

Maplewood Richmond Heights High School

College Planning Guide



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Dear Students and Parents,

As you begin to think about life after high school, you will be faced with many decisions. One of the biggest decisions to make will be where to attend college, and, as with any major decision, having the appropriate information to make the decision is essential.

The college selection process can be overwhelming, but hopefully the important facts, procedures, and suggestions presented in this booklet can help ease some of the burden of this process. Whether you are just beginning the decision-making process or you have already decided where you will be attending college, this information can help clarify questions and be an important resource for you.

It should be stressed that the MRH High School College Center views the college selection process as just that: a process. Early planning is an integral part of the process. By following a structured process, a student and family will be better prepared to make the right decision and reduce the level of stress that may come with it.

The MRH High School College Planning Guide should be used as a resource to supplement the work you do with the MRH High School College Counselor, Mr. Harcharic. You are encouraged and always welcome to meet with Mr. Harcharic on an individual basis to help you with the issues facing this important decision. Also, there are a number of other resources available to you in the MRH High School College Center.

As with any resource, the only way to utilize the knowledge it contains is to read it. You are strongly encouraged to read through this material and write down questions as they arise. In addition, you will find a glossary of terms in the Appendix section if you are unsure what a term means. There is also a list of sources for further information if you have questions that are not answered in the text.

Parents, you should be aware of the decisions facing your son or daughter. If you have already had a child go through this transition, you may already know some of this material, but it never hurts to review it again. Whatever your child decides, you should be involved in the process, as your input will be important. Try to prevent yourself from making the final decision for him or her, but offer encouragement and helpful advice. Having your support will make his or her decision-making process much easier and more comforting. As a parent, you are the number one influence on your child and the decision he or she will make. Good luck with the process and eventually the decision that you make. Please do not hesitate to contact the MRH High School College Center for further assistance at (314) 446-3805.

Sincerely,

Mr. Justin Harcharic
MRH High School College Counselor

A PLANNING CALENDAR FOR JUNIORS

AUGUST

- Review your high school course-work and activity plans to make sure they reflect the impression you want to make on college admissions officers. Colleges pay close attention to the kinds of courses you take during high school, your GPA, and the extracurricular activities in which you are involved.

SEPTEMBER

- Compile a list of colleges that interest you. Some valuable resources include college websites, college catalogs, and Internet search engines.
- Register to take the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) and study for it. Test results are used to qualify for National Merit Scholarships.
- Register and begin preparing for ACT and SAT tests.
- Watch for local college fairs and attend these programs. These are great ways to gather a lot of information about a number of different institutions.

OCTOBER

- Take the PSAT. You are allowed to use a calculator for the math portion of the test so be sure to bring one with you to the test.
- Take the ACT and/or SAT.
- Watch for college representative visits to your high school. If interested in a particular college or university, sign up in the MRH High School College Center to visit with that representative.

NOVEMBER

- Continue to research institutions. You should have a long list (approx. 10-15 schools) on your list.
- Visit with college admission representatives when they are at your high school.
- Attend local college fairs to continue to gather information about prospective institutions.

DECEMBER

- When you receive your PSAT score report, use the score guide to help you interpret your results.
- Investigate which exams the colleges to which you are interested in applying require. (SAT, SAT subject tests, ACT, or COMPASS)
- Take the ACT or SAT if you have not already done so.

JANUARY

- Begin scheduling campus visits to the colleges on your list of prospective institutions.
- Make an appointment to meet with the Mr. Harcharic to discuss college plans and processes.

FEBRUARY

- Take the ACT if you have not done so or for another score.
- Start investigating private scholarships and other student aid programs. You may be able to get funding from an organization with which you or your family is

affiliated. The MRH High School College Center keeps a notebook and file cabinet for all the local and private scholarships available.

MARCH

- Register for the ACT or SAT exams if you have not done so already.

MAY

- Continue investigating colleges you are interested in and knocking schools off your list you are no longer interested in pursuing.
- Do campus visits to schools still on your list.
- Take any Advanced Placement (AP) exams you are eligible to take.

A PLANNING CALENDAR FOR SENIORS

SEPTEMBER

- Revise and update your college list based on your research and college visits. It is a good idea to have your list pared down to about 5-8 schools to which you plan to apply.
- Complete and return the MRH High School Transcript Release Form to the MRH High School College Center. This way when you are ready to request your transcript to be sent to the schools you are applying to, there will not be any delay.
- Make an appointment to meet with the Mr. Harcharic to discuss college plans and discuss the process of turning in applications.
- Make a detailed list of registration and test dates for the ACT and SAT exams, college application deadlines, housing deadlines, and financial aid deadlines.
- Gather college admission applications. Review these to see all that is necessary for each additional application process. Begin preparing them.
- Sign up for the required tests you have not completed or wish to take again. You should take these exams at least six weeks prior to the college admission deadline to ensure scores will be available.
- Meet with college reps that come to MRH High School, the MRH College Fair and local college fairs for visits for any additional information you may need.

OCTOBER

- Begin drafting college application essays.
- Request required letters of recommendation, at least three weeks in advance of the deadline, from your teachers, community leaders, and employers. Furnish an addressed, stamped envelope when making the request.
- If applying for Early Decision, you should complete your application and request school transcripts at least three weeks in advance of deadline. Remember, yours is not the only transcript being processed!
- Start pursuing any outside local or private scholarships. Watch for deadlines!
- Register for the NCAA Clearinghouse if you are a Division I or II prospect.
- Check to see if your colleges require the CSS Profile for financial aid consideration.

NOVEMBER

- Continue working on college applications.

DECEMBER

- Continue to pursue any outside funding and scholarships.
- Continue working on college applications. If you applied for Early Decision, you should be receiving your decision letter in early December. If you were not accepted, complete applications for alternate choices.
- Take the ACT and/or SAT again if needed.
- Turn in any Mid-Year Reports to the College Center that need to be mailed.

JANUARY

- Complete and submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after Jan. 1. The FAFSA may be accessed on-line at www.fafsa.edu.gov. Completing the FAFSA on-line is recommended as it cuts the process down in about half of the normal time.

FEBRUARY

- Continue to apply for local scholarships.
- Complete and turn in any last minute applications.

MARCH

- About four to six weeks after you submit the FAFSA, you will receive the results in the form of a Student Aid Report (SAR). Send the SAR to any of your chosen colleges, if they have not received a copy. The SAR will tell you the amount of money your family is expected to contribute (expected family contribution or EFC) and whether you qualify for any federal or state funded programs or any loans.

APRIL

- Most schools notify students by April 1 (if not before). Read all the material you receive. Pay attention to instructions.
- Review all financial aid award letters.
- Based on all information received, decide on the school that is best for you.
- Inform the institution you plan to attend and turn in any paperwork along with the tuition deposit.
- Advise the schools you do not plan to attend of your decision. This can be done via phone, email, or letter. This allows the school to admit from their wait list and frees up any funds for other students.
- May 1 is the national deadline for notifying schools of your intentions. If you do not notify the schools, you will be dropped from their list and will lose all scholarships and housing reservations.
- Write thank you notes to those who awarded you scholarships.
- Turn in your final transcript request form to the College Center.
- Contact colleges directly for official transcripts if you have taken part in any Advanced College Credit programs

MAY

- Enjoy your final few weeks of life at high school.
- Graduate!! Congratulations!!

SELF-EVALUATION

DETERMINING YOUR GOALS

Deciding to attend college and what college to attend are some of the biggest decisions you will make in your life. Following are some questions to ask your self when beginning the process of making these decisions. A serious look at yourself will help you learn more about what you want to do with your life. Keep in mind this process may take some time to really gain valuable insight into who you are, so do not despair if answers are not readily available. Be honest and thoughtful with yourself!!

GOALS AND VALUES

- Which aspects of your high school years have been most meaningful to you? If you could live this time over, would you do anything differently?
- What values are most important to you? What do you care most about? What occupies most of your energy, effort, and/or thoughts?
- How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the future?
- What kind of person would you like to become? Of your unique gifts and strengths, which would you like to continue to develop?
- What would you most like to change about yourself?
- If you had a year to go anywhere and do whatever you wanted, how would you spend that year?
- What experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?
- What is your work ethic?

YOUR EDUCATION

- What are your academic interests? Which courses have you enjoyed the most? Which courses have been most difficult and have you not enjoyed?
- What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own? Consider interests pursued beyond class assignments: topics chosen for research papers, lab reports, independent projects, independent reading, job or volunteer work.
- How do you learn best? What methods of teaching and style of teacher engage your interest the most?
- What has been the most stimulating intellectual experience in recent years?
- In what learning environment do you learn most effectively? Do you need one on one instruction, or do you enjoy group projects?
- In what area of skills and knowledge do you feel most confident? What skills and knowledge are you least confident in? Have you been challenged by your courses?
- Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? Are your standardized test scores?
- Are there outside circumstances that have interfered with your academic performance? Consider such factors as after school jobs, home responsibilities or difficulties, excessive school activities, illness or emotional stress, parental influences, or other factors that are unique to your background.

ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

- What activities do you most enjoy outside the class? What activities have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made different choices?
- Do your activities show a pattern of commitment, competence, or contribution to other individuals, your family, and/or school?
- How would others describe your role in school or community? What do you consider your most significant contribution?
- After a long, hard day, what do you most enjoy doing? What is fun and relaxing for you? OTHER QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
- What do your parents and friends expect from you? How have their expectations influenced the goals and standards you set for yourself?
- What is the most controversial issue you have encountered in recent years? How did you deal with it?
- Have you encountered people who think and act differently from you? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself?
- How would someone who knows you well describe you? What are your strengths and weaknesses? How have you grown or changed during your high school years?
- Which relationships are the most important to you and why? Describe the people whom you consider your friends? In what ways are they similar to or different from you?
- How do you respond to pressure, competition, or challenge? How do you react to failure, disappointment, or criticism?
- How important to you are approval, rewards, and recognition?
- What are the best decisions you have made recently? How much do you rely on direction, advice, or guidance from others?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TRANSCRIPT

The next step in understanding yourself is to understand where you stand academically. What does your academic record say about you? Do you think your academic record accurately reflects your abilities? How can you make the most of your record to help you in the college search process?

At your high school, your transcript reports courses and grades earned beginning in your freshman year of secondary school (whether at your present high school or at a previous school) as well as summer school and correspondence courses.

Some colleges and universities require that you send your standardized test results directly from the testing services themselves. If you ask for your scores to be sent at the time you take the test, there usually is no extra fee. If you ask that your scores be sent at a separate time from the test, a processing fee will be required by the testing services. It is your responsibility to know which of your colleges require score reports from the testing services.

Colleges and universities require an **official transcript** (one which bears the seal of the school and the original signature of a school administrator) for admission consideration. An official transcript cannot be released directly to a student or parent or guardian. It must be sent directly from your high school to the party requesting it. Students and their parents or guardians are welcome to request an unofficial transcript at any time. Also, we must have a signature on file in order to release a transcript whether it is official or unofficial.

Students and parents or guardians are welcome to stop by the College Center at any time to request a transcript. If a student is not yet 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must also sign the transcript release form.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE

DEVELOP A STUDY SCHEDULE

Develop a study schedule that works for you and stick with it. Developing some discipline in your habits while still in high school will make the adjustment easier when you get to college where no one will tell you to study!

PRACTICE

Practice your writing skills – especially if you do not enjoy writing. Whether it is something you like or not, writing is a critical skill for success in college and the workplace!

TRY

Try to get some practice with speaking in front of a class or other group. Some majors require more of this type of skill than others. Inevitably, you will have to make oral presentations, and believe it or not, learning to do them well can help you develop confidence across the board!

THINK ABOUT

Think about careers of interest to you. Many students change career directions and majors several times in their undergraduate year so you do not have to make up your mind right now. However, it is a good idea to be thinking about some of your long-term goals!

READ

Read the newspapers or a news magazine. Watch the national news on TV. Stay informed about local, national, and international news!

TALK TO FRIENDS

Talk to friends, relatives, and others who have gone to college. Ask for their advice on how to succeed academically and adjust well to college life.

MAKE UP YOUR MIND

Make up your mind that you want to succeed. Have a positive attitude and believe in yourself!

Information from *College Planning 101* presented by the University of Missouri, Columbia.

THE COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS

Below is a summary that addresses the most common considerations that students and their families deal with when choosing a college.

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

A COLLEGE is an institution that offers educational instruction beyond high school level in a two or four year program.

A UNIVERSITY is an institution that grants degrees in a variety of fields and is composed of a number of schools or colleges, each of which encompass a general field of study. Universities are typically much larger than colleges. In most cases, students apply to an individual school or college within the university; example: College of Arts & Science, College of Fine Arts.

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE

PUBLIC institutions are supported primarily through funds from the state in which that school resides. The taxpayers of that state support them. Therefore, you will pay more to attend a public institution that is not in your state of residence. Admission standards will vary from public school to public school in a particular state and from state to state. It is usually more difficult to get admitted as an out-of-state applicant to a public institution due to state mandates.

A PRIVATE college is primarily funded through tuition and money raised from private resources (i.e. alumni, corporations, foundations, etc.). You pay the tuition price whether you live in the state or not. These schools have the same admission criteria and requirements for all applicants. These requirements are determined by the school faculty, administration, and governing board.

IN-STATE OR OUT-OF-STATE

This only refers to public institutions. You will pay a lower tuition rate for a public institution in Missouri because you and your family have supported the school indirectly through your taxes. An OUT-OF-STATE public institution is a school that is publicly funded but that is out of the state of Missouri. You will pay a higher tuition rate to attend one of these schools since you and your family have not supported the institution through taxes. Typically, out-of-state public schools tend to be more selective in their admission choices for out-of-state students. Generally, they also tend to provide less financial aid to out-of-state students.

RESEARCH, COMPREHENSIVE, OR LIBERAL ARTS

I. RESEARCH colleges and universities emphasize research. While not always the case, research institutions tend to be large schools with extensive graduate programs. Graduate students who are hired as teaching assistants often teach undergraduate students. These schools offer opportunities to participate in this research.

Examples of RESEARCH institution:

- *Harvard University*
- *Purdue University*
- *Washington University in St. Louis*
- *University of Missouri, Columbia*

II. COMPREHENSIVE schools offer both undergraduate and graduate programs in a wide variety of academic disciplines. They generally base their focus on outcomes, i.e. helping a student reach his/her career goal. They tend to serve a wide array of needs for their regional communities like graduate programs, continuing education, and off-campus courses.

Examples of COMPREHENSIVE institutions:

- *St. Louis University*
- *Truman State University*
- *Southeast Missouri State University*
- *Bradley University*
- *Elon College*

III. LIBERAL ARTS colleges tend to emphasize undergraduate education. They also tend to be though not always private and smaller in enrollment numbers but not always. The emphasis is on teaching undergraduate students rather than on research. These colleges feel students are best served for their futures by having a broad-based education in a variety of subject areas.

Examples of LIBERAL ARTS colleges:

- *William Jewell College*
- *Drury University*
- *Rhodes College*
- *DePauw University*
- *Oberlin College*

JUNIOR/COMMUNITY COLLEGES

These two-year institutions provide academic programs that lead to an Associate's Degree. Students can then transfer to a four-year institution to get their Bachelor's Degree if they so choose.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL

This two-year institution offers terminal occupational programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment in the field. These schools may also offer one-year certificate programs in certain crafts and clerical skills.

TRADE SCHOOL

It offers specialized training in specific work field such as cosmetology, computer technology, medical or dental technology, culinary arts, and drafting. Programs can vary from certificate, diploma, associate, and bachelor degree.

MILITARY SCHOOL

There are federal military academies that prepare officers for the Navy, Army, Air Force, and Marines. To be admitted requires a U.S. Senate or Representative to nominate and recommend you. Private and state supported military institutions including the U.S. Coast Guard, operate on a regular admissions process.

COLLEGE ADMISSION COMPETITOR SELECTOR

This selector is not a RATING; it is an attempt to describe in GENERAL TERMS the situation a prospective student will meet when applying for admission. When referring to the Selector, please remember that colleges consider several or all of the following factors when determining admission eligibility: difficulty of high school coursework, grades in academic courses, grade point average, standardized test results, leadership roles, involvement at school, involvement in the community, special talents, academic interests, evidence of exceptional motivation.

| Admission Competition Categories | Educational Opportunities | Class Rank | Grade Point Average | Standardized Test Scores |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Most Competitive: Superior students encounter a great deal of competition in this category. These schools admit fewer than one-quarter of their applicants. These schools go beyond outstanding academics and look for a student who is outstanding outside of class as well as inside the classroom.</p> | <p>Approximately 60 colleges</p> <p>The traditional Ivy League schools like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, etc. as well as schools like Stanford, Duke and Rice</p> <p>The military academies</p> | <p>In general, require students to be in the top 5% to 10% of their classes with the most difficult course selection</p> | <p>Grades of A with perhaps a few A – grades.</p> | <p>Median freshmen tend to score between 1350 – 1600 on the SAT I and greater than a 30 Composite Score on the ACT.</p> |
| <p>Highly Competitive: Generally, these schools admit one-third to one-half of their applicants, but may accept fewer than one-quarter who apply.</p> | <p>Approximately 100 schools</p> | <p>Accept most of their students from the top 20% - 25%</p> | <p>A grade of B + or better will be required</p> | <p>Median freshmen score between 1250 – 1310 on the SAT I and 28 or better on the ACT.</p> |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| <p>Very Competitive: Generally, these schools accept one-half to three-quarters of their applicants, although some schools in this category may accept fewer than one-third of their applicants.</p> | <p>Approximately 250 schools</p> | <p>Accept most of their students from the top 30% - 40%</p> | <p>A grade of no less than a (B-)</p> | <p>Median freshman score between 1110 – 1200 on the SAT I and an ACT Composite Score of 25 or higher</p> |
| <p>Competitive: This is a very broad category. Generally accept three-quarters or more of their applicants. In some cases, may accept fewer than one-half of their applicants.</p> | <p>More than 700 schools</p> | <p>Prefer students in the top 40%-60%</p> | <p>Some colleges require a grade average of (B-) or better. Others state a minimum of (C) average</p> | <p>Median freshman score between 950-1050 on the SAT I and/or ACT Composite Score of 22 or higher</p> |

CHOOSING A COLLEGE

Choosing the right college can seem like a rather daunting task. After all, your college education and overall experience will affect the rest of your life.

With over 3000 colleges and universities in the country, it can become overwhelming to narrow your focus to just the few to which you want to apply for admission. If you do not have an absolute priority like an unusual major, a special learning need, or a unique talent, your choices are wide open.

There are many factors to consider when choosing a college, but following are some of the key factors you should consider:

1. Distance from home

Do you want to live close to home or live far away? Being close to home can hinder your ability to experience independence, but being too far may make you lonely.

2. Size of school

Do you learn better in a smaller learning community or would you like to be in a large lecture hall? Small schools will offer you more personal involvement, a community atmosphere, and smaller classes, whereas the larger schools tend to be more impersonal, make it easier for you to be anonymous, and have much larger classes.

3. Setting – suburban, urban, or rural

Do you want to be in a rural area, in the heart of a large city, or at least have access to a larger city?

4. Academics

Consider the majors, academic support services or honors programs each school has to offer. Do you have any special educational needs?

5. Campus life

Consider the diversity of the campus, residence halls, campus clubs and organizations, fraternities and sororities, and religious programs and opportunities.

6. Overseas study opportunities

Are you interested in studying for a semester or year in another country? Do you want to study abroad as a part of a university-led tour group or independently?

7. Admission Criteria

Do you have the required standardized test score and grade point average needed for admission? What is the percentage of students admitted? What courses are required or strongly recommended for admission?

8. Cost

Do you have the flexibility to consider an expensive private or public institution or

are you limited to a less expensive school?

9. Scholarships and Financial Aid

Will you qualify for any institutional academic scholarships? Are there other scholarships for which you can apply?

10. Reputation

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the institution?

One of the most commonly asked questions is, “How many colleges should I apply to?” There is no universal answer to this question since each individual is different. Some students may only apply to one or two schools while others may apply to ten or twelve. Neither approach is best. After carefully investigating your requirements of a college, you should be able to narrow your choice to approximately 6-8 schools that provide the services you desire. As you are narrowing your choices, you may want to consider placing the schools into the following categories:

Reach Schools – These schools may be “long shots” based on your credentials, the admissions selectivity, and the overall cost of the university; however, consider stretching yourself and taking the risk to apply to these institutions.

Good Match/Target Schools – These schools should possess significant features you want in a school, and it should be realistic that you will be admitted.

Safety Schools – These schools will have many of the features you are looking for, and admission is highly likely.

While there is no hard and fast rule regarding these categories, including one or two schools in each category is sufficient. You want to make sure you apply to at least two “good match” or “safety” schools to insure you will be accepted and be able to make a choice when the time comes.

A FEW POINTS OF CAUTION

1. Many students spend hours deciding on their top few choices and very few minutes on their fifth or sixth choice. It is strongly advised that you take time in considering those choices as you may end up at one of those schools if admission and/or financial aid at your first choice(s) are not offered. You want to make sure your “safety” schools reflect the needs you desire, not just because they are inexpensive or admission is not as difficult.

2. Some students feel that schools that fall into the “good match” or “safety” categories are not as good as those in the “reach” category. This is not necessarily the case. The selectivity may be stricter in some schools so your chances of admission may be decreased. In many cases, your good match and safety schools may be just as good to serve your purposes. You need to find the fit that is best for you!!

3. Not all of the “good” schools are in the East. As a result of this country’s growth and where the first settlements began, the majority of colleges are located in the East. Schools outside this region offer similar programs that may even be better than those within that region.

RESOURCES TO HELP IDENTIFY SCHOOLS

1. College Fairs

This is a good way to gather information from a variety of institutions and talk to admission representatives. Starting this year, MRH sponsors a district fair that rotates between the four high schools. The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) also sponsors a national fair in St. Louis every year. This fair is typically the third Sunday in October and is held at Saint Louis University. Normally between 350-400 institutions are present. In addition, there is the Missouri ACAC held at Maryville University the last Sunday of April every year. This fair typically has between 200-250 institutions present. Watch the bulletins, newsletters, and bulletin boards for information on these fairs and others in the area.

2. Admission Representative visits to MRH High School

These visits should be treated as a way to gather information, not as a replacement to the campus visit. Colleges recruit heavily in the fall (Sept., Oct., and Nov.) and less so in the spring (Feb., March, and April). In these meetings, you are able to meet an admission representative, receive literature and an application, and ask questions. To make these meetings most advantageous, you should know which schools you want to meet with that have programs in which you are interested. Watch the bulletin and bulletin boards for dates and times of college visits. If you are interested in signing up to meet with a certain college representative, stop by the MRH High School College Center.

3. College and University Files

In the MRH High School College Center, we have book shelves full of information about many of the college and universities across the United States. You are welcome to take any of the information as you need it. For the most part, those files are updated yearly.

4. College Resource Books

In the MRH High School College Center, there are a number of resource books to help you with your college selection process. Check with Mr. Harcharic if you are interested in checking any of these books out.

5. “Navigating the Web for College Bound Students” (see appendix)

Many of these search engines will generate lists of schools based on how you answer specific questions. They are helpful for general information and will have links to the individual college web sites if you want further and more concise information. See Appendix.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many students have additional factors that are primary considerations for them in the college choice process. Those factors may outweigh other college characteristics or they may be just something else to keep in mind. For several of these factors there are special “rules” to keep in mind as you go through the college choice process.

These factors include the following:

1. Athletics
2. The Fine and Performing Arts
3. Learning and Physical Disabilities
4. Military Academies and ROTC
5. Minority Interests

If you are considering or find yourself in any of the categories listed above, you are encouraged to speak with your college counselor. We have more detailed information that is pertinent to each of these areas. Below are some general guidelines for your information.

1.ATHLETICS: Refer to the NCAA section in this booklet.

2. THE FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS: If you plan on studying a fine or performing art in college or wish to compete for a scholarship in the fine or performing arts, you will need to be prepared to present either an audition or a portfolio. The following tips will help you showcase your talents and skills when preparing for an audition or a portfolio review.

A. MUSIC AUDITIONS

If you intend to apply to a selective music program in a college, you are strongly encouraged to create a recorded tape and a short document outlining your past musical achievements at your high school and elsewhere. Creating a tape and resume will showcase your musical abilities and help to set you apart from many other applicants. **Please check carefully about each school’s audition procedure. The earlier you register, the better, as spaces will quickly fill up.**

Tape Format:

1. The tape should be professionally recorded with high quality equipment.
2. Choose your pieces wisely. Choose pieces that demonstrate your different strengths.
3. Do not make the tape too long.
4. Send the tape to both the College Admissions Office and the appropriate member of the school’s music department.
5. Be sure to label both the tape box and the actual tape with your name and some other identifier, i.e. your social security number or address.

B. DANCE AUDITIONS

At many four-year colleges, an open class is held the day before auditions. A performance piece that combines improvisation, ballet, modern, and jazz is taught, and the students will be expected to perform the piece at the audition. Dance programs vary, so check with the college of your choice for specific information.

C. THEATER AUDITIONS

Most colleges do not require that a student audition to be accepted into the theater department, unless the college offers a Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) degree in theater. Although colleges and universities differ, generally those students who are auditioning for Theater should:

- prepare two contrasting monologues.
- prepare pieces that do not exceed 5 minutes.
- take a theater resume and photo to the audition.
- choose a monologue where you play only one character.
- MEMORIZE your selection.

Check with the school to ensure you are aware of their audition procedures.

D. ART PORTFOLIOS

The pieces you select for your portfolio should demonstrate your interest and aptitude for a serious education in the arts.

- Make your portfolio as clean and organized as possible.
- Some colleges may differ, but most will be looking for a selection of slides documenting your work, usually no more than twenty submitted in a slide file page.
- Slide portfolio should be presented in a standard 8 1/2 x 11 plastic slide sleeve.
- You should include a brief Artist Statement, which describes your interests and investment in the visual arts.
- It is important to protect your work, but make sure the package you select is easy to handle and does not interfere with the viewing of the artwork.
- Label each piece with your name, address, and high school.

3. LEARNING AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES:

A. What is a Disability?

A student is considered to have a disability if he or she meets at least one of the following conditions. The student must:

- Have a documented physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, learning, working, or performing manual tasks.
- Have a record of the impairment.
- Be perceived as having such an impairment.

B. PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

A Physical Disability is any impairment of speech, vision, hearing, and mobility.

C. LEARNING DISABILITIES

A Learning Disability is an array of biological conditions that impede a student's ability to process and disseminate information. A learning disability is commonly recognized as a significant deficiency in one or more of the following areas: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematical calculations, problem solving, sustained attention, time management, or social skills.

D. LEGAL RIGHTS OF DISABLED STUDENTS

The following legislation mandates that colleges and universities receiving federal financial assistance cannot discriminate in the recruitment, admission, or treatment of students.

Students with specific disabilities have the right to request and expect accommodations, including auxiliary aids and services that enable them to participate in and benefit from all programs and activities offered by or related to the school.

1973 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act states: "no otherwise qualified individual...shall, solely by reason of...handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

1990 ADA (the Americans with Disabilities Act) Requires educational institutions at all levels, public and private, to provide equal access to programs, services, and facilities. Schools must be accessible to students, as well as to employees and the public, regardless of any disability.

STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- Be sure that your disability is well documented and current, within 18 months of graduation.
- Encourage your teachers to include in their letter of recommendation how you have learned to work and cope with your disability.
- Learn the federal laws that apply to students with disabilities.
- Visit several colleges and universities and make appointments to talk with the individual/s facilitating the support programs available on the campus.

- Ask about the services available and how to access these services. Ask about the college's expectations for students with disabilities.
- Ask to talk with other students who have similar disabilities to learn about their experiences on campus.
- Ask if there is an additional cost for support services and request detailed information concerning the cost structure.

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR DISABILITIES INFORMATION

Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) <http://www.ahead.org/>

Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA) <http://www.add.org/>

Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders (CHADD) <http://www.chadd.org/>

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) <http://www.cec.sped.org/>

International Dyslexia Association <http://www.interdys.org/>

LD On Line www.ldonline.org

Coalition of leading organizations in the field of learning disabilities dedicated to improving public awareness. Get questions answered; browse the bookstore, and more.

National Center for LD www.LD.org

LD Resources

www.ldresources.com

Publishes essays on a variety of topics and many other resources

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic

www.rfbd.org

Publishes essays on a variety of topics and many resources

Note: Many colleges now have applications online. Students with learning disabilities like completing these directly on the computer. This process avoids the problem of illegible handwriting, allows for corrections, and allows students to send them promptly.

4. MILITARY ACADEMIES AND ROTC: Entrance into any of the Military Academies is among the most competitive in the U. S. Students should prepare early and be in regular contact with both their academy liaison officer and their college counselor. For students interested in military service and college, you should investigate ROTC scholarships as well. Information about ROTC scholarships and life in the military may be obtained at www.todaysmilitary.com.

ACADEMY ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- A. You begin the application process in the spring semester of junior year. Contact the appropriate liaison officer for special requirements for any academy. Below are the admission criteria used by the United States Air Force Academy.
- B. Admissions is based on a composite score based on academic and leadership competencies:

70% - ACADEMIC COMPETENCIES

- High school coursework: 4 years college prep English, 4 years advanced math, 3 years lab science, 3 years foreign language (desirable typing, computer science)
- Number of advanced placement and/or accelerated courses
- GPA (in academic courses only)
- Test scores: PSAT (pre-candidate only), SAT I, ACT (complete testing in junior year)

30% - LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

- Physical aptitude (pull-ups, sit-ups, push-ups, running)
- Athletic activities

All graduates of the military academies have a five-year active duty military obligation. Contact an academy liaison officer (9th grade is not too early) to develop appropriate plans to meet all academy requirements and timelines for admissions. The names of local liaison officers may be obtained from your College Counselor Mr. Harcharic

LOCATIONS

Air Force Academy: Colorado Springs, Colorado 80840 www.usafa.edu

Coast Guard Academy: New London, Connecticut 06320 www.cga.edu

Merchant Marine Academy: Kings Point, New York 11024 www.usmma.edu

Military Academy: West Point, New York 10996 www.usma.edu

Naval Academy: Annapolis, Maryland 21402 www.usna.edu

5. MINORITY INTERESTS: Many students have an interest in pursuing opportunities available because of their ethnic background. There is a wealth of resources aimed specifically at these interests. Some of them are listed below:

A. ASPIRA of America, Inc.

144 I Street, NW, Suite 800 Washington, DC 20005
202-835-3600

B. HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

www.hbcuconnect.com (on-line reference for school listings, scholarships and more.)

C. INROADS

Buhl Building 535 Griswold, Suite 720
Detroit, Michigan 48226
313-961-6464
Fax: 313-961-6488

D. National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students (NSSFNS)

250 Auburn Avenue, NE Suite 500
Atlanta, Georgia 30314 404-577-399

E. United Negro College Fund (UNCF)

700 Penobscot Building Detroit, Michigan 48226
313-965-5550
Fax: 313-965-6886

THE CAMPUS VISIT

THE CAMPUS VISIT – GENERAL INFORMATION

The campus visit is an essential part of the college selection process. As you begin to identify schools you are interested in, you should attempt to visit as many of those schools as possible. These visits should help determine if this institution is someplace you can picture yourself for the next four (or five) years of your life.

When making an appointment for a college visit, you should keep the following things in mind:

1. When do I want to visit? Is a certain part of the year more convenient than another?
2. What particular day can I visit? Planning the visit when high school is not in session may be best. Have an alternate day in mind in case your first choice is not convenient for the college.
3. Who do I want to go with me? Do I want to go by myself, with my parents, or with my friends? Will I be more nervous if I am with others or by myself? If others do go with you, make sure you take the lead when you arrive by introducing yourself. If your parent(s) do go along, make sure they know what their role will be so you will not become embarrassed or upset.
4. Plan how much time it will take you to get to the school in order to make an appointment at a convenient time for you.
5. Consider staying on campus overnight if that option is available. Eating in the cafeteria, sleeping in the residence halls, and attending some classes will give you a better sense of what it is like to be a student on that campus.
6. If you are going to see more than one school in the same day in the same vicinity, make sure you allow enough time to see the schools without being rushed.
7. You should call the admission office a few days in advance to confirm your appointment, especially if it was made several weeks in advance.
8. If you run into delays or get lost, call the Admission Office to let them know you are going to be delayed and how long it may be before you arrive.
9. Ask that directions or a map be sent to you.
10. If you will not be able to make your appointment, contact the Admission Office to let them know. Many times, they will be able to reschedule with you at that time.

You should contact an Admissions Office at least two weeks prior to when you want to visit. This should give them ample time to get everything set up for you. If you are interested in meeting with a professor, attending a class, meeting with a coach, or spending the night, be sure to mention this when you call to set up your appointment. Some college campuses have set visit times whereas others are able to accommodate your schedule. Be prepared to be flexible.

You may want to schedule two visits, perhaps at a different time of the academic year. The summer is much more relaxed for you and the Admission Offices. However, you miss seeing what it is like when students are present. Thus, making two trips will enable

you to see the differences. Summer visits are especially good for first-time visits. If you like a school and it is still on your list you want to apply to, you should consider visiting again during the school year.

It is best to avoid an unscheduled drop in to an Admission Office. Many times the admission representatives will already be booked and unable to meet with you and a tour may not be available. You may get lucky and find out that they can accommodate you, but “dropping in” is discouraged and not a productive way to visit.

Most college campuses have “Visit Days”. These are group visit days that allow you to take a tour of campus, see an admission presentation, possibly meet with professors in major areas you are considering, and meet current students. These types of visits are a good way to get a general overview of a campus. If you like what you see and hear, it is probably best to go back for a more in-depth visit.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ON A CAMPUS VISIT

Speaking from personal experience as a former admission counselor, the worst college visit is one where the prospective student is not prepared and does not say anything in the admission interview. It is best to go with a list of prepared questions. It makes a great impression! In addition, when asked a question, answer thoroughly and with more than a simple “yes,” “no,” or “I don’t know.” Following are some questions to consider asking:

Academics

1. What are the admission requirements?
2. Do certain majors require an additional admission process (i.e. audition, portfolio review, etc.)?
3. Do you accept advanced placement credit or dual enrollment credit?
4. Is there an honors program or college?
5. Who teaches the classes: graduate assistants or professors?
6. What academic support services are available?
7. Is there a foreign language requirement for admission and/or graduation?
8. What kind of access is there to computers and technology on campus?
9. Are there opportunities to study abroad?
10. What kinds of services are available for students who are undecided about their majors?
11. What features of their major make it special, unique or particularly strong?
12. What is the average class size as a freshman and then in future years?
13. What is the student-faculty ratio?
14. How are academic advisors assigned? What kind of interaction will I have with my advisor?

Cost, Scholarships and Financial Aid

1. Including living expenses, what is the total estimated cost for one academic year?
2. Does it cost to park on campus? How do I apply for a parking permit?
3. What scholarships are available? What was the average academic scholarship awarded last year?
4. Is there a separate application for scholarships? If so, how can I get those

- applications?
5. Are the scholarships renewable? If so, is there a GPA requirement to maintain?
 6. How many students receive some sort of aid?
 7. What is taken into consideration for financial aid?
 8. What types of work-study jobs are available?

Student Life, Housing, and Other Services

1. What extracurricular activities are available? Leadership opportunities?
2. Are there sororities and fraternities on campus? What percentage of the campus is Greek?
3. What is the diversity of the student body?
4. How do I get athletic and event tickets? Is there a cost for students?
5. What kind of cultural opportunities are available on campus?
6. What percentage of students live on campus?
7. Am I required to live on campus?
8. Do students stick around on the weekends?
9. How are roommates assigned? If you have a problem with your roommate, how is it resolved?
10. Can I request a certain roommate?
11. What are the differences among the various residence halls?
12. What kinds of services are available for students with learning or physical disabilities?
13. What kinds of personal counseling and health services are available?
14. What steps is the university taking to make the campus safe?
15. Do I need a car to get around campus? Are basic services close to campus? Is there a public transportation system?
16. What is the surrounding community like?
17. What kinds of services are available for students who wish to take advantage of additional tutoring or extra help? 18. What kinds of internships, career counseling, and placement services are available?

The campus visit should be considered a time to look at a school and ask questions about programs, activities, cost, and to see the setting which will help you make a well-informed decision if this may be the place for you. The campus tour is one of the best times to ask candid questions about issues the Admission Office may have only touched on.

Many tour guides are current students who can give you insight from a student perspective. Take advantage of the opportunity to ask them lots of questions!

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING

**Maplewood Richmond Heights High School CEEB and ACT Code Number:
262-080**

Standardized tests are only one of the many factors which colleges use in the admission process. Tests provide the admission office with individual scores that are then compared to national performance. These tests help indicate and measure ability, achievement, and preparation for college. Following is a brief description of the major tests:

THE PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) is given in October for juniors and accelerated sophomores as a practice test for the SAT Reasoning test. It is a three-hour test consisting of two verbal, two mathematics, and one writing skills sections. Detailed results help to alert students to what areas they scored best/worst in and predict an approximate equivalent score for the SAT Reasoning test. The PSAT is unique in that you receive your test booklet and correct answers with your results. Thus, you can go back and check your work. Of the 1.2 million students who take the test annually, 15,000 become National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists that can later lead to academic honors. You should take the PSAT even if you are remotely interested in college since it gives you necessary practice.

THE SAT REASONING TEST

The SAT Reasoning test (formerly SAT I) is a measure of the critical thinking skills you will need for academic success in college. The SAT assesses how well you analyze and solve problems. There are three sections to the SAT: Critical Reading, Math, and Writing. Each section is scored on a scale of 200-800, and the writing section will contain two sub scores. Each section contains multiple-choice questions and the new Writing section also contains a 25-minute written essay. The short essay measures your ability to organize and express ideas clearly, develop and support the main idea, and use appropriate word choice and sentence structure. The essay will be scored by trained high school and college teachers. Each reader will give the essay a score from 1 to 6 (6 is the highest score) based on the overall quality of the essay and your demonstration of writing competence. The SAT is given seven times throughout the year. (This information was taken directly from www.collegeboard.com.) Visit this web site for more information and test dates.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS

SAT Subject Tests (formerly SAT IIs) are designed to measure students' knowledge and skills in particular subject areas, as well as their ability to apply that knowledge. Students take the Subject Tests to demonstrate to colleges their mastery of specific subjects like English, history, mathematics, science, and language. The tests are independent of any particular textbook or method of instruction. The tests' content evolves to reflect current trends in high school curricula, but the types of questions change little from year to year. Many colleges use the Subject Tests for admission, for course placement, and to advise students

about course selection. Some colleges specify the Subject Tests they require while others allow applicants to choose. It is best to check with each school you are considering to see what they require or recommend. The Subject Tests are offered in 17 different areas that include literature, U.S. History, World History, Math (Level 1 and 2), biology (ecological and molecular), chemistry, physics, Chinese, French, German, Spanish, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Japanese, and Korean. These are all one-hour, multiple-choice tests. Not all colleges require SAT Subject Tests so check to make sure if you need to take them. (This information was taken directly from www.collegeboard.com).

ACT ASSESSMENT TESTS

The PLAN (for tenth grade students) is a comprehensive assessment program designed to improve the secondary and post-secondary planning and preparation of students and to enable schools to assist students and their parents in this important process. Your high school administers the PLAN once a year, in mid-autumn. The PLAN measures academic development in four key subject areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. These four tests are complimentary in content to those of the ACT assessment.

The ACT Assessment test is designed to assess students' general education development and their ability to complete college-level work. The test covers four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science. These tests are all multiple choice. The tests emphasize reasoning, analysis, problem solving, and the integration of learning from various sources, as well as the application of these proficiencies to the kinds of task college students are expected to perform. Each section of the test is graded on a scale of 1-36 and an average composite score is given with the highest score possible being a 36. Starting in February 2005, there is an optional Writing test that is a 30-minute essay test that measures students' writing skills. The Writing test will be graded on a scale of 1 to 6 with 6 being the highest score. Two trained readers will read the essay so the highest score a student can receive on the Writing test is 12. Students will need to check with individual institutions they are applying to determine if the school requires the writing portion of the ACT. The ACT is given six times throughout an academic year. (Information was taken directly from ACT.org). Check ACT.org for more information and national test dates.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMINATIONS (AP)

The Advanced Placement tests are designed to provide a measure of academic competence that allows students to move ahead in college by taking advanced courses while in high school in an attempt to earn college credit. The tests are administered in May during the regular school day. Students should take the tests following the completion of a corresponding Advanced Placement course.

TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TOEFL)

The TOEFL measures the ability of nonnative speakers of English to use and understand North American English as it is spoken, written, and heard in college and university settings. Most people who take TOEFL are planning to study at colleges and universities where instruction is in English. The TOEFL test measures English language proficiency in reading, listening, writing, and speaking (new in September 2005). Some students, whose first language is other than English take

TOEFL instead of the ACT or SAT. It is best to contact the school you are considering to inquire what is required.

Stop by MRH High School College Center to pick up information packets about these tests. These packets include the dates of tests, deadline dates to register for the tests, registration forms, and any additional information you need regarding the tests. Students who have special needs may request special provisions (i.e. un-timed tests, longer time for testing, large print, etc.). These provisions must be approved by either ACT or The College Board regarding their respective test. For more information, stop by The College and Career Center.

A RESOURCE LIST FOR TEST PREPARATION SERVICES

A number of ACT prep courses are held prior to each national test date. All involve a fee for the program. Several area programs are listed below. Rockwood does not endorse any one program over another.

Independent Tutors

Dr. Jack Arnold, (314) 984-7058 or (314) 805-4561
Marianne Hockenhull, (314) 842-5461

Kaplan Test Prep

8448 Delmar, St. Louis, MO 63124
(314) 997-7791

Mackler and Associates

12647 Olive Blvd., Suite 110, Creve Coeur, MO 63141
(314) 434-4431

Saint Louis University, Speed Reading and Comprehension Course

221 North Grand Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63103
(314) 977-7234

Simply Math & Reading Learning Center

463 Lafayette Center, Ballwin, MO 63011
(636) 256-0022

Sylvan Learning Center*

453 N. Lindbergh Blvd., Creve Coeur, MO 63141
(314) 997-3035

*These programs have multiple centers throughout the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. Please consult the yellow pages for the location closest to you.

**The Focus on Learning program is offered here in St. Louis by William Woods faculty. It is specifically targeted to students who are attempting to raise their score on the ACT to at least a 30 composite.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW AND MEET ALL THE REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES OF THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO WHICH HE OR SHE IS APPLYING!!!

This cannot be emphasized enough. The college specialist will assist you with the process and assure you understand what is expected of you. It is still your responsibility to get it done and to get it done on time.

“PREPARE EACH APPLICATION AS IF IT IS THE ONLY ONE YOU ARE SUBMITTING!!”

Getting Organized

Once you have your list of schools to which you are going to apply, you should create some kind of organizing plan (i.e. computer spread sheets, index cards, etc.) that works for you. Below is a list of factors that you will need to consider and manage as you work on your applications for admission scholarships and financial aid.

1. What is required of each application?
 - a. An application form
 - b. Essay(s)
 - c. Resume of activities, leadership, community service, etc.
 - d. Teacher Recommendation(s)
 - e. Counselor/Advisor recommendation
 - f. Official Transcript from MRH High School
 - g. Standardized Test Scores
 - h. Peer Evaluation
 - i. Residency Form
 - j. Honors program application
 - k. Is there a separate scholarship application?
 - l. Do I have to file the Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA)?
 - m. Is the CSS Profile required for financial aid consideration?
2. When is each part due?
3. How must every element be submitted? Paper copy? On-line? All-in-one packet? What should I submit, and what should my college counselor submit?
4. How will I know when the application has been received?

TIPS FOR COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

1. **READ THE DIRECTIONS** and follow them explicitly.
2. **Complete the application NEATLY.** You may type, print legibly, or use your word processor to cut and paste your information. You are encouraged to use the Common Application whenever possible. The Common Application is a consortium of several hundred schools who all use a single application form. It is available to file on-line or may be downloaded, completed on the computer, then printed out. The Common Application is available at www.commonapp.org.
NOTE: Make sure you check to see if the schools you are applying to have any supplements. The supplements will be available either on the Common Application site or on the college's website.
3. **PROOFREAD, proofread, proofread!** This is equally as important when you submit an application online as it is when you do a hard copy version of the application. Spelling and grammatical errors are absolutely unacceptable.
4. **Keep a copy of all documents that you submit.** This includes when you apply on-line.
5. **Applying on-line.** Many colleges are encouraging students to apply on-line. You should apply on-line as long as you are completely comfortable with the computer. Here are a few recommendations if you do choose to apply on-line:
 - a. Always print a copy of what you are going to submit BEFORE you actually submit it.
 - b. Make certain that you print out the directions and READ THEM BEFORE you begin to complete the application.
 - c. Print out the "checklist" that colleges offer for the steps that you must complete after you submit the on-line application. This will include the list of additional documentation you submit or that our offices must submit in order to complete your application for admission.
 - d. If you do not submit the application fee on-line, MAKE SURE you give it to our offices to submit with your supplemental information.
 - e. It is recommended that you NOT SUBMIT your essays on-line. Rather, we recommend that you submit your essays as a supplemental item with your transcript. It is difficult to know what your essay will look like when it is uploaded by the college and printed out from their on-line application. You want to ensure that your essay is presented in the best light possible.
6. **Additional Pages:** If you need to use additional pages to answer any question on the application, be sure to put your name and the other identifier you are using at the top of EVERY additional page. This identifier could be your social security number, your address, or a number assigned to you by the school.
7. **Application Fee:** Be sure to securely attach your application fee to your application.

8. **Signature:** BE SURE to sign your application and the waiver statement on all forms you will be using to request a recommendation.
9. **Photographs:** If an application requests a photo, know it is always optional.

COLLEGE ADMISSION ESSAYS

Although you may wish for one, there is no formula for writing a successful college application essay. The primary consideration is that the essay truly reflects your individuality and your special qualities. Your approach should be determined by whom you are rather than by any guidelines established by other people.

The most important piece of advice is to find a topic about which you care. If you write honestly, your readers will have an opportunity to see your world through your eyes. Remember, colleges are looking for the essay to reveal your preferences, your values, and your thought process – who you truly are. Write your essay from your heart. Your life is not one-dimensional, and your application essay is one of the ways to make who you are come to life for a college.

Having said that, the following guidelines should be helpful:

1. **ANSWER THE QUESTION ASKED.** This is critical. Do not try to apply an essay for another essay to another question if it truly does not fit. Make sure you are answering what they are asking.
2. **Apply the writing skills you already know – all of them.** This is the time to show the writing skills that have been honed through your years in high school. Start by jotting down ideas or list of things you want to include. Develop a focus with a clear starting point, supporting information, and a strong conclusion.
3. **Write for impact.** Remember that your essay will be read quickly, so be emphatic, concise and vivid.
4. **Use Details!** Give specifics and examples; dig deep into yourself to reveal why you chose what you are writing about.
5. **Be technically perfect.** PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD. Do a rough draft, then have it reviewed by your English teacher and your college counselor. Make edits and go through the review process again. Spelling, punctuation, grammar and structure errors ARE NOT acceptable.
6. **Focus your essay.** Have one or two points to make. Do not try to cover your entire life or all of the problems of the world.
7. **Write about yourself.** Tell something specific to you. Even if you choose to answer a question that does not seem to be personal, explain why this question was the one you chose when you write your essay.
8. **Use your normal “voice.”** Put your thesaurus away. Use the first person but be careful of using “I” too often.
9. **Have a “catch.”** Make an impact from the first sentence.
10. **TYPE** your essay.

11. **Follow the directions.** Do not write an essay that is significantly longer than instructed. Make sure you complete the essay in the space provided if they specify where the essay must fit.
12. **Read your essay aloud** to locate any rough spots.

Some things you should make sure you DO NOT DO:

1. **DO NOT have anyone else write your essay.** This includes your parents. There is no such thing as just helping you get started.
2. **DO NOT use profanity.**
3. **DO NOT be general.** You must be specific, give details, bring your essay to life.
4. **DO NOT use overblown or pompous words.** You should sound like you are a high school senior.
5. **DO NOT use clichés or overused phrases** like “I learned a lot” or “it was interesting” or “really meaningful.”
6. **DO NOT use passive voice.**
7. **DO NOT use the same essay for totally different questions.** Yes, you can adapt an essay, but you cannot always use the same essay, word for word.
9. **DO NOT write a controversial essay:** remember you have no idea who will be reading your essay or their viewpoint in particular. So, you want to be careful about advocating for a very sensitive issue.

One final piece of advice:

PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD!!!!!!!

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

Most private colleges, competitive public schools, and some employers will request at least one letter of recommendation from a teacher. Colleges are looking for personal insights about applicants, not a reiteration of grades and test scores. The colleges want these letters to give insight into how you learn, how you contribute to the classroom, and what your attributes and aptitude are for learning.

The Teacher Recommendation is a shared responsibility between the applicant and the classroom teacher. The student must take an active role in obtaining teacher evaluations because this task is a voluntary one for the teacher. Do not leave this matter to chance. The following procedures will help clarify the process:

- **Choose carefully:** Most competitive colleges prefer letters from teachers of college prep courses (English, advanced math, science, history or foreign language), particularly those who taught you in your junior year. Make sure the teacher(s) you ask have not just positive things to say but can also address how you have grown as a student, ways in which you have gone beyond what is required, and how you have used the material to enhance the learning environment for everyone. It is okay to ask a teacher from a class where you did not earn all “A”s if this teacher can speak to how you overcame your struggles with the material.
- **Request politely:** Make personal contact in a quiet and one-on-one setting. Do not e- mail or ask in a crowded hallway during the change of classes. Give teachers plenty of time. This means at least two weeks although preferably you will ask them at the beginning of the school year. It is okay for teachers to write your letter without knowing exactly to whom it might go. They can always add additional comments later if they feel it is necessary for a particular college.
- **Discuss specifically:** Be clear about what you are asking. This is an academic recommendation, not a character reference. The essence of the letter is based on the teacher/pupil relationship in the classroom and emphasizes the student’s learning style, habits, and achievements. If you wish the teacher to touch on any specific points, you should be clear in your request.
- **Supply comprehensively:** Give each teacher a statement from you about why you are interested in the school, a summary of your plans for college and career goals. This information will be submitted for each school you are asking the teacher to recommend you to for admission. If the teacher is planning on mailing the letter directly to the institution, give them a self-addressed, stamped envelope using the high school’s address as a return address.
- **Follow-up:** Check-up periodically. Ask the teacher to let you know when they have mailed the letter or turned it into the MRH High School College Center. *NOTE: The teacher will mail the information DIRECTLY to the college or turn it into the MRH High School College Center to be mailed with the application. He/she should not return it to you.*

- **Thank graciously:** Write a thank you note to the teachers expressing your appreciation. This can be done as soon as you know that the letters have been sent.
- **Inform immediately:** As a matter of courtesy, inform the teachers who wrote for you of the college's decision. Acknowledge the team effort that brought you success, or acknowledge the work the teacher put in to assisting you even if the outcome was not a success.

Additional letters may come from the college specialist and other individuals who know you well. The general understanding is that these letters are confidential between the writer and the institution.

ADMISSION INTERVIEWS

The interview is probably one of the most misunderstood parts of the college search process. Very few colleges actually require interviews. Somewhere in the process, however, you may be offered the opportunity to interview with an admission officer, a student, an alumnus, or a professional interviewer. Whether required or not, if you have an interview with an admission representative, you need to remember that what occurs in the interview will have a bearing on the college when they are reviewing your file for admission. The impression you make can help or hinder your admission chances. So here are some tips to make the most out of your admission interview.

1. Colleges have different policies about interviews. As part of your organization process when you decide to apply to a college, be sure to check on the school's policy. If an interview is "recommended" or "required," you should take advantage of the opportunity.
2. The interview is, first and foremost, an exchange of information. You want to learn about the college while they are learning about you.
3. Be prompt and be neat. Be sure to allow yourself plenty of time to arrive at your interview. Dress appropriately. You do not need to wear a suit and tie but you should also avoid torn jeans.
4. Be prepared. Do your homework in advance. Know the school and know what you want to say about yourself. What do you still need to know about the school to make an informed decision about attending there? Why are you so "sold" on this school? What does your academic record and your activities say about you, and what does it not show about who you are?
5. Answer questions to the best of your ability. Be honest and forthright. It is okay to say you don't know the answer to a question, but also avoid giving one-word answers. There are no right or wrong answers. It is okay to pause for a moment before answering. Give yourself time to think.
6. Use good posture and make appropriate eye contact. Your college counselor will help you prepare. Sometimes these small details can make all the difference in the world.
7. Write a thank you note to the interviewer.
8. Be yourself at all times. Admission counselors are very keen and can perceive a lot about you by the way you talk, sit, and present yourself. Most of all, BE POSITIVE!
9. Have a list of prepared questions. *Refer back to the campus visit section*

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Now that you have applied to your chosen colleges and universities, it is time to sit back and wait, providing you have completed all of the admission requirements. Many schools have on-line systems where you can track your application status. Take advantage of this! It is important for you to be aware of the status of your application. However, colleges and universities are receiving thousands of pieces of mail a day during the applications season. These take time to process. Please allow 3-4 weeks for a school to receive your information and enter it into their system before requesting another copy to be sent.

Below are some other factors to consider while waiting on admission decisions:

1. Make sure to find out when and how decisions are made. Many schools operate on a rolling admissions basis meaning that an application file will be reviewed as soon as it is complete and a decision would be rendered within a few weeks. Other schools operate on a single decision date, meaning all decisions are held until a date determined by the Admissions Office.
2. It may be appropriate for you to visit the school again during this waiting period. This will give you another opportunity to see the campus and talk with school representatives and current students. Some campuses have Open Houses for admitted students.
3. Be aware of when you need to let a school know whether or not you will be attending. Many schools operate under the May 1 Candidate Reply Date, which is a national deadline date for accepting admission and financial aid packages. Others may have earlier deadlines. It is your responsibility to be aware of these deadlines. This is especially important for students who are planning to live on campus to avoid not having a residence hall room.
4. Once you have made your decision, inform the school of your decision by sending in writing or by sending in a required tuition deposit. Let the other institutions you have applied to, know of your decision not to accept their offer of admission and financial aid. This should also be done in writing.

OPTIONS OTHER THAN ACCEPTANCE INCLUDE:

WAITING LIST – If a school does not consider you one of their top prospects but does not want to deny you outright they may offer you the option of being put on the “waiting list.” If enough of the accepted students choose not to accept the school’s offer of admission, then you may be accepted. Basically, this keeps your chances of being admitted active. A date is usually given to you when a final decision will be made so you can plan accordingly. Only accept this offer if you are still genuinely interested in the school. Also, it is important to keep in mind commitments you may need to make to other institutions.

Deferral – A few students choose to defer admission for a semester or even a year. This allows them time to earn some money, travel, get work experience, or pursue some community service opportunities. You must ask the Admissions Office if you can defer and what the procedure is at each college. This is especially important for scholarship purposes. If you think you may want to wait a year before attending college, it is best to

apply in your senior year and then defer your enrollment.

Denial – If you were denied acceptance to a school, all is not lost. Hopefully you will have some idea as to the reason – applied to a highly selective school, poor academic achievement, low test scores, etc. If, however, you do not understand, you may want to call the Admission Office to inquire. They may be able to provide you with some answers so that you may improve yourself in the deficient areas. If you are truly interested in that particular school, inquire about appeal procedures or the possibility of transferring.

MRH High School's Application Procedures

To process your application(s) for admission, please follow these procedures:

1. It is your responsibility to know a college's deadline for submitting admission applications, your financial aid application, scholarship application, testing results, and housing and deposit deadlines. When looking at deadline dates, verify that the date is either a postmark date or has to be in the Admission Office by a certain date.
2. If you are applying to a college that requires a counselor letter of recommendation, you will need to stop by Mr. Harcharic's office to pick up a Counselor Recommendation Information Form. This needs to be filled out and returned to Mr. Harcharic's office at least 10 school days prior to your desired mailing date.
3. Colleges prefer that applications arrive complete, meaning they would prefer to receive one packet which contains all required materials for admission including the application, application fee, transcript, test scores, letters of recommendations, and essays. In order to facilitate this, please submit ALL of these items for your application to Mr. Harcharic or the College Center Secretary at least 10 school days prior to your desired mailing date.
4. If you are applying on-line, it is not necessary to print a hard copy of the application for our office. However, it is a good idea that you print a copy for your records. Please note on the Application Data Sheet/Transcript Release Form that you did apply on line. Print out a copy of all directions for what to submit in addition to your on-line application and bring it to our offices. We will then send all supplemental materials required to complete your application.
5. When you are ready to bring in applications, please bring them to Mr. Harcharic or the College Center Secretary. You will need to fill out an Application Date Sheet/Transcript Release Form for your 12th Grade Year. You only need to complete and submit one Transcript Form for up to 10 colleges/universities of your choice. We must have a signature on file to release your transcript. Regardless of if a student is 18, or is not yet 18 years of age, a parent or guardian's signature is also required. After you submit your initial Transcript Release Form to our offices, when ready you will also need to submit the school and address you would like your official transcript sent to Mr.

Harcharic or the College Center Secretary.

6. After you leave the applications with Mr. Harcharic or the College Center's Secretary, an official transcript will be prepared. Mr. Harcharic and/or the College Center Secretary will finalize whatever is necessary to complete (letter of recommendation, Counselor recommendation form, etc.) the application. The application will then be mailed from the office.
7. **As you begin to receive admission decisions from institutions, please let us know by turning in a copy of your acceptance letters to the College Center Secretary!**

FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION

For many families the cost of higher education has become a significant concern. How a family will pay for a college education can be a major factor in the college choice process. Regardless of your family's financial considerations, you and your parents should have a conversation at the BEGINNING of your college choice process about what the expectations are in terms of who will be paying for what and what kinds of resources will be available for your college education.

MERIT-BASED AID -- SCHOLARSHIPS:

Many colleges award moneys to students based exclusively on some kind of special merit, academics, athletics, musical ability, etc. These moneys are not based on a family's financial circumstances. Merit-based moneys may be awarded by colleges or by independent groups. All students are strongly encouraged to seek scholarships through both the schools they are applying to and through independent sources. You will find independent scholarships at the following:

1. The College & Career Center maintains files of scholarship applications.
2. The Internet: this is an excellent resource for all students. There are numerous sites but two of the best are: www.fastweb.com and www.collegenet.com.

A word of caution: Unfortunately, there are groups that engage in scholarship fraud. These companies attempt to take money from high school seniors and their parents. They are usually found online, via direct mail or via sales presentations marketing scholarship and financial aid "services." Many scholarship scams often make claims such as:

- The scholarship is guaranteed.
- You can't get this information anywhere else.
- I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship.
- The scholarship will only cost \$xx. (NEVER pay to apply for a scholarship)!!
- You've been selected by a "national foundation" to win a scholarship!
- You're a finalist!

NEED-BASED AID:

For a family who requires assistance in paying for a child's education, the system may seem daunting but it is in reality just another process that must be completed. So, once again it is critical to identify the necessary paperwork to be filed and the deadlines to be met.

Step 1: Application Forms

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) – The FAFSA is the form required to qualify for all federal and state financial aid programs. All colleges will require this form. This form is the core calculator in computing your family's contribution to your education. This calculation creates a number for you known as the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). This EFC will then be used by the colleges to award you financial assistance to

pay for your education. You can estimate your EFC on-line through such sites as www.finaid.org. The FAFSA may not be filed before January 1 of your senior year, and most colleges request that you file the FAFSA sometime between February 1 and February 28. You should plan on filing your FAFSA on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

CSS PROFILE – This form created and managed by the College Board is an additional information form required by select schools. The form gathers additional financial information from your family that is not gathered on the FAFSA. This form will revise your EFC for the schools that utilize the PROFILE. The PROFILE is available after October 1 of your senior year.

Schools require that you file the PROFILE over a wide range of deadlines. You must obtain the form by registering on-line at www.collegeboard.com

Institutional Forms – Some colleges have their own forms. You should consult with each school you are applying to for their financial aid application requirements.

Supplements – Some families will be asked to submit supplemental forms to the FAFSA and/or PROFILE. These forms are the Divorced-Separated Parent's Statement and the Business/Farm Supplement. Be sure to read the instructions carefully for each school you are applying to for information about the forms that you will be specifically required to submit.

Additional Information: You may be asked to submit additional information such as copies of your taxes. Submit all information requested of you in a timely manner.

Step 2: How Colleges Award Aid:

Calculating the Cost of Attendance: Colleges and universities award your financial assistance by using your EFC and subtracting it from the total cost of attending that school. The cost of attendance used to award you financial assistance is not the bill that you will be expected to pay. Your actual bill will include tuition, fees, room, and board. The cost of attendance includes all of those costs plus an allotment for travel, books, and personal expenses per year. It is wise for you to know both figures. What will your bill be and what are the total costs for your education each year?

Financial Aid Packaging: A financial aid package will be sent to you by each school that you file for assistance from and at which you are admitted. Each school's financial aid package will be different as each school will have a different cost of attendance and each school will view your EFC differently. Each financial aid package should contain the following information:

- Your parental contribution: Financial assistance starts with the premise that it is a family's responsibility to assist a student in paying for college. So, regardless of your family's personal expectations, the government and the colleges will expect that parents will contribute toward a student's education. This contribution is known as the parental contribution.
- Your student contribution: Financial assistance also assumes that a student will assist in paying for his or her college costs.
- Gift Moneys: These are moneys that are awarded without any expectation that they will be repaid. Scholarships and grants fall into this category. NOTE: Merit-based moneys will be considered as part of this category even if they were

awarded without regard to your family's financial circumstances.

- Self-help Moneys: These are moneys that are awarded with some kind of "repayment" obligation. Loans and work fall into this category. NOTE: All need-based financial aid packages will include self-help moneys.

Step 3: Calculating Your Real Costs:

Analyze your Financial Aid Package: Be sure to carefully read all of the information that is included with your financial aid package. You want to understand what portion of your aid is gift money versus self-help. You want to know what obligations come with each type of aid you are awarded. And, you want to understand what your final bill will be after your financial aid is subtracted.

Compare multiple offers: You should do an analysis of each financial aid package you receive. You should compare it based against the costs of that school and then against the other financial aid packages you receive.

Contact the financial aid office: If you have questions or feel that your aid package from one school is not comparable to another school's package, often discussing your questions and concerns with the financial aid office at each school will clarify your concerns. Some schools will change the financial aid package if you present additional information that warrants a change.

FEDERAL GRANTS AND LOANS

What are Grants?

Grants are available to many qualifying students and do not require repayment. Not all grants are renewable. Students remain eligible for grants as long as the terms and conditions of the grant are fulfilled. It is recommended to take the time to fully understand the terms and conditions associated with any grant awarded. Some people get grants and scholarships confused because the differences are very subtle. Grants are generally need-based, whereas scholarships are generally merit-based. Grants are awarded to students from many sources, including the state and federal governments. The state and federal government determine the eligibility of each student based on financial need. Grants may be available through the student's college or other sources. Some grants may be available based on the student's major, interests, and academic progress.

TYPES OF GRANTS

1. There are two types of federal grants:

A. Federal Pell Grant Program

Federal Pell Grants are awarded to eligible undergraduates pursuing their first baccalaureate or professional degree. The Federal

Pell Grant Program is portable, meaning it can be taken to any college. The maximum award is \$4,800 per year. The actual award amount is based on COA (cost of attendance), EFC (expected family contribution) and enrollment status.

B. Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)

FSEOG grants are awarded to eligible undergraduates pursuing their first baccalaureate or professional degree. This grant is awarded annually. The amount awarded, typically between \$100 and \$4,000, is determined by the school. This grant is not portable meaning it cannot be taken to any college.

2. State Grants

Some states offer grants. Visit the Missouri Department of Higher Education web site (www.dhe.mo.gov) to get information on Missouri grants.

Apply for federal and state grants by submitting the FAFSA.

LOANS

Federal loans are administered by the U.S. Department of Education and include Stafford, PLUS (Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students), and Perkins loans. Compared to private loans, these loans generally have lower interest rates and more favorable repayment terms for borrowers. Federal loans are made available to students and parents through private lenders, the U.S. Department of Education, and individual schools. The school determines the types and amount of federal loans offered to each school based upon information provided on the FAFSA.

Stafford Loan There are two types of Stafford Loans: Subsidized and Unsubsidized. To qualify for either Stafford Loan, a student must submit the FAFSA, be enrolled at least half-time and maintain satisfactory academic progress, be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, not be in default on a federal education loan, and meet Selective Service requirements. The borrowing limit increases throughout the college years. For example, the borrowing limits for 2008-2009 are \$3,500 for year 1, \$4,500 for year 2, and \$5,500 for years 3 and 4. The interest rate will vary, but is capped at 8.25%. Repayment begins six months after the student graduates or drops below half-time enrollment status.

Subsidized Stafford Loans are for students who demonstrate financial need. The federal government pays the interest while the student is in school at least half-time and during the six- month “grace period” and during deferment periods.

Unsubsidized Stafford Loans are available to students regardless of financial need. Students are responsible for the interest that accrues during the time they are in school and during the six- month grace period. Upon entering repayment, the accrued interest is added to the loan amount.

Federal Perkins Loan Federal Perkins Loans are need-based loans available through the school. Eligible undergraduate students can borrow up to \$4,000 per year. The

interest rate is 5% and is fixed for the term of the loan; repayment being nine months after the student graduates or drops below half-time enrollment status.

Federal PLUS Loans Federal Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) are credit-based loans that parents can use to help pay for their child's educational expenses. Typically, parents borrow PLUS loans to cover any school costs that remain after all financial aid such as grants, scholarships and other student loans are taken into account. Parents may borrow up to the cost of education minus financial aid awarded to the dependent student. The interest rate will vary, but is capped at 9%. Repayment begins within 60 days of the final disbursement (these loans are typically disbursed in two or more smaller payments) of the loan.

Apply for federal loans by submitting the FAFSA. In addition, the financial aid offices at the colleges your student is considering will help walk you through the loan process.

Note: students are not required to accept all the money that is offered to them.

FINANCIAL AID FACTS TO REMEMBER

- Once you apply for need-based financial assistance, it will take anywhere from a couple of weeks to six to eight weeks for you to receive information regarding a financial aid package. You will receive the following:
 - a. Student Aid Report (SAR) – this form is from the federal government and is a document that is based on your FAFSA application. It will show your EFC and what information was used to calculate this figure. This information will be sent anywhere from ten days (if you file electronically) to six weeks (if you file by paper) after you file the FAFSA. When you receive your SAR, you know that the colleges have received your EFC from the federal government and can begin working on your financial aid package.
 - b. Financial Aid Package – this is your actual financial award. You will receive one from each school to which you have been admitted.
- You must reapply for financial aid each year.
- Talk to the financial aid offices at each school to which you are applying. Each school will have its own requirements and policies regarding financial aid. These requirements and policies will dramatically affect how much you pay for a school and what types of assistance you will receive.
- If you transfer schools, your aid does not necessarily transfer with you. You will need to re-file for aid at the new school.
- The two most common forms used are the FAFSA and the PROFILE, but remember to check for other required forms. ALL schools require the FAFSA. All other forms vary by college.

- 75% of financial aid dollars are administered through the colleges. The federal government is the largest provider of funds for financial aid programs.
- It is not what a college says its costs are that matter for you – it is what you have to pay after financial aid is taken into consideration that matters. Don't write off a college because of the "sticker" price. Talk to the school about what financial options are available to you.

Refer to the Appendix for additional scholarship and financial aid information from scholarship.com.

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS WEB SITES

U.S. Department of Education – FAFSA on the web
www.fafsa.ed.gov

FastWEB
www.fastweb.com

A free scholarship search service that assists you in identifying scholarships that may be appropriate for you to apply. These scholarships are from college, universities and independent resources.

www.finaid.org

Provides links to many sources of information about financial aid and scholarship scams. Includes a calculator that can be used to determine your family's Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Missouri Student Assistance Resource Services
www.mostars.com

Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority
www.mohela.com

U. S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov/studentaid

American Student Assistance
www.amsa.com

Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education
www.afcpc.org

College and Career Planning
www.bridge-rayh.org/Cgood.html

The College Board: EXPAN Scholarship Search
www.collegeboard.org/fundfinder/bin/fundfind01.pl

College Scholarship Service
www.collegeboard.com/paying

Federal Trade Commission: Scholarship Scams
www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship

Scholarship Resource Network
www.rams.com/srn

The Student Guide: Financial Aid from the U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide

Sallie Mae
www.salliemae.com

Wiredscholar
www.wiredscholar.com
Student loans, scholarships, and minority information

FOR THE STUDENT ATHLETE

STUDENT ATHLETE'S FOUR-YEAR PLAN

FRESHMAN YEAR

1. Get to know all the coaches in your sport.
2. Work on your grades!!!
3. Attend sports camps.
4. Start thinking about a realistic analysis of your abilities in your sport. Camps and coaches can help with this. Now is the time to find out where you are in relation to other athletes in your sport and to work to improve your skills.
5. Start to investigate and think about your academic and career goals.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

1. Keep your grades up!!!
2. Talk to your coaches about your ambitions. How do these ambitions fit in with your abilities? What do you need to do now to make yourself an attractive prospect in the future?
3. Stay out of trouble!
4. Start identifying colleges and universities that interest you.
5. Take the PLAN and the PSAT.
6. Attend sports camps. If you have a first or second choice "dream college" that you would like to be recruited to attend, it is a good idea to attend sports camps where that schools' coaches are participating.

JUNIOR YEAR

1. Meet with your college counselor about your career goals, academic interests, and NCAA requirements.
2. Talk with your coach for a REALISTIC assessment of which college level you can play.
3. Take the PSAT (in October) and the ACT (in February)/SAT I (in January). Now is the time to see how you score and to work on improving those scores.
4. Attend college fairs and workshops on college admission.
5. Starting in January, work with your college counselor to create a list of appropriate colleges for you to explore.
6. VISIT college campuses. This is critical. You may meet with the coaches while you visit a campus but if you are considering becoming a Division I or Division II NCAA Athlete, you may not accept any free item from the coach or admission staff UNLESS everyone who visits the campus receives that item. This includes soda!!! If the coach provides you with any support of your visit costs, then it is an "Official Visit." You may only have five official visits while you are being recruited. These are done during your senior year.
7. Create your Athletic Resume, and, begin to compile tapes of your athletic performances.
8. Write letters to the coaches at each of the schools you are interested in attending. Include your Athletic Resume.

9. Begin to gather letters of recommendation from your coaches. This is particularly important to do from coaches that have worked with you outside of your high school – such as sports camps and on select teams.
10. At the end of your junior year (after you receive your final grades for the junior year), enter yourself on the NCAA Clearinghouse.
(www.ncaa.clearinghouse.net).
11. Attend sports camps.

SENIOR YEAR

1. Make sure you are registered with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
2. Write to the coaches at the schools you are interested in again with your senior sports schedule and with an update on any awards you may have received as well as an update on your summer athletic activities.
3. Finalize your SAT/ACT scores.
4. Finalize your college list.
5. Become informed of and aware of the “signing dates” for your sport.
6. If you have not visited all of the schools that are on your final list, plan those visits (official or otherwise).
7. Complete and submit your applications for admission.
8. Be 100% of your final choice before signing with any team.
9. Before committing to a school, sit down with your parents, your college counselor, and your high school coach to evaluate the pros and cons of each choice.
10. Once you make your final choice, write a thank you note to the other coaches you have been speaking with to let them know of your choice and to let them know you appreciated their time and assistance.
11. Make your final decision based on a meaningful college education, excellent career preparation, and a satisfying athletic experience (in that order)!

CHECKLIST FOR THE STUDENT ATHLETE

Use the following checklist to remind yourself throughout your junior year of the tasks you need to perform to find the “right” college experience.

GENERAL TO DO’S THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:

- ___ Meet with my college counselor to discuss the college search process.
- ___ Ensure that I registered to take both the SAT and the ACT.
- ___ Review my transcript to make sure that everything is correct and I understand what my academic record is going to look like to college admission office.
- ___ Begin to visit college campuses.

IN-SEASON TO DO’S:

- ___ Make note of any awards or honors received for athletics or academics. Did I keep copies of any time I was mentioned in the paper?
- ___ Make note of my statistics for this season and previous seasons.

POST-SEASONS TO DO’S:

- ___ Ensure that I met with my coaches to assess my performance and my potential to play in college. Did I get recommendations on colleges that I might be a good athletic fit at.
- ___ Ensure that I put together my Athletic Resume.
- ___ Ensure that I sent letters to coaches at all of the schools that I am interested in pursuing.
- ___ Review the NCAA rules regarding recruiting and eligibility.
- ___ Plan on attending an appropriate “showcase” program.

This form is adapted from Mike Koehler’s Football Coach’s Survival Guide, Prentice Hall.

WHAT EXACTLY ARE THE NCAA, THE NAIA, AND THE NJCAA?

College athletics are governed by one of three organizations:

- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)
- National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)
- National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

These governing bodies decide the rules and regulations that keep the various college sports and teams in line with what the organizations and their members determine are appropriate standards.

The NCAA is the largest and best known of the three organizations. Regardless of which of the three organizations governs the school you decide to attend and play a sport at, it is critical that you understand and abide by the eligibility requirements for that organization. In general, if you meet the eligibility requirements to be a NCAA Division I athlete, you will be eligible for the other organizations as well. However, you should check with each organization to be certain.

Websites:

- NCAA: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
- NAIA: www.naia.org
- NJCAA: www.njcaa.org

THOUGHTS ABOUT NAIA AND DIVISION III SCHOOLS **NAIA AND DIVISION III SCHOOLS:**

NAIA AND DIVISION III SCHOOLS:

High school athletes who are interested in playing a sport in college need to know a little bit about the NCAA's Division III schools. These generally are the smaller schools that don't receive national coverage by the media but that have every bit as much tradition and history as the major colleges – sometimes more. These schools are not allowed to award athletic scholarships, but more young athletes play in Division III schools than any other, and these athletes generally receive among the finest educations in the country.

The NAIA is an alternative organizing body to the NCAA. NAIA schools may award scholarships. They range in terms of size of school and types of programs offered. They offer programs that are competitive and carry as much tradition as many NCAA programs.

Think about these facts:

- Division III and NAIA colleges and universities constitute some of the best schools in the country. They are among the most prestigious and provide some of the best educational programs.
- Division III and NAIA schools provide some of the best placement opportunities in

- the nation after graduation – for both jobs and graduate schools.
- Most Division III and NAIA schools provide informal and personalized educations. Students usually get to know their professors quite well.
 - Division III and NAIA schools provide increased contact with professors and fewer contacts with graduate assistants.
 - Student athletes who are not being recruited by major college programs may still have the chance to play their sports in Division III and NAIA colleges.
 - Division III and NAIA schools tend to be extremely competitive both academically and athletically. They have some of the finest athletes in the nation.
 - Student athletes often receive preferential treatment regarding admission. *If you are competitive academically*, but maybe not quite as competitive as other applicants, your involvement in sports may help you get into Division III and NAIA schools.

WHAT THE SCOUTS LOOK FOR IN PROSPECTS

NOTE: This page was adapted from an article by Joe Butler specifically addressing what basketball coaches and scouts are looking for in a player.

What do college coaches and scouts look for in a high school prospect? There are many items so let's categorize them in no specific order.

- A. **Physical presence.** Whatever the requirements of your sport, coaches and scouts will consider how you physically resemble the best of players in the sport. So for instance, in basketball, how tall you are is a key factor.
- B. **Athleticism.** Speed, quickness, jumping ability, strength, etc. The basic physical attributes that will indicate you have the ability to develop into a top flight athlete in your sport.
- C. **Intelligence.** Many athletes think that because they are physically good that they do not need to worry about the intellectual side of the game or of life. This is a mistake on the athlete's part. More and more college coaches are looking for high school players that make great decisions both during the game and in life.
- D. **Intensity.** College coaches are looking for players who play hard each and every day. Players that give it all during practice, in the classroom and on the playing field.
- E. **Attitude.** An athlete's attitude can be a key factor for a college coach. Do you accept responsibility for your actions? Are you willing to accept direction from your coach? Will you take a backseat to other teammates when it is in the best interest of the team?
- F. **Fundamentals and Hard Work.** Last but not least, nothing is more pleasing for a scout or coach than to see an athlete who really knows the fundamental skills necessary for his/her sport. Too often athletes focus on their strengths and ignore their weaknesses. Players who continually work hard on improving all aspects of their sport are the ones most likely to be noticed.

NCAA INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY

All students who wish to be a scholarship athlete at an NCAA Division I or Division II school must file for Initial-Eligibility certification from the NCAA prior to being offered a scholarship. You may file any time after you complete your junior year of high school for your initial-eligibility through the NCAA website at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

The NCAA determines an athlete's eligibility for participation in college level athletics based on a formula of high school grades in select core courses and standardized test scores (ACT or SAT). The exact formula and core course requirements are listed on the NCAA website.

The following questions and answers are from the NCAA website:

1. How are students prioritized for processing at the clearinghouse?

Students who have their status requested by an NCAA institution are prioritized by the clearinghouse for processing. Students with disabilities and students who individually request a preliminary status report will also be prioritized. If a student's eligibility status is not prioritized in one of these ways, the clearinghouse may not process the student's file.

2. How is the NCAA core course grade point average different from a student's overall grade point average?

The NCAA core course grade point average is calculated using only NCAA-approved core courses in the required core academic areas. High school grade point averages generally include the grades from all courses attempted in grades nine through twelve.

3. May weighted grades for honors or Advanced Placement courses be factored into the calculation of the student's core grade point average?

A school's normal practice of weighting honors or advanced courses may be used as long as the weighting is used for computing grade point averages at the student's high school. Weighting cannot be used if the high school weights grades solely for the purpose of determining class rank. Additionally, in no instance may the student receive greater than 1.000 additional quality point for purposes of calculating the grade point average for initial eligibility.

4. What options are available to students who do not meet the NCAA initial-eligibility standards?

Students who do not meet the initial eligibility standards may be granted a waiver of their deficiency through the NCAA initial eligibility waiver process. NCAA academic committees are vested with the authority to authorize waivers of the initial eligibility requirements based on objective evidence that demonstrates circumstances in which a student's overall academic record warrants a waiver of the normal application of the legislation. The waiver must be filed by an NCAA institution (college or university) on behalf of the student. However, students with a diagnosed disability may file a waiver on their own behalf.

5. May courses taken in the eighth grade that are high school core courses (e.g. Algebra I, Spanish I, Freshman Composition) be used to meet the 16 core-course requirements?

Courses taken in the eighth grade may not be used to satisfy the core curriculum requirements regardless of the course content or level. However, in the rare event that students need to have courses taken in the eighth grade considered for eligibility purposes, the initial eligibility waiver process is available. NOTE: Courses taken after eighth grade graduation, but prior to the first regular ninth-grade term (i.e. summer school prior to ninth grade) may not be used to satisfy the core curriculum requirement.

6. May courses taken by a high school student for college credit be used to meet the core course requirements?

Courses taken during high school for college credit may be used to satisfy core curriculum requirements IF the courses are accepted and awarded credit by the high school for any student and meet all other requirements for core courses. For NCAA Division I only, if such a course is taken at a local college, it must be placed on the student's high school transcript.

7. What documentation does the NCAA require to enable a student with a disability to use a test score from a nonstandard administration of the ACT/SAT?

The following documentation is required: a) a current signed copy of a professional evaluation report that states the diagnosis of the student's disability; and b) a copy of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Individual Transition Plan (ITP) or Section 504 Plan or statement that relates to accommodations received by the student with the disability. The NCAA national office, not the clearinghouse, processes the information.

8. May courses taken at one high school be accepted if they appear on the transcript of another high school, i.e. what happens if I transfer high schools?

If you have attended more than one high school, you must submit official transcripts from each high school, which you attended even if all of your courses and grades from each high school appear on your current high school's transcript.

9. Where can I find a list of my high school's approved core courses?

Each high school's list of approved core courses may be found by linking from the NCAA website to the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse website.

WHEN TO DO WHAT

Everything really begins in the junior year for a student athlete who is looking to be recruited. When to begin this process in your junior year depends upon your sport and what works for you timing wise. However, you should definitely begin this process before the end of your junior year.

Blue Chip Athletes:

Every once in a while an athlete comes along of exceptional ability. This student will be highly touted in the local media and highly recruited by colleges and universities throughout the United States. This is the RARE exception. This athlete and his or her family should spend time defining what is important to them in terms of academics, geography, support programs and athletic environment. This athlete will have to be able to clearly articulate these priorities and determine whether or not a particular school can meet these priorities. The athlete and his or her family should make certain that his or her coaches and his college counselor have a clear understanding of these priorities. Often the issue for this athlete is not “can I get a scholarship?” but “how do I make the right choice from among these offers?” Again, it should be reiterated... this is the rare exception.

Most Athletes:

Most athletes will need to initiate contact with coaches and colleges in order to get noticed. This does not mean that these athletes are not talented or do not have the potential to play scholarship-based intercollegiate athletics in college. It just means that there are many, many high school athletes in the country, and you have to do something to make yourself visible.

Checklist of Activities for Most Athletes:

1. Assemble an Athletic Resume.
2. Write to the coaches you are interested in playing for:
 - a. Go on-line to each of the major organizing units for collegiate athletics and get a list of schools that offer your sport.
 - b. Go on-line to each college that offers your sport and get the coach's name.
 - c. Make your letter personalized to the coach – show that you are a go-getter and that you are seriously considering this school versus just writing to everyone.
3. Start to gather athletic references.
4. Plot a campaign of contact:
 - a. Initial Letter
 - b. Letter at the end of your season or beginning of your select team season.
 - c. Letter at the beginning of your senior year.
 - d. Reference letter(s) from coach(es).

- e. Video.
 - f. Visit.
5. Respond promptly to all requests from coaches – even if you decide you are no longer interested in a program. Be polite and let them know. Don't waste your time or theirs.
 6. Be aware of recruiting rules and signing dates. Get the dates for your sport from the NCAA website. If you don't get signed by one of these dates, re-contact coaches and let them know you are still available and interested. This is particularly true for Division II and Division III as well as for NAIA schools. They will be waiting to see who is left after the signing dates and will be ready to pursue you more aggressively then.

NCAA RECRUITING RULES

Below is a highlighted list of recruiting rules that apply to NCAA institutions. You should consult the NCAA website for an updated list of these rules. The rules are revised regularly and you want to ensure that you are familiar with the most recent rules that apply to you.

1. No alumni, booster, or representative of a college's athletic interests can be involved in your athletic recruiting.
2. A contact is any face-to-face meeting between a college coach and you or your parents, during which any of you say more than "hello."
3. Phone calls from faculty members or coaches are not permitted until on or after July 1 after completion of your junior year. (Football date is August 15. Division III is anytime after your junior year.)
4. In sports other than football, a coach is limited to one telephone call per week except that unlimited calls may be made under certain circumstances.
5. You or your parents may telephone a coach at your own expense as often as you may wish.
6. Letters from coaches are not permitted until September 1 at the beginning of your junior year.
7. In all sports other than football, coaches may contact you off the college campus three times. In football, seven times.
8. An evaluation is any off-campus activity used to assess your academic qualification or athletic ability, including a visit to your high school (during which no contact occurs) or watching you practice or compete.
9. In all sports other than football and basketball, coaches may not evaluate you

more than four times each academic year. In football and basketball, two times.

10. Know the specific contact and evaluation periods for football and basketball (see the NCAA website).
11. There is a “dead period” when coaches may not contact or evaluate you on or off the college campus. These dates are available through the NCAA website.
12. Know the National Letter of Intent signing dates (early, late, and regular) for your sport. Again, consult the website.
13. You may not try out for a college athletic team in Division I and Division III. In Division II, you may have a tryout after completion of high school eligibility. You must have had the Athletic Director’s permission and may include competition in sports other than football, hockey, lacrosse, soccer, and wrestling.
14. You can visit a college campus any time at your own expense, even during your junior year.
15. During your senior year, you can have one 48-hour expense-paid (official) visit to a particular campus. You may receive no more than five such visits (even if you are being recruited in more than one sport). Before you visit, the college must have your official academic transcript (Division I), and your test scores (ACT, SAT or PSAT).
16. During your official visit, you may receive round-trip transportation, room and board (at on-campus facilities if available), and complimentary admissions to campus athletic events. A student host can be given \$20 a day to cover costs of entertaining you.
17. There is no limit on the number of Division III schools you may visit.
18. NAIA schools may have on-campus tryouts.
19. Make sure your correct year in school is shown on all programs, letters and information your coach and counselor are using.
20. Know the limits on what the college can provide a prospective student in terms of printed information.
21. Schools are permitted to ask prospects to undergo a medical exam during the visit.

WATCHING OUT FOR IMPROPER RECRUITING

High school athletes being recruited by one or more colleges must always be alert to improper tactics used by some recruiters. Most college coaches are honest men and women who are interested in you as a total person. Some few, however, are interested in you only if you can help their athletic programs. Such coaches are to be avoided. Fortunately, they are pretty easy to spot. If you are being contacted by one or more college coaches, keep these pointers in mind. There are other tactics besides the ones listed below to watch out for. Whenever you have a question or concern, be sure to talk to your coach or your college counselor.

- The coach who “bum raps” other schools and coaches. Some coaches try to make their own light shine brighter by blowing out everyone else’s. When they resort to this tactic, their own light isn’t very bright in the first place. You want to know this.
- The coach who talks only about how great his or her program is. It may be a good one, but if that’s the only thing he or she talks about, you are being recruited only to keep it good. College for you is much more than helping someone else maintain his or her reputation.
- The coach who promises you a starting position right away. Obviously, there are some entering freshmen who are good enough to be first string right away, but they are few and far between. Listen to the recruiter who is honest with you now, because only then will he or she be honest later.
- The coach who doesn’t give an oral commitment to a four or five year scholarship. The NCAA allows only a one-year, renewable scholarship, but honest recruiters can promise more than one year. Make sure the recruiter makes such a verbal commitment to you, your parents, and your coach.
- The coach who puts you in contact with a “booster” from the college. The NCAA permits no contact with boosters. If you even talk to one, you jeopardize your future.
- The coach who promises easy admission, easy professors, or an easy schedule. He or she has no interest in you as a student.
- The coach who says that his or her school’s academic program in your field of study is the best in the nation. Have your counselor check this out for you.
- The coach who promises to let your best friend “walk on” with the team. Rarely is such a coach concerned with the best interests of your friend. He or she is using your friend only to get to you.

THE ATHLETIC RESUME

While all athletes hope that recruiters will be lined up waiting for them, the reality is that most athletes find the coaches before the coaches find them. What this means is that if you are interested in playing a sport as a scholarship athlete in college you will most likely spend time marketing yourself. One of the best ways you can do this is to prepare an effective Athletic Resume.

The specific format you choose to use is up to you. This handout is designed to give you insights into the elements that you should include in your resume regardless of how you set it up.

ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Name, full mailing address, phone and e-mail
- Picture – coaches like to put a face with the stats
- Physical Statistics that are relevant to your sport
- Athletic Activities (what positions, events, teams, summer camps, etc.) Be sure to include team awards as well as individual awards, i.e. did your team win district or state?
- Athletic Honors/Awards
- Academic Statistics and Awards (your grade point average, SAT/ACT scores, honors, etc.)
- Other Activities (what have you participated in outside of athletics) In this category you will want to include the organization/event name, years participated, offices held, and hours per week you committed
- Community Service (include the same information as for activities)
- Employment

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Make sure that you define your activities.
- Do not use initials for organizations – spell it out.
- Be thorough.
- Make sure you have the name of the organization, award or event correct.
- All of your activities listed should be those you participated in while in high school.

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING A CAMPUS VISIT

Before you decide to make your first visit, it's a good idea to think carefully about the kind of information you are going to need to eventually make a decision. Once you do, you will be able to ask the right kinds of questions. Here are some good questions to help you get started:

For the Coach/Recruiter:

1. What position (event) do you want me to play (perform), and how many

- others are you recruiting for the same position (event)?
2. What is your coaching philosophy? Are you considering any changes to this philosophy? How did you develop this philosophy?
 3. Will I be red-shirted?
 4. If I need a fifth year, will you finance it?
 5. What happens to my scholarship if I am injured or ineligible?
 6. What kind of academic support do you have available for athletes? What are your academic expectations of me?
 7. Has drug use been an issue at your school? Athletic program?
 8. Are all injuries handled by a team insurance policy?
 9. If injured, may I use my family doctor? Who determines my fitness to compete after an injury?
 10. What is expected of players during the season? During the off-season?

For the Current Players at the School:

1. What does your typical daily schedule look like? In-season? Off-season?
2. Approximately how many hours a night do you study?
3. What generally are the attitudes of professors toward athletes? How about in my specific area of study?
4. How do you like the living arrangements?
5. Do you have an academic advisor? Is this the same system that all students use or is it different for athletes? What does your advisor do for you?
6. Are the coaches available to help if you have academic problems?
7. What was the biggest adjustment for you in going from high school to college athletics?

For the Non-Athletes at the School:

1. How do you perceive the athletes and the athletic program at the school?
2. If you had to do it all over again, would you choose to attend this school? Why or why not?

For the Admissions Officer/Faculty Members:

1. What are the graduation rates for the general student population? For athletes in general? For athletes in my sport?
2. How long does it take someone in my area of academic interest to graduate?
3. What special attributes does your school offer students in my academic area of interest?
4. What is the placement rate and average starting salary for graduates in my field of study?
5. Aside from athletic scholarship, are there other forms of scholarships/financial aid for which I may be eligible? How would receiving an athletic scholarship affect my eligibility for these other monies?

WHAT TO ASK AFTER YOUR CAMPUS VISIT

You will have to ask yourself several important questions after you have visited your schools in order to decide ultimately on the right school. These questions will provide a good start. Take the time to think about your answers, and be sure to talk to your coach, your college counselor, and your parents about answers that may be difficult for you. Remember, you want the right athletic AND academic experience, so all these questions are important.

1. Did any of the recruiters have bad things to say about the other schools that are recruiting me?
2. Did any of the recruiters promise that I would compete right away, even be a starter? (If they did, they may have been less than honest.)
3. Would I attend this school if I had no intention of competing in my sport?
4. Do the coaches and players seem to care genuinely about each other?
5. Will I be successful academically in this school? Athletically? How do I measure up to everyone else?
6. Were the coaches and players I met honest, available to me and others, friendly, and genuinely interested in me?
7. Were the coaches interested in academics? Did they ask about my educational and career interests? Were they knowledgeable about my intended program of study? If not, did they introduce me to someone who might answer my questions?
8. Will I fit in with the rest of the student body at this particular school? Will I be comfortable associating with them for four or more years?
9. How will I feel if one or more of the coaches leaves? Will I still be happy with the school? My sports participation?
10. Does the school satisfy all the requirements that I identified earlier with my parents and college counselor? *This is probably the most important question.* Give it a lot of thought, and be sure to talk it over with your coach, your counselor, and your parents.

USEFUL RESOURCES FOR ATHLETES

WEBSITES:

- www.ncaa.org
- www.ncaaclearninghouse.net
- www.naia.org
- www.njcaa.org

BOOKS:

- Advising Student Athletes Through the College Recruitment Process, Michael D. Koehler
- Student Athlete Guide to College, Princeton Review
- The Athlete's Game Plan for College and Career, Stephen and Howard Figler

WHAT I WISH SOMEONE WOULD HAVE TOLD ME
ABOUT BEING A COLLEGE ATHLETE
(from the perspective of a student)

- The importance of high school grades starting as a freshmen.
- The importance of preparing for SATs and ACTs.
- Applying for regular admissions as well as athletic admissions. In other words, don't forget to file your application for admission when you are being athletically recruited.
- Set long-range goals for ten years after high school.
- Be sure that the colleges you look at meet your academic needs as well as your athletic needs.
- Talk to several college coaches from different schools.
- Visit all of the college campuses that you are considering.
- Learn time management skills before starting college.
- Develop communication skills as a team member and as a student.

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

Accreditation – When a school is recognized as maintaining standards that qualify the graduates for admission to higher or more specialized institutions.

Advanced Placement (AP) – The Advanced Placement Program gives students the opportunity to pursue college level studies while still in secondary school and receive advanced placement and/or credit upon entering college depending on how they score on the AP exam.

Alumni Interviews – Admission interviews conducted by graduates of colleges to which you have applied. This is often done locally when a student is unable to travel to a distant college.

American College Testing Program (ACT) – see ACT section.

Associate’s Degree – A degree granted by most two-year colleges and some four-year colleges at the end of two years of study. A student may earn either an Associates of Arts or Science Degree, depending on their course of study.

Award Letter – A means of notifying students of the financial assistance being offered. The award letter provides information on the types and amounts of aid offered, as well as specific program information, student responsibilities and the conditions that may govern any awards.

Bachelor’s Degree – A degree granted by a four-year institution after completing the degree requirements of the school. A Bachelor of Arts or Science is granted depending on the course of study.

Candidates’ Reply Date Agreement (CRDA) – The CRDA is the common date of May 1 when an accepted student must make a commitment to the institution as to whether s/he will accept that offer of admission. This allows the candidate to make an informed decision after all information is known from all colleges to which a student has applied.

Class Rank – A student’s standing based on his/her academic record compared with that of other members of the class.

College Fair – A gathering of college representatives at a central location where students can talk to many admission representatives about admission, financial aid, activities, etc. Watch the Maplewood Richmond Heights School District website and our weekly “This Week In Guidance Newsletter” for information on our College Fair held each fall. Check with your school’s College Center to determine when other fairs may be occurring in the St. Lois region.

College Scholarship Service (CSS) – CSS is the financial aid division of the College Board (CEEB). It provides the need analysis service for students and their families to assist the Financial Aid Office in determining your financial need.

CSS Profile – The financial aid form produced by the CSS that may be required for some colleges in order to qualify for financial aid. A fee is required to process this form.

College Work Study Program – A government supported financial aid program coordinated through Financial Aid Offices, whereby an eligible student (based upon need) may work part-time while attending classes to help pay for educational and/or living expenses. This eligibility is determined by submitting the FAFSA.

Consortium – Several colleges and universities in an area that join together and provide students opportunities to utilize other member institutions’ libraries and facilities, and take courses. Joint lectures and special events are many times also planned by one of the member institutions.

Cooperative Education Plan (Co-op) – A program offered by some colleges that lets a student combine work and study – usually extending the time required to complete a degree. Co-op programs are either “alternating” (work and study in alternating terms) or “parallel” (work and study scheduled within the same term).

Core Curriculum – A group of courses in a variety of areas, such as arts and sciences, that make up the general education requirements for all students at an institution regardless of their major.

Cost of Attendance (COA or Cost of Education (COE) – The total cost of attending a post- secondary institution for one academic year, including tuition and fees, housing and food for the period of enrollment, books and supplies for education, travel costs directly related to attendance, child care expenses, and costs related to a disability.

Deferred Admission – This is an admission plan whereby the student applies to a college in the senior year and is notified of acceptance but decides to postpone admittance due to travel, work, or to pursue other interests before attending college. Each individual institution will set its own policy regarding deferred admission so it is best to check with the college you are planning to attend.

Early Action – A plan that allows highly qualified candidates to apply early for admission and be given a decision in December or January. If accepted, the student does NOT have to make a commitment until later in the spring. The institution determines the exact date, which gives students the opportunity to pursue other schools.

Early Admissions – This plan allows high school students the opportunity to begin college coursework without completing high school requirements. This program is limited to exceptional students. The individual school will determine who is eligible for this program.

Early Decision – Colleges that offer this program will require the student to complete their application early in the fall, and students will usually receive a decision in December or January. Students should only apply early decision to their first-choice school. In most cases, this application is binding, meaning that if accepted, the college would expect the student to withdraw other applications and make a commitment to attend that institution.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) – Figured by a congressionally determined formula, the EFC is the amount that the government states a family can contribute to educational expenses. A college or university will use the EFC to determine financial

need and what federal, state, and institutional aid the student is eligible to receive.

Financial Aid Package – Any combination of financial aid, including scholarships, grants, student loans and work-study, as determined by the financial aid office of a college or university.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – This is the common financial aid application used by all colleges and universities. Once filed, the Department of Education processes it and the information is sent in the form of a Student Aid Report (SAR) to the student's home as well as up to ten colleges that the student listed on the form. For more information or to file on-line, visit www.fafsa.ed.gov.

General Education Development Examination (GED) – A series of tests that adults who did not complete their high school requirements may take to receive an equivalent high school certificate or diploma.

Grade Point Average (GPA) – An indicator of the student's overall scholastic performance. The GPA is computed by totaling the number of grade points earned in each course (i.e. A=4, B=3, etc.) and dividing the sum by the total number of credits that are taken.

Grants – A financial aid award that may not have to be repaid if terms and conditions are met. Grants are offered by the federal government, state agencies, and colleges. **Need Analysis** – The process used to evaluate an applicant's financial situation to determine how much student aid s/he needs to help meet postsecondary educational expenses.

Official Transcript – The document that records the grades that bears the seal of a high school or college and a signature to certify the grades are valid. It is usually also sent in a sealed and signed envelope.

Open Admissions – The policy of some colleges to admit virtually all high school graduates regardless of academic qualifications such as high school grades and admission test scores.

Private College – A college that is not funded by public sources, but owned privately. A private college may, however, receive public grants for financial aid or other projects. Most expenses are covered by tuition, fees from students, and donations.

Public College – A college that is operated mostly by a public entity (such as the state). Because of this assistance, expenses are usually less than that of a private college for its students.

Qualified Acceptance – Acceptance is made providing the student complete further requirements such as a summer school course. Upon successful completion, the student would be able to enroll as any other incoming student.

Renewal FAFSA – A FAFSA application that must be filed for subsequent year applications after the initial FAFSA has been filed.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) – ROTC programs are conducted by

certain colleges in cooperation with the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force. The program combines military education and intense training for students who plan to pursue a career in the military.

Rolling Admissions – A plan used by many colleges whereby students are notified of a decision after completion of their application. This usually occurs within a few weeks after the admission office receives the completed application.

Scholarships – Awards that usually do not have to be paid back, typically given to students who demonstrate or show promise of high achievement in areas such as academics, athletics, music, art, or other disciplines.

Selective Service Act – The law that requires registration with selective service in order to be eligible for federal financial aid. It applies to males age 18 years and older who were born on or after January 1, 1960, are citizens or eligible non-citizens, and are not currently on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Special Circumstances – Circumstances that may not accurately reflect a family's EFC. Factors include unusual medical or dental expenses, loss of job, or tuition expenses for younger children in private schools. Financial Aid offices usually require proof of these special circumstances in writing. They will take them into consideration when looking at the total financial aid package.

State Certification – Certification by the state licensing commission in a particular trade or profession that specifies you meet minimum competency requirements.

Student Aid Report (SAR) – The SAR is produced in response to submission of the FAFSA. The SAR provides the EFC (Expected Family Contribution).

Study Abroad – An arrangement by which a student completes part of his/her college program studying in another country.

Transcript – A chronological listing of all subjects and grades received by a student. It should also include the standardized test scores and other objective information about the student.

Unmet Need – The difference between the cost of education and the combined total of the financial aid award made by the college and the expected family contribution.

Waiting list – Students who are not accepted or denied may be placed on a waiting list for admission until a time when a space becomes available or a final decision is made.

Top Ten Lists

www.scholarships.com

The following is a collection of lists we felt might make things a lot easier for students applying for all types of financial aid. Use them as a checklist for everything from applying for Scholarships to completing the FAFSA to guard against being scammed.

A. Top Ten Tips for a Winning Scholarship Application

1. Apply only if you are eligible.
2. Complete the application
3. Read and follow all instructions
4. Submit a clean and neat application
5. Submit a well-composed essay that makes a definite impression.
6. Be aware of and meet all deadlines.
7. Mail application to the proper address with the proper postage affixed.
8. Give your application materials a final review.
9. Seek assistance if you feel you need it.
10. Make sure you're proud of and satisfied with, your application submission.

B. Top Ten Reasons an Applicant will Not Win a Scholarship

1. Applicant mailed the envelope without the application enclosed.
2. Applicant submitted an incomplete application.
3. Applicant forgot to include their name and/or address.
4. Applicant submitted an illegible or unintelligible application.
5. Applicant sent the application with insufficient postage-returned "postage due."
6. Applicant submitted irrelevant or inappropriate supporting documentation.
7. Applicant submitted a dirty or stained application.
8. Applicant applied for an award having fallen short of the minimum

requirements.

9. Applicant made a number of spelling errors.
10. Applicant was rude or abusive to the judges.

C. Top Ten Tips to Protect Yourself Against Scholarship Scams

1. Don't believe a promise of guaranteed funds you'll never have to repay. No one can guarantee that you will win a scholarship or grant. Remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
2. Beware of scholarship services that charge fees or claims that you can't get this information anywhere else. There are many free lists of scholarships available. Check with your college counselor, library, and Scholarships.com before you decide to pay someone to do the work for you.
2. Ignore the myth of unclaimed funds and the companies that advertise huge amounts of unclaimed money.
3. Don't be fooled by official sounding names and logos. Make sure the foundation, organization, or program is legitimate.
4. Don't pay an advance fee. Don't pay anyone who claims to be "holding" a scholarship for you or informs you the scholarship will cost some money. Free money shouldn't cost a thing.
5. Disregard any news that you're a finalist in any contest that requires you to pay a fee for further consideration. Before you send money to apply for the scholarship, check it out.
6. Check the terms closely if there's a guaranteed refund or a money back guarantee. Refund guarantees often have conditions or strings attached. Get refund policies in writing – before you pay.
7. Resist high-pressure tactics like "We'll do all the work for you." Don't be fooled. There's no way around it, you must apply for scholarships or grants yourself.
8. Do not give out your credit card, bank, or checking account numbers to any solicitors who claim they need it for you to be eligible for either a contest or access to "exclusive" scholarship information. Get information in writing first. It may be a set-up for an unauthorized withdrawal.
9. A lower fee is no guarantee that a scholarship service or program is legitimate.

D. Top Ten Tips for Completing the FAFSA

1. Have available the following documents and information when completing the FAFSA:
 - Most recent year's tax forms, or end of year pay stubs.
 - W-2 forms
 - Records of the most recent year's untaxed income, such as child support and untaxed income from agencies such as Social Services, Social Security, and the Veteran Administration. (You do not need to send copies of these documents with your FAFSA, however you will need to refer to them when you file.)
 - The student's correct social security number.
2. Do not leave blanks for any questions requiring a numeric figure, such as a dollar amount or a test score. If your answer to a question is zero, be sure to write "0".
3. Read instructions and follow them carefully. Even if you have completed this form previously, it is not safe to assume revisions have not been made to previous versions.
4. If you are a parent completing the form for your children, be sure to complete a separate FAFSA application for each student. Check that the social security number reported is the correct one for the student filing the form, incorrect social security numbers delay processing.
5. If you are a dependent student, it is important that you enlist the assistance of your parents and that you actively participate in completing the FAFSA. If the financial aid office has questions they will contact the student first, and it is imperative that both you and your parent(s) are aware of the information provided.
6. Obtain the Federal school code from the school or schools you may be interested in attending.
7. Check figures and calculations. Mistakes delay the processing of up to 40% of all forms processed.
8. The asset questions pertaining to net value are for secondary and investment real estate only. You are not required to report the net value of your primary residence.
9. Sign the FAFSA, both the student and parent (if applicable) must sign and date.
10. You should file early, but do not sign, date, or mail the FAFSA before January 1. By filing early, you may receive favorable consideration for receiving campus-based aid. You must file a FAFSA every year. Any changes in your family situation should be conveyed to your financial aid administrator, they might affect your eligibility.

E. Top Ten Mistakes When Completing the FAFSA

1. Incorrect Social Security Number – Verify with your Social Security card.
2. Unsigned form-Be sure to sign and date the form (student and a parent for dependent students). If you file the FAFSA on-line, be sure to print, sign, and mail the signature page.
3. Incomplete form – Complete the entire form. List the net worth of your assets as of the day you complete the FAFSA. If your answer to some questions is zero, be sure to write “0” instead of leaving the answer blank. Be sure to answer the question related to drug convictions.
4. Income earned from work left blank – Report the wages, salaries, and tips earned from work for the student and each parent if the student is dependent. Report the wages, salaries, and tips earned from work for the student and spouse if the student is independent. This income will not be counted twice, but will determine your allowance for Social Security tax payments and a special allowance for families in which both parents are employed or the student and spouse are employed.
5. Income tax paid is incorrect amount – Report the actual tax paid (usually determined by the tax tables when completing the income tax form), not the amount withheld by your employer as shown on your W-2 form.
6. Number in household/number in school is incorrect – if you are a dependent student, report only the people who live with your parents and will continue to receive more than half of their support from your parents. If you are an independent student, report only the people living in your household who will continue to receive more than half of their support from you. In order to be included in the number in school, your sibling(s), spouse and/or children must be attending at least 6 hours in one term and working toward a degree from a college which participates in the federal financial aid programs. As of 2002-03, parents are excluded from the number in college for both federal and institutional aid.
7. Be sure to indicate which schools should receive your FAFSA information.
8. Graduate student status – most students are not working towards their second degree and so will answer “no.”
9. Divorced/remarried parental status listed incorrectly – List the current marital status of your custodial parent (the one with whom you reside and whose information is listed on the FAFSA).
10. Incorrect address – Write in your permanent mailing address, do not use your campus or summer address.

F. Top Ten Financial Aid Tips

1. Prioritize your efforts, beginning with the federal government. Explore the private sector for additional financial aid programs. Visit websites like Scholarships.com to locate the private sector financial aid for which you can apply.
2. Contact each school to explore the financial aid possibilities. Write to the school's financial aid office as soon as you apply for admission. Applying for financial aid should not affect your chances of being accepted.
3. Be prepared. Students and parents should file their income tax returns early. You'll need information from income tax forms to complete your financial aid applications.
4. Get to know your financial aid administrator (FAA). Ask the 10 questions outlined in "Top Ten Questions..." The help of the FAA will be valuable if questions arise later on in the year.
5. Submit a FAFSA even if you think you will not qualify for federal aid. Being rejected for federal aid is sometimes a prerequisite for private awards. Some schools require you to fill out their own application as well as a profile.
6. Apply for aid as early as possible. Deadlines vary, but your application for Federal Student Aid can be sent any time after January 1. An early application will help get the best financial aid package possible.
7. Take advantage of tuition prepayment discounts. Many colleges offer up to a 10% discount for early payment.
8. Money from grandparents may avoid gift tax liability if paid in your name directly to the school.
9. Investigate company-sponsored tuition plans. Many employers will invest in the education of their employees or children of employees.
10. Apply for financial aid each year you are in school. Even if you receive aid during one year, you must reapply to get it for the next year. Use the Renewal FAFSA form to reapply for aid and save time. See your FAA for assistance.

G. Top Ten Questions for Your Financial Aid Administrator

1. Will my request for financial aid have any impact on my ability to be admitted to this college?
2. Will the college meet my full financial aid need?

3. Will the college continue to meet my full financial aid need for all four years of my enrollment?
4. Describe your financial aid program, including requirements for need-based aid, merit-based aid and scholarships.
5. What application materials are needed to apply for financial aid, and does the college require its own form in addition to the FAFSA?
6. Where can I find additional sources of financial aid?
7. What are the deadlines for submitting financial aid forms? Are there state financial aid programs that I should know about?
8. When will I be notified of my financial eligibility?
9. Once my financial aid package is awarded, will additional scholarships reduce the amount of financial aid I can receive?
10. Does this college participate in a tuition payment plan that allows installment payments for each semester's bill?

Don't forget to visit www.scholarships.com to conduct a free college scholarship search and to get more free financial aid information.

HOW IS COLLEGE DIFFERENT FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

A. FOLLOWING THE RULES IN HIGH SCHOOL

- * High school is mandatory and usually free.
- * Your time is structured by others.
- * You need permission to participate in extracurricular activities
- * You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.
- * Each day you proceed from one class directly to another, spending 6 hours each day--30 hours a week--in class.
- * Most of your classes are arranged for you.
- * You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.
- * *Guiding principle: You will usually be told what to do and corrected if your behavior is out of line.*

B. CHOOSING RESPONSIBLY IN COLLEGE

- * College is voluntary and expensive.
- * You manage your own time.
- * You must decide whether to participate in co-curricular activities.
- * You must balance your responsibilities and set priorities. You will face moral and ethical decisions you have never faced before.
- * You often have hours between classes; class times vary throughout the day and evening and you spend only 12 to 16 hours each week in class
- * You arrange your own schedule in consultation with your adviser. Schedules tend to look lighter than they really are.
- * Graduation requirements are complex, and differ from year to year. You are expected to know those that apply to you.
- * *Guiding principle: You are expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.*

C. GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

- * The school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters and some don't.
- * Classes generally have no more than 35 students.
- * You may study outside class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.
- * You seldom need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough.
- * You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class.
- * *Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.*

D. SUCCEEDING IN COLLEGE CLASSES

- * The academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters, plus a week after each semester for exams.
- * Classes may number 100 students or more.
- * You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.
- * You need to review class notes and text material regularly.
- * You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing, which may not be directly addressed in class.
- * *Guiding principle: It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you've already done so.*

E. HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

- * Teachers check your completed homework.
- * Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.
- * Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.
- * Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.
- * Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.
- * Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.
- * Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.
- * Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.
- * Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.
- * Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.

F. COLLEGE PROFESSORS

- * Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.
- * Professors may not remind you of incomplete work.
- * Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.
- * Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.
- * Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.
- * Professors expect you to get from classmates any notes from classes you missed.
- * Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. Or they may expect you to relate the classes to the textbook readings.
- * Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Good notes are a must.
- * Professors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.
- * Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded.
- * Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.

- * Professors may not formally take roll, but they are still likely to know whether or not you attended.
- * *Guiding principle: High school is a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and skills.*
- * *Guiding principle: College is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned.*

G. TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL

- * Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.
- * Makeup tests are often available.
- * Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.
- * Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.
- * *Guiding principle: Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.*

H. TESTS IN COLLEGE

- * Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You, not the professor, need to organize the material to prepare for the test. A particular course may have only 2 or 3 tests in a semester.
- * Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them.
- * Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.
- * Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.
- * *Guiding principle: Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.*

I. GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL

- * Grades are given for most assigned work.
- * Consistently good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test grades are low.
- * Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade.
- * Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.
- * You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher.
- * *Guiding principle: "Effort counts." Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."*

J. GRADES IN COLLEGE

- * Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.

- * Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.
- * Extra credit projects cannot, generally speaking, be used to raise a grade in a college course.
- * Watch out for your first tests. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected--but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade. You may be shocked when you get your grades.
- * You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental standard--typically a 2.0 or C.
- * *Guiding principle: "Results count." Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you achieve good results, it will not substitute for results in the grading process.*

HOW TO MAKE THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

- Take control of your own education: think of yourself as a scholar.
- Get to know your professors; they are your single greatest resource.
- Be assertive. Create your own support systems, and seek help when you realize you may need it.
- Take control of your time. Plan ahead to satisfy academic obligations and make room for everything else.
- Stretch yourself: enroll in at least one course that really challenges you.
- Make thoughtful decisions: don't take a course just to satisfy a requirement, and don't drop any course too quickly.
- Think beyond the moment: set goals for the semester, the year, your college career.

Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center, Southern Methodist University

TOP TEN COLLEGE SURVIVAL TIPS

10. Know how to do your laundry – it is possible to wash your underwear without turning it pink! Although, asking for help might be a great way to meet that cute upperclassman who lives down the hall.
9. Know how to balance your checkbook. Just because you have checks left does not mean you have money left!
8. Attend class – even if all the professor does is read from the book. The first step in successfully completing college is to go to class. Besides, you'll meet lots of your fellow students.
7. Know where the Student Health Center is. Strep throat and mono run rampant on college campuses. Try to get some sleep (naps are a favorite college activity) and don't be too tough to go for a check up.
6. Rule of Thumb: For every one hour in class spend two hours outside of class studying, reading, or reviewing your notes. College isn't just an adventure; it's a job! Follow this rule Sunday through Thursday and I promise you'll still have plenty of time for fun.
5. Join at least one activity within the first two weeks of school. Most students decide to withdraw or transfer from their college within the first six weeks of school (even if they don't actually leave until the semester). Getting involved is one of the best ways to assure you'll make it.
4. Call home regularly. Remind your family you still exist or else mom may turn your room into her sewing sanctuary. Besides, how else are they going to know the food stinks and you need a care package?
3. Make sure your roommate or your friend knows where you are going to be. Believe it or not, you can live in the same 15' X 15' room with someone and not see them for days. Play it safe – touch base.
2. Live by the Golden Rule, with your roommate in particular. Do unto others...dirty socks, pizza boxes, and big band music may not bother you but...
1. Learn to sew on a button, hammer a nail, change a tire, check your oil...all those little things that mom and dad do. They won't be with you next fall. You'll have to solve all of these problems yourself. (Or, you'll at least have to know where to find a good seamstress, a reliable service station and become best friends with the maintenance crew at your college.)

USEFUL WEB RESOURCES

Below is a listing of some websites that have been found to be particularly useful for our students. This is neither a comprehensive listing, nor an endorsement of one page over another. It is just a listing aimed at serving as a starting point for you and your family. A more comprehensive list of the websites available can be obtained through the National Association of College Admission Counseling at www.nacac.com.

COLLEGE SEARCH PROCESS IN GENERAL

- www.collegeboard.com
- www.collegedata.com
- www.college-scholarships.com/missouri.htm
- www.act.org
- www.nacac.com
- www.collegenet.com
- www.collegenight.com
- www.mycollegeguide.org
- www.collegelink.com
- www.collegeview.com
- www.mapping-your-future.org
- www.makingcollegecount.com
- www.petersons.com
- www.collegecountdownkit.com

COLLEGE RANKINGS

- www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/eduhome.htm
- www.thegrid.net/frugg
- www.100hot.com/directory/education/college.html
- www.library.uiuc.edu/edx.rankings.htm

TESTS AND TEST PREPARATION

- www.collegeboard.com
- www.act.org
- www.toefl.org
- www.ets.org
- www1.kaplan.com
- www.review.com

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- www.fastweb.com
- www.collegeboard.com
- www.scholarshiphelp.org
- www.wiredscholar.com
- www.collegescholarships.com
- www.college-scholarships.com
- www.collegenet.com
- www.scholarships.com
- www.scholarships4college.com

- www.collegesavings.org
- www.educaid.com
- www.finaid.org
- www.fafsa.ed.gov
- www.nasfaa.org
- www.mostars.com
- www.uncf.org
- WeeklyScholarshipAlert.org

ATHLETES

- www.ncaa.org
- www.naia.org

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- www.aauap.org
- www.acb.org
- www.ahead.org
- www.chadd.org
- www.fcsn.org
- www.ldonline.org
- www.add.org
- www.nclld.org
- www.npnd.org

MULTI-CULTURAL STUDENTS

- www.blackexcel.org
- www.uncf.org
- www.black-collegian.com
- www.hacu.net
- www.hsf.net
- www.sciencewise.com/molis
- www.naacp.org
- www.nativculture.com/lisamitten/education.html
- www.collegfund.org

CAREER SEARCHES

- www.myroad.com
- www.myfuture.com
- www.mapping-your-future.org
- www.careerview.collegeview.com
- www.careerweb.com
- www.futurecollegegrads.com
- www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/majors/majors.htm

APPLYING TO COLLEGE (applications and tips on completing applications)

- www.essayedge.com
- www.campustours.com
- www.apply.com

- www.commonapp.org
- www.collegecountdownkit.com
- www.collegeboard.com