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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Cobb County School District's Approach to College and Career Planning

1. Why is College and Career Planning vital for all students in the Cobb County School District?

Cobb County strongly believes in supporting all students with College and Career planning in Grades K-12. Our vision for career readiness emphasizes programming that is embedded in instruction and incorporates real-world work experiences for students. To assist our schools with fulfilling this vision, we have a multi-faceted approach including classroom instruction delivered by counselors about post-secondary career and college options, integrated curriculum based on state and national standards, dual enrollment, internships and use of a technology platform to explore, develop, and refine a plan for each student when they graduate from the Cobb County School District. In addition, the Cobb County School District complies with the State of Georgia's Bridge Law, which requires all students in grades 6-12 participate in developmentally appropriate college and career readiness activities each year.

2. In what grades is college and career planning required for Cobb County students?

The Cobb County School District aims to embed career readiness in the curriculum for all grades. In elementary school, this includes career exploration opportunities, and beginning in Grade 6, all students are exposed to college and career planning as a required component of the curriculum. In middle school, students receive classroom lessons on careers, and begin learning about graduation requirements. In high school, students begin the process of postsecondary planning. As students' interests change, students in high school continue to receive lessons on careers and career pathways offered throughout the Cobb County School District to help plan for their future.

3. How can families learn more about the college and career programs and opportunities provided by the Cobb County School District and Naviance?

School counselors can assist families with learning more about the college and career readiness in Cobb County. Each school offers a variety of opportunities for families to be involved in the college and career exploration of their students. Parents/guardians may also create their own Naviance accounts; this account is directly linked to their student's account parents/guardians can access the platform at any time. Accessing this portal allows parents/guardians to review the work their student has completed in Naviance, see postsecondary institutions their student is interested in attending, track their student's progress towards completing applications and follow up when additional assistance is needed.

4. What student information is collected through Naviance?



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To enable students to utilize Naviance, the Cobb County School District provides Naviance with student unique ID numbers to create student accounts. The purpose of collecting the required data elements is to allow the student to log into Naviance, and to allow the school staff to support students' activity within Naviance. For example, a school counselor may log into Naviance to review how a student has progressed in achieving a stated goal. Under the Data Sharing Agreement between Naviance and the Cobb County School District, personally identifiable student information is always under the direct control of Cobb County. Naviance is prohibited from using personally identifiable student data for any other purpose. In addition to the student information that Cobb County provides to Naviance to enable student accounts, students also provide individual responses as they use the educational tools in the Naviance platform to explore and plan for college and career opportunities. Here are some examples:

- **Strengths Explorer:** This is an in-product feature that allows students to take this survey to help them identify their strengths in middle school.
- **Counselor-created surveys:** Naviance provides school counselors the ability to create their own surveys for their students. Some examples include, gathering information from students on the success of school events or what type of events they would like to have in the future, student information forms used for counselor recommendation letters, etc. Naviance does not review the content of these surveys, as they are done at the sole discretion of the Cobb County School District.
- **Career Interest Profiler:** This is an in-product feature that allow students to take a survey to help identify career areas that may be of interest. The career interest profiler helps students identify postsecondary options that match career interests. The career interest profiler is completed in high school.

In all cases, the survey results are only made available in the system to the student and their school counselor. They are not shared with higher education institutions.

5. How does Naviance utilized Cobb County student data?

In all cases, Cobb County data, including any survey results, are only made available in the system to the student and their school counselor. They are not shared with higher education institutions. Under the Naviance privacy policy, Naviance may not sell or use personally identifiable student data for commercial purposes. In addition, a comprehensive Data Sharing Agreement is in place between Cobb County and Naviance to further ensure Naviance abides by the data security and privacy requirements outlined in the contract.

6. How does Naviance assist students in the college exploration and application process?

Naviance provides several tools to streamline the college exploration and application process. Beginning in high school, students can explore colleges based on their interest. For example, type of college, location, etc. using the Supermatch tool in Naviance. In Grade 12, students can



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use Naviance eDocs. Naviance eDocs is an electronic college application tool, allowing high schools to prepare and send college application documentation electronically to more than 3,000 electronic destinations including all Common Application destinations.

7. What is Active Match and how is it utilized in Cobb County?

Active Match is a tool provided by Naviance to enable students to choose to participate in the part of the college application process where the student can request information, send information such as SAT or ACT score to colleges and communicate directly with college admissions offices. Active Match can link colleges to the students that may be the best fit. Students make the choice to communicate with schools by completing a form to request more information.

8. Does Naviance utilize other companies or third parties to provide services to the Cobb County School District?

Naviance offers Cobb County the option to choose from a select list of third-party tools that are embedded into the Naviance platform to support their students' college and career goals. All the third-party partners providing features within Naviance are publicly available here. Cobb County has access to a dashboard within Naviance allowing Cobb County to therefore control the product features that are available to students, including the features provided by third parties. Examples of features provided by third parties include serving videos about different careers, sending transcripts to a college as part of an application, providing preparation for college admissions tests and providing information about scholarships. The district and schools may turn these features on or off at any time, at their discretion, via a dashboard within Naviance.

9. Are third parties operating within Naviance required to protect student personal information?

Many of the third-party tools simply provide information on potential career paths or help students explore learning styles. These third parties do not require, and do not receive, any personally identifiable information. There are some third-party tools that some schools enable that do require minimal personally identifiable information in order to properly function. Each of these has been configured by Naviance to ensure that only the minimally required personally identifiable information is sent to the third party and utilized only to fulfill the functionality that the school has chosen to enable.

When information is not required by the third party in order to operate the feature, it is not provided. Like Naviance, its third-party partners are legally obligated to only use students' personal information to provide their services to the school and for no other purpose. All of Naviance's third party partners are contractually required to comply with applicable laws, to use the personal information only to provide the feature to the school on our behalf, to not share the personal information with any other parties, to delete the personal information when no longer needed or when we request that it be deleted on behalf of one of our school partners, and to comply with the Naviance privacy and security policies. In addition, the Data Sharing Agreement



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between Cobb County and Naviance requires all third-party providers to abide by the terms that meet or exceed those in the Data Sharing Agreement.

10. How long is student information retained by Naviance?

Under the Data Sharing Agreement between the Cobb County School District and Naviance, Cobb County has authority to request deletion of student data maintained by Naviance, and Naviance is permitted to maintain data only so long as it is under contract with the Cobb County School District.

11. Can families opt students out of participation in the college and career activities provided by the Cobb County School District and/or Naviance?

No. The college and career activities are an integral part of the curriculum. The Cobb County staff assist students with exploring college and career pathways that will allow students to realize their strengths, goals, skills, knowledge, values, and interests in future careers, and to help them make better academic decisions. The Cobb County School District's approach to college and career readiness is aligned with ESSA, the Cobb County strategic plan, the Cobb County Board Policy IHF-R, Career and Technology Education for the state of Georgia, and the Cobb County school counseling student standards.

The Naviance College and Career Readiness online platform is a critical tool in the Cobb County School District's college and career readiness program. It provides a variety of tools for students to explore careers and facilitates the college search and application process. Cobb County students are required to utilize the tools provided by Naviance as part of classroom lessons provided by Cobb County school counselors in grades 6-12.