

Suggestions for a Successful College Search

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What are my child's options after high school?

- ▶ Four-year institutions: Liberal Arts College or a Research University
- ▶ Military Academy: secure nomination in junior year or VERY early senior year
- ▶ Two year colleges: community colleges, junior colleges and technical colleges
- ▶ Direct entry into the world of work
- ▶ Enlistment into the military
- ▶ Proprietary schools

10 Things Parents May Consider When Thinking of College Options

- ▶ Type of College
- ▶ Distance from Home
- ▶ Size of College
- ▶ Area of Interest/Program of Study
- ▶ Safety of area
- ▶ Academic Rigor of Institution
- ▶ Social or Extracurricular interests
- ▶ Cost of Attendance
- ▶ Financial Aid/Scholarship Opportunities
- ▶ Participant in the Tuition Exchange/Remission Program

10 Things Students May Consider When Thinking of College Options

- ▶ Location
- ▶ Size
- ▶ Quality of Education
- ▶ Appearance of Campus
- ▶ Dorms
- ▶ Majors
- ▶ Greek Life
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Food
- ▶ Political Leanings

Ways to Gather Information on Schools

- ▶ Websites
- ▶ Guidebooks
- ▶ College Fairs
 - ▶ Week of October 24
- ▶ College Literature
- ▶ Visiting the School
- ▶ Virtual Visits/Fairs
- ▶ Word of Mouth

The Application

- ▶ College's Own Application
 - ▶ Online
- ▶ Common Application
 - ▶ Currently used more than 1000 colleges and university
 - ▶ Commonapp.org
 - ▶ Online version
 - ▶ Some colleges require supplement(s)
- ▶ The Coalition Application
 - ▶ 150 national colleges & universities
 - ▶ Coalitionforcollegeaccess.org
 - ▶ Can start adding information to locker as a first year student
 - ▶ Focused on providing access to college with free planning tools
- ▶ Apply Texas Application
 - ▶ Texas public and private colleges
 - ▶ Online version
 - ▶ Applytexas.org
 - ▶ Schools have different admission requirements

What Do Schools Consider?

- ▶ Academic Record
- ▶ Standardized Test Scores
- ▶ Essay
- ▶ Recommendations
- ▶ Extra Curricular Activities
- ▶ Interviews

Academic Record

- ▶ Most important element
- ▶ Includes: Grades earned, strength of courses taken, rank in class, competitiveness of school curriculum
- ▶ Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, Honors, Advanced or Accelerated courses show challenge in preparation for college

Academic Record

- ▶ A solid high school background will include the following coursework:
 - ▶ 4 years of English
 - ▶ 4 units of Math (check to see the school's minimum requirement)
 - ▶ 4 units of Science
 - ▶ 4 units of Social Science
 - ▶ 2 units of foreign language (3 are recommended)
 - ▶ 1 unit of academic elective or fine arts elective (depending on school being considered)

Standardized Testing

- ▶ Many institutions continue a test optional philosophy. May require a different component in lieu of a test score.
- ▶ Most schools will look at SAT OR ACT (don't require one or the other)
- ▶ SAT comprised of Evidence Based Reading and Writing and Math (www.collegeboard.com)
- ▶ ACT has English, Math, Science, and Reading Components (www.actstudent.org)
- ▶ You should research each school's requirements and schedule tests for spring of junior year/fall of senior year.

Essay

- ▶ Original example of student's work to provide further insight into the candidate and allow a multi-dimensional understanding of the student
- ▶ Student should write an essay that is reflective of themselves
- ▶ Essay should aim to be 500-750 words
- ▶ Do not repeat what is also written elsewhere in the application

Recommendations

- ▶ Many schools require a recommendation from a high school counselor
- ▶ Teacher recommendation may be optional, but can provide a greater understanding of the academic strengths of the student
- ▶ Parents may be encouraged to write on behalf of their student
- ▶ Students may ask recommendation writers to submit electronic recommendations or to submit on school letterhead.
- ▶ Give teachers and counselor 3 weeks for completion of recommendation

Extracurricular Activities

- ▶ Reviewed to assess what a candidate has accomplished outside of the classroom
- ▶ Can occur inside or outside of the school (ie. Scouting, church, work, volunteer work)
- ▶ Be sure to include: leadership positions, depth of involvement, diversity of experiences

Interview

- ▶ Gives the college a chance to get to know the person on the application
- ▶ Interview may be required in some situations (ie. scholarships)
- ▶ Interviews are held at the school and locally by both admission officers and alumni
- ▶ Ask if you can interview so that you may learn more about the school.

Admission Application Options

- ▶ Open enrollment: the college typically admits all students with a high school diploma regardless of class rank or test scores
- ▶ Rolling admission: the college reviews complete applications on a rolling basis and usually notifies the student within 3 or 4 weeks.
- ▶ Regular decision: the college has a deadline by which most applicants apply and it notifies all students around the same time—usually at the end of March or beginning of April
- ▶ Early decision/early action

Early Decision/Early Action

- ▶ *Early Decision*—students make a commitment to a first choice school that if admitted, they definitely will attend.
- ▶ *Early Action*—students make application to one or sometimes more schools and receive a decision well in advance of the college's usual response date. Students are not obligated to accept the admission offer.
- ▶ *Single Choice Early Action*—students make application to only ONE school and receive a decision well in advance of the college's usual response date. Students are not obligated to accept the admission offer.

Final Thoughts

- ▶ The student should drive this process...you are in the back seat gently encouraging. The student will be at the school for 4 years and they need to be comfortable with the school of choice. The student needs to be at a school where they will succeed academically and socially.
- ▶ The list should include both academic and financial reach schools, comfort schools and safety schools. This covers all options for the student and the family.
- ▶ TE Data Sheet provides introductory research