

## College Counseling Office Statement of Philosophy

The JD Cloud School College Counseling Office (CCO) believes that the college application process, like all experiences on campus, is an opportunity for learning and growth. Through this process, students are able to demonstrate the skills and abilities they have cultivated during their time at JD Cloud School. They are also able to further develop their capacities for self-reflection, research, analysis, and communication. In order for students to realize the potential of the college application process, we encourage all students to take ownership of this experience; to think deeply about what they want and need in this next stage of their education; and to thoughtfully consider all of their post-secondary options to ensure the best fit. With extensive experience, the counselors in the CCO facilitate this development through questioning, encouraging, advocating, and sharing our knowledge. We care deeply about our students and their college plans, but it is ultimately up to each individual student to fully engage with us and this process. The most satisfying and rewarding experience is one in which students can sense the immense growth and maturity that has resulted from fully participating with us. All of our programming and individual counseling is designed to address the central qualities of a JD Cloud School education, ensuring the potential for students to not only discover a post-secondary experience, but also to learn in the process:

- 1) **Self-motivation, self-awareness, and responsibility for actions**—Self-reflection is at the heart of the college process. We work with students individually and collectively to foster the self-awareness required to find the right college match. How do students learn best? What values and beliefs are most important to them? How do they foresee integrating professional opportunities into their undergraduate curriculum? These are just a few of the questions that fuel our conversations.
- 2) **Curiosity, creativity, and openness to exploration** - There are many incredible colleges and universities in the United States and abroad! We connect students with information and resources to research these options and engage in conversations about which institutions might best fit their needs. Students who are open to learning about innovative programs often find the most exciting opportunities.
- 3) **Effective communication**—There are many different audiences that require consistent communication during the college process. Throughout the student’s college search and application process, they correspond with admissions representatives, college students, alumni interviewers, and recommendation writers. We help students understand their intended audience and teach them to craft appropriate correspondence.
- 4) **Balance perseverance and resilience with humor and joy**—This process often presents challenges as well as successes. We work closely with students to help them cope with disappointments, switch gears when plans change, and push through when things feel overwhelming. We also celebrate with students! From “smaller” victories such as polishing an essay to larger ones such as receiving acceptance letters, counselors are immensely proud of students and their accomplishments.
- 5) **Balance individual effort with productive collaboration**—During this process students write...alot! We believe in honoring students’ ideas and the effort they put into this work. We also encourage students to seek out support from us and from trusted family and friends when they feel stuck or need encouragement.
- 6) **Balance self-advocacy with commitment to others**—There are many individuals who have an interest in a student’s college process and eventual college match. From family members and friends to influential adults at home or school, the college process is a common topic of conversation. As adolescents, students can find it difficult to balance the ideas and concerns of important people in their lives with their own needs and interests. We encourage students to find their “voice” in the process and help them communicate that voice effectively. We also value the perspective of people who know students well and ask that students thoughtfully consider the input of those individuals.