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IS MALIA OBAMA'S GAP YEAR A GROWING TREND?

First daughter Malia Obama graduates from high school next month and she's going to Harvard where her parents attended Law School, but she's taking a break from her studies first. A gap year is a popular plan for many who want to travel or those who need to earn money for tuition. Here's Jan Crawford:

"She spent nearly half her life as first daughter before she heads off to Harvard Malia Obama is taking a break from the classroom, a so-called gap year. It's an increasingly common move for high School seniors, not just those like Malia graduating from a lead Washington Prep Schools.

"It made a lot of sense for me to come here and hit the ground running".

Joe Palekas works in a coffee shop in his South Carolina hometown to help pay for a gap year here in Morocco where he studied Arabic .

"I figured out generally what I wanted to do, and it just gave me a whole new perspective"

Last year 33,000 High School seniors took a gap year, nearly double the number from 2011. Most students focus on special projects or enroll in structured programs like one overseen by Carola Weil at American University:

"You don't take a gap year program because you're not qualified for college," Weil said. "This is not a remedial program, it is tough, it is demanding."

The Obamas haven't disclosed how Malia will spend her year. In an interview Monday afternoon with CBS affiliate WKRC, the president sounded like any other dad-- reflecting on how hard it is to say goodbye.

"I'm going to miss her terribly. But she is well-prepared, she is going to do great things, and as Michelle reminds us, our job is to make sure they don't need us anymore."

Now there could be a simple reason Malia is taking a gap year. Scott, this is how it looked like when Chelsea Clinton enrolled at Stanford University in 1997 when her father was still president. But by next year of course the Obamas will be out of the White House, and somewhat out of the spotlight.