



The College Process
10/12/10

AGENDA

- 1. Timeline for preparing for college**
- 2. Graduation requirements**
- 3. Testing**
- 4. College Options**
- 5. What are colleges looking for?**
- 6. Finding colleges that fit**
- 7. The Application Process**
- 8. Financial Aid**
- 9. Scholarships**
- 10. Questions**



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The director of college counseling has the overall responsibility for guiding students through the college process and the transition to post-secondary education. This includes the following:

1. **Monitoring a student's progress towards graduation and college requirements for acceptance.**
 - a. Courses
 - b. Credits
 - c. Grades

2. **College search**
 - a. Meet with all students individually throughout the year.
 - b. Finding a college that fits with the student/parents criteria
 - c. College visits
 - d. Field trip to the National College Fair Wed October 6th at the Minneapolis Convention Center. All 9th and 10th graders will be leaving at 9 am and returning by 2 pm.
 - e. Researching majors and careers
 - f. Applying to colleges
 - g. Essay writing for college applications
 - h. Recommendation letters
 - i. Scholarship/grant search
 - j. Financial Aid
 - k. Preparing for college
 - l. Transitioning beyond high school

3. **High School Advisory Coordinator**

Conduct various post-secondary activities with 9th and 10th grade students as a whole or by grade level.

Parents' College Planning Guide

Use this checklist to help your student prepare for educational opportunities after high school.

In 7th or 8th Grade

- Monitor your student's progress in reading, writing and math. Identify and discuss any learning problems with your student's teacher.
- Help your student set realistic goals. Recognize your student's efforts as well as successes.
- Talk with your student's school counselor about assessment tests to help your student identify personality traits, interests and skills as well as explore career options.
- Talk with a school counselor and your student about classes that lay the groundwork for college.
- Encourage your student to take challenging courses.
- Encourage your student to be an active learner by taking notes, participating in discussions, asking questions and learning from mistakes.
- Establish a quiet space for studying and a regular daily schedule for homework. Buy a dictionary and thesaurus.
- Help your student develop problem-solving skills by asking for his or her input, assigning responsibilities and allowing him or her to make certain decisions.
- Consider summer enrichment classes and programs for your student.
- Continue saving and encourage your student to put aside some of his or her earnings.

In 9th or 10th Grade

- Make sure your student is enrolled in challenging classes that are appropriate for your student's abilities.
- Help your student to evaluate his or her abilities and make the connection between education and career options.
- Talk with your student's school counselor about assessment tests to help your student identify personality traits, interests and skills as well as explore career options.
- Suggest a tutor or other special help if your student is struggling with a certain subject.
- Help your student to learn how to manage time and to use library and Internet resources.
- Talk with your student about his or her academic plan and learn about different types of postsecondary schools.
- Check if your high school requires its students to take the PLAN test in 10th grade.
- Suggest extracurricular activities to help your student develop teamwork, leadership and commitment skills.
- Continue saving and encourage your student to put aside some of his or her earnings.
- Consider summer enrichment classes and programs for your student.

In 11th or 12th Grade

- Talk with your student's school counselor about assessment tests to help your student identify personality traits, interests and skills as well as explore career options.
- Help your student explore programs that can earn your student college credit, such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Postsecondary Enrollment Options and College in the Schools
- Check with your high school to learn whether it offers career-focused programs such as tech-prep, school-to-career, and school-to-work.
- Make sure your student takes the PSAT no later than the fall of 11th grade.
- Check if your student has registered for the college entrance exam (ACT or SAT) required by the schools your student would like to attend.
- Search and apply for private scholarships as early as possible to help pay for college, but be wary of possible scams.
- Talk with your student about his or her academic plan to make sure your student takes the courses required for graduation and for admission to college. Talk about different types of colleges.
- Consider summer enrichment classes and programs for your student.
- Attend job fairs with your student. Explore career, apprenticeship or internship options.
- Attend college and financial aid fairs.
- Help your student narrow his or her choice of schools. Arrange for campus visits to those schools and help your student evaluate them.
- Download or request *Your Guide to Paying for College* at www.getreadyforcollege.org (click on "Publications").
- Find a mentor or enrichment program to build on your student's interests and aptitudes.
- Encourage your student to mentor other students or volunteer in the community.
- Make sure your student asks for letters of recommendation (if required) from teachers, counselors and others who can comment on his or her ability to succeed in college.
- Complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) as early as possible after January 1 of your student's senior year. You and your student must complete your taxes before submitting the FAFSA.
- Make sure admissions applications are sent on time to four to six schools. If you cannot afford the application fee, check if the school has the option to waive it.
- Make sure your student's high school transcript has been sent to the schools to which your student applied.
- Review your Student Aid Report (SAR) for accuracy. If you make corrections, return the form as soon as possible.
- Help your student choose a college. Make sure your student notifies in writing the schools he or she doesn't plan to attend.

Choosing the Right College

Use the checklist below to identify the characteristics that matter most to you. Ask your parents to do the same. Then compare and discuss your answers. Search for schools that match your key criteria and fit you academically, socially and culturally:

My Top Criteria

- athletic offerings
- campus safety
- campus setting (urban, suburban, small town or rural)
- diversity of student population
- extracurricular organizations and events
- faculty experience and expertise
- financial aid availability and deadlines
- geographic location
- housing availability and cost
- length, time and location of classes
- number of students enrolled
- percentage of graduates employed within one year
- percentage of students who graduate
- percentage of students who return the following year
- programs of study (majors and minors)
- school facilities and equipment
- school or program reputation
- student-to-faculty ratio (class size)
- support services (meals, counseling, job placement)
- transportation availability and cost
- tuition and fees

My Parents' Top Criteria

- athletic offerings
- campus safety
- campus setting (urban, suburban, small town or rural)
- diversity of student population
- extracurricular organizations and events
- faculty experience and expertise
- financial aid availability and deadlines
- geographic location
- housing availability and cost
- length, time and location of classes
- number of students enrolled
- percentage of graduates employed within one year
- percentage of students who graduate
- percentage of students who return the following year
- programs of study (majors and minors)
- school facilities and equipment
- school or program reputation
- student-to-faculty ratio (class size)
- support services (meals, counseling, job placement)
- transportation availability and cost
- tuition and fees

If you're still having trouble identifying what's important to you, ask yourself:

- Why do I want to go to college?
- What do I want to get out of college?
- How will college help me work toward my goals?
- Which college will best/least help me work toward my goals?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of going now rather than later?
- Does it matter how many students are enrolled with me?
- Do I want to be with students who have diverse ideas, viewpoints and backgrounds?
- In which type of campus setting am I most/least comfortable?

College Comparison Worksheet

Evaluate each school in the areas listed below and then compare your evaluations.

School Characteristics			
	School 1	School 2	School 3
ACADEMICS			
Class location (on or off campus, online)			
Class scheduling (when classes are held)			
Faculty experience and expertise			
Programs of study (majors and minors)			
Student-to-faculty ratio (class size)			
ADMISSIONS			
Admissions or placement tests			
Applications forms (school, system, common, online)			
Credit for prior learning*			
Deadlines (early decision, early action, rolling, open)			
Selectivity (open, liberal, traditional, selective, very selective)			
Total first-year applicants			
> % accepted			
> % who actually enrolled			
> Average GPA of applicants			
CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT			
Campus facilities, equipment and services			
> Computers and Internet access			
> Food service (cafeterias)			
> Health care			
> Housing			
> Library			
> Recreational			
> Transportation (parking, buses, etc.)			
Campus safety			
Campus setting (urban, suburban, small town, rural)			
Coeducational			
Geographic location (distance from home)			
Religious affiliation			

* Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Postsecondary Enrollment Options, College in the Schools, College-Level Exam Program

STUDENT BODY	School 1	School 2	School 3
Number of undergraduates enrolled			
> % of full-time students			
> % of men and women			
> % of students 25 or older			
> % of minority students			
> % of students from out-of-state			
> % of international students			
> % of student who live on campus			
% of students who return the following year			
% of students who graduate			
% of graduates employed within one year			
COST	School 1	School 2	School 3
Application fee			
> Fee waiver available?			
Amount of Deposit (after acceptance)			
Total Annual Cost of Attendance			
> Tuition and fees			
> Room and board			
> Other required expenses (books, supplies)			
FINANCIAL AID	School 1	School 2	School 3
Financial aid availability			
> Grants (participates in federal and/or state grant program?)			
> Scholarships			
> Work study			
> Loans			
Financial aid deadline			
Financial aid forms (FAFSA, PROFILE, school)			
% of undergraduates receiving financial aid			
> Average amount awarded to undergraduates			
STUDENT ACTIVITIES	School 1	School 2	School 3
Athletic offerings			
Campus clubs and activities			
Extracurricular organizations and events			
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	School 1	School 2	School 3
Career counseling			
Job placement services			
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	School 1	School 2	School 3
Financial condition			
School accreditation			

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/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?
- 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?
- What are the other students like?

Talk with Instructors in the Program

- What are the academic requirements in the program?
- What kinds of courses are offered? How often are they offered?
- How many students are in the program? How many are accepted into the program each year?
- How long does it take most students to complete the program?
- How long have they taught at the school? Do they teach full time or part time?
- What background do they have in the field? How does it relate to the courses they teach?
- What types of activities are they involved in that relate to the field of study?

Talk with an Admissions Counselor

- Has the institution and its programs been accredited by a recognized accrediting association?
- What are the admissions requirements for college or for a specific program?
- 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?
- Can credits be earned online or transferred from other colleges?
- What percentage of first-year students return the following year?
- What percentage of graduates are employed within one year?

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?
- Does the school participate in federal and state aid programs? (Not all schools are eligible.)
- What percentage of undergraduates receive aid? How much do they receive on average?
- Does the college offer any financial aid of its own? If so, how do I apply?
- Which financial aid forms do I need to fill out and what are the deadlines?
- How is financial aid paid out? When will I receive it?

College and University Profiles

Each entry provides the campus address, general telephone numbers, and the school's Web address as well as the following information. If the school did not provide the information or the topic is not relevant to the school, then the category has been omitted.

Freshmen Admissions Requirements

- **Admission Selectivity.** Indicates how selective (open, liberal, traditional, selective, or highly selective) the admission process is at the school.
- **Accepted Applications.** The admission application form(s) accepted by the school.
- **Application Fee.** The application fee that must be submitted with the admission application. Some schools may elect to waive this fee.
- **Application Deadline.** The date by which all required materials must be submitted to the school. Some schools will not consider applicants who miss the deadline. "Rolling" means that applications are accepted continuously, and accepted applicants are placed as soon as space becomes available. "Early decision" means students applying to that school by the early decision deadline will be notified of their acceptance or rejection earlier than other applicants. Students use this option for their first choice school because schools expect early decision applicants to enroll if accepted. Applications filed by the "priority date" are reviewed first, and accepted applicants are assigned the first spaces in the incoming class. Applications received by the final deadline, but after the "priority deadline," are reviewed next. Applying by the "priority date" may enhance the student's chances of receiving financial aid and enrolling in the classes the student wants.
- **Additional Requirements.** Indicates whether the school requires a high school diploma or GED, application essay, letters of recommendations, an interview, a minimum grade point average and a high school transcript. Students also should submit transcripts for any satisfactorily completed college coursework. Also indicated are any other admission requirements or possible exceptions if students do not meet the regular requirements.
- **Required Admission Tests.** Indicates whether the ACT or SAT I is required by the school.
- **Required Placement Tests.** Indicates which placement tests students must take after they are admitted to the school. *ASAP* refers to the *Academic Skills Assessment Program*; *CPAT* refers to the *Career Programs Assessment Test*; and *CAPP* refers to the *Computerized Academic Placement Program*.

Freshman Profile

- **Total Applicants.** The number of students who applied for admission.
- **Total Accepted.** The number of students who were accepted.
- **Total Who Enrolled.** The number of accepted students who enrolled in the fall.
- **Average GPA.** The average grade point average of students who were accepted.
- **% Submitting ACT.** The percent of first-year applicants who submitted the ACT and the combined score, if reported.
- **% Submitting SAT.** The percent of first-year applicants who submitted the SAT I and the combined score, if reported.

Estimated 2009-2010 Full-Year Cost

- **Tuition & Fees.** The estimated 2009-2010 tuition and fees. This does not include the cost of books and supplies or living expenses.
- **Room & Board.** The estimated amount to live and eat on campus during the academic year. “Off-Campus Only” indicates that no on-campus housing is available.
- **Books & Supplies.** The estimated amount a student should expect to spend on books and related supplies for the entire academic year.

Financial Aid

- **Required Financial Aid Forms.** The financial aid form(s) that must be submitted to apply for financial aid. “FAFSA” refers to the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*. “CSS” refers to The College Board’s *CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE*; there is a fee associated with this form. “School” refers to any school-specific form.
- **Title IV (FAFSA) School Code.** The six-digit school code used on the FAFSA.
- **Financial Aid Deadline.** The date(s), if any, by which students must submit a financial aid application. A “priority date” indicates the last date that applications will be given priority in awarding financial aid. Applications submitted after this are considered after those that met the priority deadline have been reviewed.
- **Date Award Letters Are Sent.** The date by which award letters are sent to the student. For some schools, letters are sent on an ongoing or rolling basis.
- **Undergraduates Receiving Aid.** The percent of undergraduate students who receive financial aid.

Campus Profile

- **Campus Setting.** Indicates the campus setting (urban, suburban or small town/rural, varies).
- **Academic Calendar.** Indicates the school’s academic year (semester, trimester, quarters, 4-1-4, varies or continuous).
- **Student/Faculty Ratio.** Indicates the ratio of students to faculty members.
- **Average Class Size.** Indicates the average size of a non-lab class.
- **Study Options.** Indicates whether the school offers cooperative education, academic honor societies, summer school, evening classes or programs, weekend classes or programs, study abroad options, online classes or programs, remedial classes or programs for working adults.
- **Accepts Credit for Prior Learning.** Indicates whether a school accepts credit earned through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, College in the Schools, the College Level Examination Program or the Postsecondary Enrollment Options program.
- **Intercollegiate Sports.** Indicates the men’s or women’s sports offered by the school.

Student Profile

- **Total Fall Enrollment.** The number of undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional students attending the school in fall 2008.
- **Total Undergraduates.** The number of undergraduates attending the school, followed by select student body percentages.

Affiliation

The regional higher education organization or system with which a school is affiliated.



TESTING

PLAN: This is a Practice ACT test which will give a student an idea of how well they will do on the ACT test. It also has an extensive interest inventory. **Test given: Mon Sept 27 and wed Sept 29th periods one and two.**

Website: ACT.org

PSAT: Pre-SAT test. **This test is given in the morning at NOVA, Wed Oct 13th.** This is only a practice test for grades 9 and 10. When the students are juniors, it will count towards the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Website: collegeboard.com

ACT: We will be administering this test for 9th and 10th graders at NOVA **on Saturday, April 9th 2011.** More information will follow regarding test preparation and instructions.

Website: ACT.org

SAT: Some students may take this test in addition to the ACT for college admittance. This test is not administered at NOVA but can be taken at several other sites in the metro area.

Website: Collegboard.com

AP Testing: TBD

MCA Testing: Spring 2011

Grade 9: Science and writing

Grade 10: Reading

Grade 11: Math

College Preparation & Admissions Tests

PLAN	PSAT	ACT	SAT	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
What does it test?				
English, reading, math, and science reasoning skills	Critical reading and math reasoning abilities as well as writing skills	English, reading, math, and science reasoning skills; optional writing test	Critical reading and math reasoning abilities and writing skills	The ability of nonnative speakers of English to read, write, speak and understand North American English
Why should I take this test?				
Measures academic preparation and prepares you for college admissions tests (also includes a career interest inventory to help you explore career options)	Prepares you for college admissions tests and may qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship (if taken as a junior)	Most common college admissions test for four-year colleges in the Midwest and central United States	Most common college admissions test for four-year colleges on the East and West coasts	Required by some four-year colleges if English is not your native language
When should I take the test?				
Sophomore year	Junior year	Junior or senior year	Junior or senior year	Junior year or later
When are the tests offered?				
Usually in the fall, but check with your high school counselor	The third Saturday in October or the preceding Wednesday	There are five test dates scheduled during the academic year	There are seven test dates scheduled during the academic year	Test dates vary by location; check website
Where are the tests held?				
Usually at your high school	Usually at your high school	At a high school or a local college or university	At a high school or a local college or university	Sites vary by location; check website
How long does it take to complete the test?				
3 hrs. 10 min.	2 hrs. 45 min.	3 hrs. 25 min. (with writing test)	3 hrs. 45 min.	4 hrs. 30 min. (internet version)
What does it cost?				
Check with your high school	\$13 (may be waived for students for whom the fee is a hardship)	\$33 + \$15 for writing test (may be waived for students for whom the fee is a hardship)	\$47 (may be waived for students for whom the fee is a hardship)	\$170 (a fee reduction may be available for high school seniors who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents planning to take the test in the United States)
How do I sign up for the test?				
Check with your high school counselor	Check with your high school counselor	Visit the website listed below	Visit the website listed below	Visit the website listed below
For More Information				
www.actstudent.org/plan	www.collegeboard.com/psat	www.actstudent.org	sat.collegeboard.com	www.toefl.org

While two-year colleges generally do not require new students to take a college entrance exam, most new students are required to take a placement test to determine which level of courses are appropriate for them.