

# Using NJCAN in High School to Support Career Readiness: A Project-Based Learning Lens

**Project Title:** Accepting College Acceptance

**Grade Level:** 9 -12

**Essential Question:**

Do postsecondary institutions truly have a set procedure when it comes to selecting applicants? What factors play a role in acceptance and how do they vary depending on the institution?

**Project Statement:**

You were recently hired as an admissions counselor for a college in the state of NJ. As part of your new job description you have to create a screening tool for applicants for acceptance into your university. Once a student is tentatively approved, you also have to assist the applicant in finding possible resources for financing the cost of four years at your institution. When your recommendation is complete you will have to debate your candidates' merits with other admissions counselors and decide on final acceptances.

**NJCAN Features:**

- **School Sort**
- **Admission information**
- **Program information**
- **Resume Builder**
- **Recommend course work/program of study**
- **Course Planner**
- **Portfolio**
- **Financial Aid Sort**

**Length:** Varies

If all steps are done completely it would take thirty-six, 50 minute periods. This project based learning module integrates a variety of disciplines since few educators can spend that type of class time on one subject. If done in its entirety it would replace previous classroom learning experiences that met the same standards. There is a lot of room for adaptation to make this work in your overall yearly learning plan. This could be done in conjunction with other assignments, it could be shortened, it could be done primarily out of class, or a combination of the aforementioned could be used.

### **Essential Skills and Knowledge:**

- Students need to be able create a valid and reliable screening tool
- Students need to know the factors for acceptance into a chosen university
- Students need to understand financial literacy as it pertains to college and career options
- Students need to make an argument and defend it with clear examples
- Students need to know how to present candidates for college admission

### **Embedded Academic Knowledge:**

- Read information and create a chart on Excel
- Write a resume, cover letter, and admissions essay
- Write justification for a screening tool
- Read case law and current events on college admission issues
- Create an oral argument for acceptance of a candidate
- Read applications and use a screening tool
- Debate the merits of candidates using facts and details
- Weigh the financial impact of various career and college choices

### **9.1 Standards**

- 9.1.12.B.1 Present resources and data in a format that effectively communicates the meaning of the data and its implications for solving problems, using multiple perspectives.
- 9.1.12.B.2 Create and respond to a feedback loop when problem solving.
- 9.1.12.C.5 Assume a leadership position by guiding the thinking of peers in a direction that leads to successful completion of a challenging task or project.

### **9.2 Standards**

- 9.2.12.A.2 Identify a career goal and develop a plan and timetable for achieving it, including educational/training requirements, costs, and possible debt.

### **9.3 Standards**

- 9.3.12.C.1 Assess and modify Personalized Student Learning Plans to support declared career goals.
- 9.3.12.C.2 Characterize education and skills needed to achieve career goals, and take steps to prepare for postsecondary options, including making course selections, preparing for and taking assessments, and participating in extra-curricular activities.
- 9.3.12.C.3 Develop personal interests and activities that support declared career goals and plans.
- 9.3.12.C.8 Interpret how changing economic and societal needs influence employment trends and future education.
- 9.3.12.C.23 Determine job entrance criteria (e.g., education credentials, math/writing/reading comprehension tests, drug tests) used by employers in various industry sectors.

## **CCCS ELA\***

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; summarize complex concepts, processes, or information presented in a text by paraphrasing them in simpler but still accurate terms.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.9 Synthesize information from a range of sources (e.g., texts, experiments, simulations) into a coherent understanding of a process, phenomenon, or concept, resolving conflicting information when possible.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2a Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2b Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2c Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2d Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic and convey a style appropriate to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2e Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2f Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1b Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1d Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify

\*Some standards may not be met if the unit is not done in entirety.

their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

## **Math**

CCSS.Math.Content.HSS-MD.B.5b Evaluate and compare strategies on the basis of expected values. *For example, compare a high-deductible versus a low-deductible automobile insurance policy using various, but reasonable, chances of having a minor or a major accident.*

### **Possible Steps for Doing this Project:**

1. Students get into group of 3-5 people and the project is introduced. Have them do a pre-assessment to see how familiar they are with the process. You can group based on knowledge, ability, or choice. Just make sure there is individual accountability embedded. (20 min.)
2. As a team the group decides what college they will use as their place of employment. The teacher shows NJCAN as a tool for this process. It could be good to introduce this with information on how college rankings can get inflated. (40 min.)
3. As a team the group decides two majors that applicants could consider. They may want to take into account job outlook, earnings potential, growth, etc. That can be demonstrated on NJCAN as well. It is under the careers tab. (40 min.)
4. Based on previous acceptance data, related research, and major, the team should come up with criteria for acceptance. The teams can go online and contact schools to find out admissions tools that are already in use. They will need to look on NJCAN and compare it to other college admission sites. They should develop a tool to help calculate the criteria using Excel, Google Tools, or a self-created program. Each student should submit a work report for accountability purposes. (80 min.)
5. The teacher can introduce the students to a law database and demonstrate a Boolean search. The students should look up and summarize some of the issues surrounding college acceptance such as affirmative action, scholarship consideration, and gender equity. How to summarize can be modeled if the students have not mastered the skill. (60-120 min.)
6. Individually the students will create possible applicants. Students can model applicants on themselves or they can invent a candidate who has a high chance of being accepted but is not

an automatic acceptance. It is best to work on this through NJCAN and to check other past acceptance data. (80 min.)

7. Each candidate should have a cover letter, resume, and essay. The resume can be created in NJCAN but may also have an online component to help students stay current. This piece can be your most time intensive if the college essay is not addressed in another class. (240 min.)
8. After groups have created candidates, they will share their candidates with other teams. (60 min.)
9. Each team will decide on two candidates to submit to the committee. You may have to go over Socratic seminar if students haven't done this before. It can be good to start with a problem solving activity. They will have to write a justification for each candidate. (80 min.)
10. When you receive the candidates from other teams, you will go through and create possible financing options for the applicants. A lot of factors need to be considered here. It involves economic projections and variables. The depth you want to get into with this can vary. (120 – 240 min.)
11. You will then combine with another team and accept a total of 3-6 candidates. This is reinforcing the process in step nine on a larger scale. (40 min.)
12. Create a presentation that highlights the merits of the final candidates. Students can infuse multimedia tools. (80 min.)
13. When completed you will present your final recommendations to the Dean of a college.