

MAXIMIZING SUMMER

STAYING SHARP FOR FALL &
LOOKING GOOD TO COLLEGES



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Who is Marigold Prep?

- Virtual support for test prep, every major academic subject, and executive functioning
- Decades of tutoring & test prep experience
- Provided online instruction "before it was cool"



**HI! I'M CASSIE
BROWN
FOUNDER OF
MARIGOLD PREP**

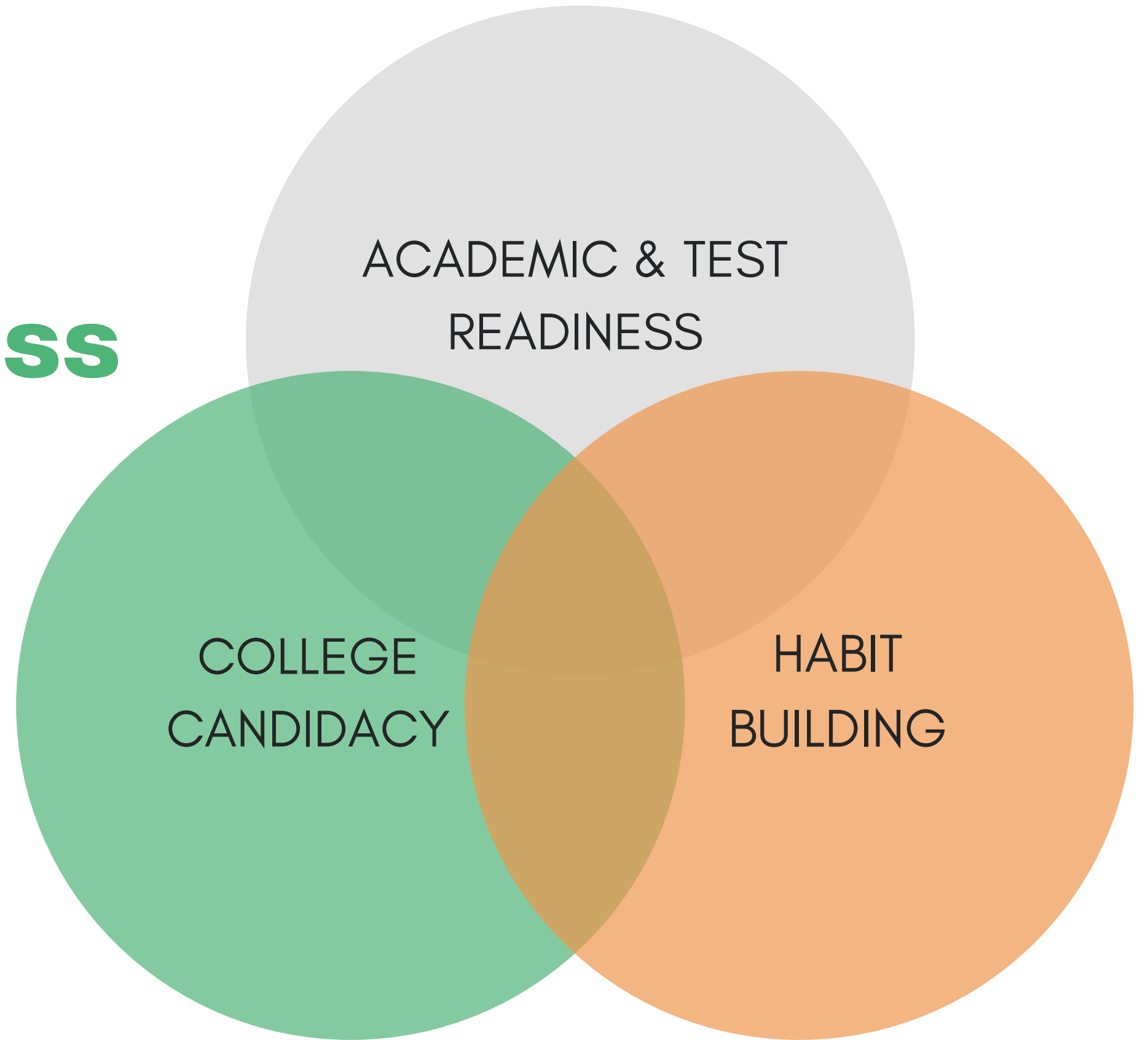
415 237 3377

cassie@marigoldprep.com



Today we'll discuss

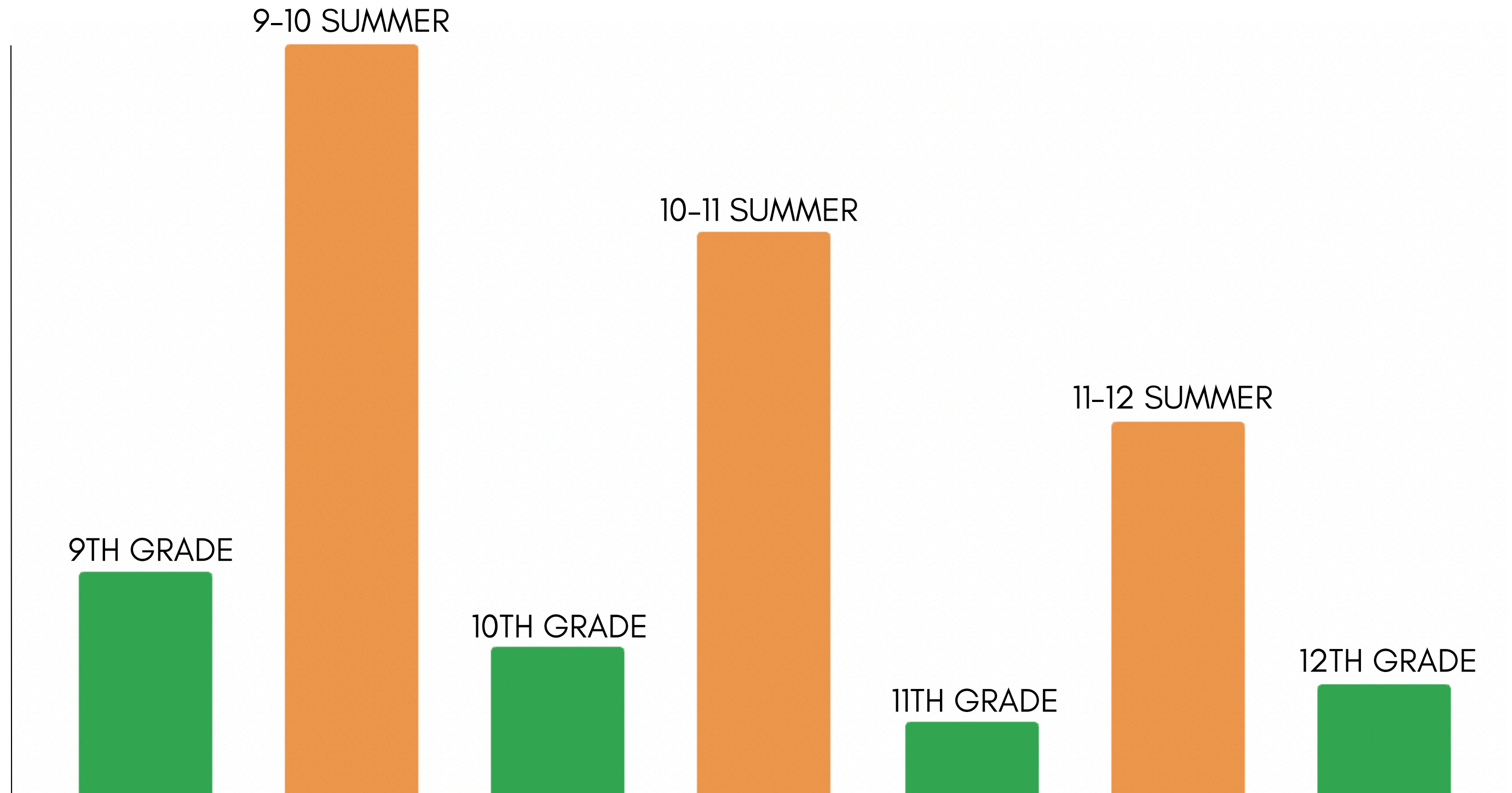
- Academic & Test Readiness
- College Candidacy
- Habit Building
- Live Q&A



Student Capacity In High School

Time Available

- School Year
- Summer



Academic & Test Readiness

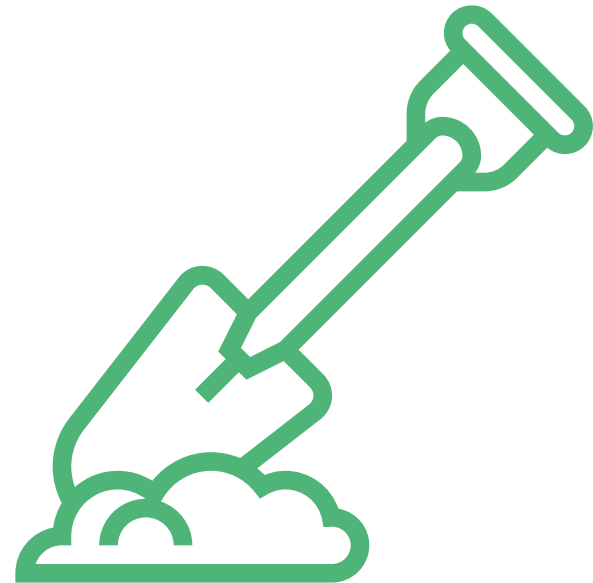


College Priorities

According to the NACAC State of College Admissions report, which surveys hundreds of college admissions officers each year, **the following factors are the most important** in college admissions decisions.

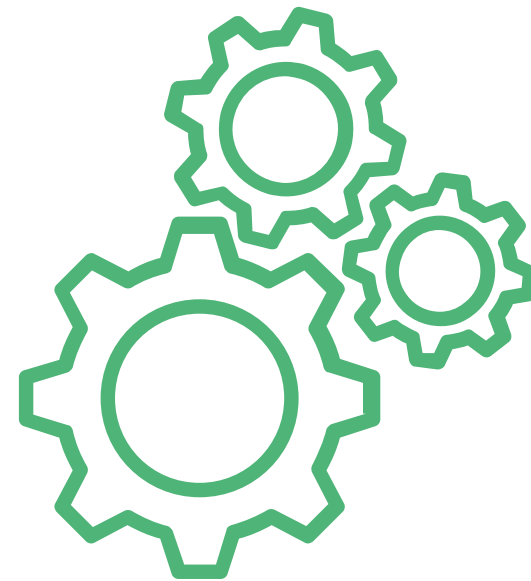
Admissions Decision Factors	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
High school grades in college prep courses	77%	15%	5%	3%
Total high school grades (all courses)	74%	19%	5%	2%
Strength of high school curriculum	64%	23%	10%	3%
Positive character attributes	28%	38%	19%	16%
Essay or writing sample	19%	37%	27%	17%
Student's interest in attending	16%	28%	25%	31%
Counselor recommendation	12%	40%	28%	21%
Teacher recommendation	11%	41%	28%	21%
Extracurricular activities	7%	44%	31%	18%
High school class rank	6%	22%	43%	29%
Admission test scores (ACT, SAT)	5%	25%	39%	31%

TYPES OF SUMMER ACADEMICS



REMEDIATION

Digging yourself out of any academic “holes” from previous school years, including remediating required classes.



MAINTENANCE

Maintaining and enriching academic skills so you can start the school year strong.



GETTING AHEAD

Engaging in summer classes or coursework that allows you to advance more quickly in high school or college

Academic Remediation

Avoiding summer school does not necessarily mean a student is ready to progress in a given subject. In fact, when a student scrapes by in a subject and **does nothing to remediate those skills over summer, they often struggle more** than they did the preceding school year.

This is particularly true in **math**, which is **cumulative** in nature.

If your student struggled in academic subjects last school year, academic remediation should be your **number one priority this summer**. Examples include summer school, tutoring, and self-paced options.



Academic Maintenance

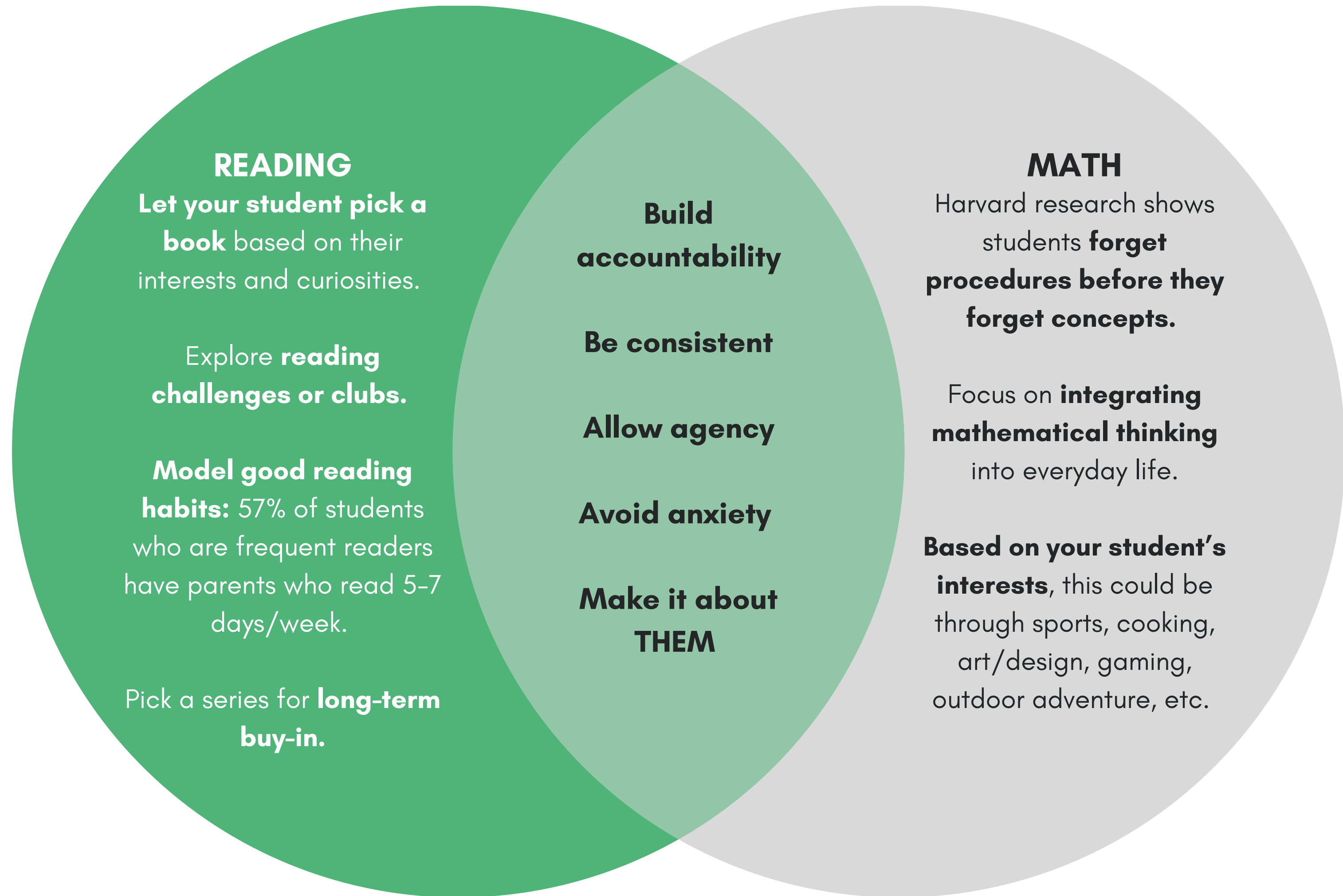
Students who are not in need of academic remediation should still focus on **keeping their skills sharp and building strong habits.**

Reading over the summer is one of the most effective ways to keep **comprehension and critical thinking** skills sharp, but ~35% of high school parents report their student reads zero books over the summer.

According to a study from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, students lose **2.6 months of math learning over the summer**. Unlike reading, which is integrated into daily life, many students **don't engage in any mathematical thinking** over the summer.

Let's look at some strategies to stay sharp...





Getting Ahead...

Students who have **mastered academic content** from the previous year can start getting ahead by:

- “Pre-gaming” for the **most rigorous classes** next school year
- Taking summer school classes to **fulfill high school graduation requirements**
- Enrolling in **college classes for credit** to save time and money once they enter college
- Attending **summer enrichment programs** pertaining to their academic strengths and interests
- Focusing on college candidacy, passion exploration, and habit building...



WHAT ABOUT TEST PREP?



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Testing Timeline

When should my student **take** the SAT/ACT?

Sophomore

- Primary focus should be GPA and taking/ getting into rigorous classes
- **Take the PSAT in October.**

First
Semester
Junior

- **Take the PSAT (NMSQT) in October**
- Take your first (and possibly second) SAT/ACT **if you have already completed Algebra 2**

Second
Semester
Junior

- Take your first SAT/ACT in March or April if you are **currently in Algebra 2**
- Aim to take your **final test in May/June**
- In our opinion, every student should have tested **at least once by the end of their Junior year**

First
Semester
Senior

- If you are **unable to wrap up testing within Junior year**, aim to take your last test by **September Senior year**
- **EA/ED decisions are in November**, regular admissions deadlines are in December and January

Preparation Timeline

When should my student **start preparing** for the SAT/ACT?

Rising
Junior
Summer

START PREP IF:

- You have **completed Algebra 2**
- You have a **rigorous junior year**
- You want **200+ points** of improvement
- You have **learning differences**, test **anxiety**, or known **gaps in academic fundamentals**

First
Semester
Junior

START PREP IF:

- You meet the aforementioned criteria, but **cannot logistically fit in prep** over the summer
- Still, if possible, try to do *SOMETHING* over summer when you have **increased mental capacity**

Second
Semester
Junior

START PREP IF:

- You are **currently in Algebra 2**
- The demands of summer and/or junior year did not allow you to start prep earlier.

Rising
Senior
Summer

START PREP IF:

- **In our opinion**, students should **start prep prior to Senior year**, but we understand that life happens.
- Regardless of where your student is, summer is a great time to **brush up on skills** for a final test

Are there **academic benefits** to **summer test prep**?

Absolutely!

The SAT and ACT test the **math and verbal content** covered in high school, in addition to **critical thinking and problem solving** skills.

There is a **massive overlap** between the content and skills taught in test prep and those required for successful academic remediation and maintenance.

Students also report SAT/ACT prep helps them to **build academic confidence and navigate test anxiety**.



College Candidacy



What does “college candidacy” mean?

College candidacy refers to everything you do leading up to college applications that **proves you are a good fit** for your goal schools and programs. The college applications you submit senior year will tell your story, but everything you do before that **IS your story**.

This means **students start building college candidacy years before filling out their college applications**. Increased time and capacity over the summer allows them to build candidacy through pre-college programs, community engagement, research projects, or jobs/internships.

Building **Candidacy** Outside the Classroom



Explore
Your
Passions

Dive deeper into your **curiosities** to figure out what **makes you tick**.



Participate
with
Purpose

Take action and make an **impact** on something that matters to you and your **community**.



Be
Consistent &
Authentic

Chose summer activities with common themes that **relate to authentic interests**.



Tell Your
Story

Write **essays** and get recommendations that highlight **your passions and their impact**.



Community Engagement

Colleges love students who have made a **meaningful impact in their community**. This doesn't necessarily need to be a local community, as long as students feel **personally connected** to it.

When helping students initiate community-based projects, we challenge them to **ask the following questions**:

- What is the most **pressing concern** in my community right now?
- What kind of problems are my local schools, community, and health organizations facing?
- How have I **interacted with my community in a meaningful way**, and how might I leverage my interests to help them further?
- What are some **barriers to access to resources** in my community or neighboring communities?

Research Projects

Research and self-directed projects allow students to explore how their **passions relate to the real world**, and how they can apply them outside of the classroom.

The fun part? **Show it off!** Students should work towards the end goal of having a **polished showcase of their work** in the form of a paper, portfolio, website, etc.





Pre-College Programs

Summer programs at colleges have many benefits, including:

- Gives students a **taste of the college experience**
- Expose students to the **application/essay process** early
- Allow students to further enrich and explore their passions in a **community of like-minded individuals**
- Introduce students to potential **role models and mentors** in their field of interest
- Show colleges an interest and **commitment to higher education**

Pick programs that relate to your **student's specific passions** and skills at schools (or types of schools) they are interested in attending.

Essays & Applications

- The best time to start applications and write essays is the **summer before senior year**.
- **Start early**, and plan for multiple drafts.
- Stories should highlight a **student's uniqueness** and **why** that uniqueness will make them a **valuable contribution** to the institution.
- **Lean on college counselors and tutors** when necessary. Even the most confident teenagers **struggle to “pitch themselves”**.
 - Most teenagers don't want mom to pitch for them. 😊



Habit Building



Executive functions are the roots of healthy habits:

Executive: “having the power to put plans, actions, or laws into effect”

Functions: A set of **mental processes** that govern our conscious decisions and voluntary actions.



Some key **executive functions** are:

Harvard-backed research describes these skills as an air traffic control system that helps multiple planes land and take off simultaneously. Just like the air traffic control system, **executive functioning skills allow us to initiate, organize, and shift focus between multiple tasks fluidly.**

- Planning
- Prioritization
- Task Initiation
- Time Management
- Organization
- Working Memory
- Attention
- Self-Awareness
- Emotional Regulation
- Flexible Thinking
- Perseverance

Where do executive functioning skills come from?



MISCONCEPTION

You can't teach this stuff – you either get it or you don't. Some people are just born better at staying organized, controlling their temper, or adjusting to new situations/ than others.



TRUTH

No one is born with executive functioning skills. They develop over time. A child's experiences and environment can have a profound effect during this period of development.

Because it deals with conscious decisions, executive functioning can absolutely be taught and learned.

Goals & Accountability

We encourage our students to work with **SMART goals**, a method of setting meaningful objectives with its origins in corporate planning. Quite simply, SMART is an acronym that **frames goals in five tangible ways.**



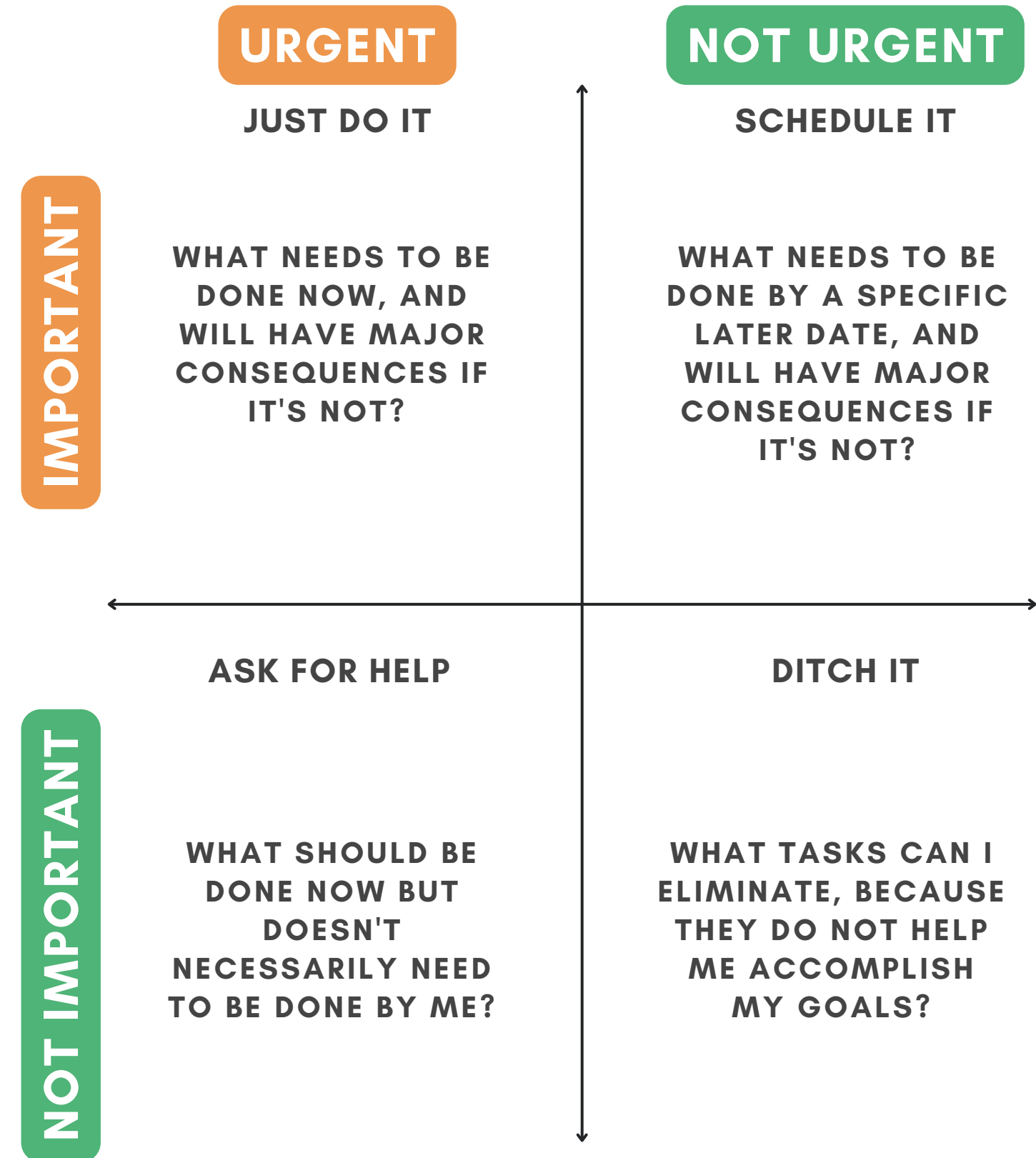
S	SPECIFIC WHAT DO I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?	
M	MEASURABLE HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN IT IS ACCOMPLISHED?	
A	ACHIEVABLE WHAT AM I ABLE TO DO TO ACHIEVE IT?	
R	RELEVANT WHY IS IT WORTH MY TIME AND EFFORT?	
T	TIME BOUND WHEN CAN I REASONABLY ACCOMPLISH IT BY?	

PLAN OF ACTION WHAT ARE MY ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS? WHEN DO THEY NEED TO BE COMPLETE?	ACTION ITEM	DUE DATE

OBSTACLES & SOLUTIONS WHAT OBSTACLES DO I EXPECT AND HOW WILL I PREVENT OR SOLVE THEM?	OBSTACLES	SOLUTIONS

Prioritization

The Eisenhower Matrix helps us **understand the difference between urgent and important**, and prioritize tasks accordingly. Organizing a to-do list into four separate buckets helps us **navigate the psychologically proven “Mere-Urgency Effect”**, which compels us to focus on the “urgent, non-important” at the peril of the “important, non-urgent”.



Transitioning to Fall

Developing Metacognition

An awareness of one's own thought process; understanding how the brain processes information and learns new skills.

1. Identify separate skills you are expected to master
 - a. **Good tools include the class syllabus, unit names, class objectives, talking to your teacher...**
2. Learn to recognize (**accurately!**) which skills are the greatest challenge for you
3. Distinguish between concepts that are good to learn by memory and concepts that require critical thinking – **these require very different study strategies!**





In Summary

- **Every summer, students generally have more time and capacity than will have until after they apply to college.**
- Academics are the most important factor in college admissions decisions, but **not the only factor.**
- This gives added importance to making the most of summer and **creating balance during the school year.**
- In general, the best time to **start test prep** is the **summer before junior year.**
- Summer also allows students to explore their passions and **make an impact in their community**, which can help them stand out to colleges.
- Increased time and capacity give students an opportunity to **build new habits.**
- Developing systems and self-awareness during the summer is one of the best ways to **ensure a successful school year.**



m a r i g o l d p r e p

Additional questions?

Click here to schedule a free consultation to discuss a customized test prep plan for your student.

415 237 3377

HELLO@MARIGOLDPREP.COM