



COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE

Tenafly High School

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Dear Students and Parents:

As you approach the intensive, college search which lies ahead, it may initially feel overwhelming and confusing. Many of you may be undecided about what you want to major in or are unsure about how to choose a college. Your school counselor is here to take you through the process and familiarize you with everything you will need to know to realize your goals. The responsibility for meeting deadlines, taking appropriate admissions tests and filling out college applications is yours. But your counselor will help you every step of the way.

Your counselor is the link between you and the college. Take advantage of personal conference time to determine the direction you wish to take. Having a clear understanding of the admissions process, using all the available resources and communicating openly with your school counselor will definitely help make the college process go smoothly. As your counselors, we will work with you in any way we can, offering our insights while respecting your unique needs and talents.

This guide can be your starting point as you begin the college selection process. Access Naviance frequently, visit your counselor often and let's get started on the exciting journey of planning your future!

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WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS AFTER GRADUATION?

Four-Year College or University

When a student successfully completes the required coursework at a four year college, he/she earns a Bachelor's Degree in a chosen field. The most common type of four year college is the Liberal Arts College, where students choose a major, but take a series of core requirements and electives. Universities are larger in size than colleges and can have schools of education, business, nursing, engineering, etc., and a graduate school program. Whether a college or university, all vary in size, degree of competitiveness for admission and may be public (state schools) or private.

Two-Year College

Two year colleges (often called "Community Colleges") offer an Associate's Degree upon successful completion. Many two year colleges provide specialized technical programs which qualify you to work in special jobs. Students and families who are concerned about college costs can take advantage of what two-year colleges offer. Two year colleges cost only a fraction of what a typical four year college costs and, because they are close to home, do not incur additional expenses for room and board. Many who earn associate's degrees transfer to a traditional four year college to then earn a Bachelor's degree. Some people choose to take courses part time, allowing them to hold jobs around their class schedules.

Vocational/Trade Schools

Vocational and Trade Schools (Technical or Professional Institutes) offer classes and, many times, licensure in highly specific careers where hands-on training is the predominant part of the curriculum. Some examples are in the art and culinary industries, automotive technology, computer technology, health care, radiology, ex-ray technician, nursing and cosmetology. The requirements for admission and completion of course requirements vary and need to be researched for specific trades.

Post-Graduate Studies (PG Year)

PG Years are equivalent to taking a fifth post-high school year, usually at an independent boarding school. Students who choose this path benefit from an additional year of high school where they can improve their GPA to be more competitive for college. This also gives them an opportunity to mature, experiencing independence through dormitory life before applying to college. In most cases, individualized curricula are tailored to meet each student's academic needs to ensure academic success for college.

Military

One can enlist in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard upon finishing high school. Many who choose this path are interested in gaining a combination of military experience, managerial experience, technical skills and travel opportunities. Enlisting in the military also has the added benefit of earning money to be applied toward college tuition. Enlistment contracts usually require several years of service, at which point you can either extend your service contract or return to the civilian sector with Reserve, National Guard, or Individual Ready Reserve options.

Gap Year

A Gap Year, also known as a "year out," "year off," "deferred year" or "bridging year," is a year-long break from study chosen by some students before entering college. It is often spent gaining work experience, traveling or volunteering.



COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

JUNIOR YEAR

Fall/Winter

1. Familiarize yourself with reference material available in the Guidance Office.
2. Search the Internet for college, career and financial information. Make sure you are registered on Naviance.
3. Register for and take the PSAT in October.
4. Attend the Junior Planning Night at THS sponsored by the school counselors.
5. Meet with college representatives at our weekly College Mini Fairs; begin gathering information and brochures (September through November).
6. Continue to focus on achieving excellent results in your coursework.
7. Attend the annual College Fair held at FDU in September.
8. Participate in college/career group meetings conducted by counselors.
9. Visit colleges during the November school break (NJEA Convention) and weekends.
10. Plan an SAT or ACT timeline for preparation and testing dates.

Spring

1. Register for and take the SAT or the ACT, particularly if you plan to apply ED (Early Decision) or EA (Early Action).
2. Register for and take the SAT Subject tests, if appropriate; discuss this with your counselor and subject teacher, particularly if you plan to apply ED or EA.
3. Visit websites for information regarding tours and interviews.
4. Visit college campuses especially while colleges are still in session - spring break is an excellent time to do this.
5. Meet with your counselor for a "College Conference". (Parents are encouraged to attend.)
6. Attend other local College Fairs.
7. Carefully select your senior year courses during February scheduling meeting with your counselor.
8. Complete a self-descriptive questionnaire on Naviance for your counselor to use when writing your college recommendation.
9. Plan a meaningful summer through community involvement, work, travel, or educational/cultural experiences.
10. Verbally request recommendations from two (2) teachers.

Summer

1. Begin online application process as well as accessing financial aid information
2. Review college catalogs online and browse college websites.
3. Continue to visit and interview at colleges. Send personalized thank-you notes as a follow up to the college visit.
4. Write and carefully edit the college essay(s).
5. Register for the fall SATs, SAT Subject tests, ACT or TOEFL as needed.

SENIOR YEAR

Fall

1. Continue to place a very strong emphasis on your academic work. Many colleges will be requesting your first quarter grades. Senior grades are often the key to being accepted or rejected.
2. Prepare and send all materials for Early Decision/Early Action applications (usually by November 1st), as well as Rolling Decision applications. This includes sending SAT scores (through collegeboard.org) or ACT scores (act.org) weeks before your deadline.
3. Be aware of the various application deadlines you must meet.
4. Continue to touch base with your counselor on a regular basis.
5. Start looking into scholarship opportunities. Check the Naviance Scholarship website.
6. **REMINDER:** Allow at least fifteen (15) working days (three weeks) for the Guidance Office to process applications at this peak time. When meeting a January 1st deadline, remember that counselors are not available during the winter break. Every student should have at least one application in by Thanksgiving.
7. Attend and participate in college/career group guidance sessions conducted by counselors. Update your self-descriptive questionnaire for your counselor, if necessary.
8. **KEEP YOUR GRADES UP!** All colleges will be receiving mid-year and end-of-year grade reports – many may request your first quarter grades.
9. E-mail your recommending teachers through Naviance.
10. Attend our Financial Aid seminar.
11. File the CSS Profile.

Winter

1. File the FAFSA after January 1st. These forms are available on line.
2. Complete all remaining applications.
3. Continue to look at scholarship opportunities on Naviance.

Spring

1. Apply for local scholarships. If you become a recipient, write a letter thanking the organization for the award.
2. By mid-April, you should be notified of the admissions decisions by all colleges to which you applied.
3. Discuss your options with your parents and counselor. Finalize your decision by sending in your deposit by May 1st. It is unethical to submit more than one deposit.
4. Inform the other colleges of your intention to enroll elsewhere. This may open a spot for a student who was waitlisted at that school. **Inform the School Counseling Office of all college decisions** so we can update our Naviance statistics.
5. Successfully complete your senior year. Your college will request your final grades. Keep your grades up since acceptances are contingent upon continued satisfactory performance in all courses in progress.
6. Congratulations! You've made it through the College Process and can now look forward to some stimulating, exciting years ahead.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACCREDITATION - Official recognition that a college, university, or trade school has met the standards of a regional or national association.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSES/CREDIT – AP courses are college level classes in a wide variety of subjects that you can take while still in high school. An examination is administered and scored 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest. Each college or university decides how much advanced placement credit, if any, it will grant the student.

AMERICAN COLLEGE TEST (ACT) - College readiness test, similar to the SAT, although somewhat more achievement-oriented, may be submitted in lieu of the SAT to most colleges.

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE – a degree awarded by a college after satisfactory completion of an approved two-year program of study.

BACCALAUREATE OR BACHELOR'S DEGREE – a degree awarded by a college or university after satisfactory completion of an approved four-year program of study.

CSS PROFILE - A financial aid form that is required by certain colleges in addition to the FAFSA.

COLLEGE GUIDES - Publications, which include profiles of colleges and universities and can be used as part of the college exploration process.

COMMON APPLICATION FORM - A standardized application accepted by over 500 colleges. This is available on-line (commonapp.org).

DEFERRED MATRICULATION - Allows an accepted student to postpone admission for one semester or year.

EARLY ACTION - Allows the student to apply by a specified date, usually in fall or early winter, and receive early notification of an admission decision. In this instance, accepted students are **not** obligated to attend that particular college or university.

EARLY ADMISSION - Admits students of unusually high ability into college at the end of the junior year of high school.

EARLY DECISION- Same as Early Action, but if admitted, the student has an obligation to accept the offer of admission and **withdraw all applications to other colleges or universities**. If admitted under Early Decision, the student **must** enroll.

EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICES (ETS) - An agency established by the College Board to produce its tests.

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA) - A detailed form used by students and parents to supply information about their income and assets. This information is used to determine financial need in attempting to meet college costs.

GRANT - A financial gift toward college which does not have to be repaid by the student.

HITS - The number of meaningful contacts you have had with a receiving institution. Some colleges keep track of these contacts. Demonstrating interest at a school may make a difference in your admission decision at that school.

LOAN - Money borrowed by the student to pay for college expenses. The loan must be repaid usually with interest.

MATRICULATION - Enrollment in a degree program at a college or university.

NON-MATRICULATION - Enrollment in a college or university but not into a degree program. Students cannot graduate in this status, but credits earned may apply toward a degree when the student matriculates.

OPEN ADMISSION - Allows everyone with a high school diploma or its equivalency to enroll at the college.

PRELIMINARY SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST/NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST (PSAT/NMSQT) - This shorter version of the SAT is designed to prepare juniors for the SAT. It is administered by high schools in October. It also serves as the only qualifying exam for scholarships awarded by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The NMSQT Selection Index, which is used to determine the top scholars in the country for the Merit Scholarships, is the sum of three equally weighted scores --- the verbal, math and writing scores. Although any student can take the test, only juniors qualify for a scholarship.

REGULAR DECISION - An applicant submits a completed application and required credentials by a specified deadline date and receives notification of the admission decision, usually in March or April.

ROLLING ADMISSION - An applicant submits a completed application and an admission decision is made when the application and all required credentials are received. Acceptance is based upon meeting a pre-determined standard set by the college rather than looking at the total applicant pool.

ROTC - Reserve Officer Training Corps; it combines military education with college study leading to the baccalaureate degree. There is an offer of financial assistance to those who commit themselves to future service in the Army, Navy, or Air Force. Not all campuses offer ROTC.

SAT – This test is administered through the Educational Testing Services (ETS). Scores are reported on a 200 - 800 scale and includes three sections – critical reading, mathematics, and writing. Many colleges and universities require the SAT or ACT. The redesigned SAT will be launched in the Spring of 2016.

SAT SUBJECT TEST- One-hour tests administered in a variety of academic subjects and sometimes required by colleges, especially highly competitive or selective institutions, for the purpose of placement in freshman courses as well as for admissions decisions. SAT and SAT Subject tests cannot be taken on the same dates.

SCORE CHOICE –This policy gives students the option to choose SAT scores by test date and SAT scores by individual test that they send to colleges. Score Choice is optional and if students choose not to use it, all scores will be sent automatically.

SELF REPORTING – Rutgers has joined the California State College system’s “Honor” reporting process. Students self-report their high school grades using only the online application. ONLY, after they are accepted and enroll do students have to provide an official high school transcript.

TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TOEFL) - A test of English proficiency for foreign students administered through the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Most colleges require foreign students to take this test in addition to the SAT as a routine part of the application process (if they have been in the U.S. for five years or less). A Registration Booklet and a listing of test sites can be obtained in the Guidance Office. The test is available only in a computerized version.

TRANSCRIPT - An official copy of the academic school record sent directly from the high school to the college. Students and parents must formally request these.

TUITION DEPOSIT - A college requires an admitted student to state his/her intention to enroll by submitting a deposit by a specified date. This non-refundable deposit is applied to the student's tuition for the upcoming academic year. It is unethical to submit more than one deposit.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES - Two-year or Associate's Degree, or four-year Baccalaureate or Bachelor's Degree.

WAIT LIST - After the college or university considers the applicant for admission, he/she may be placed on a Wait List, which means that entrance may be granted if a smaller than anticipated number of accepted students make tuition deposits and if the student demonstrates continued interest in attending the school.

WORK STUDY - A financial aid program that allows the student to earn money by working on campus in an approved program to help pay for college expenses.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

SAT or ACT

The SAT and ACT are admission tests used among colleges and universities. They are typically taken by students in their junior and senior years. Both the SAT and ACT have distinct personalities – the ACT is curriculum-based, while the SAT is aimed more at general reasoning and problem-solving skills. *Colleges and universities nationwide will accept either test.*

It is recommended that all students take the SAT or ACT at least once before the end of their junior year. To register for the SAT or SAT Subject test go to www.collegeboard.com. To register for the ACT go to www.ACT.org. Be aware that there are fees for late registration so register far in advance of your desired test date.

SAT redesign March 2016.

SAT Subject Tests

If the colleges you select recommend or require the SAT Subject tests, it is best to take them when you have completed all coursework in that subject area. At a single testing session, you can take one, two, or three SAT Subject tests. Each test is one hour in length.

If you are unsure about when to take the ACT/SAT or SAT Subject tests, please consult with your counselor.

TOEFL

With students for whom English is a second language, who have lived in the US for 5 years or less, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is required by most colleges. Register for the TOEFL test at www.toefl.com.

NCAA REQUIREMENTS



Registration

Students interested in athletic scholarships for Division I or II schools should register with the NCAA eligibility center at the beginning of their junior year in high school. At the end of the junior year, a transcript, which includes six semesters of grades, should be sent to the Eligibility Center. When taking either the SAT or the ACT, students should request scores be sent directly to the Eligibility Center by using the code 9999.

Requirements

1. Complete a minimum of 16 (Division I) or 14 (Division II) core courses (approved core courses for Tenafly High School can be found at: ncaaclearinghouse.net).
2. Maintain the required GPA. Division I schools have a sliding scale for test scores and grade point averages. Division II schools require a minimum GPA of 2.0 and an SAT score of 820 (Critical Reading and Math combined). The NCAA grade-point average is calculated using NCAA core courses only.

If you are interested in playing a Division sport in college, speak to your current high school coach and your school counselor. It is important to then contact coaches at the schools to which you will be applying.

HOW STUDENTS SELECT COLLEGES

An excellent place to start is with your school counselor. He or she knows some of your strengths and weaknesses and will help you identify your needs and wants. Your counselor can share experiences of students who have similar profiles and will make suggestions about colleges you may wish to explore. Make an appointment for a college conference in your junior year (usually after first semester grades are available).

Using our up-to-date computer software (Naviance, collegeboard.com) and/or with the counselor's experience, you'll get suggestions.

Together you'll share feelings about some important aspects of the process:

- a. **Competitiveness**. How many freshmen does the college admit? How many apply? What are the average grades, class rank, and SAT/ACT scores of the students who attend? Do they consider special talents?
- b. **Cost**. What can you and your parents afford to pay for room, board, tuition, books, living expenses, etc? Is the budget \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 or more?
- c. **Private or Public**. Public or in-state are generally less expensive than private ones. Out-of-state public colleges are often less expensive than private and can be a great option.
- d. **Location**. Do you want to be in a rural, urban or suburban environment? It may matter a great deal to some of you and not at all to others. The other factor is distance from home. If the college is within two or three hours driving distance, you may be able to come home on weekends. If further away, you may be able to come back only for holidays, and you may have to add additional dollars to your college expenses.
- e. **Size**. Some students like to know everyone on campus, enjoy small classes, and feel at home on a campus of less than 2,000. Others like the hustle and bustle of a large university where, although classes are large, this is offset by the greater variety of offerings.
- f. **College Major**. Not every college offers every major. Not every college, even a highly competitive one, is recognized in every field. While it is estimated that only about half of the students who enter college have a major in mind and that half of these change their major at college, it is recommended that the student at least start thinking about two or three majors to explore at college. Keep in mind that almost all students must declare a major by the end of sophomore year and that certain majors have so many pre-requisites and require such a prescribed program that failing to select a major early could result in additional time needed to graduate (e.g. nursing, accounting, health careers, engineering, etc.).
- g. **Special Features**. This area considers the special desires of the student. Are you considering a study abroad program, internship, cooperative education program, or non-academic features such as off-campus housing?
- h. **Personality**. What about the male/female ratio, number of students living on campus, fraternities/sororities, emphasis on extra-curricular activities and athletics? What are the students really like?

The Guidance department hosts about 10-12 college mini-fairs in the fall, which give you the opportunity to meet with well over 150 college representatives. During Junior Year, you and your family will be invited to a Junior Year College Conference to help you get started. Evening programs are planned as well. In the winter of senior year a Financial Aid Workshop is presented.

COLLEGE VISITS

You are encouraged to visit colleges, preferably during the school year when their classes are in session. An informed college choice is essential and a visit is very different than seeing the college on-line. Colleges also like to know that you are interested enough to make the effort to come to their campus. Your counselor will be happy to suggest colleges to visit and what to look for during your visit. He or she can also run you through a practice interview to prepare you for the "real thing" if an interview is scheduled. Please consult [Tiger Q](#) for details concerning college visits and school attendance.

Hints to make your visit go smoothly:

- Check the website of the college you will be visiting to see if an appointment for a tour is necessary.
- Jot down a few notes about your impressions of the school immediately after your visit so you don't confuse one campus with another.
- Plan to be on a campus for about 2 hours for a tour and admissions presentation and try the food!
- Send an e-mail to admissions when you get home (if you are considering applying to that school). Tell them you were on campus and describe briefly what impressed you.

A note to parents: College visits can be a wonderful time to be with your child but it can often be frustrating as well. It can be hard to understand what your son or daughter "loves" or "hates" about a particular campus, especially when their opinion is opposite of yours. Be a good listener and keen observer.

The Interview:

Fewer schools are offering interviews. However, if you do ask for one and schedule it during your visit, here are some tips:

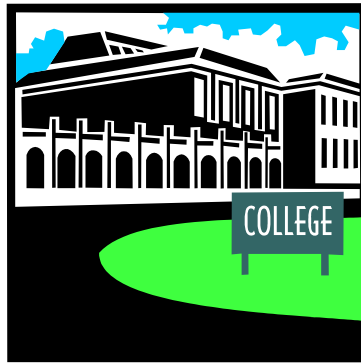
Before an interview, think about your strengths and weaknesses and what it is you want from a college education. During the interview, take part in a dialogue. Don't passively sit there and just answer the interviewer's questions. If the interviewer asks if you have any questions, be prepared to have some. You don't want to give him/her the impression that you have come unprepared or that you are not interested. Avoid asking questions that can be answered in college literature. Instead, ask questions that relate to you and your personal decision about attending a particular college. Tell the interviewer something about yourself--your personality, your goals, your priorities, and your aspirations. Develop a conversation rather than a question and answer period.

Some of the most typical interview questions include:

- Why are you considering this college?
- What makes you think this college and you are right for each other?
- What other colleges are you applying to and why?
- What do you hope to major in and why?
- What are your plans for the future?
- What do you expect to be doing ten years from now?
- What have you liked or disliked about your high school?
- If you were the principal of your school, what would you change?
- What would you like to tell me about yourself?
- What magazines, books, or newspapers have you read lately?
- What television shows do you watch?
- What can you tell me about your family?
- How do you spend your time outside of school?
- What extracurricular activities have you found most satisfying?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- If you could talk with any single living person, who would it be and why?
- What is the most significant contribution that you have made to your community?
- What events have been crucial in your life?
- How do you feel about...gun control, the use of drugs and alcohol, nuclear freeze, etc.?

These questions are samples. *No one would ask you all of them.* However, it might help to ponder some of them before your interview. Remember to be yourself and to be as enthusiastic and positive as possible

Send a thank you note/e-mail when you return home. It need not be long, but it should thank the interviewer for his/her time, and it should also reinforce your interest in that particular college. An e-mail can be appropriate.



HOW COLLEGES SELECT STUDENTS

Colleges generally admit students using three basic guidelines: an academic profile, extra curricular involvements and personal characteristics. The emphasis on each varies with the philosophy and needs of the college and university. Some only consider grade point average and standardized test scores. Others place a great deal of emphasis on growth and personal characteristics. Others see extra-curricular involvement as an important component which they hope will continue if admitted to the college.

A. Academic Profile

1. **Courses Taken.** Have you followed a strong academic program emphasizing English, Social Studies, World Language, Science, and Mathematics? Have you taken meaningful electives? Have you challenged yourself to the best of your ability vis-à-vis what the school offers? Are you still going strong in senior year or taking it easy? Senioritis is **NOT** an option.
2. **Academic Performance.** How well have you done in terms of grades? Are you consistent? Is there a trend? Are your grades, when compared to your test scores, indicative of your ability?
3. **Grade Point Average.** What is your cumulative grade point average?
4. **Class Rank.** Our school does not rank.
5. **Testing for College.** Most competitive colleges require the submission of SAT or ACT scores and, in some cases, SAT Subject test scores. Many students take SAT at least twice, and most colleges recognize the student's highest verbal and highest mathematics score, (called Super Scoring) even if taken on different test dates. Because it purports to be a measure of scholastic potential, some colleges find SAT I or ACT to be a predictor of success in the freshman year. Others find that there is no better predictor of future success than past success and consider grades to be more significant.

B. Extra-Curricular Activities

1. **In School**. Our school offers many opportunities for involvement: drama, debate, yearbook/newspaper, sports, service clubs, etc. Too much varied involvement may be seen as superficial; no involvement may be seen as indifference or apathy. The key may be becoming involved meaningfully in two or three activities for a number of years, culminating in a leadership role.
2. **Out-of-School**. Some students devote a great deal of time to their church, temple, youth center, local hospital or a special talent. These can represent meaningful growth experiences and are no less important than school activities.
3. **Work Experience**. Obtaining and holding a job while going to school is not an easy task and is a valuable growth experience. Let the colleges know about all your activities in the community, in school, or at work.

C. Personal Characteristics

1. **Recommendations**. Most competitive colleges require two teacher recommendations, preferably from those you have had during the last two years. Ask your teachers well in advance if they would be willing to write recommendations for you. They will upload their letters to Naviance and send them through e-docs. If your school is not an e-docs school, you must provide an addressed envelope to your teachers. Thank them for their help. Your school counselor, of course, will write your school recommendation and fill out the necessary forms. In order to do this, you must complete the self-descriptive, junior questionnaire so the counselor will have a more comprehensive picture of you and be able to brag about your accomplishments.
2. **Interview**. Fewer colleges are requiring an interview due to time and staffing constraints. If you are a confident person who can convey your enthusiasm for a particular college, an interview can be a real plus. Your application will have an advocate - your interviewer. Your counselor will be happy to guide you through a practice interview.
3. **Application and Essay**. Your application and essay will tell a great deal about your experience, education, and goals as well as your ability to communicate. Please pay attention to spelling and grammar. A poorly completed application can indicate indifference and a poor command of English.

Keep yourself abreast of special programs such as:

- ❖ Group guidance sessions
- ❖ Junior Year College Planning Workshop
- ❖ Financial Aid Workshop
- ❖ College Mini Fairs
- ❖ College representatives who visit THS

Your counselor can be a valuable resource in determining college selection. Often times they have visited campuses and know college representatives who can help with your questions and concerns.

This is an exciting time for you, but it is often filled with anxiety. Please allow us to help you through this process. We are confident that, together, we can accomplish great things.

THE APPLICATION

Process

1. A Common Application may be used to apply to over 500 colleges. (commonapp.org).
2. Many colleges require teacher recommendations; ask teachers by the end of your junior year.
3. Your counselor will write a recommendation for you and it will be sent with each transcript. **You must fill out the self-descriptive, junior questionnaire on Naviance before this can be written.** It is an invaluable aid in this process.
4. You are responsible for requesting official SAT, SAT Subject test or ACT scores to be sent directly to each college. If you want to use Score Choice, you must wait to see your scores before deciding which test date to send to colleges.
5. Be aware of application deadlines which vary at each college.
6. Make sure you have at least 2 safety schools on your list of schools to which you are applying. The remainder of schools should be good matches/targets for you. If you want to have a reach or two, that is fine, but understand that a reach means it is very unlikely that the school will accept you.

The application is your opportunity to shine. The ability to follow instructions, the quality of written work, the completeness of the application, and the care with which one completes the application are just some of the factors that are assessed. “Do not undersell yourself. Be honest and, above all, COMPLETE THE APPLICATION YOURSELF.”

TIPS ON WRITING THE ESSAY (THE COLLEGE BOARD™)

Essay

- Read the topic question(s) carefully and answer the question being asked. Remember that one essay does not satisfy all essay prompts.
- Be honest!
- Tell your story in your own voice!
- Write about a subject or idea with which you are familiar. In other words, personalize your essay. Use anecdotes, if appropriate.
- Be yourself. Do not attempt to use words or ideas that are unfamiliar to you. It usually shows.
- Write about the specific rather than the general, the concrete rather than the abstract.
- Proofread! Proofread! Proofread! Spell check is not enough and will not catch all errors.
- Before submitting your final draft, have someone else proofread it (English teacher, counselor, peer, or parent). Does it sound like you?
- Avoid the “laundry list” accomplishments! That information is already available elsewhere in your application.

FINANCING A COLLEGE EDUCATION

There are six major sources of funds for financing a college education:

1. Family resources
2. Student resources (savings, earnings from summer jobs, legacies, etc.)
3. Student earnings while in college
4. Loans
5. Grants
6. Scholarships

Most colleges offer a financial aid package, which may consist of a combination of loans, grants, scholarships and work-study.

Colleges require the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in order to assess need. The FAFSA should be filed as soon as possible after January 1 of the senior year and is based on the previous year's financial records. The official website is www.fafsa.ed.gov.

In addition to the FAFSA, some colleges may require a CSS Profile or their own financial form. Check with the college Financial Aid Office to determine exactly what is required and what deadlines exist.

The following steps will help in the pursuit of a financial aid award.

1. Go to the Financial Aid section of the colleges' website to learn about scholarship opportunities.
2. Attend our Financial Aid Workshop. Look over the FAFSA before the workshop so that you can ask specific questions.
3. Submit your completed FAFSA, CSS Profile if required and all institutional aid forms as soon as possible. Be sure to keep a copy for yourself.
4. Submit local scholarship forms before their deadlines.
5. Explore scholarship possibilities through outside organizations - check Naviance, your parents' employers, civic groups (Rotary, Lions, etc.), religious groups, and/or ethnic groups.



SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Websites

NAVIANCE – <https://connection.naviance.com/tenafly>

Our computer-based, online application management system where all THS students will record their college applications and college decisions. This site will not only help you organize your applications, but also allow you to see how competitive your profile is with different colleges based on data entered from the statistics of previous graduating classes.

COLLEGE BOARD - <https://www.collegeboard.com>

This website covers mostly everything you need in the college research process. You can: register for SATs, search scholarships, conduct online college searches, and obtain information and links to financial aid resources. The most helpful tools in this website are for college searches, enabling you to find lists of possible places to consider, based on size, majors, location, activities available, etc.

Books

Barron's Profiles of American Colleges

Barron's actually offers a series of high school resources from college planning to SAT study guides. The Profile of American Colleges book provides a very detailed synopsis of the academic profile, extracurricular offerings, tuition figures, admissions requirements and contact information of more than 1,500 four-year colleges in the United States.

Colleges That Change Lives. By Lauren Pope

The title of this easy-to-read book speaks for itself. Some of the schools captured here are actually top choices for strong students because they simply offer something special.

Rugg's Recommendation on the Colleges - By Frederick E. Rugg

Unlike the vast majority of college guides offered in bookstores, *Rugg's* guide provides lists of colleges based on the availability of standard liberal arts majors to the most specific pre-professional programs. Each list is also subcategorized with levels of selectivity.

The Fiske Guide - By Edward B. Fiske

The Fiske Guide to Colleges features a direct, student and parent friendly synopsis of over 300 colleges in the country, focusing on the "real deal" with academics, student life, and campus features. Many students use the Fiske Guide as their first resource when initially deciding whether they want to continue research on a specific college.

The Insiders Guide to the Colleges - By Yale Daily News Staff

The Insiders Guide gives a combination of evaluative and statistical information on a variety of colleges and universities. It also provides an overview of the admissions process and specific information for students with disabilities, international students, etc.