

“Understanding the Admission Process”

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First Step: The college search process. It’s never too early to start researching colleges! It’s all about finding the right fit for you and what you want out of your college experience – chose an institution that will allow you to grow academically and develop into the person you want to become.

- Start researching now, it’s never too early – regardless what year in high school.
- 5 P’s – Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance
- Research colleges of all sizes, types, location, etc.
- What are you looking for inside & outside the classroom?
- Visit, Visit, Visit!

Second Step: The application process. Students have your college list narrowed down to your top three to five schools you are seriously considering before you start applying. Allow yourself plenty of time to apply because there is more to it than just completing an application – it’s about submitting the strongest application possible.

- Apply Strategically – don’t put all of your eggs in one basket, have a back-up plan
- Dream Schools: reach or challenge in terms of costs, admission selectivity, or both
- Mid-range Schools: schools that you stand a competitive chance of getting accepted
costs may or may not be as much of an issue
- Safe Schools: institutions that offer higher acceptance rates & lower costs
- Application Types
 - Institutional App – app provided by and only relates to that specific institution
 - Common App – one app that allows students to apply to multiple institutions at one time (not all institutions partner with Common App)
- Required Documents for Application – differs at each institution
 - Official HS transcript
 - SAT or ACT scores – take more than once (most institutions super score)
 - Essay – let this be your voice since you are not present at the admission table, take your time and put some thought into your essay, be mindful of what you write about (you are making your impression on that institution), PROOFREAD
- Non-Required but Recommended Documents
 - Personal Statement
 - Letters of Recommendation
 - Resume – provide detailed information regarding extracurricular activities inside/outside of HS, don’t just list organizations

Third Step: The admission process. All institutions have different admission processes and timelines. Pay attention to when you are applying and how each institution handles the process. When and what are you applying for? What are colleges looking for when accepting students? When will you know your decision, financial aid notification, and have to decide on a college?

- Admission Opportunities
 - Early Decision: BINDING to that college/university, agree to attend and accept their financial aid offer
 - Early Action: NON-BINDING – earlier admission & scholarship notification, maximum consideration for admission & scholarship opportunities
 - Rolling: different meaning at various institutions – primarily, applications will be accepted throughout the entire admission year or until space is no longer available; may or may not be considered for merit aid (depending on the institution)
- Academics
 - All four years matter – first three years get you accepted, senior year keeps you admitted. Grade trends are very important to all institutions (consistent or upward)!
 - Core College Prep Courses
 - Honors, AP, dual-credit, IB, etc.
 - Stretch yourself, don't overwhelm – don't overload your schedule if you are not ready (grade trend)
 - Course Selection – all institutions will have different academic requirements, especially when considering particular academic majors. In general:
 - 4 years of English
 - 3-4 years of math
 - 3-4 years of science
 - 2-4 years of foreign language
 - 2 years of social sciences

Additional Notes & Recommendations:

- May 1st – National Candidate Reply Date: Deadline to let all institutions know if you are or are not attending.
- Create an email account specifically for colleges – allows you to be more organized with your college search. Also, be mindful of your email address (Rule: Would you want your grandparent to email that account?)
- Be professional with all forms of communication to admission counselors, financial aid representatives, staff members, etc. You can only make one impression and we are here to serve all students.
- Parents and students – have an open dialogue about the college search process. Establish roles/responsibilities of who will take care of what; talk about what each of you want out of the college experience.