of high school curriculum	185	63.8	22.7	10.3	3.2
Positive character attributes	184	28.3	37.5	18.5	15.8
Essay or writing sample	185	18.9	37.3	26.5	17.3
Student's interest in attending	185	15.7	27.6	25.4	31.4
Counselor recommendation	185	11.9	40.0	27.6	20.5
Teacher recommendation	185	10.8	40.5	28.1	20.5
Extracurricular activities	185	6.5	44.3	30.8	18.4
High school class rank	183	5.5	22.4	43.2	29.0
Admission test scores (ACT, SAT)	185	4.9	25.4	38.9	30.8
Portfolio	185	4.9	10.8	24.3	60.0
Interview	185	4.3	8.6	32.4	54.6
Work	185	2.2	30.8	40.0	27.0
State graduation exam scores	185	1.6	6.5	18.4	73.5
Subject test scores (AP, IB)	185	1.1	22.2	25.9	50.8

Personality v Character

Definition:

- Personality refers to the outward, observable traits and behaviors that define how a person interacts with others. It includes patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that are relatively consistent over time and across situations. These traits, such as being outgoing, shy, or assertive, are what we notice first in people
- Character, on the other hand, refers to a person's moral and ethical qualities. It reflects the deeper values, principles, and beliefs that guide a person's actions and decisions. Qualities like honesty, integrity, kindness, and perseverance are markers of one's character

Personality v Character

- **Personality is largely shaped by both genetics and environment.** It begins to form early in life and is influenced by family upbringing, culture, and experiences. While it can evolve, especially with significant life changes, much of it remains relatively stable throughout adulthood
- **Character is shaped through experiences, education, and deliberate personal development.** Unlike personality, which can be somewhat spontaneous, character involves choices and is often strengthened through challenges, hardships, and ethical decision-making

Observable vs. Deep-seated Traits:

- **Personality is more observable.** It includes aspects like sociability, humor, energy levels, and how someone behaves in social situations. For example, someone might be outgoing and talkative in a group setting, showing a personality trait of extroversion
- **Character is more internal (slow to reveal itself) and reflects the core values that guide actions,** especially when no one is watching. For instance, a person with strong character traits like honesty and integrity will act truthfully even when it's inconvenient or when there is no one to impress

Changeability:

- **Personality is somewhat flexible but tends to remain consistent over time.** While people can modify aspects of their personality, particularly how they express themselves or adapt to different social environments, the core traits remain relatively stable.
- Character, however, can be more malleable and intentional. **A person can actively work to build or strengthen their character traits through conscious effort, reflection, and learning.** For example, someone might strive to become more compassionate or develop greater perseverance over time.

Your Top Strengths



1 Kindness

Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them. [View More](#)

2 Love

Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing & caring are reciprocated; being close to people. [View More](#)

3 Gratitude

Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks. [View More](#)

4 Bravery

Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what's right even if there's opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it. [View More](#)

Employers generally view kindness as a valuable asset in the workplace:

- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that 77% of employers believe that kindness and compassion are essential qualities for employees to possess. They also report that kindness and empathy were key factors in creating a positive workplace culture, which in turn can lead to increased productivity, engagement, and retention (SHRM, 2019).
- A study by the University of California, Berkeley found that employees who demonstrate kindness and empathy are more likely to be promoted and receive higher salaries (Cuddy, 2015).
- The Journal of Business and Psychology found that employees who scored high in kindness were rated as more effective leaders by their supervisors, and were more likely to be promoted (Kelloway, Sivanathan, & Barling, 2013).
- The American Management Association identified kindness and empathy as among the top five leadership qualities that employees valued most (American Management Association, 2019).

Leaders on Kindness

- *"Remember there's no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple with no logical end."* – Scott Adams, Dilbert Creator and Author
- *"Kindness is the gateway to new relationships and opportunities."* – Adrienne Bankert, Author.
- *"Shine your light and make a positive impact on the world; there is nothing so honorable as helping improve the lives of others."* – Roy T. Bennett, Author

Preparing a Strengths-Based resume

Your resume is not merely a summary of what you have done. It can offer insight into what drives you. CareerBuilder website found that 58% of hiring managers said they were more likely to notice resumes that highlight candidates' strengths rather than their weaknesses. You can highlight your strength of **Kindness** by amplifying it in your descriptions.

Key word	Example
Supported	Activity listed on resume: Computer Science Club Supported younger students learning C++ so they could fully participate in the major hackathon.
	Activity listed on resume: Student Council

- SE:A1:14 Describe the growth and development process

10. Please list your top 5 core character strengths (VIA Character strengths) and write a brief response describing how these strengths will support you at university and benefit the university community you will eventually join

Creativity, judgement, Leadership, spirituality, Humility. I feel like the whole creativity and judgement plays with the INTJ role mentioned above, this will definitely help me stand out from other students as I can think outside the box while being able to effectively complete assignments efficiently. I have been told by many that I am a naturally born leader which will help in group assignments managing different members, while I am not highly religious I do believe heavily in my set morals and ideals, which will help me seek out good groups of people, I tend to humble myself a lot and not recognise my potential especially in academics, however I think it helps drive myself to become better in my weaker areas.

Character Strengths Reflection



Who Do You Admire and Why? (Journal)



Junior Project - Slide deck template grade 11

students complete

- Personality results
- Work interest
- Top 5 core character strengths
- AI generated connections with strengths and engagements
- Academics
- Future goals
- Personal interests
- College fit
- Admissions questions
- "I'm considering" - country/major
- Colleges I'm Thinking About
- Teacher recommendations
- Test plans
- Timeline & Support questions

Junior Project - Junior Interview

- Completed Junior Project is then used in Junior Interview (Student led with parent/s and counselor) which we have in January and February
- Leads into next steps and remaining events through grade 12, including the College Essay Writing Workshop (April) and the Senior Retreat (August)

Hopes & Dreams

- Add a Career Fair
- Add an Alumni Pathway Event
- Replace our “Internship” program with Career/Industry series
- Guest speakers as well as industry field trips