

STEP BY STEP: COLLEGE AWARENESS AND PLANNING FOR FAMILIES, COUNSELORS AND COMMUNITIES

INCLUDING

Middle School Curriculum

Early High School Curriculum

Late High School Curriculum

Parent/Guardian Workshops

Financial Aid Parent/Guardian Workshops



National Association for
College Admission Counseling
www.nacacnet.org



Center for Student Opportunity
Promoting a College-Bound Culture



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The Resources: Parent/Guardian Workshop sections of the *Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning for Families, Counselors and Communities* come from the work of the Committee for Inclusion, Access, and Success (formerly the Human Relations Committee) over the past 30 years. First as the *Parents and Counselors Together* (PACT), published in 1989, and then as the *Families, Counselors, and Communities Together* (FCCT), published in 2007, the guides included information that would inform the supporters of first-generation and underrepresented students in the college admission process.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning for Families, Counselors and Communities supports these populations as they begin to explore and consider postsecondary options. There are three student curriculums—one aimed at students in middle school (7th and 8th grades), one aimed at students in early high school (9th–beginning of 11th grades), and one aimed at students in late high school (second half of 11th grade and 12th grade). Following each student curriculum guide is a parent workshop that allows similar information to be presented to the adults who support those students. While they are named parent workshops, we understand the very broad definition of family and the importance of community in helping students reach their full potential, and hope that you will include anyone who works as a support or advocate for the students you are hoping to help. There is also a workshop on financial aid that can be used for any population. Finally, there is an Appendix in the back that includes Suggested Letters to be sent home, a certificate template, Workshop Evaluations (both student and counselor), Web sites, and a glossary.



DEAR VOLUNTEER

Thank you for participating in the National Association for Admission Counseling's (NACAC) *Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning for Families, Counselors and Communities*. Your individual expertise and commitment are crucial to this effort. The prospect of college is daunting for all students. Pressures are compounded for the first-generation or underserved student. Without adequate guidance from parents who have experienced the process themselves, and without a strong support network in school and in the community, the obstacles to college access for first-generation and underserved students are many.

Your job as a volunteer is to help promising students overcome these challenges and examine the world of college opportunity that awaits them. Central to purpose of the workshops is the hope that you will help to make students and their families more fully aware of the college opportunities available and accessible to the students. We hope that no student will be limited in the college search process. Therefore, it is important to actively help students and families understand that their dreams of college need not be compromised by financial considerations, geographical barriers or other obstacles.

The student curriculum guides that follow are detailed plans to guide students with whom you will be working on the path to college success. We encourage you to follow the session plans accordingly, while keeping in mind the special needs of any student population at hand. The parent/guardian workshops provide the information and tools for them to truly have the opportunity to assist their students in making the most of their middle and high school years and beyond. Feel free to apply your own expertise and instruction, when appropriate, to maximize the effectiveness and benefit to students and families. Again, thank you for choosing to volunteer your time with the NACAC *Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning for Families, Counselors and Communities* curriculum and for continuing to be committed to helping all students reach their full potential. Please feel free to contact the NACAC Director of Education and training at pd@nacacnet.org if you have any questions.

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ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING STUDENT WORKSHOPS

The Student Workshops are designed for counselors, educators and community leaders who work with middle and high school students to inform them about the necessary steps to take to prepare for college and how to complete the application and admission process.

To the School Counselor:

If you have guidance time during the year to meet with the students during five (middle school) or six (early and late high school) one hour blocks, then the session plans can be used as is. We do encourage you to personalize any of the information about graduation requirements or local college and university admission requirements. Some schools have an advisory time that could be used to deliver the messages from these workshops. Most activities in a session can be completed in 15 – 20 minutes, so sessions could be split up to accommodate your schedule. If you only have one or two total hours during the year to meet with students about preparation for college, then use the activities from different workshops that will best support your message to the students. Finally, you could offer before or after school workshops to students to present the entire curriculum—especially targeting those students who otherwise may not have someone who has knowledge of the college process.

To the Educator and Community Representative

The student sessions are designed to ensure that teachers, administrators, and community representatives, such as church leaders, youth program officials, and others, can become involved in the college awareness process. If the material in these sessions is new, take additional time to become familiar with the information and the suggestions for delivery. We do suggest that you try to offer sessions that allow for the full delivery of the content, but just as with the advice to school counselors, use the materials to fit your presentation time and your particular message. If you need assistance while preparing for your activities, we suggest that you consult with a school or college admission counselor in your community. Many of them would be eager to help you present your program.



ORGANIZING AND CONDUCTING PARENT/ GUARDIAN WORKSHOPS

The following information will help Step by Step presenters conduct parent and guardian workshops. These activities are divided into three stages: planning and design, implementation, and follow-up.

Step by Step Guide Contents



The preceding section contains overview information for you, the presenter. This information is essential to your understanding of the Step by Step initiative. Included is a discussion of the importance of early college awareness activities as a tool for assisting students in preparing for college admission.

This section offers strategies for involving target audiences in the Step by Step program. The

remainder of this guide is a series of activities, which are truly the heart of Step by Step. Each of the five sections is self-contained, but they are presented in the order that we recommend they should be used. Each section is broken down in the following manner.

Stage 1: Planning and Design

- Engage in a thorough review of the Step by Step Guide, adding information of local importance and special emphasis.
- Conduct planning meetings with school or agency and other colleagues (if you present Step by Step with other presenters).
- Identify the target audience in the school or community.
- Establish the date and time for the Step by Step workshop and determine a suitable workshop site; make arrangements for the use of the facilities.
- Identify the specific agenda Essential(s) to be presented at the parent workshop.
- Reproduce Step by Step resource handouts. Acquire supplementary resources and materials.
- Solicit sponsorship of the Step by Step program by educational officials and community leaders.
- Identify and secure presenters, consultants and aides.
- Invite participants to the workshop.

Some suggestions for publicizing the workshop include sending an announcement home with students, sending or emailing announcements or invitations directly to parents and guardians, and working with relevant community groups and houses of worship to alert their members about the workshop.

This may include an announcement on the group's Web site. Depending on the budget and the number of people the facility will accommodate, you may wish to look into advertising (either paid or as a public service announcements) with local newspapers or radio stations.

Stage 2: Implementation

- Review all planning and design tasks to ensure that all have been completed.
- Prepare for the teaching aspects of the workshop.
- Conduct the workshop.
- Ask participants to complete the Workshop Evaluation (see page 328, copy as needed).


Stage 3: Follow-up

- Review planning and design tasks, workshop flow, and division of responsibilities.
- Summarize and study the Workshop Evaluations.
- Send thank-you notes or call sponsors and individuals who assisted you in presenting the workshop.
- Repeat any tasks required to complete the full Step by Step program or to repeat a workshop for a different audience.
- Provide appropriate feedback to sponsors and administrators.
- Conduct overall Step by Step program evaluation.
- File Step by Step Reports with the NACAC national office.

Site and Meeting Preparation Strategies

Locating the most appropriate site for the workshops is essential and requires consideration of what location will be most effective. When reviewing possible locations, consider whether the site is easily accessible, well-lit and safe after dark. Step by Step presenters will find the following types of facilities suitable for parent and guardian workshops:

- School classroom/conference facilities.
These can usually be obtained through personal contact with a school administrator. Be sure to acquire a confirmation (written, if possible) of your meeting space from someone in a position of authority in the school.
- Church, library, and community agency facilities.
Arrangements can be made with the pastor, librarian, or agency director. Some community sites may not be known to all prospective parent and guardian participants and will necessitate maps or special instructions.



Some suggestions for publicizing the workshop include sending an announcement home with students, sending or emailing announcements or invitations directly to parents and guardians, and working with relevant community groups and houses of worship...

Regardless of the type of facility, the following concerns should be considered in the selection of a Step by Step workshop site and preparation for the parent and guardian workshop:

Facilities

- An informal arrangement of chairs allowing for participant interaction with the presenter and with each other
- Welcome and registration area (if needed)
- Audiovisual equipment (for PowerPoint presentation, overhead transparencies, or other audio visual resources)
- White Board, marking pens, and eraser or flipchart, easel, and marking pens

- Hospitality breaks (coffee, snacks, etc.)
- Access and facilities for the handicapped
- Special services, such as child care


Guest Presenters and Consultants

Presenters who choose to involve guest presenters or consultants in their Step by Step workshops are encouraged to follow the guidelines suggested below:

- Make your initial communication with guest presenters or consultants a personal contact (personal visit or telephone call).
- Outline the specific role that you wish the person to play and set time parameters for his or her presentation.
- Communicate all workshop details (date, time, location, agenda, etc.) in writing. Be sure to include directions and maps to your workshop site.
- Two follow-ups are generally useful when dealing with guest presenters and consultants. The first is a follow-up to the invitation to participate. This allows for a clarification of roles. The second follow-up should come as a reminder three to five days in advance of the actual workshop.
- Be prepared for cancellations and no-shows. Your workshop agenda should be flexible in case the presenter is not available. Another presenter may be required to address the subject.
- Send or email a thank-you or make telephone calls to all who help you with the Step by Step workshop. You may wish to use these people in future workshops and this expression of your gratitude will leave them with a positive feeling about your workshop.



Thank you for your commitment to working with parents, guardians, family members, and students!





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STEP BY STEP: COLLEGE AWARENESS AND PLANNING

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Grades 7 through 8

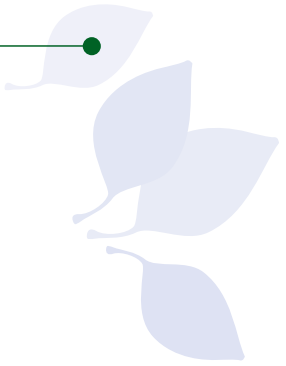
INTRODUCTION

Guidance in the later years of middle school, and particularly the time of transition to high school, can put students on a successful path to college education. At this stage, a counselor's role should include:

- Challenging students to see college admission and attendance as the goal after high school
- Encouraging students to assess their interests, strengths, and academic habits
- Helping students understand basic concepts regarding college options and financing a college education
- Providing a template for the college preparatory curriculum that students should plan for high school years
- Encouraging students to understand how they can build a profile and support network that will help them reach their college goals

The following five session curriculum lays a comprehensive foundation to address all of the above. **PLEASE NOTE:** While the curriculum is written in a certain order, it is important that you keep the needs of your group in mind. Please feel free to change the order of the sessions if you feel the need to do so.





SESSIONS

**Middle School Curriculum
Grades 7 through 8**

1

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Parent/Guardian Workshop 74**

1

SESSION I: IT'S ALL ABOUT ME: MY FUTURE GOALS

The purpose of this session is to have students examine what they want when they graduate from high school, how their current interests can relate to future careers, and how they can learn more about particular careers.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will have:

- shared thoughts about the future with peers who have similar interests
- learned how current interests can help them reach personal goals
- found more information about possible careers

Activities and Handouts:

Activity #1: Peer Connections

Handout: Ice Breaker Bingo

Activity #2: What Do You Like?

Handout: My Interests Chart

Activity #3: Making a Name for Myself

Handout: Career Fact Sheet/Business Card Exercise



1

SESSION I: IT'S ALL ABOUT ME: MY FUTURE GOALS

ACTIVITY # 1: PEER CONNECTIONS

Opening Discussion:

While Middle School students need to think about individual goals and plans, their peers can help them along the way.

Activity/Handout:

Middle School Bingo—an ice breaker to get conversations started

Materials:

Pencils

Instructions:

1. Print and copy a bingo card for each player.
2. Players circulate to find group members who match descriptions in the bingo squares.
3. When a match is found, the player writes the name of the individual in the square. Different names must be used in each square
4. When a player has filled a row with names, s/he yells “Bingo!”
5. With the group, check the squares and identify the individuals described.
6. Continue the game for a second round, with the new goal of filling the entire card. (Probably would need to set a 5 minute time-limit and then award the person who came closest.)
7. When a player has filled the entire card, s/he yells “Bingo!”
8. Check the entire card, identifying group members matching each description.
9. Read through card and have all participants stand when a category applies to them.

B	I	N	G	O
Does volunteer work	Would like to go out of state for college	Is a 7th grader	Speaks more than 1 language	Has been on the honor roll at school
Has a leadership role in his/her school	Is active in a church, temple, or mosque	Wants to attend a small college	Wants to be a writer	Has parents or brother or sister who attended college
Wants to be a teacher	Was born in a country other than the U.S.	FREE	Has visited a college campus in the last year	Participates in at least one extra-curricular activity at school
Has moved in the last two years	Plays on a sports team	Wants to be a performer (music or drama)	Is an 8th grader	Wants to attend a large university
Plays a musical instrument	Studies (does homework) at least an hour a night	Has parents who did not attend college	Wants to attend a community college	Wants to be a doctor or scientist

I

SESSION I: IT'S ALL ABOUT ME: MY FUTURE GOALS

ACTIVITY # 2: WHAT DO YOU LIKE?

Opening Discussion:

Getting students to think about careers and goals is important, but just as important is having them consider what interests them and how these interests could connect to careers. Thinking about why students like certain classes and activities can help them learn more about themselves.

Activity/Handout:

My Interests

Instructions:

1. Ask students to take about 10 minutes to fill in Part I of the “My Interests” form.
2. Talk with them about their responses.
3. Have them complete Part II of the form.
4. Ask them to share the responses to Part II with a partner. Students should be encouraged to give each other feedback about career ideas.
5. Share with the whole group some of the jobs that were identified.





MY INTERESTS

Part I—Directions: Look at the table below. On the left list the classes you like the best and tell why. On the right, list the activities you enjoy most and tell why.

Classes	Activities

Part II—Answer the following questions based on your responses to and discussions about Part I.

1. How are the classes you like and the activities you like the same or different?
2. What classes and activities do you think you will want to continue in high school?
3. What classes and activities do you look forward to adding in high school?
4. What jobs can you think of that could grow out of any of the classes or activities that you like?

1

SESSION I: IT'S ALL ABOUT ME: MY FUTURE GOALS

ACTIVITY #3: MAKING A NAME FOR MYSELF

Opening Discussion:

Now that students have had a chance to think about what they like and how their interests could lead them to a future path, they should be encouraged to think about specific careers they would like to learn more about—careers where they could make a name for themselves.

Activity/Handouts:

Career Exploration Sheet

Career Interview

Materials:

Colored markers or crayons

Instructions:

1. Have students work in pairs—preferably with a “common interest buddy” from the Bingo Game.
2. Each partner should “interview” the other using the questions on the “Career Exploration Sheet.”
3. Have each student design a business card based on the career s/he thinks would be most interesting
4. Encourage students to think of a person they know who is working in a career field that interests them and ask them some important questions:
 - What did you dream about doing when you were in middle school or high school?
 - How did you decide on this career?
 - How much education did you need career?
 - What is the best thing about your career and what would you change?

CAREER EXPLORATION SHEET

1. I would like to know more about a career in:
2. I think this could be a good career for me because:
3. To learn more about this career, I should talk to:
4. I can also learn more about this career from the following places:
5. This is what my business card would look like if I worked in this career:

Name Here
Title or Profession Here
Address Line
City, State, Zip Code
Phone: (123) 456-7890
Fax: (123) 456-7890
Email: email@here

2

SESSION II: SHOULD I GO TO COLLEGE?

The purpose of this session is to have students explore what their ideas of college are, whether they want to go to college, and how college could make a difference in their lives. Now that students have had a chance in Session I to look at long term career goals, they can learn more about how college can help them reach those goals. This is also a good time to help them understand that college is affordable.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will have

- a clear image of what a college is
- learned that many careers require a college degree
- a better understanding of how they can benefit from and attain a college degree

Activities and Handouts:

Activity #1: College Knowledge

Handouts: College Knowledge Survey
Earning Power Sheet

Activity #2: Knowledge is Power

Handout: College Degree and Career

Activity #3: Know, Want, Learn

Handout: Know, Want Learn Chart



2

SESSION 2: SHOULD I GO TO COLLEGE?

ACTIVITY #1: COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

Opening Discussion:

Students at this age may have some ideas about college based on people they know who are there, what they've seen on television, or what they might have read about. This is a good time to talk about their impressions of college and what they think college can do to help them in a future career.

Using the resource below from www.studentaid.ed.gov initiate a discussion with the students about why it is not too early to think about college.

WHY THINK ABOUT COLLEGE NOW?

As a middle-school teen, you probably have a lot on your mind: *Will I get this major school project finished on time? What should I do this weekend? Will Mom or Dad notice that I exceeded my cell phone's daytime minutes this month (yikes!!)?*

But have you seriously thought about **college**? Here are some reasons why you should start thinking about college now ?

You say: It's too early to think about college!

We say: The steps you take now will determine your college options later. Start planning now!

You say: No one in my family ever went to college.

We say: Be the first! Set a good example for others to follow by meeting people and learning cool stuff in college.

You say: I can't afford it!

We say: Colleges, high school counselors, scholarship agencies, and even your state government can help meet the cost! More than half of college students get some type of financial aid. For example, if you take challenging courses and earn good grades, you could apply for scholarships.

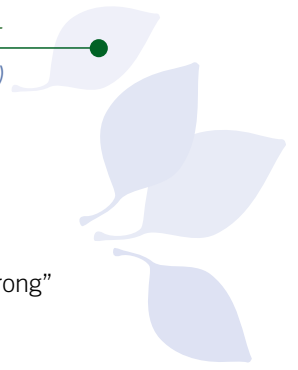
Activity/Handouts:

College Knowledge Survey

Earning Power Sheet

Instructions:

1. Give each student the survey and ask them to answer the questions in a few words.
2. Then, talk about your answers as a group.
3. After the discussion, hand out the "Earning Power" sheet with the graph that shows how education pays.



COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE SURVEY

Answer each of these questions in a few words. These are your own thoughts. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers.

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “college”?
2. Whom do you know who goes to or has been to college? Where?
3. Why do you think students continue on to college after high school?
4. What jobs do you think require a college education?
5. What colleges do you know about? How do you know about these colleges?
6. What other things do you think that you can do in college besides study and take classes?
7. Why do you want to go to college?

Adapted from Cabral, Joshua. “Addressing the Needs of First-Generation, College-Bound Students: A Comprehensive 5th–12th Grade Approach.” *South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School*.

EARNING POWER

There is real, independent evidence that shows education leads to higher pay.

According to a government report, “college graduates age 25 and over earn nearly twice as much as workers who stopped with a high school diploma” (attributed to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004).

Good paying jobs usually require at least a high school diploma. An employer may even request your high school transcripts.

Living away from home, making new friends and taking unique courses are all a part of the college experience. But, it gets even better! A college education will offer you more money, more job choices and more freedom.

Businesses want more than employees with a high school diploma—they want problem solvers, good thinkers, people who are flexible and want to learn more things. People with a college education generally have more jobs to choose from. Also, people with degrees are less likely to lose their jobs (something to keep in mind when you have to pay your own bills someday).

More Money

On average, a person who goes to college earns more money than a person who doesn't.

Educational Attainment by Selected Characteristics: 2009

[For persons 25 years old and over (198,285 represents 198,285,000). As of March. Based on the Current Population Survey; see text, Section 1 and Appendix III. For composition of regions, see map, inside front cover]

Characteristic	Population (1,000)	Percent of population—					
		Not a high school graduate	High school graduate	Some college, but no degree	Associate's degree ¹	Bachelor's degree	Advanced degree
Total persons	198,285	13.3	31.1	17.1	9.0	19.0	10.6
Age:							
25 to 34 years old	40,520	11.7	28.0	19.2	8.9	22.8	9.3
35 to 44 years old	41,322	11.7	28.7	16.6	10.2	21.4	11.4
45 to 54 years old	44,366	10.9	32.2	17.0	10.8	18.8	10.4
55 to 64 years old	34,289	11.1	30.2	17.8	9.2	18.6	13.1
65 to 74 years old	20,404	17.7	36.4	15.5	5.9	13.9	10.5
75 years old or over	17,384	26.3	36.6	13.7	4.9	11.4	7.0
Sex:							
Male	95,518	13.8	31.4	16.8	7.9	19.0	11.1
Female	102,767	12.9	30.8	17.3	10.0	19.0	10.1
Race:							
White ²	162,079	12.9	31.2	16.9	9.1	19.3	10.7
Black ²	22,598	15.9	35.4	20.3	9.0	12.7	6.6
Other	13,608	14.3	22.3	13.9	7.8	25.8	16.0
Hispanic origin:							
Hispanic	25,956	38.1	29.3	13.3	6.1	9.6	3.6
Non-Hispanic	172,329	9.6	31.3	17.6	9.4	20.4	11.6
Region:							
Northeast	36,572	11.8	33.3	13.1	8.6	19.9	13.3
Midwest	43,163	10.2	34.4	17.7	9.8	18.2	9.7
South	72,720	15.0	31.8	16.9	8.6	17.9	9.8
West	45,829	14.8	25.1	19.9	9.1	20.7	10.5
Marital status:							
Never married	34,386	14.6	30.3	17.7	7.9	20.3	9.2
Married, spouse present	118,712	10.8	29.9	16.3	9.4	21.0	12.5
Married, spouse absent ³	3,021	27.4	28.7	12.2	6.8	15.6	9.3
Separated	4,943	24.2	34.3	17.5	9.1	10.6	4.3
Widowed	14,217	27.2	38.1	14.7	6.2	8.9	4.9
Divorced	23,006	11.6	33.4	21.9	10.3	15.2	7.5
Civilian labor force status:							
Employed	121,526	8.4	28.1	17.4	10.4	22.6	13.0
Unemployed	10,597	17.4	36.7	18.8	8.5	13.7	4.9
Not in the labor force	65,444	21.9	35.8	16.0	6.5	13.0	6.8

¹ Includes vocational degrees. ² For persons who selected this race group only. See footnote 2, Table 225. ³ Excludes those separated.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, unpublished data, <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/educ-attn.html>>.

2

SESSION 2: SHOULD I GO TO COLLEGE?

ACTIVITY #2: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Opening Discussion:

Though money isn't the only reason to consider a particular career, remember that a job that pays well offers more personal choices. Read and discuss with the students these real-life examples of how college pays off.

Real-Life Examples

People with a college education typically earn more money during a shorter span of time.

Buying Groceries

Terry is a dental assistant (two years of college). Terry will earn enough money to buy groceries for a week after working only one day.

Pat is a high school graduate and works as a salesperson in a department store. To buy the same groceries, it takes Pat three days.

Buying a Car

Jamie is a college graduate and works as an accountant. Jamie will earn enough money to buy a new four-door compact car in about one year.

Chris never went to college and works as an aerobics instructor. It will take Chris about three years to buy the same car.

Source: www.studentaid.ed.gov

Activity/Handout:

Careers by Degrees

Instructions:

1. Put the career titles in the chart (next page) on strips of paper and write the categories (two-year colleges, four year colleges, and more than four years of college) on the board with blank spaces underneath.
2. Ask each student to select a strip of paper and place that strip under the appropriate category.
3. When all the students are finished, reveal the answers (next page).

This will give students a chance to brainstorm about how much education it takes to be in representative professions. (For example, there may be some question about why a dancer would need a college degree. Erika Kinetz in a Dec. 2005 *New York Times* article writes about many dancers who do not have degrees but also notes that those with degrees are more employable if dance does not work out, can find better paying jobs when dancing careers end, and need a degree if they want to teach).

CAREER BY DEGREES

A major benefit of a college degree is having more jobs to choose from. Below are just some possibilities available to college graduates.

Not sure what one of the jobs is? Do a little investigating by looking it up on the Web at www.bls.gov/oco. Check out the in-demand jobs!

Two-Year College (Associate degree)	Four-Year College (Bachelor's degree)	More than Four Years (Graduate degree)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • computer and office equipment repairer • dental hygienist • disc jockey (deejay) • firefighter* • mechanic • physical therapist assistant • restaurant manager • webmaster* • zookeeper* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accountant • coach • computer programmer • dancer • engineer • FBI agent • graphic designer • insurance agent • journalist • medical laboratory technician • pilot • pharmacist • photographer • social worker • sportscaster/news reporter • teacher • writer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • architect • dentist • lawyer • minister, priest, or rabbi • physician • psychologist • scientist • university professor

*Note: You can also train for these jobs at a four-year college. Why do that? Because more education usually means more earnings!

Source US Department of Education www.studentaid.ed.gov

2

SESSION 2: SHOULD I GO TO COLLEGE?

ACTIVITY #3: KNOW, WANT LEARN

Opening Discussion:

Now that students have some idea of the value of college, they should be encouraged to explore how to research colleges in which they might be interested.

Activity/Handout:

Know-Want-Learn (KWL) Chart

Handouts/materials:

College guidebooks and viewbooks

Instructions:

1. Have each student list a few schools to research and distribute the chart.
2. Provide guidebooks and viewbooks, and if there are computers, refer the students to the Web sites
3. Have the students fill in the chart for 2-3 schools.



KNOW-WANT-LEARN (KWL) CHART

- Directions:**
- List what you already know about a college in the KNOW column.
 - List what you want to know in the WANT column.
 - List new information you learn in the LEARN column.

College 1	College 2	College 3
ALREADY KNOW		
WANT TO LEARN		
I LEARNED		

3

SESSION III: THERE IS A COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE! FIND YOUR BURIED TREASURE

The purpose of this session is to affirm students' belief that college is attainable. Activities are designed to help students understand that there exists a vast array of college possibilities for all students and that each student will be responsible for identifying his/her own college options. In this session, students will be encouraged to begin thinking about what they value and what they will look for in a college. Students will be exposed to some of the resources available for college research.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will:

- understand that the college experience is very different from the middle or high school experience
- gain an understanding of different types of colleges and the different experiences and opportunities offered
- have been introduced to some of the resources available for getting to know about colleges
- begin to explore the kind(s) of colleges which might be a "fit"
- have been introduced to web-based resources for researching college information

Materials:

All Activities: blackboard and chalk, dry-erase board and markers, or flipchart with markers

*Activities and Handouts:***Activity #1: Evaluating Your School Experience So Far****Activity #2: Getting to Know College Possibilities**

Handout: How Can I Start Thinking About College?

Activity #3: Starting Your Search for the Right College

Handout: Your Map to Buried (College) Treasure

Activity #4: Using the Internet to Research Colleges

Handout: Internet Sites Focused on College Exploration

Additional Resources:

Access to computers, if possible. Alternatively, you may want to photocopy examples of Web pages which students may access for free.

ACTIVITY #1: EVALUATING YOUR SCHOOL EXPERIENCE SO FAR

Opening Discussion:

Remind students that they probably didn't have much choice when it came to selecting the schools that they are currently attending. Additionally, remind students that there may not be a large number of options regarding their choice for high school. However, the sky's the limit when it comes to the choices students will have for college. And this is a good time to begin thinking about all of the possibilities that exist!

Questions to open up discussion:

- How was it decided which middle school you would attend?
- What have you liked about your current school?
- What would you change if you could?
- If you could choose your middle (junior high) school now, what would you look for?
- How will your high school attendance be decided?
- How well do you anticipate that your high school will fit you and your goals?

Instructions:

1. Ask students to brainstorm a list of qualities that they believe would make a school "just right" and list these qualities on blackboard or flip charts.
2. Have students discuss the qualities on the list and how these might apply to their college search.

3

SESSION 3: THERE IS A COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE! FIND YOUR BURIED TREASURE

ACTIVITY # 2: GETTING TO KNOW COLLEGE POSSIBILITIES

Opening discussion:

Colleges aren't all the same. Different colleges and universities have different missions (or functions, or goals). This activity is designed to teach students the different types of higher education opportunities that exist for them after college. Those qualities that students listed as "making a school just right" in Activity #1 are likely some of the qualities that they will want to look for in a college.

Activity/Handout:

How Can I Start to Think About College?

Instructions:

1. Give every student the handout entitled "How Can I Start to Think About College?" Allow students a few minutes to read the handout and then review the different types of colleges with the students.
2. Write, as headings, each category of college on the blackboard or flip chart pages.
3. Ask students to suggest names of colleges which they think fit into each category. Help them evaluate each suggested college accurately, and then write the name of the college under the correct heading on blackboard or flipcharts

ALTERNATIVELY:

Ask students to suggest people they know who have attended specific colleges and then evaluate which category of college that institution falls under. Write the name of the college under the correct heading on blackboard or flipcharts.

HOW CAN I START TO THINK ABOUT COLLEGE?

We know that you are interested in going to college. Today, college probably seems like it is a long way off. But in just a couple of years, you will begin to think about particular colleges that you might want to attend. In the end, picking ONE college out of hundreds of possibilities will require lots of thought and quite a bit of research. Here are some ways in which to begin thinking about your college options.

GETTING STARTED

It is important to remember that you want to pick a college that is JUST RIGHT FOR YOU! YOU will be sitting in the college classroom—not your parents and not your best friend. You will want to seek lots of advice along the way, especially from teachers or counselors who know colleges well. But, in the end, no one can tell you where you'll be happy. So start by asking yourself questions about how you feel about school right now, like:

1. How do I learn best? In large classes or small groups?
2. Do I like being one of the best in a class, or do I need the competition of other equally bright classmates in order to challenge myself?
3. Do I learn more quickly when structure is clear and uniform, or does freedom to make choices about how I spend my time for a class fit me better?
4. What extracurricular activities have been most important to me? Which will I want to continue in college?
5. What have I learned about my academic interests and abilities that will influence what I might study in college?
6. Who are my friends? Do I want my relationships in college to be similar or different?

Answers to these questions will help you apply what you have already learned about yourself as you think about college possibilities.

INCLUDE YOUR FAMILY

Now is a good time to start talking with your family about college. Are they ready to support you as you plan for college? Are there colleges that they hope you will consider? Are they comfortable with allowing you to travel a great distance for college? Are there limits to what they can or will contribute to your college finances?

If you and your parents are on the same page—great! If not, this might be a good time to share what you are learning in these workshops—or to ask your family to talk with the leader of these workshops in order to learn more about the advantages and range of colleges. If they are worried about paying for college, your workshop leader can help them understand the financial aid process.

WORK ON YOUR COLLEGE VOCABULARY:

COLLEGE TYPES:

While no two are exactly alike, most fit into one or more of the following categories:

Liberal Arts Colleges focus on the education of undergraduate students. Classes are generally taught by



professors who see teaching as their primary responsibility. Students who attend liberal arts colleges are exposed to a broad sampling of classes. In addition, they select at least one area of in-depth study that is their college “major.” Many employers look for graduates of liberal arts programs, because they are “well-rounded.”

Universities are generally larger and include a liberal arts college, as well as colleges focused on preparation for a specific career, like nursing or education. Universities offer a greater range of academic choices than do liberal arts colleges, but often come with classes that are quite large.

Technical Institutes and Professional Schools enroll students who have made clear decisions about what they want to study and emphasize preparation for specific careers, for example in music or fine arts, engineering or technical sciences. You will want to be quite sure of your future direction before selecting one of these options.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities find their origins in the time when African-American students were systematically denied access to most other colleges and universities. Students at HBCU’s have a unique opportunity to experience an educational community in which they are a part of the majority. They find committed faculty mentors who encourage their expectations of success.

Tribal Colleges are similar to HBCU’s, in focusing on the needs and education of American-Indian students.

Similarly, Women’s Colleges, with their larger numbers of female faculty and administrators, offer college women confidence-building role models, greater opportunities to serve in a full range of student leadership positions, and a heightened awareness of career possibilities for women. Women’s colleges graduate a high number of science majors, as well as students who continue on to graduate school and/or professional studies.

Community or junior colleges generally offer the first two years of a liberal arts education, in addition to specialized occupational preparation. An associate degree is awarded at the end of a two-year program of studies, following which many students continue their education at a four-year institution.

Proprietary institutions are considered for-profit companies that operate under the demands of investors and stockholders. They attract adult learners and part-time students in search of narrowly-focused professional training opportunities. These programs usually offer a non-traditional format; many for-profits also have classes solely available online.

OTHER COLLEGE TERMS YOU’LL WANT TO KNOW:

Public colleges and universities are financed by citizens who pay taxes in your state. Their primary mission is often to serve students who live where you do. Generally, costs to students are less than those of private colleges.

Private colleges and universities are not supported by states or taxes. Some receive support from a religious group.

Financial aid comes in many forms and helps students with need pay for college costs. Financial aid includes:

- **grants:** money given to students based upon family income and also
- **scholarships:** awards based upon school performance, test scores, or special talents (like sports or music).

Undergraduate degrees include: a two-year **associate degree** (earned at a community college or two-year private college) and a **bachelor’s degree** (completed at a four-year institution).

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SESSION 3: THERE IS A COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE! FIND YOUR BURIED TREASURE

ACTIVITY #3: STARTING YOUR SEARCH FOR THE RIGHT COLLEGE

Opening Discussion:

In this activity students are encouraged to explore the many characteristics of colleges and universities that should be considered as they consider options and what constitutes an appropriate match or “good fit.”

Activity/Handouts:

Your Map to Buried (College) Treasure

Additional resources:

Several college guidebooks and viewbooks.

Instructions:

1. Give every student the “Treasure Map.”
2. Review with students each of the squares on the map.
3. Ask each student to complete his/her own treasure map.
4. Bring students back together as a whole, and invite students to share which “map points” were most important to them and why they were most important.
5. Divide students into groups of two or three. Ask them to use the guidebooks and viewbooks to find information that would help them dig up information on their treasure map.
6. Ask each group to share what kind of information they were able to locate—and where it was found.



YOUR MAP TO BURIED (COLLEGE) TREASURE

“As I look for my buried “college” treasure, I am going to use this map as my guide.”



START HERE

PS (Pirate School) #1

DISTANCE FROM HOME: I want to look for my treasure:
 close to home not too close to home not sure

Do you think that you will want to be close to home? Would you enjoy traveling to a new place? Some students find that it helps to have the support of family close by while in college; others need to get away from distractions.

HOUSING: When I finish a day of looking for treasure I want to: be living at home
 be living on campus in a dormitory
For a first year, it is best to live either at home or in a dormitory on-campus. Which option seems best for you? Check to see what housing options are available.

LOCATION: I'd like to dig for treasure:
 in or near a big city
 in a quieter location

Are the opportunities of a city important, or do you want a quiet, safe place that will help you focus on your studies?

COLLEGE MAJOR: After you find your treasure—where would you like it to take you? Do you have a college major or career plan? If so, for which strong programs should you look?

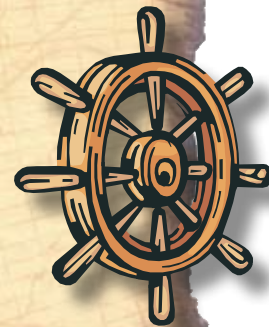
(Fill in the blank with college major or career choice)

ACTIVITIES: Even pirates can't spend all of their time looking for treasure! How would you like to use your spare time? Are extracurricular activities (sports, drama, music, fraternities and sororities, etc) important to you? Campus activities that matter to me include:

(Fill in the blank with one or two activities)

GRADUATION RATE: No college treasure hunt is complete without researching how many admitted students are successful in finishing a degree! Make sure that your search includes information on how many students return after their first year and how many stay to graduate.

END POINT: Congratulations—you are on your way to finding



COLLEGE TREASURE!



ACTIVITY #4: USING THE INTERNET TO RESEARCH COLLEGES

Opening Discussion:

As early and as often as possible, students should make use of internet tools in researching:

- specific colleges
- the college admission process
- financial aid and scholarships

This session will familiarize students with current and responsible Web sites.

Activity/Handout:

Internet Sites Focused on College Exploration

Additional Resources:

Computer access, if possible. Alternatively, photocopy examples of Web pages that students may access for free.

Instructions:

1. Distribute handout listing good, free Web sites for exploring colleges.
2. Explain the difference between free Web sites and those which charge fees for use.
3. If a computer with a projector is available, walk students through one of the Web sites.
Alternatively, use photocopied Web pages to talk about the kinds of information available on exploration Web sites.
4. Encourage students to use computers at school, at the library, or at home to begin researching colleges and college matches.
5. If computers are available, allow students to begin exploring. Circulate to be of assistance throughout this activity.



INTERNET SITES FOCUSED ON COLLEGE EXPLORATION:

COLLEGE INFORMATION

CSO College Center: www.CSOCollegeCenter.org

The College Board: www.collegeboard.com

KnowHow2Go: www.knowhow2go.org

Hobson's CollegeView: www.collegeview.com

Peterson's: www.petersons.com

The Common Application Online: www.commonapp.org

Colleges That Change Lives: www.ctcl.org

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Federal Student Aid: <http://studentaid.ed.gov>

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): www.fafsa.gov

FAFSA4caster: www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov

CSS/PROFILE: <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>

The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid: www.finaid.org

FastWeb: www.fastweb.com

FindTuition: www.findtuition.com

Sallie Mae: www.salliemae.com

TESTING

ACT: www.act.org

ACT Fee Waiver Instructions: www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/feewaiver.html

SAT: The College Board: www.collegeboard.com

SAT Fee Waiver Instructions: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenefees/feewaivers.html

Preliminary SAT (PSAT): www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html

Free Test Prep from Number2.com: www.number2.com

The Princeton Review: www.princetonreview.com

Kaplan's Test Prep: www.kaptest.com

ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS AND RESEARCH/POLICY

National Association for College Admission Counseling: www.nacacnet.org

MemberPortal/United Negro College Fund (UNCF): www.uncf.org

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities: www.hacu.net/hacu/Default_EN.asp

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education: www.nafeo.org

First In The Family: www.firstinthefamily.org

ATHLETICS

The Official NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse Web site: <http://eligibilitycenter.org>

Campus Champs: www.campuschamps.org

Athletic Aid: www.athleticaid.com

CAREERS

The Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/oco

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SESSION IV (PART I):
HOW DO I GET TO COLLEGE?*Looking Ahead: Making the Transition to High School and Beyond*

Entering high school will bring many changes and more independence which means that students should be prepared to make some of their own decisions about what courses to take, how committed they will be to doing well, and how to become involved in extracurricular activities. All of those decisions will ultimately have an impact on when, where, and whether they will go to college. In order to make the most of their high school careers, students should have an idea of where their strengths and weaknesses lie and what they might be able to do to enhance their strengths and improve upon the weaknesses.

Objectives:

By the end of this session students will have:

- developed a curriculum plan for high school
- discussed study skills and different academic expectations of high school
- discussed preparation for standardized testing
- examined factors colleges are looking for in potential applicants

*Activities and Handouts:***Activity #1: Planning For the Future**

Handouts: Your High School Classes Will Open the Doors to College
What Classes Will You Take to Prepare for College?

Activity #2: Making the Most of the High School Experience

Handouts: How Do I Learn?
Suggested Aids for Different Learning Styles
Your School Counselor Can Be Your “College Planning

Buddy”

Common Application Teacher Recommendation

Activity #3: Getting Involved

Handouts: Activities Questionnaire
Interests and Related Activities with List of Clubs and

Organizations

Activity #4: Time Management

Handouts: Banking Your Time
Personal Daily Time Chart



4

SESSION 4: HOW DO I GET TO COLLEGE? (PART 1)

ACTIVITY #1: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Opening Discussion:

Preparing for college entrance and success begins with extremely careful planning of high school course work. Every student needs to focus the bulk of energy during the high school years on classes which are truly “college-preparatory.” While it is certainly important to “enrich” a four-year schedule with classes in the fine and practical arts, colleges will look for the “meat and potatoes” classes in English, mathematics, foreign languages, laboratory sciences, and history/social sciences.

Activity/Handouts:

Your High School Classes Will Open the Doors to College
What Classes Will You Take to Prepare for College?

Materials:

Chalk board or flip chart

Instructions:

1. Engage the students in a discussion of what courses they think would be considered “college preparatory.” Write their suggestions on the board.
2. Distribute handout, “Your High School Classes Will Open the Doors to College” and read it with them, answering any questions.
3. Distribute activity sheet, “What Classes Will You Take to Prepare for College”? Ask them to take a few minutes to fill out both columns of the chart.
4. Role Play: Divide students into pairs and ask one to pretend to be the guidance counselor/teacher and the other the student. The scenario is a meeting focused on what courses the student should be taking in 9th grade that will lead to a strong high school curriculum.
5. Allow the pairs to report to the larger group about the ways they are and are not on track for college. What deficiencies have been identified? What do individual students need to do to catch up?
6. Answer any questions that this activity may have brought forward.



YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES WILL OPEN THE DOORS TO COLLEGE

Because you are planning to go to college, it's important that you take the right classes in high school. That means that, beginning in 9th grade, the majority of your classes should be ones that will prepare you for admission to and, perhaps even more importantly, success in college. Most admission officers will tell you that the first thing they look at is your choice of classes, even before they look at grades. When it comes time to apply to college, you want to make sure that you meet the admission criteria for ALL colleges in which you are interested. Always remember that it is much better to be “over prepared” than “under prepared.”

Here's what you need by the end of your senior year in order to meet the admission expectations at a majority of colleges:

- **4 full years of English classes.** This includes courses in which you study writing and courses in which you read literature. Colleges know that you need to be able to write well in nearly every career. You need to be able to read and analyze, and you need to develop strong communication skills!
- **4 full years of math classes.** Students who take math in each year of high school are far more successful in college than students taking only three years. Math is the tool that you will use for many other classes, especially those in science. Your math classes should include at least four of the following six classes, taken in this order:
 - Pre-algebra
 - Algebra
 - Geometry
 - Algebra II and/or trigonometry
 - Precalculus
 - CalculusNever “skip” a year of math in high school because you will lose your momentum. If you do not take math in your senior year, you will find that the math classes required in college will be very difficult!
- **3-4 years of laboratory science classes.** You will have the strongest background if you have taken at least one year each of:
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
 - Physics
- **2 years, at a minimum, of social sciences.** Most college freshmen studied World History and US History in high school. Other social science options include:
 - Government
 - Sociology
 - Geography
 - Psychology
- **2-4 years of foreign language.** More and more colleges are requiring a minimum of 2 years of language study while in high school, as an admission criterion. Because many colleges require students to study a second language, it is important that you expose yourself to the study of languages while in high school.

A small number of colleges require one year of **visual or performing arts** prior to admission. Participation in these classes throughout high school can help you develop a “special talent” that will make you a highly qualified applicant.

As a summary, most colleges require students to meet certain college prep curriculum standards, but just meeting the minimum is not necessarily the best way to prepare for college. Strong preparation means going beyond the minimum—allowing you to start your college career in college-level courses, not remedial courses which are designed to help you catch up or review high school material—for NO CREDIT!

SPECIAL NOTE FOR ATHLETES: Make sure that you work with your counselor and coaches so that your classes meet the standards of the NCAA Clearinghouse. Go to www.athleticscholarships.net for more information.



WHAT CLASSES WILL YOU TAKE TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE?

Subject	Minimum college preparation	State universities and other selective college requirements	Highly selective college recommendations	Courses I would like to take	Courses I need to take
English	4 years, with emphasis on essay/theme writing	4 years, with emphasis on written/oral communications and literature	4 years at the Honors/AP level when possible		
Math	3 years, including algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra	4 years, including geometry, and advanced algebra	4 years, including trigonometry, pre-calculus, and calculus (if available)		
Social Studies	2-3 years, including 1 year of U.S. History and 1-2 years from other social sciences	2-3 years, including 1 year of U.S. History and 1-2 years from other social sciences	3-4 years, including 1 year of U.S. History, 1 year of World or European History		
Science	2 years of lab science: biology, chemistry or physics	3-4 years of lab science: biology, chemistry or physics	3-4 years of lab science: biology, chemistry, and physics		
Foreign Language	Some programs require 2 years of one language	2-3 years of one foreign language	3-4 years of one language		

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SESSION 4: HOW DO I GET TO COLLEGE? (PART 1)

ACTIVITY #2: MAKING THE MOST OF THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Opening Discussion

Now that the students have a clearer idea of what colleges are looking for and how their course selection might enhance their opportunities for admission, it is time for them to appreciate the importance of strong study skills as well as understand that each of them has the ability to become a competitive applicant for college. By determining how they learn best, they can begin to plan for ways to be successful in high school.

Handouts:

How Do I Learn?**Suggested Aids for Different Learning Styles****Tips for Making Your Classes Count****Your School Counselor Can Be Your “College Planning Buddy”****Common Application Teacher Recommendation Form**

Instructions:

1. Ask the students to complete honestly the “How Do I Learn?” handout.
2. Once they have determined which learning methods they think best suit them, pair students into “like” learning styles and instruct them to look at the “Suggested Aids” and “Tips for Making Your Classes Count.” They should then discuss ways they might implement the tips they think would be helpful.
3. Again in pairs, lead the students in a role play in a teacher/student scenario where the teacher helps the student understand how to develop good study habits based on the “Suggested Aids.” Be sure they also consider good test taking strategies based on their findings.
4. Looking at the handout “Your School Counselor Can Be Your Buddy,” discuss the importance of building a support network of adults and peers to help maximize the high school experience.
5. Ask the students to describe their favorite teacher (or coach or activity leader). What makes that person special? What would that teacher say about them? Ask the students to write their recommendation from that person’s point of view (use the Common App form). Impress upon the students that in many ways, they will be writing their teacher recommendations themselves as they go through high school, so it is important that they find a teacher with whom they can talk.

HOW DO I LEARN?

(Taken from Incentive Publications, Inc. Nashville, TN 1990)

Read each statement below and select the appropriate number as it applies to you:

Often (3) Sometimes (2) Seldom/never (1)

Learning by seeing:

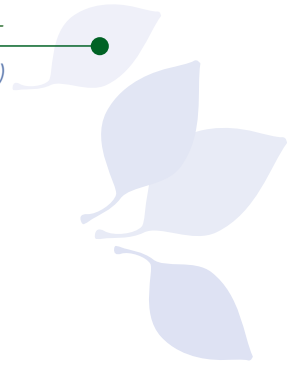
- ___ I remember information better if I write it down.
- ___ Looking at the person who is talking helps keep me focused.
- ___ I need a quiet place to get my work done.
- ___ I find it easiest to learn something new by watching a demonstration of how to do it.
- ___ I enjoy reading most when I can read descriptive passages that allow me to create mental pictures.
- ___ I usually remember people I have met by their faces (I forget names).
- ___ When I take a test, I can see the textbook page in my head.
- ___ I need to write down directions, not just take them verbally.
- ___ Music or background noises distract my attention from the task at hand.
- ___ I don't always get the meaning of a joke.
- ___ I doodle and draw pictures on the margins of my notebook pages.
- ___ I have trouble following lectures.
- ___ I react very strongly to colors.
- ___ **TOTAL**

Learning by hearing:

- ___ My papers and notebooks always seem messy.
- ___ When I read, it helps to use my finger to track my place on the line.
- ___ I find it easiest to learn something new by listening to someone explain how to do it.
- ___ I enjoy reading most when I can read dialogue between characters.
- ___ I usually remember people I have met by their names (I forget faces).
- ___ I don't follow written directions well.
- ___ If I hear something, I will remember it.
- ___ Writing has always been difficult for me.
- ___ I often misread words from the text ("them" for "then").
- ___ I would rather listen and learn than read and learn.
- ___ I'm not very good at interpreting an individual's body language.
- ___ Pages with small print or poor quality copies are difficult for me to read.
- ___ My eyes tire quickly, even though my vision check-up is always fine.
- ___ **TOTAL**

Learning by doing: (touching, feeling, smelling, moving)

- ___ I start a project before reading the directions.
- ___ I hate to sit at a desk for long periods of time.
- ___ I enjoy reading most when I can read stories with a lot of action in the beginning.
- ___ I usually remember people I have met by their mannerisms, motions, and actions.

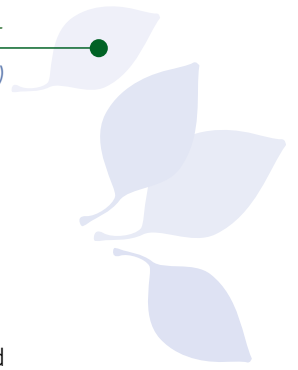


- ___ I prefer first to see something done and then do it myself.
- ___ I use trial and error approach to problem-solving.
- ___ I like to read my textbook while doing something else.
- ___ I take frequent study breaks.
- ___ I have a difficult time giving step-by-step instructions.
- ___ I use my hands when describing things.
- ___ I have to rewrite or type my class notes to reinforce the material.
- ___ **TOTAL**

- Record your totals here: Visual: _____ Hearing: _____ Sensing: _____
- Circle the learning type with the highest score.
- Now look at the **Suggested Aids for Learning Styles** and discuss with your partner how you think you might be able to take advantage of some of those aids in order to improve your study habits.

SUGGESTED AIDS FOR DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES

VISUAL	AUDITORY (HEARING)	SENSING
Use guided imagery	Use tapes	Pace/walk as you study
Form pictures in your mind	Watch TV	Physically "do it"
Take notes	Listen to music	Practice repeated times
See parts of words	Speak/listen to speakers	Breathe slowly
Use "cue" words	Make up rhymes/poems	Role play
Use notebooks	Read aloud	Exercise
Use study cards w/colors	Talk to yourself	Dance
Use photographic pictures	Repeat things orally	Write on surfaces w/finger
Use charts, graphs	Have discussions	Write lists repeatedly
Use maps	Listen carefully	Move in chair
Draw, use drawings	Say words in syllables	Watch lips move in front of mirror
Use mnemonics (acronyms, visual chains, mind maps)	Use mnemonics (word links, rhymes, poems, lyrics)	Use mnemonics (word links, rhymes, poems, lyrics)



TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR CLASSES COUNT

- **Sit close to the front** of the classroom when possible.
- **Join in** class discussions.
- **Ask questions!** If you don't understand something, chances are others in the class don't understand either.
- **Keep up** with class assignments. Finish them before they're due.
- **Ask for help** in any class in which you find yourself falling behind. Remember, your teachers want to help you succeed!
- Look for ways to **sharpen your basic skills** in each class. You can practice your writing skills in history, your algebra skills in science, and your math and science skills in vocational education classes.
- **Learn keyboarding** skills so you can type your own schoolwork and use a computer.
- Learn to **take good class notes**. You'll be taking lots of notes during the rest of your life.
- Learn to **proofread, correct, and rewrite** your written work.
- **Develop test-taking skills**. Your counselor and teachers can show you how to get the most out of your test preparation.

OUTSIDE of high school (what you do outside of school counts too!)

- Develop **habits** now that will help you succeed in high school, in education after high school, and in the world of work.
- Find a **quiet place to study** where you won't be interrupted. Is it just too noisy at home? Ask your family or a teacher to help you find a place to study.
- Plan a **daily homework schedule** and stick to it. Do more than is required.
- Ask your **family or friends** to read your written work. And ask them for help if you're having trouble at school.
- Use your local **library**. If you don't have a library card now, ask the librarian for one. They're free.
- Read **newspapers and magazines**. Talk with your family and friends about what you read.
- Look up words you don't know in the **dictionary**. Then use your new words in writing and while talking.
- Talk with your family about **career plans** and what you want to do in the future.



YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR CAN BE YOUR “COLLEGE PLANNING BUDDY”

Hopefully, there will be several sources for support as you prepare for and make your way through high school: family, teachers, coaches, religious leaders, and friends, but one you may not have considered is your school counselor. School counselors are one of the best ongoing sources of information and support for students who plan to go to college. If you are lucky enough to have a counselor in your middle school, it is a good idea to visit that person on a regular basis. Most school counselors have many, many students they want to help. To make sure your counselor knows you are planning for college, a good way to start is with a visit to introduce yourself and explain that college is your goal.

While you are still in middle school, your counselor can help you make sure that you are taking all of the classes necessary so that you will be able to take college-preparatory high school classes. When it comes time to register for high school and to pick your courses, you will want to meet with a counselor to plan a strong high school program that will open doors to any college you wish to attend.

When you get to high school, your counselor can help you:

- Plan classes that will prepare you well for college admission and success. Your counselor will know which high school classes are required for college admission.
- Review how you are doing in your classes and suggest areas that need improvement. If you need to do some catching up, your counselor can suggest ways to do that.
- Find special programs that may help you prepare for college, beyond your school's walls. These might include weekend or summer programs on college campuses (often free to students whose parents didn't go to college), internships, or community college classes open to high school students. Your counselor will know about local college fairs, opportunities to visit college campuses, and even overnight visits to colleges that may be offered.
- Familiarize yourself with everything you need to know about taking recommended and/or required college admission tests. Counselors know how and when to register for tests. They can even help with fee waivers if your family can't afford to pay for tests.
- Figure out how to PAY for college by applying for financial aid from colleges and scholarship agencies.
- Meet with your family to help them understand how the college admission and financial aid process works!

Although most of the work you will do with your high school counselor about college planning will take place during your junior and senior years, it is never too early to visit with your counselor. Whatever grade you are in NOW, this is the time to start helping your counselor get to know you and your college dreams.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT A COUNSELOR: If you don't have a school counselor available, ask a teacher you trust to serve as your advisor as you plan for high school and, later, for college.



2012-13 TEACHER EVALUATION
For Spring 2013 or Fall 2013 Enrollment

TE

TO THE APPLICANT

After completing all the relevant questions below, give this form to a teacher who has taught you an **academic** subject (for example, English, foreign language, math, science, or social studies). **If applying via mail**, please also give that teacher stamped envelopes addressed to each institution that requires a Teacher Evaluation.

Legal Name _____ Female
Last/Family/Sur (Enter name **exactly** as it appears on official documents.) First/Given Middle (complete) Jr., etc. Male

Birth Date _____ CAID (Common App ID) _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Address _____
Number & Street Apartment # City/Town State/Province Country ZIP/Postal Code

School you now attend _____ CEEB/ACT Code _____

IMPORTANT PRIVACY NOTICE: Under the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), after you matriculate you *will* have access to this form and all other recommendations and supporting documents submitted by you and on your behalf, unless at least one of the following is true:

1. The institution does not save recommendations post-matriculation (*see list at www.commonapp.org/FERPA*).
2. You waive your right to access below, regardless of the institution to which it is sent:
 - Yes, I do waive my right to access, and I understand I will never see this form or any other recommendations submitted by me or on my behalf.
 - No, I do *not* waive my right to access, and I may someday choose to see this form or any other recommendations or supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf to the institution at which I'm enrolling, if that institution saves them after I matriculate.

Required Signature _____ Date _____

TO THE TEACHER

The Common Application membership finds candid evaluations helpful in choosing from among highly qualified candidates. You are encouraged to keep this form in your private files for use should the student need additional recommendations. Please submit your references promptly, **and remember to sign below before mailing directly to the college/university admission office. Do not mail this form to The Common Application offices.**

Teacher's Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.) _____ Subject Taught _____
Please print or type

Signature _____ Date _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Secondary School _____

School Address _____
Number & Street City/Town State/Province Country ZIP/Postal Code

Teacher's Telephone (_____) _____ Teacher's E-mail _____
Area/Country/City Code Number Ext.

Background Information

How long have you known this student and in what context? _____

What are the first words that come to your mind to describe this student? _____

In which grade level(s) was the student enrolled when you taught him/her? 9 10 11 12 Other _____

List the courses in which you have taught this student, including the level of course difficulty (AP, IB, accelerated, honors, elective; 100-level, 200-level; etc.).

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Ratings Compared to other students in his or her class year, how do you rate this student in terms of:

No basis		Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered (top 1%)
	Academic achievement							
	Intellectual promise							
	Quality of writing							
	Creative, original thought							
	Productive class discussion							
	Respect accorded by faculty							
	Disciplined work habits							
	Maturity							
	Motivation							
	Leadership							
	Integrity							
	Reaction to setbacks							
	Concern for others							
	Self-confidence							
	Initiative, independence							
	OVERALL							

Evaluation Please write whatever you think is important about this student, including a description of academic and personal characteristics, as demonstrated in your classroom. We welcome information that will help us to differentiate this student from others. (Feel free to attach an additional sheet or another reference you may have prepared on behalf of this student.)

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SESSION 4: HOW DO I GET TO COLLEGE? (PART 1)

ACTIVITY #3: GETTING INVOLVED

Opening Discussion:

Many students are not aware of the fact that colleges want to see applicants who have been actively involved in high school, either through school related activities or community based commitments. It is important for students to realize BEFORE entering high school that each year “counts” and they should plan to get involved early in their freshman year.

Activity/Handouts:

Activities Questionnaire**Interests and Related Activities****List of possible high school clubs and activities**

Instructions:

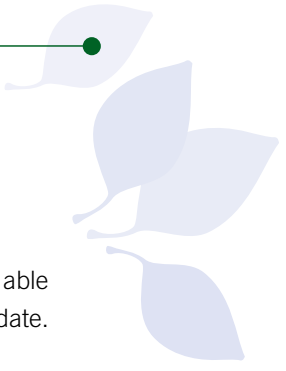
1. Ask students to fill out the “Activities Questionnaire” and remind them that they may not be able to answer every question.
2. Once they have completed the questionnaire, ask the students to find a partner and together decide how they would each fill out the “Interests & Related Activities” chart that will help them to see how their current interests might relate to school or community activities during high school. They may need to do some “brainstorming” to come up with high school clubs and organizations. Remind them that there are no “wrong” answers here and that they may have to think creatively in order to figure out how their interests would translate into something more.
3. Once each student has had a chance to complete the chart, ask s/he to “introduce” his/her partner to the group, so that all can benefit from the observations and questions that may arise with this exercise.

ACTIVITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

1. What activities do you enjoy outside of the daily routine of school? Why?
2. In what sports or games do you participate? With whom?
3. In what school-sponsored activities have you participated and why did you select these?
4. Have you had any leadership roles on sports team, in local organizations, religious institutions, youth groups, or school sponsored activities? If so, what are they?
5. What summer experiences have been particularly important to you? Camps, church or family activities, etc.?
6. What kind of music do you like? Do you play an instrument? Sing? Would you like to? Do you have friends or family members that are somehow involved in music?
7. Have you been involved with any volunteer or community service work? Why did you do it and what did you learn from it? Would you like to continue this in high school?

Adapted from Cabral, Joshua. "Addressing the Needs of First-Generation, College-Bound Students: A Comprehensive 5th-12th Grade Approach." South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School. 2004



INTERESTS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

The following table is to help you focus on your interests and abilities and to determine how you might be able to develop them in high school. Don't be afraid to put down interests that you may not have pursued to date. The future is yours!!

Interests and Talents	Current Related Activities	Possible Related High School Activity
<i>(i.e., acting)</i>	<i>(i.e., watching movies)</i>	<i>(i.e., joining the drama club)</i>

Sample activities/clubs available in high school:

- Student Government
- Yearbook and other publications
- Prom Committee
- Language, science and math clubs
- Community Service
- Band/choir/theater
- Athletics: team players, boosters, cheerleaders, team managers
- Choirs
- Dance Groups/teams
- Other Clubs

(In many high schools, some of the above activities may be classes, but colleges will still consider them to be activities).

4

SESSION 4: HOW DO I GET TO COLLEGE? (PART 1)

ACTIVITY #4: TIME MANAGEMENT

Opening Discussion:

Moving from Middle School to High School will give students many more opportunities to be involved in activities and may also mean students will have more homework and perhaps more responsibilities at home. Learning how to manage their time can be the most important skill for students to learn. In this activity, talk about how students use their time now and whether or not they procrastinate and why.

Activity/Handout:

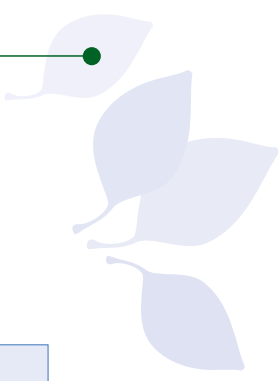
Banking Your Time

Personal Daily Time Chart

INSTRUCTIONS FOR BANKING YOUR TIME

Game:

1. Provide play money (24 bills: \$100 or \$1 bills—or 24 pennies if nothing else is available.)
2. Select a volunteer to come to the front and place all the money in his/her hands.
3. Ask how much time he/she needs each day to do the following, and take \$100 or \$1 or one penny away from him/her for each hour needed:
 - Sleep
 - Shower, dressing, getting ready for school
 - Breakfast
 - Travel to and from school
 - School hours
 - After school sports, activity, or job
 - Household chores
 - Homework
 - Dinner
 - Television
 - Personal Time
4. Talk about how he/she banked the time, what are the things that have to be done compared to the things that he/she wants to do, and how a person can prioritize.
5. Ask students to complete the Personal Daily Time chart. Talk about how they are currently using their time and what changes they might make in order to be a better student.



PERSONAL DAILY TIME CHART

Code each of the hours with one of the letter codes below.

Sleep—Z	Travel to and from school—T	After school sports, activities, job—AS	Dinner—D
Shower, dress, get ready for school—GR	School day hours—SD	Household chores—C	Television—T
Breakfast—B		Homework—HW	Personal Time—PT

6 am	
7 am	
8 am	
9 am	
10 am	
11 am	
Noon	
1 pm	
2 pm	
3 pm	
4 pm	
5 pm	
6 pm	
7 pm	
8 pm	
9 pm	
10 pm	
11 pm	

5

**SESSION V (PART II):
HOW DO I GET TO COLLEGE?**

In the previous session, students spent time looking at their learning styles, extracurricular possibilities, and course planning for high school, so now it is time for them to gain a clearer understanding of how colleges will ultimately look at them as applicants. It is also important for them to understand the role that finances will play in their ability to attend college.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will have

- been introduced to the main factors that colleges are seeking in an applicant
- gained insight into some of the fundamentals of paying for college
- pulled together the information from this session and the previous ones by playing “Step to the Top of Your Class”
- Completed an evaluation of the workshop

*Activity/Handouts:***Activity #1: What are colleges looking for?**

Handout: What Matters Most to Colleges

Activity #2: Thinking Ahead: Paying for College

Handouts: Paying for College is a Family Affair
Financial Aid True/False Questions

Activity #3: Putting it all Together

Handout: Step to the Top of the Class

Activity #4: Evaluation

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SESSION 5: HOW DO I GET TO COLLEGE? (PART II)

ACTIVITY #1: WHAT ARE COLLEGES LOOKING FOR?

Opening Discussion:

In order for students to better understand why they need to plan ahead for their courses, they should have some insight into what colleges are looking for in an applicant. This activity will help them to look at the college application process from the college point of view and to assess how they might “look” to colleges by their senior year.

Activity/Handout:

What Matters Most to Colleges

Materials:

Poster Board or paper, scotch tape

Instructions:

1. Cut into strips the nine factors listed in “What Matters Most to Colleges” and hand to students (or pairs of students).
2. Ask students to read aloud the factor they have been given and then tape it to the board (or write in on the chart). Briefly discuss each factor and answer appropriate questions.
3. Once all the factors have been placed on the board, ask them what they think they will have the most control over during their high school years. They should make note of those factors and try to set some goals for themselves.
4. End the session with questions and answers.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO COLLEGES

(CollegeData.com)

How do colleges select students? It's not one of the great mysteries of life, even though it sometimes looks that way. While there is no precise formula for how a student gets admitted to a college, admission departments typically provide their admission criteria. While every college is different, some factors consistently rank as either Important or Very Important:

Which Factors Rank as the Most Important to a College?

Overall high school grades—Your transcript will list every class that you have taken in high school and the grade you received in that class. Colleges will be looking to see whether you took challenging courses or whether you opted for the easier route.

College prep course grades (AP and honors)—For most selective institutions, college prep courses count more than those of regular courses. If your high school does not offer those advanced courses, try to take the most challenging courses available.

Standardized test scores—These include the results of the SAT Reasoning Test, the ACT test, the SAT Subject Tests, and Advanced Placement (AP) tests. Colleges will let you know which of these tests you will need to submit. The SAT Reasoning Test and the ACT scores are the two most requested.

The admission essay—Almost every application will ask you to submit an essay or personal statement based on a question the college provides. You usually choose from several questions. Your essay is your opportunity to put a “personality” behind the application. The essay gives you a chance to say why you want to attend that particular college. A good essay can tip a decision in your favor, especially at private colleges.

Extracurricular commitment—What you do in your spare time says a lot about you. Maybe you've pursued a sport, spent years developing a talent, or made a strong commitment to work or volunteering. What counts most to colleges, especially highly selective colleges, is how long you have been involved, how much time you allot each week, and whether or not you have taken a role of leadership in your activity.

Demonstrated interest—Whether it's showing up for a college visit, calling admission officers, or an enthusiastic interview, showing that you really want to attend a college can help your chances—especially at private colleges.

A special talent—This is a skill that makes you stand out. Whether it's your piano playing or your creativity in painting, a special talent that is valued by a college could give you a leg up on other candidates, not to mention access to scholarships that list your talent as one qualification. If a college wants a talent you possess, there is no telling what they'll offer.

Letters of recommendation—Although not all colleges ask for them, some colleges require that you ask certain teachers, your high school counselor, and possibly your principal to complete and submit to colleges recommendation forms as a testimony of your achievements and capabilities. They are supposed to be letters of praise, so look for faculty with whom you've had a good history, who know you well and who can vouch for your likelihood of academic success.

Class rank—Class rank shows where you place numerically in your senior class based on your Grade Point Average (GPA). The higher your GPA, the better chance you have of being in a higher rank. Ranking number one or in the top ten percent in a class of 300 is more impressive than ranking in the same position in a class of 12. However, fewer and fewer colleges are giving class rank high importance.

While all of these factors are important, it is up to the college to tell you which are the most important to them. You can see that colleges want more than just test scores and GPAs. They want a student who will be a successful, contributing member of their community.



ACTIVITY #2: THINKING AHEAD— PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Opening Discussion:

Although college may seem far away, it's never too soon to think about the cost and to understand that there is money for those who may think that college is not affordable. Middle School students should be encouraged to share this section with their families.

Activity/Handout:

Financial Aid True/False Quiz

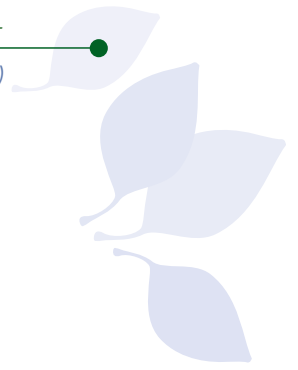
Paying for College Education is a Family Affair

Instructions:

1. Begin with the quiz, asking each student to complete it independently.
2. Discuss the answers to the quiz, explaining as necessary.*
3. Hand out "Paying for College is a Family Affair." Discuss briefly, and ask the students to take this home to their families.

**Answers to the quiz:*

1. False—generate a discussion about learning, having more job/career options, creating more opportunities for yourself
2. True
3. True and False—talk about the federal government sites, help at the library and community centers
4. True
5. False—talk about two year schools, certificate programs, and military options
6. False—a college graduate will earn almost twice as much
7. True
8. True and False—talk about DI, DII, DIII options
9. False—here is where you can talk about EFC, merit aid, aid packages
10. True—talk about co-op options, for example



FINANCIAL AID TRUE/FALSE QUIZ

1. College is not worth the debt involved. It's better to go directly to work. **TIF**
2. Half of all students attending four-year colleges pay less than \$9,500 to attend school each year. **TIF**
3. Only A students can go to college and get financial aid. **TIF**
4. Applying for financial aid is very difficult and complicated. **TIF**
5. To make it in today's world, you must have a four-year degree. **TIF**
6. Over the course of a lifetime, a high school graduate can earn as much as a college graduate. **TIF**
7. The average annual income of a person with a college degree is more than \$55,000. **TIF**
8. Colleges give full athletic scholarships to athletes. **TIF**
9. Private colleges are too expensive and you shouldn't apply if you don't have the money. **TIF**
10. Some employers will help you pay for college. **TIF**

PAYING FOR COLLEGE IS A FAMILY AFFAIR AND HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

THE SAD FACT is that many students who earn admission to college never go because they do not complete the financial aid process.

THE GOOD NEWS is that there are lots of ways to pay for college and lots of information and help are available to students who honestly need financial aid assistance!!

FACTS WORTH NOTING:

- The earlier you begin to think about paying for college the better.
- Money is available to almost every student who attends college.
- No one gets financial aid by wishing! You need to apply and follow through.
- Even the most ambitious student will need assistance from the adults in the household in order to complete the financial aid application process.
- You do not need to pay anyone to help you apply for financial aid! Beware of anyone who offers a service for a fee
- Often the most expensive colleges have the “deepest pockets” and can help the very neediest students to make college affordable.

In a perfect world, families begin thinking about college finances when their children are still in grade school. But we all know this is NOT a perfect world. So—the time for you to start thinking about paying for college is TODAY!

There is a lot of money available to students with need:

While it is true that college costs increase almost yearly, it is also true that there is more financial aid available than ever before—according to the College Board, more than \$199 billion. This money comes from the following sources:

- US Government programs, which provide more than \$146.5 billion a year in grants, loans and work-study assistance.
- State grant and loan programs.
- College and university grant, loan and scholarship programs.
- Scholarships given by foundations, corporations and community organizations.



These are the sources of financial aid:

- **Grants and scholarships:** Also called “gift aid,” grants are based on financial need and do not need to be repaid. Scholarships are most-often awarded on the basis of strong academic achievement, a special talent or ability, or personal characteristics.
- **Work-study:** This option gives students the opportunity for part-time employment either on campus or off campus at a private, non-profit organization or public agency to help them meet their financial need.
- **Loans:** These are offered to students or parents and must be repaid. Loans that are awarded based on financial need are low-interest loans, usually sponsored by the federal government. Interest on these loans is paid by the government for students with the greatest need. Repayment does not begin until six months after completion of the college program and may be deferred until a later date under some special circumstances.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID IS TIME-CONSUMING, BUT NOT HARD!

There are many people and resources who can help you find your way through the financial aid process. Your school counselor, your teachers, adults in your community or place of worship may all be available to advise you. At every college you consider, financial aid officers will be eager to help students and families understand and complete the financial aid process. Don't be afraid to ask for lots and lots of help.

If you are a good student and an active participant in school and community, you may qualify for scholarships offered by corporations, foundations, religious organizations, or community groups. Ask at your school about possibilities. Do some research online at FastWeb (www.fastweb.com/) and The College Board (http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp).

In the end, all of the work required to apply for financial aid is well worth the effort! In 2008:

- College graduates (bachelor's recipients) earned an average of \$55,700.
- High School graduates earned an average of \$33,800.

Over the course of your life and career that difference will make up for the cost of even the most expensive college—many times over!

ACTIVITY #3: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Opening Discussion:

This will be the final wrap-up of the workshop, combining many of the issues discussed into a game that illustrates a number of the factors that colleges consider when making decisions about applicants. The students should be able to “see” that they do have some control over the way colleges will view them.

Activity/Handout:

Step to the Top of Your Class

Evaluation Forms

Appendix:

Letters

INSTRUCTIONS: FOR STEP TO THE TOP OF YOUR CLASS

Making the game: Reproduce copies of “class standing” pages, which follow these instructions in order to prepare participants’ “personal quality” sheets. Use nine differently colored pieces of construction paper. On one side write the applicable class standing in large numerals with a magic marker. On the same side, and on top of the numerals, tape the copy of the page with the corresponding class standing at the top and the qualities possessed by the student with that standing underneath: For example: centered at top of page: “#1 in middle school class:” and underneath: “You don’t like science and plan to take the bare minimum of lab science classes.” “You do not plan to participate in activities while in high school, etc.” The back side of the construction paper (and the side that will face the audience) should remain blank so that those in the audience will lose track of who has what standing during play.

Getting started with play: You will need nine volunteers to be students about to enter high school. Secure a volunteer to play the “School Principal.” That student reads the qualities and tells students whether to move up or down in the competition. Hand out the class standings in RANDOM order and then instruct volunteers to organize themselves in class standing order from highest to lowest. (This is generally a couple of minutes of comedy relief because players have trouble getting organized. This is part of the fun.)



Scenario of play:

The remainder of the group is told that they are the teachers deciding who from the senior class at “All-American High School” (or you pick a better and more funny name) will be selected to speak at graduation ceremonies. The teachers, along with the principal, are deciding who has “stepped to the top” of his/her high school class and will be asked to speak at graduation. Before them they see the candidates. Point out that they are standing in rank order from highest to lowest, based upon how they placed at the end of middle school. Point out that more than grades will be involved in making this decision.

The personal qualities/qualifications are then read and the volunteers are asked to exchange places (move up and down in the order) based upon what is read. (One very important note to make this work: if more than one student is moving down at the same time, the lowest student must move first and visa versa—if more than one student is moving up, the highest student must move first.) You may choose to alter the qualities/qualifications and the weight given to each.

Stop after each quality read in order to discuss why this helped or hindered the student. As an example: you may ask, “How do you think it might help you to have a volunteer job in the summer?” Or, “How might studying at the library be helpful in your classes?” This is a way to generate discussion.

The ending:

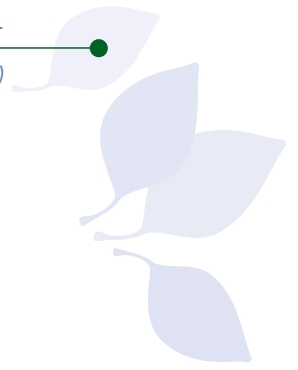
After all qualities have been read and candidates have been “sorted,” have the participants turn over their top sheet to reveal their original standing and then turn the sheet around to reveal it to the audience. Read through the standings, pointing out the new order and note that the top candidate, newly sorted, will be invited to speak at graduation. Point out to students that many of their personal choices will have an impact on the ways in which they will grow and achieve during their high school years.

At the end of the game you may want to say to everyone participating: “If you are planning a strong high school class load, plan to study regularly, plan to be involved in school activities, save what you can for college, and have your ‘team’ in place to support you for college—hey guys, you are ALL winners!”

You might choose to have a small prize—like pieces of candy to thank the volunteers.

QUALITIES, WHICH ARE READ, AND DESIGNATED PLACES TO MOVE UP AND DOWN IN THE LINE:

1. IF YOU PLAN TO TAKE THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES REQUIRED BY COLLEGES FOR ADMISSION +2
2. IF YOU PLAN TO GET INVOLVED IN SOME MUSICAL ACTIVITIES IN HIGH SCHOOL +1
3. IF YOU MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR COUNSELOR DURING YOUR FIRST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL TO LET HER KNOW YOU PLAN TO GO TO COLLEGE +2
4. IF YOU PLAN TO SPEND YOUR SUMMERS “HANGING OUT” -1
5. IF YOU PLAN TO TAKE AT LEAST THREE YEARS OF THE SAME FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN HIGH SCHOOL +2
6. IF YOU NEVER SPEAK TO YOUR TEACHERS OUTSIDE OF CLASS -2
7. IF YOU SPEND MORE TIME ON THE PHONE AND WATCHING TV THAN YOU DO ON YOUR HOMEWORK -4
8. IF YOU HAVE TALKED TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT THE FACT THAT YOU WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE AND ASKED FOR THEIR SUPPORT +2
9. IF YOU DON'T LIKE SCIENCE AND PLAN TO TAKE THE BARE MINIMUM OF LAB SCIENCE CLASSES -1
10. IF YOU SPEND MORE TIME THINKING ABOUT YOUR NEXT PARTY THAN YOU DO YOUR NEXT CLASS -1
11. IF YOU STUDY AT LEAST ½ HOUR EACH NIGHT FOR EACH ACADEMIC CLASS YOU ARE TAKING +3
12. IF, INSTEAD OF STUDYING FOR YOUR TEST, YOU COPIED OFF YOUR NEIGHBOR'S PAPER—SIT DOWN, YOU JUST FAILED AN IMPORTANT CLASS THAT YOU NEEDED FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION
13. IF, EVEN THOUGH NO ONE IN YOUR FAMILY HAS GONE TO COLLEGE, YOU ARE DETERMINED TO DO SO +2
14. IF, IN THE SUMMER, YOU GET A VOLUNTEER JOB RELATED TO YOUR CAREER INTEREST +2
15. IF YOU DO NOT PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY ACTIVITIES WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL -3
16. IF YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN A COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT +1



17. IF YOU HAVE A PUBLIC LIBRARY CARD AND VISIT THE LIBRARY FOR A QUIET PLACE TO STUDY +2
18. IF YOU BELONG TO A SPORTS TEAM AND WORK HARD TO DO YOUR BEST +2
19. IF YOU PLAN TO GET A PART-TIME JOB AND SAVE YOUR MONEY FOR A CAR, INSTEAD OF SAVING MONEY FOR COLLEGE -3
20. IF YOU GOT BEHIND IN ONE OF YOUR CLASSES BUT STAYED AFTER SCHOOL TO GET EXTRA HELP FROM THE TEACHER +1
21. IF YOU MAKE SURE YOUR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS KNOW HOW YOUR SCHOOL WORK IS GOING AND REGULARLY SHARE GRADES AND REPORT CARDS WITH THEM +3
22. IF YOU TAKE SICK DAYS FROM SCHOOL, EVEN WHEN YOU AREN'T SICK -1
23. IF YOU PLAN TO BELONG TO STUDENT GOVERNMENT OR WORK ON THE SCHOOL PAPER +1

TEXT FOR PERSONAL QUALITY SHEETS APPEARS ON FOLLOWING PAGES:

#1 in middle school class:

- YOU DON'T LIKE SCIENCE AND PLAN TO TAKE THE BARE MINIMUM OF LAB SCIENCE CLASSES
 - YOU DO NOT PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY ACTIVITIES WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL
- YOU MAKE SURE YOUR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS KNOW HOW YOUR SCHOOL WORK IS GOING, AND REGULARLY SHARE GRADES AND REPORT CARDS WITH THEM

#2 in middle school class:

- YOU PLAN TO SPEND YOUR SUMMERS “HANGING OUT”
- YOU SPEND MORE TIME THINKING ABOUT YOUR NEXT PARTY THAN YOU DO YOUR NEXT CLASS
- IN THE SUMMER, YOU GET A VOLUNTEER JOB RELATED TO YOUR CAREER INTEREST

#3 in middle school class:

- YOU PLAN TO TAKE THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES REQUIRED BY COLLEGES FOR ADMISSION
- YOU PLAN TO SPEND YOUR SUMMERS “HANGING OUT”
- YOU SPEND MORE TIME ON THE PHONE AND WATCHING TV THAN YOU DO ON YOUR HOMEWORK
- INSTEAD OF STUDYING FOR YOUR TEST YOU COPIED OFF YOUR NEIGHBOR’S PAPER—SIT DOWN, YOU JUST FAILED AN IMPORTANT CLASS THAT YOU NEEDED FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION

#4 in middle school class:

- YOU PLAN TO GET INVOLVED IN SOME MUSICAL ACTIVITIES IN HIGH SCHOOL
- YOU NEVER SPEAK TO YOUR TEACHERS OUTSIDE OF CLASS
- YOU DON'T LIKE SCIENCE AND PLAN TO TAKE THE BARE MINIMUM OF LAB SCIENCE CLASSES
- YOU TAKE SICK DAYS FROM SCHOOL, EVEN WHEN YOU AREN'T SICK

#5 in middle school class:

- YOU MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR COUNSELOR DURING YOUR FIRST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL TO LET HER KNOW YOU PLAN TO GO TO COLLEGE
- YOU SPEND MORE TIME THINKING ABOUT YOUR NEXT PARTY THAN YOU DO YOUR NEXT CLASS
- YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE
- YOU PLAN TO GET A PART-TIME JOB AND SAVE MONEY FOR A CAR INSTEAD OF SAVING FOR COLLEGE

#6 in middle school class:

- YOU PLAN TO GET INVOLVED IN SOME MUSICAL ACTIVITIES IN HIGH SCHOOL
- YOU PLAN TO TAKE AT LEAST THREE YEARS OF THE SAME FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN HIGH SCHOOL
- YOU HAVE TALKED TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT THE FACT THAT YOU WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE AND ASKED FOR THEIR SUPPORT

#7 in middle school class:

- YOU BELONG TO A SPORTS TEAM AND WORK HARD TO DO YOUR BEST
 - YOU PLAN TO TAKE THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES REQUIRED BY COLLEGES OF ADMISSION
 - EVEN THOUGH NO ONE IN YOUR FAMILY HAS GONE TO COLLEGE, YOU ARE DETERMINED TO DO SO
 - YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE

#8 in middle school class:

- YOU STUDY AT LEAST ½ HOUR EACH NIGHT FOR EACH ACADEMIC CLASS YOU ARE TAKING
- YOU BELONG TO A SPORTS TEAM AND WORK HARD TO DO YOUR BEST
 - YOU GOT BEHIND IN ONE OF YOUR CLASSES BUT STAYED AFTER SCHOOL TO GET EXTRA HELP FROM THE TEACHER

#9 in middle school class:

- YOU HAVE TALKED TO YOUR FAMILY ABOUT THE FACT THAT YOU WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE AND ASKED FOR THEIR SUPPORT
- YOU HAVE A PUBLIC LIBRARY CARD AND VISIT THE LIBRARY FOR A QUIET PLACE TO STUDY
- YOU PLAN TO BELONG TO STUDENT GOVERNMENT OR WORK ON THE SCHOOL PAPER
- IN THE SUMMER YOU GET A VOLUNTEER JOB RELATED TO YOUR CAREER INTEREST

5

SESSION 5: HOW DO I GET TO COLLEGE? (PART II)

ACTIVITY #4: EVALUATION

Opening Discussion:

As a finale to the workshop, please ask the students to take time to complete the evaluation, encouraging them to be honest and thorough as it will help students in the future. Once they have completed the evaluations, give them their certificates and thank them for their participation.



6

RESOURCES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL: PARENT WORKSHOP

Objectives

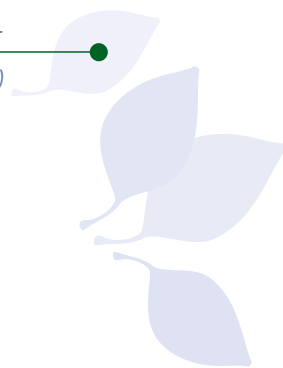
- To demonstrate the importance of families in student achievement and success.
- To provide methods of collaboration between families and schools that foster self-esteem, motivation, and academic achievement.

Message

Parents and guardians should have ongoing, direct involvement in the education of their children. In far too many instances, however, they leave that responsibility to the schools. Consider that students spend a far greater amount of time in the home, the neighborhood and the community than they spend in the classroom. Students spend half (180 days) their days in school and half (180 days) out of school. Schools require that the student be in class for only six to seven hours; three-fourths of each school day is spent out of school. By influencing a student's out-of-school time, parents can have a positive impact on their child's experience in school.



By influencing a student's out-of-school time, parents can have a positive impact on their child's experience in school. Educators have long believed that what a student does outside of school affects what he or she does in the classroom. By taking an active interest and becoming involved in the education of their child, parents can form partnerships with teachers and other educators—partnerships that will prove productive for the student."



Introductions

If *Middle School* is the first workshop that you do for parents and guardians, you will need to use some type of icebreaker technique to introduce yourself, your fellow presenters and the participants to each other. As participants introduce themselves, have them indicate the names and ages of their children.

The Step by Step message is best delivered in an informal, friendly atmosphere where people know one another and where participant interaction is encouraged. The use of name badges will help you and the parents and guardians to remember names. Do everything you can to make parents and guardians feel comfortable.

The reasons that many parents do not participate in educational programs can be traced to not feeling welcome or comfortable. Your initial goals are to create a sense of belonging and to encourage participation in the full Step by Step workshop offering. Ask the group to consider continuing to meet on their own to extend support to each other.

Discussion Questions

Throughout this section there are opportunities to repeat the message and use discussion questions to gain parent participation in the workshop. Before they can be effective in helping children become successful in school, family members must first be acknowledged as important care providers, and their personal self-esteem must be addressed. Emphasize that the purpose of the Step by Step workshop is to help parents and guardians learn how to get the most out of school for the benefit of their students.

These questions provide information about participants:

- Why did you come to this workshop? What do you want to learn?
- What aspect of the steps to encourage student achievement do you find most difficult to provide? Easiest to provide?
- What are some examples of how you helped your students prepare for school or practice good study habits?
- What problems have you experienced in getting your student to study, read, and engage in other educational activities at home?
- Computer games and the Internet are major distractions for many students. What other distractions are present in your home or in your community?
- Numerous suggestions have been made today/tonight about helping students with studying or homework. Do you feel comfortable with the roles suggested here for you as a parent or guardian? Have you found any tutors or special resources that you can share with others?

Activities

Invite educators or community representatives to serve as consultants during the presentation.

If your audience is composed of elementary school parents and guardians, you may want to schedule a field trip to the middle/junior high school to learn about the program and courses available there.

You may also want to schedule a group visit to the community library. Provide the name of a person who will be their guide and encourage the parents and guardians to take their children along.

Resources

The Helping Your Child Series below is available for free in both English and Spanish from the US Department of education at www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/hyc.html, or by calling 800/USA-Learn.

- *Helping Your Child Learn History/Science/Mathematics*
- *Helping Your Child Become a Reader/With Homework*
- *Helping Your Preschool Child*
- *Helping Your Child Succeed in School/Through Early Adolescence/Become a Responsible Citizen*

Steps to Encourage Student Achievement

Step 1: Encourage positive work habits that stress the importance of education.

Step 2: Become involved in school and encourage basic skills.

Step 3: Acknowledge success and respect effort.

Step 4: Provide an effective place to study, and provide help as needed.

Step 5: Encourage extracurricular activities both in and out of school.

Step 6: Recognize that opportunities to learn are never ending.

Step 1: Encourage positive work habits that stress the importance of education

The work habits that parents support at home—such as promptness, respect, responsibility, and interest in school work—easily transfer to the school environment. These positive work habits are also important on the job. When parents demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning, they also stress the importance of education, and completing high school is an important first step to the worlds of work and college.

Step 2: Become involved in school and encourage basic skills

Involvement in children's school work means encouraging basic skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and computer skills. Parents can model effective work habits, encourage the completion of homework, seek helpful resources when necessary, actively participate in decisions that affect the student's academic or educational program, and help find solutions to school problems.

Step 3: Acknowledge success and respect effort

It is important for parents to acknowledge that children in the same family may be different in aptitude, intelligence, and personality. Success is an individual measure, and one's best effort does not always mean "A+" grades, so parents should acknowledge and praise each success. When parents express respect for what their child is capable of doing, children learn to value a good effort, and this increases self-esteem and self-respect.

Step 4: Provide an effective place to study, and provide help as needed

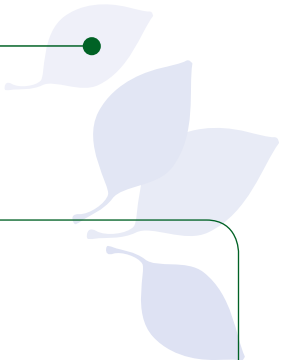
Differences in learning styles can affect the ways in which students complete their homework. Establishing a routine, budgeting time effectively, utilizing self-discipline, and providing a quiet place to study are all important elements to success in school. Helping children with homework is an essential activity for parents that may include providing materials and resources. If the subject matter is unfamiliar, consult a teacher or counselor for help. Older students, other parents, or special assistance programs may provide help. Being involved in the child's school activities sends the message that school is important.

Step 5: Encourage extracurricular activities both in and out of school

Extracurricular activities in school and in the community give students an opportunity to express their uniqueness. Encourage your student to participate in sports, school clubs, science fairs, and related activities. Individual activities and interests are also significant and add to the development of the student. Internships, volunteering or paid employment builds discipline and character that prepares students for life in the workplace.

Step 6: Recognize that opportunities to learn are never ending

School, home and the community are places to learn. Help your student to be an active learner. The kitchen at home can be a laboratory for learning about science and mathematics. The newspaper or online news can help students gain a sense of history and social science. Every experience can offer opportunities for symbolic or practical learning. Help students understand that education never stops and that school provides the foundation for future studies and careers—a high school diploma represents a fundamental step in the total life experience.



Monthly, take the time to reflect on each step by answering the following:

1. How will I encourage positive work habits that stress the importance of education? _____

2. Is my student involved in school and how will I encourage basic skills? _____

3. How will I acknowledge my student's success and respect his or her effort? _____

4. How will I provide an effective place to study, and how will I provide help as needed? _____

5. Is my student involved in extracurricular activities both in and out of school and how will I encourage new involvement? _____

6. Do I and does my student recognize that opportunities to learn are never ending? What new opportunities are in sight? _____

Provide a Constructive Learning Environment at Home

- Determine the physical space where quiet studying can occur.
- Provide the resources (e.g., paper, pens, computer, etc.) that your student will need.
- Establish a routine time for homework and class projects that will allow for balanced leisure activities.
- Promote sound time management skills, providing attention to all subjects and planning for long-range projects (such as book reports and essays).
- Encourage games and leisure activities that require reasoning, computations, and problem-solving skills. Allow your student to participate in building things, fixing things, cooking and related tasks.
- Monitor computer games and television. Encourage activities that compliment the educational experience. Also, monitor the use of the telephone and the Internet.
- **See page 304-305 for sample questions to help your student determine postsecondary options.**

Use school and community resources to ensure student success. Helping your student to use the school or community library is one of the most important things that you can do as a parent. Libraries have more than books—they have computers and audio/video resources, and they host special programs designed to help your child be a better learner. Furthermore, museums, zoos, parks, and other sites are learning laboratories waiting to be explored.

Meet with your student's teachers and counselors. Take an hour at the beginning of the school year to establish these important ties, and check in throughout the year. Email or call when a personal visit is not possible. Some family members may be intimidated by educators, but this fear is usually unfounded. Teachers, counselors, librarians, and other specialists are there to help, and they look forward to working with you. Approach them and be approachable. Also, grade reports provide an opportunity to check on your child's progress, but don't wait until poor grades are received to check with the school.

Join the parent organization at your school and become involved in the decision-making process. Learn how the school operates and how family members can provide input.

Families and Schools Must Work Together

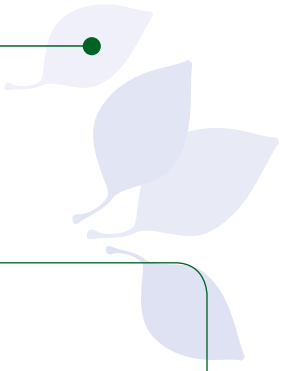
As a parent or guardian, you have the unique opportunity to provide information and assistance to your student as she or he proceeds through an educational program. You can support and extend the efforts of teachers, counselors, and other school staff to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that help students plan for the remainder of their education, their careers and their lives. A three-way partnership between home, the school and the student will advance your student's success in school.

Family Members' Influence Makes a Difference

You can also influence your student's work attitudes and sense of responsibility for doing his or her best in school. Here are some suggestions. Help your student to:

- Feel good about going to school
- Attend school appropriately dressed and in good physical condition (e.g., rested, well-fed, and focused)
- Support school rules and explain the reasons for them
- Always complete homework assignments
- Manage his/her time wisely. Ask about dates for tests, grade reports, parent conferences, school events, and other activities
- Establish a school and home calendar and place it in a prominent location in the home

As a parent or guardian, you have the unique opportunity to provide information and assistance to your student as she or he proceeds through an educational program. You can support and extend the efforts of teachers, counselors and other school staff to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that help students plan for the remainder of their education, their careers and their lives.



Scheduling Contract

(to be filled out by student, and signed by both the student and parent/guardian)

I will study _____
(where)

What I need: _____
(supplies)

Homework times starts at _____

List long-range projects: _____

Games and leisure activities I'm interested in: _____

Each day I will limit my television/phone/Internet/video game time to: _____

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Building Self-Esteem and a Positive Self-Image

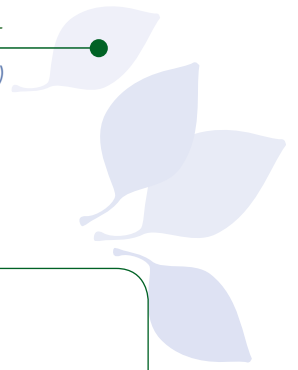
Your student's success in school is partially related to his or her sense of self-esteem. Ask the school staff to work with you to help raise or maintain your student's level of self-esteem. Below are some suggestions.

- **ENCOURAGE**—expect your student to be able, competent, and responsible.
- **MOTIVATE**—reward effort and improvement with enthusiasm.
- **APPRECIATE**—acknowledge small steps. Focus on successes rather than failures.
- **LISTEN**—pay attention to your student. Use meals and other “together” times to find out what's happening at school.
- **HELP**—set aside time to assist with school work and to practice new and developing skills. Select a study place and set a study time with your student.
- **GUIDE**—practice consistent discipline and be a positive role model.
- **PARTICIPATE** and enjoy doing things together (both educational and recreational).
- **LOVE!**

Preparing for a Rewarding Future

The sound educational habits that students acquire during the elementary and middle grades will not be fully felt until they reach adolescence and adulthood. The importance of good study skills must begin during childhood and be nurtured throughout the school experience. The stronger the student's academic preparation and record of achievement, the greater are his or her chances of high school graduation and of moving on to the college and university experience. The competition of the 21st Century will give greater opportunities to those who are best prepared: the students most able to meet the challenges of the classroom. Success in a career is directly related to success in school. The best options will be open to the students with the best preparation. As a parent or guardian, you can ensure a rewarding future by devoting attention now to the building of a sound educational foundation for your student.

The importance of good study skills must begin during childhood and be nurtured throughout the school experience. The stronger the student's academic preparation and record of achievement, the greater are his or her chances of high school graduation and of moving on to the college and university experience.



Weekly Self-Esteem Checklist

Each week go through this checklist to make sure you are building your student's positive self-image.

- ENCOURAGE**—give your student at least one encouraging comment per week. Try to cover different areas of his or her life, such as academics, talents, social involvement, etc.

- MOTIVATE**—add to your list of ways to reward your student when he or she accomplishes a goal. For example, consider giving him/her more decision-making opportunities, support a new interest or even take him/her to their favorite restaurant.

- APPRECIATE**—verbally recognize one of this week's accomplishments.

- LISTEN**—schedule time to sit down with your student to find out about the week. Dinner is one of the best times to catch up with your family.

- HELP**—ask your student weekly if he or she needs help either from you or a tutor.

- GUIDE**—be consistent and reflective. Allow your student to offer criticism.

- PARTICIPATE**—plan one fun activity a week with your student to keep a strong bond during these challenging years.

- LOVE**—if you've completed this list, you've already shown your student love!

Setting the Stage for Dreams to Become Reality

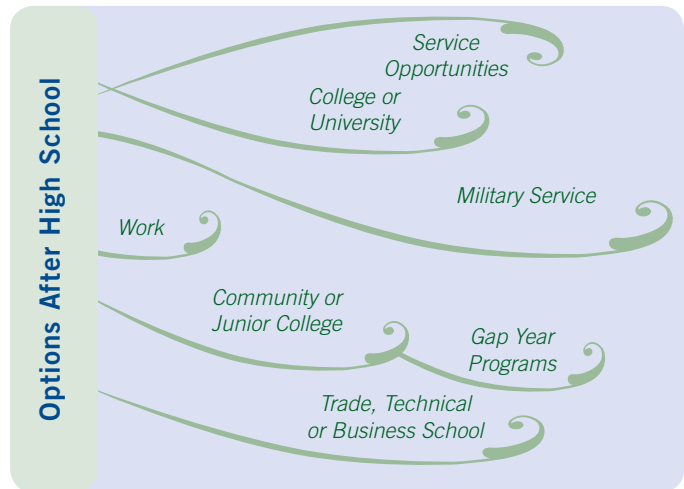
Considering Options

Students can develop the skills and knowledge essential in today's job market by earning a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university or getting an associate's degree from a community, junior or technical college. Many high schools and employers offer career-focused programs such as Tech-prep, School-to-Work, and School-to-Career, which are linked to community and technical colleges. These programs encourage students to take occupational or technical courses in high school but also emphasize the importance of studying core courses in English, math, science, and history. College students learn to express themselves clearly and effectively, to make informed decisions, to solve problems, and to use technology—all essential skills in today's job market.

Parents and guardians can give examples of people they know, either in person or through the media, who have gone to college and emphasize how a college education helped those people to achieve professional and personal goals. For example, Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team. He went to college, played basketball at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, strengthened his athletic skills, received national recognition, and was selected for the NBA. Had Jordan not gone to college, he may never have achieved his goal of becoming a star athlete.

Students and families can discuss jobs that require a college education. They can also discuss jobs that do not require a college education but provide more options if the student goes to college. For example, going to college isn't mandatory to play in the NBA, but athletes who have gone to college have had the opportunity to develop their intellectual and athletic skills, to mature, and to learn how to handle the pressures, money and other business opportunities of professional athletes.

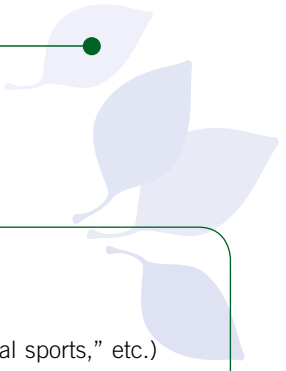
Students and families may want to talk about people they know who went to college, what those people studied in college, and what they are doing now. Students will discover that college provides opportunities to enhance reading, writing, speaking, computer skills, critical thinking, and problem solving, all of which prepare students for a variety of career choices. The logical conclusion is that planning for college now is smart and will maximize future options.



- Going to college provides many academic, professional, and personal options.
- Taking college courses improves reading, speaking, writing, and computer skills while enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Attending college increases earning power.
- Planning now and working hard are essential, and effort now will help to ensure success.

- Four-year public and private colleges and universities—bachelor's/baccalaureate degree
- Two-year public and private junior and community colleges—associate degree
- Technical/vocational/trade schools—certificate, license
- Technical colleges—certificate, license and on-the-job experience

Students can develop the skills and knowledge essential in today's job market by earning a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university or getting an associate's degree from a community, junior or technical college.



Long-Term Dreams/Goals

(Insert items, such as “design clothing,” “draw architectural plans for my dream house,” “play professional sports,” etc.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What are the first steps to achieving these goals—list them here:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

List how a postsecondary education can help fulfill these goals:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Average Family Income by Education

Both Genders, 18 years and over	Average All Workers	High School		College						
		Not a Graduate	Graduate, inc. GED	Some College, No Degree	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's or Higher				
						Average Bachelor's or Higher	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree	Professional Degree
Mean Earnings	\$57,060	\$24,300	\$29,448	\$39,700	\$42,000	\$63,230	\$55,7000	\$67,300	\$91,900	\$100,000

Educational Options

- Four-year public and private colleges and universities—bachelor's/baccalaureate degree
- Two-year public and private junior and community colleges—associate degree
- Technical/vocational/trade schools—certificate, license
- Technical colleges—certificate, license and on-the-job experience

Benefiting from hard work and recognizing opportunities

Ask parents, guardians and students to describe a goal they worked to achieve. Then have them explain the benefits of achieving that goal. (They may have earned money or improved grades, gained confidence, made friends, or proved they could accomplish something). Then ask these additional questions about the benefits of their hard work: What did they have to do to achieve the goal? What planning and preparation were required? How did they feel when they achieved their goal?

Benefits of a College Degree

Relate this discussion to a college education. What are the benefits of earning a degree? According to the US Census Bureau, in 2009, a person with only a HS degree had mean earnings of \$30,627 and bachelor's degree holders earned a mean of \$56,665, or 1.85 times more. Ask what other benefits come from reaching this goal? What do students and their families need to do to prepare for college?

Ensuring student success is a family matter

Extensive research confirms that a student's success is dependent on family involvement. Family financial status, parents' educational levels or students' grades do not determine student success in college as much as family involvement. One of the best long-term investments a family can make, therefore, is to be involved in their student's education.

Connecting with Children at Home and at School

Making the transition from childhood to adulthood can be exciting, overwhelming, and sometimes disturbing for children, as well as for their parents, schools and communities. Peers and teen culture place pressures on middle school students at a time when they are facing emotional, social, physical, and educational changes. Responsibility for learning is beginning to shift from the teacher to the student. Teens need acceptance and positive self identity. They also desire independence and maturity. In addition, they are weathering growth spurts, mood swings and changing educational expectations. All of these changes can be confusing and complex. Keeping in mind the pressures of this transition, parents and guardians should not expect perfection from their children. Education is a process, and development during the middle school years is rarely linear; there will be ups and downs along the way. Families, teachers and counselors can help adolescents make responsible choices and establish reasonable limits.

Parents and guardians can help their students to address academic and personal pressures and changes by setting healthy limits for their children without being too rigid or strict. Setting reasonable limits includes clearly defining acceptable behavior, establishing consequences for unacceptable behavior and enforcing those consequences. Setting firm, fair limits is one way parents and guardians demonstrate their respect for their children. Help students understand the reasons for the rules, allow them to express their opinions, but hold them accountable for abiding by these rules. As a part of the growth process, students will test their parents' limits, but enforced consequences for rule breaking will help students to be responsible for their own behavior. Students also benefit from helping with family chores and being involved in decision making.

Monitoring students' after-school activities helps adolescents make constructive use of their leisure-time and may also help curb inappropriate behavior. Positive school and community activities can enhance personal qualities, develop leadership and teamwork, and define talents and skills. In addition to discussing after school activities, it's important that parents and guardians listen to their students and get to know their students' friends. Acknowledging concerns and worries, exploring solutions, and talking directly about sex, drugs, alcohol, and gangs are ways to communicate positive behaviors, values and character traits. Promoting honesty, a good work ethic and responsibility for one's actions are essential for success in and out of school. Parents and guardians should also promote daily physical activity, nutritious meals, and adequate sleep.

Families are the most important influence on children's lives. When it comes to school achievement, the values instilled by parents and guardians are twice as important as family economic or educational background. School counselors, teachers, nurses, and religious and community youth leaders can assist and support parents and guardians in dealing with the pressures and changes adolescents encounter.

Helping Students Cope with Academic and Personal Pressures

At home

- Talk to children and help them become aware of stresses, both academic and personal, in their lives.
- Discuss college and career options.
- Limit distractions when students study (monitor the use of the television, telephone and Internet).
- Encourage time-management skills.
- Promote daily physical activity, nutritious meals and adequate sleep.
- Monitor after school activities.
- Clearly state values and acceptable behaviors.
- Set healthy limits for children without being too rigid or strict.
- Offer perspective and focus when young people feel overwhelmed by the physical and emotional changes they are experiencing, and help them understand and address real and perceived pressures.
- Celebrate students' academic and extracurricular successes and provide positive involvement by attending school and community activities.

At school

- Ensure that middle and high school students take challenging courses.
- Expect the school to have high learning standards and to encourage family involvement.
- Keep in touch with the school rather than waiting for a problem to arise.
- Use community resources: after-school programs, adult education classes, libraries, athletic programs, religious organizations, etc.
- Expect and ask much of the school, community and employers.
- Celebrate students' academic and extracurricular successes, and provide positive involvement by attending school and community activities.

Make a list of ways to personalize these tips to best help your student.

Family Participation

Parents and guardians need to encourage students to establish high standards, take challenging courses, and use their out-of-school time to develop academic and extracurricular interests. The positive correlation between achievement in higher-level courses and success on college entrance tests and in college is high. In addition, a positive correlation exists between extracurricular involvement and personal self-satisfaction, positive involvement in college and even success in the work place.

Families should also expect much of the school and community. Programs and services should be offered at a time that is convenient for families and students. Schools should be safe and provide disciplined classroom settings that encourage teaching and learning, and relevant instruction. Schools should make parents feel welcome, appreciate the vital role that parents play in their children's education, and encourage parental involvement by giving parents a voice in school decisions. Mentoring programs, family resource centers, literacy and adult education, technology that links parents to the school, internships, summer educational and enrichment programs, and exposure to arts and culture are examples of programs and services that could be provided by schools and communities. Employers can take a proactive role in education by donating supplies, expertise, or money; sponsoring career programs; and adopting flexible hours so parents can visit schools.

Connecting to schools may seem overwhelming, but it is crucial because parental participation is vital to students' learning. Education is essential to build the academic skills, character, creativity, and commitment required to master basic and advanced skills, to maximize college and career options, and to develop responsible, compassionate citizens.

Taking the Right Courses for College Begins in Middle School

Core Academic High School Courses

Subject Area	Amount of Study
<i>English</i>	<i>4 years</i>
<i>Science</i>	<i>2–4 years</i>
<i>Biology</i>	
<i>Chemistry</i>	
<i>Physics</i>	
<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>3–4 years</i>
<i>Algebra</i>	
<i>Geometry</i>	
<i>Trigonometry</i>	
<i>Pre-Calculus</i>	
<i>Calculus</i>	
<i>History/Social Studies</i>	<i>2–4 years</i>
<i>Foreign Language</i>	<i>2–4 years of same language</i>
<i>Electives</i>	
<i>Computer Science</i>	<i>Technical Education</i>
<i>Music</i>	<i>Art</i>

Taking challenging courses in middle school gives students the opportunity to take more advanced courses in high school and college. For example, in math, students who complete algebra I and geometry by the end of ninth grade are much more likely to go to college.

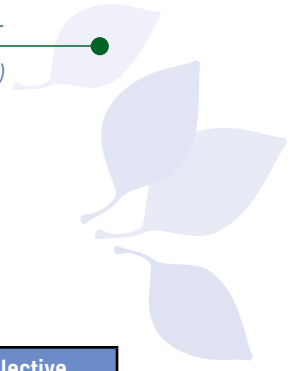
Planning for college should begin in middle school or earlier. Knowledge and skills acquired in middle school provide the foundation for high school courses and a college education. Challenging middle school and high school courses prepare students for college.

Taking challenging courses in middle school gives students the opportunity to take more advanced courses in high school and college. For example, in math, students who complete algebra I and geometry by the end of ninth grade are much more likely to go to college. By successfully completing those math courses before 10th grade, students can enroll in high school courses in algebra II, trigonometry, precalculus or calculus, biology, chemistry, and physics. In addition, they may qualify for Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses in high school. Students who take AP or IB courses and do well on the AP or IB exams may earn college credit and/or advanced standing in college for work completed in high school. In addition to math, every year in middle school and high school, students must study English, science, and history or geography. These courses are the core academic classes students need to maximize their educational options.

In addition to their core courses, students should study a foreign language for a minimum of two years of one language; ideally, three or four years of the same language, computer science, and the arts (music, dance, drama, and the visual arts). Learning a foreign language demonstrates to colleges that students are interested in more than just the core courses and impresses employers with the students' preparation to thrive in a global economy. Many colleges make foreign language study a requirement for admission.

Students should be well-versed in computer technology by the time they reach college. Use of a computer is vital for today's college student. The computer and the Internet are essential for tasks such as writing papers, doing research, enrolling in classes, taking classes online, and communicating with professors and classmates via email.

Participating in drama, vocal or instrumental music, dance, or the visual arts (e.g., painting, drawing, ceramics, photography, film, graphic design) provides valuable experiences and broadens students' understanding and appreciation of the world. The visual and performing arts also contribute significantly to intellectual development and provide excellent extracurricular opportunities for students. In short, there is no substitute for taking challenging, rigorous courses in a wide variety of disciplines.



Middle School Schedule of Courses
(complete with specific classes)

Subject	English	Science	Mathematics	Social Studies	Foreign Language	Elective	Elective	Elective
6th Grade								
7th Grade								
8th Grade								

Graduation and college admission requirements vary from state to state.

Check with your student's school counselor for specifics.

Creating Academic Portfolios and Developing Extracurricular Interests

The Academic Portfolio

The middle school years are an ideal time to begin an academic portfolio. Students should designate a large file folder, box, drawer, or some other specific place in which to keep samples of their best work in the core academic courses and the arts. Students may also choose to create an electronic portfolio. Examples of what may be included are research papers, creative writing samples, science projects, written copies of oral reports, and artwork. Label each piece of work with the month and year and the name of the course for which the academic work was done. Students may want to include some type of reflection about each project and explain what was learned. In addition, keep a record of any awards or honors and the date received (e.g., honor roll every semester in eighth grade [2009-10], 2nd place in 2009 regional science fair, first place in solo violin at 2010 state music competition).

When students begin high school, they should start a new academic portfolio that includes samples of their best academic work in high school. They will be able to compare their academic portfolio from middle school with the high school portfolio and see their academic growth. The types of

Academic portfolios for middle school and high school

- Save samples of student's best work in core academic subjects.
- Save samples of student's best work in the arts.
- Record completion date and course title on each work.
- Keep everything in a folder or portfolio, including records of any awards or honors and the dates received.
- Consider creating an electronic portfolio.

work saved and the importance of identifying each work (with date, course title and reflection) are the same in middle and high school. Some colleges encourage applicants to submit an academic portfolio as part of the admission process. By saving their work on a regular basis, students will have easy access to their best work along with tangible examples of their hard work throughout middle school and high school.

Portfolio Chart

Each month, select a project/test from each subject to keep in the portfolio.

Subject	Date	Description

Extracurricular interests

The middle school years are also an ideal time for students to explore extracurricular interests, which may include athletics, the arts, student government, school publications, academic projects, religious or civic groups, or community service. Extracurricular activities can be pursued at school, in the community and through employment and religious or civic organizations. Students also can belong to national organizations, such as religious youth groups, Girl/Boy Scouts, Big Brother/Sister, and Jack and Jill. Students may choose to independently develop their own interests.

Being involved in extracurricular activities helps students discover their talents and develop their skills. Extracurricular involvement also builds confidence, creates an identity, and encourages students to see relationships and connections between what they learn in the classroom, their outside activities, and their future employment and leisure activities. Often an activity builds both team and independent skills. For example, students involved in performing arts are part of a team, learning collaboration and team effort on stage, but they also can work independently practicing voice projection, memorization or posture.

When students discover activities that interest them, they should find more ways to develop those interests. For example, students who like animals might start out caring for their own pets. Based on their experience of caring for their own pets, they can get part-time jobs pet sitting for others, which could lead to employment or an internship in a pet store, with a veterinarian, or at a zoo or aquarium. They also could take courses related to their interest in animals, such as biology, anatomy and physiology, and zoology, and select related topics for research papers, art assignments, and science projects. For example, students could complete a research project about seeing eye dogs or the benefits of pets for elderly and terminally ill people; study the anatomy of a horse and draw horses based on their findings; or conduct scientific research on the effects of caffeine on animals or on the changing habitat of animals indigenous to the rainforest. In this way, extracurricular interests can compliment and strengthen academic work.

Many high schools require students to participate in community service in order to graduate, and colleges often recognize volunteers by considering their service in the admission process or awarding special scholarships to students who volunteer. Volunteering can be year-round and ongoing

(working at a hospital, zoo, or shelter for the homeless or tutoring elementary students), during a specific season (teaching physically challenged people to ski or sail), or for a specific event (collecting clothing and food for hurricane victims or running in a fund-raising race to benefit AIDS or cancer patients). Volunteering is a superb way for students to develop their talents and interests and to share and give back to others.

Like their academic portfolio, students in middle school should maintain an extracurricular record that is a list of all activities at school or in the community; independent activities and projects; community service/volunteer work; and employment. The record should include the beginning and ending dates (month/year) of each activity, positions held (e.g., point guard, varsity basketball; president of religious youth group), and awards or honors (Eagle Scout Award; first chair, trumpet, school band). When students enter high school, they should start a new extracurricular record of high school activities. Students can use their portfolio to develop a resume with the help of their guidance counselor. Colleges, scholarship committees, employers, and others will request resumes or information about students' after school activities, community service, and employment.

Many high schools require students to participate in community service in order to graduate, and colleges often recognize volunteers by considering their service in the admission process or awarding special scholarships to students who volunteer.



Extracurricular interests and records for middle and high school

- Extracurricular interests enable students to discover their talents and develop their skills.
- Interests can develop in athletic, artistic, academic, community service, and other areas.
- Students can participate in interests at school, in the community or at work.
- Extracurricular interests build confidence, create an identity and encourage students to see relationships and connections between what they learn in the classroom, their outside activities, and their future employment and leisure activities.
- Extracurricular activities help students learn to work collaboratively and independently.
- Students should find more ways to explore their interests because developing extracurricular interests will compliment and strengthen academic work.
- Students can share and develop talents and interests by volunteering in their community (community service).
- Students and parents should maintain extracurricular records in middle school and high school.
- Students may want to develop a resume and maintain a formal list of extracurricular interests.

Translating Interests into Activities

A student's interests can often be translated into activities. List interests and brainstorm clubs, organizations, teams, etc. to join.

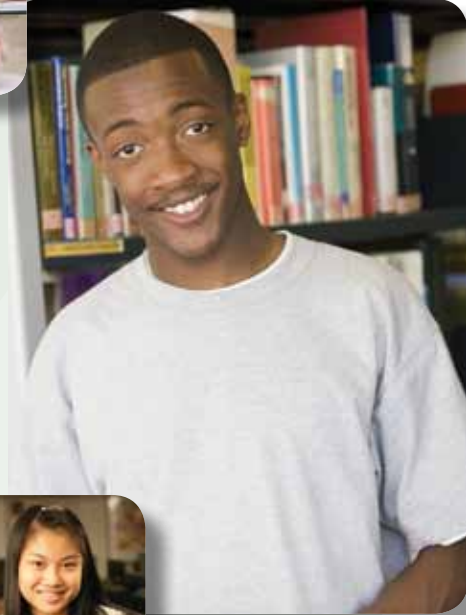
Interests	Related Activities
(i.e. journalism)	(i.e., yearbook)



National Association for
College Admission Counseling
www.nacacnet.org



Center for Student Opportunity
Promoting a College-Bound Culture



STEP-BY-STEP: COLLEGE AWARENESS AND PLANNING

EARLY HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Grades 9 – First Semester 11

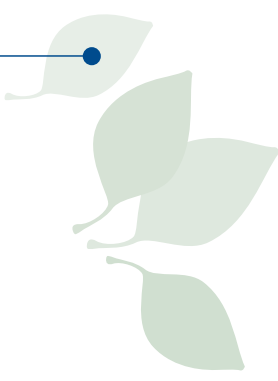
INTRODUCTION

Intervention in the earlier years of high school can put students on a successful path to college attainment and graduation. At this stage, a counselor's role should include:

- Encouraging students to see themselves as college bound
- Instilling the belief that college is accessible for everyone
- Building a strong foundation for students in and outside of the classroom by helping students choose a college preparatory course schedule in high school and encouraging extracurricular involvement
- Putting together a plan for standardized testing
- Building a student's self-motivation to pursue college and helping him or her build a support network of adult mentors to help reach that goal
- Helping students assess their career interests and aspirations and begin researching colleges to pursue those goals

The following six session curriculum lays a comprehensive foundation to address all of the above.





SESSIONS

Early High School Curriculum Grades 9 – First Semester 11

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Building Your Dream Team
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RESOURCES FOR EARLY HIGH SCHOOL:
Parent/Guardian Workshop 186

1

SESSION 1: IT IS ALL ABOUT ME! MY FUTURE PLANS START TODAY

The purpose of this session is to encourage students to think about their academic and personal goals for the future, how they can reach them, and why college may be an important step for them to take. With their career goals in mind, the facilitator can demonstrate how higher education fits into their plans. Students will also learn about incentives to attend college, as well as the myths about financial aid.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will

- comprehend the importance of good decision-making
- have a better understanding of their short term and long term goals
- find peers with similar interests who can help them in the college process
- learn how personal interests and activities can affect their college choices
- understand the personal and financial benefits of postsecondary education
- find answers to questions about college costs

Activities and Handouts:

Activity #1: Common Interests and Connections

Handout: Ice Breaker Bingo Game

Activity #2: What's Your Dream?

Handout: Long-Term Dreams/Goals

Activity #3: Why College?

Handout: Personal College Counseling Questionnaire 1

Activity #4: College Is Affordable

Handout: College Costs/Financial Aid



1

SESSION 1: IT IS ALL ABOUT ME! MY FUTURE PLANS START TODAY

ACTIVITY #1: COMMON INTERESTS AND CONNECTIONS

Opening Discussion:

Although the decision to go to college is a very personal one and each student needs to decide what is best for him or her, talking with other students who have similar goals and interests can be very helpful.

Activity/Handout:

College Bound Bingo—an ice breaker activity to get the peer conversations started.

Instructions:

1. Print and copy a bingo card for each player. (Pencils required.)
2. Players circulate to find group members who match descriptions in the bingo squares.
3. When a match is found, the player writes the name of the individual in the square.
4. Different names must be used in each square. When a player has filled a row with names, s/he yells “Bingo!”
5. With the group, check the squares and identify the individuals described.
6. Continue the game for a second round, with the new goal of filling the entire card. (May need to set a 5 minute time-limit and then award person who came closest.)
7. When a player has filled the entire card, s/he yells “Bingo!”
8. Check the entire card, identifying group members matching each description.
9. Read through card and have all participants stand when a category applies to them

COLLEGE BOUND BINGO

B	I	N	G	O
Does volunteer work	Would like to go out of state for college	Is a 9th grader	Speaks more than 1 language	Has been on the honor roll at school
Has a leadership role in his/her high school	Is active in a church, temple, or mosque	Wants to attend a small college	Wants to major in English or journalism	Whose parents or sibling attended college
Wants to major in history or psychology	Was born in a country other than the U.S.	FREE	Has visited a college campus in the last year	Participates in at least one extra-curricular activity at school
Has attended more than one high school	Plays on a sports team	Has a part-time job	Is a 10th grader	Wants to attend a large university
Plays a musical instrument	Is part of an academic enrichment program outside of school (like Upward Bound)	Whose parents did not attend college	Wants to attend a community college	Wants to major in math or the sciences

1

SESSION 1: IT IS ALL ABOUT ME! MY FUTURE PLANS START TODAY

ACTIVITY #2: WHAT'S YOUR DREAM?

Opening Discussion:

Ask students to think about their values, skills, and interests as they look ahead to their life after high school. Then, ask them to list many of those options (military, work, trades, college). To focus the attention on the importance of college, ask students to think about lifestyle choices—career, car, house, etc.—and share information about how a 2 or 4 year college degree can help them reach their goals.

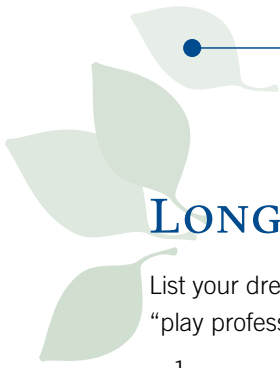
If computers are available, part of the initial discussion should involve searching helpful Web sites (Center for Student Opportunity's College Center—www.CSOLCollegeCenter.org, College Board—www.collegeboard.com, ACT—www.actstudent.org) to show students how to do career and interest searches. Cyber Guidance—www.cyberguidance.net—is a good site that has an excellent section on jobs, what education is required for various jobs, and where certain job/career interests can lead a student. Additionally, www.payscale.com shows salaries by job. If computers are not available, please refer students to the Web sites to visit when they do have computer access.

Activity/Handout:

Long Term Dreams/Goals

Instructions:

1. Distribute the Long-term Dreams/Goals handout
2. Give students 10-15 minutes to complete the worksheet
3. Bring the students back together and facilitate a follow up discussion about their responses.



LONG-TERM DREAMS/GOALS

List your dreams/goals, such as “design clothing,” “draw architectural plans for my dream house,” “play professional sports,” “become a doctor,” etc.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are the first steps to achieving these goals? List them here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List how a postsecondary education can help fulfill these goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

From NACAC's *Guiding the Way to Higher Education: Families, Counselors, and Communities Together*, 2007.

1

SESSION 1: IT IS ALL ABOUT ME! MY FUTURE PLANS START TODAY

ACTIVITY # 3: WHY COLLEGE?

Opening Discussion:

Once a student has an idea of his/her interests, the next step is to ask “Why college?”. Inform students that it is also very important to think about who will influence their decision about going to college. Yogi Berra once said, “If you don’t know where you’re going, you might end up someplace else.” Have students think about and briefly discuss this quote as they are determining the WHY and WHO.

Activity/Handout:

Personal College Counseling Questionnaire 1

Instructions:

1. Distribute the “Personal College Counseling Questionnaire 1” handout
2. Give students 10-15 minutes to complete the worksheet
3. Bring the students back together and facilitate a follow up discussion about their responses.



PERSONAL COLLEGE COUNSELING QUESTIONNAIRE I

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ GPA: _____

Why are you going to college?

Check those that apply and add onto the end if there are responses that are more appropriate for you:

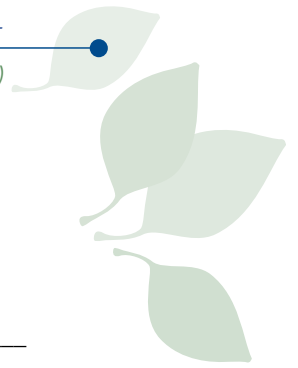
- I'm not ready to get a job yet
- I want to continue my education
- To make more/new friends
- To continue playing a certain sport
- To be with my friends
- To prepare for a career
- To have fun
- My parents insist
- For the personal challenge
- I want to see a different part of the country
- To better humankind
- I don't have anything better to do
- I enjoy learning
- _____
- _____

Who Will Make the College Decision?

Who do you think should make the decision of the college you attend?

- Me. It's my future.
- Me, with strong input from my parents
- Me, with some input from my parents
- Parents, with some input from me
- My college counselor
- My advisor/mentor
- Based on where my parents went to college
- Based on where my older brothers or sisters have gone to college
- Based on where my friends will be

Adapted from Cabral, Joshua. "Addressing the Needs of First-Generation, College-Bound Students: A Comprehensive 5th–12th Grade Approach." *South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School*. 2004



PERSONAL COLLEGE COUNSELING QUESTIONNAIRE I (PAGE 2)

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ GPA: _____

In the space below, please respond to the following questions. Your responses are for your personal information and college counseling only. Therefore, please respond openly and honestly.

1. In which academic area (math, science, history, English, Spanish, etc.) do you do best? Is this subject the easiest for you? Why do you think you do well in this subject?

2. In which academic area (math, science, history, English, Spanish, etc.) do you do the worst? Is this subject the hardest for you? Why do you think you don't do well in this subject?

3. Which academic subject do you enjoy the most? Why do you enjoy it?

4. Which academic subject do you enjoy the least? Why don't you enjoy it?

5. What are your interests outside of school?

6. What's something that you're really good at that no one else knows about?

7. Do you play any sports or are you involved in any clubs or extracurricular activities?

Adapted from Cabral, Joshua. "Addressing the Needs of First-Generation, College-Bound Students: A Comprehensive 5th–12th Grade Approach." *South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School*. 2004

1

SESSION 1: IT IS ALL ABOUT ME! MY FUTURE PLANS START TODAY

ACTIVITY # 4: COLLEGE COSTS/FINANCIAL AID

Opening Discussion:

Going away to college can be exciting because students can live away from home, make new friends and take some amazing courses—remind students, however, that a college degree can give them even more than that. Data shows that a college degree correlates with salary ranges. Today, employers use diplomas and degrees more and more to select candidates for jobs and a person with a bachelor's degree will typically earn nearly twice as much per year as a person with a high school diploma. In fact, any education beyond high school (2 year, 4 year, military training) will increase your earnings.

A Federal Government financial aid publication offers two concrete examples²:

- A dental assistant, who must have two years of college, will earn enough money to buy groceries for a week after working only one day. A high school graduate who is a salesperson in a department store would have to work three days to buy the same groceries.
- An accountant with a college degree will earn enough money in a year to buy a four-door compact car, but a high school graduate working as an aerobics instructor would need three years of income to buy the same car.

Activity/Handout:

Financial Aid True/False Quiz

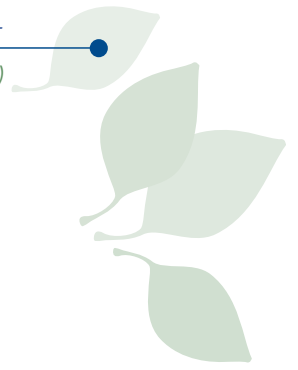
Instructions:

1. Distribute the Financial Aid True/False Quiz
2. Give students 5-10 minutes to complete the worksheet
3. Bring the students back together, review the answers, and facilitate a follow up discussion about each question.

Here are the answers:

1. False—generate a discussion about learning, having more job/career options, creating more opportunities for yourself
2. False
3. True and False—talk about the federal government sites, help at the library and community centers
4. True
5. False—talk about two year schools, certificate programs, and military options
6. False—a college graduate will earn almost twice as much
7. True
8. True and False—colleges may give some full scholarships, but most are partial, and some do not give scholarships at all. Discuss the differences among DI, II, III.
9. False—here is where you can talk about EFC, merit aid, aid packages
10. True—talk about co-op options, for example

² www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/learning.jsp



FINANCIAL AID TRUE/FALSE QUIZ

1. College is not worth the debt involved. It's better to go directly to work. **T I F**
2. Only A students can go to college and get financial aid. **T I F**
3. Applying for financial aid is very difficult and complicated. **T I F**
4. College can be expensive, but two-thirds of all undergraduate students receive financial aid to help cover college costs. **T I F**
5. To make it in today's world, you must have a four-year degree. **T I F**
6. Over the course of a lifetime, a high school graduate can earn as much as a college graduate. **T I F**
7. The average annual income of a person with a college degree is over \$55,000. **T I F**
8. Colleges give full athletic scholarships to athletes. **T I F**
9. Private colleges are too expensive and you shouldn't apply if you don't have the money. **T I F**
10. Some employers will help you pay for college. **T I F**

1

SESSION 1: IT IS ALL ABOUT ME! MY FUTURE PLANS START TODAY

WRAP-UP

Keep in Mind:

Ensure that students leave the session knowing that having a better grasp of their short term and long term goals will not make their path to college easier to facilitate but will increase their satisfaction in life. Goals and dreams may change over the course of a year, month or even a day. The necessity to continue to analyze, organize, and realize dreams and goals always remains the same.

Homework:

1. Students should set aside 30 minutes in a quiet space free of distractions.
2. With a pen and paper in hand, students should take the full half hour to write a list of things that they want to accomplish in their life. This activity should not be restricted to academic or career achievements. Additionally, students should not be limited by the resources that they have available to them now. Encourage students to THINK BIG and WIDE.
3. Students should then take time away from this list and return to it later.
4. When the students return to their lists, they should classify the goals into ones that they can complete while in high school, while in college, and after graduation.
5. Students should think about which goals they can accomplish with or without college education.
6. Finally, pass out the “Paying for College is a Family Affair” for students to take home, read, and/or discuss with their parents.





PAYING FOR COLLEGE IS A FAMILY AFFAIR AND HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

THE SAD FACT is that many students who earn admission to college never go because they do not complete the financial aid process.

THE GOOD NEWS is that there are lots of ways to pay for college and lots of information and help are available to students who honestly need financial aid assistance!!

FACTS WORTH NOTING:

- The earlier you begin to think about paying for college the better.
- Money is available to almost every student who attends college.
- No one gets financial aid by wishing! You need to apply and follow through.
- Even the most ambitious student will need assistance from the adults in the household in order to complete the financial aid application process.
- You do not need to pay anyone to help you apply for financial aid! Beware of anyone who offers a service for a fee
- Often the most expensive colleges have the “deepest pockets” and can help the very neediest students to make college affordable.

In a perfect world, families begin thinking about college finances when their children are still in grade school. But we all know this is NOT a perfect world. So—the time for you to start thinking about paying for college is TODAY!

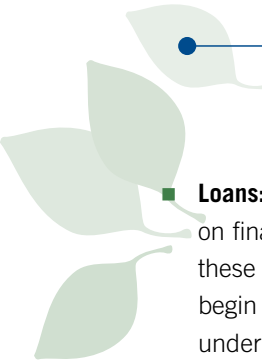
There is a lot of money available to students with need:

While it is true that college costs increase almost yearly, it is also true that there is more financial aid available than ever before—according to the College Board, more than \$199 billion. This money comes from the following sources:

- US Government programs, which provide \$146.5 billion a year in grants, loans and work-study assistance.
- State grant and loan programs.
- College and university grant, loan and scholarship programs.
- Scholarships given by foundations, corporations, and community organizations.

These are the sources of financial aid:

- **Grants and scholarships:** Also called “gift aid,” grants are based on financial need and do not need to be repaid. Scholarships are most-often awarded on the basis of strong academic achievement, a special talent or ability, or personal characteristics.
- **Work-study:** This option gives students the opportunity for part-time employment either on campus or off campus at a private, non-profit organization or public agency to help them meet their financial need.

- 
- **Loans:** These are offered to students or parents and must be repaid. Loans that are awarded based on financial need are low-interest loans, usually sponsored by the federal government. Interest on these loans is paid by the government for students with the greatest need. Repayment does not begin until 6 months after completion of the college program and may be deferred until a later date under some special circumstances.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID IS TIME-CONSUMING, BUT NOT HARD! Here is how the need-based application process generally works:

1. Every student must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This is the only application required by many colleges, and should be completed as soon as possible after January 1st of the senior year. As the name says, this is free! The preferred method for completing this form is online, although a paper copy is available. The Web site is: **www.fafsa.gov** (NOT “.com,” a fee-based, unnecessary service)
2. A few colleges and universities also require that students complete a financial aid form specific to the institution, or the College Scholarship Service Profile application, which is offered through the College Board. There is a fee for this form, but fee waivers are available through school counselors and college financial aid offices.
3. Financial aid offices use the information provided through these forms to determine a family’s ability to pay for college. This is called the “estimated family contribution” (EFC), and it is always the same, regardless of the cost of the college. That means that financial aid can help you afford even the most expensive college, if you qualify for admission.
4. In the spring of the senior year, colleges notify students of the amount and type of aid offered.
5. Students have until May 1st to compare offers of admission and financial aid in order to make one final college enrollment decision.

There are many people and resources who can help you find your way through the financial aid process. Your school counselor, your teachers, adults in your community or place of worship may all be available to advise you. At every college you consider, financial aid officers will be eager to help students and families understand and complete the financial aid process. Don’t be afraid to ask for lots and lots of help.

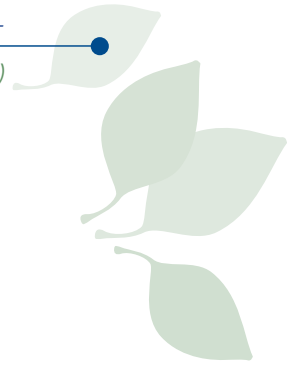
If you are a good student and an active participant in school and community, you may qualify for scholarships offered by corporations, foundations, religious organizations, or community groups. Ask at your school about possibilities. Do some research online at FastWeb (www.fastweb.com/) and The College Board (http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp).

In the end, all of the work required to apply for financial aid is well worth the effort! In 2008:

- College graduates earned an average of \$55,700.
- High School graduates earned an average of \$33,800.

Over the course of your life and career that difference will make up for the cost of even the most expensive college—many times over!!

For more information on financial aid visit: **www.finaid.org** and **www.studentaid.ed.gov**



HERE IS HOW ONE STUDENT FINANCED HER FIRST YEAR IN COLLEGE:

Susan Smart

Total Cost: **\$21,120**

(Tuition, Room and Board, Books, Fees, Travel)

EFC **\$3,241**

(Estimated Family Contribution as determined by FAFSA)

Financial need: **\$17,879**

How she pays:

Scholarship from college	\$4,000
Federally subsidized student loan	\$3,500
State scholarship	\$2,500
Federal Pell Grant	\$1,060
Federal Perkins Loan	\$2,400
Federal SEOG Grant	\$300
Federal Work Study	\$1,600
Scholarship from church	\$1,500
Summer earnings	\$1,019



2

SESSION 2: THERE IS A COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE!

The purpose of this session is to help students understand that a vast array of college possibilities lie ahead for all students and that each student will be responsible for identifying his/her own college options. In this session, students will be encouraged to begin thinking about what they value and what they will look for in a college. Students will be exposed to some of the resources available for college research.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will

- understand that the college experience is very different from the middle or high school experience
- gain an understanding of different types of colleges and the different experiences and opportunities offered
- have been introduced to some of the resources available for getting to know about colleges
- begin to explore the kind(s) of colleges which might be a “fit”
- have been introduced to resources for researching college information.

Materials and Handouts:

All Activities: blackboard and chalk, dry-erase board and markers, or flipchart with markers

Recap Activity: Have students share their lists from their Session I homework assignment.

Activity #1: Evaluating Your School Experience to Date

Activity #2: Getting to Know College Possibilities

Handout: Charting Your Course for College—Part One

Activity #3: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About College but Were Afraid to Ask

Handout: Charting Your Course for College—Part Two

Handout: Doing Your Research

Several college guidebooks and college viewbooks

Activity #4: Using the Internet to Research Colleges

Handout: Internet Sites Focused on College Exploration

Access to computers, if possible. Alternatively, you may want to photocopy examples of Web pages which students may access for free.

2

SESSION 2: THERE IS A COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE!

ACTIVITY #1: EVALUATING YOUR SCHOOL EXPERIENCE TO DATE

Opening Discussion:

Remind students that they probably didn't have much choice when it came to selecting the schools that they are currently attending. Additionally, remind students that there may not have been a large number of options regarding their choice for high school. However, the sky's the limit when it comes to the choices students will have for college. This is the perfect time to begin thinking about all of the possibilities that exist!

Activity/Handouts:

None

Questions to open up discussion with students:

- How was it decided which high school you would attend?
- What have you liked about your current school?
- What would you change if you could?
- How well do you anticipate that your high school will help you reach your goals?
- If you could choose your high school now, what would you look for?

Instructions:

1. Ask students to brainstorm a list of qualities that they believe would make a school "just right" and list these qualities on blackboard or flip charts.
2. Have students discuss the qualities on the list and how these might apply to their college search.

2

SESSION 2: THERE IS A COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE!

ACTIVITY # 2: GETTING TO KNOW COLLEGE POSSIBILITIES

Opening Discussion:

Colleges aren't all the same. Different colleges and universities have different missions (functions, goals). This activity is designed to teach students the different types of higher education opportunities that exist for them after high school.

Activity/Handout:

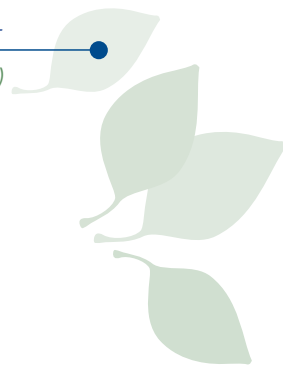
Charting Your Course for College—Part One

Instructions:

1. Give every student the handout entitled “Charting Your Course for College—Part One”. Allow students a few minutes to read the handout and then review the different types of colleges with the students.
2. Write, as headings, each category of college on the blackboard or flip chart pages.
3. Ask students to suggest names of colleges which they think fit into each category. Help them evaluate each suggested college accurately, and then write the name of the college under the correct heading on blackboard or flipcharts

AND/OR

4. Ask students to suggest people they know who have attended specific colleges. Evaluate which category of college that institution falls under. Write the name of the college under the correct heading on blackboard or flipcharts.



CHARTING YOUR COURSE FOR COLLEGE (PART ONE)³

“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler...
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

—Robert Frost

Few decisions that you will make in your life will seem more important than your choice of a college. In fact, the career paths open to you, many of the friends you will maintain for a lifetime, even the area of the country in which you are likely to live and work will be strongly influenced by your college decision. It is important to remember that choosing a college—or even a list of colleges to which to apply—is not an exact science. There is not “one perfect” college for anyone. Instead, there are many colleges that would be a fine match for every college-bound student. The trick is to identify your unique priorities for selecting a college, carefully research the characteristics of a range of colleges and universities and, finally, make a match of several options to which you will make application.

GETTING STARTED

As you begin planning for college selection, take stock of your priorities. You will be sitting in the classroom at your final choice, not your parents and not your best friend. Although it is a good idea to seek advice, especially from teachers or counselors who know colleges well, in the end, no one can tell you where you’ll be satisfied and happy.

A good place to start is by considering what you have and have not found important and rewarding in your high school experience.

Ask questions like:

- How do I learn best? In large or lecture-style classes, or in small discussion/seminar settings?
- Do I prefer being one of the best in a class, or do I need the competition of equally bright peers in order to challenge myself?
- Do I learn more quickly when structure is clear and uniform, or does freedom to make choices about how I spend my time for a class fit me better?
- What extracurricular activities have been most important to me? Which will I want to continue in college?
- What have I learned about my academic interests and abilities that will influence what I might study in college?
- Who are my friends? Do I want my relationships in college to be similar or different?

Answers to these questions will help you apply what you have learned about yourself during your high school years as you set priorities for your college experience.

³ Copyright 2004: Mary Lee Hoganson

Before you begin picking college possibilities, it is also a good idea to have a candid conversation with your parents. Are there limits to what they can or will contribute to your college finances? (If your parents are separated or divorced, ask this question of both parents since many colleges will expect a financial contribution from both.) Are there colleges which they hope you will consider? Are they comfortable with allowing you to travel a great distance for college?

If you and your parents are on the same page—great! If not, it is better to negotiate differences of opinion at the beginning of the selection process rather than at the end, when you have selected a college which your parents will not support as a final choice. If you find your parents too narrowly focused, your counselor may be able to educate them about the wide range of quality colleges. If they are worried about paying for college, your counselors can help them understand the financial aid process.

CONSIDERING COLLEGE TYPES:

Colleges aren't all the same. Different colleges and universities have different missions (or functions, or goals). While no two are exactly alike, most fit into one or more of the following categories:

Liberal Arts Colleges focus on the education of undergraduate students. Classes are generally taught by professors who see teaching as their primary responsibility. Because most liberal arts colleges are smaller than universities, classes tend to be smaller and more personal attention is available. As opposed to preparation for a specific career path, students who attend liberal arts colleges are exposed to a broad base of courses in the humanities, social sciences and sciences. In addition, they select at least one area of in-depth study which is their college “major”. Many employers look for graduates of liberal arts programs, valuing their well-rounded preparation.

Universities are generally larger and include a liberal arts college, as well as some professionally-oriented colleges and graduate programs. Universities offer a greater range of academic choices than do liberal arts colleges. They will likely provide more extensive resources in terms of library, laboratory, fine arts and athletic facilities. At many large universities class size will reflect institutional size, with most introductory classes being taught in a lecture format.

Technical Institutes and Professional Schools enroll students who have made clear decisions about what they want to study and emphasize preparation for specific careers, for example in music or fine arts, engineering or technical sciences. You will want to be quite sure of your future direction before selecting one of these options.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities find their origins in the time when African-American students were systematically denied access to most other colleges and universities. Students at HBCUs have a unique opportunity to experience an educational community in which they are a part of the majority. They find committed faculty mentors who encourage their expectations of success.

Similarly, **Women's Colleges**, with their larger numbers of female faculty and administrators, offer college women confidence-building role models, greater opportunities to serve in a full range of student leadership positions, and a heightened awareness of career possibilities for women.

Community or junior colleges generally offer the first two years of a liberal arts education, in addition to specialized occupational preparation. An associate degree is awarded at the end of a two-year program of studies, following which many students continue their education at a four-year institution.

Proprietary institutions are considered for-profit companies that operate under the demands of investors and stockholders. They attract adult learners and part-time students in search of narrowly-focused professional training opportunities. These programs usually offer a non-traditional format; many for-profits also have classes solely available online.

ACTIVITY # 3: EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT COLLEGE BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

Opening Discussion:

In this activity students are encouraged to investigate the many characteristics of colleges and universities that should be considered as they explore options and what constitutes an appropriate match or “good fit.” In addition, students are introduced to reliable resources for college research.

Activity/Handout:

Charting Your Course for College—Part Two

Doing Your Research

Several college guidebooks and college viewbooks

Instructions:

1. Give every student the handout entitled “Charting Your Course for College—Part Two.”
2. Ask students to brainstorm a list of everything they would want to know about a college before deciding to apply. (For example: Is it in a city or the country? What majors are offered? Does the college have fraternities and sororities?) List these suggestions on a clean blackboard or fresh flipchart pages. Keep prompting until a relatively long list is created. Prompts might include questions like:
 - a. What about a location might make a difference to you?
 - b. What about where you will live at college?
 - c. What kinds of facilities might you want on a campus?
 - d. What will you want to do to have fun?
3. After the list is completed and all responses have been recorded, ask each student to consider and pick the three to five questions that are the most important to him/her. Make a checkmark next to each question picked.
4. Circle the top vote getters.
5. Ask students where they think they could find information about each topic/quality circled.
6. Introduce students to several good college guidebooks and a sampling of college view books.
7. Divide students into small groups. Give each group at least one guidebook and several college view books. Ask each group to develop a list of information/answers to questions that they were able to locate.
8. Have each group report on what was located.
9. To conclude this activity, distribute handout “Doing Your Research” to be read at home.

CHARTING YOUR COURSE FOR COLLEGE (PART TWO)⁴

Here are some other important things to consider in selecting colleges:

ACCREDITATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE FEDERAL STUDENT AID PROGRAMS: The goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by colleges and universities meets acceptable levels of quality. Accrediting agencies, which are private educational associations of regional or national scope, develop evaluation criteria and conduct peer evaluations to assess whether or not those criteria are met. To participate in the federal student aid programs, an institution must be accredited by an accrediting agency or state approval agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a “reliable authority as to the quality of postsecondary education” within the meaning of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended. This is all very technical, but the bottom line is if a college or university is unaccredited, it will not be able to offer federal student aid. You should be very cautious about considering a school that does not participate in the federal student aid programs.

INSTITUTION SIZE: The size of a college or university will have an impact upon many of your opportunities and experiences. The range of academic majors offered, the extracurricular possibilities, the amount of personal attention you’ll receive, the number of books in the library, will all be influenced by size.

In considering size, however, it is essential that you look beyond the raw number of students attending. Consider instead, average class size for both first year students and upperclassmen. Investigate not just the number of faculty, but also how accessible faculty are to students. Perhaps you are considering a small department within a large school, or vice versa. Large schools may offer extensive support services for students with special needs or those who are experiencing difficulty. Smaller schools may not be able to fund similar programs. On the other hand, extra support may not be necessary if faculty work closely with individual students.

LOCATION: Distance from home may be important to you. Is it important to you to be able to visit home frequently, or do you see this as a time to experience a new part of the country? Some of you will prefer an urban environment with access to museums, ethnic food, or major league ball games. Others will hope for easy access to outdoor activities or the serenity and safety of a more rural setting.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS: If you have a good idea of something specific you want to study in college or a career for which you want to prepare, look for well-respected academic departments in this discipline at the colleges you explore. Talk with professors and students in these departments. Research relative reputation by surveying adults already in the field and using printed resources which rank academic departments.

You should not limit your selection process to academic program issues alone. Studies show that a majority of college students change college major at least once during their college years. Therefore, it is important to pick a college or university that will offer you many appealing possibilities. Look for unique options such as study abroad, unusual academic calendars, or cooperative education plans which enable you to include several paid internships with your classwork, as ways of enhancing your education.

If you are undecided, relax and pick an academically-balanced institution which offers a range of majors and programs. Most colleges offer expert counseling to help the undecided student find a focus.



CAMPUS LIFE: Be sure that you consider what your experience will be like at a college beyond the classroom. In order to grow in all ways, you will want a reasonable balance between academic rigor and an active social life. Find out what is available in terms of extracurricular activities, athletics, and special interest groups. Does the community surrounding the college offer attractive outlets for students? Are students truly welcomed by the community? Is there an ethnic or religious community in which you can participate? What influence, do fraternities and sororities have on campus life?

Colleges will often require that you live in campus housing for one or more years. So, in considering social life, be sure to look carefully at the quality of life in the dormitories. Many colleges now offer residential-life options, such as substance-free dorms and special interest floors for students who share academic, recreational or community service interests. Others will offer dormitory-based study assistance, computer facilities, and counseling services. Ask if housing is guaranteed to be available to returning students. If so, how are dormitory assignments made after the first year?

COST: Today's price-tag for a college education has made cost an important consideration for most students. At the same time, virtually all colleges work very hard to ensure that academically-qualified students from every economic circumstance can find the financial aid that will allow them to attend. In considering cost, look beyond the price-tag to financial assistance that may be available. Decide the value of a desired educational experience and how much sacrifice (usually in terms of work and loan) you are willing to make to obtain your goals. Work closely with the financial aid officers at the colleges to which you apply.

Two factors that are less obvious to many students, but very important in predicting the kind of experience you will have in college are:

DIVERSITY: You will learn much from your college classmates every day—in the classroom and in activities. Many graduates tell us that this was an important consideration in their college choice. Consider geographic, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of the student body as ways of assessing your future learning opportunities.

RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES: One of the best ways to measure the quality of a college or university and the satisfaction of its students is by learning the percentage of students who return after the first year and the percentage of entering students who remain to graduate. Comparatively good retention and graduation rates are indicators that:

- A college and a majority of its students are well-matched,
- Sufficient classes and academic programs are available, and that
- Responsible academic, social, and financial support systems exist for most students.



DOING YOUR RESEARCH

Today, there are so many resources available to students looking at colleges that it is hard to know where to start. If you are determined to do a thorough job of researching colleges you will want to use several of the following resources:

COLLEGE GUIDEBOOKS: Students often begin with one or two of the many college guides. Excellent and objective resources include *The College Handbook*, published by the College Board, and *Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges*, to name only two of the better known. These comprehensive references contain all of the data needed to answer most of your factual questions. Guides which address, in addition, quality of life issues and are based on surveys of enrolled students, offer subjective information. These include *The Fiske Guide to Colleges* and *The Insider's Guide* that is published by the Yale Daily News. If you want to get specific information about college majors, the College Board's *Index of College Majors* is a good starting place. Ratings of specific academic programs, though also subjective in nature, can be found in resources such as *Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges*. Most public and many school libraries will keep copies of these guidebooks on shelves.

Beware of rankings that appear to make sweeping comparisons of the quality of entire institutions. You should know that these rankings are often based on data reported by the colleges themselves, the accuracy of which has recently been questioned. Such rankings often weigh factors, like acceptance rate of applicants or average faculty salaries, which have little demonstrable relationship to the quality of an undergraduate's education. Remember that all colleges have academic programs of varying strength.

COLLEGE-PRODUCED RESOURCES: Colleges will shower you with publications once you show any interest. Glossy viewbooks give a brief glimpse of campus, majors, student life, and the admission process. Videos produced by many colleges will give you some sense of a college's campus if you can't visit. Don't ignore the college catalog as a source of information, if it is available (most likely in your school library). It is the definitive place to:

- look for application deadlines and requirements,
- see the breadth and depth of classes offered in your areas of interest,
- find a comprehensive list of scholarships offered, and
- discover the academic credentials of faculty members.

COMPUTER RESOURCES: The computer has had a significant impact on the type and availability of new college resources. In the past few years there has been a proliferation of computer software which is tailored to the college search process. Check to see if your school counseling office has available a college-search program to assist you in your college planning.



PEOPLE RESOURCES: Your school counselor will help you assess your qualifications for a range of postsecondary options and share the experiences of students from your school who have attended various institutions. Plan to meet with college admission officers if they visit your school in the spring and fall. Be prepared with questions that go beyond information you can look up in guidebooks. Ask about student satisfaction, retention, campus safety, support services, etc. Feel free to follow up with letters or phone calls to this admission person. Alumni of your school, who are attending or have graduated from colleges that you are considering, will be an excellent source of information. Because they are likely to have entered college with a background similar to yours, their experiences are particularly meaningful.

Talk to people who are working in careers to which you aspire. Ask for their recommendations about college programs and preparation paths. Many professional associations provide resources to students preparing for specific vocations.

COLLEGE FAIRS AND OPEN HOUSES: Watch the bulletin boards at your school for announcements of area-wide college fairs or open houses hosted on college campuses. The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) holds large college fairs in many large cities throughout the country. In addition to the general fairs, NACAC hosts college fairs specifically for students interested in visual and performing arts. You may find information about the dates and locations of NACAC fairs at www.nacacnet.org. At a fair you will have an opportunity to meet and talk with representatives from many colleges and universities, ask questions which are specific to your search, and get on mailing lists for applications.

VISITS TO COLLEGE CAMPUSES: The very best way to gain first-hand knowledge of a college or university is to visit. At a minimum, make some visits to colleges and universities in your local area, which vary in size and kind. This will give you a baseline for judging the kind of environment you are seeking. It is very important that you visit the college you think you will attend, before making a final commitment. Arrange through the admission office to attend classes and stay in a dorm, if possible.



2

SESSION 2: THERE IS A COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE!

ACTIVITY # 4: USING THE INTERNET TO RESEARCH COLLEGES

Opening Discussion:

As early and as often as possible, students should make use of internet tools in researching:

- specific colleges,
- the college admission process,
- financial aid and scholarships.

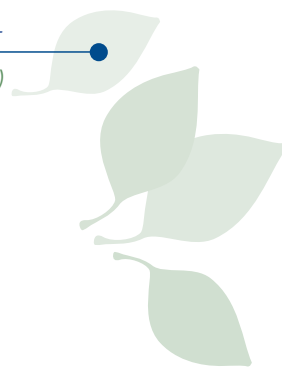
Activity/Handout:

Internet Sites Focused on College Exploration

You will want access to computers, if possible. Alternatively, you may want to photocopy examples of web pages, which students may access for free.

Instructions:

1. Distribute handout listing good, free Web sites for exploring colleges.
2. Explain the difference between free Web sites and those which charge fees for use.
3. If a computer with a projector is available, walk students through one of the Web sites. Alternatively, use photocopied Web pages to talk about the kinds of information available on exploration Web sites.
4. Encourage students to use computers at school, the library and home to begin researching colleges and college matches.
5. If computers are available, allow students to begin exploring. Circulate to be of assistance throughout this activity.



INTERNET SITES FOCUSED ON COLLEGE EXPLORATION:

COLLEGE INFORMATION

CSO College Center: www.CSOCollegeCenter.org

The College Board: www.collegeboard.com

KnowHow2Go: www.knowhow2go.org

Hobson's CollegeView: www.collegeview.com

Peterson's: www.petersons.com

The Common Application Online: www.commonapp.org

Colleges That Change Lives: www.ctcl.org

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Federal Student Aid: <http://studentaid.ed.gov>

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): www.fafsa.gov

FAFSA4caster: www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov

CSS/PROFILE: <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>

The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid: www.finaid.org

FastWeb: www.fastweb.com

FindTuition: www.findtuition.com

Sallie Mae: www.salliemae.com

TESTING

ACT: www.act.org

ACT Fee Waiver Instructions: www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/feewaiver.html

SAT: The College Board: www.collegeboard.com

SAT Fee Waiver Instructions: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenfees/feewaivers.html

Preliminary SAT (PSAT): www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html

Free Test Prep from Number2.com: www.number2.com

The Princeton Review: www.princetonreview.com

Kaplan's Test Prep: www.kaptest.com

ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS AND RESEARCH/POLICY

National Association for College Admission Counseling: www.nacacnet.org

MemberPortal/United Negro College Fund (UNCF): www.uncf.org

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities: www.hacu.net/hacu/Default_EN.asp

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education: www.nafeo.org

First In The Family: www.firstinthefamily.org

ATHLETICS

The Official NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse Web site: <http://eligibilitycenter.org>

Campus Champs: www.campuschamps.org

Athletic Aid: www.athleticaid.com

CAREERS

The Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/oco

2

SESSION 2: THERE IS A COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE!

WRAP-UP

Keep in Mind:

No two schools are exactly alike. Students need to know that each college presents a different opportunity and a new way to grow. Because colleges can differ vastly, students should be strongly encouraged to do their research of a variety of schools, and they should be aware that there are a multitude of resources designed to help them do so.

Homework:

1. Instruct students to read the “Doing Your Research” handout prior to the next session.
2. Upon reading “Doing Your Research”, students should pick one or two of the resources mentioned on the handout to find out more information about 1 college that currently interests them. Public and school libraries are a good place to access computers and/or college guidebooks and college view books.
3. They should then record 3 pieces of interesting information about the college in their notebook and be prepared to discuss their findings with the group.



3

SESSION 3: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: CURRICULUM AND TESTING

The purpose of this session is to impress upon the students that they must begin now in order to maximize their potential for admission to the appropriate colleges. They should understand they are “in the driver’s seat” and can truly chart their course for the future. By learning more about selecting a college prep course of study and learning about the types of standardized tests they should consider taking, students will be better prepared to apply to college when they reach senior year.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, a student will

- understand all components necessary for a college prep curriculum
- have made a tentative course plan for high school
- understand how testing impacts admission, which tests to take, and when

Activities and Handouts:

Recap Activity: Have students share some of the information that they discovered while researching a college through their “Doing Your Research” Activity.

Activity #1: What classes will you take to prepare for college?

Handouts: Your High School Classes Will Open the Doors to College; What Classes Will You Take to Prepare for College?

Activity #2: Standardized Tests: What are they?

Handout: Standardized Test Information Sheet

Activity #3: Practicing the SAT and ACT

Handout: Practice SAT and ACT Questions and explanation of answers



3

SESSION 3: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: CURRICULUM AND TESTING

ACTIVITY # 1: CURRICULUM PLANNING

Opening Discussion:

Preparing for college entrance and success begins with extremely careful planning of high school course work. Every student needs to focus the bulk of energy during the high school years on classes that are truly “college-preparatory.” While it is certainly important to “enrich” a four-year schedule with classes in the fine and practical arts, colleges will look for the “meat and potatoes” classes in English, mathematics, foreign languages, laboratory sciences, and history/social sciences.

Activity/Handout:

Your High School Classes will Open the Doors to College What Classes Will You Take to Prepare for College?

Instructions:

1. Distribute handout: “Your High School Classes Will Open the Doors to College”, and activity sheet: “What Classes Will You Take to Prepare for College?”
2. After allowing students time to read and consider the handout. Ask them to individually complete the activity sheet.
3. Divide students into small groups to compare responses.
4. Allow small groups to report to the larger group about the ways they are and aren’t on track for college. What deficiencies have been identified? What do individual students need to do to catch up?
5. Answer any questions that this activity may have brought forward.



YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES WILL OPEN THE DOORS TO COLLEGE

Because you are planning to go to college, it's important that you take the right classes in high school. That means that, beginning in 9th grade, the majority of your classes should be ones that will prepare you for admission to and, perhaps even more importantly, success in college. Most admission officers will tell you that the first thing they look at is your choice of classes, even before they look at grades. When it comes time to apply to college you want to make sure that you meet the admission criteria of ALL colleges in which you are interested. Always remember that it is much better to be “overprepared” than “underprepared”.

Here's what you need by the end of your senior year in order to meet the admission expectations at a majority of colleges:

- 4 full years of English classes. This includes courses in which you study writing and courses in which you read literature. Colleges know that you need to be able to write well in nearly every career. You need to be able to read and analyze, and you need to develop strong communication skills!
- 4 full years of Math classes. Students who take math in each year of high school are far more successful in college than students taking only three years. Math is the tool that you will use for many other classes, especially those in science. Your math classes should include at least four of the following six classes, taken in this order:
 - Pre-algebra
 - Algebra
 - Precalculus
 - Geometry
 - Algebra II and/or trigonometry
 - Calculus

Never “skip” a year of math in high school, because you will lose your momentum. If you do not take math in your senior year, you will find that the math classes required in college will be very difficult!

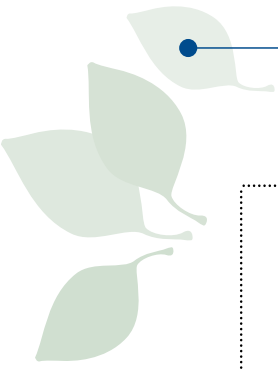
- 3-4 years of laboratory science classes. You will have the strongest background if you have taken at least one year each of:
 - Biology
 - Chemistry
 - Physics
- 2 years, at a minimum, of social sciences. Most college freshmen studied World History and American History in high school. Other social science options include:
 - Government
 - Sociology
 - Geography
 - Psychology

- 2-4 years of foreign language. More and more colleges are requiring a minimum of 2 years of language study while in high school, as an admission criterion. Because many colleges require students to study a second language, it is important that you expose yourself to the study of languages while in high school.

A small number of colleges require one year of visual or performing art prior to admission. Participation in these classes throughout high school, can help you to develop a “special talent” that will make you a highly qualified applicant.

As a summary, most colleges require students to meet certain college prep curriculum standards. But just meeting the minimum is not necessarily the best way to prepare for college. Strong preparation means going beyond the minimum—allowing you to start your college career in college-level courses, not remedial courses which are designed to help you catch up or review high school material—for NO CREDIT!

SPECIAL NOTE FOR ATHLETES: Work with your counselor and coaches to make sure that your classes meet the standards of the NCAA Clearinghouse. Go to www.athleticscholarships.net for more information.



WHAT CLASSES WILL YOU TAKE TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE:

Subject	Minimum college preparation	State universities and other selective college requirements	Highly selective college recommendations (Honors & AP levels, when possible)	My courses to date	I need to take
English (with an emphasis on reading and writing)	4 years	4 years	4 years		
Math	3 years, including algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra	4 years, including algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra	4 years, including algebra, geometry, and advanced algebra		
Social Studies	2-3 years, including 1 year of U.S. History and 1-2 years from other social sciences	2-3 years, including 1 year of U.S. History and 1-2 years from other social sciences	2-3 years, including 1 year of U.S. History and 1-2 years from other social sciences		
Science	2 years of lab science: Biology, Chemistry or Physics	2-3 years of lab science: Biology, Chemistry or Physics	2-3 years of lab science: Biology, Chemistry or Physics		
Foreign Language	2 years of the same foreign language	2-4 years of the same foreign language	4 years of the same foreign language		

3

SESSION 3: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: CURRICULUM AND TESTING

ACTIVITY # 2: STANDARDIZED TESTING

Opening Discussion:

Since standardized testing is required for admission to many colleges and is used to qualify for many scholarships, all students should be sure to take the SAT and/or ACT at least once. Preparation is recommended for both tests and both companies offer free materials to help with that preparation (online information is available through www.actstudent.org and www.collegeboard.com or through bulletins available in the guidance office). The more a student reads and the more s/he is familiar with the test, the better the results will be. Many students will have the ability to take the PLAN and/or PSAT through their schools and should take advantage of that opportunity. The ACT also offers Explore, a college readiness test aimed at 8th and 9th grade students.

Activity/Handout:

Standardized Tests

Instructions:

1. Ask the students to look over the Standardized Tests handout and write down any questions they might have.
2. Once they have each had an opportunity to read and think about the handout, ask them to share their questions.
3. If there is a computer available, show the students the College Board and ACT sites and particularly the site for registering for the SAT and ACT.
4. If you don't have computer access, then try to print out the College Board and ACT "homepages" to show students what they look like.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Their names can sometimes sound like alphabet soup, but the standardized tests you will take in high school are important for college. Some schools require different tests, so you want to make sure to check with each one about their requirements. Here are the four main tests you may have to take if you want to apply to most colleges:

ACT TESTS

EXPLORE

The Explore helps students in 8th and 9th grades to plan their high school careers. The test will help to discover appropriate high school courses, prepare for the ACT or find a career direction.

When do I take the test?

The EXPLORE is taken in 8th and 9th grades.

How do I register?

The EXPLORE is usually administered by your school district. See your guidance counselor for more information or go to www.actstudent.org/explore.

What is the test's structure?

The EXPLORE consists of four 30-minute sections of English, math, reading, and science.

PLAN

The PLAN is the pre-ACT test taken to help students estimate how well they will do on the ACT and, in some cases, can have bearing on scholarship. It is a comprehensive guidance resource that helps students measure their current academic development, explore career/training options, and make plans for the remaining years of high school and post-graduation years.

When do I take the test?

The PLAN is taken during the tenth grade.

How do I register?

The PLAN is usually administered by high schools. See your guidance counselor for more information or go to www.actstudent.org/plan.

What is the test's structure?

PLAN is a four part multiple-choice test structured very similarly to the ACT with sections covering English, mathematics, reading and science.

For more information about PLAN, talk to your high school counselor or visit www.actstudent.org/plan.



ACT

This standardized test is designed to assess high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. It often is used for college admission decisions, and all U.S. colleges and universities accept ACT results. The ACT can also be used to determine NCAA eligibility.

When do I take the test?

The ACT is offered usually six times during a given school year. Students generally take the test first during the spring of their junior year and/ or during the fall of their senior year. It is usually best to take it as early as possible, as you may want to take the test again to get your best score possible.

When and how do I register?

A registration packet should be available at your high school, but you may also register online at www.actstudent.org. Be mindful of the registration deadlines for each test, as they are generally one month in advance, but it is suggested that you register at least six weeks prior to the test. Fee waivers are available for students who qualify for financial assistance, so inquire with the ACT directly.

What is the test's structure?

The ACT consists of four multiple-choice tests in English, mathematics, reading, and science, as well as an optional writing test.

How is it scored?

Each subject is scored 1-36 for a composite score, the highest being a 36 overall.

All pertinent ACT testing date information, fee information, registration information and all other questions can be answered by visiting www.actstudent.org.

College Board/SAT Tests

PSAT

The PSAT (Preliminary SAT) is a two-part, exam that is very similar to the SAT. Not to be taken lightly, the PSAT is generally the first indicator colleges and universities use for scholarship purposes and placement.

When do I take the test?

Most people take the PSAT in the fall of their junior year in high school. In addition, some students choose to take it during their sophomore year, which is strongly encouraged. However, scores on the PSAT during your junior year are used to determine National Merit Scholars who qualify for merit-based scholarships distributed throughout the United States

How do I register?

You must sign up for the PSAT at your high school. The PSAT is administered during October of every school year. There is a fee associated with taking the PSAT, but there are fee waiver opportunities for certain students and some schools pay for their students to take the test.

What is the test's structure?

The PSAT consists of two 25-minute verbal sections, two 25-minute math sections, and one 30-minute writing skills section.



SAT

The SAT is one of two standardized tests used by colleges as part of their admission requirements. The SAT I measures verbal, written, and math reasoning skills and is used for admission at most colleges. The SAT is often used to determine eligibility for scholarships and is required by the NCAA for those athletes who hope to compete in college.

The SAT Subject Tests (formerly SAT II) consist of more than 20 subject areas and are achievement tests designed to measure subject-area knowledge. Many colleges use the Subject Tests for admission, for course placement, and to advise students about course selection, but only some require them

When do I take the test?

The SAT and Subject Tests are administered every October, November, December, February, March, May and June of each school year. Most students take the SAT during the second semester of their junior year and/or the first semester of the senior year. The best rule of thumb with the SAT is the earlier and more often the better.

When and how do I register?

A registration packet should be available at your high school, but you may also register online at www.collegeboard.com. Keep in mind the registration deadlines for each test, as they are generally one month in advance, but it is suggested that you register at least six weeks prior to the test. While there are costs associated with taking the test, students who require financial assistance may qualify for fee waivers. (www.collegeboard.com/satfeewaiver)

What's the test's structure?

The SAT is 3 hour and 45 minute test with ten sections consisting of critical reading, math, writing, and one experimental section which is masked to look like a regular section. Extended time and other accommodations are available for students who qualify. For more information, see your guidance counselor.

How is it scored?

Scores on each section range from 200-800 points. The scores from each section are combined, and the highest possible combined score is 2400.

All pertinent SAT testing date information, fee information, registration information and all other questions can be answered by visiting www.collegeboard.com.

Other tests

The Test of English As a Second Language (TOEFL) tests your ability to communicate in English and is a test for students for whom English is not a first language. The test measures skills in reading, listening, speaking and writing in English and requires you to combine two or more of these skills to respond to a question. It is usually an internet based exam given in designated test centers by appointment. Paper based tests are only offered in remote areas. For more information, see your guidance counselor or go to www.ets.org.

SPECIAL NOTE: Not all colleges require standardized testing although they often do require additional essays and or recommendations. For a list of those colleges, go to www.fairtest.org.

3

SESSION 3: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: CURRICULUM AND TESTING

ACTIVITY # 3: PRACTICE SAT & ACT QUESTIONS

Opening Discussion:

Standardized tests aren't fun for anyone. But the name of the game is "practice." With practice you will become more comfortable with the test and score better when it comes time to take the real test.

Activity/Handout:

Sample SAT and ACT Questions

Sample SAT Questions: Explanations

Sample ACT Questions: Explanations

Instructions:

1. Divide the students into groups of three and tell them that they will be receiving three practice SAT/ACT questions.
2. Tell the groups that they have three minutes to find the answer to the questions and will receive 5 points for each right answer.
3. The group with the most points will get to explain how they solved the problems. Let them see how closely their explanation comes to the one provided by the College Board/ACT.

NOTE: Depending upon the academic level of the students, the counselor may want to find more difficult questions by going to the College Board web site and looking at "Practice Questions" in the section called "Prepare for the SAT." The web site also posts a "Question of the Day" every day which is good practice for those students who have access to a computer. Practice ACT questions are located at www.actstudent.org.

Wrap-Up Discussion:

Remind students that practice is the best way to do their best on any test. If desired, bring sample questions to each subsequent session for this group. With the close of the topic of testing, remind the students that tests are only a small part of the college application and that in the following sessions they will learn about other important aspects of the application process, like the importance of extracurricular activities.



SAMPLE SAT QUESTIONS:

Sentence Completion:

The sentence below has two blanks, each blank indicating that something has been omitted. Beneath the sentence are five sets of words labeled A through E. Choose the word or set of words that, when inserted in the sentence, best fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

Hoping to ----- the dispute, negotiators proposed a compromise that they felt would be ----- to both labor and management.

- (A) enforce . . useful
- (B) end . . divisive
- (C) overcome . . unattractive
- (D) extend . . satisfactory
- (E) resolve . . acceptable

Math Question #1:

A special lottery is to be held to select the student who will live in the only deluxe room in a dormitory. There are 100 seniors, 150 juniors, and 200 sophomores who applied. Each senior's name is placed in the lottery 3 times; each junior's name, 2 times; and each sophomore's name, 1 time. What is the probability that a senior's name will be chosen?

- (A) $\frac{1}{8}$
- (B) $\frac{2}{9}$
- (C) $\frac{2}{7}$
- (D) $\frac{3}{8}$
- (E) $\frac{1}{2}$

Math Question #2:

$$7-4x = 5$$

$$8x-3 = 1$$

What value of x satisfies both of the equations above?

SAMPLE SAT QUESTIONS EXPLANATIONS

Explanation of Sentence Completion:

One way to answer a sentence completion question with two words missing is to focus first on just one of the two blanks. If one of the words in an answer choice is logically wrong, then you can eliminate the entire choice from consideration.

- Look at the first blank in the example above. Would it make sense to say that “negotiators” who have “proposed a compromise” were hoping to enforce or extend the “dispute”? No, so neither (A) nor (D) can be the correct answer.
- Now you can focus on the second blank. Would the “negotiators” have proposed a compromise that they believed would be divisive or unattractive to “both labor and management”? No, so (B) and (C) can be eliminated, and only choice (E) remains.
- Always check your answer by reading the entire sentence with your choice filled in. Does it make sense to say “Hoping to resolve the dispute, the negotiators proposed a compromise that they felt would be acceptable to both labor and management”? Yes.

Correct answer: (E)

Explanation of Math Question #1:

To determine the probability that a senior’s name will be chosen, you must determine the total number of seniors’ names that are in the lottery and divide this number by the total number of names in the lottery. Since each senior’s name is placed in the lottery 3 times, there are $3 \cdot 100 = 300$ seniors’ names. Likewise, there are $2 \cdot 150 = 300$ juniors’ names and $1 \cdot 200 = 200$ sophomores’ names in the lottery. The probability that a senior’s name will be chosen is

$$\frac{300}{300 + 300 + 200} = \frac{300}{800} = \frac{3}{8}$$

Answer to Math Question #2:

OR

Correct Answer:

$\frac{1}{2}$ or .5

			/	2
•	•	•	•	•
1	•	0	1	0
2	•	2	2	•
3	•	3	3	•
4	•	4	4	•
5	•	5	5	•
6	•	6	6	•
7	•	7	7	•
8	•	8	8	•
9	•	9	9	•

.	5		
•	•	•	•
1	•	0	0
2	•	2	2
3	•	3	3
4	•	4	4
5	•	5	•
6	•	6	6
7	•	7	7
8	•	8	8
9	•	9	9

SAMPLE ACT QUESTIONS

Passage I:

Measles is an extremely contagious viral infection spread by the respiratory route. Figure 1 shows the course of measles from time of exposure to recovery from the infection.

After recovery from measles, the infected individual develops immunity or resistance to reinfection. Figure 1 shows the development of immunity indicated by the antibody level.

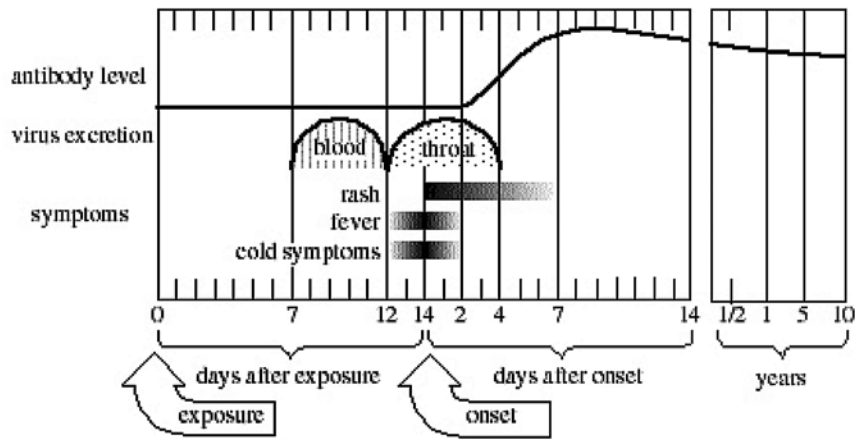


Figure 1

Figure 1 adapted from D. M. McLean, *Virology in Health Care*. ©1980 by Williams & Wilkins.

Based on the information presented in the passage and in Figure 1, would it be possible to determine that a person had immunity against the measles virus 6 months after exposure?

- Yes; the level of protective antibodies against measles would be elevated 6 months after exposure.
- Yes; the virus would still be present in the respiratory tract to protect against reinfection.
- No; the level of protective antibodies against measles would be undetectable 6 months after exposure.
- No; the virus would no longer be present in the blood to protect against reinfection.

SAMPLE ACT QUESTIONS: EXPLANATIONS

The best answer is A.

Figure 1 depicts the progression of the measles from time of exposure until 10 years after exposure. Figure 1 also indicates the antibody level in the body.

- A. Yes; the level of protective antibodies against measles would be elevated six months after exposure.

Correct. Figure 1 indicates that six months after exposure, the antibody level is elevated. Since this level is not elevated prior to infection, it would be possible to determine that a person had immunity against the measles virus six months after exposure by measuring the antibody level and determining that it was elevated.

- B. Yes; the virus would still be present in the respiratory tract to protect against reinfection.

Incorrect. Figure 1 indicates that the virus excretion is present in the throat two to three weeks after exposure. However, the virus excretion is not present in the throat after six months.

- C. No; the level of protective antibodies against measles would be undetectable six months after exposure.

Incorrect. Figure 1 indicates that the antibody level remains elevated for at least 10 years. Thus, the protective antibodies against measles would be detectable six months after exposure, making C incorrect.

- D. No; the virus would no longer be present in the blood to protect against reinfection.

Incorrect. Even if the virus was no longer present in the blood, other factors could be measured to determine that a person had immunity against the measles virus six months after exposure. For example, the antibody level remains elevated for at least 10 years.



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SESSION 3: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: CURRICULUM AND TESTING

WRAP-UP

Keep in Mind:

There is no day better than today to start preparing for college. As early as 9th grade, students should begin a college prep program, choosing classes that will not only make them stand out during the application process, but will prepare them for college level courses. Additionally, students need to prepare for and take the SAT or ACT, as these tests are a mandatory criterion at most colleges.

Homework:

1. Inform students that they have already begun the first stage of their homework with their “What Classes Will You Take to Prepare You for College?” handouts.
2. Instruct students to plan what they think their schedules should look like next year based on the classes that they still need/would like to take. Although the assignment only calls for a plan for one year, students may plan until the end of high school if they would like.
3. Additionally, students are to incorporate into their schedules standardized testing. Which test(s) should they be focusing on next year (PLAN, PSAT, ACT,SAT) and when should they take it?
4. While students should refer back to the handouts that they received during this session to assist with completion of this assignment, encourage students to talk with their own school counselors (when possible) to assess and plan their options for the next school year.



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SESSION 4: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: EXTRACURRICULAR INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

Students often believe that their grades and test scores are all that colleges look for in determining admission for an applicant, but they need to understand that in many cases, their extracurricular interests and talents will also be an important (and sometimes key) factor in the final admission decision and may also lead to scholarships. In this session, students will learn about the ways that extracurricular activities and other factors might impact their decisions about colleges. The session will end with the “Great Sorting Game” that should help the students understand that their GPA is not the only factor that colleges will be considering (and it’s fun!)

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will

- understand how extracurricular activities can improve opportunities for college admission, enhance the college experience, and lead to future jobs
- begin a résumé
- examine a college bound calendar for high school
- understand how these pieces fit together through playing “The Great Sorting Game”

Activities and Handouts:

Recap Activity: Have students pair up and share the schedules that they created for next school year. Ask students to compare their plan (or their previous courses) to their partner’s.

Activity #1: Translating Interests into Activities

Handouts: Personal College Counseling Questionnaire 2;
Interests & Related Activities

Activity #2: Building Your Résumé and Getting Involved

Handout: Activities Résumé

Activity #3: Understanding the Big Picture

Handout: College Planning Checklist

Activity #4: Putting It All Together

Handout: The Great Sorting Game



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SESSION 4: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: EXTRACURRICULAR INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY # 1: TRANSLATING INTERESTS INTO ACTIVITIES

A student's extracurricular interests (in or out of school) can often be translated into more formal activities. This exercise will help students brainstorm clubs, organizations, teams, etc. that they might want to join. In the following activity, they will be encouraged to begin a résumé (or list) of the activities in which they are currently involved with and to add to that list each time they enter into a new activity.

Opening Discussion:

Remind students that colleges want active and engaged students who are involved in their community and that scholarship organizations also look for students who are involved in activities.

Did you know that your extracurricular interests will:

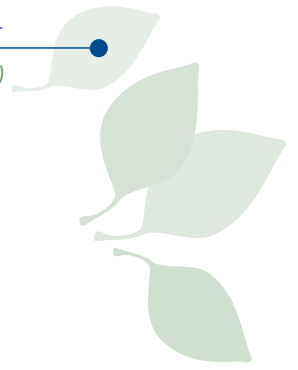
- enable you to discover your talents and develop your skills?
- help build confidence and encourage you to see relationships and connections?
- lead to college majors and future employment as well as internships and volunteer opportunities?
- enhance your application to college and your chances for admission as well as scholarships?

Activity/Handout:

Personal College Counseling Questionnaire 2 Interests & Related Activities

Instructions:

1. Begin by asking the students to complete the “Personal College Counseling Questionnaire 2” as fully as possible.
2. Once they have completed it, ask the students to find a partner and together decide how they would each fill out the “Interests & Related Activities” chart that will help them to see how their interests might relate to school or community activities and to future majors and/or careers. They may need to do some “brainstorming” to think of majors and careers. Remind them that there are no “wrong” answers here and that they may have to think creatively in order to figure out how their interests would translate into something more.
3. Once students have had a chance to complete their charts, ask them to “introduce” their partner to the group, so that all can benefit from the observations and questions that may arise with this exercise.



PERSONAL COLLEGE COUNSELING QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Student Name _____

1. What activities do you enjoy outside of the daily routine of school? Why?
2. In what sport, games, or activities do you participate? With whom?
3. Have you had any leadership roles on sports team, in local organizations, religious institutions, youth groups, or school sponsored activities?
4. In what school sponsored extracurricular activities have you participated? Why?
5. What summer experiences have been particularly important to you? Camps, academic programs, jobs, etc.?
6. What kind of music do you like? Do you play an instrument? Sing? Would you like to? Do you have friends or family members that are somehow involved in music?
7. Are there activities or opportunities of which you wish you had taken advantage earlier? Do you have any regrets? Is it too late now?
8. Have you been involved with any volunteer or service work? What did you learn from it? Will you continue in the future? Why did/do you do it?
9. What are your interests outside of school?
10. What is something that you're really good at that no one else knows about?



INTERESTS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

This table should help you to organize your interests and talents and decide how they might relate to activities you could pursue in or out of school and how they might lead to a major in college or a possible career.

List your talents and/or interests in the first column and discuss with your partner what activities you might be able to join that would fit those interests and put them in the second column.

Finally, discuss possible college majors or careers that you might be able to pursue that would fit those interests and talents.

Interests and Talents (i.e., writing)	Related Activities (in and out of school) (i.e., yearbook)	Possible Major and/or Career (i.e., journalism/newspaper reporter)

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SESSION 4: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: EXTRACURRICULAR INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY # 2: BUILDING YOUR RÉSUMÉ & GETTING INVOLVED

Opening Discussion:

A résumé is a list of your experience, skills, and educational background, and is an important piece of the college application. It allows colleges to learn more about you outside of your classroom work and academic performance. Your résumé should be a “living document” that you add to throughout high school until it’s time to apply to colleges in your senior year.

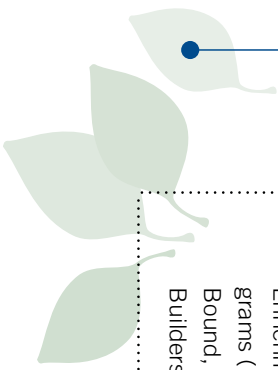
Activity/Handout:

Activities Résumé

Resources List (optional)—the facilitator may want to create a list of extracurricular activities and volunteer opportunities in the school and community, as well as a list of local scholarship opportunities and resources, to share with the students.

Instructions:

1. Ask students to fill out the “Activities Résumé.”
2. They may add to the list the activities they might do as they go through high school.
3. The students should be encouraged to keep a copy of the résumé in a safe place since it can be used not only for completing applications, but also as an informative piece to share with their guidance counselor and teachers who may be writing recommendations for them in the future.
4. In addition to their “Activities Résumé,” the facilitator should remind students to keep a record of awards or honors (and the date received) in a file folder or to consider creating an electronic portfolio.



ACTIVITIES RÉSUMÉ

	Dates From/To	Time Spent		Responsibility / Accomplishments
		Hours per week/month	Total Hours	
A. School and Athletic Activities				
B. Volunteer Service/ Community or Family Activities				
C. Paid Work (after school or summer job)				
D. Summer/ Enrichment Pro- grams (Upward Bound, Bridge Builders, etc.)				

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SESSION 4: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: EXTRACURRICULAR INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY # 3: UNDERSTANDING THE BIG PICTURE

Opening Discussion:

It is important for students to understand that each year in high school will count towards preparing for college. They should be aware of important events in order to be sure that they are taking advantage of every opportunity to be ready for applying to college by the fall of their senior year.

Activity/Handout:

College Planning Checklists—Grades 9–11

Instructions:

1. Give each of the students a copy of the “College Planning Checklist” and ask them to read it carefully, putting check marks where appropriate.
2. After giving them time to thoroughly read the Checklist, allow time for questions.



COLLEGE PLANNING CHECKLIST

FRESHMAN

- Plan a challenging program of classes to take.
 - The courses you take in high school show colleges what kind of goals you set for yourself. Are you signing up for advanced classes, honors sections, or accelerated sequences? Are you choosing electives that really stretch your mind and help you develop new abilities? Or are you doing just enough to get by? Colleges will be more impressed by respectable grades in challenging courses than by outstanding grades in easy ones.
 - Keep in mind the courses that colleges expect you to have completed for admission; your schedule should consist of at least 4 college preparatory classes per year, including:
 - 4 years of English
 - 4 years of math (through algebra II, trigonometry or higher)
 - 2-4 years of foreign language
 - 3-4 years of laboratory science
 - 2-4 years of history/social studies
 - 1 year of fine arts
 - 1 year of electives from the above list
- Create a file of important documents and notes.
 - Copies of report cards, lists of awards and honors, and lists of school and community activities in which you are involved, including both paid and volunteer work, and descriptions of what you do.
- Get involved with academic enrichment programs, summer workshops, and camps with specialty focuses such as music, arts, and science.
 - Keep in mind that learning doesn't happen solely in the classroom.
- Stay active in clubs, activities, and sports that you enjoy.
 - Colleges look at more than just your academic record for admission. It's important that you demonstrate your abilities outside of the classroom too.



SOPHOMORES

- ❑ Learn what resources are available to help you plan for college by meeting with your school's college or guidance counselor. Ask about catalogs, guidebooks, college search programs, and college information Web sites.
- ❑ Begin your college search and visits.
 - Create a list of colleges and universities in which you are interested and discuss the list with your parents and school counselor.
 - Find out about the different types of schools. Decide which characteristics are most important to you, such as the size of the school, distance from home, cost, and extracurricular activities.
- ❑ Continue extracurricular activities, as admission officers look at students' extracurricular activities when considering them for admission.
- ❑ Continue participation in academic enrichment programs, summer workshops, and camps with specialty focuses such as music, arts, and science.
- ❑ Update your file of important documents and notes
- ❑ Prepare for standardized testing
 - Ask your counselor about taking the ACT PLAN or PSAT test in the fall. These are valuable tests to help you prepare for the actual ACT and SAT, two college entrance exams, which you can take during your junior year.
 - Review PLAN or PSAT test results with your parents and school counselor.
 - Many students take SAT Subject Tests for college admission as early as sophomore year. These tests help you show colleges your proficiency in different subject areas.
- ❑ Sign up for junior year courses keeping in mind that you will want to challenge yourself with tougher courses. It will pay off in the long run not only by making you smarter, but by impressing colleges and helping you win scholarships.
- ❑ Talk to your counselor about registering for AP courses next year. AP, or Advanced Placement, courses grant college credit for achievement in exams during high school covering many different college-level subjects.



JUNIORS

August

- Start your year off right by talking with your guidance counselor about the year ahead. Be sure to ask about test dates for the PSAT, ACT, and SAT. You'll need to register up to six weeks ahead of time.
- Start investigating sources for financial aid. Take note of scholarship deadlines and plan accordingly.
- Develop a résumé—a record of your accomplishments, activities, and work experiences. This will be an important part of your college application.
- If you don't participate in many activities outside of class, now is the time to sign up. Consider clubs at schools, team sports, or even an after school job.

September/October

- Take the PSAT. Even if you took the test during your sophomore year, taking the test this year will count towards National Merit Scholar consideration and will give you a better predictor for the SAT you take later this year or next.
- Sign up for ACT or SAT prep courses or use free test preparation resources on the Internet. If you can't find the best Web sites, ask your counselor. You will want to take the test at least once in the spring and again next fall during your senior year.
- Sign up for the ACT and SAT, if you haven't already.

December

- PSAT and ACT PLAN test results should be coming in. Review the results to learn more about your strengths and weaknesses and discuss them with your parents and counselor.

January/February

- Meet with your guidance counselor again to develop your senior schedule. Ask how you can improve your college preparation.
- Talk to a counselor or teacher about registering for AP courses during your senior year.
- Register for a spring offering of the SAT or ACT
- Think about registering for SAT Subject Tests this spring. The final registration deadline for taking the test this academic year will be in April.



March/April

- Begin taking a more serious look at colleges and universities you are interested in attending. Make a file and gather information about academics, financial aid, and campus life to put in it. Go to college fairs and open houses and learn as much as you can from the Internet about schools.

- Begin planning college visits. Spring break is a good time because you can observe a campus when classes are going on. Even if they are not campuses that you think you would attend, it is important to get exposure to college campuses and the college experience.

- Think about lining up a summer job, internship, or co-op.

- If you are in AP courses, get ready for the AP exams next month.

- Develop a preliminary list of colleges that interest you. Write or call them to request a viewbook and additional information.

- Take a look at some college applications and consider all of the different pieces of information you will need to compile.

May

- AP Examinations are given in high schools nationally this month. Make sure you are signed up and know the dates and times for your exams.

- Make a list of teachers, counselors, employers, and other adults who you might ask to write letters of recommendation for your college applications.

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SESSION 4: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: EXTRACURRICULAR INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY # 4: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER— THE GREAT SORTING GAME

Opening Discussion:

The Great Sorting Game engages students in an enjoyable mock-admission simulation. The purpose is to help students understand the many factors that are weighted in admission decisions. The game should generate discussion that will summarize many of the issues presented so far.

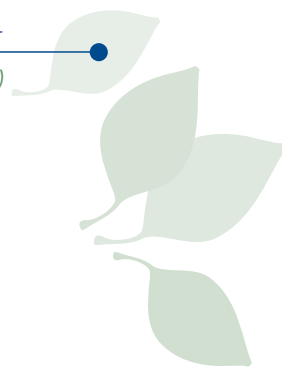
Activity/Handout:

The Great Sorting Game

Instructions:

1. Instructions and game materials are in the pages that follow.





THE GREAT SORTING GAME

(Copyright 2003, Mary Lee Hoganson)

A PARTICIPATORY DEMONSTRATION OF HOW SELECTIVE COLLEGE ADMISSION WORKS (SORT OF)

Getting started with play:

Find 9 volunteers to be admission candidates. Secure an additional volunteer to play the “Director of Admission.” It will be that person who reads the qualities and tells students whether to move up or down in the competition. Hand out the GPAs in RANDOM order and then instruct volunteers to organize themselves in GPA order from highest to lowest. (This is generally a couple of minutes of comedy relief because players have trouble getting organized. This is part of the fun.)

Scenario of play:

The group of non-volunteers is told that they are the Admission Committee from “Highly Prestigious University” (or you pick a better and funnier name). The committee is at the very end of the admission cycle and still has 9 great applicants from which it can only admit 3 students. All have very appealing qualities, but there is simply not enough room in the class for all 9. Before them they see the candidates. Point out that they are in standing in GPA order from highest to lowest. Also emphasize that all are great candidates and so the committee will have to decide based upon personal qualities and qualifications. Point out that, if the committee were to decide only on academics, the three with the highest GPAs would get in.

The personal qualities/qualifications are then read and the volunteers are asked to exchange places (move up and down in the order) based upon what is read. (One very important note to make this work: if more than one student is moving down at the same time, the lowest student must move first and visa versa—if more than one student is moving up, the highest student must move first.) You may choose to alter the qualities/qualifications and the weight given to each.

Stop after each quality read in order to discuss why this helped or hindered the candidate. As an example: you may ask, “why do you think it might not be helpful to declare your major as pre-med or psychology?” After reading the “Greek Major” quality, point out that many selective colleges have Classics Professors who are covered with cobwebs and are really hoping to get a few kids in their classes. Stop after the Early Decision qualification to discuss how this may play into a decision by a college. In this way, it is more than reading the qualities. It is a way to generate discussion.

The ending:

After all qualities have been read and candidates have been “sorted”, have the candidates turn their GPA sheets around to reveal the GPA to reveal to the audience. Read through the GPAs, pointing out the new order and note that the top three, new sorted, candidates are going to be admitted.

You might choose to have a small prize—like pieces of candy to thank the volunteers.

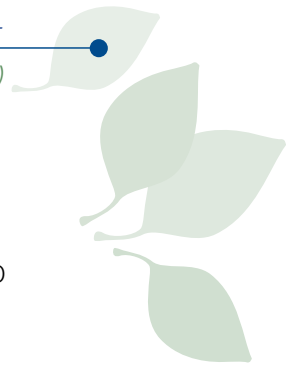


THE GREAT SORTING GAME

(Copyright 2003 Mary Lee Hoganson)

Qualities, which are read, and places to move up and down in the line:

1. IF YOU HAVE TAKEN AN EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG ACADEMIC PROGRAM +2
2. IF YOU PLAY THE OBOE OR VIOLA +1
3. IF YOU CLEARLY STATED THAT THIS COLLEGE WAS YOUR FIRST CHOICE BY MAKING AN EARLY DECISION APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT +2
4. IF YOUR INTENDED MAJOR IS PSYCHOLOGY OR PREMED -1
5. IF YOUR INTENDED MAJOR IS GREEK +2
6. IF YOU DO NOT KNOW ANY OF YOUR TEACHERS WELL AND HAD TROUBLE FINDING SOMEONE TO WRITE YOUR COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION -2
7. IF, WHEN YOU TYPED YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY, YOU FORGOT TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE COLLEGE YOU WERE APPLYING TO, -4
8. IF YOU ARE A LEGACY +2
9. IF YOU DID NOT WRITE THE OPTIONAL ESSAY FOR YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION -1
10. IF THE TOPIC OF YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY WAS “WHAT I LEARNED FROM PLAYING SPORTS” -1
11. IF YOU WROTE THE ESSAY OF THE YEAR—THE ONE THAT WAS PASSED AROUND THE ENTIRE ADMISSION OFFICE IT WAS SO REMARKABLE + 3
12. IF YOU PLAGERIZED AN AP AMERICAN HISTORY PAPER AND GOT CAUGHT—SIT DOWN, YOU’RE OUT OF THE COMPETITION ENTIRELY



13. IF YOU WILL BE FIRST IN YOUR FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE +2
14. IF YOU PARTICIPATED IN AN ENRICHING SUMMER PROGRAM BETWEEN YOUR JUNIOR AND SENIOR YEARS +2
15. IF YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN NO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES -3
16. IF YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN A SIGNIFICANT COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT +1
17. IF YOU ARE AN EAGLE SCOUT +2
18. IF YOU ARE A VARSITY ATHLETE +2, AND IF YOU ARE A VARSITY ATHLETE AND TOOK SECOND-PLACE AT REGIONALS IN YOUR SPORT MOVE UP ONE MORE (A TOTAL OF 3)
19. IF YOU GOT A “D” IN AN ACADEMIC COURSE AT THE END OF YOUR JUNIOR YEAR -3
20. IF YOU CAME TO THE COLLEGE INFORMATION SESSION AND INTRODUCED YOURSELF TO THE COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE (AND IN THE CASE OF THE STUDENT WHO JUST GOT THE “D”, EXPLAINED THE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES) +1
21. IF YOU ARE A LEGAL RESIDENT OF IDAHO +3
22. IF YOU NEVER GAVE YOUR COUNSELOR ANY PERSONAL INFORMATION FOR USE IN WRITING YOUR COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION -1
23. IF YOUR LAST NAME IS TRUMP—THE NAME ON THE COLLEGE LIBRARY IS TRUMP—AND IT’S NOT A COINCIDENCE, MOVE ALL THE WAY TO THE FRONT AND STAY THERE

4.0

- You did not write the optional essay for your college application
 - You have participated in no extracurricular activities
- You are a legal resident of Idaho

3.9

- Your intended major is Pre-Med
- You wrote your essay on “What I learned from playing sports”
- You participated in an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years

3.8

- You have taken an exceptionally strong academic program
 - Your intended major is psychology
- When you typed your college essay, you forgot to change the name of the college to which you were applying
- You plagiarized an AP American History paper and got caught

3.7

- You play the viola
- You do not know any of your teachers well and had trouble finding someone to write your college recommendation
- You did not write the optional essay for your college application
- You never gave your counselor any personal information for use in writing your college recommendation

3.6

- You clearly stated that this college was your first choice by making an early decision application and commitment
 - The topic of your college essay was “What I Learned from Playing Sports”
- You have been involved in a significant community service project or trip
- You attended the college information session at your high school and introduced yourself to the college representative

3.5

- You play the oboe
- You plan to major in Greek
- You are a legacy
- You participated in an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years

3.4

- You are a varsity athlete
- You have taken an exceptionally strong academic program
- You will be the first in your family to attend college
- You have been involved in a significant community service project

3.3

- You wrote the essay of the year—the one that was passed around the entire admission office it was so remarkable
- You are a varsity athlete and took second-place at regional competition in your sport
- You got a “D” in an academic course at the end of your junior year
- You attended the college information session at your high school and introduced yourself to the college representative (and offered an

3.2

- You are a legacy
- You are an Eagle Scout
- Your last name is Trump—the name on the library is Trump—and it's not a coincidence

4

SESSION 4: GOING TO COLLEGE STARTS NOW: EXTRACURRICULAR INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

WRAP-UP

Keep in Mind:

Colleges are not looking for any one type of student. However, all schools look for an accomplished student who brings a lot to the table. While colleges search for truly well-rounded students, they do take into account that grades might not be as high for a student who is committed to many activities outside of the classroom, and vice versa. Students should continue to keep a record of all of the activities that they do outside of school and should also keep in mind how those activities have shaped who they are and will make them better candidates at their chosen colleges.

Homework:

1. Instruct students that they will be writing a two-paragraph essay on “The Ideal Student.”
2. In the first paragraph, the students are to pretend that they are a college admission counselor reviewing student applications. They should write what they are looking for in the ideal student. Remind students that admission counselors don’t just look for good grades but take many things into account.
3. In the second paragraph, students should write how they ARE or CAN BECOME that ideal student. Here, students should focus on actions that they have or will take in the future.
4. Remind students that each paragraph should be five or more sentences.



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SESSION 5: THE COLLEGE SEARCH AND APPLICATION PROCESS

The purpose of this session is to build on the knowledge students have gained about themselves and colleges in the previous sessions and to expand upon the information from Session II about the various ways they can find out about colleges and begin to understand which colleges might be the best “match” for them. The students will look at their résumés in relation to the kinds of information they are gathering about colleges and, by looking at The Common Application, will begin to determine how they will ultimately convey this information to colleges. This session will also discuss how special needs and talents factor into the application process.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will

- understand the importance of “matching” their interests, abilities, and goals with the resources individual colleges can offer
- be familiar with several resources that will help with a college search, including a discussion of the college visit
- be introduced to The Common Application
- understand how special needs and talents are viewed by colleges (this will include artistic, musical, and athletic talents, as well as the needs of students with learning disabilities)

Activities and Handouts:

Recap Activity: If students would like to share what qualities they would look for in the “Ideal Student” allow five or fewer minutes for them to read and discuss.

PART ONE: Continuing the college search

Activity #1: Beginning the search in earnest

Handouts: Activities Résumé (from Session IV); College Counseling Questionnaire

Activity #2: Using college view books to track your interest

Handouts: College Match Tracking Chart; College View Books; Internet Sites Focused on College Exploration (from Session II)

Activity #3: Learning through campus visits and college fairs

Handouts: Campus Visits; College Fair Tip Sheet

PART TWO: College Admission and the Application

Activity #4: Filling out an application

Handouts: Parts of a College Application; The Common Application

5

SESSION 5: THE COLLEGE SEARCH AND APPLICATION PROCESS

PART ONE: CONTINUING THE COLLEGE SEARCH

ACTIVITY # 1:

BEGINNING THE SEARCH

Opening Discussion:

In Session II, “There is a College for Everybody,” students learned that there are over 3,000 colleges and universities and there is more than one institution that can meet their needs. Building upon the questions discussed in “Charting Your Course for College,” students will begin to personalize the search process, first by determining the questions to ask about what colleges can offer and, second, what they will be able to convey to colleges through the application process.

Activity/Handout:

Activities Résumé (from Session IV)

College Counseling Questionnaire

Instructions:

1. Remind the students that they are at the center of the search, so they need to make their own decisions and realize that the answers to questions will be different for each student.
2. Hand out the “College Counseling Questionnaire” and ask them to complete it as honestly and fully as possible.
3. Then ask them to highlight the factors that they think will be most important to them as they look for the “right match” in a college.

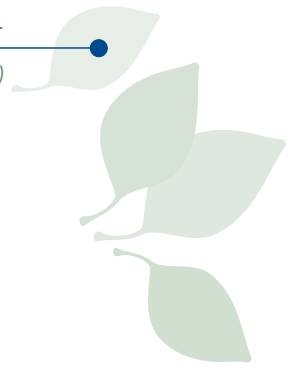
COLLEGE COUNSELING QUESTIONNAIRE

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ GPA: _____

In the space below, please respond to the following questions. Your responses are for your personal information and college counseling only. Therefore, respond openly and honestly.

Location:

1. Do you have a specific location in mind for college (i.e., a specific city, state or region)?
2. Do you have any requirements in terms of location (i.e., warm/cold climate, near family, near the ski slopes)?
3. How far from/close to home is the ideal college (i.e., minutes away, an hour away, a day's drive, a plane flight)?
4. Do you prefer a city, a suburb or a small town?
5. Do you want your college to be near other colleges (in a college town)?
6. Do your parents have a certain location in mind?
7. Are you willing to consider locations that you have not yet visited or do you prefer a location with which you are comfortable?



Academic Interests:

1. Do you have a specific career in mind? What college major do you think would best suit this profession?
2. What other academic areas do you hope to pursue in college?
3. Do you work better when you are challenged by tough classes and motivated classmates or when you are near the top of a less competitive group?
4. How hard do you work in high school?
5. How hard do you expect to work in college?
6. What types of academic programs would your like you ideal college to have (study abroad, internships, co-op, honors, etc.)?
7. Is it important that you attend a well-known college?

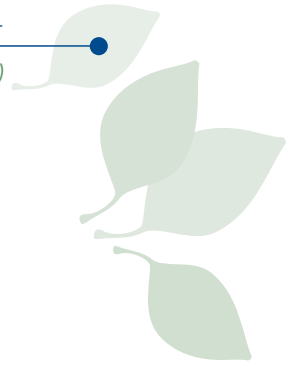
Adapted from Cabral, Joshua. "Addressing the Needs of First-Generation, College-Bound Students: A Comprehensive 5th–12th Grade Approach." *South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School*. 2004



Size and Student Body:

1. Do you prefer a small college (2,000 students or less), a mid-sized college (2,000–8,000), or a large university (over 8,000 students)? Why?
2. Are you comfortable in small classes? Large classes? Why?
3. Do you prefer a college that is primarily for undergraduates or a college that has lots of graduate and doctoral students on campus?
4. Would you consider a men's college or a women's college?
5. Do you prefer a college with a religious affiliation?
6. Is racial/ethnic diversity important to you?

Adapted from Cabral, Joshua. "Addressing the Needs of First-Generation, College-Bound Students: A Comprehensive 5th–12th Grade Approach." *South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School*. 2004



Activities:

1. Do you plan to participate in sports at college?

2. What other extracurricular activities interest you?

Finances:

Will cost influence where you go to college? Will your family apply for financial aid? Do you think that you will qualify for merit scholarships (based on achievement)?

Admission Selectivity:

If 5 is the most selective (level of difficulty on gaining admission) and 1 is not at all selective, to which level of college do you expect to apply? Which do you think are likely to say yes?

Adapted from Cabral, Joshua. "Addressing the Needs of First-Generation, College-Bound Students: A Comprehensive 5th–12th Grade Approach." *South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School*. 2004

ACTIVITY # 2: USING COLLEGE VIEW BOOKS TO TRACK YOUR INTEREST

Opening Discussion:

Remind the students about using guidebooks, view books, and the internet to gather information about colleges. Encourage them to begin taking notes on which colleges appeal to them and why.

Activity/Handout:

College Match Tracking Chart

College View Books

Internet Sites Focused on College Exploration (from Session II)

Instructions:

1. Distribute the “College Match Tracking Chart” and review the descriptive categories.
2. If students know colleges in which they are interested, have them complete the chart using what they already know about those schools. If not, distribute college view books—you may need to divide students into small groups depending on the number of view books you have available—and have them fill in the chart with information they find in the view books. Ask the students if any of these colleges match their interests.
3. Encourage students to design their own charts, reflecting the factors most important to them.
4. Remind students to keep this chart and to use it in the future as they continue their college search. This chart is a good way for students and counselors to keep track of the colleges that the students have investigated.



COLLEGE MATCH TRACKING CHART

Place the name of the colleges that you are interested in at the top of each column. Add any factors that are important to you as you search for the best “match” for you.

	College A	College B	College C
School Name			
Location			
How Competitive?			
Majors Offered			
Extracurricular Activity			
Size of Classes			
Tuition/Scholarship Programs			
Academic Support Programs			
Dorm Choices			
Social Life			

5

SESSION 5: THE COLLEGE SEARCH AND APPLICATION PROCESS

ACTIVITY # 3: LEARNING THROUGH CAMPUS VISITS AND COLLEGE FAIRS

Opening Discussion:

Students should know that colleges welcome prospective students to their campuses, and campus visits are a wonderful way for students to get to know colleges, when possible. Students should also know that a number of colleges have cost-free visit programs. Colleges often identify potential applicants through guidance counselors. Students should talk with their guidance counselors about these programs and should also contact colleges directly to find out whether they have programs for prospective applicants.

Colleges visit communities across the country and take part in college fairs to share information with prospective students. It's not only important to attend these college fairs, but to be prepared.

Part 1: Preparing for the College Visit

Activity/Handout:

Campus Visits

Part 2: Accessing Colleges Through School Fairs

Activity/Handout:

College Fair Tip Sheet

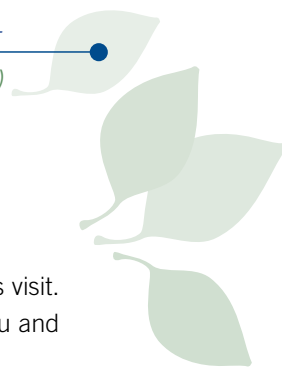
Instructions:

Part 1:

1. Distribute the "Campus Visits" handout.
2. Discuss briefly and answer questions from students.
3. Ask students to keep the handout in their folder for future reference.

Part 2:

1. Distribute the "College Fair Tip Sheet" handout. Go over the handout with the students.
2. Access a list of college fairs in the area through the NACAC or the regional ACAC Web site.
3. Instruct students to prepare by developing a list of the college booths they want to visit prior to going to the fair. They should research the colleges and use their college tracking charts to help them decide which booths to visit and what questions to ask.
4. Optional activity: If time allows, set up a scenario of two students approaching a college table at a fair, the first one with a list of questions and the second not knowing anything about the college or himself. Role-play the two scenarios.



CAMPUS VISITS

After you compile a list of colleges to which you are considering applying, it is then time for the campus visit. While it does take time and money, the campus visit is invaluable in information gathering. It allows you and your family to gauge college “fit.”

The visit can give you a true sense of day-to-day life on campus:

- The school may be diverse, but is there a genuine integration of the student body?
- The school may be small, but is it supportive?
- Teachers can be highly qualified, but are they enthusiastic about teaching students?

Understanding a college requires looking beneath the facts and figures.

Pre-Planning

Call to schedule the visit at least two weeks ahead of time.

Not pre-planning can lead to an unproductive visit. If you call ahead of time, the admission office will be able to accommodate you and ensure you have a great visit.

Make sure to get proper directions to the admission office.

In order to make a good first impression, make sure you know where you’re going so that you can arrive on time. Get a campus map and, if you have any questions, call the admission office to clarify your directions.

If there is anything specific you wish to see, ask ahead of time.

Depending upon the time of year, admission offices may not be able to accommodate you. For example, in the summer months staying overnight or seeing a professor usually does not happen. However, it does not hurt to ask if there might be something of specific interest to you, like visiting a class.

Be flexible.

Be willing to try something else, and always remember that you want to present yourself positively—you might want to apply to this school later.

If you need to cancel or reschedule, call ASAP.

Of course, you cannot predict emergencies or unforeseen circumstances but it is a common courtesy to contact the admission office to let them know that you can’t come.

During the Visit

Take notes

Write a few things down during the visit. Your notes will be a valuable reference when you are comparing colleges later.

- What image do you get of student life? Talking to current students is a good way to find out what life might be like for you on campus. What activities are students participating in on campus? Do students appear happy with their experience?
- What are the admission criteria? Admission criteria vary by college. It is important to find out what you need to do to be eligible for a specific school. Ask what courses and tests need to be taken before you apply.

- What events and speakers are planned? Events and campus guests are another lens through which to evaluate and judge the soul of the college. Are they engaging?

Ask questions

Take an active role. This is a golden opportunity for you to ask questions about what really matters to you.

- Are answers to your questions consistent? You can determine a lot about whether a college has a certain culture if you receive consistent answers to your questions whether you are asking them of students, admission personnel, teaching faculty, or administrators. What do people care about? How do students and faculty treat and regard one another?
- Are people asking questions of you? When you meet people during your visit, you can find out a lot by the questions they ask you. Are they asking you questions that lead you to believe they are interested in you and the contribution you will make?

Try to do some extra things on your own.

Eat in the cafeteria, talk to students, see where they hang out and look around the neighborhood of the school. If you look around, you can get a more complete picture, and not just what the admission office highlights.

- What is posted on campus bulletin boards? Posters, messages, and announcements about upcoming events all give you an impression about the soul of the college. They inform you what people care about. What are the issues? Who is recruiting for volunteers? Who is speaking out about what?
- What are students doing or talking about when they are not in class? As you walk across the campus, get near students who are speaking to one another. What are they talking about? A campus issue? What just happened in class? Or, about that afternoon's sporting event? When you are eating with students in the dining hall, what are their topics of conversation?

Don't discount the school because of bad weather or other uncontrollable circumstances.

Some students cross a school off their list simply because it rained, or because they visited during a school break when activities are minimal. Don't fall into this trap.

Post Visit

Always write a thank you note or email the admission contact.

In order to make a great impression, write a thank you note to those you met on campus. This gives you the opportunity to be remembered when your application is reviewed.

Make sure you have contact information for any future questions or concerns.

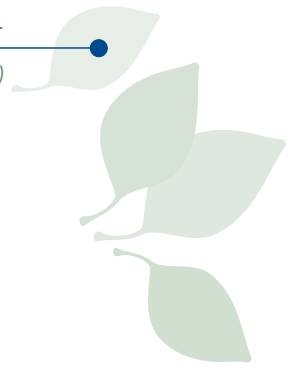
Keep business cards and pamphlets in some organized folder so that you can refer back to them if necessary.

Make sure to remain in contact with the school.

Some schools keep a record of contact information, and in some cases, use that as a measurement of your interest level as the school is considering you for admission.

Talk with your high school counselor about the visit.

Parents, relatives, and friends can help you evaluate your impressions after college visits, but your counselor can provide a neutral and informative perspective about your experiences.



COLLEGE FAIR TIP SHEET

BEFORE THE FAIR

- Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Do I want to attend an extra large, large, medium or small school?
 - What major do I wish to study?
 - Do I want to attend an urban, suburban or rural school?
 - Do I want to attend a 2 year, 4 year, single sex or religiously affiliated school?
 - Do I want to participate in athletics, clubs, fraternities or sororities or special programs such as study abroad or cooperative education?
- Research colleges that are attending the fair to determine if they meet your search criteria.
- Make a list of questions to ask college representatives. Try to select questions that are insightful and are not easily answered in the literature.
- Bring a resume and/or card with your name, address, high school, year of graduation, email address, intended major and activities in which you want to be involved to give to the representative.

AT THE FAIR

- Pick up a fair directory and bag for all of the material you collect.
- Visit schools which match or are the closest match to your search criteria.
- Ask the same questions you have developed to each college representative you visit.
- Make sure to fill out an inquiry card to let the college know you were in attendance (or give them a pre-printed card you brought with you). This will enable you to get on their mailing list.
- Make notes about information which you found most interesting/helpful.
- Be adventurous. Don't just talk to the "well known" schools.
- Attend an information session that is offered to gather information about the college search process, financial aid or whatever topics are available.

AFTER THE FAIR

- Review information (catalogs and view books) to gather more information and help narrow down your choices.
- Send a thank you note/email to the college representative as a way to reinforce your interest in the school.

PART TWO: COLLEGE ADMISSION AND THE APPLICATION

ACTIVITY #4: FILLING OUT AN APPLICATION

Opening discussion:

Begin a discussion on the application process with an interactive question and answer session. Here are some questions and themes to consider:

- How difficult do you think it is to be admitted to college?
- Did you know that some colleges practice what is referred to as “Open Admissions” while others are considered to be highly selective? Some colleges only consider SAT scores and GPA while most will look at many other factors before making a decision. (Remember the “Great Sorting Game”?)
- Referring back the view books and other colleges that have been discussed, see if you can determine schools that are “selective” in their admission policies.
- How do you think those colleges would view you as an applicant, considering your résumés and curriculum plans (courses taken, GPA, activities)? Let the students know that typically students will apply to several colleges and will try to include at least one “realistic” college that they and their guidance counselor think they could get into.
- Are you thinking about playing a sport in college? Playing a musical instrument? Majoring in painting or theatre? If so, then you should know the following:

• For the athlete:

- Talk to your coaches early and often
- Don't be lured into college athletic search companies
- Be open to all options: Division I, Division II, Division III; NAIA; Club and Intramural Teams
- Keep your grades up because college are looking for student-athletes, not just athletes
- If possible, go to the NCAA Web site (www.ncaa.org) to learn about eligibility and recruiting rules for all sports. Two other good Web sites are: www.CampusChamps.org and www.athleticaid.com.

• For the artists, musicians, and actors:

- Discuss your plans with your teachers/instructors
- Keep your work: portfolios for artists, lists of parts in plays for actors and, when possible, recordings of your music for musicians
- Auditions for musicians and actors are often part of the admission process for those who are planning to continue to study their art.

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SESSION 5: THE COLLEGE SEARCH AND APPLICATION PROCESS

CONTINUED ACTIVITY #4: FILLING OUT AN APPLICATION

Activity/Handout:

Parts of a College Application The Common Application

Instructions:

1. Give each student a copy of “Parts of a College Application” and “The Common Application.”
2. “Walk” the students through the parts of the application using the handout and sample application. There will not be time for them to complete the whole application at this time, but respond to any questions they might have so they could do that when they get home. Emphasize that it is valuable to do a draft application before they submit a “real” one. Here are the sections to focus on:
 - Activities section: Point out that when they completed the “Activities Résumé” in Session IV, the students compiled most of the information they will need for this section. What they will need to do is put that information in the format required by each individual application (often they are asked to list activities in order of importance). Give them time to begin doing that.
 - Secondary School Report Form: Explain that this is the type of form that someone at their high school, probably their counselor, will complete. For colleges that request it, it accompanies the transcript. Ask students what surprises them about this form. Ask them about their relationship with their counselor.
 - Mid-Year Report Form: Explain that this is sent after the fall semester of senior year. Explain to students that changes in their senior year curriculum have to be reported to colleges. SENIOR YEAR MATTERS!
 - Teacher Evaluation Form: Ask students what surprises them about this form. Stress that the purpose of the teacher recommendation is to write about them as a student in that teacher’s classroom. Ask students to identify at least two teachers who they think they could ask to write a recommendation and ask them to jot down several adjectives they think those teachers would use when describing them. Stress that if they can’t think of any teachers now, they should try to build a relationship with a teacher before senior year.
3. Conclude the session with a reminder that by beginning the college search early and by knowing what the components of an application are, the students will be much better prepared to apply to college when the time comes in their senior year. Encourage them to keep all of the materials/handouts in a folder or binder.



PARTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- You, the student, are responsible for sending your actual application and some additional documentation. Your high school is responsible for sending the transcript and a secondary school report (if required). If a teacher agrees to write a letter of recommendation, that teacher is responsible for submitting it. BUT you, the student, are responsible for following your school's policy for requesting transcripts and letters of recommendations. Know what you are expected to do!
- Listed below is everything that *could* be required, but you might not be asked to submit everything on this list to every college. *For example, there are many colleges that do not require students to write essays. There also are many colleges that do not require standardized test scores.*

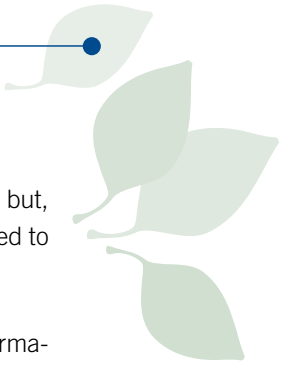
WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A COLLEGE APPLICATION?

A. Official Transcript: Your transcript is the record of all the courses you have taken for high school credit, your grades, and credits earned. This is the information you should have on the curriculum planner you completed in Session III. Other information that might be included on a transcript: GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, courses in progress. This is normally sent directly from your high school to the college.

B. Standardized Test Scores

C. The Application Form: The student is responsible for requesting an application form, completing it, and submitting it by the college deadline (by mail or online). Many colleges accept The Common Application. No matter what school or what application, these will be important components:

- Personal and Educational Data (i.e., name, address, phone number, e-mail, citizenship and residency information, high schools you have attended, college credits you have earned, parental information, senior year schedule, standardized test scores)
- Honors and Awards
- Extracurricular, Personal, and Volunteer Activities
- Employment, Internships, and Summer Activities (Some colleges allow you to submit a résumé in addition to the activity section of their application.)
- Essays, both short answer and a longer personal essay
- Disciplinary information
- Application Fee (many colleges will accept fee waivers which can be obtained from the guidance office)
- Signature
- For certain majors, students might be required to audition or asked to submit a portfolio of artistic work.



D. Secondary School Report Form or Counselor Recommendation Form: This is not required by all colleges but, if it is required, the high school is responsible for submitting this form to the college. However, you will need to request that it be sent. It is important to know and follow your school's procedures.

TIP: Usually the person at your school (probably your counselor) who is completing this form asks for information from students and parents ahead of time. If possible, meet with this person before he or she writes a letter of recommendation.

E. Mid-Year Report Form: This form is not required by all colleges but, if it is required, it will be submitted by your high school. However, you must request that it be sent. The purpose of the form is for the college to see your grades from the first term of your senior year.

F. Teacher Recommendation Form: This form is not required by all colleges but, if it is, the teacher is responsible for sending it. However, you are responsible for asking a teacher to complete it and giving that teacher all the necessary information. Look over this form and imagine what one of your teachers would say about you. Colleges are not only looking for teachers from courses where you have received an A, but from teachers who know you well and can talk about your work ethic, inquisitive nature, and motivation to learn.



5

SESSION 5: THE COLLEGE SEARCH AND APPLICATION PROCESS

WRAP-UP

Keep in Mind:

The college search and application process can be very complicated and stressful if students don't TAKE THE TIME to manage the process carefully. Students should first take into account their interests before choosing a school because not just any school can meet all of the students' needs. Campus visits and college fairs are great ways to gain information that can help students' determine if a school is the right "fit". Once determining a list of schools, remind students that they should carefully fill out applications, making sure to consult the handouts and assignments that they have done thus far to facilitate the completion of their applications.

Homework:

1. Instruct students that, if they haven't already done so, it is now time to sit down and talk with their parents about their college options.
2. Not only can students share all that they have learned through the program, but they can ask their parents for their thoughts on their child(ren)'s college possibilities.
3. Students should also encourage their parents to attend the awards ceremony at the end of final session of the program.



6

SESSION 6: BUILDING YOUR DREAM TEAM AND TAKING IT ON THE ROAD

The purpose of this session is to help students build momentum for their college planning that will carry them through to the actual point of selecting and making application to colleges. Students will be encouraged to think about the resources upon which they may draw over their high school years, including the adults in their lives.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will have

- Identified individuals who can serve as mentors in college planning,
- Explored summer experiences that will enrich college readiness,
- Enhanced problem-solving skills to be used as they pursue college admission,
- Been reinforced with congratulations and a certificate of completion.
- Completed an evaluation form.

Activities and Handouts:

(Activities #1 and #2 require chalkboard and chalk or flipchart and markers)

Recap Activity: If students would like to share what qualities they would look for in the “Ideal Student” allow five or fewer minutes for them to read and discuss.

Activity #1: Finding Friends and Mentors on Your Path to College

Handouts: With a Little Help From My Friends (first two questions); How to Use Your School Counselor

Activity #2: Using Your Time Beyond the Classroom to Prepare for College

Handouts: With a Little Help From My Friends (third question); Summer Programs—You mean what I do in the summer can help me with college options?

Activity #3: Developing College-Readiness Problem-Solving Skills

Handout: My Map to College: Nothing Can Stop Me Now!

Activity #4: Wrapping it All Up

Handouts: Certificate of Completion; Evaluation tool

6

SESSION 6: BUILDING YOUR DREAM TEAM AND TAKING IT ON THE ROAD

ACTIVITY # 1: FINDING FRIENDS AND MENTORS ON THE PATH TO COLLEGE

Opening Discussion:

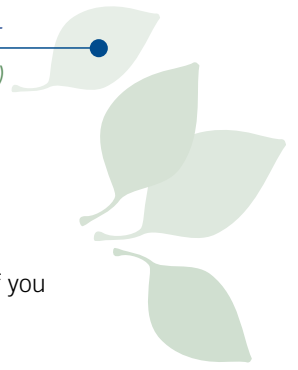
Each one of us requires friends and mentors as we work toward our future goals. It is important that students identify the individuals who can help them reach their goal of college attendance. Students should consider who may help or impede their planning for college.

Activity/Handout:

With a Little Help From My Friends How to Use Your School Counselor

Instructions:

1. Distribute the handout, "With a Little Help from My Friends". Allow approximately five minutes for students to answer the questions.
2. Ask students to share with the group the individual they have identified as a mentor and what role that person has played in each student's life.
3. Discussion: Have students report on the individuals whom they have identified as potential friends and mentors during their college planning process. Use the chalkboard or flip chart to list individuals by the roles played in the students' lives. By the end of this activity, students should have touched upon these individuals: parents, siblings, school counselors, teachers, coaches and leaders of extracurricular activities, community and religious leaders, employers
4. Distribute the handout, "How to Use Your School Counselor." Give students a few minutes to review the handout.
5. Ask students to share what their experience with school counselors has been to date.
6. Discuss with students the special resource that school counselors may provide. Suggest ways to overcome problems that may have arisen in effective working relationships to date.



WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

A mentor is defined as: “a wise and trusted teacher or guide”. Your road to college will be much easier if you enlist the help of more than one mentor along the way.

1. Name a person who has had a positive influence on your ability to go to college:
(Note: this person is one of your “mentors”)

- What is this individual’s relationship to you?
- How has he/she helped you move ahead toward college?

2. Who else can you think of who could be a “mentor” and help you attain your college goals?

3. Identify an experience you have had outside of the classroom (during the last year) that makes it more likely that you will have a successful college experience.

- How did this help you prepare for college?

HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR

School counselors are one of the best ongoing sources of support for students who plan to go to college. They can be your friend throughout the entire college process. If you are lucky enough to have access to a counselor in your school, it is in your best interest to visit that person on a regular basis.

Start by making an individual appointment to introduce yourself to your counselor. Begin your meeting by introducing yourself and stating clearly that it is your definite goal to attend college. Make sure your counselor realizes that this is IMPORTANT to you and that you are HIGHLY MOTIVATED! Whatever grade you are in NOW, this is the time to start helping your counselor get to know you and your college dreams.

Throughout your high school years, your counselor can help you:

- Plan classes that will prepare you well for college admission and success. Your counselor will know which high school classes are required for college admission.
- Review your academic record and suggest areas that need improvement.
- Begin the admission process by identifying the questions you should be asking—and finding honest answers.
- Find information; for example in books, catalogues, brochures, and CDs that deal either with the admission process or a specific college or university.
- Locate Web sites that offer RELIABLE and FREE information about college.
- Identify special opportunities that may maximize your chances for being a well-prepared and appealing candidate for colleges. These might include weekend or summer programs on college campuses (often free for first-generation students), internships, or community college classes open to high school students.
- Learn about local college fairs, opportunities to visit college campuses, and even overnight visits to colleges that may be offered.
- Familiarize yourself with everything you need to know about the required college admission tests. Provide a fee waiver if you cannot pay for tests yourself.
- Figure out how to PAY for college. Your counselor can give you essential information about the “need-based” financial aid application process.

If you feel it will be helpful, ask your counselor to meet with you and the members of your family who will be working with you in your college planning. Having everyone in agreement about your future will make the process much easier!

6

SESSION 6: BUILDING YOUR DREAM TEAM AND TAKING IT ON THE ROAD

ACTIVITY #2: USING YOUR TIME BEYOND THE CLASSROOM TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE OPENING DISCUSSION:

Students should understand that experiences beyond the classroom can help them prepare for college admission and success. Colleges care about how students elect to use their unscheduled time. In particular, summer is an important time that can be used to enhance maturity, motivation, and academic readiness.

Activity/Handout:

With a Little Help From My Friends (third question)

Summer Programs—You mean what I do in the summer can help me with college options?

Instructions:

1. Following up on question #3 from the handout students completed in Activity #2, ask each to share the experience that has enhanced their likelihood of a successful college experience and how this has helped them to prepare for college. Use the chalkboard or flip chart to list these activities.
2. Ask students to group these activities by kind, for example:
 - extracurricular activity
 - sports
 - church
 - employment
 - academic enrichment
3. Distribute the handout on Summer Programs. Explain that, in addition to what has already been listed, a summer program may be an exceptionally good experience in terms of college preparation. Point students particularly to the Web sites they may use to explore summer programs. (If computers are available, some time may be devoted to exploring the sites listed.)



SUMMER PROGRAMS:

You mean what I do in the summer can help me with college options?

What comes to mind when you think of summer? Summer job? Fun in the sun? Travel? How about college preparation? And did you know that colleges will take note of HOW you have used your summers as an indication of your educational preparation?

Working at a summer job can certainly help you save money for college and provide adult mentors, but think about investing some time at a summer program on a college campus. Many are free or low cost, with scholarship options. The right choice can help you learn what it's like to be in college, where your career interests can lead you, and how to connect with more people who can help you in the college process.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR FINDING THE RIGHT SUMMER PROGRAM FOR YOU:

Find a program that fits your academic area of interest or just narrow down the list of things that seem of interest.

- Many colleges and universities host summer programs for high school students. Finding a program on a college campus will expose you to the college experience and help orient you for college life.
- Ask your local college or university about the programs they offer. Or, if you know what college you might want to attend after high school, look there.
- Many programs are associated with some type of cost, so be mindful of that. If cost is a concern, ask the program if they have financial aid or fee waivers. And also be aware that there are free summer programs out there.
- Registration deadlines are extremely important. Some programs accept every student who applies, and some are very selective. The best way to ensure your selection is to apply early. Make sure all necessary documentation is in your application so that it can be processed and so that you can be considered for the program of your choice.

While these programs are important for your development and your future, remember that this is still your summer vacation. In other words, communicate with your family as to the best times for you to participate in these programs.

In the end, you should pick the summer enrichment program that is the best fit for you academically and socially. Choose something in which you have a serious interest, and ask as many questions as you can about the program you choose so that you know exactly what to expect.

Visit www.petersons.com to find a great variety of summer programs, from camps to internships.



Also check out these Web sites for representative possibilities:

www.leadprogram.org—a partnership of top business schools and corporations that provides summer programs for high school juniors

www.blackexcel.org/summer-progs.htm—a comprehensive list of options for minority students

http://jackierobinson.org—provides educational and leadership development programs as well as scholarships, mentors, and internships

www.abetterchance.org—a resource for identifying, recruiting and developing leaders among young people in underserved populations

www.jbhe.com—*The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* evaluates many programs and campuses seeking diversity

To research summer programs, search sites with directories (like www.teenink.com) or search within college sites for listings of their programs. Here are a few examples of summer college programs for high school students posted on college Web Sites:

http://bioengineering.union.edu (click on outreach)—**2 week, all expense paid program for underrepresented sophomores and juniors** interested in biology and bioengineering

www.carleton.edu/summer/CLAE—a week long, all expense paid program for juniors to introduce them to college life and the value of a liberal arts education

http://courses.ncssm.edu/bennett/RECAP—a 3-week research experience for students interested in chemistry, astronomy, or physics

www.spelman.edu/academics/programs/biology/howardhughes_summer.shtml—a five-week non-residential program for students interested in the sciences



ACTIVITY #3: DEVELOPING COLLEGE- READINESS PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

OPENING DISCUSSION:

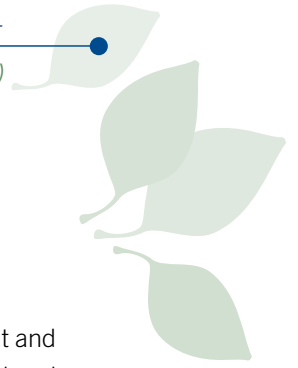
Students need to begin thinking ahead to how they will continue planning for college beyond the end of this session. The purpose of this activity is to help students consider how they will address challenges that may arise as they continue on their path to college. The exercise calls upon topics covered throughout the six session series. By problem solving and sharing with one another, students should grow in their determination to reach their goal—COLLEGE!

Activity/Handout

My Map to College: Nothing Can Stop Me Now!

Instructions:

1. Distribute the handout: My Map to College: Nothing Can Stop Me Now!
2. Divide students into small groups of, perhaps, three. Instruct them to follow the directions on the first page of the handout.
3. Bring the whole group back together. Move from small group to small group asking for their response to each challenge-point: Was it a “bump in the road” or a “roadblock?” How did they think the challenge might be addressed? Who might help?
4. Let other groups respond before moving on to the next challenge.
5. Invite the whole group to summarize what they have heard/learned from this exercise.



MY MAP TO COLLEGE: NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW⁵

Congratulations, you've made the decision to go to college. Good for you!! Now you are in the driver's seat and here is a map to get you started on your way. You are going to find that there are some bumps in the road and even a few roadblocks. In order to reach your final destination—COLLEGE—you will need to figure out how to get over the bumps and around the roadblocks.

Work with your small group to come up with solutions to the challenges you will encounter on this map. First decide if this is a “bump in the road” (fairly easy to get over), or a “roadblock” (will require time and work). Next discuss possible solutions. Jot down who you might go to for help in making progress and/or how you solved the problem. Be ready to share with the whole group at the end.

My Map To College: Nothing Can Stop Me Now

MY MAP TO COLLEGE: NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW!

YOU!

COLLEGE! Roseburg

Callout Boxes:

- 19:** You have never been on a college campus so you're not sure you'll recognize college when you get there. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 26:** Your mom is a single, working-mom. She has been depending on you to help with your little brothers and sisters. You aren't sure she can manage if you go away to college. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 74:** Your parents aren't sure that college is going to be a bump in the road or a road block. Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 126:** You just got your score back from your college admission test (ACT or SAT). They are a disappointment and don't look good enough for admission to college. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 138:** None of your friends are planning to go to college. They say that college is too long and hard. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 197:** You have fallen far behind in one of the classes that you know is required for college admission. Your friend tells you "shouldn't worry" to an easier class second semester. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 206:** Your dad says that the average cost of college education in the United States is that more money than you and your parents could ever save. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 242:** It is time to register for your classes next year. Your counselor looks at your grades to date and suggest that you take less challenging classes than you know you will need for admission to college. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 26:** Your college application requires an essay. Writing is not your strength. You don't know how to get started. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 270:** A military recruiter has visited your high school. He suggests that you join the armed forces instead of going to college. He tells you that you can get all the educational training that you will need, while seeing the world. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 280:** You are a disappointment and don't look good enough for admission to college. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
- 290:** You have never been on a college campus so you're not sure you'll recognize college when you get there. Is this a bump in the road or a road block? Suggested ways to deal with this and move on? Who might help?
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6

SESSION 6: BUILDING YOUR DREAM TEAM AND TAKING IT ON THE ROAD

ACTIVITY # 4: WRAPPING IT ALL UP

Opening Discussion:

This is an opportunity for you to congratulate all students on their commitment to attend college and their participation in the sessions. You will want to motivate students to continue beyond these sessions.

Activity/Handout:

Evaluation tool

Certificate of Completion

Instructions:

1. In your own way, thank and congratulate students on their participation and completion of the series of sessions.
2. Ask students for informal oral feedback on their experience.
3. Distribute Evaluation Tool and collect when completed.
4. Distribute Certificates of Completion.



7

RESOURCES FOR EARLY HIGH SCHOOL: PARENT/GUARDIAN WORKSHOP

Objectives

- To present information about the various kinds of postsecondary education.
- To help parents understand the educational routes to postsecondary education.
- To discuss the importance of interests, values and abilities in educational decision-making.
- To discuss the importance of building a sound record of achievement in challenging high school courses.

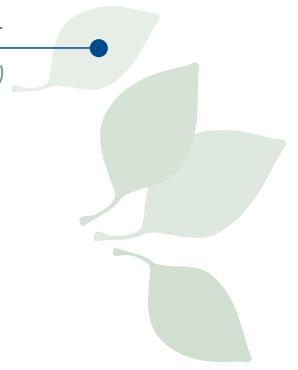


Message

Parents are a child's first and most influential teacher. In fact, parents are often surprised by the impact their roles as educators have on the lives of their children. The more parents or guardians understand about the challenges of learning, the better equipped they will be to play a guiding role in charting a school experience for their child that ensures high school graduation and presents the widest range of educational and career options.

How can parents help? Begin by taking an active interest in what their child is studying in school. The courses a student takes at every grade level have a lot to do with what the child can do after high school graduation. Throughout grades 7-12, families can assist by:

- Investigating the types of programs offered in the school
- Monitoring the student's grades or other reports of academic progress
- Meeting regularly with counselors and teachers to monitor progress
- Becoming familiar with the school calendar, especially grading periods and special events (e.g. testing periods)
- Encouraging the student to get involved in school and community activities
- Reviewing the child's course schedule and participating in future course selection
- Teaching self-advocacy, self-discipline and motivation, which allows students to act on their own behalf



Introductions

You will need to use some type of icebreaker technique to introduce yourself, your fellow presenters and the participants to each other.

Discussion Questions

Some of the questions and discussion topics you may wish to interject are listed below:

- Ask parents what options they had after school. Will their children have the same opportunities? Will they face the same obstacles?
- Ask parents what postsecondary education options exist in the community, and what has been their experience at these schools.
- Ask what local resources they have found to help chart their children's educational experience.



Activities

A number of activities could enhance the information you provide to parents.

- When discussing the various kinds of postsecondary education, consider inviting a representative of each to participate in the workshop:
 - o Colleges and universities
 - o Community and junior colleges
 - o Trade and technical schools
- Invite a high school counselor to talk with parents about the specific educational programs (e.g. academic, vocational, or technical) and the courses available to students.
- Identify the specific educators and community agency representatives who can assist during the middle and high school grades. Invite these individuals to the Step by Step workshop to talk about their programs.
- List the admission requirements for state universities. Compare them with requirements at a private institution in your area.

Thinking About Plans After High School

Some students move directly from school to a job. These students may have pursued a vocational or technical education while in high school. Without formal vocational preparation, they will likely be required to participate in some form of apprenticeship or on-the-job training program to gain entry to their chosen occupation. Other students may decide to take time off before continuing their education so that they might save money for college or explore their interests.

Students may choose to enter military service. The Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard provide several hundred occupational opportunities as well as the specific training programs required to be successful in each. The military services also provide enlisted personnel with the opportunity to participate in college and university training and to continue these studies following enlistment.

Future Plans

(List possible postsecondary options and the goals they will help your student achieve.)

Postsecondary Options	Goal
Service Opportunity	
College or University	
Military Service	
Work	
Community/Junior College	
Gap-Year Programs	
Trade, Tech. or Bus. School	

Types of Postsecondary Institutions

College and University

Description: Institutions composed of divisions called schools or colleges that offer a wide range of majors and prepare individuals for a wide spectrum of careers. There are about 2,500 four-year accredited colleges and universities in the United States.

Length of study: Four years of study leading to a college degree (usually a bachelor's degree).

Characteristics: Well-rounded education, including studies in arts, sciences and the humanities. Can be public, private, sectarian, non-sectarian, coeducational, large or small, and found in any type of community.

Trade, Technical, and Business School

Description: Privately owned schools specializing in trades or vocations. There are thousands of schools in the United States offering hundreds of different courses and occupational programs. These schools specialize in teaching particular skills (e.g. welding, culinary arts, cosmetology, and telecommunications) required in the workplace. Visit the Vocational Schools Database at www.rwm.org/rwm.

Length of Study: Studies vary in length from intensified training programs lasting a few weeks to diploma or certificate-granting programs that may take up to two years.

Characteristics: Open admission, so that all who apply are usually admitted. Instruction is directed to skill training required for a specific job. "Hands on" learning or "learning by doing" is often used.

Community College/Junior College

Description: Two-year public and private institutions conveniently located in local communities. They specialize in college transfer programs, vocational programs or both. There are about 1,200 community colleges in the United States. Visit the Community College Finder at www.aacc.nche.edu.

Length of study: Depends on program—generally six months to two years. Programs lead to degrees (usually associate degrees) or certificates.

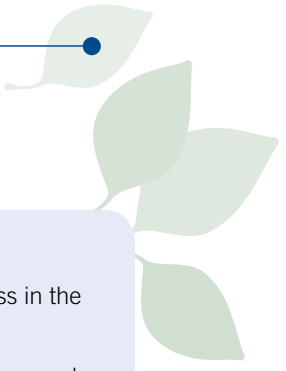
Characteristics: Usually inexpensive, flexible hours, convenient location, independent study as well as traditional classroom approach. Open admission, but certain programs may have selective admission and may require standardized test results and/or essays. Transfer programs are often tied to four-year colleges in state or area. Usually respond to local employment demand by offering courses in needed areas.

Online Institutions

These are for students who may be unable to attend classes on campus. Traditional colleges and universities also offer some courses and programs online. To learn about online institutions, visit www.directoryofonlineschools.com.

Coursework Leading to College

Ideally beginning in middle school but no later than ninth grade, the college-bound student will need to pursue a course of study that is both extensive and rigorous. Some high schools prescribe schedules beginning in the ninth grade so students get on a "track," which can have a dramatic effect on their educational experiences.



Academic Preparation for College

Required/Recommended Precollege Coursework

Subject Area	Amount of Study	Types of Classes
English (Language Arts)	4 years	Literature, Writing/ Composition, Speech
Science	3–4years	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Earth/ Space Science
Mathematics	3–4 years	Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II, Trigonometry and/or Calculus
Social Studies	3–4 years	U.S. History, US Government, Economics, World History/Geography
Foreign Language	2–4 years	of same lan- guage
Arts	1–3 years	Art, Dance, Drama, Music, Performing or Visual Arts
Computer Science	basic knowledge	

How counselors can help:

- Monitor achievement and progress in the classroom.
- Identify individual learning concerns and find solutions.
- Appraise aptitude, intelligence, and other individual characteristics; interpret findings.
- Provide information about high school study options and course offerings and assist in educational planning.
- Teach study skills and motivate students to get the most out of their school experience.
- Encourage students to maintain an academic portfolio.
- Foster extracurricular involvement and the maintenance of an extracurricular record.
- Introduce the concepts of educational exploration and decision-making, and aid students in understanding the various educational options they may pursue.
- Give students support and guidance through the development of post-high school plans.

High School Class Chart

(fill in boxes with specific classes)

Subject	English	Science	Mathematics	Social Studies	Foreign Language	Arts	Computer Science	Elective
9th Grade								
10th Grade								
11th Grade								
12th Grade								

Types of Financial Aid

Grants

Grants are also known as gift aid; they are based on need and do not have to be repaid. They come from the federal or state governments or from the college itself. Grants are based on a student's financial need, and when the need is high, the grant aid tends to be high as well. Grants may be made up from various sources. There are five types of federal student aid grants, all of which require filing the FAFSA to be eligible:

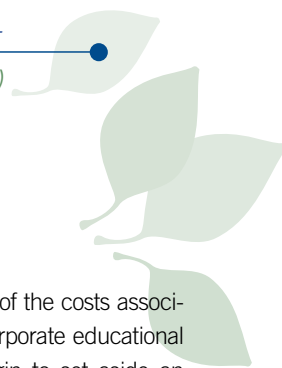
- Federal Pell Grants are the largest source of free money for college from the federal government. To be considered, the student must file the FAFSA. Pell Grants can be used for tuition, fees and living expenses, and in 2009–10 they ranged from \$555 to \$5,550.
- Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (FSEOG) are awarded to students with exceptional financial need. Filing the FAFSA is all that is needed, and students who qualify for a Pell Grant will be given priority consideration. The grants range from \$100 to \$4,000 per year.
- Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACGs) are for Pell-eligible students who completed a rigorous high school course of study and are enrolled in an eligible program of study. For a list of recognized rigorous programs of secondary school study in your state visit www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/about/ac-smart/state-programs.html. Awards in 2009–10 were \$750 for first-year and \$1,300 for second-year students.
- National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grants (SMART Grants) are for Pell-eligible students in their third or fourth year of specific majors (listing at www.ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/attachments/GEN1012Attach.pdf). Students must have a minimum 3.0 GPA. The award for full-time students in 2009–10 was \$4,000.
- Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants are for students pursuing a degree in education. The award amounts up to \$4,000 and the student agrees to teach in a participating school or teach in a high-need field for four complete years. This grant is converted to an Unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loan and must be repaid if the teaching agreement is not fulfilled.
- In addition to federal grant money, many institutions have their own grant aid available for high-need students.

Scholarships

Scholarships are a form of financial aid that is usually based on merit, sometimes in combination with need. The competition for many scholarships is intense. Some are given to the student who exhibits a particular ability or skill such as athletics or music; others are awarded for academic achievement. Scholarships are often renewable for each college year, usually contingent on the student continuing to participate in the activity that prompted the award; or, in the case of academic scholarships, maintaining a certain achievement level or grade point average. In some instances, the college controls the scholarship process, inviting only certain students to become candidates.

Web sites such as FastWeb (www.fastweb.com/) and The College Board (http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp) provide free scholarship search services that allow students to identify scholarships based on their interests, talents, need, ethnicity, and other factors. Students should be aware of scholarship scams, however. One way to spot a scam company is if it asks students to pay a fee in order to provide a scholarship search or guarantees a successful search. Visit www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml for more information on scholarship scams.

Don't overlook the possibility of local scholarships. Students should seek out and apply for as many local scholarships as possible. High schools, churches, local businesses, civic organizations, and special programs may have local scholarships. Some companies and businesses offer assistance to children of their employees. The school counselor or the school's Web site can provide information about local scholarships, also.



Work-Study

In this case, the student earns the money awarded, often working on campus in the book store, library or dining commons. Students may be able to find employment related to college studies or community service. The typical number of hours worked is 10-15 hours per week, and the salary is often higher than minimum wage.

Loans

Loans are a part of most financial aid packages, and they must be repaid, usually with interest. Fortunately, most government loans do not have to be paid until after graduation. Loans can be either need-based or awarded without regard to the family's financial circumstances, and they may be awarded to the student or to the parent(s). Loans based on need usually come from the federal government, the college or university, or private lenders.

Some of the most common types of the loans include:

1. Stafford Loan – the most common government loan for undergraduates at all types of colleges. The government pays the interest on a Stafford subsidized loan while the student is in college.
2. Perkins Loan – is a low interest loan for students with exceptional need. These loans are awarded by colleges using mostly federal funds, and no interest is accrued while a student is enrolled at least half-time. Repayment begins nine months after graduation. Students can borrow up to \$5,500 per year or a total of \$27,500.
3. PLUS (Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students) Loan – is a federal loan that allows parents to borrow up to the total cost of attendance, less any other aid the student receives. These loans are unsubsidized, so the parent is responsible for paying the interest.
4. Private Loans – after exhausting all other sources of financial aid. Private loans usually carry a higher interest rate than federal loans, and they may not have as favorable repayment terms.

Students and parents should get all of the facts about the loan before signing a loan agreement. Loans must be repaid according to the terms of the loan, even if the student does not finish college or is dissatisfied with the educational program.

Preparing to Meet College Costs

The earlier parents or guardians become aware of the costs associated with college, the better the family can incorporate educational costs into their savings plan. Families that begin to set aside an amount of money when the child is born are buying a form of insurance that the funds will be available to assist the student when the time comes to go to college.

A simple savings account at a bank or credit union is a common choice, but there are other options:

- 529 plans are tax-advantaged investment plans offered by states. They are designed to encourage saving for the future college-going expenses of a designated beneficiary, typically a child or grandchild. Withdrawals from 529 plans are free from federal income taxes. Many states also offer a state tax deduction, matching grants, scholarship opportunities, and other benefits. There are two types of 529 plans: prepaid tuition and savings. Prepaid tuition plans allow the pre-purchase of tuition based on today's rates but paid out when the beneficiary is in college. Savings plans, administered by 49 states and the District of Columbia, require a monthly deposit that is invested, usually in mutual funds, on behalf of the saver. More information is available at www.collegesavings.org.
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are matched savings accounts that help low-income families save and build assets that can be used to invest in a college education, among other things. The match on the family's monthly investment, which can be quite small, is provided by a variety of government and private-sector sources. IDAs also include a financial literacy component that helps families plan for the future. More information is available at www.cfed.org/assets/pdfs/IDA_Fact_Sheet_2009_12_12.pdf.
- Coverdell Education Savings Accounts (formerly Education IRAs) are investment plans that allow deposits of up to \$2,000 in taxable income per beneficiary per year in a designated investment trust account. Later withdrawals for qualified expenses are tax-free. More information is available at www.savingforcollege.com/intro_to_esas/.
- US Savings Bonds are very safe investments that offer relatively modest returns. Interest on savings bonds is always exempt from federal and state income taxes. When the bonds are redeemed in a year that eligible education expenses are incurred, the accrued interest is also free from federal income taxes (but only if the bond is registered in the parent's, not the student's, name). More information is available at www.treasurydirect.gov/indiv/research/articles/res_invest_articles_education_0604.htm.

One resource to help set and meet college savings goals is the financial calculators at www.finaid.org/calculators. If it doesn't impose a financial hardship, families may also want to consult a professional financial planner.

Assessing Individual Characteristics

A full examination of a student's individual characteristics will provide considerable insight that can help parents and educators assist students with educational planning.

- What natural abilities does he/she possess? What things come easy to him/her?
 - In what school subjects has he/she obtained the best grades? In what activities and sports has he/she experienced the greatest measures of success?
 - How does he/she enjoy spending his/her leisure time? What inspires his/her curiosity?

While considering the abilities and success of the student, equally important is the consideration of a child's weaknesses. Be aware of areas in which the child might need encouragement or help, while remembering that weaknesses can be the shadow-side of a child's strength.

Teachers and Counselors Can Help

When parents consider all that is involved in motivating, assisting and guiding their child, the task of helping him/her to succeed in school may seem overwhelming. It appears even more difficult with two, three or more children moving through the elementary and middle grades at the same time.

Do not hesitate to ask for help from school and community organizations to ensure that the student gets the best education possible. First, build strong relationships with the teachers. They will be important allies throughout the schooling process.

A second key consultant to parents is the school counselor. The counselor's specific task, whether in elementary, middle or high school, is to help students find success in school and to address the personal, social, emotional, and academic concerns that may stand between them and that success. Counselors have been specifically trained to assist in the many transitions that occur during the K-12 experience and beyond.

Counselors are also present in the various postsecondary education institutions in the community, and they will assist with educational planning and decision-making. Other specialists (professional and volunteer) include staff community agencies, youth centers, recreation programs, and other community programs.

The high school counselor will continue these services while providing specific assistance in the secondary-to-postsecondary and college admission process. That role will be discussed in a later workshop.

Become acquainted with the counselor early and consult him/her throughout the student's educational experience.

How counselors can help:

- Monitor achievement and progress in the classroom.
- Identify individual learning concerns and find solutions.
- Appraise aptitude, intelligence, and other individual characteristics; interpret findings.
- Provide information about high school study options and course offerings and assist in educational planning.
- Teach study skills and motivate students to get the most out of their school experience.
- Encourage students to maintain an academic portfolio.
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NACAC National Association for
College Admission Counseling
www.nacacnet.org

CSC Center for Student Opportunity
Promoting a College-Bound Culture



STEP BY STEP: COLLEGE AWARENESS AND PLANNING

LATE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

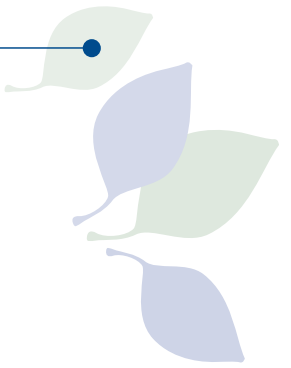
Grades 11 and 12

INTRODUCTION

Guidance in the later years of high school can put students on a successful path to college attainment and graduation. At this stage, a counselor's role should include:

- Encouraging students to assess where they are in their college search and application process and what steps to take to reach their goal of choosing the college that best suits their needs
- Assisting the students in putting together a plan for standardized testing
- Helping students assess their career interests and aspirations and begin researching colleges to pursue those goals
- Guiding students through the process of completing and submitting an application for admission to the school of their choice
- Introducing students to the financial aid process





SESSIONS

The following six-session curriculum lays a comprehensive foundation to address all of the above.

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**SESSION 1:
Goal Setting: Taking Stock 196**

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**SESSION 2:
Standardized Testing. 218**

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**SESSION 3:
The College Search. 234**

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**SESSION 4:
The Application Process (Part One) . . . 245**

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**SESSION 5:
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**SESSION 6:
Financial Aid and Final Wrap-up 279**

7

**RESOURCES FOR LATE HIGH SCHOOL:
Parent/Guardian Workshop 302**

1

SESSION I: GOAL SETTING: TAKING STOCK

The purpose of this session will be for the students to talk about where they are in the college search process (have they begun to think about college, started a search, taken an SAT/ACT)? Some individual time with the Workshop Facilitator and a college admission checklist for 11th and/or 12th grade should end the session.

Objectives:

By the end of this session students will have:

- created a personal definition/description of college
- completed a personal resume
- reviewed a college planning calendar for junior and senior years

Activities and Handouts:

Activity #1: Where are you?

Activity #2: College Means...How do YOU define college?

Handouts: How Do You Define College?
Considering College Types

Activity #3: Who are you?

Handout: College Counseling Resume and
Questionnaire

Activity #4: What and when?

Handouts: Calendar/checklist
How to Use Your School Counselor
Choosing Your Team



1

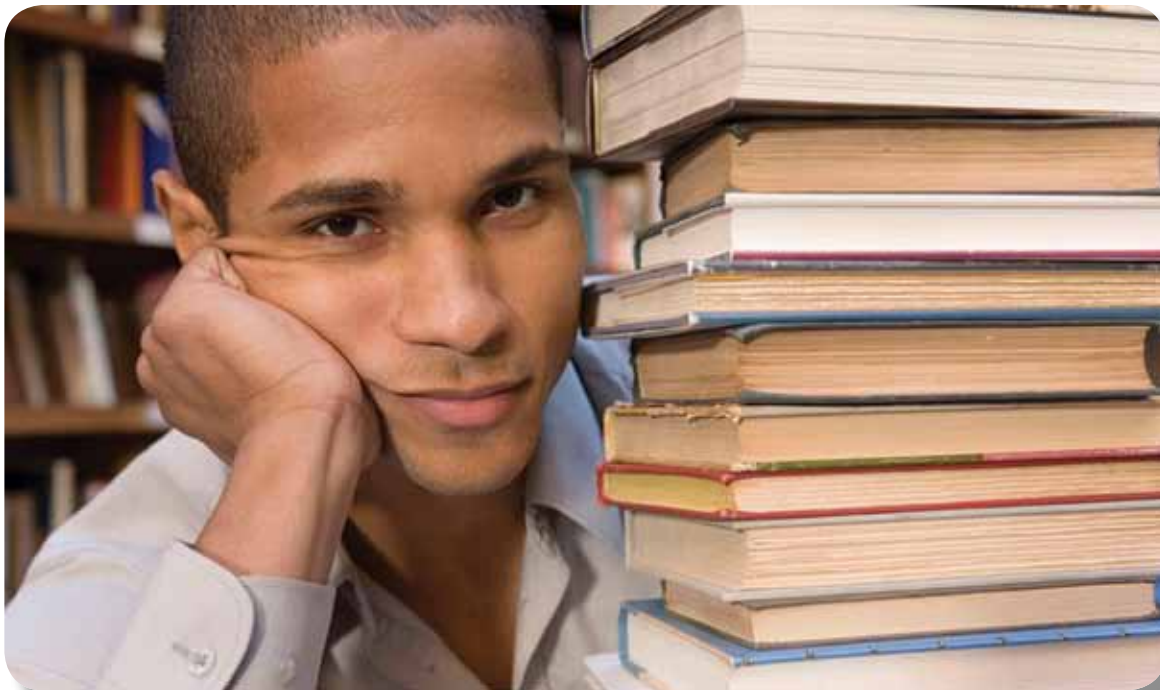
SESSION I: GOAL SETTING: TAKING STOCK

ACTIVITY #1: WHERE ARE YOU?

Opening Discussion:

At this point, students may be at very different stages in the college selection process. Using the following questions, generate a discussion about what steps they have taken so far in the college search. The purpose of the opening discussion is not only to discuss the following questions but also to have the students learn more about one another as they share their ideas. This discussion in many ways is an ice breaker.

- Why are you here? Ask students to make appropriate introductions depending upon setting and composition of group. Try to direct the students to talk about their goals for the session and goals for college attendance.
- What have you done if anything to prepare for college? This could be as sophisticated as doing a college search or as simple as taking college preparatory courses in high school, or talking to a next door neighbor.
- Have you visited a college? If so, what was the experience like?
- Have you taken the PSAT/PLAN and/or SAT/ACT? Discuss.
- Have you started the college search process? If so, what have you done?



1

SESSION I: GOAL SETTING: TAKING STOCK

ACTIVITY #2: COLLEGE MEANS....: HOW DO YOU DEFINE COLLEGE?

Opening Discussion:

The purpose of this exercise is to determine how much the students know about colleges and how accurate their information is. Remember that “college” can include various forms of higher education including community college and vocational schools.

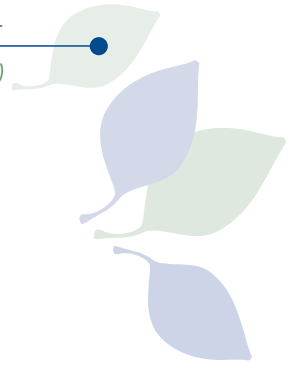
Activity/Handouts:

Definition Worksheet

Considering College Types

Instructions:

1. Ask students to pair with a partner and then try to identify specific names of colleges among the categories of colleges listed in order to see what they know about different types of colleges.
2. Use this exercise to generate discussion about the variety of options in higher education and to give students an opportunity to interact with one another.
3. After answering questions, ask students to turn to “Considering College Types” and read it together or silently, circling or highlighting any facts that interest them or about which they have questions.
4. Answer questions once students have completed the reading.



HOW DO YOU DEFINE COLLEGE?

Two year _____

Four year _____

Ivy League _____

Historically Black _____

Urban _____

Suburban _____

Specialized:

• Engineering _____

• Culinary _____

• Art _____

• Medical _____

• Fashion _____

• Technology _____

• International _____

Coed _____

Single Sex _____

Public _____

Private _____

Major Athletic Conferences _____

Religiously affiliated _____

Undergraduate _____

Graduate _____

Division III _____

Other _____

From: *The College Board College Advising Basics Workbook*



CONSIDERING COLLEGE TYPES

Colleges aren't all the same. Different colleges and universities have different missions (or functions, or goals). While no two are exactly alike, most fit into one or more of the following categories:

Liberal Arts Colleges focus on the education of undergraduate students. Classes are generally taught by professors who see teaching as their primary responsibility. Because most liberal arts colleges are smaller than universities, classes tend to be smaller and more personal attention is available. As opposed to gaining preparation for a specific career path, students who attend liberal arts colleges are exposed to a broad base of courses in the humanities, social sciences and sciences. In addition, they select at least one area of in-depth study which is their college "major." Many employers look for graduates of liberal arts programs, valuing their well-rounded preparation.

Universities are generally larger and include a liberal arts college, as well as some professionally-oriented colleges and graduate programs. Universities offer a greater range of academic choices than do liberal arts colleges. They will likely provide more extensive resources in terms of library, laboratory, fine arts and athletic facilities. At many large universities class size will reflect institutional size, with most introductory classes being taught in a lecture format. Some classes will be taught by graduate students. Professors at major universities will be involved in research which adds to the vitality of the academic community, but may also draw energy, focus, and resources away from undergraduate teaching.

Technical Institutes and Professional Schools enroll students who have made clear decisions about what they want to study. They emphasize preparation for specific careers, for example in music or fine arts, engineering or technical sciences. You will want to be quite sure of your future direction before selecting one of these options.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities find their origins in the time when African-American students were systematically denied access to most other colleges and universities. Students at HBCU's have a unique opportunity to experience an educational community in which they are a part of the majority. They find committed faculty mentors who encourage their expectations of success.

Tribal Colleges are similar to HBCU's, focusing on the needs and education of Native American students.

Women's Colleges, with their larger numbers of female faculty and administrators, offer college women confidence-building role models, greater opportunities to serve in a full range of student leadership positions, and a heightened awareness of career possibilities for women. Women's colleges graduate a high number of science majors, as well as students who continue on to graduate school and/or professional studies.

Community or junior colleges generally offer the first two years of a liberal arts education, in addition to specialized occupational preparation. An associate degree is awarded at the end of a two-year program of studies, following which many students continue their education at a four-year institution.

Proprietary institutions are considered for-profit companies that operate under the demands of investors and stockholders. They attract adult learners and part-time students in search of narrowly-focused professional training opportunities. These programs usually offer a non-traditional format; many for-profits also have classes solely available online.



OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER IN SELECTING COLLEGES

ACCREDITATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE FEDERAL STUDENT AID PROGRAMS: The goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by colleges and universities meets acceptable levels of quality. Accrediting agencies, which are private educational associations of regional or national scope, develop evaluation criteria and conduct peer evaluations to assess whether or not those criteria are met. To participate in the federal student aid programs, an institution must be accredited by an accrediting agency or state approval agency recognized by the US Secretary of Education as a “reliable authority as to the quality of postsecondary education” within the meaning of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended. This is all very technical, but the bottom line is if a college or university is unaccredited, it will not be able to offer federal student aid. You should be very cautious about considering a school that does not participate in the federal student aid programs.

INSTITUTION SIZE: The size of a college or university will have an impact upon many of your opportunities and experiences. The range of academic majors offered, the extracurricular possibilities, the amount of personal attention you’ll receive, and the number of books in the library will all be influenced by size.

In considering size, however, it is essential that you look beyond the raw number of students attending. Consider instead, average class size for both first year students and upperclassmen. Investigate not just the number of faculty, but also how accessible faculty are to students. Perhaps you are considering a small department within a large school, or vice versa. Large schools may offer extensive support services for students with special needs or those who are experiencing difficulty. Smaller schools may not be able to fund similar programs. On the other hand, extra support may not be necessary if faculty work closely with individual students.

LOCATION: Distance from home may be important to you. Is it important to you to be able to visit home frequently, or do you see this as a time to experience a new part of the country? Some of you will prefer an urban environment with access to museums, ethnic food, or major league ball games. Others will hope for easy access to outdoor activities or the serenity and safety of a more rural setting.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS: If you have a good idea of something specific you want to study in college or a career for which you want to prepare, look for well-respected academic departments in this discipline at the colleges you explore. Talk with professors and students in these departments. Research relative reputation by surveying adults already in the field and using printed resources which rank academic departments.

You should not limit your selection process to academic program issues alone. Studies show that a majority of college students change college major at least once during their college years. Therefore, it is important to pick a college or university that will offer you many appealing possibilities. Look for unique options such as study abroad, unusual academic calendars, or cooperative education plans which enable you to include several paid internships with your class work, as ways of enhancing your education.

If you are undecided, relax and pick an academically-balanced institution which offers a range of majors and programs. Most colleges offer expert counseling to help the undecided student find a focus.

CAMPUS LIFE: Be sure that you consider what your experience will be like at a college—beyond the classroom. In order to grow in all ways, you will want a reasonable balance between academic rigor and an active social life. Find out what is available in terms of extracurricular activities, athletics, special interest groups. Does the community surrounding the college offer attractive outlets for students? Are students truly welcomed by the community? Is there an ethnic or religious community in which you can participate? What influence, if any, do fraternities and sororities have on campus life?

Colleges will often require that you live in campus housing for one or more years. So, in considering social life, be sure to look carefully at the quality of life in the dormitories. Many colleges now offer residential-life

options such as substance-free dorms and special interest floors for students who share academic, recreational or community service interests. Others will offer dormitory-based study assistance, computer facilities, and counseling services. Ask if housing is guaranteed to returning students. If so, how are dormitory assignments made after the first year?

COST: Today's price-tag for a college education has made cost an important consideration for most students. At the same time, virtually all colleges work very hard to ensure that academically-qualified students from every economic circumstance can find the financial aid which will allow them to attend. In considering cost, look beyond the price-tag for available assistance. Decide the value of a desired educational experience and how much sacrifice (usually in terms of work and loan) you are willing to make to obtain your goals. Work closely with the financial aid officers at the colleges to which you apply.

Two factors which are less obvious to many students, but very important in predicting the kind of experience you will have in college are

DIVERSITY: You will learn much from your college classmates every day—in the classroom and in activities. Consider geographic, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of the student body as ways of assessing your future learning opportunities.

RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES: One of the best ways to measure the quality of a college or university and the satisfaction of its students is by learning the percentage of students who return after the first year and the percentage of entering students who remain to graduate. Comparatively good retention and graduation rates are indicators that:

- a college and a majority of its students are well-matched,
- sufficient classes and academic programs are available
- responsible academic, social, and financial support systems exist for most students.



From: **CHARTING YOUR COURSE FOR COLLEGE**
(Copyright 2004: Mary Lee Hoganson)

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SESSION I: GOAL SETTING: TAKING STOCK

ACTIVITY #3: WHO ARE YOU?

Opening Discussion:

Now is a time to reflect on individual goals and accomplishments. Give a brief introduction of the “College Counseling Resume” and let students know that this information can help them find a college that is a good match. Students should also be encouraged to share this information with their high school counselor and family as they work together to research colleges.

Activity/Handout:

Personal Resume

Instructions:

1. Ask students to complete the “College Counseling Resume” and encourage them to ask questions.
2. Make sure to collect the questionnaires.
3. Try to allow time for individual Q&A with the students during this activity.
4. Use this interaction to help you determine the initial needs of this group and to plan future sessions.



COLLEGE COUNSELING RÉSUMÉ

Section I—Family:

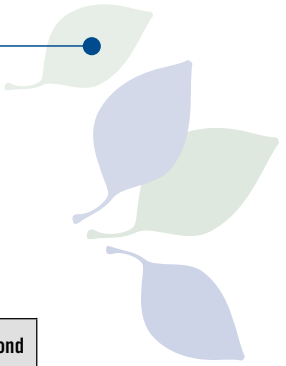
	Father	Mother	Guardian	Siblings
Name(s)				
Educational Background (high school, post-high school, etc.)				
Occupation				

Section II—Academics/School:

1. Check the following:

	English	History	Language	Math	Science	Computer	Art	Other
Which subjects do you like the best?								
In which subjects have you done the best?								
Which subjects are more difficult for you?								

2. Your academic record: How would you describe your academic record? Are your grades above, below or consistent with your ability? Why?
3. Your finest academic moment: Describe that achievement or experience.



Section III—School Activities:

Activity

Grade Level

9	10	11	12	Beyond
---	----	----	----	--------

Athletics (sport and level [JV, varsity, etc.] and any awards)

	9	10	11	12	Beyond

Extracurricular Activities (clubs, organizations)

	9	10	11	12	Beyond

Employment and Summer Activities

	9	10	11	12	Beyond

Church/Community Service

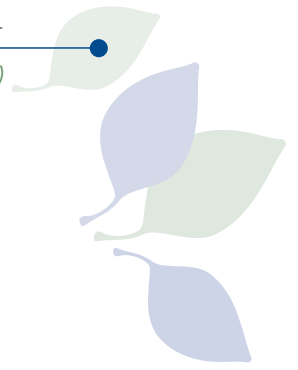
	9	10	11	12	Beyond

Section IV—College/Career Interests:

1. List the college majors that interest you.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
2. Identify the profession(s) in which you see yourself working. _____

Section V: FACTORS AFFECTING YOUR COLLEGE CHOICES:

1. Besides getting an education and preparing for a career, what are other reasons why you are going to college?
2. What type of college environment will challenge you to grow the most academically and personally?
3. What are your top 4-6 criteria in selecting a college?
4. In college, what extracurricular activities do you want to continue or begin?
5. What professions interest you the most?
6. List college majors that interest you
7. What pressures, if any, are you feeling from yourself or others about going to college?
8. What are your major concerns about attending college?
9. College Type: Single Sex _____ Coed _____ Either _____



10. College Locations—Check regions and circle states of particular interest:

- Midwest (IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, MO, OH, WI)
- Southeast (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
- Mid-Atlantic (DE, D.C., MD, PA, NJ, NY)
- New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, VT, RI)
- West (AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, HI, KS, MT, NE, NV, NM, OK, OR, ND, SD, TX, UT, WA, WY)
- Canada, England, Scotland

If you are interested in specific cities, list them here and explain why.

11. Community (check all that apply):

- small town
- large town
- near a city
- near the mountains
- near the coast
- undecided

12. College size (check all that apply):

- under 500-1000
- 1000-2000
- 2000-5000
- 5000-10,000
- over 10,0000
- no preference

Section VI—Final Thoughts:

Is there anything else you'd like to share about yourself?

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SESSION I: GOAL SETTING: TAKING STOCK

ACTIVITY #4: WHAT AND WHEN AND WHO?

Opening Discussion:

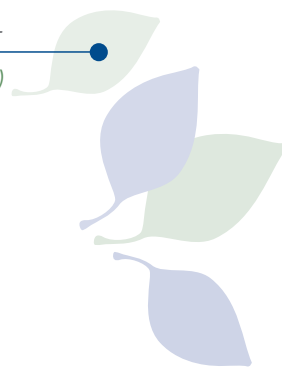
Remind students that even though the process can seem overwhelming, if they take it step-by step, it will be easier. They will feel as if they are in control of the process. Keeping a calendar of important dates and deadlines is absolutely essential throughout the college search and application process. Developing a solid relationship with the school counselor will be an additional source of support, as will recognizing the role of family, friends and community contacts.

Activity/Handouts:

Calendar/Checklist**How to Use Your School Counselor****Choosing Your Team**

Instructions:

1. Hand out the calendar for the junior and senior year that will give students an idea of where they should be in the preparation for entering higher education.
2. Briefly go over the list letting students know that much of the information will be discussed in future sessions.
3. Ask students to check the appropriate boxes and keep the calendar in a safe, useful place.
4. Go over the handout on “How to Use Your School Counselor,” pointing out to students the importance of using their counselor to help them through the application process.
5. Ask students if they have met with their counselor.
6. Hand out “Choosing Your Team” and ask students to identify at least one person who will be a support for them as they apply to college.
7. Ask the students to take home their checklist, resume, and questionnaire, to complete and bring them back for the next session.



PREPARING FOR COLLEGE: JUNIOR/SENIOR CHECK LIST

JUNIORS

Fall:

- Start your year off right by **talking with your guidance counselor about the year ahead**. Confirm that your courses will put you on the right track for college admission. Be sure to ask about test dates for the PSAT, ACT, and SAT. You'll need to register up to six weeks ahead of time.
- Starting developing a résumé**—a record of your accomplishments, activities, and work experiences. This will be an important part of your college application.
- If you haven't participated in many activities outside of class, now is the time to sign up**. Consider clubs at schools, team sports, leadership roles, or involvement in your religious or civic community group.
- Take the PSAT**. Taking the test as a junior will qualify you for some scholarship consideration and identify you to colleges as a potential applicant. When you receive the results (usually in December), review them to learn more about your strengths and weaknesses. Discuss the results with your family and school counselor.
- Begin to prepare for the ACT or SAT**. Free test preparation may be available at your school, your local community colleges, and community based programs; in addition, there are many free resources on the Internet. If you can't find the best Web sites, ask your counselor. You should plan to take at least one of these tests in the spring and again next fall during your senior year. **Ask your counselor if you qualify for a fee waiver**.

January/February:

- Meet with your guidance counselor again to develop your senior schedule**. Make sure that you will be enrolled in the most challenging courses for which you are qualified.
- Register for a spring offering of the SAT and/or ACT**. Ask your counselor if you should take an SAT Subject Test this spring.
- Ask your counselor about summer opportunities on college campuses**. These can be a great way to find out what college life is all about and make you a more attractive candidate for admission to colleges.



March/April:

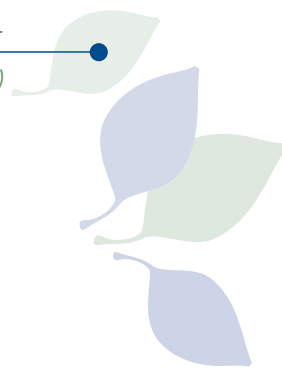
- Begin taking a more serious look at colleges and universities.** Make a file for each college in which you are interested and gather information about academics, financial aid, and campus life. Go to college fairs and open houses and learn as much as you can about colleges online.
- Begin planning college visits.** Spring break is a good time to visit. Try to visit colleges near you, and include a large, medium size, and small campus.
- Develop a preliminary list of colleges that interest you.** Write or email to request a viewbook and additional information.
- Think about lining up a summer job, internship or co-op.**

May:

- Take a look at some college applications** and consider all of the different pieces of information you will need to compile.
- Make a list of teachers, counselors, employers, and other adults whom you might ask to write letters of recommendation** for your college applications.

Summer:

- Continue investigating colleges**
- Begin thinking about your applications. Generally, colleges will have their applications online by the beginning of August. Work on the essay before you return to school!**



SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

August/September

- Register for the SAT and/or ACT** if you didn't take it as a junior, or if you aren't satisfied with your score and want to take it again. (remember that your counselor can help you with fee waivers)
- Take a look at some college applications** and consider all of the different pieces of information you will need to compile.
- The SAT test date most popular with high school seniors is this month.**
- Visit with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate** and fulfill college admission requirements. If you're ahead of schedule, consider taking courses at a local university or community college to get a jumpstart on college credit.
- Take every opportunity to get to know colleges:** meeting with college representatives who visit your high schools during the fall, attending local college fairs, visiting campuses (if possible). Ask your counselor if they know of special campus visitation programs.
- Narrow down your list of colleges** and begin to consider "safe," "reach," and "realistic" schools. Make sure you have the application and financial aid information for each school. Find out if you qualify for any scholarships at these schools.
- Create a checklist and calendar** to chart:
 - Standardized test dates, registration deadlines, and fees
 - College application due dates
 - Financial aid application forms and deadlines
 - Other materials you'll need for college applications (recommendations, transcripts, essays, etc.)
 - Your high school's application processing deadlines
- Some schools require the CSS/Financial Aid Profile.** Ask the colleges to which you are applying for their deadlines. You can register as early as September. See your guidance counselor about fee waivers.



October

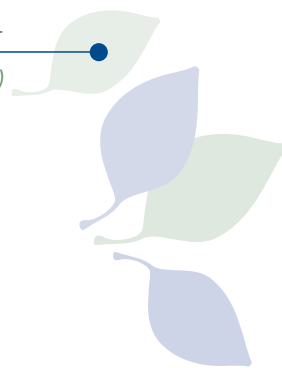
- Some colleges will have deadlines as early as this month.** These would include rolling admission, priority, early decision, and early action deadlines.
- If you cannot afford the application fees that many colleges charge, **ask your counselor to help you request a fee waiver.**
- Finalize your college essay.** Many schools will require that you submit at least one essay with your application.
- Request personal recommendations from teachers, school counselors, or employers.** Follow the process required by your high school or provide a stamped, addressed envelope, the appropriate college forms, and an outline of your academic record and extracurricular activities to each person writing you a recommendation.
- Research possibilities of scholarships.** Ask your counselor, your colleges, and your religious and civic groups about scholarship opportunities. There are also some good scholarship Web sites, including FastWeb (www.fastweb.com/) and The College Board (http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp). You should NEVER pay for scholarship information.

November

- Finalize and send any early decision or early action applications due this month.** Have a parent, teacher, counselor, or other adult review the application before it is submitted.
- Every college will require a copy of your transcript from your high school.** Follow your school's procedure for sending transcripts.
- Make sure testing companies have sent your scores directly to the colleges to which you are applying.**
- The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) will be available this month,** but cannot be completed before January 1. This is the form you will complete to find out what financial aid you are eligible to receive from the government. Ask your guidance office for a copy or visit www.fafsa.ed.gov. This form should be filed online if at all possible.

December

- Begin to organize regular decision applications** and financial aid forms, which will be due in January and/or February.
- Register for the January SAT (If needed). It is the last one colleges will be able to consider for a senior.**



January

- Many popular and selective colleges will have application deadlines as early as January 1.** Others have deadlines later in January and February. Keep track of and observe deadlines for sending in all required fees and paperwork.
- If necessary, register for the February ACT (some colleges will be able consider it).**
- Ask your guidance office in January to send first semester transcripts to schools where you applied.** At the end of the school year, they will need to send final transcripts to the college you will attend.
- It is time to file the FAFSA (no later than Feb 1).** The sooner you complete it, the sooner you will have an idea of your financial aid options. Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR)—it should arrive four weeks after the FAFSA is filed.

Feb/March/April

- While most of your applications will be complete and you are waiting to receive admission decisions, **don't slack in the classroom.** The college that you do attend will want to see your second semester transcript. No Senioritis!
- Acceptance letters and financial aid offers will start to arrive.** Review your acceptances, compare financial aid packages, and visit your final choices, especially if you haven't already.

May

- May 1 is the date when the college you plan to attend requires a commitment and deposit.** When you've made your college decision, notify your counselor and the colleges. Send in your deposit by the postmark date of May 1. If you've been offered financial aid, accept the offer and follow the instructions given. Also notify schools you will not attend of your decision.
- Make sure that you have requested that your final transcript be sent to the school you will be attending.**
- If you are "wait listed" by a college you really want to attend, visit, call and write** the admission office to make your interest clear. Ask how you can strengthen your application.



Summer

- It's been a long journey through high school and to college. **Take time to enjoy your summer!**
- Getting a summer job** can help pay some of your college expenses and give you great career preparation.
- Make a list of what you will need to take with you for your dorm room.** The suggested list of items, room and furniture dimensions and many other questions can usually be answered by visiting your college's Web site and searching under 'Housing' or 'Residence Life' for further information.
- You will most likely get a roommate assignment** from your college. Call, write or email to get acquainted in advance. In your conversations and communication, you should be able to figure out who will bring what for your room.
- Some colleges will offer a summer orientation/registration.** Make sure to attend in order to meet fellow students and other important people on campus and to familiarize yourself with your new school. This is often the time you sign up for your fall courses.



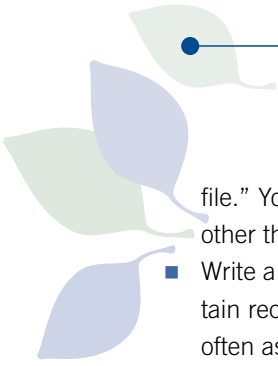
HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR

School counselors are one of the best ongoing sources of support for students who plan to go to college. They can be your friend throughout the entire college process. If you are lucky enough to have access to a counselor in your school, it is in your best interest to visit that person on a regular basis.

Start by making an individual appointment to introduce yourself to your counselor. If small-group college counseling or information sessions are offered, sign up. But don't only settle for a "group" meeting in which you will have to share time with other students. Make sure that you schedule an uninterrupted time for a private, one-on-one session. **Begin by introducing yourself and stating clearly that it is your definite goal to attend college.** Make sure your counselor realizes that this is IMPORTANT to you and that you are HIGHLY MOTIVATED!

Throughout your high school years, your counselor can help you:

- Plan classes that will prepare you well for college admission and success. Your counselor will know which high school classes are required for college admission.
- Review your academic record with you and suggest areas that need improvement. If you need to do some catching up, your counselor can suggest ways in which to do that.
- Begin the admission process by identifying the questions you should be asking—and finding honest answers. Questions such as: "Do I want to stay near home? Does the college have my major? How important is size?"
- Clarify and understand terms, ideas, and experiences for you that will encounter during research, campus visits, or meetings with college representatives. Your counselor will know where to find information; for example in books, catalogues, brochures, and CDs that deal either with the admission process or a specific college or university. In addition, your counselor will be able to point you to Web sites that offer RELIABLE and FREE information about college.
- Identify special opportunities that may maximize your chances for being a well-prepared and appealing candidate for colleges. These might include weekend or summer programs on college campuses (often free for first-generation students), internships, or community college classes open to high school students. Your counselor will know about local college fairs, opportunities to visit college campuses, and even overnight visits to colleges that may be offered.
- Familiarize yourself with everything you need to know about the required college admission tests. Your counselor can make sure that you get registered for the PSAT (the practice test for the SAT) and PLAN (the practice test for the ACT) tests. She/he can help you know which tests (SAT, ACT, SAT Subject tests, or TOEFL -Test of English as a Foreign Language) will be required by the colleges to which you may apply. Counselors know how and when to register for tests. She/he can even help with fee waivers if your family can't afford to pay for tests.
- Secure applications, identify application deadlines and prioritize in order to make sure that everything gets done carefully and ON TIME! Here also, if you do not have enough money to pay for application fees, your counselor can assist in asking colleges to waive application fees.
- Complete your applications and polish any required college essays so that the product you send to colleges will represent the best of your thinking and writing abilities. Make sure that you take a "rough draft" to your counselor early on. Leave plenty of time for revision and rewriting, prior to deadlines.
- Figure out how to PAY for college. First, your counselor can give you essential information about the "need-based" financial aid application process. He/she can help you understand how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and, if required, other aid applications—such as those required by individual colleges or the College Board's "College Scholarship Service Pro-



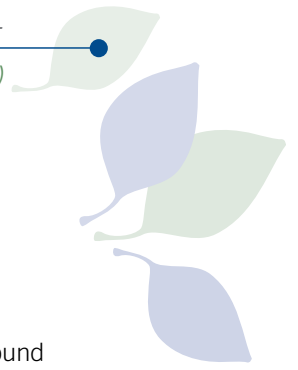
file.” Your counselor may also be able to help you research scholarships that are based on factors other than your ability to pay for college.

- Write a letter of recommendation to colleges or universities. Many colleges will require that you obtain recommendations from both a counselor and one or two teachers. In addition, counselors are often asked to complete “secondary school and mid-year reports” (included with applications).
- Compare offers of admission and financial aid after you have heard from all of your colleges. This can be an essential step in making a final decision. Your school counselor can help you decide which programs are best suited to your educational goals. She/he can also help you compare offers of scholarships and need-based financial aid that may be sent to you in very different formats from different colleges.

There are a few other very important things to remember about working with your school counselor.

- Most school counselors have many, many students whom they want to help. So make it as easy as possible for your counselor to help YOU.
 - Make appointments early and show up on time.
 - Submit any forms that require counselor completion well in advance of due dates.
 - Carefully follow any procedures that have been established by your school for turning applications and related forms or for securing transcripts.
 - Whenever possible, make copies of everything you mail or give to your counselor. Sometimes, with so much paper, things get lost. When you have a copy easily at hand, nothing is ever lost forever.
- Make sure that you keep your counselor “in the loop” in terms of what you are hearing from colleges. If there are any problems which arise, your counselor can act as your direct advocate with colleges.
- Whenever you have questions don’t hesitate to return to your counselor for advice, especially if you feel you are being asked by a college to do something that doesn’t seem “just right”. Your counselor will know the rules of the game by which both students and colleges are supposed to play.
- If you think it would be helpful, try to schedule a meeting with your counselor AND your parent(s). There are parts of the college process for which you will need lots of help from them. This is particularly true when it comes time to completing the financial aid applications.
- Be sure to thank your counselor for assistance given. The counseling door is always open to students who show that they are appreciative of a counselor’s time and effort.

Finally, when all is said and done, and you have made it successfully through the college selection and admission process—make sure that you take time to THANK your counselor one more time with a handwritten note (as well as any teachers who helped). If you have made good use of your counselor’s knowledge and assistance, the thanks will be more than well-deserved. When the student-counselor relationship “clicks,” your counselor will be able to offer the essential emotional support and encouragement that you will need during one of the most important times of your life. And your expression of gratitude will build a reservoir of good-will, should you need to return for further assistance at any time in the future.



CHOOSING YOUR TEAM

Content adapted from the book *In* by Mike Moyer.

Getting into college is a team effort. You are the captain of your application team, but you will need to surround yourself with individuals who can help make your college application shine. Like any ace squadron, your team needs members with different skills. Your team should include:

Counselors

They should provide: College information and academic advice. Counselors are great sources of information and can open your eyes to college possibilities. Don't be afraid to pick their brains about potential schools and if you might be a good fit. Nobody knows more than your counselor.

Family members

They should bring: Support and guidance. The best thing your parents can do is help you make the most of high school by providing a good environment for studying and by offering the encouragement you need during this stressful time. They should also support you in your college decision.

They should avoid: Making decisions for you about your activities and interests or ultimately running your college search. The right school for Mom and Dad may not be the right place for you.

Friends

They should bring: Support. Getting through high school and applying to college can be stressful. Lean on your friends for support, understanding and stress relief because they're probably going through the same process. Be cautious of turning your decisions over to friends.

References

They should bring: The ability to speak positively not just about your accomplishments, but about your passions and potential. These can be teachers or other adults who know you well. A reference might be someone you worked with on a volunteer project, an employer or church leader. They should be willing to contact a potential college on your behalf. Most colleges require letters of recommendation from at least one teacher so it pays to be in good standing. Do you have a class you like or a teacher that is particularly engaging? A good relationship with a teacher can lead to a good recommendation, and this can help open college doors for you.

My team

School/College counselor

Friends & Family

References

Don't forget: Send thank-you notes to everyone on your team!

For more tips, go to www.Cappex.com/tips.

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SESSION 2: STANDARDIZED TESTING

The goal of this session is to introduce students to the various tests that are used by colleges, to help them determine which tests to take, and to demonstrate how to register for the tests.

Objectives:

At the end of this session, students will:

- understand the different types of standardized testing
- know how and when to register for the different tests
- have reviewed sample questions and testing strategies

Activities and Handouts:

Activity #1: Understanding the Tests

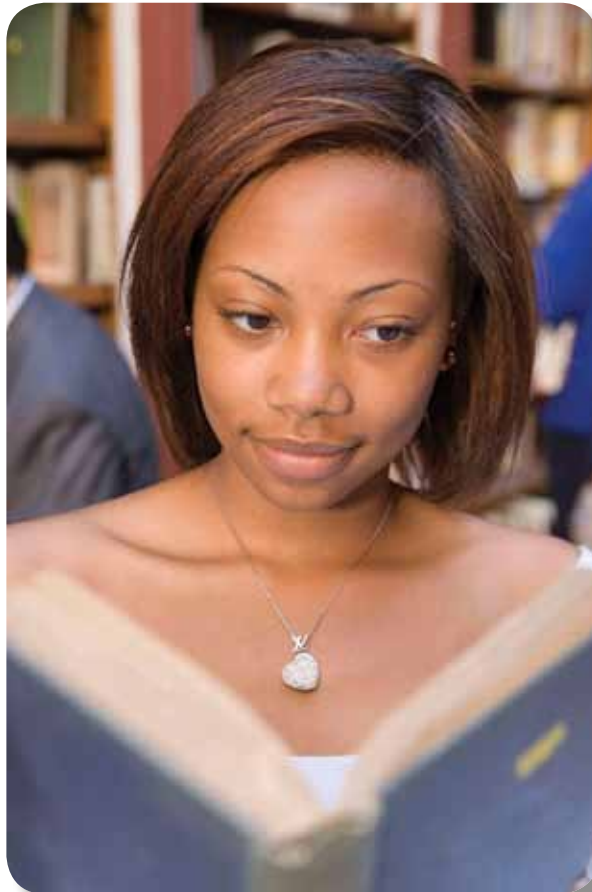
Handout: Understanding Standardized Tests for Juniors and Seniors

Activity #2: Test Registration

Handout: Guidelines and Timetable

Activity #3: Practice Session

Handouts: Ten Brief Test Taking Tips
Sample Test questions
ACT Science Question and Explanations
Sample Prompts for Timed Writing
SAT Essay Scoring Guide



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SESSION 2: STANDARDIZED TESTING

ACTIVITY #1: UNDERSTANDING THE TESTS

Opening Discussion:

The majority of colleges require one of the two admission tests, the SAT or the ACT. Many colleges and universities give applicants the option of reporting scores from either of the two testing programs. Since students may have this option, they should take both the ACT and SAT at least once. Retakes may be needed in the senior year, since students do not always receive their highest score from their first sitting. However, applicants need to be aware that some institutions may have a stated preference for one test or the other. Bulletins describing the programs and practice tests should be available in high school guidance offices. For students who meet low income standards, test fee waivers are also available.

Students should develop the strongest testing profile possible. The first step is to have taken the PSAT. If the students have taken or will take the PSAT or PLAN, talk to them about reviewing the results as they prepare to take the PSAT. The best way to do well on these tests is to take the most difficult curriculum that is appropriate. Students should be strongly encouraged to continue in math, science and English for all four years of high school. While grades and coursework are more important in the admission process than testing, colleges that require the SAT or ACT do want to see strong scores.

Some colleges waive the ACT and or SAT tests for admission purposes but may require test scores for placement purposes. A list of over 750 test optional colleges can be found at www.fairtest.org.

Activity/Handouts:

Understanding Standardized Tests for Junior and Seniors

Instructions:

1. Ask students what test(s) they have already taken and plan to take.
2. Give students a copy of the handout.
3. Walk the students through the handout, emphasizing the differences between the two tests.
Answer questions about which test(s) might be appropriate.

UNDERSTANDING STANDARDIZED TESTING FOR JUNIORS AND SENIORS

PSAT and PLAN Tests. You may have already taken the PLAN (offered by the ACT Company) and/or the PSAT (Preliminary SAT offered by the College Board) as a sophomore. Ideally, all students take the PSAT in the fall of the junior year. Taking the test as a junior will qualify you for some scholarship consideration and identify you to colleges as a potential applicant. Reviewing results of PLAN and PSAT tests will help you to prepare for the SAT and ACT exams. The results of these tests are not reported to colleges. They are for your benefit only.

SAT

ACT

When is it administered?	Seven times per year	Six times per year
What is the test structure?	Ten-section exam: Three Critical Reading, three Math, three Writing, and one Experimental. The Experimental section is masked to look like a regular section.	Four-section exam: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. An Experimental section is added to tests on certain dates only, and is clearly experimental.
What is the test content?	Math: up to 9th grade basic geometry and Algebra II. Science: none. Reading: sentence completions, short and long critical reading passages, reading comprehension. Writing: an essay, and questions testing grammar, usage, and word choice.	Math: up to trigonometry. Science: charts, experiments. Reading: four passages, one each of Prose Fiction, Social Science, Humanities, and Natural Science. English: stresses grammar.
Is there a penalty for wrong answers?	Yes ¼ point off for incorrect answers	No
How is the test scored?	200-800 per section, added together for a combined score. A 2400 is the highest possible combined score.	1-36 for each subject, averaged for a composite score. A 36 is the highest possible composite score.
Are all scores sent to schools?	Yes. If a student requests a score report be sent to specific colleges, the report will include the scores the student received on every SAT taken.	No. There is a "Score Choice" option. Students can choose which schools will receive their scores AND which scores the schools will see.
Are there other uses for the exams?	Scholarship purposes. Some colleges may use scores for placement	Scholarship purposes. Certain statewide testing programs. Some colleges use scores for placement
Best time to register?	At least six weeks before the test date The earlier the better	At least six weeks before the test date The earlier the better
How to contact?	Educational Testing Service (ETS) www.ets.org The College Board www.collegeboard.com	ACT, Inc. www.ACT.org



Additional Tests:

SAT Subject Tests: These are one hour multiple choice exams given in specific subject areas (see <http://sat.collegeboard.com/about-tets/sat-subject-tests> for list of tests offered). Some of the most competitive colleges require one or more of these tests for admission and other colleges and universities use them for placement in courses in college. Students need to ask whether the colleges to which they are applying require the Subject Tests.

Advanced Placement Exams: AP exams are three-hour exams in specific subject areas and are designed to be taken upon the completion of an AP course or the equivalent. They are rigorous exams that include both multiple choice and essay sections. More than 1,400 colleges and universities accept AP credits. To learn more about AP exams go to <http://professional.collegeboard.com/testing/ap>. AP exams are scored on a scale of 1-5.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) tests a student's ability in English and is a test for students for whom English is not the first language. The test measures skills in reading, listening, speaking, and writing in English and requires the student to combine two or more of these skills to respond to a question. It is usually an internet based exam given by appointment designated test centers. Paper based tests are offered only in remote areas. For more information go to www.ets.org.

Source: College Board Web site, www.collegeboard.com



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SESSION 2: STANDARDIZED TESTING

ACTIVITY #2: TEST REGISTRATION

Opening Discussion:

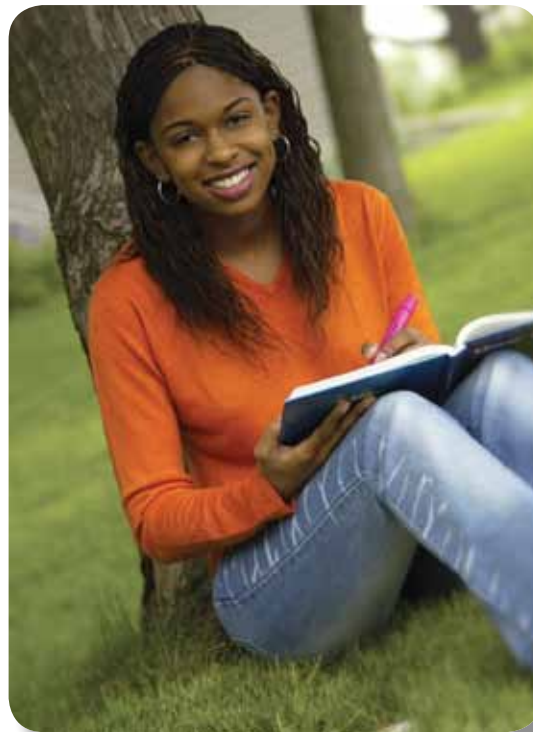
This activity will give the facilitator the opportunity to inform students that it is important for them to register independently, on-time and accurately, and that fee waivers, as well as accommodations for disabled students, are available.

Activity/Handout:

General Guidelines and Testing Timetable

Instructions:

1. Give each student a copy of “General Guidelines and Testing Timetable.”
2. Walk the students through the handout.
Ask students to highlight when they might be able to take specific tests.
3. Discuss what must be brought to the testing center.
4. If computer access is available and there is sufficient time, log on to **www.collegeboard.com** or **www.actstudent.org** and walk through the registration process for each test. Have students complete as much information as possible.





GENERAL GUIDELINES AND TESTING TIMETABLE

Guidelines:

- SAT Tests are offered in Jan, March/April, May, June, October, Nov and Dec.
- ACT tests are offered in Feb, April, June, September, October, and December
- Registration deadlines for both tests are usually at least six weeks prior to the test date.
- Results for the tests can be obtained on-line usually within three weeks of the administration (extra fees may apply) or a paper copy of results may be sent within four weeks.
- Many students take these tests more than once. Two to three SAT or ACT scores are sufficient for colleges to have an accurate testing profile for a candidate. Scores tend not to vary appreciably after three tests. Students do not have the ability to select which SAT scores to send since colleges receive all scores and take the best combination of SAT scores from different test dates. Students have the option to send ACT score from a single test date.

Testing Timetable:

11th Grade

- PSAT should be taken in October
- At least one SAT Reasoning Test and/or ACT should be taken in the spring semester
- SAT Subject Area Tests in May or June when appropriate for specific colleges
- AP tests in May if enrolled in AP courses

12th GRADE

- Final ACT and SAT Tests First Semester (must be completed by the end of December)
- Latest date to take SAT Subject Tests
- AP tests in May if enrolled in AP courses

Helpful Hints for SAT/ACT Registration Procedure

- Register on time in order to avoid a late fee (fee waivers may NOT be used if you register late!)
- Use the same information each time (full name, address, birth date), otherwise a student may be considered to be two different people.
- The **test center code** is essential for the student to be able to take the test in the location desired. If the student registers late, he/she may not get the center requested.
- The **high school code** is necessary in order for the high school to receive the scores.
- The **college codes** should be included with registration once students know there is a good possibility they will be applying. When registering, a student can request, at no cost, for scores to be sent to four colleges; however, if scores need to be sent after registration, the student will be charged. Many colleges require that the scores be sent to admission offices directly. If scores are not sent to colleges, there may be a delay in making decisions and/or considering a student for scholarships.

- **Fee waivers** are available from the guidance office if a student shows financial need. For information, check: www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/feewaiver.html, <http://sat.collegeboard.com/register/sat-fee-waivers>
- **Students with diagnosed learning or other disabilities** should check with their high school guidance office about obtaining special testing accommodations, minimally several months in advance of the test date. (Special early application for registration required).

On the day of the test:

- Come well rested
- Arrive early
- Eat a good breakfast (these are long tests!)
- Bring with you: admission ticket, approved calculator, at least two #2 sharpened pencils, picture ID



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SESSION 2: STANDARDIZED TESTING

ACTIVITY #3: PRACTICE SESSION

Opening Discussion:

Understanding and practicing the types of questions asked on the SAT or ACT are absolutely necessary steps in the college process. Emphasize to the students that these tests measure critical thinking.

Research has demonstrated that test preparation improves scores on standardized tests for some students. This section will introduce students to sample questions and test taking strategies. ACT and SAT practice tests can be downloaded from their Web sites www.collegeboard.com and www.act.org and there are many books available with test questions.

Activity/Handouts:

Ten Brief Test Taking Tips

Sample Test Questions and Explanations

ACT Science Question Explanation

Sample Prompts for Timed Writing

SAT Essay Scoring Guide

Instructions:

1. Go over the “Test Taking Tips” with the students and remind them to keep the handout for a reference to review the night before taking any standardized test.
2. Simulate a testing environment by giving students several different test questions, asking them to complete the questions in a set amount of time (one minute per question).
3. Review the answers to the questions and use the discussion time to talk about the types of questions and strategies for answering them.
4. Go over the “ACT Science Question Explanation” and encourage them to go to the ACT Web site to review sample questions.
5. Give the students the writing prompts from both the SAT and ACT and give them time to brainstorm ways they might respond to the prompts.
6. Give students a copy of the SAT Scoring Chart and follow up with a discussion about how the essays are scored. Remind them that each essay receives two scores on a scale of 1 to 6 to receive a possible total of 12.

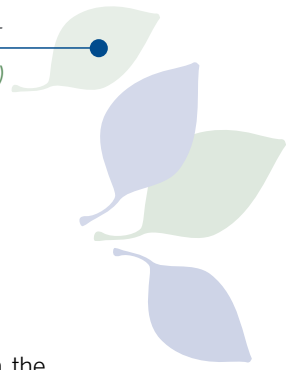


TEN BRIEF TEST TAKING TIPS FOR STANDARDIZED TESTS

1. Be sure to read and pay careful attention to all directions.
2. Read every possible answer because the best one could be the last one.
3. Work as rapidly as possible, but don't work carelessly.
4. Eliminate answers that you are certain are incorrect.
5. Don't spend too long on any one question. Instead, skip difficult questions and move on. Mark questions in the test booklet to which you need to return. Be careful to skip that same question on the answer sheet. Return to these questions if time permits.
6. Make sure to record every answer in the correct place on the answer sheet. If you change an answer, be sure to erase changes completely.
7. The SAT test penalizes for wild guessing. (1/4 point subtracted for each **wrong** answer—no subtraction for blanks). But, if you can narrow the correct answer down to two possibilities, it is in your favor to make your best guess.

On the other hand . . .

8. Because the ACT test does not subtract points for incorrect answers, you should make an “educated guess” and not leave questions blank.
9. Use every minute of the time given for the test. If you finish early, go back and complete questions skipped, make sure you have not mismarked the answer sheet, and check your work.
10. Being familiar with testing format and procedures will help you do your best. Be sure to take some practice tests prior to test day.



SAMPLE SAT QUESTIONS:

Sentence Completion:

The sentence below has two blanks, each blank indicating that something has been omitted. Beneath the sentence are five sets of words labeled A through E. Choose the word or set of words that, when inserted in the sentence, best fits the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

Hoping to ----- the dispute, negotiators proposed a compromise that they felt would be ----- to both labor and management.

- (A) enforce . . . useful
- (B) end . . . divisive
- (C) overcome . . . unattractive
- (D) extend . . . satisfactory
- (E) resolve . . . acceptable

Math Question #1:

A special lottery is to be held to select the student who will live in the only deluxe room in a dormitory. There are 100 seniors, 150 juniors, and 200 sophomores who applied. Each senior's name is placed in the lottery 3 times; each junior's name, 2 times; and each sophomore's name, 1 time. What is the probability that a senior's name will be chosen?

- (A) $\frac{1}{8}$
- (B) $\frac{2}{9}$
- (C) $\frac{2}{7}$
- (D) $\frac{3}{8}$
- (E) $\frac{1}{2}$

Math Question #2:

$$|4x - 7| = 5$$

$$|3 - 8x| = 1$$

What value of x satisfies both of the equations above?

SAMPLE SAT QUESTIONS EXPLANATIONS

Explanation of Sentence Completion:

One way to answer a sentence completion question with two words missing is to focus first on just one of the two blanks. If one of the words in an answer choice is logically wrong, then you can eliminate the entire choice from consideration.

- Look at the first blank in the example above. Would it make sense to say that “negotiators” who have “proposed a compromise” were hoping to enforce or extend the “dispute”? No, so neither (A) nor (D) can be the correct answer.
- Now you can focus on the second blank. Would the “negotiators” have proposed a compromise that they believed would be divisive or unattractive to “both labor and management”? No, so (B) and (C) can be eliminated, and only choice (E) remains.
- Always check your answer by reading the entire sentence with your choice filled in. Does it make sense to say “Hoping to resolve the dispute, the negotiators proposed a compromise that they felt would be acceptable to both labor and management”? Yes.

Correct answer: (E)

Explanation of Math Question #1:

To determine the probability that a senior’s name will be chosen, you must determine the total number of seniors’ names that are in the lottery and divide this number by the total number of names in the lottery. Since each senior’s name is placed in the lottery 3 times, there are $3 \cdot 100 = 300$ seniors’ names. Likewise, there are $2 \cdot 150 = 300$ juniors’ names and $1 \cdot 200 = 200$ sophomores’ names in the lottery. The probability that a senior’s name will be chosen is

$$\frac{300}{300 + 300 + 200} = \frac{300}{800} = \frac{3}{8}.$$

Correct Answer: (D)

Answer to Math Question #2:

OR

Correct Answer:

$\frac{1}{2}$ or .5

				/	2
○	○	○	●	○	○
1	○	○	○	○	○
2	○	○	○	○	○
3	○	○	○	○	○
4	○	○	○	○	○
5	○	○	○	○	○
6	○	○	○	○	○
7	○	○	○	○	○
8	○	○	○	○	○
9	○	○	○	○	○

.	5		
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○
○	○	○	○



While the ACT is also a multiple choice standardized tests, there are some differences as noted in “Understanding Standardized Testing for Juniors and Seniors” from Session II. The most notable difference is found in the science section of the test. Following is a description of that section from the ACT Web site.

ACT SCIENCE TEST DESCRIPTION

The Science Test is a 40-question, 35-minute test that measures the skills required in the natural sciences: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem solving.

You are not permitted to use a calculator on the Science Test.

The test assumes that students are in the process of taking the core science course of study (three years or more) that will prepare them for college-level work and have completed a course in Earth science and/or physical science and a course in biology.

The test presents seven sets of scientific information, each followed by a number of multiple-choice test questions. The scientific information is presented in one of three different formats:

- data representation (graphs, tables, and other schematic forms)
- research summaries (descriptions of one or more related experiments)
- conflicting viewpoints (expressions of several related hypotheses or views that are inconsistent with one another)

The questions require you to:

- recognize and understand the basic features of, and concepts related to, the provided information
- examine critically the relationship between the information provided and the conclusions drawn or hypotheses developed
- generalize from given information and draw conclusions, gain new information, or make predictions



ACT – SAMPLE PROMPT FOR TIMED WRITING

Educators debate extending high school to five years because of increasing demands on students from employers and colleges to participate in extracurricular activities and community service in addition to having high grades. Some educators support extending high school to five years because they think students need more time to achieve all that is expected of them. Other educators do not support extending high school to five years because they think students would lose interest in school and attendance would drop in the fifth year. In your opinion, should high school be extended to five years?

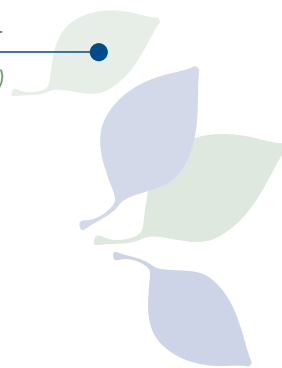
In your essay, take a position on this question. You may write about either one of the two points of view given, or you may present a different point of view on this question. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.

SAT PROMPT FOR TIMED WRITING

Many persons believe that to move up the ladder of success and achievement, they must forget the past, repress it, and relinquish it. But others have just the opposite view. They see old memories as a chance to reckon with the past and integrate past and present.

—Adapted from Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, *I've Known Rivers: Lives of Loss and Liberation*

Assignment: Do memories hinder or help people in their effort to learn from the past and succeed in the present? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.



ESSAY SCORING GUIDE

From www.collegeboard.com

Homepage Home > Testing > SAT Reasoning Test™ > Scores > Essay Scores > Essay Scoring Guide

A framework for scoring SAT Reasoning Test essays

The SAT Scoring Guide **expresses the criteria readers use to evaluate and score the student essays**. The guide is structured on a six-point scale. Since the SAT essay is scored holistically, readers are trained to **use the SAT Scoring Guide in conjunction with anchor papers, which have been scored by consensus as representative examples**. The language of the Scoring Guide provides a consistent and coherent framework for differentiating between score points, without defining specific traits or types of essays that define each score point.

Score of 6

An essay in this category demonstrates **clear and consistent mastery**, although it may have a few minor errors. A typical essay:

- Effectively and insightfully develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates outstanding critical thinking, using clearly appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- Is well organized and clearly focused, demonstrating clear coherence and smooth progression of ideas
- Exhibits skillful use of language, using a varied, accurate, and apt vocabulary
- Demonstrates meaningful variety in sentence structure
- Is free of most errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 5

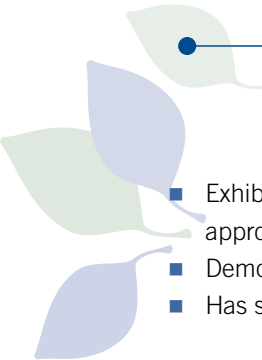
An essay in this category demonstrates **reasonably consistent mastery**, although it will have occasional errors or lapses in quality. A typical essay:

- Effectively develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates strong critical thinking, generally using appropriate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- Is well organized and focused, demonstrating coherence and progression of ideas
- Exhibits facility in the use of language, using appropriate vocabulary
- Demonstrates variety in sentence structure
- Is generally free of most errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 4

An essay in this category demonstrates **adequate mastery**, although it will have lapses in quality. A typical essay:

- Develops a point of view on the issue and demonstrates competent critical thinking, using adequate examples, reasons, and other evidence to support its position
- Is generally organized and focused, demonstrating some coherence and progression of ideas

- 
- Exhibits adequate but inconsistent facility in the use of language, using generally appropriate vocabulary
 - Demonstrates some variety in sentence structure
 - Has some errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 3

An essay in this category demonstrates **developing mastery**, and is marked by **one or more** of the following weaknesses:

- Develops a point of view on the issue, demonstrating some critical thinking, but may do so inconsistently or use inadequate examples, reasons, or other evidence to support its position
- Is limited in its organization or focus, but may demonstrate some lapses in coherence or progression of ideas
- Displays developing facility in the use of language, but sometimes uses weak vocabulary or inappropriate word choice
- Lacks variety or demonstrates problems in sentence structure
- Contains an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Score of 2

An essay in this category demonstrates **little mastery**, and is flawed by **one or more** of the following weaknesses:

- Develops a point of view on the issue that is vague or seriously limited, demonstrating weak critical thinking, providing inappropriate or insufficient examples, reasons, or other evidence to support its position
- Is poorly organized and/or focused, or demonstrates serious problems with coherence or progression of ideas
- Displays very little facility in the use of language, using very limited vocabulary or incorrect word choice
- Demonstrates frequent problems in sentence structure
- Contains errors in grammar, usage and mechanics so serious that meaning is somewhat obscured



Score of 1

An essay in this category demonstrates **very little** or **no mastery**, and is severely flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:

- Develops no viable point of view on the issue, or provides little or no evidence to support its position
- Is disorganized or unfocused, resulting in a disjointed or incoherent essay
- Displays fundamental errors in vocabulary
- Demonstrates severe flaws in sentence structure
- Contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics that persistently interfere with meaning

Score of 0

Essays not written on the essay assignment will receive a score of 0.





3

SESSION 3: THE COLLEGE SEARCH

The purpose of this session is to familiarize students with the variety of college options open to them and ways in which to access college information. The emphasis should be on opportunity and access, not on the criteria for admission, which will come in a later session. Using Session I as a starting point, students will embark on a college search using counselor expertise, Web resources (if available), viewbooks/catalogues/guidebooks.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will:

- prioritize his or her criteria for finding appropriate schools
- understand the importance of finding a good match
- find relevant information about colleges
- learn how to make the most of a campus visit as a research tool

Activities and Handouts:

Activity #1: Making a Match

Handouts: Resume from Session I, Selection Criteria Chart

Activity #2: Researching Colleges

Handouts: Viewbooks, catalogues, guidebooks, list of Web sites

Activity #3: The Ultimate Test Drive: Making the Most of a Campus Visit

Handouts: Campus Visit Checklist

The College Visit

College Comparison Worksheet

3

SESSION 3: THE COLLEGE SEARCH

ACTIVITY 1: MAKING A MATCH

Opening Discussion:

This session focuses on how to search for the right “match” in a college. Based on the initial session’s discussion of types of colleges, ask students what kinds of institutions they think they might want to consider. What majors might they want to pursue?

Activity/Handouts:

Resume from Session I
Selection Criteria Chart

Instructions:

1. Ask students to review their personal resumes from Session I, looking especially at Section V.
2. Ask students to fill in the criteria column of the chart, using the items listed below the chart and referring to their resume. If they know of particular colleges, they can add them and fill in the blanks if they are able. They will be using this chart for the next exercise.



SELECTION CRITERIA CHART

Primary Selection Criteria	College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4	College 5
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
Other Criteria					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

LOCATION

Distance from Home
School Setting (Urban, Rural)
Location and Size of Nearest City

SIZE

Enrollment
Physical Size of Campus

ENVIRONMENT

Co-ed, Male, Female

ADMISSION PROFILE

Average Test Scores, GPA, Rank

ACADEMICS

Your Major Offered
Special Requirements
Accreditation
Student-Faculty Ratio
Typical Class Size

COLLEGE EXPENSES

Tuition / Fees
Room & Board
Estimated Total Budget
Percent Received Aid
Scholarships

HOUSING

Residence Hall
Types and Sizes
Food Plan
Fees
On / Off Campus

FACILITIES

Academic
Recreational
Other

JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES

Availability

ACTIVITIES

Clubs
Organizations
Greek Life
Athletics
Intramurals Other

CONTACT WITH PERSON WHO HAS ATTENDED THIS SCHOOL

Their opinion

TYPE OF SCHOOL

State university
Private college
Military Academy
Community College
Trade School

3

SESSION 3: THE COLLEGE SEARCH

ACTIVITY #2: RESEARCHING COLLEGES

Opening Discussion:

Students need to examine a variety of sources so they can begin to see the similarities and differences among colleges and universities. They should not think about cost at this point, but rather, qualities and characteristics that colleges have to offer.

Activity/Handouts

Viewbooks, catalogues, guidebooks and list of Web sites (computers if available)

Criteria Chart from Activity #1

List of Resources

Instructions:

1. If there is internet access in the facility, show the students several Web sites (see attached suggestions) and guide them through a representative number, pointing out information about majors, residential options, and the admission/application site (which will be covered in a later session), and other aspects as you see fit.
2. Viewbooks and guidebooks should be on hand, too. Ask students to read a description of a college from a guidebook and talk about what they think they would like or not like about that school.
3. Have students look at resources independently and refer to their “Criteria Checklist” to develop a list of 4-6 schools in which they would be interested.
4. Once they have developed a list, they should return to the resource books or go to the college Web sites to learn more about whether “the match” is right for them.

INTERNET SITES FOCUSED ON COLLEGE EXPLORATION:

COLLEGE INFORMATION

CSO College Center: www.CSOCollegeCenter.org

The College Board: www.collegeboard.com

KnowHow2Go: www.knowhow2go.org

Hobson's CollegeView: www.collegeview.com

Peterson's: www.petersons.com

The Common Application Online: www.commonapp.org

Colleges That Change Lives: www.ctcl.org

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Federal Student Aid: <http://studentaid.ed.gov>

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): www.fafsa.ed.gov

College Goal Sunday FAFSA Completion Assistance: www.collegegoalsundayusa.org

FAFSA4caster: www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov

CSS/PROFILE: <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>

The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid: www.finaid.org

FastWeb: www.fastWeb.com

FindTuition: www.findtuition.com

Sallie Mae: www.salliemae.com

TESTING

ACT: www.act.org

ACT Fee Waiver Instructions: www.actstudent.org/faq/answers/feewaiver.html

SAT: The College Board: www.collegeboard.com

SAT Fee Waiver Instructions: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenfees/feewaivers.html

Preliminary SAT (PSAT): www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html

Free Test Prep from Number2.com: www.number2.com

The Princeton Review: www.princetonreview.com

Kaplan's Test Prep: www.kaptest.com

ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS AND RESEARCH/POLICY

National Association for College Admission Counseling: www.nacacnet.org

United Negro College Fund (UNCF): www.uncf.org

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities: www.hacu.net

National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education: www.nafeo.org

First In The Family: www.firstinthefamily.org

ATHLETICS

NCAA Eligibility Center: www.ncaa.org

Campus Champs: www.campuschamps.org

Athletic Aid: www.athleticaid.com

CAREERS

The Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/oco

3

SESSION 3: THE COLLEGE SEARCH

ACTIVITY #3: THE ULTIMATE TEST DRIVE—MAKING THE MOST OF THE CAMPUS VISIT

Opening Discussion:

To introduce this activity, ask students to consider the following: People who want to buy a car often spend a lot of time test driving cars, but once they buy one and drive it off the lot, the car depreciates in value. The opposite is true of “test driving” a college: the time a student spends visiting a college can help him or her know if the school is a good match. Once the student enrolls in a college, the school never loses value. For students who may not have opportunities to visit college campuses, college fairs and visiting with college representatives who come to their high schools provide a reasonable substitute.

Activity/Handouts

The College Visit Checklist**The Campus Visit****College Comparison Worksheet**

Instructions

Review the College Visit Handout

1. Go over the “The Campus Visit” allowing time for questions and discussion.
2. Give each student the “College Visit Checklist” and talk about how the list can also be useful if a student attends a college fair.
3. Describe what occurs on a tour and in an information session.
4. Talk about how students can possibly use the campus visit as a time to have an interview, if the college requires or allows one.
5. Emphasize the importance of filling in the comparison worksheet as soon after a visit as possible and securing the name and contact information of someone in the admission office.
6. Give students the names of four schools nearby and ask them to find out when the schools schedule tours and information sessions. Students should use the available resources to find this information.
7. Describe the differences among reach, target, and likely schools.

COLLEGE VISIT CHECKLIST

To help you find the right college, fill out one of these forms each time you visit a school.

DECIDE

COLLEGE NAME

CITY

STATE

SIZE

TUITION

ROOM & BOARD

FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS

ADMISSIONS CONTACT

NAME

EMAIL

PHONE

TO-DO CHECKLIST

- Talk to professors
- Visit the library
- Tour campus
- Sit in on a class
- Eat at a cafeteria
- Talk to admissions office
- Read the college newspaper
- Check out computer labs
- Talk to students
- Visit student housing
- Read bulletin boards
- Check out recreational facilities
- Check out student activities
- Tour the city around campus
- Eat at an off-campus student hang-out
- Picture yourself living here

RATE IT

On a scale of 1-5, five being the best, rate the following:

- People _____
- Social life _____
- Classrooms _____
- Dorms _____
- Town _____
- Campus _____
- Food _____

ASK A STUDENT

What is the best part about this college?

What is the worst part?

What is a typical day like?

What do the students do on the weekends?

How are classes structured?

Why did you choose this college?

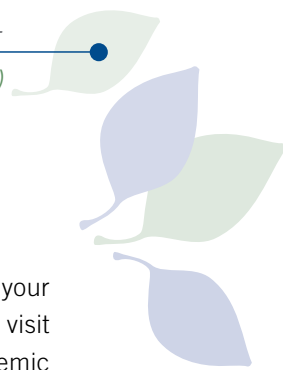
THE BEST PART ABOUT MY VISIT

THE WORST PART ABOUT MY VISIT

CAPTIP! Weather on the day of a college visit can affect your impression of a school. Don't let the rain keep you from a school you like. For more tips, go to www.Cappex.com/tips.

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THE CAMPUS VISIT

One of the most important parts of your college research is the campus visit. Visiting the colleges on your list will give you a firsthand impression of the students, faculty, staff, facilities, and programs. On a visit you can learn what the admission office is looking for in its applicants, gain a feeling for the academic and social atmosphere, see the study/living/recreation facilities, talk with students, and get a sense of the surrounding community.

WHEN TO VISIT

- Admission offices are open all year, but visiting when classes are in session is best. If you visit in the summer, you can certainly learn about admission and get a general tour of the campus, but it might be hard to get a good sense of the atmosphere of the college.
- The best time to visit? Spring Break of your junior year can be ideal. Even if you are not certain where you might eventually apply, if you can visit one large, one medium size, and one small school, you will be better prepared to make final decisions about where to apply.
- Once you have narrowed your list in the fall of the senior year, you may want to make return overnight visits to schools to which you will be applying. On these visits, plan to go to classes and interact with students.
- If at all possible, try to visit colleges before you apply. You may discover the school is not at all what you had thought it would be based on the online research you had done. However, attending accepted students visit programs at the colleges you have visited previously can help you narrow down your choices.
- SPECIAL VISITATION DAYS: Some colleges will offer spring programs for juniors and fall programs for seniors. Check online or contact the admission office since you may need to make a reservation.

HOW TO PLAN A VISIT

- A good campus visit takes two-four hours, including time to get a sense of the surrounding town or area. Don't try to visit more than two schools in one day.
- Figure out an itinerary: where you want to travel, how you will travel, how far one school is from another
- Call the admission office at least two weeks ahead of time to schedule your visit. Admission offices have set times for tours and information.
- Think of all the things you want to do when you visit and ask what the admission office can help you with: talking with an admission officer, taking a tour, attending a class, meeting with a professor in an area that interests you, eating a meal on campus, talking with a coach or advisor of an extracurricular activity that interests you, etc.
- Research each college before you go visit so you'll have specific questions to ask.
- Contact students you might know at the school before you plan to visit.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU VISIT

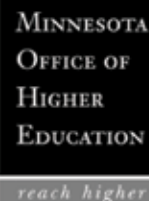
- Focus on people, place and programs in your visit.
- Talk to as many people as you can: students, dining hall workers, tour guides, faculty.
- Look at a campus newspaper and check out campus bulletin boards.
- Wander through snack bars and student centers and observe how students interact with each other.

- Keep track of all names of people you talk with, especially in the admission office.
- Go to the admission session and take the official tour. Listen to the tour guide, but don't jump to a conclusion about a particular school based solely on your experience with a tour guide.
- If you are meeting or interviewing with an admission staff member, be on time, be yourself, ask questions that deal with your particular needs, make sure you mention anything about your background or achievements that you want the admission office to know.

AFTER THE VISIT

- Fill out the college comparison worksheet before you get to another campus.
- Send a thank you note to any admission person you meet.
- Look ahead to fall of the senior year to plan a follow-up, overnight visit.





Campus Visit Checklist

When you visit a campus, it is important that you ask the right types of questions:

Look at Equipment and School Facilities

- Are the facilities and equipment up-to-date and operating?
- Is the equipment similar to what you will be using on the job?
- Is the library good for studying and research?
- Are the dorms quiet enough for studying?
- What is the cafeteria like?
- How large or small are the dorm rooms?
- What types of furniture are provided/allowed?
- Are there plenty of computer labs?
- Do students get free e-mail and Internet access?

Sit In on a Class or Two

- Do the instructors seem knowledgeable?
- Are the students participating in classroom activities?
- What kinds of work are the students doing?
- How large/small are the classes?

Talk with Current Students in the Program

- How long have they been in school?
- Do they like the program?
- Are they learning what they need to know to get a job?
- What is their opinion of the instructors?
- Do the instructors spend time with the students to be sure they understand the material?
- How much time is needed for studying and other work outside class?
- Are instructors available outside of class?
- Have they had any problems with the school, the instructors or the classes?
- What do they like most/least about the school/program?
- How do they spend their free time?

Talk with Instructors in the Program

- What are the academic requirements in the program?
- What kinds of courses are offered?
- How many students are in the program?
- How long does it take most students to complete the program?
- How long have they been teaching at the school?
- Do they teach full time or part time?
- What types of activities are they involved in that relate to the field of study?
- What types of background do they have in the field?

Talk with an Admissions Counselor

- What are the admissions requirements at this college?
- How do I apply and which forms do I fill out?
- When are the important deadlines for admissions?
- What are the housing requirements and parking rules?
- What types of extracurricular activities are available?
- What is the job placement rate of recent graduates?

Talk with a Financial Aid Counselor

- How much does it cost to attend the college (including tuition, room and board, fees, etc.)?
- What financial aid options are available?
- Are there any special financial aid services offered by the college?
- Which forms do I need to fill out and what are the deadlines?
- How is financial aid paid out? When will I receive it?
- Are there school-specific scholarships available? How do I apply?



COLLEGE COMPARISON WORKSHEET

College Names	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Location – contact information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> distance from home admission staff contact email/phone number 			
Size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> student enrollment physical size of campus 			
Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> type of school (2 yr., 4 yr.) school setting (urban, rural) location & size of nearest city co-ed, male, female religious affiliation 			
Admission Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deadline tests required average test scores, GPA, rank would it be “reach”, “likely” or “target”? 			
Academics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> your major offered special requirements accreditation student-faculty ratio typical class size 			
College Expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tuition, room & board estimated total budget application fee, deposits 			
Financial Aid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deadline required forms % receiving aid scholarships 			
Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> residence hall requirement food plan 			
Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> academic recreational other 			
Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clubs, organizations Greek life athletics, intramurals other 			

4

SESSION 4: THE APPLICATION
PROCESS (PART I)

The purpose of this session is to introduce the students to the various parts of a college application and to help them to understand the importance of taking responsibility for the completion of each component. Some high schools help students with the application process more than others, but students must recognize that, ultimately, they are the ones in control. Although not all colleges offer interviews and many students cannot get to campus, the advantages of interviewing will also be covered in this session.

Objective:

By the end of this session, a student will:

- recognize the importance of understanding the college application process at his/her high school.
- know what he/she is responsible for submitting to a college and what is sent by the school.
- have examined a college application and discussed the specifics of each section.
- know how to request a teacher recommendation.
- have practiced introducing himself/herself and answering one typical interview question.

*Activities and Handouts:***Activity #1: Setting the Stage**

Resource: Question prompts

Activity #2: The Application

Handouts: Parts of the Application Worksheet
The Common Application

Materials: Chalk board or chart paper, pens/pencils

Activity #3: The Teacher Recommendation

Handouts: Who Will Write Your Teacher Recommendation worksheet
Teacher Recommendation Request Form
Teacher Recommendation form from Common Application

Activity #4: The interview

Handout: Typical College Interview Questions

Materials: Chalk board or chart paper

4

SESSION IV: THE APPLICATION PROCESS (PART I)

ACTIVITY #1: SETTING THE STAGE

Opening Discussion:

In this activity, students will be learning “all they ever wanted to know” about a college application. It is important to emphasize the critical role of the high school in the college application process—in providing students with information and forms, writing recommendations, submitting transcripts, and meeting deadlines. It is critical that students know where in their school to go for help (probably the guidance department).

Some Questions to ask:

1. *Does your school have counselors? If so, tell me about yours. How often have you had a chance to meet with him or her? Do you think your counselor knows you very well?*
2. *If there are no counselors, who at your school is responsible for helping students with college applications? (It could be an administrator, a career center director, volunteers, etc.) Where are their offices located?*
3. *How do students at your school request transcripts? Counselor Recommendations? Are there any fees associated with these requests? Any forms? Any deadlines? Are students supposed to supply envelopes and stamps?*

To close the discussion, list on the board or on chart paper some concrete suggestions for locating this information and becoming better acquainted with the counselor.



4

SESSION IV: THE APPLICATION PROCESS (PART I)

ACTIVITY #2: THE APPLICATION

Opening Discussion:

Completing an application can be daunting, but when looked at piece by piece, it can become a manageable process. It is important for students to be in charge of their college applications: making decisions and doing the work, but knowing to whom to turn for help.

Activity/Handout:

Parts of a College Application

Common Application

Secondary Report Form and Mid-Year Report Forms from the Common Application

Instructions:

1. Give each student The Common Application (or another application that you want to use) and the *Parts of a College Application Worksheet*
2. Emphasize the **Important Things to Remember** bullets at the beginning of the worksheet.
3. Using the worksheet and the sample application, go through the application, section by section. Most likely, there will not be time for students to complete the application at this time, but respond to any questions they might have so they can do so later, at home. **Emphasize that it is valuable to do a draft application before submitting a “real” one.**
4. Ask students to look at the activities section. Point out that when they completed the “College Counseling Resume” in Session I, they compiled most of the information necessary for this section. Students will need to put that information in the format required by each individual application. Emphasize that there are no “good” or “bad” activities—this section provides an opportunity to demonstrate how they have spent their time outside of class. *Note: Some applications allow students to send a resume or additional list of activities as a supplement to this section.*
5. Ask students to look at the **Secondary School Report Form**. Explain that this is the type of form that someone at the school, probably their counselor, will complete and send with the transcript. Ask them what surprises them about this form. Again, ask students about their relationship with their counselor. What is the policy at their school for requesting counselor recommendations?
6. Ask students to look at the **Mid-Year Report Form**. Explain that this is sent after the fall semester of their senior year. Explain to them that changes in their senior year curriculum must be reported to colleges. **SENIOR YEAR MATTERS!**



PARTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION

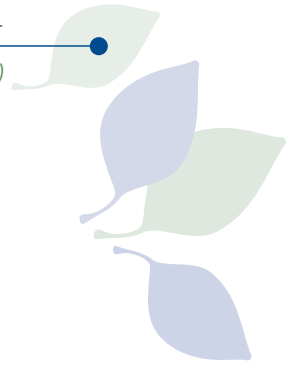
Pat Walters, MEd, CEP, Retired Counselor, Texas

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- This list includes everything that could be required, but you might not be asked to submit everything on this list to every college. **For example, there are many colleges that do not require students to write essays. There also are many colleges that do not require standardized test scores.**
- **You**, the student, are responsible for following your school's policy for submitting applications and requesting transcripts and letters of recommendations. **KNOW WHAT YOU ARE EXPECTED TO DO!**

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A COLLEGE APPLICATION?

- Official Transcript:** This is normally sent directly from your high school to the college. Your transcript is the record of all the courses you have taken for high school credit, your grades, and credits earned. Other information that might be included: GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, courses in progress. If it is possible to do so at your school, request an unofficial copy of your transcript and make sure that it is accurate.
- Standardized Test Scores:** If required by your college, you will request from College Board (www.collegeboard.com) and/or ACT (www.actstudent.org) that your official test scores (SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests) be sent directly to the college admission office. Even though you might be asked for your scores in the application and even though they might appear on your transcript, **MOST COLLEGES REQUIRE THAT THEY COME DIRECTLY FROM THE TESTING SERVICE TO THE COLLEGE.**
- The Application Form: The student is responsible for requesting an application form, completing it, and submitting it by the college deadline (by mail or online).** You might be asked for the following information in the paper or online application:
 - Personal and Educational Data (i.e., name, address, phone number, e-mail, citizenship and residency information, high schools you have attended, college credits you have earned, parental information, senior year schedule, standardized test scores)
 - Honors and Awards
 - Extracurricular, Personal and Volunteer Activities
 - Employment, Internships, and Summer Activities (Some colleges allow you to submit a resume in addition to the activity section of their application.)



- Essays, both short answer and a longer personal essay
- Disciplinary information
- Application Fee
- Signature
- *For certain majors, students might be required to audition, or you could be asked to submit a portfolio of your artistic work.*

D. **Secondary School Report Form or Counselor Recommendation Form: This is not required by all colleges!** If it is required, **the high school is responsible for submitting this form to the college.** However, you will need to request that it be sent. It is important to know and follow your school's procedures.

TIP: Usually the person at your school (probably your counselor) who is completing this form asks for information from students and parents ahead of time. If possible, meet with this person before he or she writes a letter of recommendation.

E. **Mid-Year Report Form: This form is not required by all colleges.** If it is required, it will be submitted by your high school. However, you must request that it be sent. **The purpose of the form is for the college to see your grades from the first semester of your senior year.**

F. **Teacher Recommendation Form: This form is not required by all colleges.** If it is, follow your school's policy for requesting and sending recommendations.

If in doubt, consult your counselor or call the college/university admission office to confirm application requirements.

THE COMMON APPLICATION
For Undergraduate College Admission

2012-13 FIRST-YEAR APPLICATION
For Spring 2013 or Fall 2013 Enrollment

APPLICANT

Legal Name _____
Last/Family/Sur (Enter name **exactly** as it appears on official documents.) First/Given Middle (complete) Jr., etc.

Preferred name, if not first name (only one) _____ Former last name(s) _____

Birth Date _____ Female Male US Social Security Number, if any _____
mm/dd/yyyy Required for US Citizens and Permanent Residents applying for financial aid via FAFSA

Preferred Telephone Home Cell Home (_____) _____ Cell (_____) _____
Area/Country/City Code Area/Country/City Code

E-mail Address _____ IM Address _____

Permanent home address _____
Number & Street Apartment #

City/Town _____ County or Parish _____ State/Province _____ Country _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____

If different from above, please give your current mailing address for all admission correspondence. (from _____ to _____)
(mm/dd/yyyy) (mm/dd/yyyy)

Current mailing address _____
Number & Street Apartment #

City/Town _____ County or Parish _____ State/Province _____ Country _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____

If your current mailing address is a boarding school, include name of school here: _____

FUTURE PLANS

Your answers to these questions will vary for different colleges. If the online system did not ask you to answer some of the questions you see in this section, this college chose not to ask that question of its applicants.

College _____ Deadline _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Entry Term: Fall (Jul-Dec) Spring (Jan-Jun)

Decision Plan _____

Academic Interests _____

Career Interest _____

Do you intend to apply for need-based financial aid? Yes No

Do you intend to apply for merit-based scholarships? Yes No

Do you intend to be a full-time student? Yes No

Do you intend to enroll in a degree program your first year? Yes No

Do you intend to live in college housing? _____

What is the highest degree you intend to earn? _____

DEMOGRAPHICS

Citizenship Status _____

Non-US Citizenship(s) _____

Birthplace _____
City/Town State/Province Country

Years lived in the US? _____ Years lived outside the US? _____

Language Proficiency (Check all that apply.)
S(Speak) R(Read) W(Write) F(First Language) H(Spoken at Home)

_____	S	R	W	F	H
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Are you Hispanic/Latino?
 Yes, Hispanic or Latino (including Spain) No If yes, please describe your background.

- Regardless of your answer to the prior question, please indicate how you identify yourself. (Check one or more and describe your background.)
 American Indian or Alaska Native (including all Original Peoples of the Americas)
Are you Enrolled? Yes No If yes, please enter Tribal Enrollment Number _____
- Asian (including Indian subcontinent and Philippines)

- Black or African American (including Africa and Caribbean)

- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Original Peoples)

- White (including Middle Eastern)

Optional The items with a gray background are optional. No information you provide will be used in a discriminatory manner.

Religious Preference _____

US Armed Services veteran status _____

FAMILY

Please list both parents below, even if one or more is deceased or no longer has legal responsibilities toward you. Many colleges collect this information for demographic purposes even if you are an adult or an emancipated minor. If you are a minor with a legal guardian (an individual or government entity), then please list that information below as well. If you wish, you may list step-parents and/or other adults with whom you reside, or who otherwise care for you, in the Additional Information section.

Household

Parents' marital status (relative to each other): Never Married Married Civil Union/Domestic Partners Widowed Separated Divorced (date _____)

With whom do you make your permanent home? Parent 1 Parent 2 Both Legal Guardian Ward of the Court/State Other mm/yyyy

If you have children, how many? _____

Parent 1

Mother Father Unknown

Is Parent 1 living? Yes No (Date Deceased _____) mm/yyyy

Last/Family/Sur First/Given Middle

Former last name(s) _____

Country of birth _____

Home address **if different** from yours _____

Preferred Telephone: Home Cell Work (_____) _____
Area/Country/City Code

E-mail _____

Occupation _____

Employer _____

College (if any) _____ CEEB _____

Degree _____ Year _____

Graduate School (if any) _____ CEEB _____

Degree _____ Year _____

Parent 2

Mother Father Unknown

Is Parent 2 living? Yes No (Date Deceased _____) mm/yyyy

Last/Family/Sur First/Given Middle

Former last name(s) _____

Country of birth _____

Home address **if different** from yours _____

Preferred Telephone: Home Cell Work (_____) _____
Area/Country/City Code

E-mail _____

Occupation _____

Employer _____

College (if any) _____ CEEB _____

Degree _____ Year _____

Graduate School (if any) _____ CEEB _____

Degree _____ Year _____

Legal Guardian (if other than a parent)

Relationship to you _____

Last/Family/Sur First/Given Middle

Country of birth _____

Home address **if different** from yours _____

Preferred Telephone: Home Cell Work (_____) _____
Area/Country/City Code

E-mail _____

Occupation _____

Employer _____

College (if any) _____ CEEB _____

Degree _____ Year _____

Graduate School (if any) _____ CEEB _____

Degree _____ Year _____

Siblings

Please give names and ages of your brothers or sisters. If they are enrolled in grades K-12 (or international equivalent), list their grade levels. If they have attended or are currently attending college, give the names of the undergraduate institution, degree earned, and approximate dates of attendance. If more than three siblings, please list them in the Additional Information section.

Name Age & Grade Relationship

College Attended _____ CEEB _____

Degree earned _____ Dates _____
mm/yyyy – mm/yyyy

Name Age & Grade Relationship

College Attended _____ CEEB _____

Degree earned _____ Dates _____
mm/yyyy – mm/yyyy

Name Age & Grade Relationship

College Attended _____ CEEB _____

Degree earned _____ Dates _____
mm/yyyy – mm/yyyy

EDUCATION

Secondary Schools

Most recent secondary school attended _____

Entry Date _____ Graduation Date _____ School Type: Public Charter Independent Religious Home School

Address _____ CEEB/ACT Code _____

City/Town _____ State/Province _____ Country _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____

Counselor's Name _____ Counselor's Title _____

E-mail _____ Telephone (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____

List all other secondary schools you have attended since 9th grade, including academic summer schools or enrichment programs hosted on a secondary school campus:

Table with 3 columns: School Name & CEEB/ACT Code, Location (City, State/Province, ZIP/Postal Code, Country), Dates Attended (mm/yyyy)

Please list any community program/organization that has provided free assistance with your application process: _____

If your education was or will be interrupted, please indicate so here and provide details in the Additional Information section: _____

Colleges & Universities List all college/university affiliated courses you have taken since 9th grade and mark all that apply: taught on college campus (CO); taught on high school campus, excluding AP/IB (HS); taught online (ON); college credit awarded (CR); transcript available (TR); degree candidate (DC).

Table with 8 columns: College/University Name & CEEB/ACT Code, Location (City, State/Province, ZIP/Postal Code, Country), CO, HS, ON, CR, TR, DC, Dates Attended mm/yyyy - mm/yyyy, Degree Earned

If you indicated that a transcript is available, please have an official copy sent to your colleges as soon as possible.

ACADEMICS

The self-reported information in this section is not intended to take the place of your official records. Please note the requirements of each institution to which you are applying and arrange for official transcripts and score reports to be sent from your secondary school and the appropriate testing agencies. Where "Best Scores" are requested, please report the highest individual scores you have earned so far, even if those scores are from different test dates.

Grades Class Rank _____ Class Size _____ Weighted? Yes No GPA _____ Scale _____ Weighted? Yes No

ACT Exam Dates: _____ Best Scores: _____

SAT Exam Dates: _____ Best Scores: _____

TOEFL/IELTS Exam Dates: _____ Best Score: _____

Table for AP/IB/SAT Subjects with columns for Subject, Score, mm/yyyy, Type & Subject, Score, mm/yyyy, Type & Subject, Score

Current Courses Please list all courses you are taking this year and indicate level (AP, IB, advanced, honors, etc.) and credit value. Indicate quarter classes taken in the same semester on the appropriate semester line.

Table for Current Courses with columns: Full Year/First Semester/First Trimester, Second Semester/Second Trimester, Third Trimester

Honors Briefly list any academic distinctions or honors you have received since the 9th grade or international equivalent (e.g., National Merit, Cum Laude Society).

S(School) S/R(State or Regional) N(National) I(International)

Grade level or post-graduate (PG)	Honor	Highest Level of Recognition
9 10 11 12 PG		S S/R N I
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & WORK EXPERIENCE

Extracurricular Please list your **principal** extracurricular, volunteer, and work activities **in their order of importance to you**. Feel free to group your activities and paid work experience separately if you prefer. Use the space available to provide details of your activities and accomplishments (specific events, varsity letter, musical instrument, employer, etc.). **To allow us to focus on the highlights of your activities, please complete this section even if you plan to attach a résumé.**

Grade level or post-graduate (PG)	Approximate time spent		When did you participate in the activity?		Positions held, honors won, letters earned, or employer	If applicable, do you plan to participate in college?
	Hours per week	Weeks per year	School year	Summer/School Break		
9 10 11 12 PG						
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
Activity _____						
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
Activity _____						
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
Activity _____						
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
Activity _____						
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
Activity _____						
<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	_____	_____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____	<input type="radio"/>
Activity _____						

WRITING

Please briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities or work experiences in the space below.

Please write an essay of 250 – 500 words on a topic of your choice or on one of the options listed below, and attach it to your application before submission. **Please indicate your topic by checking the appropriate box.** This personal essay helps us become acquainted with you as a person and student, apart from courses, grades, test scores, and other objective data. It will also demonstrate your ability to organize your thoughts and express yourself. *NOTE: Your Common Application essay should be the same for all colleges. Do not customize it in any way for individual colleges. Colleges that want customized essay responses will ask for them on a supplement form.*

- 1 Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
- 2 Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
- 3 Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
- 4 Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
- 5 A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.
- 6 Topic of your choice.

Additional Information Please attach a separate sheet if you wish to provide details of circumstances or qualifications not reflected in the application.

Disciplinary History

- ① Have you ever been found responsible for a disciplinary violation at any educational institution you have attended from the 9th grade (or the international equivalent) forward, whether related to academic misconduct or behavioral misconduct, that resulted in a disciplinary action? These actions could include, but are not limited to: probation, suspension, removal, dismissal, or expulsion from the institution. Yes No
- ② Have you ever been adjudicated guilty or convicted of a misdemeanor, felony, or other crime? Yes No
 [Note that you are not required to answer “yes” to this question, or provide an explanation, if the criminal adjudication or conviction has been expunged, sealed, annulled, pardoned, destroyed, erased, impounded, or otherwise ordered by a court to be kept confidential.]

If you answered “yes” to either or both questions, please attach a separate sheet of paper that gives the approximate date of each incident, explains the circumstances, and reflects on what you learned from the experience.

Note: Applicants are expected to immediately notify the institutions to which they are applying should there be any changes to the information requested in this application, including disciplinary history.

SIGNATURE

Application Fee Payment If this college requires an application fee, how will you be paying it?

- Online Payment Will Mail Payment Online Fee Waiver Request Will Mail Fee Waiver Request

Required Signature

- I certify that all information submitted in the admission process—including the application, the personal essay, any supplements, and any other supporting materials—is my own work, factually true, and honestly presented, and that these documents will become the property of the institutions to which I am applying and will not be returned to me. I understand that I may be subject to a range of possible disciplinary actions, including admission revocation, expulsion, or revocation of course credit, grades, and degree, should the information I have certified be false.
- I acknowledge that I have reviewed the application instructions for each college receiving this application. I understand that all offers of admission are conditional, pending receipt of final transcripts showing work comparable in quality to that upon which the offer was based, as well as honorable dismissal from the school.
- I affirm that I will send an enrollment deposit (or equivalent) to only one institution; sending multiple deposits (or equivalent) may result in the withdrawal of my admission offers from all institutions. [Note: Students may send an enrollment deposit (or equivalent) to a second institution where they have been admitted from the waitlist, provided that they inform the first institution that they will no longer be enrolling.]

Signature 

Date _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Common Application member institution admission offices do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, parental status, physical disability, learning disability, political affiliation, veteran status, or sexual orientation.



2012-13 SCHOOL REPORT

SR

For Spring 2013 or Fall 2013 Enrollment

TO THE APPLICANT

After completing all the relevant questions below, give this form to your secondary school counselor or another school official who knows you better. **If applying via mail**, please also give that school official stamped envelopes addressed to each institution that requires a School Report.

Legal Name _____ Female
Last/Family/Sur (Enter name **exactly** as it appears on official documents.) First/Given Middle (complete) Jr., etc. Male

Birth Date _____ CAID (Common App ID) _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Address _____
Number & Street Apartment # City/Town State/Province Country ZIP/Postal Code

School you now attend _____ CEEB/ACT Code _____

Current year courses—please indicate title, level (AP, IB, advanced honors, etc.) and credit value of all courses you are taking this year. Indicate quarter classes taken in the same semester on the appropriate semester line.

Full Year/First Semester/First Trimester	Second Semester/Second Trimester	Third Trimester <small>or additional first/second term courses if more space is needed</small>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

IMPORTANT PRIVACY NOTE: By signing this form, I authorize all schools that I have attended to release all requested records covered under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) so that my application may be reviewed by The Common Application member institution(s) to which I am applying. I further authorize the admission officers reviewing my application, including seasonal staff employed for the sole purpose of evaluating applications, to contact officials at my current and former schools should they have questions about the school forms submitted on my behalf.

I understand that under the terms of the FERPA, after I matriculate I will have access to this form and all other recommendations and supporting documents submitted by me and on my behalf, unless at least one of the following is true:

- The institution does not save recommendations post-matriculation (*see list at www.commonapp.org/FERPA*).
- I waive my right to access below, regardless of the institution to which it is sent:

Yes, I do waive my right to access, and I understand I will never see this form or any other recommendations submitted by me or on my behalf.

No, I do *not* waive my right to access, and I may someday choose to see this form or any other recommendations or supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf to the institution at which I'm enrolling, if that institution saves them after I matriculate.

Required Signature _____ Date _____

TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Attach applicant's official transcript, including courses in progress, a school profile, and transcript legend. (Check transcript copies for readability.) Use both pages to complete your evaluation for this student. **Be sure to sign below before mailing directly to the college/university admission office. Do not mail this form to The Common Application offices.**

Counselor's Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.) _____
Please print or type

Signature _____ Date _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Title _____ School _____

School Address _____
Number & Street City/Town State/Province Country ZIP/Postal Code

School Website Address _____

Counselor's Telephone (_____) _____ Counselor's Fax (_____) _____
Area/Country/City Code Number Ext. Area/Country/City Code Number

School CEEB/ACT Code _____ Counselor's E-mail _____

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Background Information

Class Rank _____ Class Size _____ Covering a period from _____ to _____
(mm/yyyy) (mm/yyyy)

The rank is weighted unweighted. How many additional students share this rank? _____

How do you report class rank? quartile _____ quintile _____ decile _____

Cumulative GPA: _____ on a _____ scale, covering a period from _____ to _____
(mm/yyyy) (mm/yyyy)

This GPA is weighted unweighted. The school's passing mark is _____

Highest GPA in class _____ Graduation Date _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Percentage of graduating class immediately attending: _____ four-year _____ two-year institutions

How many courses does your school offer:
 AP _____ IB _____ Honors _____

If school policy limits the number a student may take in a given year, please list the maximum allowed:
 AP _____ IB _____ Honors _____

Is the applicant an IB Diploma candidate? Yes No

Are classes taken on a block schedule? Yes No

In comparison with other college preparatory students at your school, the applicant's course selection is:

- most demanding
- very demanding
- demanding
- average
- below average

How long have you known this student and in what context? _____

What are the first words that come to your mind to describe this student? _____

Ratings Compared to other students in his or her class year, how do you rate this student in terms of:

No basis	Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered (top 1%)
Academic achievement							
Extracurricular accomplishments							
Personal qualities and character							
OVERALL							

Evaluation Please provide comments that will help us differentiate this student from others. Feel free to attach an additional sheet or another reference you have prepared for this student. Alternatively, you may attach a reference written by another school official who can better describe the student. We especially welcome a broad-based assessment and encourage you to consider describing or addressing:

- The applicant's academic, extracurricular, and personal characteristics.
- Relevant context for the applicant's performance and involvement, such as particularities of family situation or responsibilities, after-school work obligations, sibling childcare, or other circumstances, either positive or negative.
- Observed problematic behaviors, perhaps separable from academic performance, that an admission committee should explore further.

I cannot provide a written evaluation because (check one or both):

- I do not have sufficient personal knowledge of this student.
- The demands of my counseling load do not afford me sufficient time.

① Has the applicant ever been found responsible for a disciplinary violation at your school from the 9th grade (or the international equivalent) forward, whether related to academic misconduct or behavioral misconduct, that resulted in a disciplinary action? These actions could include, but are not limited to: probation, suspension, removal, dismissal, or expulsion from your institution. Yes No School policy prevents me from responding

② To your knowledge, has the applicant ever been adjudicated guilty or convicted of a misdemeanor, felony, or other crime?
 Yes No School policy prevents me from responding.

[Note that you are not required to answer "yes" to this question, or provide an explanation, if the criminal adjudication or conviction has been expunged, sealed, annulled, pardoned, destroyed, erased, impounded, or otherwise ordered to be kept confidential by a court.]

If you answered "yes" to either or both questions, please attach a separate sheet of paper or use your written recommendation to give the approximate date of each incident and explain the circumstances.

Applicants are expected to immediately notify the institutions to which they are applying should there be any changes to the information requested in this application, including disciplinary history.

Check here if you would prefer to discuss this applicant over the phone with each admission office.

I recommend this student: No basis With reservation Fairly strongly Strongly Enthusiastically

TO THE APPLICANT

After completing the information in this section, give this form to your school counselor or another school official who knows you better. **If applying via mail**, please also give that school official stamped envelopes addressed to each institution to which you have applied.

Legal Name _____ Female
Last/Family/Sur (Enter name **exactly** as it appears on official documents.) First/Given Middle (complete) Jr., etc. Male

Birth Date _____ CAID (Common App ID) _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Address _____
Number & Street Apartment # City/Town State/Province Country ZIP/Postal Code

School you now attend _____ CEEB/ACT Code _____

IMPORTANT PRIVACY NOTE: In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the original School Report submitted on your behalf reflects your choice to waive or not waive your right of access to all recommendations and supporting documents. That response applies to all subsequent reports, including this one. You chose the following:

- Yes, I do waive my right to access, and I understand I will never see this form or any other recommendations submitted by me or on my behalf.
 No, I do *not* waive my right to access, and I may someday choose to see this form or any other recommendations or supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf to the institution at which I'm enrolling, if that institution saves them after I matriculate.

TO THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Please submit this form when midyear grades are available (end of first semester or second trimester). Attach applicant's official transcript, including courses in progress and transcript legend. (Please check transcript copies for readability.) **Be sure to sign below before mailing directly to the college/university admission office. Do not mail this form to The Common Application offices.**

Counselor's Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.) _____
Please print or type

Signature _____ Date _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Title _____ School _____

School Address _____
Number & Street City/Town State/Province Country ZIP/Postal Code

School Website Address _____

Counselor's Telephone (_____) _____ Counselor's Fax (_____) _____
Area/Country/City Code Number Ext. Area/Country/City Code Number

School CEEB/ACT Code _____ Counselor's E-mail _____

Background Information If any of the information below has changed for this student since the School Report was submitted, please enter the new information in the appropriate section below.

Class Rank _____ Class Size _____ Covering a period from _____ to _____ Cumulative GPA: _____ on a _____ scale, covering a period from _____ to _____
(mm/yyyy) (mm/yyyy) (mm/yyyy) (mm/yyyy)

The rank is weighted unweighted. This GPA is weighted unweighted. The school's passing mark is _____
 How many additional students share this rank? _____

We do not rank. Instead, please indicate quartile _____ quintile _____ decile _____ Highest GPA in class _____ Graduation Date _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Have there been any changes to the senior year courses listed on the original School Report? Yes No

Have there been any changes in the applicant's disciplinary status at your school since you submitted the original School Report?
 Yes No School policy prevents me from responding

To your knowledge, have there been any changes to the applicant's criminal history since you submitted the original School Report?
 Yes No School policy prevents me from responding

Do you wish to update your original evaluation of this applicant? Yes No

If you responded yes to any of the preceding questions, please attach an explanation.

Check here if you would prefer to discuss this applicant over the phone with each admission office.

THE COMMON
APPLICATION
For Undergraduate College Admission

2012-13 FINAL REPORT
For Spring 2013 or Fall 2013 Enrollment

FR

TO THE APPLICANT

After completing the information in this section, give this form to your school counselor or another school official who knows you better. **If applying via mail**, please also give that school official stamped envelopes addressed to all institutions requesting a final transcript.

Legal Name _____ Female
Last/Family/Sur (Enter name **exactly** as it appears on official documents.) First/Given Middle (complete) Jr., etc. Male

Birth Date _____ CAID (Common App ID) _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Address _____
Number & Street Apartment # City/Town State/Province Country ZIP/Postal Code

School you now attend _____ CEEB/ACT Code _____

IMPORTANT PRIVACY NOTE: In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the original School Report submitted on your behalf reflects your choice to waive or not waive your right of access to all recommendations and supporting documents. That response applies to all subsequent reports, including this one. You chose the following:

- Yes, I do waive my right to access, and I understand I will never see this form or any other recommendations submitted by me or on my behalf.
 No, I do *not* waive my right to access, and I may someday choose to see this form or any other recommendations or supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf to the institution at which I'm enrolling, if that institution saves them after I matriculate.

TO THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Please submit this form when final grades are available (end of second semester or third trimester). Attach applicant's official transcript and transcript legend. (Please check transcript copies for readability.) **Be sure to sign below before mailing directly to the college/university admission office. Do not mail this form to The Common Application offices.**

Counselor's Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.) _____
Please print or type

Signature _____ Date _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Title _____ School _____

School Address _____
Number & Street City/Town State/Province Country ZIP/Postal Code

School Website Address _____

Counselor's Telephone (_____) _____ Counselor's Fax (_____) _____
Area/Country/City Code Number Ext. Area/Country/City Code Number

School CEEB/ACT Code _____ Counselor's E-mail _____

Background Information If any of the information below has changed for this student since the Midyear Report was submitted, please enter the new information in the appropriate section below. **(Counselors of transfer applicants need not answer the questions below the shaded box.)**

Class Rank _____ Class Size _____ Covering a period from _____ to _____ Cumulative GPA: _____ on a _____ scale, covering a period from _____ to _____
(mm/yyyy) (mm/yyyy) (mm/yyyy) (mm/yyyy)

The rank is weighted unweighted. This GPA is weighted unweighted. The school's passing mark is _____
 How many additional students share this rank? _____

We do not rank. Instead, please indicate quartile _____ quintile _____ decile _____ Highest GPA in class _____ Graduation Date _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Have there been any changes to the senior year courses listed on the original School Report? Yes No

Have there been any changes in the applicant's disciplinary status at your school since you submitted the original School Report?
 Yes No School policy prevents me from responding

To your knowledge, have there been any changes to the applicant's criminal history since you submitted the original School Report?
 Yes No School policy prevents me from responding

Do you wish to update your original evaluation of this applicant? Yes No

If you responded yes to any of the preceding questions, please attach an explanation.

Check here if you would prefer to discuss this applicant over the phone with each admission office.

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SESSION IV: THE APPLICATION PROCESS (PART I)

ACTIVITY #3: TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Opening Discussion:

Students need to know that they have some control over their teacher recommendations, depending on who they ask, how far ahead of time they ask, and the kinds of information they provide the teacher. The role play will provide practice that should help build the student's confidence in approaching a teacher.

Handouts:

Common Application Teacher Recommendation Form

Teacher Recommendation Request

Who Will Write Your Recommendation Worksheet

Instructions:

1. Give each student the three handouts.
2. Ask students what surprises them about the teacher recommendation form. Stress that, in essence, a teacher recommendation should answer the question: Why would a professor want to teach this student?
3. Ask students to identify at least two teachers whom they could confidently ask to write a recommendation—they should write the names on the worksheet.
4. Some schools have a specific procedure for requesting teacher recommendations. If theirs does not, the Teacher Recommendation Request form is something they could use. If a college does not ask for a teacher recommendation, it may be because they do not want additional information; however, if a student is deferred, a strong letter of recommendation could be sent at that point.
5. **IMPORTANT POINT:** Students cannot ask to see teacher recommendations, but they are able to help shape them by giving the teacher good information.
6. **Role-Play:** Ask students to turn to the handout, “Who Will Write Your Recommendation?” and the “Teacher Recommendation Request Form.” Allow a few minutes to read those handouts and then pair students and ask them to practice asking a teacher for a recommendation.

THE COMMON APPLICATION
For Undergraduate College Admission

2012-13 TEACHER EVALUATION

TE

For Spring 2013 or Fall 2013 Enrollment

TO THE APPLICANT

After completing all the relevant questions below, give this form to a teacher who has taught you an **academic** subject (for example, English, foreign language, math, science, or social studies). **If applying via mail**, please also give that teacher stamped envelopes addressed to each institution that requires a Teacher Evaluation.

Legal Name _____ Female
Last/Family/Sur (Enter name **exactly** as it appears on official documents.) First/Given Middle (complete) Jr., etc. Male

Birth Date _____ CAID (Common App ID) _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Address _____
Number & Street Apartment # City/Town State/Province Country ZIP/Postal Code

School you now attend _____ CEEB/ACT Code _____

IMPORTANT PRIVACY NOTICE: Under the terms of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), after you matriculate you *will* have access to this form and all other recommendations and supporting documents submitted by you and on your behalf, unless at least one of the following is true:

1. The institution does not save recommendations post-matriculation (*see list at www.commonapp.org/FERPA*).
2. You waive your right to access below, regardless of the institution to which it is sent:

- Yes, I do waive my right to access, and I understand I will never see this form or any other recommendations submitted by me or on my behalf.
 No, I do *not* waive my right to access, and I may someday choose to see this form or any other recommendations or supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf to the institution at which I'm enrolling, if that institution saves them after I matriculate.

Required Signature _____ Date _____

TO THE TEACHER

The Common Application membership finds candid evaluations helpful in choosing from among highly qualified candidates. You are encouraged to keep this form in your private files for use should the student need additional recommendations. Please submit your references promptly, **and remember to sign below before mailing directly to the college/university admission office. Do not mail this form to The Common Application offices.**

Teacher's Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.) _____ Subject Taught _____
Please print or type

Signature _____ Date _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Secondary School _____

School Address _____
Number & Street City/Town State/Province Country ZIP/Postal Code

Teacher's Telephone (_____) _____ Teacher's E-mail _____
Area/Country/City Code Number Ext.

Background Information

How long have you known this student and in what context? _____

What are the first words that come to your mind to describe this student? _____

In which grade level(s) was the student enrolled when you taught him/her? 9 10 11 12 Other _____

List the courses in which you have taught this student, including the level of course difficulty (AP, IB, accelerated, honors, elective; 100-level, 200-level; etc.).



Ratings Compared to other students in his or her class year, how do you rate this student in terms of:

	No basis	Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the top few I've encountered (top 1%)
Academic achievement								
Intellectual promise								
Quality of writing								
Creative, original thought								
Productive class discussion								
Respect accorded by faculty								
Disciplined work habits								
Maturity								
Motivation								
Leadership								
Integrity								
Reaction to setbacks								
Concern for others								
Self-confidence								
Initiative, independence								
OVERALL								

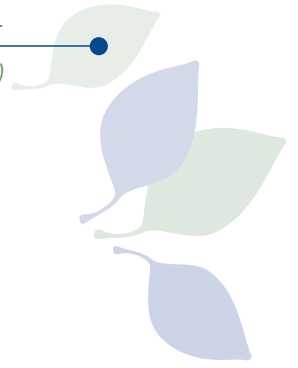
Evaluation Please write whatever you think is important about this student, including a description of academic and personal characteristics, as demonstrated in your classroom. We welcome information that will help us to differentiate this student from others. (Feel free to attach an additional sheet or another reference you may have prepared on behalf of this student.)

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WHO WILL WRITE YOUR TEACHER RECOMMENDATION? HOW DO YOU ASK FOR A RECOMMENDATION?

- The first step is to make sure that your colleges require teacher recommendations. You do this by carefully reading the applications.
- If recommendations are required, make sure that you have the forms the colleges require and that you know the deadline dates. Address and stamp an envelope for each college that requires a teacher recommendation.
- Find out if your school has a specific policy regarding teacher recommendations. If there is a policy, follow it. If not, you can use the information in this handout.
- The next step is deciding what teacher (or teachers, if your colleges require more than one) to ask.
- Think of the high school teachers with whom you have a good relationship, who know you best, and who would be enthusiastic about writing a recommendation for you.
 - These teachers should be from academic subjects, preferably from junior or senior year.
 - Teachers whom you have had for more than one class are often good choices.
 - List the teachers you might ask: _____, _____, _____.
- Approach the teacher at least three or four weeks before the deadline date. You can say something like this: I am applying to College XYZ, and that college requires a teacher recommendation. I think you know a lot about my strengths as a student. Would you be able to write a recommendation for me?
- If the teacher agrees, give them all the required college forms, stamped envelopes, and information about yourself as soon as possible. Again, they need at least three weeks notice! TIP: Use the TEACHER RECOMMENDATION REQUEST form in your handouts to provide personal information.
- If the teacher is not sure or says no, don't push it. Ask a different teacher. **YOU WANT SOMEONE THAT WANTS TO WRITE THE LETTER!**
- **WRITE A THANK YOU NOTE TO THE TEACHERS WHO WRITE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOU!**



TEACHER RECOMMENDATION REQUEST

Student's Name _____ Today's Date: _____

Student's DOB: _____

E-mail Address / Phone # (in case of questions) _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Course(s) with This Teacher (i.e., English 3): _____

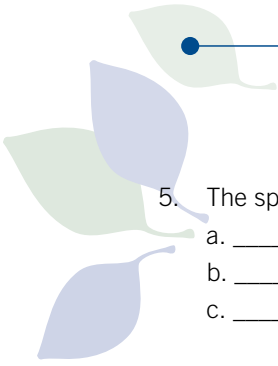
Thank you so much for agreeing to write this letter of recommendation for me. I asked you because I think you are a teacher who knows me well and who can accurately evaluate my potential for academic success in college. This information may be helpful to you as you write the recommendation.

1. I think my academic strengths are...
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

2. I think my personal strengths are...
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

3. I am considering the following college majors because...
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

4. These are some of the things I want the college admission and/or scholarship committee to know about me...
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____



5. The specific things I hope you will discuss in this letter...
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

6. What I remember most about your class...

7. Additional information that might be helpful...

*(Students: You may attach a resume to this form if you wish. But remember that the teacher recommendation will focus on you **as a student in this teacher's classroom.**)*

These are the schools I am applying to. I have attached any teacher recommendation forms they require, as well as stamped and addressed envelopes.

Name and Address of School	Official Deadline
	Postmark _____ or Received by _____ <small>Date</small> <small>Date</small>
	Postmark _____ or Received by _____ <small>Date</small> <small>Date</small>
	Postmark _____ or Received by _____ <small>Date</small> <small>Date</small>
	Postmark _____ or Received by _____ <small>Date</small> <small>Date</small>

Again, thank you. I know this is a big time commitment, and I appreciate your help.

Copyright, Pat Walters, MEd, CEP Retired High School Counselor

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SESSION IV: THE APPLICATION PROCESS (PART I)

ACTIVITY #4: INTERVIEWS

Opening Discussion:

Interviews are seldom required. Exceptions include a few highly selective institutions as well as some scholarship programs. However, a student should take advantage of the opportunity to interview on or off campus if possible. Students should know that meeting an admission representative “face-to-face,” whether in an informal interview or at a meeting at their school or a college fair, can be helpful in the admission process. Students with “special needs” or with complicated family situations should be encouraged to make personal contact with an admission officer from the colleges to which they plan to apply. Making a good first-impression is important. In this session, students will find that role-playing allows them to make and correct mistakes in a “practice” situation.

Activity/Handouts:

Typical College Interview Questions

Materials: Flip Chart or blackboard

Instructions:

1. Give the students a copy of “Typical College Interview Questions.”
2. Ask each student to circle at least two questions he/she is prepared to answer.
3. Demonstrate an introduction: Firm handshake, good eye contact, introducing yourself
4. Ask students to work with a partner. One is the interviewer, one the student. The student should introduce himself/herself. Then the interviewer should ask a question (one of the ones his partner circled), to which the student responds.
5. Instruct students to switch roles.
6. Ask the students to make comments about what was effective in the interview exercise and write them on the flip chart or board.



TYPICAL COLLEGE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

If you have the opportunity for an interview with a college admission representative, take advantage of it. This is a chance for you to answer questions about yourself—your interests and accomplishments, your future goals, your reasons for applying to College XYZ, etc. It is also a great opportunity for you to ask questions. Remember, you are trying to decide if this college is a good match for you.

Some typical questions you might be asked:

- Tell us about yourself as a student. What are your favorite classes? What do you want to study in college?
- What are the extracurricular activities you have been most involved with during high school? What were your contributions?
- What do you see as your strengths and weaknesses? Your greatest accomplishments? How would your friends describe you?
- Why are you considering our college? What special programs are you interested in?
- What characteristics are you looking for in the college you will attend?
- Is there anything else you want us to know about you?
- DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

This last question is important—be prepared. Not only will you be able to get specific information about the things that interest you most, but you will show the interviewer that you have done your research.

Some topics to consider asking about:

- The admission process at that school
- Specific majors you are interested in
- Special programs such as freshman seminars, study abroad, etc.
- Social life—clubs and organizations, sororities and fraternities
- Dorm Life—types of housing, food
- Participation in activities such as music, drama, athletics, community service—who participates? How?
- School traditions?

BE YOURSELF!

5

SESSION 5: THE APPLICATION
PROCESS (PART II)

Making the final decision about where to apply can be confusing at best. Students will come away from this session with knowledge of terms as well as practices and processes required for the completion of college applications, including how to write a college essay.

Objectives:

By the end of this session, students will:

- understand that the college application process is challenging, but should not be feared.
- understand that attention to detail is required
- have set an individualized game plan for the college application process
- have outlined a possible college essay

*Activities and Handouts:***Activity #1: Managing Expectations: Where am I applying?****Which admission plan is for me?**

Handouts: Different Admission Plans
College Application Tracking Chart

Materials: College List from Session IV

Activity #2: The College Essay

Handouts: Common Application essay topics
NACAC's Top 10 Tips for a College Essay
The College Essay: Getting Started
Sample College Essays



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SESSION V: THE APPLICATION PROCESS (PART II)

ACTIVITY #1: MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Opening Discussion:

Students should know why they are applying to each of their colleges. When students narrow their college list, they should keep a record of each college's admission requirements and deadlines. They should develop a realistic and practical plan for completing applications that can be adjusted as necessary. A student may also want to consider applying to his/her top choice through an "early" plan, if offered.

Activity/handouts:

Different Admission Plans

College Application Tracking Chart

College list from Session III homework

Instructions:

1. Hand out "Different Admission Plans" and discuss the different options, emphasizing pros and cons of each. Remind students that it is important to consider the financial implications of applying Early Decision: Would they be better served if they waited to receive several financial aid offers?
2. Ask the students to look at the "College Application Tracking Chart" and begin filling it out to the best of their ability at this point. Completing this chart will be an ongoing process as students determine exactly where they are applying.
3. Point out to students that some colleges track "interest"; therefore, it is beneficial for the student to correspond with the admission office through an occasional email, to try to attend a local college fair if the college of interest is there, and to let the college know if they visit. "Interest" is important to a college because it indicates how serious the student might be about attending that institution.



DIFFERENT ADMISSION PLANS

There are two main categories of admission options: **non-restrictive** and **restrictive**.

Non-restrictive application plans do not restrict students from applying to other institutions. You'll have until May 1 to consider your options and confirm enrollment. There are three application plans under non-restrictive:

- Regular Decision
- Rolling Admission
- Early Action—this is an “early” option.

Regular Decision means that you turn in your application by the college's deadline, and they let you know by a specified date.

For **Rolling Admission**, schools review applications as they're submitted and make decisions throughout the admission cycle (usually within four to six weeks of submission of the application). It is usually wise to send your application as soon as possible since some colleges will fill their class by early winter.

With **Early Action**, you send your application by the early deadline and the college sends you its decision earlier. Some colleges do have additional restrictions on their early action programs, though, so make sure to read carefully the instructions from each college.

There are two types of restrictive application plans:

- Early Decision
- Restrictive Early Action.

When you decide to apply **Early Decision**, you are committing yourself to going to that school. Early Decision is for those early-bird students who already have a clear first-choice college. If you're still comparing colleges and don't want to limit your choices yet, Early Decision is not for you. Why? Early Decision is a contract between you and the college. You agree that if the college accepts you, you'll withdraw all other college applications and attend the early decision college. Because of this commitment, you can apply Early Decision to only one college.

The other restrictive option is **Restrictive Early Action**. This one means that you apply to your school of choice and get a decision early. Be aware, though, that some schools restrict applicants from applying to any other early plans at other schools. If you go this way, you'll have until May 1 to confirm that you'll be attending.

- These early options can be confusing—some schools even have more than one of these options—so talk to your guidance counselor if there's anything you don't understand.

Colleges respond to early applications in one of three ways: acceptance, rejection or holding applications over to regular decision.



Are You Ready to Commit?

If several of your classmates are working on early decision applications, you may feel some pressure to do the same. But resist the temptation to apply early decision unless you truly are ready to commit to one college.

The only way you can be 100 percent sure is if you've done the work that leads to a good decision. Ask yourself these questions:

- Have I thoroughly researched this college and other colleges that may interest me?
- Have I visited this college while classes are in session and met with someone at the admission office?
- Have I explored my academic, extracurricular and social options at this college?
- Have I talked to a financial aid officer to get an estimate of college costs and to find out how Early Decision could affect my aid package?
- Have I discussed this decision with my family and/or guidance counselor?
- Is this a true first choice, or are there other colleges that still interest me?

If you're at all unsure about your first choice, applying Early Action (which does not require a commitment and allows you to apply to other schools), rolling, or regular decision is your best option. There is no need to limit your college choices this early, unless you truly want to.

Do Early Application Plans Affect Financial Aid?

If you need financial aid, you'll probably need to complete a CSS Profile or the college's institutional form at about the same time as the early decision application. The college financial aid office can then send you a tentative financial aid package (tentative until you can send the college your tax return and other supporting documentation). Each college does this a little differently, so check with the financial aid office or admission office of the college to be certain of their procedures.

What if your early decision college does not offer you enough financial aid?

"If the financial aid package is insufficient, we will release the early-decision-admitted student from the Early Decision obligation," says Richard C. Vos, vice president and dean of admission and financial aid at Claremont McKenna College (CA). "If the initial aid offer in mid-December is seen as inadequate, we encourage the family to have a conversation with our financial aid director. That process almost always resolves the problem."

However, Early Decision may not be the best choice if you want to compare financial aid packages between institutions until May 1. Early Decision requires an earlier commitment.

Advantage to Applying Early?

Many students make an effort to apply through one of the early application programs because they hope to beat the competition of regular decision. Although most colleges have a smaller number of applications in their early programs, whether it's easier to get accepted early than later depends on each college's policies.

One factor to consider is whether your academic record will be stronger later in your senior year. If you had stellar junior-year grades, this may not be a concern. But if you think that your application would be stronger with the addition of your grades for the fall of your senior year, waiting for regular decision may be the way to go.

A possible advantage to applying early, especially Early Action, is that you will receive admission decisions early. If you're accepted to one or several colleges, you may feel a bit less stress about the rest of the college admission process. (And if you're accepted Early Decision, your college search is over.) If your application is declined at one or more colleges, you have some time to re-assess your college choices, if necessary. Colleges can also neither accept nor reject, but rather hold over your application to regular decision. If this happens, make sure to send updated information in time for the regular decision deadline (such as senior-year grades and activities) to bolster your application.

In the end, the decision of whether or not to apply early decision or early action is yours alone. Do your research, think about your options, look at your fall schedule, talk to your guidance counselor and family. And then decide for yourself.





COLLEGE APPLICATION TRACKING CHART

College	Deadline date	Transcript sent	Test scores sent	Recommendations sent	Financial Aid Forms Filed

5

SESSION V: THE APPLICATION PROCESS (PART II)

ACTIVITY #2: THE COLLEGE ESSAY

Opening Discussion:

The college essay stands as the last major hurdle to the application for many students. They may complete everything else, but the essay seems to be waiting for a stroke of divination. This activity is designed to help students kick start their essay. It is very important to have them fill out as much as possible in the session. The goal is for students to see the essay as an opportunity, not a chore. Having them do a prewriting gets them started in a concrete way.

Activity/Handout:

Handouts: The College Essay: Getting Started

NACAC's Top 10 Tips

Common Application essay topics (or essay from one of their applications)

Sample essays to Evaluate

Instructions:

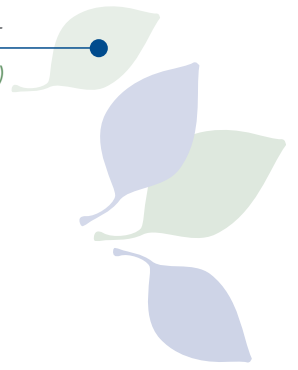
1. Give each student a copy of “The College Essay: Getting Started” and ask them to complete the questions.
2. Read with them **NACAC's Top 10**, answering any questions as you go over the hints. (for more information, see www.nacacnet.org/PublicationsResources/steps/Articles/Pages/CollegeEssay.aspx.)
3. Read the Common Application topics. Ask students which topic they would probably choose to write about. Have them circle it. *If they are already writing about other topics, list some of them on the board.*
4. Stress that whatever the essay topic is, their purpose is to tell the admission committee something important about who they are.
5. To help them begin an essay, guide them through “College Essay: Getting Started.” This complete activity, as well as other resources for essays, can be found at www.collegeboard.com/student.
6. Hand out the sample essays and ask the students to read them and decide what they like and don't like about them. Encourage them to base their decisions on how well the response answers the topic, how many specific “showing” details there are, and how well written the response is. Then read them the critiques from admission committees. Discuss.

THE COLLEGE ESSAY: GETTING STARTED

College Board's *Recipe for a Draft: How to Kick-Start Your College Essay*

(View this activity and other resources at www.collegeboard.com/student/apply).

- Think about yourself. What are your best qualities? List several of them here: _____, _____, _____, _____.
- Choose one of the qualities you listed above, one you'd like to convey to the college admission committee. **Complete this sentence: "I am a very _____ person."**
- Set a timer for 20 minutes (or 10, or 15). Pretend you're taking an exam at school and responding to this prompt: **Tell a story about an experience or time when you showed you were a very _____ person (using the characteristic identified above.)** Write non-stop for the designated time.
- Congratulations! You have started a draft of a college application essay.



NACAC'S TOP TEN TIPS FOR WRITING A COLLEGE ESSAY

(Read a more detailed discussion of each tip at www.nacacnet.org/PublicationsResources/steps/Articles/Pages/CollegeEssay.aspx).

1. **Start early.** The more time you have, the less stress you'll have.
2. **Be yourself.** One of the biggest mistakes students make is "writing what they think others want to hear."
3. **Be honest.** College admission officers have read hundreds—even thousands—of essays. They are masters at discovering any form of plagiarism.
4. **Take a risk.** Don't settle for the essay that everyone else is writing.
5. **Keep in focus.** Use the essay to help the admission officers get to know you as a person.
6. **Write and rewrite.** Don't try to write a masterpiece on your first try.
7. **Get a second opinion.** Even best-selling novelists ask other people to read their manuscripts before they're sent to the publisher.
8. **Proofread.**
9. **Don't confuse applying online with sending e-mail.** Make sure that you put as much effort into an online essay as you would if you were sending it snail mail.
10. **Don't expect too much from an essay.** The application essay is important, but it's not the only thing that is considered.



SAMPLE ESSAYS TO EVALUATE

Below are essays written in response to long and short essay topics. Read each essay once and evaluate whether or not it is effective. These are actual essays written by applicants applying to a major state university.

Essay #1—Describe a person who has had a significant influence on your life.

The person who has had the biggest influence on my life would be my twirling coach, Nicole. Not only is she a coach, but a friend and a role model.

Although some days at practice can be absolutely dreadful, I know that she only screams and pushes to make us better and I love that about her. Not only is she there for us as a coach, but also as a friend as well. Whenever someone has a rough day, she is the perfect person to talk to. She seems to have the answers to almost everything. She often sits us down as a team and has talks about being the better person in an argument, being a good leader, and most of all, being a good person.

Not a day goes by that I don't think about something that Nicole has taught me. Whether it is getting in a petty fight over nothing or just wanting to be lazy and not pick up by baton for an hour's practice, I often think, Nicole wouldn't be happy with my decision, or Nicole wouldn't do that. She seems to indirectly alter some of the decisions I make, which I believe are standards for a great role model.

If I would have never met my twirling coach, I don't know where I'd be today. So many of my decisions I make are influenced by things she says and her actions. She definitely has had a great amount of influence upon my life as a coach, a friend, and a role model.

Essays # 2 and #3 (same short answer topic; essays by two different students)- If you were to work with a professor to design and help teach a class, what topic would you choose and why?

Essay #2:

Like many young adults, I am constantly on the run trying to get to the next activity I have scheduled. The day never seems long enough, and there is always something left undone. School, for example, is a source of a lot of stress and anxiety. I often find myself getting distracted thinking about the Calculus test or the English paper, long after they have passed.

A year ago I went to a meditation retreat in the Catskill Mountains. Since then, I have been regularly practicing meditation, an ancient yoga practice independent of all religions. However, every religion utilizes the value of meditation in one form or another to achieve eternal bliss and peace of mind.

Although I am somewhat of a "beginner," I have already witnessed many benefits. I have found I am able to concentrate better and have an increased immunity to distractions. I find meditating helps to relieve much of my tension and enables me to work with much more zeal. Many nights I have to study for multiple tests or quizzes, so I meditate a few minutes before I start each new subject. Once I have done this, my mind is clearer and more responsive to the information it is fed.



At college, I would like to share the wonder of meditation with others to help them get through the tough times. The message of meditation transcends religious lines and can be beneficial to everyone. Working with more accomplished individuals, I would like to explore the therapeutic aspect of the practice; and, perhaps through statistical, historical, and spiritual data, support this ideology. The opportunity to work with a professor would help me structure and deliver the message better. Guest speakers as part of a club or college course would enhance the experience of meditation. I believe this course would be a great learning experience and benefit for interested students.

Essay #3:

If I were to work with a professor to design and teach a class, the topic for my new course would be a broad study of major modern day religions as Judaism, Christianity, Muslim, and Buddhism. Through education this class's objective would hopefully be to curb prejudice and increase tolerance of other religions. I feel that especially now during this time of crisis in our nation that to toleration can only further expound on the unity we now possess.

Essay #4: Describe the environment in which you grew up and how it has shaped your personal goals.

I grew up in a brick house on Nottingham Drive, a place with old furniture and young faces, with small rooms that never seemed empty. I grew up with my pointy nose buried in books, wearing stretch pants and bows and listening to my father's new songs on the guitar. I sat at a dinner table as girlish voices made fun of that pointy nose along with my big ears, and I finally learned to laugh about them. I grew up with a big-nosed father who always had a joke on his tongue and a mother who always had an answer. I heard that as long as I worked hard enough, I could do anything.

I grew up eating fresh tomatoes from my grandpa's garden and later saw that same garden overrun with weeds. I grew up during summers at the lake, with cousins who couldn't read until fourth grade and could break every object in sight. I watched at a distance as relatives struggled through life, searching for paths to independence. I heard stories from the adults' fold-out table, of women abandoned by the men whom they had depended on. Somewhere amongst those stories, I made up my mind not to make their same mistakes.

I grew up with a determination to make something of myself, to stand apart from the crowd. I listened to seemingly endless stories about the Depression, wars and old friends. I wondered if I would ever get a chance to tell my stories. I wondered what type of stories I would have to tell.

I began to understand that I have a choice. I can choose the stories that I want to tell. I can choose whether or not I repeat others' mistakes. And I can choose what I make of myself. As to how I make these choices, I'm sure that all I have to do is remember the stories from when I grew up.



ADMISSION COUNSELORS' CRITIQUES OF ESSAYS

Essay #1

This essay does not work because it lacks depth. The writer just skims the surface and gives the reader vague details about the coach. She doesn't tell HOW her coach influences her life. The writer needed to take this essay to the next level. The writing also lacks sophistication. The word choice and sentence structure are very simplistic.

Essay #2

This is a good short answer response because it is a very specific topic and shares a personal experience. The writer uses clear details and writes well. This brief answer response also shows that the writer is open minded, curious, and motivated to work with others.

Essay #3

Even though this is a short answer response, the writer needed to go into more depth. The topic is too broad as presented and doesn't allow the writer to talk about the details. The writer also did not proofread carefully; there are words missing and other grammatical errors.

Essay #4

This essay is an excellent example of how concrete details can create a vivid story. The writer's strong observation skills and sensitivity to her family hold the reader's attention. Her reflections at the end are well supported by the story. The writer uses language well and shows a sense of style.

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SESSION VI: FINANCIAL AID

For most students, an application is not complete without considering finances, so the primary goal of this session is to provide information to students and parents/families about the financial aid process. Since this is the final session, allow time at the end for the final “wrap-up” which will be the “Great Sorting Game” followed by a discussion and final evaluation.

Objective:

By the end of this session, students will:

- have a better understanding of the components of financial aid
- know what questions to ask as they move through the financial aid process

Activities and Handouts:

Activity #1: Understanding Financial Aid

Handouts: Paying for College is a Family Affair
Student Bulletin: A Quick Guide to Financial Aid Terms
Student Bulletin: Understanding Your Financial Aid Letter

Activity #2: Using the FAFSA4caster

Activity #3: Wrap-up

Handout: The Great Sorting Game

Activity #4: Evaluation

Handout: Final Evaluation



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SESSION VI: FINANCIAL AID

ACTIVITY #1: UNDERSTANDING FINANCIAL AID

Opening Discussion:

Understanding financial aid may seem to be a difficult task but, with help, it can be manageable and it is well worth the effort in the end. There are lots of opportunities for students to receive enough aid to attend even the most expensive college.

Handout:

Paying for College is a Family Affair

Student Bulletin: A Quick Guide to Financial Aid Terms

Student Bulletin: Understanding Your Financial Aid Letter

How Financial Aid Works: Case Study

Resources: Flip chart or board

Instructions:

1. Read “Paying for College is a Family Affair” with the students, answering questions as they arise.
2. Ask students to work in pairs with the “Quick Guide to Financial Aid Terms.” One student will ask the other what he/she thinks the definition of the terms might mean. If the answer is correct, then they star (*) the term. Student pairs should alternate asking/answering the questions. Once all sets of pairs have completed the exercise, then the facilitator can determine which group guessed the most “right” definitions of the terms. The students should be encouraged to take this handout home.
3. Next, give the students “Understanding your Financial Aid Letter.” On the board or flip chart, write out the sample aid package from “How Financial Aid Works” which provides a case study for the information in the financial aid letter.
4. Instruct students to take all the handouts home and discuss them with their families. IF possible, they should try to get on at least one of the suggested Web sites and, if they are seniors, they should go to the FAFSA Web site or ask their guidance counselor for a paper copy.



PAYING FOR COLLEGE IS A FAMILY AFFAIR AND HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

THE SAD FACT is that many students who earn admission to college never go because they do not complete the financial aid process.

THE GOOD NEWS is that there are lots of ways to pay for college and lots of information and help are available to students who honestly need financial aid assistance!!

FACTS WORTH NOTING:

- THE EARLIER YOU BEGIN TO THINK ABOUT PAYING FOR COLLEGE THE BETTER.
- MONEY IS AVAILABLE TO ALMOST EVERY STUDENT WHO ATTENDS COLLEGE.
- NO ONE GETS FINANCIAL AID BY WISHING! YOU NEED TO APPLY AND FOLLOW THROUGH.
- EVEN THE MOST AMBITIOUS STUDENT WILL NEED ASSISTANCE FROM THE ADULTS IN THE HOUSEHOLD IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION PROCESS.
- YOU DO NOT NEED TO PAY ANYONE TO HELP YOU APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID! BEWARE OF ANYONE WHO OFFERS A SERVICE FOR A FEE.
- OFTEN THE MOST EXPENSIVE COLLEGES HAVE THE “DEEPEST POCKETS” AND CAN HELP THE VERY NEEDIEST STUDENTS MAKE COLLEGE AFFORDABLE.

In a perfect world, families begin thinking about college finances when their children are still in grade school. But we all know this is NOT a perfect world. So—the time for you to start thinking about paying for college is TODAY!

There is a lot of money available to students with need:

While it is true that college costs increase almost yearly, it is also true that there is more financial aid available than ever before—according to the federal government, more than \$199 billion. This money comes from the following sources:

- The US Department of Education’s Federal Student Aid (FSA) program which provide \$146.5 billion a year in grants, loans and work-study assistance.
- State grant and loan programs.
- College and university grant, loan and scholarship programs.
- Scholarships given by foundations, corporations, and community organizations.

These are the sources of financial aid:

- **Grants and scholarships:** Also called “gift aid,” grants are based on financial need and do not need to be repaid. Scholarships are most-often awarded on the basis of strong academic achievement, a special talent or ability, or ethnicity.

- **Work-study:** This option gives students the opportunity for part-time employment ON CAMPUS to help them meet their financial need.
- **Loans:** These are offered to students or parents and must be repaid. Loans that are awarded based on financial need are low-interest loans, usually sponsored by the federal government. Interest on these loans is paid by the government for students with the greatest need. Repayment does not begin until 6 months after completion of the college program and may be deferred until a later date under some special circumstances.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID IS TIME-CONSUMING, BUT NOT HARD!

Here is how the need-based application process generally works:

1. Every student must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This is the only application required by many colleges, and should be completed as soon possible after January 1st of the senior year. **As the name says, this is free!** The preferred method for completing this form is online, although a paper copy is available. The Web site is: **www.fafsa.ed.gov** (NOT .com which is a fee-based, unnecessary service)
2. A few colleges and universities also require that students complete a financial aid form specific to the institution, or the College Scholarship Service Profile application, which is offered through the College Board. There is a fee for this form, but fee waivers are available through school counselors and college financial aid offices.
3. Financial aid offices use the information provided through these forms to determine a family's ability to pay for college. This is called the "estimated family contribution" (EFC), and it is always the same, regardless of the cost of the college. That means that financial aid can help you afford even the most expensive college, if you qualify for admission.
4. In the spring of the senior year, colleges notify students of the amount and type of aid offered.
5. Students have until May 1st to compare offers of admission and financial aid in order to make one final college enrollment decision.

There are many people and resources who can help you find your way through the financial aid process. Your school counselor, your teachers, adults in your community or place of worship may all be available to advise you. **At every college you consider, financial aid officers will be eager to help students and families understand and complete the financial aid process. Don't be afraid to ask for lots and lots of help.**

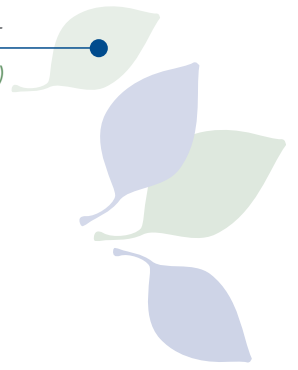
If you are a good student and an active participant in school and community, you may qualify for scholarships offered by corporations, foundations, religious organizations, or community groups. Ask at your school about possibilities. Do some research online at **www.fastWeb.com** and **The College Board** (http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp).

In the end, all of the work required to apply for financial aid is well worth the effort! In 2008:

- **College graduates earned an average of \$55,700**
- **High School graduates earned an average of \$33,800**

Over the course of your life and career that difference will make up for the cost of even the most expensive college—many times over!

For more information on financial aid visit: **www.finaid.org** and **www.studentaid.ed.gov**



HERE IS HOW ONE STUDENT FINANCED A FIRST YEAR IN COLLEGE:

Susan Smart

Total Cost: **\$21,120**

(Tuition, Room and Board, Books, Fees, Travel)

EFC **\$3,241**

(Estimated Family Contributions determined by FAFSA)

Financial need: **\$17,879**

How she pays:

Scholarship from college	\$4,000
Federally subsidized student loan	\$3,500
State scholarship	\$2,500
Federal Pell Grant	\$1,060
Federal Perkins Loan	\$2,400
Federal SEOG Grant	\$300
Federal Work Study	\$1,600
Scholarship from church	\$1,500
Summer earnings	\$1,019



STUDENT BULLETIN

Adapted from: www.fastWeb.com. Visit the site to search over \$3.4 billion in scholarships!

Volume 2
High School Edition

Quick Guide to Financial Aid Terms

A few weeks after submitting your FAFSA, you will receive a copy of your **SAR**, and your prospective college(s) will receive a copy as well. Using information taken from your SAR, each school you applied to will send you an Award Eligibility Letter, breaking down your Aid Eligibility. The aid offered in the letter will be based on your Financial Need, which is equal to your COA minus your EFC.

This can quickly get confusing. To better understand the financial aid process, here are the key terms YOU need to know:

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): This is the form used by the government to determine the amount of federal and state aid you are eligible to receive. For more information about how to complete the FAFSA, watch the four-minute FAFSA video at www.fastWeb.com/financial-aid.

Student Aid Report (SAR): This is the official notification sent to you that confirms your FAFSA has been processed. This document will include your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): This is a measure of your family's financial strength based on income, assets, family size, etc., and gathered from information you submitted on the FAFSA. Your EFC represents the amount of money the federal government believes your family can contribute toward one academic year of college. The actual amount your family ends up paying could differ from the EFC figure, depending on which sources of aid are available to you.

Aid Eligibility: This is the total aid you are eligible to receive. It can include scholarships, grants, work-study and loans. Any aid that is offered is typically summarized in an award letter and sent to you by your prospective college(s).

Award Eligibility Letter: This is the list of aid that you are eligible to receive from your prospective college, including terms and conditions. You should be aware that you are not required to accept all the aid found in the letter. You could turn down loans, for example.

Cost of Attendance (COA): This figure includes the total price of tuition, fees, room, board, books, supplies, transportation and personal expenses for one year of college. This is also known at some colleges as the "Student Budget."

Financial Need: This is the difference between your Cost of Attendance (COA) and your EFC.

Now that you know these key terms, re-read the top paragraph of this bulletin. It should be much clearer to you! Please visit www.finaid.org for more information on the financial aid process.



Types of Aid

Federal Aid is financial aid that comes from the government and is usually disbursed through your college. It can include:

Grants typically are based on financial need and do not need to be paid back. An example is the Pell Grant. Eligibility often depends on your FAFSA results.

Scholarships usually are based on achievement or talent and do not to be paid back. You can search for scholarships at www.fastWeb.com. FastWeb adds and updates scholarships every single day. Also, your prospective college(s) may offer scholarships based on merit and/or need. Call their financial aid office to find out which scholarships are available to you and how you can apply.

Loans: These funds must be paid back, usually with interest. There are federal student loans, federal parent loans, and private loans. The good news is that interest rates for federal student loans and parent loans are currently at historic lows. However, you must demonstrate financial need for some loans, like the Perkins Loan. To find out more about loans, visit www.finaid.org/loans.

Federal Work-Study: This program provides part-time jobs for students with financial need. Jobs are usually available on and off campus and listed through the school's financial aid office.

Loan Terms

Student loans come in many varieties. The best loan terms are offered through the loan programs regulated by the federal government, such as Stafford and Perkins loans. Banks and other financial institutions also offer private loans, sometimes known as alternative or direct-to-consumer loans. Private loans are not regulated by the federal government and may offer unfavorable terms, such as high or ballooning interest rates and lack of flexibility for periods of financial hardship or unemployment. If you are offered a loan that is not regulated by the federal government, be sure to understand all the terms before you sign. If you have any doubts, ask a financial aid officer for advice.

Interest: A periodic charge for borrowing money, expressed as a percentage of the loan balance. Interest rates are either variable (the rate can change) or fixed (the rate will not change).

Annual percentage rate (APR): The overall cost of borrowing money, expressed as an annual percentage of the loan balance. The APR combines the interest rate with loan fees, and also includes the effects of compounding.

Default: Failure to repay your loan; it may lead to legal action to recover the money and can negatively affect your credit rating.

Principal: The full amount borrowed. During repayment, it refers to the portion of the original amount still owed (not including interest).

Loan Fees: One-time charges to originate or guarantee a loan, expressed as a loan balance percentage.



STUDENT BULLETIN

From: www.fastWeb.com. Visit the site to search over \$3.4 billion in scholarships!

Volume 2
High School Edition

Understanding Your Financial Aid Award Letter

Use this example as a guide to reading your financial aid award letter. Remember, you can choose to accept or decline any part of your financial aid package. Make sure to contact your prospective college's aid office immediately, if you have any questions.

Expenses (COA*)

Tuition:	\$7,334
Health and Fees:	176
Books/Supplies:	1,015
Room/Board:	5,204
Personal:	2,600
Transportation:	910

Total Expenses: \$17,239

* Cost of Attendance (COA): The total expenses (tuition, fees, etc) of one year's education. Your school may also include indirect costs (books, room and board, transportation, personal expenses, etc.). Our example includes both direct and indirect expenses.

Resources (EFC*)

Family's Resources

Parent's Contribution:

From Earnings:	\$2,500
From Assets:	112

Student's Contribution: 500

Other Resources

Total Resources: \$3,112

* Expected Family Contribution (EFC): Amount your family is expected to give per year, determined by FAFSA results (e.g., EFC is \$3,112 [2,500+112+500]). The amount you end up actually paying could differ from the EFC, depending on what resources are available at your college.

**Awarded Financial Aid**

Award	Fall	Spring	Total	Accept ✓	Decline ✓
Pell Grant	\$625	\$625	\$1,250		
Direct Stafford Loan (Subsidized)	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$3,000		
Direct Stafford Loan (Unsubsidized)	\$1,938	\$1,938	\$3,876		
Total Direct Loans			\$6,876		

Total Financial Aid Package: \$8,126

(COA) - (EFC) - (Aid) = Unmet Need

\$17,239 - \$3,112 - \$8,127 = \$6,000

Notice the choice to accept/decline each award

Federal Pell Grant (free money)

Federal Stafford Loan—Subsidized (interest-free until six months after graduation)

Federal Stafford Loan—Unsubsidized (interest accrues immediately after loan is disbursed)

If you have applied to other schools, compare this financial aid award with the others. Remember to search for scholarships at www.fastWeb.com! Scholarships will always be the best way to meet the costs of a college education.

Comparing Financial Aid Award Letters

You may receive award letters from different colleges. Keep the following in mind when making your final decision.

- Look carefully at your award letters: Letters from different schools will probably have their figures and costs in different formats. Compare award letters to see how their offers measure up. Ask if outside scholarships will affect your aid.
- Compare loan offers: Interest rates, how interest compounds, repayment terms and cancellation provisions can vary widely from loan to loan.
- Compare affordability of aid offers over time: Ask how your financial aid package will change over time. The aid package made available to you in your senior year may look very different from the one you were offered freshman year.
- Look beyond the “sticker price”: The school with the lowest cost of attendance may not be the most affordable. The amount and type of aid offered will influence affordability.
- Don't accept an offer just because it has the lowest “unmet need”: You may save more by accepting an offer with a higher unmet need, if the aid package offers scholarships, grants and work-study instead of loans.
- Compare like terms: How do the schools determine cost of attendance? Do they all include direct costs as well as indirect costs? How do they handle outside scholarships? What work-study options are available? What are wages like? Can you substitute work-study for a loan?

6

SESSION VI: FINANCIAL AID

ACTIVITY #2: USING THE FAFSA4CASTER

Opening Discussion:

FAFSA4caster will help you get an early start on the financial aid process by:

- Providing you with an early estimate of your eligibility for federal student aid
- Giving you an experience similar to FAFSA on the Web
- Allowing you to transfer all of your FAFSA4caster data to FAFSA on the Web once you are ready to apply for aid
- Providing you with the option to apply for your Federal Student Aid PIN*
- Increasing your knowledge of the financial aid process, and providing information about other sources of aid.

*A PIN is a 4-digit number that is used in combination with your Social Security Number, name and date of birth to identify you as someone who has the right to access your own personal information on Federal Student Aid Web sites, such as FAFSA on the Web.

Resources:

- Computers with high-speed Internet access* and supported browsers (see www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/F4CApp/index/beforebrowser_req.jsf for information on supported browsers)
- Financial aid officer from a local college

*NOTE: If a computer with Internet access is not available, guide students through completion of the FAFSA Worksheet in preparation for completing the FAFSA on the Web.

Instructions:

Walk students through the FAFSA4caster at www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov OR the FAFSA Worksheet, which is available at www.fafsa.ed.gov/before012.htm.

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SESSION VI: FINANCIAL AID

ACTIVITY #3: WRAPPING IT ALL UP

Opening Discussion:

The Great Sorting Game engages students in an enjoyable mock-admission simulation. The purpose is to help students understand the many factors that are weighted in admission decisions. The game should generate discussion that will summarize many of the issues presented so far.

Activity/Handout:

The Great Sorting Game

Instructions:

1. Instructions and game materials are in the pages that follow.



THE GREAT SORTING GAME

(Copyright 2003, Mary Lee Hoganson)

A PARTICIPATORY DEMONSTRATION OF HOW SELECTIVE COLLEGE ADMISSION WORKS (SORT OF)

Getting started with play:

Find 9 volunteers to be admission candidates. Secure an additional volunteer to play the “Director of Admission.” It will be that person who reads the qualities and tells students whether to move up or down in the competition. Hand out the GPAs in RANDOM order and then instruct volunteers to organize themselves in GPA order from highest to lowest. (This is generally a couple of minutes of comedy relief because players have trouble getting organized. This is part of the fun.)

Scenario of play:

The group of non-volunteers is told that they are the Admission Committee from “Highly Prestigious University” (or you pick a better and funnier name). The committee is at the very end of the admission cycle and still has 9 great applicants from which it can only admit 3 students. All have very appealing qualities, but there is simply not enough room in the class for all 9. Before them they see the candidates. Point out that they are in standing in GPA order from highest to lowest. Also emphasize that all are great candidates and so the committee will have to decide based upon personal qualities and qualifications. Point out that, if the committee were to decide only on academics, the three with the highest GPAs would get in.

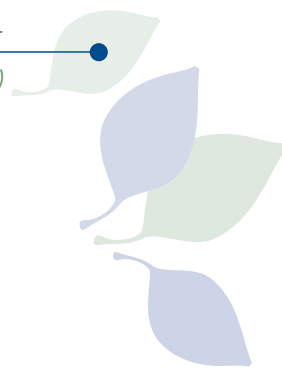
The personal qualities/qualifications are then read and the volunteers are asked to exchange places (move up and down in the order) based upon what is read. (One very important note to make this work: if more than one student is moving down at the same time, the lowest student must move first and visa versa—if more than one student is moving up, the highest student must move first.) You may choose to alter the qualities/qualifications and the weight given to each.

Stop after each quality read in order to discuss why this helped or hindered the candidate. As an example: you may ask, “why do you think it might not be helpful to declare your major as pre-med or psychology?” After reading the “Greek Major” quality, point out that many selective colleges have Classics Professors who are covered with cobwebs and are really hoping to get a few kids in their classes. Stop after the Early Decision qualification to discuss how this may play into a decision by a college. In this way, it is more than reading the qualities. It is a way to generate discussion.

The ending:

After all qualities have been read and candidates have been “sorted”, have the candidates turn their GPA sheets around to reveal the GPA to reveal to the audience. Read through the GPAs, pointing out the new order and note that the top three, new sorted, candidates are going to be admitted.

You might choose to have a small prize—like pieces of candy to thank the volunteers.



THE GREAT SORTING GAME

(Copyright © 2003 Mary Lee Hoganson)

Qualities, which are read, and places to move up and down in the line:

1. IF YOU HAVE TAKEN AN EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG ACADEMIC PROGRAM +2
2. IF YOU PLAY THE OBOE OR VIOLA +1
3. IF YOU CLEARLY STATED THAT THIS COLLEGE WAS YOUR FIRST CHOICE BY MAKING AN EARLY DECISION APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT +2
4. IF YOUR INTENDED MAJOR IS PSYCHOLOGY OR PREMED -1
5. IF YOUR INTENDED MAJOR IS GREEK +2
6. IF YOU DO NOT KNOW ANY OF YOUR TEACHERS WELL AND HAD TROUBLE FINDING SOMEONE TO WRITE YOUR COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION -2
7. IF, AS YOU TYPED YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY, YOU FORGOT TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE COLLEGE YOU WERE APPLYING TO, -4
8. IF YOU ARE A LEGACY +2
9. IF YOU DID NOT WRITE THE OPTIONAL ESSAY FOR YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION -1
10. IF THE TOPIC OF YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY WAS "WHAT I LEARNED FROM PLAYING SPORTS" -1
11. IF YOU WROTE THE ESSAY OF THE YEAR—THE ONE THAT WAS PASSED AROUND THE ENTIRE ADMISSION OFFICE IT WAS SO REMARKABLE +3
12. IF YOU PLAGIARIZED AN AP AMERICAN HISTORY PAPER AND GOT CAUGHT—SIT DOWN, YOU'RE OUT OF THE COMPETITION ENTIRELY
13. IF YOU WILL BE FIRST IN YOUR FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE +2
14. IF YOU PARTICIPATED IN AN ENRICHING SUMMER PROGRAM BETWEEN YOUR JUNIOR AND SENIOR YEARS +2
15. IF YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN NO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES -3
16. IF YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN A SIGNIFICANT COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT +1
17. IF YOU ARE AN EAGLE SCOUT +2
18. IF YOU ARE A VARSITY ATHLETE +2, AND IF YOU ARE A VARSITY ATHLETE AND TOOK SECOND-PLACE AT REGIONALS IN YOUR SPORT MOVE UP ONE MORE (A TOTAL OF 3)
19. IF YOU GOT A "D" IN AN ACADEMIC COURSE AT THE END OF YOUR JUNIOR YEAR -3
20. IF YOU CAME TO THE COLLEGE INFORMATION SESSION AND INTRODUCED YOURSELF TO THE COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE (AND IN THE CASE OF THE STUDENT WHO JUST GOT THE "D", EXPLAINED THE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES) +1
21. IF YOU ARE A LEGAL RESIDENT OF IDAHO +3
22. IF YOU NEVER GAVE YOUR COUNSELOR ANY PERSONAL INFORMATION FOR USE IN WRITING YOUR COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION -1
23. IF YOUR LAST NAME IS TRUMP—THE NAME ON THE COLLEGE LIBRARY IS TRUMP—AND IT'S NOT A COINCIDENCE, MOVE ALL THE WAY TO THE FRONT AND STAY THERE

4.0

- You did not write the optional essay for your college application
 - You have participated in no extracurricular activities
- You are a legal resident of Idaho

3.9

- Your intended major is Pre-Med
- You wrote your essay on “What I learned from playing sports”
- You participated in an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years

3.8

- You have taken an exceptionally strong academic program
 - Your intended major is psychology
- When you typed your college essay, you forgot to change the name of the college to which you were applying
- You plagiarized an AP American History paper and got caught

3.7

- You play the viola
- You do not know any of your teachers well and had trouble finding someone to write your college recommendation
- You did not write the optional essay for your college application
- You never gave your counselor any personal information for use in writing your college recommendation

3.6

- You clearly stated that this college was your first choice by making an early decision application and commitment
 - The topic of your college essay was “What I Learned from Playing Sports”
- You have been involved in a significant community service project or trip
- You attended the college information session at your high school and introduced yourself to the college representative

3.5

- You play the oboe
- You plan to major in Greek
- You are a legacy
- You participated in an enriching summer program between your junior and senior years

3.4

- You are a varsity athlete
- You have taken an exceptionally strong academic program
- You will be the first in your family to attend college
- You have been involved in a significant community service project

3.3

- You wrote the essay of the year—the one that was passed around the entire admission office it was so remarkable
- You are a varsity athlete and took second-place at regional competition in your sport
- You got a “D” in an academic course at the end of your junior year
- You attended the college information session at your high school and introduced yourself to the college representative (and offered an explanation of your “D” grade)

3.2

- You are a legacy
- You are an Eagle Scout
- Your last name is Trump—the name on the library is Trump—and it's not a coincidence

6

SESSION VI: FINANCIAL AID

ACTIVITY #4: EVALUATION

Handouts:

Evaluation form

Instructions:

1. Hand out the evaluation form and ask students to be honest, encouraging them to give helpful suggestions that might be useful to future workshops.
2. Hand out certificates and thank the participants.
3. Final instruction for facilitator: Please complete the evaluation for volunteers

7

RESOURCES FOR LATE HIGH SCHOOL:
PARENT/GUARDIAN WORKSHOP*Objectives*

- To introduce parents to the high school-to-college transition and the college application process.
- To encourage parents and guardians to engage in organized, step-by-step planning of their children's educational goals.

Message

With more than 3,400 two- and four-year colleges in the United States, how will students pick the right one? Beyond taking the right courses and doing well, what steps will students need to follow to get into college? How can families help?

This section will focus on these questions and concerns by following the road to college. Preparing for college is an extremely exciting time in the life of the student, filled with challenge, opportunity and decision-making.

Because the process of selecting a college is very personal, it must begin with self-reflection. Students may wish to examine their goals, strengths, weaknesses, and reasons for going to college. Then, the student may want to determine what characteristics he or she will look for in deciding which colleges to explore.

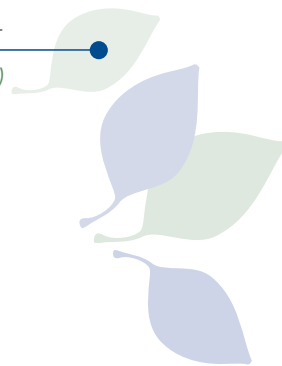
While the student is going through this awareness or assessment period, it is important to be realistic. As one experienced counselor said about the college exploration process, “Dream, but keep one foot on the ground.”

Methods

Parents, guardians, and counselors can help in college exploration by encouraging the student to find the answers to a number of questions. It's extremely important to have the student—not the parent or guardian—answer the questions. The role of the family is to guide, not steer, the student through the exploration process. Parents should resist the temptation to impose their values and goals on the student's answers to these exploratory questions.



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Introductions

Any time you have a workshop for parents and families, it is a great idea to have an icebreaker. The “How Do You Define College” worksheet from Session I of the Late High School Curriculum is perfect for opening this workshop.

Discussion Questions

This workshop affords the Step by Step presenter a number of opportunities to engage in dialogue with parents and participants. Some of the questions and discussion topics to interject are listed below:

- When discussing the questions a student should consider in choosing a college, the Step by Step presenter can compliment the message by citing specific examples of colleges that fit the various questions.
- When discussing the college application process and admission folder, it might be useful to distribute sample applications and display an admission folder with an actual transcript or other school records. Be certain to protect the anonymity of the subject.
- Ask parents to consider appropriate support roles after the college responds to the application. How should parents respond to admit, deny, or wait list decisions?

Activities

- Ask parents and guardians of college students to talk with the group.
- Invite several students to participate in the discussion of the questions a student should ask when exploring college opportunities.
- Distribute a number of sample college mailings, viewbooks, and comprehensive guides to let the parents and guardians see the various options that exist for students considering a four-year college or university.
- Demonstrate how the Internet can be used to research college and financial aid options.
- Schedule a visit to the admission office at a local college or university or invite an admission counselor/officer to make a presentation. When visiting a campus, arrange for parents to see the same things that students would see.
- Schedule a visit to a National College Fair (if one is held in your city or metropolitan area) or a college fair program sponsored by the local school district.

Resources

In addition to the resources that follow, presenters may wish to acquire the following NACAC resources:

- *A Guide to the College Admission Process* (\$13e for members and \$16e for nonmembers per 100 copies)
- *Guide for Parents* (Set of 100: \$12 for members and \$17 for nonmembers, also available in Spanish)

These guides are available from National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), 1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 400, Arlington, VA 22201. Call 800/822-6285, or visit www.nacacnet.org, Publications and Resources, Marketplace.

Step by Step presenters can also gather the following local information for use as handouts:

- College brochures, catalogs and viewbooks
- Information from college Web sites
- A sample admission folder, including the college application

Asking the Right Questions

- Does your child want a small college or a large university? A two-year or four-year program? Large or small classes?
- Does your child want a school with a specific major or a school that offers a variety of majors and programs? Is he/she interested in liberal arts? Business? Engineering? Trade or technical?
- In what geographical area does the student want the college to be? How far away from home? Urban environment with lots of options or small town serenity? Does he/she want to live on campus or live at home and commute?
- What extracurricular activities, athletics, and clubs are offered? Are there fraternities and sororities? What type of housing?
- What are the costs? How will these costs be met? How much and what type of financial aid is available?
- How diverse is the campus? What is the ethnic, racial, and religious make-up of the student body? Is it coeducational or a single-sex institution? Is it political or non-political?

Once your child has had an opportunity to review these questions and come up with at least tentative answers, it is time to involve the school counselor once again. The counselor can relate these answers to the student's academic profile including grades, rank in class, test scores, and student activities. With the help of the counselor, the student can make a list of colleges that meet his or her specific needs and are consistent with the student's academic profile.

A Note on the Right College

Every student aspires to find the right college, and it is very possible to achieve that goal. Students and parents should keep in mind, though, that there is seldom just one right school or 3,000 wrong schools. In reality, there are a number of right colleges and universities waiting to be discovered by students.

More important is finding a college that is right for the student, and that the goals and personality of the student are well matched with the college. Students who think first about who they are and what they want are more likely to choose a college that fits them. The use of interest and personality

inventories may be useful to help students understand their personality, learning style and identify careers that may best suit them.

Gathering Information about Colleges

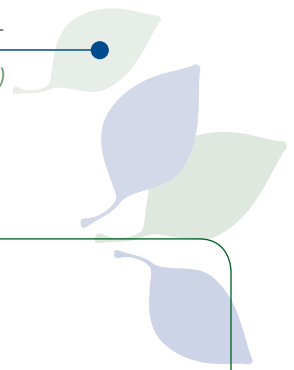
With his or her list of colleges in hand, the student should begin to learn as much as possible about each school. The search may begin in the guidance office and continue on the Internet.

Many school guidance offices offer technology to assist students in making a list of colleges and finding out more about specific colleges. Guidance offices also collect brochures and catalogs from a variety of colleges. Students can browse through college guidebooks and books on the college application and financial aid process (available in the guidance office, libraries and local book stores).

The Internet is also a rich source of information on colleges. Most schools and public libraries offer free access to computers and the Internet. Students can visit comprehensive college and financial aid Web sites, as well as the Web sites of specific colleges.

The search for the right college may not be over until the student has participated in a college fair and visited college campuses, if possible. Some schools and community organizations provide field trips to local colleges. Parents and guardians should encourage this information-gathering process and participate with their children.

More important is finding a college that is right for the student, and that the goals and personality of the student are well matched with the college. Students who think first about who they are and what they want are more likely to choose a college that fits them.



Ask the Right Questions Checklist

When helping your student determine postsecondary options, use this checklist.

College Size	Large	Medium	Small	
Class Size	Large	Medium	Small	
Type of Institution	Two-Year	Four- Year		
Majors	Liberal Arts	Business	Engineering	Trade or Technical Other _____
Geographic Area	Urban	Suburban	Rural	
	Far from Home	Close to Home		
	On campus	Commuter		
Extracurricular Activities	Athletics	Clubs	Fraternities/Sororities	Other _____
Costs	High	Mid	Low	
Financial Aid	Participates in federal programs		Does not participate*	
Campus Diversity	Ethnic	Religious		
	Co-ed	Single-sex		
	Political	Non-political		
Special Considerations	_____			

***Be very cautious about considering a school that does not participate in federal student aid programs.**

Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities

An outgrowth of NACAC's Statement of Principles of Good Practice, the Students' Rights Statement makes clear to entering college students those "rights" that are only alluded to by the Principles of Good Practice. It also spells out the responsibilities students have in the admission process.

When You Apply to Colleges and Universities, You Have RIGHTS

Before You Apply:

- You have the right to receive factual and comprehensive information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial costs, aid opportunities, practices and packaging policies, and housing policies. If you consider applying under an early admission plan, you have the right to complete information from the college about its process and policies.
- You have the right to be free from high-pressure sales tactics.

When You Are Offered Admission:

- You have the right to wait until May 1 to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid.
- Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission and/or financial assistance prior to May 1 must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1. They must grant you this extension and your request may not jeopardize your status for admission and/or financial aid.
- Candidates admitted under early decision programs are a recognized exception to the May 1 deadline.

If You Are Placed on a Wait/Alternate List:

- The letter that notifies you of that placement should provide a history that describes the number of students on the wait list, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing.
- Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of remaining on a wait list.
- Colleges are expected to notify you of the resolution of your wait list status by August 1 at the latest.

If you think your rights have been denied, you should contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date. In addition, you should ask your counselor to notify the president of the state or regional affiliate of the National Association for College Admission Counseling in your area. If you need further assistance, send a copy of any correspondence you have had with the college or university and a copy of your letter of admission to National Association for College Admission Counseling, 1050 N. Highland Street, Arlington, VA 22201, Phone: 703/836-2222, 800/822-6285, Fax: 703/243-9375

When You Apply to Colleges and Universities, You Have RESPONSIBILITIES

Before You Apply:

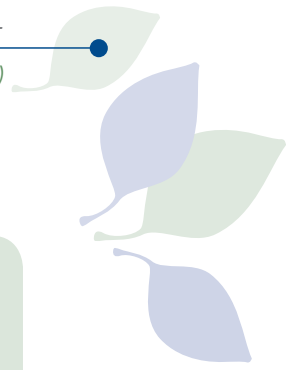
- You have a responsibility to research, and to understand and comply with the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships, and housing. You should also be sure you understand the policies of each college or university regarding deposits you may be required to make before you enroll.

As You Apply:

- You must complete all materials required for application and submit your application on or before the published deadlines. You should be the sole author of your applications.
- You should seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. Follow the process recommended by your high school for filing college applications.
- It is your responsibility to arrange, if appropriate, for visits to and/or interviews at colleges of your choice.

After You Receive Your Admission Decisions:

- You must notify each college or university that accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting its offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision as to the college you wish to attend, but no later than May 1. It is understood that May 1 will be the postmark date.
- You may confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on a wait list by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify a college or university at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll.
- If you are accepted under an early decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications. If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.



Definitions of Admission Options in Higher Education

Non-Restrictive Application Plans

Regular Decision

Definition: Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.

Commitment: Non-binding

Rolling Admission

Definition: Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.

Commitment: Non-binding

Early Action (EA)

Definition: Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

Commitment: Non-binding

Restrictive Application Plans

Early Decision (ED)

Definition: Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.

Commitment: Binding

Restrictive Early Action (REA)

Definition: Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.

Commitment: Non-Binding





The School Counselor: A Valuable Resource

Counselors are one of the best resources your student has; they are the students' ally throughout middle/high school and the entire college admission process. It is in every student's best interest to meet with their counselor regularly. Counselors can:

- Review the student's academic record, suggest areas that need improvement and recommend courses that qualify for college admission.
- Provide specific information on a student's high school performance—rank in class, test scores and grade point average are all details that colleges ask for when a student applies.
- Help the student identify the questions (and find the honest answers) that start the admission process. These questions include “Do I want to stay near home? Does the college have my major? What clubs, sports, and activities are offered?” and the others listed earlier in this section.
- Suggest schools that might match a student's answers to those questions.
- Show students where to find more information, such as books, catalogs, brochures, Web sites, and DVDs, on either the admission process or a specific college or university.
- Recommend evening programs that may be of value; refer students and parents to the guidance department Web site; remind students and parents to carefully read all information that is sent home about the college admission process.
- Clarify or explain terms, ideas and experiences that students encounter during their research, campus visits or interviews with college representatives.
- Help students meet deadlines for filing applications and taking college admission tests.
- Provide the necessary forms for financial aid and explain the criteria students must satisfy to qualify for financial assistance.
- Write a letter of recommendation to colleges or universities, and help the student select teachers who can write letters of recommendation for them.
- Offer the emotional support, warmth and encouragement that students need during the college admission process.

Ask Your Student's Counselor

1. In what subjects can my student improve?
2. Can you recommend courses that will count toward college credit?
3. What is my student's class rank and GPA?
4. What are important questions to ask when considering an institution?
5. Ask about specific schools the student is interested in.
6. Where can I find more resources?
7. Are there after-school programs that would be helpful?
8. Clarify any terms or steps you're confused about.
9. Reaffirm deadlines.
10. What financial aid is available?
11. Who would you suggest to write a letter of recommendation for my student?
12. What else can I do to encourage my student?

Prepare for College Checklists

Junior Year

1. Often junior year grades are the final grades that will influence the college application.
2. Continue involvement in activities that will develop leadership skills; update the academic and extracurricular portfolio. If you are not involved in extracurricular activities or work, it is not too late!
3. Register for the October PSAT/NMSQT; register for SAT, ACT and SAT Subject tests in the spring.
4. Set up the college application process checklist, college folders and calendar.
5. With your family, begin to learn about financial aid (grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study).
6. Meet with the guidance counselor to discuss the preliminary list of colleges; continue to research colleges of interest. Aim for a final list of three to eight colleges.
7. Attend college fairs and visit college campuses during spring break and summer vacation.
8. Choose meaningful summer activities: academic or enrichment programs, volunteer activities or employment.
9. Begin preparation for the application process (draft essays, assemble portfolios, contact coaches if you are an athlete, consider letters of recommendation, etc.).
10. Continue saving for college.

Senior Year

1. Continue to monitor academic progress throughout the senior year... No Senioritis!
2. Continue involvement in activities that utilizes leadership skills; update the academic and extracurricular portfolio.
3. Take college admission tests as needed: SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, and have test scores sent to the appropriate colleges.
4. Update the college application checklist and college folders. Write due dates on the calendar and meet them!
5. Complete all portions of the college application and submit on time. Make copies of everything.
6. Complete financial aid applications (for grants, scholarships, loans and work-study). This may include the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), the CSS Profile (if required), and the college's financial aid forms.
7. Set up interviews and plan final visits to colleges.
8. In the spring review offers of acceptance, and compare financial aid packages, then make a decision of which college to attend.
9. Notify all colleges of your decision by May 1st. Send required deposits.
10. Plan meaningful summer activities and pack for college.



SAT and ACT

Colleges and universities may require either of these standardized tests for admission. To determine which test students should take, ask their high school counselors.

For SAT details, visit www.collegeboard.com; for ACT details, visit www.actstudent.org.

Gathering Information About Colleges

Every college and university in the nation produces an array of written information, including brochures, catalogs, viewbooks, and related materials. These materials are mailed directly to students who call, write, or e-mail the admission office and request this information. The information sent to students by the college will be up-to-date, while general college guides and other resources may be dated. However, students shouldn't make decisions based solely on photographs or other public relations materials. Read and think about the academic and extracurricular offerings at each college.

College Fairs and High School Visits

One-on-one conversations with college admission counselors or alumni representatives can give students and parents considerable information about colleges and universities. Such contact with representatives from a variety of schools can be most easily accomplished by participating in college fairs and college night programs when they are offered in your school or community.

NACAC sponsors the National College Fair program, which offers more than 50 college fairs and more than 30 performing and visual arts fairs in major cities and metropolitan areas across the nation. Students can register for free at www.gotomyncf.org. When they register, they will receive a bar code that colleges will use to collect data (rather than filling out the old information cards). Representatives from hundreds of colleges are present at these fairs to explain their academic programs, admission requirements, extracurricular activities and answer questions. Similar programs are offered by counselors in many school systems. Parents are encouraged to participate in these programs.

To benefit from a college fair, students should use their list of important college characteristics (see *Asking the Right Questions* on page 304) to choose which colleges to visit at the fair. Students should also read fair materials to discover which colleges will attend the fair. Then, students and families can plan which college booths to visit first so that students are sure to meet with the representatives of all the colleges that interest them. Students should also write down a list of questions to ask every college representative with whom they speak. It may be helpful for students to bring a small notebook to jot down notes on their conversations with each college representative.

College admission representatives are also available to visit with students in their high school. The school counselor usually assists in scheduling these visits and maintains a calendar of

colleges and visitation dates. Many admission representatives schedule both group meetings and individual appointments during these school visits. College fairs and high school visits permit the student to explore beyond the information contained on the Internet and in publications and guidebooks. These visits allow students to personalize questions that are tailored to their specific needs.

Campus Visits

As students refine their list of colleges, encourage them to visit campuses of colleges in which they are interested. In fact, parents should accompany their student to each campus as the experience will be informative for all. The time to visit a campus is after the student has looked at several sources of information about a school and decided that he or she would like to see the campus. Whenever possible, try to visit a college while classes are in session and students are on campus. There is no charge for visiting a college and no obligation to apply to that college. **See pages 240-244 for more material about campus visits and college comparisons.**

To make the most of a college visit, be sure to call the admission office a few weeks before the visit and make an appointment to take a tour, meet with an admission representative, or attend an information session. Many colleges also have programs that coordinate overnight visits so that prospective students can spend the night with a current student in a residence hall. Some students may wish to talk with a particular faculty member or coach or to see a part of the campus not likely to be on the usual tour, so it is even more important to make arrangements in advance.

The visit should include a meeting or interview with an admission officer, visiting a class or two, and discussions with students and faculty. The interview and class observation will provide the student with a unique opportunity to get a real sense of the college experience. Encourage your child to ask questions of students, admission officers and professors who are most qualified to provide answers about their college.

Most colleges recommend that students meet with an admission representative, but only a few require interviews as a part of the application process. As a result, these meetings are usually viewed as an opportunity for the student and the college to get to know each other better, and not as an evaluation of the student. Still, it is important for a student to make a good impression. Therefore, students should make an appointment in advance, be prompt, be dressed neatly and appropriately and be well prepared. To get the most out of an interview, the student should research the college before the interview and bring questions based on that information and on the student's interests and needs. The student should

answer questions truthfully and completely, but it's perfectly acceptable to say that he or she does not know the answer. The interview is also a perfect opportunity for students to talk about their academic and personal strengths.

Students may meet with an admission professional or a student interviewer. Some colleges also offer the option of interviewing with alumni of the college. If alumni interviews are available, the applicant for admission will be contacted. If a college does not offer an interview, do not worry. Instead, convey information the college should know in the college application materials.

Make sure your child spends enough time to determine if she or he feels comfortable in the college surroundings. After the visit, students should write a thank-you note to the interviewer(s) and tour guide(s).

If time, distance, or money precludes visits to the colleges that most interest the student, he or she might want to visit nearby colleges that may be similar. For example, visiting the main campus of a local state university will give the student a feel for large, public, residential universities. A virtual tour can also be informative, but neither option can take the place of a personal visit. Counselors highly recommend that students visit a college or university before they make the final decision to study there. Many colleges sponsor free or inexpensive visits to campus for specific students (e.g., visits for gifted athletes or prospective engineers). The student should ask the counselor or check with the college to determine if there are special visitation programs for which he or she might qualify.

The School Counselor

As the student continues to investigate college options, encourage him or her to visit the school counselor. Counselors know a great deal about specific colleges and universities. If they are unable to answer a question immediately, they have the resources to find the answer or help students locate the needed information. They can also help clarify information from other sources.

Web Sites

Most colleges have Web sites where prospective students can learn about admission requirements, academic courses, majors, extracurricular activities, social life, faculty, academic departments, graduation requirements, alumni, and career placement. Virtual tours of campus are helpful, but they do not substitute for actual visits to college campuses and conversations with college students and professors. Using the college's Web site or the admission office's e-mail address, students can often request that information about the college be sent to them. Some colleges set up specific email addresses or Internet chat rooms for current students to talk with prospective students about the college. Many colleges prefer that students apply for admission on the

Internet. (The application fee, high school transcript, and letters of recommendation may be mailed to the college.)

When exploring a college Web site, students should not limit themselves to the admission office or prospective student pages. Many college sites offer links to a variety of *unofficial* Web sites: personal home pages of current students and faculty, sites set up by student organizations, and the student-run newspaper are examples of pages that can give students a more detailed and informal look at the college. Many colleges also have Facebook and Twitter accounts where students can sign up to receive information or speak to the admission office.

Also, there are many comprehensive college admission Web sites. These sites are designed for students and families and provide information about college selection, admission, and financial aid. Examples of comprehensive sites are:

- College is Possible: www.collegeispossible.org
- ACT's C3 site: www.c3apply.org
- College Board: www.collegeboard.org
- College View: www.collegeview.com
- Hispanic Colleges and Universities: www.hacu.net
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities: www.hbcuconnect.com
- Jewish Student Life: www.hillel.org
- KnowHow2Go: www.knowhow2go.org
- Pathways to College Network: www.pathwaystocollege.net
- Virtual College Tours: www.campustours.com, www.ecampustours.com

There are many financial aid Web sites, some of which also include financial planning and estimators of financial need. Some examples are:

- College Savings Plan Network: www.collegesavings.org
- The Financial Aid Information Page: www.finaid.org
- Financial Aid Search Through the Web: www.studentservices.com/fastweb
- Federal Government Student Financial Aid Programs: www.fedmoney.org

Ask a guidance counselor for more information about college and financial aid Web sites on the Internet. Many colleges have produced videos about their schools.

Students can acquire a great deal of basic information through the study of any one of a number of good college guides or reference books. These books present a snapshot of the college. However, parents or guardians and students should be cautious of publications that rate colleges and universities or their programs. Most college rating systems are not comprehensive or objective and should not carry much weight in the decision-making process.

Applying to College(s)

As the junior year of high school ends, your child may have already made some decisions about colleges on the initial list. Colleges that do not fit the student's needs can be eliminated from consideration. Colleges that are especially appealing should be investigated more thoroughly.

It will be valuable to meet with the school counselor to review the information obtained and gain the counselor's perspective of the colleges on the list. However, don't expect the counselor to create the final list of schools or rank the final choices. The counselor's job is to help students make good decisions, not make the decisions.

The number of colleges to which students should apply is up to the individual student, although counselors recommend a range of between three and eight schools. These should all be schools that the student would be happy to attend. They should cover a range of selectivity and financial cost. Students should apply to at least one school to which they are sure to be accepted.

During the spring of the junior year, summer, or very early in the senior year, the student should visit the Web sites of the colleges to which he or she has decided to apply and determine how to apply for admission and financial aid. Most have online applications, which should be treated with the same level of professionalism as a paper applica-

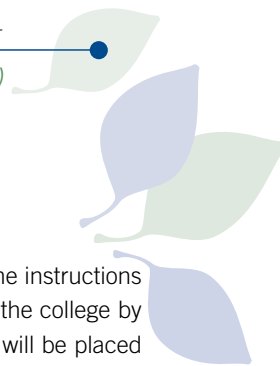
tion. Students should write and edit essays or responses before submitting the application online. The student and parent or guardian should review all applications to determine what actions need to be taken and to learn the deadlines for each application. Write down all of these deadline dates on the family calendar and make every attempt to complete the application ahead of schedule. Utilize the school counselor throughout the college application process. He or she will see that school-generated information is forwarded to the colleges to which the student will apply, but students should follow up with counselors to ensure the information has been sent.

The student and parent or guardian should review all applications to determine what actions need to be taken and to learn the deadlines for each application.

Organizing the College Application

Follow these steps to help students organize their college information and applications.

1. Make and keep a separate folder or file for each college.
2. Keep notes on each college and put them in the appropriate file.
3. Use a college application checklist to record due dates for each admission or financial aid requirement (e.g., applications, transcripts, test scores, letters of recommendation, essays, interviews, or financial aid forms). Then note on the checklist the date when each requirement is completed.
4. Use a calendar that has room on which to write notes. Record due dates, college fairs, interviews, college visits, and special programs on the calendar.
5. Read promptly all information sent by the colleges. Add to the checklist the deadlines for applications, test scores, recommendations, interviews, etc.
6. Set up columns of likes and dislikes, pros and cons for the different characteristics the student has decided their ideal college must have. Take particular note of special programs and requirements. As the student decides where to apply, he or she should take into account these requirements.
7. Take time to read and think about the information provided by each college. The student's notes assist in comparing each college. Research those colleges which seem most appealing and which are a good fit.
8. Make copies of every application for admission and financial aid before submitting the application. Be sure their applications are complete before the deadlines, if confirmation has not already been received.
9. Be efficient. Students can make their application process more standardized and organized if they use the Common Application (www.commonapp.org) when applying to multiple colleges that accept it.



Making the Application Work

The two most important steps in completing the college admission application are also the simplest: 1) read the instructions from beginning to end before starting to fill out the form; and 2) send the application so it will be received at the college by the due date. For the student, the application is like a final test. Although it's true that the greatest emphasis will be placed on the courses, grades, and in some cases, the test scores, colleges want to know about the personal qualities of your child. The application, essay, and interview (if available) are the student's opportunity to profile him/herself.

The most important concept to keep in mind when assessing admission criteria is the level of selectivity at the college in question. The more applicants a college has for each spot in its entering class, the more selective that college can be. The student should assess the selectivity of a college or university during the exploration process. This information will guide the student in targeting specific schools and in determining the number of applications to make. Students should consult the high school counselor and college admission counselor if they have any questions about the competitiveness of their application.

Awaiting the Results

When the application has been reviewed by the college or university, a number of possible responses can come back to the student.

If the student has done his or her work carefully in choosing which schools to apply to, the chances are reasonable that an acceptance letter will be forthcoming. If offered admission by more than one college, the student must weigh the choices carefully and make a final decision.

Should the student be granted conditional admission or placed on a wait list, she or he should consult with the school counselor. Conditional admission could mean that the student must meet additional requirements. The counselor can assist in evaluating the likelihood that the student might move from wait list status to admission or in appealing a decision if the student feels that his or her application has not been given proper consideration.

Once the student notifies a college that she or he is accepting an admission offer, notification should be sent to other colleges that also offered admission, telling them that the student will not be attending. This allows these colleges to extend their offer to another student who may be on their waiting list. Under no circumstances should the student indicate an intention to enroll at more than one college.

Parts of the Admission Folder

When a student applies to college, the college admission office collects a folder of information to consider as it makes a decision about the application. Parents should be aware of the parts of an applicant's folder. As one admission representative said: "Students don't apply to colleges, folders do."

See more about applications on pages 267-278.

The most important concept to keep in mind when assessing admission criteria is the level of selectivity at the college in question. The more applicants a college has for each spot in its entering class, the more selective that college can be.



The Application Packet

The application includes basic biographical information such as birth date and family information. Students may be asked to write essays, which are intended to acquaint the admission committee with certain student experiences, strengths and weaknesses, and writing ability. This is where students have the opportunity to present themselves in the best possible light.

Academic Record

The most important factor in the applicant's folder is the high school academic record. Many consider the academic record to be the best indication of later college success. The program of study, specific courses, credits earned, and the grades the student received are aspects of the record that admission officers will consider in evaluating the student's transcript (the student's official academic record). Colleges pay special attention to the challenging courses the student has successfully taken. Fortunately, the student has much control over his or her academic record.

When a student's record is compared with that of his or her classmates, he or she is assigned a class ranking relative to the others in the class. Class rank is important as a means of showing admission officers the level of competition the student has encountered and how well he or she has achieved compared to the competition. Not all high schools compute class rank. Most high schools compute grade point average (GPA), which is a method of summarizing grades earned in academic subjects or all subjects. Some schools give extra weight to the GPA for honors, accelerated, Advanced Placement (AP), and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and calculate a weighted GPA. The GPA can be determined for each year and/or cumulatively (e.g., an average of the GPAs earned in grades 9, 10, and 11 would yield a cumulative GPA for grades 9 through 11.)

College Admission Tests

Standardized tests (the SAT and ACT) have been the focus of much discussion in recent years. More institutions are re-evaluating the overall role of the tests in the admission process and seem to be placing less emphasis on the importance of the test results. A few colleges have decided not to require college admission tests as part of the application process. Some colleges accept academic portfolios in lieu of or in addition to standardized test results.

The colleges that require college admission tests will use the scores in several ways. First, they may look at the scores as one way of predicting a student's success in college. Second, colleges may use scores to compare students who come from similar backgrounds and schools or from different geographical areas. Finally, colleges may use test scores to help place students in appropriate courses. Students who plan to take a standardized test may improve their performance by attending classes to acquaint them with the tests, using test prep computer software, or by taking free practice tests available from the test publishers often available on the Internet or at bookstores. However, the best preparation is hard work in school.

The program of study, specific courses, credits earned, and the grades the student received are aspects of the record that admission officers will consider in evaluating the student's transcript (the student's official academic record). Colleges pay special attention to the challenging courses the student has successfully taken.

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are prepared by teachers, counselors and others who are significant in a student's academic, extracurricular or employment experience. These letters are an important part of the admission folder. Teachers may comment on the type of contributions the student made to the class by using specific examples. The counselor may highlight strengths that would differentiate this applicant from other candidates for admission and provide an overall appraisal of the student. The employer can comment on a student's maturity and ability to manage a variety of responsibilities. The letter of recommendation allows the writer to go beyond the information requested in the general application and tell the admission committee about the student's unique qualities and characteristics.

Student Activities and Employment

Although the student academic record is the primary factor in determining admission, the student's record of involvement in activities (both inside and outside of school) can be significant. Out-of-school activities such as work, Scouting, church groups, and volunteer activities should not be overlooked. Many college applications request information about a student's extracurricular involvement, work or volunteer experience, and summer activities. Students who have maintained an extracurricular portfolio will be able to complete this portion of the application easily.

Membership in an organization is not enough; the level of involvement and accomplishment is what matters. It is better for a student to be involved in one activity as a *significant contributor* to that activity than to be involved superficially in a number of organizations and activities. Some examples of being a significant contributor include serving as an officer in the Key Club, writing regularly for the school newspaper or yearbook, becoming an Eagle Scout, or being on the planning committee for a community service project or school social event.

The Golden Rule

As the student finalizes the list of colleges and begins filling out the applications, follow the Golden Rule of the college admission process: *Never apply to a college that you would not gladly attend if offered the choice.*

If the student researches colleges thoroughly, only applies to the ones that meet his or her needs and interests, and follows the Golden Rule of Admission, the student will improve his or her chances of gaining admission. It also sends a signal to the college that the student is sincere about attending. During the admission process, the student has certain rights and responsibilities, which are contained in a policy written by NACAC and endorsed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Review these rights and responsibilities with your son or daughter. NACAC has developed the Statement of Principles of Good Practice, a code of conduct to guide institutions and individual counselors as they guide students through the school-to-college transition.

As the student finalizes the list of colleges and begins filling out the applications, follow the Golden Rule of the college admission process: *Never apply to a college that you would not gladly attend if offered the choice.*



The Parent and Guardian's Role in the College Admission Process

The application period can be a time of anxiety for students. Help them by seeing that they follow the procedures properly and meet all deadlines. Be an active participant in the exploration process and offer guidance as your child weighs information and creates the list of schools to which he or she will apply. Be certain that all admission requirements are met in accordance with required deadlines. With your child, file all required financial aid forms by the deadline. Colleges may require one or more of the following financial aid forms:

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), required by all colleges for applicants for need-based aid and/or loans from state and federal sources. There is no charge to submit the FAFSA.
- CSS Profile of the College Scholarship Service, required by some colleges and universities (mostly private). Check to determine whether each college requires the CSS Profile and send the Profile only to the colleges that require it. There is a fee for processing the Profile and sending it to each college.
- The college may have its own financial aid form, which is returned directly to the college and for which there is no fee.
- Financial records as requested by the college, most often copies of the parents' or guardians' and student's federal income tax returns.

The college application process can be time consuming and detract from routine student responsibilities. Make sure that students keep up with all schoolwork and maintain good study habits during this time. Encourage patience, persistence, and good humor.

If students have applied to a range of schools, they will have a choice of schools to select from. Should a negative response be received, however, provide consolation and support. When good news is received, seize the time to praise and congratulate your child. It will be a very happy time for everyone.





RESOURCES FOR FINANCIAL AID: PARENT/GUARDIAN WORKSHOP

Objectives

- To help parents and guardians understand college costs and the various types of financial aid available to them.
- To motivate parents to begin financial planning that will help meet future college costs.

Message

“Mom... I need \$30,000 for my first year at college.” Such a message can bring shock to the parent who is not informed about and prepared for the costs associated with higher education. This section will explore the cost of going to college and examine the different types of financial aid that can alleviate this burden for students and families in need.

The bad news is that one year at most colleges these days, especially if living costs are included, range from an average of \$2,713 at two-year public schools (no room/board); to \$16,140 in-state and \$28,130 out-of-state at public four-year schools; and \$36,993 at private four-year colleges. The good news is that there is financial aid available to help meet college costs. Two-thirds of the undergraduate students attending college in the United States receive some form of financial assistance. The admission decision and the financial aid decision usually are made independently and separately, often by different college offices. Parents need to become fully informed about costs and assistance opportunities in time to plan an appropriate financial strategy to pay for college. However, it is important to know that cost should never be a deterrent to the student in choosing the colleges to which he or she will apply. During the application process, it makes sense to pick colleges with a range of costs, including some that are within reach financially. But the student should never eliminate a college from consideration because of cost alone. Colleges have financial aid plans because they want to enroll the best students, not just those who can afford to pay. Remember that fit is the most important criterion. Keep in mind that the likelihood of receiving aid becomes greater as the cost of college increases: the most expensive colleges have the most aid to give.

In fact, most of the students who apply for and need aid do receive part of what they need to attend their first-choice colleges. Certainly there are no guarantees, but there is a considerable amount of federal, state, institutional, and private financial aid available every year to those who submit accurate applications on time.



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Introduction

If this section is the first workshop that you do for families, you will need to use some type of “icebreaker” technique to introduce yourself, your fellow presenters, and the participants to each other.

Discussion Questions and Topics

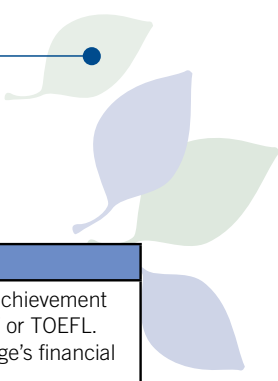
This section affords the Step by Step presenter a number of opportunities to engage in dialogue with parent participants. Some of the questions and discussion topics to interject are listed below:

- During the discussion of college costs, the Step by Step presenter may wish to present a case study of actual costs incurred by a family in sending a student to college. Inviting parents who are currently paying college costs to participate in the workshop can provide for a relevant and lively discussion.
- Due to the technical nature of many financial aid programs and the changing nature of legislation that authorizes these forms of aid, having a financial aid officer participate in the workshop as a guest presenter can be valuable.
- Many states operate financial aid programs for state residents. Become knowledgeable about these programs and invite representatives to present information about them.

Activities

- Have families calculate college costs, then estimate their Expected Family Contribution and prospective federal aid eligibility by completing the FASFA4caster at www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/F4CApp/index/index.jsf.
- Fill out the FAFSA to become familiar with the process. The instructions and forms are at www.fafsa.gov.
- Contact institutions' admission offices or browse their Web sites for schools that offer scholarships, grants and work-study programs.

Encourage families that financing higher education is possible—they just need to take the time to strategize. Also reinforce that cost should never be a deterrent to attending a particular institution. Remember that fit is the most important criterion and keep in mind that more expensive institutions often have the most aid to give.



Calendar of College and Financial Aid Events

	GRADE 9	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12
SEPTEMBER	Outline high school courses to take for next four years. Sign up for extracurricular activities.	Sign up for extracurricular activities. Sign up for the PSAT and/or PLAN with counselor.	Sign up for extracurricular activities.	Pre-register for achievement tests, SAT I, ACT or TOEFL. Know each college's financial aid deadline.
OCTOBER	Find out if your school offers pre college testing, like EXPLORE. Testing dates will vary.	Take the PSAT (optional) and/or PLAN.	Take the PSAT. Attend a college fair.	Start researching and applying for scholarships. Start developing college essays.
NOVEMBER	Some schools will allow 9th grade students to take the PSAT, but remember the test was designed for 11th grade students.			Take one or two SAT Subject Tests if needed for applications.
DECEMBER	Research summer enrichment programs and/or jobs.	Research summer enrichment programs and/or jobs.	Research summer enrichment programs and/or jobs.	Take SAT I, SAT Subject Tests or ACT if applicable.
JANUARY	Start applying for summer enrichment programs and/or jobs.	Start applying for summer enrichment programs and/or jobs.	Start applying for summer enrichment programs and/or jobs. Pre-register for SAT I, ACT, TOEFL. See your counselor to determine if you qualify for fee waivers for any of these tests.	Mail out all college applications by Jan. 1 if you have not previously done so. Fill out FAFSA and CSS Profile and mail before February 1. (Not all schools require the CSS Profile).
FEBRUARY			Start thinking about the college application process. Meet with counselor to review academic and non-academic achievements and discuss financial aid.	Financial aid applications should be mailed. You can still research and apply for private scholarships.
MARCH	Schedule classes for the following year.	Research SAT I and ACT prep programs (optional). Schedule classes for the following year.	Develop college list; check schools' SAT Subject Tests requirements. Schedule classes for the following year.	Review your Student Aid Report (SAR). If you need to make changes on your FAFSA, this is the time, via the SAR. You can do so electronically or via email.
APRIL	Register for the SAT I if applicable.	Register for SAT Subject Tests if applicable.	Check college SAT Subject Tests requirements then pre-register for SAT Subject Tests (take two or three).	You will hear from most colleges this month. Review financial aid packages. Visit one or two colleges before making your final decision (opt.).
MAY	Pre-register for summer school or new/make-up work.	Pre-register for summer school or new/make-up work.	Take the SAT I or ELPT (English Language Proficiency Test). Research scholarships.	Notify school of your choice by May 1.
JUNE	Start building your recommendation file; ask teachers of classes you excelled in, for recommendations. Research scholarships. Take SAT Subject Tests if applicable.	Take SAT Subject Tests. Ask for recommendations. Research scholarships.	Take SAT Subject Tests. Ask for recommendations. College search. Write colleges requesting applications.	
JULY/AUGUST	Visit colleges (informal).	Visit colleges (informal).	Visit colleges (call to schedule a formal visit). Apply for private scholarships.	Register for fall classes.

How Much Will College Cost?

The costs of college can be broken down into two areas: billable costs and indirect costs.

Billable Costs

Tuition and Fees
Room and Board
(if the student lives on campus)

Indirect Costs

Books and Supplies
Room and Board
(if the student lives off campus)
Transportation
Other Expenses

1. **Tuition and Fees** – this is the cost of the student’s instruction; tuition and fees vary widely depending on the type of college or university. Averages range from \$2,963 at public two-year colleges; to \$8,244 in-state and \$20,770 out-of-state at public four-year colleges; and \$28,500 at private nonprofit four-year institutions.
2. **Room and Board** – these costs will be billed by the college if a student lives on campus, and include housing and meal costs.
3. **Books and Supplies** – these are the costs for course materials, and materials can cost up to \$1,000 per year or more.
4. **Transportation** – if the student lives more than a few hundred miles away, this will add to the cost of attending college.
5. **Other Expenses** – this includes the cost of laundry, entertainment and clothing, and can add up quickly.

Methods

Have each participant estimate how much each year of college will cost. Illustrate the difference in cost and Expected Family Contribution (EFC) (Resource 5.2). Also discuss the costs for different types of institutions.

Billable Costs

These are fixed costs that show up on the college bill. They include the items that are paid directly to the college or university, including tuition, student activities fees, laboratory fees, and other charges. For students who live on campus, the costs of room and board will also be fixed, especially if optional plans are not available at reduced rates.

Indirect Costs

These are costs that do not show up on the college bill. They include books and supplies, travel to and from campus and personal expenses (laundry, entertainment and clothing, to name a few). The amount spent on these items will vary according to need and preference. If the student lives and eats off campus, room and board costs will also be indirect costs. Families have some control over indirect costs by making smart spending choices.

Assessing Student Need

Financial aid provides a specific amount of money to a student to help pay for educational expenses. Most financial aid is given because it has been determined that the student has financial need. The amount of aid is limited to the student's calculated need. As costs go up, student need also rises, and since parent resources remain the same, financial aid should increase, also. Simply stated, a student's need is the difference between the total cost of attending school and the family's financial resources.

In all instances, the student and parents are responsible for paying what they can; financial aid is intended to supplement such efforts, not substitute for them.

Cost of Attendance (the total cost of attending college)

– Expected Family Contribution (the parents' and student's financial resources)

= Financial Need

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is influenced by these factors:

- The amount the student's parents will be asked to pay from their income and assets.
- The amount the student will be asked to pay from earnings and savings.
- Family size, age of older parent, number of children currently attending college.

The Financial Aid Process

In 2009–10, the federal government provided more than \$146 billion, about 74 percent of all student aid, to help students and families pay for postsecondary education. Families can call the US Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Information Center at 800/4FEDAID (800/433-3243) for current information about federal student aid. Information is also available on the Department's Web site for students at <http://federalstudentaid.ed.gov/students.html>.

The easiest and fastest way to apply for federal and state financial aid is by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The site is available in both English and Spanish. A FAFSA on the Web worksheet can be accessed online in late November, and the FAFSA should be submitted as soon as possible after January 1 of the student's senior year of high

school. Submitting the FAFSA makes the student eligible for consideration for all federal and most state grants and loans.

Private colleges and universities may require additional financial aid forms. One such form is the CSS Profile, which is administered by the College Board. The Profile does charge a fee, which varies according to the number of colleges to which the information is sent. Students can register for the Profile only online at www.collegeboard.com. In addition, colleges and universities may have their own financial aid forms for families to submit. Students should check with all colleges to which they apply to find out their requirements for financial aid.

Males 18 years and older must register with the Selective Service to be considered for federal or state financial aid. Males can register by checking the appropriate box when they complete the FAFSA.

It is important to read and follow the instructions for completing the FAFSA and other financial aid forms and submit all financial aid applications on or before the deadlines. Families may be asked to provide copies of their income tax forms for the preceding year, so it is a good idea to file income taxes as soon as possible. Federal and state governments, colleges, and other sources of financial aid have limited funds, which are given to those who qualify and submit completed applications on time. So, the earlier financial forms are submitted, the better the chances for receiving financial aid.

Also, students must re-apply for financial aid every year that they are in college, which means that they must fill out the FAFSA and other financial aid forms annually throughout their college years.

There are other ways to finance a college education. Service to country is one example. Options include:

- Serving in the military
- Attending the US Army, Air Force or Navy military academies
- Participating in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)
- Serving in AmeriCorps, a network of national service programs

Military recruiters, the academies, school counselors, public libraries, and the Internet have information on earning money for college by serving in the military. Education benefits available to former service members have greatly expanded in recent years. For information on the Post 9/11 GI Bill, see www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm#CH33.

For more information on AmeriCorps, visit www.amer corps.gov or call 800/94-ACORPS (800/942-2677).

Types of Financial Aid: Preparing to Meet College Costs

Grants

Grants are also known as gift aid; they are based on need and do not have to be repaid. They come from the federal or state governments or from the college itself. Grants are based on a student's financial need, and when the need is high, the grant aid tends to be high as well. Grants may be made up from various sources. There are five types of federal student aid grants, all of which require filing the FAFSA to be eligible:

- Federal Pell Grants are the largest source of free money for college from the federal government. To be considered, the student must file the FAFSA. Pell Grants can be used for tuition, fees and living expenses, and in 2009–10 they ranged from \$555 to \$5,550.
- Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants (FSEOG) are awarded to students with exceptional financial need. Filing the FAFSA is all that is needed, and students who qualify for a Pell Grant will be given priority consideration. The grants range from \$100 to \$4,000 per year.
- Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACGs) are for Pell-eligible students who completed a rigorous high school course of study and are enrolled in an eligible program of study. For a list of recognized rigorous programs of secondary school study in your state visit www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/about/ac-smart/state-programs.html. Awards in 2009-10 were \$750 for first-year and \$1,300 for second-year students.
- National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grants (SMART Grants) are for Pell-eligible students in their third or fourth year of specific majors (listing at www.ifap.ed.gov/dpclatters/attachments/GEN1012Attach.pdf). Students must have a minimum 3.0 GPA. The award for full-time students in 2009–10 was \$4,000.
- Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants are for students pursuing a degree in education. The award amounts up to \$4,000 and the student agrees to teach in a participating school or teach in a high-need field for four complete years. This grant is converted to an Unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loan and must be repaid if the teaching agreement is not fulfilled.
- In addition to federal grant money, many institutions have their own grant aid available for high-need students.

Scholarships

Scholarships are a form of financial aid that is usually based on merit, sometimes in combination with need. The competition for many scholarships is intense. Some are given to the student who exhibits a particular ability or skill such as athletics or music; others are awarded for academic achievement. Scholarships are often renewable for each college year, usually contingent on the student continuing to participate in the activity that prompted the award; or, in the case of academic scholarships, maintaining a certain achievement level or grade point average. In some instances, the college controls the scholarship process, inviting only certain students to become candidates.

Websites such as FastWeb (www.fastweb.com/) and The College Board (http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp) provide free scholarship search services that allow students to identify scholarships based on their interests, talents, need, ethnicity, and other factors. Students should be aware of scholarship scams, however. One way to spot a scam company is if it asks students to pay a fee in order to provide a scholarship search or guarantees a successful search. Visit www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml for more information on scholarship scams.

Don't overlook the possibility of local scholarships. Students should seek out and apply for as many local scholarships as possible. High schools, churches, local businesses, civic organizations, and special programs may have local scholarships. Some companies and businesses offer assistance to children of their employees. The school counselor or the school's Web site can provide information about local scholarships, also.

Work-Study

Work-study is another form of financial aid based on need that is sometimes combined with grants or loans. In this case, the student earns the money awarded, often working on campus in the book store, library or dining commons. Students may be able to find employment related to college studies or community service. The typical number of hours worked is 10-15 hours per week, and the salary is often higher than minimum wage.

Loans

Loans are a part of most financial aid packages, and they must be repaid, usually with interest. Fortunately, most government loans do not have to be paid until after graduation. Loans can be either need-based or awarded without regard to the family's financial circumstances, and they may be awarded to the student or to the parent(s). Loans based on need usually come from the federal government, the college or university or private lenders.

Some of the most common types of the loans include:

1. Stafford Loan – the most common government loan for undergraduates at all types of colleges. The government pays the interest on a Stafford subsidized loan while the student is in college.
2. Perkins Loan – is a low interest loan for students with exceptional need. These loans are awarded by colleges using mostly federal funds, and no interest is accrued while a student is enrolled at least half-time. Repayment begins nine months after graduation. Students can borrow up to \$5,500 per year or a total of \$27,500.
3. PLUS (Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students) Loan – is a federal loan that allows parents to borrow up to the total cost of attendance, less any other aid the student receives. These loans are unsubsidized, so the parent is responsible for paying the interest.
4. Private Loans – can help pay for college if families come up short after exhausting all other sources of financial aid. Private loans usually carry a higher interest rate than federal loans, and they may not have as favorable repayment terms.

Students and parents should get all of the facts about the loan before signing a loan agreement. Loans must be repaid according to the terms of the loan, even if the student does not finish college or is dissatisfied with the educational program.

Preparing to Meet College Costs

The earlier parents or guardians become aware of the costs associated with college, the better the family can incorporate educational costs into their savings plan. Families that begin to set aside an amount of money when the child is born are buying a form of insurance that the funds will be available to assist the student when the time comes to go to college.

A simple savings account at a bank or credit union is a common choice, but there are other options:

- 529 plans are tax-advantaged investment plans offered by states. They are designed to encourage saving for the future college-going expenses of a designated beneficiary, typically a child or grandchild. Withdrawals from 529 plans are free from federal income taxes. Many states also offer a state tax deduction, matching grants, scholarship opportunities, and other benefits. There are two types of 529 plans: prepaid tuition and savings. Prepaid tuition plans allow the pre-purchase of tuition based on today's rates but paid out when the beneficiary is in college. Savings plans, administered by 49 states and the District of Columbia, require a monthly deposit that is invested, usually in mutual funds, on behalf of the saver. More information is available at www.collegesavings.org.
- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are matched savings accounts that help low-income families save and build assets that can be used to invest in a college education, among other things. The match on the family's monthly investment, which can be quite small, is provided by a variety of government and private-sector sources. IDAs also include a financial literacy component that helps families plan for the future. More information is available at www.cfed.org/assets/pdfs/IDA_Fact_Sheet_2009_12_12.pdf.
- Coverdell Education Savings Accounts (formerly Education IRAs) are investment plans that allow deposits of up to \$2,000 in taxable income per beneficiary per year in a designated investment trust account. Later withdrawals for qualified expenses are tax-free. More information is available at www.savingforcollege.com/intro_to_esas/.
- US Savings Bonds are very safe investments that offer relatively modest returns. Interest on savings bonds is always exempt from federal and state income taxes. When the bonds are redeemed in a year that eligible education expenses are incurred, the accrued interest is also free from federal income taxes (but only if the bond is registered in the parent's, not the student's, name). More information is available at www.treasurydirect.gov/indiv/research/articles/res_invest_articles_education_0604.htm.

One resource to help set and meet college savings goals is the financial calculators at www.finaid.org/calculators/. If it doesn't impose a financial hardship, families may also want to consult a professional financial planner.

The parent or guardian can also seek assistance from a college financial aid officer, who can provide information about the various student aid programs. The financial aid officer may be able to suggest helpful or unique options. For example, some colleges permit the student to pay their expenses on a monthly basis, much like mortgage, rent or car payments.

Suggested letter to be sent home to parents or guardians:

DEAR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS,

I am very pleased that your college-bound student has chosen to participate in the Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning. During these sessions we will be working together to explore:

- the importance of attending college in terms of career choices, lifetime earning power, and lifestyle choices
- how students must prepare in order to be admitted to college
- what students must accomplish in high school in order to succeed in college
- the college selection and application process
- how our nation's financial aid system makes college attendance possible for all motivated and qualified students.

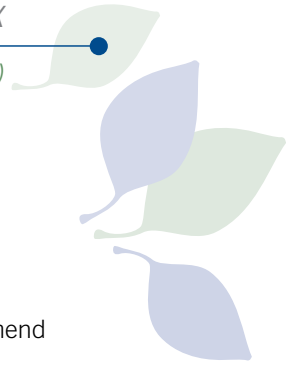
The ideas and materials for these sessions have been developed by members of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). School counselors, with many years experience devoted to helping students find their way to college, have put some of their best thinking into the design of each activity.

Support at home will make all the difference in making sure that your student gets as much as possible from this experience. Please encourage regular attendance. After each session, I encourage you to ask your student what he or she has learned and discussed. Sometimes I will send home material to be shared with you.

Your student is taking a very important step on the road to college entrance. I look forward to this opportunity to be a part of that journey.

Sincerely,

Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning Leader



Suggested letter for students upon completion of workshops

DEAR

Congratulations! You have completed the Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning sessions. I commend the time, energy and effort that you have put into planning for your future educational and career goals.

I know that you are excited about looking ahead to college. Your participation in this program has given you some of the knowledge and tools that you will need to make a successful transition from school to college. I encourage you to let this be just the FIRST of MANY steps toward fulfilling your goal of a college education. An investment in a college education is, without a doubt, the best investment that anyone can make.

I encourage you to continue to work hard and use every resource available to you in order to fulfill all of your hopes and dreams for an excellent education. I thank you for allowing me to work with you.

Sincerely,

Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning Leader

Suggested certificate for students upon completion of workshops



_____ has completed

The National Association for College Admission Counseling

**STEP-BY-STEP TO COLLEGE WORKSHOPS
FOR STUDENTS**





National Association for College Admission Counseling

STEP BY STEP: COLLEGE AWARENESS AND PLANNING

Student Evaluation

Your input regarding this program will help us improve our workshops for students in the future. Please complete the information below and return this form to your facilitator. You do not need to put your name on this form.

	RATING				
	<i>Disagree</i>				<i>Agree</i>
<i>(Please circle one choice for your rating)</i>					
The program gave me new information and ideas	1	2	3	4	5
I had plenty of time for questions and discussion	1	2	3	4	5
I now have a better idea of my plans for the future	1	2	3	4	5
The program has made me more likely to go to college	1	2	3	4	5
The program facilitator was prepared and helpful	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend this program to a friend	1	2	3	4	5

Things I liked best about the program:

Things I didn't like about the program:

I wish I had learned more about:

Other comments:



National Association for College Admission Counseling

STEP BY STEP: COLLEGE AWARENESS AND PLANNING

Leader Program Evaluation

(Please return to NACAC. Fax: 703/243-9375 or Mail: 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 400, Arlington, VA 22201)

Name: _____ Title: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Workshop Setting: _____

Dates of Workshops: _____

*We want to thank you for volunteering to conduct the Step by Step: College Awareness and Planning.
We would appreciate your feedback.*

How did you identify your target group?

Where did you conduct the workshops (School, church, community center)?

How many students were involved?

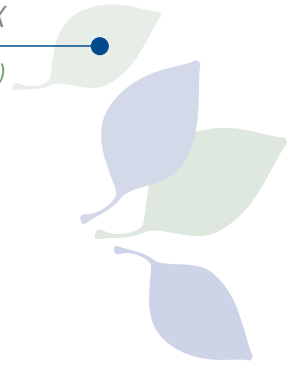
Which section(s) did you cover (Middle School, Early HS, Late HS)?

Were you able to complete the entire session program for the section(s) presented?

Were you able to cover each session in a reasonable amount of time?

Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the most positive:

The clarity of the program directions:



The quality of the handouts:

Age appropriateness of the exercises and handouts:

Please rate each of the sessions on the following:

	<i>Length</i>	<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>Quality</i>
Session I			
Session II			
Session III			
Session IV			
Session V			
Session VI			

Overall evaluation of the program:

We welcome any comments or suggestions that might improve the program:



WEB SITES

Web addresses change often, and new Web pages are added every day. Be sure that individual Web sites are accurate before recommending them to parents or students. Many of the pages listed below offer links to even more Web sites pertaining to college admission and financial aid. Find additional Web sites by using an Internet search engine, such as Yahoo! or Google.

ACT (act.org) Provides information on all tests and products produced by ACT, as well as great college information.

AIHEC (www.aihec.org) The American Indian Higher Education Consortium.

American Indian College Fund (www.collegefund.org) An organization that provides scholarships and other support to American Indian students.

Campus Pride (www.campuspride.org) An organization providing resources to the LGBT student community.

Campus Tours (www.CampusTours.com) Virtual tours to hundreds of colleges and universities.

College Board Online (www.collegeboard.com) The College Board Web site provides information on all tests and products produced by College Board, as well as excellent college information for parents, students and educators.

College Net (www.collegenet.com) Identify schools based on criteria such as location, size, degree programs, etc.; provides links to individual college Web sites.

College View (www.collegeview.com) Career, college and financial aid information, as well as virtual college tours.

CSS Financial Aid PROFILE (profileonline.collegeboard.com) A financial aid application required by many schools to apply for institutional aid.

FAFSA (www.fafsa.ed.gov) Free Application for Federal Student Aid; this is THE site to apply for financial aid online.

Fast Web (www.fastweb.com) Free scholarship and college search service.

Fed Money (www.fedmoney.org) FedMoney.org is a comprehensive free, full-text, online resource on all federal government student financial aid programs.

FinAid (www.finaid.org) Comprehensive financial aid site that is part of the Monster.com Network.

HACU (www.hacu.net) Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) represents more than 300 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Spain.

HBCU (www.hbcuconnect.com) The Web site for historically Black colleges and universities.

Kaplan (www.kaplan.com) Test prep and college comparison information.

NACAC (www.nacacnet.org) The National Association of College Admission Counseling Web site.

NAIA (naia.cstv.com) The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Web site.

NASFAA (www.nasfaa.org) The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators Web site.

NCAA (www.ncaa.org) The National Collegiate Athletic Association Web site.

Peterson's (www.petersons.com) Information about colleges and universities, career schools, graduate programs, distance learning, executive training, private secondary schools, summer opportunities, study abroad, financial aid, test preparation, and career exploration.

Princeton Review (www.review.com) Information on colleges and universities, careers and test preparation.

SallieMae College Answer (www.collegeanswer.com) Information on preparing and paying for college.

United Negro College Fund (www.uncf.org) An educational assistance organization with 40 private, historically black, member colleges and universities.

GLOSSARY

Academic Achievement

The record of a student's progress in such subjects as English, science, history, foreign language, and mathematics.

Academic Record

Transcript of grades, courses, credits, and related academic information kept on file by the school. The transcript often includes grade point average (GPA) and/or rank in class. Standardized test scores may or may not be recorded on the transcript.

ACT Assessment

An admission test used widely by college and university admission offices. The ACT tests students' ability in four distinct areas of study: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning, plus an optional writing test required by some selective universities.

ACT, Inc.

A not-for-profit organization providing assessment, research, information and program management services. In addition to the ACT, the EXPLORE and PLAN programs are all services of the organization.

AP (Advanced Placement) Tests

Standardized tests designed for students who have completed a rigorous college level course in high school. AP's are given in specific subject areas and are used to determine if a student may gain advanced standing in college and/or college credit. The AP exams are graded 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

Admission

The decision to allow a student to enter a college or university.

Admission Test

A standardized test used in the admission process to predict the likelihood of a student's success in college. The most widely used tests are the ACT and the SAT. Some colleges also require SAT Subject Tests, which are one-hour exams in specific academic subjects.

Application

Formal submission of a request and required forms and materials for admission to a college or university.

Associate Degree

A two-year degree that prepares students for further study. Some associate degree programs are sufficient training for certain careers, but many students in two-year colleges intend to complete their studies at a four-year college.

Bachelor's Degree

A four-year degree awarded after the satisfactory completion of a four-year full-time program of study at a college of university.

Billable Costs

College costs that are paid directly to the college or university, including tuition, student activity fees, laboratory fees, and other charges. For students who live on campus, the cost of room and board will also be a billable cost.

Certificate

An award for completing a particular program or course of study, sometimes given by two-year colleges or vocational or technical schools.

Class Rank

The relative numeric position of a student in his or her graduating class. Rank is calculated according to GPA and/or other measures of scholastic achievement.

College

An institution at which students study toward two- or four-year undergraduate degrees after completing high school.

College Admission Counselors

Professional educators working in the nation's colleges and universities to assist students with the exploration of educational options and the transition from high school to postsecondary education.

College Board

A non-profit organization with membership that includes counselors, admission officers, college faculty, and financial aid officers. College Board sponsors many tests and services connected with the college admission process.

College Fair or College Night

An event that allows students and parents to meet and talk with representatives from different colleges and universities.

College Guides or College Guidebooks

Publications that include profiles of colleges and universities and can be used as part of the college exploration process.

College Preparatory Courses

High school courses that provide students with the knowledge and skills required to do college-level study.

College Viewbooks

Publications developed by individual colleges or universities to promote and present information about their respective institutions including campus setting, academic program, student life, costs, and other related information.

College Visit

A visit by a student to a college or university that allows the student to experience the academic, student life and related campus features.

Common Application

A standard application form that is accepted by almost 300 colleges. Students should check with each admission office to see if the college will accept the Common Application and if additional materials are required.

Community/Junior College

A college offering a two-year program. One option is vocational which allows the student to go directly into the vocation after graduation. The other option is academic, so the student can transfer to a four-year institution.

Community Resources

People (such as librarians, tutors, etc.) or related services (such as workshops, special programs, etc.) which are available within the community to support students and parents.

Cooperative Education

A program that allows students to go to college and get paid to work while receiving credit for both; sometimes called a co-op program.

Cos-Pub

Cost of Attendance

Expenses, including tuition and fees, books and supplies, and living expenses while the student attends college. The cost of attendance is compared with the student's expected family contribution to determine the student's financial need.

CSS Profile

A Web-based financial aid form required by some colleges (mostly private). Processing fees are charged, so only colleges requiring the Profile should receive it.

Diploma

Certificate issued by a school, college or university to students who have met coursework and graduation requirements.

Early Action

A program in which the student receives an admission decision earlier than the standard response date and is not required to accept the offer or make a deposit before May 1st.

Early Decision

A program that commits participating students to enroll at the college if admitted and offered a satisfactory financial aid package. Application deadlines are usually in November/December with a decision before January 1st.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

The amount students and their families are expected to pay toward college costs derived from a financial needs analysis, usually based on income and assets.

Extracurricular Activities

A school activity such as athletics, drama or music—that offers the student the opportunity to compliment his or her classroom experiences.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

A form completed by all applicants for federal and state financial aid. The FAFSA cannot be filed before January 1st of the student's senior year of high school.

Financial Aid or Assistance

Any financial award to a student: may be a grant, scholarship, work-study or loan.

GED (General Educational Development)

A series of five tests that individuals who did not complete high school may take through the state education system to qualify for a high school equivalency certificate.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

An average of the student's academic achievement as measured by grades. Computed by multiplying the numerical grade received in each subject (or course) by the number of credits offered for each, then dividing by the total number of credits or courses studied.

Graduation Requirements

Standards set by the school or state for awarding a high school diploma.

Grant

A type of financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid. Grants are often based on financial need.

IB (International Baccalaureate Program)

A two-year comprehensive and rigorous course of study, usually beginning in the 11th grade, that is similar to the final year of secondary school in Europe. Many colleges award credit or advanced placement to students who have completed an IB program.

Indirect Costs

College costs that do not show up on the college bill and include books and supplies, travel, and personal expenses (laundry, entertainment, clothing, etc.) The amount spent on these items will vary according to need and preference.

Interview

A personal meeting (individual or group) between a prospective student and the admission representative of a college or university.

Liberal Arts

A course of study in college that provides a well-rounded education, including arts, sciences and the humanities.

Loan

Money borrowed by the student and/or parent to pay for college expenses; the loan must be repaid, usually with interest.

Matriculation

The process whereby a student is accepted, pays fees and enrolls in class, officially becoming a student at the college.

Major

The course of study in which a student concentrates coursework, time and attention. A major in a subject often results in career preparation.

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

A national, professional association of more than 10,000 school counselors, college admission personnel and independent counselors and related organizations.

Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)

Annual publication from the US Department of Labor that describes careers and outlines the nature of the job, working conditions, educational requirements, and employment outlook.

Open Admission

A college admission policy that admits virtually all applicants with high school diplomas. Such colleges usually have extensive programs designed to provide remedial or developmental help to students who enroll with academic deficiencies.

Parent Conference

A meeting between the parent and teacher or counselor to discuss the student's progress.

PLAN

A pre-ACT test, generally administered in the sophomore year, that consists of four curriculum-based tests in English, reading, science, reasoning, and math, plus an assessment of a student's career interests.

Private College/University

An institution of higher education not supported by taxes. The school may be independent or church related.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)

A practice SAT test, administered to sophomores and juniors in October. It serves as the qualifying test for scholarships awarded by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Public College/University

An institution of higher education supported by taxes or other public funds.

Recommendation

A written assessment of the student’s achievement, written by a teacher or counselor and used by colleges and universities in the admission process.

Regular Decision

A term used to describe the application process in which an institution reviews most of its applications before notifying its candidates.

Rolling Admission

A term used to describe the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are received and offers decision to students as applications are reviewed.

SAT Reasoning Test

An admission test used widely by college and university admission offices. The SAT Reasoning Test is designed to test a student’s language skills and mathematical reasoning abilities. The SAT is a multiple-choice written examination that provides math, critical reading, and writing scores, each graded 200 (low) to 800 (high), or combined scores of 600–2400.

SAT Subject Tests

Tests in specific subjects used by some colleges and universities not only to help with admission decisions but also to assist in course placement and exemption of enrolled first-year students.

Scholarship

A type of financial aid that doesn’t have to be repaid. Scholarships may be based on need, on need combined with other criteria, or solely on other criteria such as academic achievement, artistic ability or athletics.

School Counselor

Professional educator working in elementary, middle/junior high, or secondary schools to assist students with personal, social, educational, and career development.

Section 529 Plans

State-sponsored college savings programs often referred to as “529 Plans” after the section of the Internal Revenue Code that provides the plan’s tax breaks.

Standardized Tests

Tests such as the ACT and SAT that provide college admission officers with a comparative standard for evaluating a student’s academic likelihood of success in college.

Statement of Principles of Good Practice

A professional code of ethics, developed by the NACAC, that guides the conduct of college admission representatives, school counselors and independent counselors as they help students in the college transition process.

Students’ Rights and Responsibilities

A statement developed by NACAC that outlines students’ duties in the college admission process and describes what treatment students may rightfully expect from the colleges and universities to which they have applied.

Subsidized Loan

A loan based on financial need in which the federal government pays the interest during the time the student is in school, thereby subsidizing the loan.

Test Preparation Course

A program or course designed to help students become familiar with test-taking and review the areas that may be covered in admission tests.

Time Management Skills

The ability to schedule school assignments and tasks in a manner that ensures that they are completed on time and with minimal interruption of routine.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

The TOEFL helps students demonstrate their English language proficiency at the advanced level required for study in colleges in the US. Many colleges require that applicants from non-English-speaking countries take the test as part of the admission process.

Transcript

A student’s official academic record that lists all courses taken and grades received. A transcript is usually required as part of the college admission process.

Tuition

The cost for instruction or study at a college, university or school.

Tuition Deposit/Admission Deposit/Commitment Deposit or Fee

Money paid by admitted students to verify their intention to enroll. The deposit is usually applied to the student’s tuition charges for the upcoming year. The tuition deposit should be submitted to only one college by May 1st, the uniform reply date.

Tutoring

Assisting a student with some aspect of their schooling, such as mathematics or language skills. Tutoring goes beyond the

attention given to the student in a regular classroom setting and can be provided for both enrichment and remedial purposes.

Undergraduate Degree

A two-year (Associate) or four-year (Bachelor’s) degree.

Undocumented

Students and/or parents who are not US citizens or permanent residents.

University

An educational institution that may be the same as a college, but which usually offers graduate and/or professional degrees in addition to undergraduate degrees.

Unsubsidized Loan

A loan that is not need based, and the borrower is responsible for accrued interest.

Vocational/Technical Education

A program of study designed to train students for a particular occupation, business or trade.

Wait List

A list of students who meet admission requirements, but will be offered a place in the class only if space becomes available.

Web Site

An address on the Internet that contains information written and designed by a particular individual or organization.

Work Study

A financial aid program that allows the student to work on-campus or with approved off-campus employers to earn money to pay for college expenses.



National Association for
College Admission Counseling
www.nacacnet.org