

CAMDEN HILLS REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

POSTSECONDARY GUIDE



A RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS
PRODUCED BY CHRHS
SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

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COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR - JUNIOR YEAR

JANUARY

- CHRHS course registration will be held in February.
 - Students will have time to discuss senior year course selections with teachers.
 - Students are strongly encouraged to make an appointment with their counselor to discuss graduation requirements and suggested course selections based on postsecondary plans.
 - Choose the most difficult courses that you are able to complete successfully: Senior year should be your hardest year for preparation to enter the "real" world of college studies, employment, training, military service, gap year, or travel.
- ❖ Identify colleges. Define what is important to you.
 - Location
 - Size of the school
 - Diversity
 - Selectivity
 - Programs offered
 - Campus life
 - Cost
 - Entrance requirements (courses, testing, etc.)
- Check out the resources available in the Counseling Office and our library. You will find college handbooks, forms and view books. Through your PSAT score report you can access QuickStart and Big Future on www.collegeboard.com to research careers and colleges.
- Create a "Common Application" (<u>www.commonapp.org</u>) account. Make sure to list the correct enrollment date.
- ❖ Generate a list of potential colleges. Usually ten to twelve choices initially (including reach, realistic and safety options) is a manageable number. To determine this, look at colleges'/universities' average GPA, SAT/ACT scores and admission rates.
- Register to take the SAT's through www.collegeboard.com. You may also choose to take the ACT through www.actstudent.org. See their websites for deadlines and test dates.
- ❖ Plan to meet individually with your counselor for a "Junior Visit". You may review your SAT and transcript information, letters of recommendations, expectations for senior year and your overall interests and plans following high school.

FEBRUARY/MARCH/APRIL

- Consider a college visit during February or April vacation. This is a great time to plan a trip that includes one or several visits. Many colleges are in session at this time.
- Attend Regional College Night
- ❖ Make follow up appointments with your counselor to stay on top of early deadlines, college admission representative visits in the fall and enrichment opportunities such pre-college programs which are traditionally held over the summer.
- ❖ Attend Scholarship Night. All information presented that night is also found on our website at www.fivetowns.net

MAY

- ❖ College Fair Augusta Civic Center (You and your parents are encouraged to attend.)
- Attend Financial Aid Night by FAME

JUNE to SEPTEMBER

- College visits continued...although it's summer, visits to college campuses are still extremely valuable. College students today often attend throughout the summer and most admissions offices offer tours and interviews. Check out colleges in the warm weather, and get a good perspective on the campus and overall environment. Contact schools before your visit if possible.
- Attend Red Folder Night.
- Develop a résumé listing vital information about yourself and your goals. This piece of "homework" will become a valuable asset as you pursue summer employment or part-time work as a senior and beyond.
- ❖ Start working on your college essay and a possible additional supplemental writing assignment ("Common Application" publishes essay prompts every March for the subsequent application year). Both of these written assignments will save you time as a senior. The essay can be in draft form but is crucial if you plan to apply to a college that requires one. The majority of schools ask for an essay at minimum. The reason being that most colleges (2 or 4 year) will want to see your personal statement providing the reader a glimpse of your reasons to pursue your education beyond CHRHS.
- ❖ Identify colleges and narrow your list. Define what is important. You did this in March—<u>do it again</u> now! Keep track of application deadlines so you are prepared as you head into senior year.
 - Location
 - Size of the school
 - Diversity
 - Selectivity (reach, safety?)
 - Programs offered
 - Campus life
 - Cost
 - Entrance requirements (courses, testing, etc.)
 - Your instincts after a visit.

THE VOCABULARY OF COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

College Board

This agency is in charge of many tests and services connected with the college admissions process and administers the PSAT and SAT (CHRHS CEEB Code is 200215 for testing registration purposes).

SAT

This educational testing service examination measures aptitude for college and is required by many colleges for entrance. Students usually take either the ACT or SAT, sometimes both.

ACT

This is the American College Testing Program examination used to measure aptitude for college work. This test is used throughout the country by college and university admission offices. Somewhat like the SAT, it is curriculum based and includes tests related to high school content areas: English, math, reading and science reasoning.

Cooperative Education (Work Study)

A program that provides alternating periods of study and full-time work.

Accreditation

Institutions or major programs are "accredited" or approved by a recognized accrediting organization.

Early Admission

Accepts students for college study before they have received their high school diploma.

Regular Admission

The usual schedule where students apply to colleges in the fall or winter and receive an answer in the spring.

Early Decision

Allows students to apply in the fall to the school of their first choice and receive an answer by early winter. This is a legally binding agreement through which you agree to attend their school if accepted.

Early Action

Similar to Early Decision except students, if admitted, are not obligated to attend the college.

Open Admissions

School will accept anyone who meets basic requirements.

Admit-Denv

Candidate is admitted to the college but not awarded any financial aid.

Rolling Admissions

Applications are acted upon as received and candidates notified immediately.

Waiting List

Application is neither accepted nor rejected but rather held in limbo in case an opening develops later.

THE VOCABULARY OF COLLEGE ADMISSIONS CONTINUED...

Candidates Reply Date - May 1st

Students are required to let the college of their choice know that they will be attending by this date. Sending a deposit reserves a space in the class. If any institution requires a deposit prior to May 1st, it must be fully refundable until May 1st.

Common Application (CAO)

An online form which may be used to apply to more than one college.

Matriculation

Means "enrolled"

FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid seeks details on your income and assets. It will calculate your Expected Family Contribution at no charge. You can find this form on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov and submit it after October 1st during your Senior year.

Fee Waiver

Our office can provide fee waivers for limited income students for the SAT test.

The Great Divide - By Barbara Mayer

College Admission counselors report that the courses a student has chosen over the course of four years greatly influence the way his/her application is viewed by the Admissions Committee. When judging the strength of an admission application, Admission personnel place "Quality of Curriculum" and "Grades Achieved" as their highest priority of evaluation. What do they mean by "Quality Curriculum"? Read on.

The more demanding an academic subject appears to be to a college, the greater its impact on the application's strength. Advanced Placement courses are valued the most, and Honors courses follow closely behind. You may not know that most colleges create a new grade point average for their applicants, and the majority will weight these new averages if they include Honors and AP courses. Only academic subjects are included: usually this means English, Math, Science, Social Studies and Foreign Languages. Therefore, if you can achieve a B or better in an Honors course, take it!

About the title of this article: An Admissions Counselor recently told me that his college specifically favored applicants who had completed four years of the five academic subjects mentioned above. Discussing the applicants from my high school this year, I mentioned that most of our students take only the required three years of foreign language, and many take only three years of Science. He replied, "The fourth year of a Science, a Mathematics, and a Foreign Language is the great divide among admission applicants. Those who have chosen to remain in the challenging academic curriculum stand a better chance of admission."

The counselor mentioned above works for a highly selective, private liberal arts college. The vast majority of Admission personnel, whom I have questioned, from all types of colleges, have echoed his advice. Of course, there are always exceptions. The student applying to an art college rarely needs four years of math OR science, but does need an extensive art background and a portfolio. Still, it is wise advice for the college bound to challenge themselves throughout their high school years. Although colleges may state a minimum requirement of three years of science and math for Admission, you may boost your chances for Admission by taking more than the minimum. Most applicants can use all the boosts they can get!

COLLEGE PLANNING WEB RESOURCES (CHRHS website is also a great resource)

Exploring College Options

www.collegeboard.com ("Big Future" very popular college search engine)

https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=chrhs (Naviance)

www.cappex.com

www.petersons.com

www.youniversitytv.com

www.collegeview.com

www.collegenet.com

www.collegexpress.com

www.review.com

Exploring Financial Aid:

www.famemaine.com

www.finaid.org

www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov

www.collegeboard.com

www.salliemae.com

www.fastweb.com

www.finaid.org

www.nelliemae.org

Test Preparation

(Note: SAT/ACT Test Prep Booklets are available free in the Counseling Office - by connecting to the web pages you have access to actual test questions used by both SATs and ACTs. Be wary of any sites that charge \$. Free online SAT courses are available to you. See your counselor for information.

www.collegeboard.com

www.kaplan.com

www.review.com

www.testprep.com

www.actstudent.org

Student Athletes

www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

State of Maine Sites for Financial Aid and Scholarships Information

www.famemaine.com

Please feel free to contact <u>FAME</u> with any questions you may have about their programs, services, or the website itself. (1-800-228-3734)

THE COLLEGE SEARCH

Tips for Finding Your College Match

Characteristics to Consider

Finding a good fit is the factor most important to your college success. What's the best way to find colleges that match your academic and personal interests? First, identify your priorities. Next, research the characteristics of a range of colleges. Finally, match these up.

Here are some college characteristics to consider:

Type of College

Colleges are generally either two-year or four-year. At two-year colleges, you can earn an associate degree. At most four-year colleges, you can earn a bachelor's degree.

Colleges are also categorized as either public or private. Public and private colleges vary in size and available resources. Public colleges are funded by state and local governments, and usually charge lower tuition prices for students who live in their state. That means that the ones in your state may be more affordable for you. Remember, though, that both public and private colleges offer financial aid from various sources.

Size

The number of undergraduates at a college can have a big impact on your experience there. It affects the:

- Range of majors offered
- Extracurricular possibilities
- Amount of personal attention you'll receive
- Variety of academic facilities, including labs, libraries and art studios

When looking at a college's size, be sure to consider more than just the total number of students attending. For example, if you choose a small academic program within a large college, your experience might be very much like attending a small college. Investigate not just the number of faculty members, but also how accessible they are to students.

Location

Do you want to visit home often, or do you see this as a time to experience a new part of the country? Perhaps you like an urban environment with access to museums, ethnic food and major league ball games. Or maybe you hope for easy access to the outdoors and the serenity of a small town. Think about where you would be the most comfortable.

Majors

If you know what you want to study, look into the reputations of academic departments in that subject. Researching online is a good start. If you can talk with people who work in that field, that's even better. If you're undecided, pick an academically balanced institution that offers a range of majors and programs. Most colleges offer advising to help you find a focus.

Cost and Financial Aid

Today's college price tag makes cost an important consideration for most students. That said, keep in mind that almost every college works with its financial aid office to make sure that academically qualified students can attend.

Campus Life

Think about what your college life will be like beyond the classroom. Aim for a balance between academics, activities and social life.

Sports and Activities

Most students pursue interests other than academics while they are at college. You might consider playing a sport at the intramural or varsity level. Or you might want to get involved with the campus radio or television station. Make sure that any activity you're passionate about is available at the colleges you're considering.

Housing and Programs

Often, part of the college experience is living as part of a community. Consider whether you want to live on campus, and whether joining a fraternity or sorority is important to you.

When considering academics, look for <u>special programs</u> and pick a college that offers many possibilities, such as study abroad or work-study.

Diversity

Consider what you might gain from living and learning among students with diverse backgrounds. Think about the ethnic, racial and religious diversity of the students as a means of learning more about the world. Investigate what kinds of student organizations, or other groups with ethnic or religious foundations, are active and visible on campus to get an idea of what it might be like.

Another option is a single-sex college. There are colleges specifically for men and others specifically for women throughout the country. You might want to consider one of these if you feel that you would thrive in a same-sex environment.

Your Ideal Campus

What makes the campus a place you can feel at home? To help you figure it out, think about the answers to these questions:

- What extracurricular activities and athletics are available?
- Does the community around the college offer interesting outlets for students?
- Are students welcomed by the community?
- How do fraternities and sororities influence campus life?
- Is housing guaranteed?
- How are dorms assigned?
- What ethnic, religious, and special-interest organizations are on campus?

Admission Criteria

You should consider what the colleges you are interested in require for admission. Do you want to attend a college that accepts the majority of its applicants, or one that accepts just a small percentage? Some colleges require a minimum grade point average (GPA), while others are more flexible. Find out if the colleges that are a good fit for you require admission tests, such as the SAT®. You may also want to know if you can get advanced credit or placement for AP® exams and dual enrollment course work.

Retention and Graduation Rates

One of the best ways to judge a college's quality and the satisfaction of its students is to find out the percentage of students who return after the first year (called the retention rate) and the percentage of entering students who stay until graduation. Good retention and graduation rates are a sign that the college has good academic, social and financial support systems for students.

How many college applications should I submit?

It depends on your personal situation. Listed below are a few things to keep in mind as you create a balanced list.

1. Apply to a range of schools.

- Your final college list should include approximately 3 8 colleges, but there is not one "magic" number.
- Choose 1-2 colleges where you easily meet admission criteria and you will most likely get in about a 90 100% chance. These are usually called "safety schools" or "back-ups"
- Select 1 4 colleges that are overall **realistic** matches about a 75% chance of getting in. These are colleges that fit academically and socially.
- Choose 1 -2 "**reach**" colleges say a 25% or less chance of getting in. These are colleges that present an admission challenge to all students regardless of their preparation.

The key is to plan your list now so you are not making last minute decisions.

2. Do NOT go overboard.

- There are several reasons to apply only to those schools where you are sure you want to go.
- The application fee at most colleges is around \$25 \$75. Applying to a large number of schools can be expensive.
- Applications involve time and effort. There are many steps and each item must be done carefully. Quality is better than quantity when it comes to college applications.
- You may be taking a spot away from another applicant who really wants to go to that school.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES: PLACES SO CLOSE CAN TAKE YOU SO FAR...by The College Board

Community colleges are an important sector of American higher education. Today over 10 million students attend the more than 1100 community colleges throughout the United States. Since their beginning 100 years ago, community colleges have offered a unique educational opportunity for transfer, vocational training and community service. The underlying principles of access and equity are at the core of their mission. Here are some reasons why students select a community college.

QUALIFIED AND ACCESSIBLE FACULTY

Faculty members' primary responsibility is teaching, not research and publishing. Many professors also have extensive practical experience in the subjects they teach. Faculty are accessible to students through office hours and advising and often act as sponsors to clubs and organizations.

CLASS SIZE

The average class size in most community colleges is significantly smaller than public four-year universities. This makes community colleges great places for students who like small classes and individualized attention. They won't be a number or get lost in the crowd.

MAJORS

Community colleges offer a wide variety of majors and degrees. Students can prepare for an immediate career or pursue the first two years of general academic course work required for a bachelor's degree. They can also work toward a degree that they started elsewhere. Community colleges have taken a leadership role in occupational programs. They prepare students for careers in both existing and emerging technologies. Honors programs allow students to take rigorous courses supplemented by special opportunities.

CONVENIENCE

Most community colleges offer flexible course schedules that allow students to fit their studies around work or home commitments. They are usually within easy commuting distance by car or public transportation. They also are on the forefront of distance learning and extension programs including courses that enable students to complete coursework off campus.

DIVERSITY

College is about learning new ideas, meeting new people and having varied experiences. At community colleges, students are introduced to a diverse group of students in terms of age, experience, ethnicity and goals. Community colleges offer a wide spectrum of clubs and activities that celebrate and support the diversity that exists on their campuses. Athletics, student government, campus publications and cultural events all thrive on student involvement.

COMMUNITY

Community colleges are committed to serving the needs of their communities. As important resources in their communities, colleges offer both credit and non-credit courses, technical training and recreational, social and cultural programs. Community colleges have developed partnership programs with businesses and often serve as learning centers for various local businesses. They work collaboratively with primary and secondary schools and civic and government groups. Community colleges continually strive to meet the wants and needs of their communities and its people, giving each a unique local focus.

CONNECTED TO FOUR YEAR COLLEGES

Many students begin their undergraduate studies at a community college and finish at a four-year college. Community college and Maine four-year colleges have formed exciting partnerships to ease this transfer. Articulation agreements detailing courses and programs for transfer are growing in number. Counselors are available to assist students in the transfer process. Studies show that students who spend their first two years at a community college and then go on to graduate from four-year colleges are as well prepared academically as those who go directly to four-year colleges.

TECHNOLOGY

Community colleges and technology play a critical role in each other's growth and development. Colleges incorporate technology in assessment and instruction. Computer labs are plentiful and accessible. Many labs offer state of the art equipment and programs. Training for high tech workers often happens at community colleges with majors such as telecommunications, digital systems, robotics, and laser optics.

SUPPORT

Community colleges are committed to student success. They offer a comprehensive array of support services that include tutoring, advising, career planning and counseling. Through developmental courses students can improve skills in math, English, and languages.

COST

Solid cost savings is one of the major benefits of attending a community college. The low tuition cost makes a quality education available to many who may not have had access in the past. Tuition at community college is often less than the price of a computer. In addition, for students in need of assistance, financial aid programs are available at community colleges too.

RESPONSIVENESS

Community colleges respond quickly to community needs. They deliver courses in many formats and locations and often create specific training programs at the request of a local business or industry. They also serve as sites for many community programs and activities.

SUCCESS

Many people who began their higher education at a community college have gone on to make significant contributions and to achieve recognition in a variety of fields. Many leaders in communications, government, entertainment, business, and sciences were once community college students. The education they received prepared them for the changing world in which they live today.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS ATTENDING A COLLEGE FAIR

Plan Ahead

- Identify the colleges that you definitely want to visit.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask.
- Fill out inquiry cards ahead of time, or come armed with mailing labels that include your name, address, phone number, year of graduation and gender.
- Be sure to bring a pen and notepad.
- Only pick up college brochures that you need or want.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Do you want to attend a large university or a small college?
- How far away from home do you want to go to school?
- Do you prefer a city campus, a suburban location or a small town?
- What program of study do you wish to pursue? (It's okay to be undecided!)
- Are there activities such as athletics or clubs in which you want to participate during college?

Questions to Ask College Representatives

Admission:

- What factors do you consider when making an admission decision?
- What is the GPA (grade point average) of the average entering first year student?
- What kind of courses should I take my senior year?
- Is the SAT/ACT required? What scores are in the middle 50% of entering first year students?
- Are interviews required for admission?

Financial Aid:

- What are the basic costs for one year? (Tuition, room/board and fees)
- What kind of financial aid programs are available?
- How many students receive financial aid? What is the average award?
- What kinds of scholarship opportunities are available? Does your school offer merit and need based scholarships?

Programs of Study:

- Do you have my major?
- What are considered your top programs?
- What unique programs does your institution offer?
- What is your job placement rate for graduating students?

Campus Life:

- What is the total enrollment? What is the male/female ratio?
- How many students live on campus?
- What kind of campus living programs do you offer?
- What activities are available? Athletics? Arts? Clubs?

PLANNING A COLLEGE VISIT

Call the admissions office and set up your visit yourself. Most colleges offer tours on a regular basis. Ask to talk to students in your areas of interest.

Before you go:

- 1. While there is no one "best" time to visit a college, there are a few times that are not good. For example, visits made when students are on vacation or in final exams or when the college is sponsoring special weekends will give an incomplete and often inaccurate picture.
- 2. Phone ahead to the admissions office to find out what opportunities will be available to you when you visit. Visit options may include:
 - Campus tours
 - Group information sessions
 - Attending classes
 - Staying with students in residence halls
 - Individual meetings with admissions officers, professors, coaches, etc.
 - Interview if recommended
- 3. Be knowledgeable. Read over the college's view books before you get to the campus so that you know what the college offers and what it views as its strengths. Read the college's materials thoroughly ahead of time. Make a list of questions and points to clarify during your visit.
- 4. Arrive on campus early enough to allow time for finding the admissions office and locating a parking place.
- 5. Depending on the college and its proximity to you, you may want to visit informally as a junior and then return for a more focused visit and interview in the fall of your senior year.
- 6. Decide which options meet your needs and schedule appointments if necessary.
- 7. Schedule your "first choice" college visits last, when you are more experienced in the process.

Touring the campus: items to consider

- 1. Plan to document with a camera or take notes (see example of our "The College Visit" form) while on tour. If you see more than one college in a day, you may need these notes to refer back to.
- 2. Notice quality and accessibility of faculty. Are the building and grounds well maintained?
- 3. Try to see a dorm or eat in the cafeteria. Where do students eat? What type of meal plans are available?
- 4. What is the system for allocating housing after freshman year? Is housing guaranteed?
- 5. What activities and sports do they offer?
- 6. Can freshman have cars on campus?
- 7. What are the safety protocols on campus?

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW From The College Board

The Basics

A college interview is a chance to show that you're more than just test scores and grades. And it's an exchange of information — you learn about the college and the college learns about you. Not every college requires an interview: it may be mandatory, optional or not offered at all. The interview is just one of many factors in the admission decision and it is rarely the deciding one. Still, if a borderline student turns out to be impressive, the interviewer has the authority to write a letter supporting admission.

Types of Interviews

Interviews vary depending on the college, student and particular situation. You could find yourself interviewing with an admission officer, a student, or an alumnus. Most of these interviews last between 30 and 60 minutes.

There are also other, less formal, interview situations. You may have the opportunity to participate in a group information session with admission staff members and current students. Many high schools hold college fairs, where you can meet with representatives on an individual basis.

If you intend to attend a music, drama or dance institute, you should plan on performing an audition or submitting a portfolio, in addition to taking part in any necessary interview.

Why Interview?

Most colleges don't require an interview; however, there are many benefits to meeting face-to-face with an admission officer. Interviews give you the chance to:

- Show that you are seriously interested in attending.
- Convey what you can bring to a campus community.
- Learn more about a college's programs.
- Explain variations in your record for example, changes in your grades.

Be Your Own Best Advocate

The admission officers learn about you from a group of documents: your transcript, test scores and application. While your essay and recommendations can offer an impression of who you are, words on paper can reveal only so much. The interview is your chance to be your own advocate by talking positively about your interests and activities, to show your personality, and to boost your chance of admission.

Discuss Special Circumstances

The interview is a good time to explain anything unusual in your transcript or discuss any personal circumstances that affected your studies. Any problems that you may find difficult to write about in the application are often easier to discuss with a sympathetic admission counselor. For example:

- You may not be the best math student, but it never stopped you from taking AP® Calculus tell the interviewer why you persisted despite such difficulties.
- During sophomore year, your parents divorced and your academic work took a downturn.
- You have a learning disability and need to make an extra effort with every assignment.

Making Your Interview a Positive Experience

You can't pass or fail, so don't be nervous. As long as you've prepared and practiced, you can probably make a good impression. Here are some other tips:

- Accept a college's offer of an interview.
- Be on time.
- Go into the interview alone, without your parents.
- Be polite to everyone you meet.
- Act naturally.

- Respond conversationally don't memorize a speech.
- Use appropriate language and avoid slang.
- Be confident but not arrogant.
- Tell the truth.
- Express interest in the college and its programs.
- Ask questions not covered by the college catalog or website.
- Avoid eating or drinking during the interview.
- Dress neatly and cleanly; don't wear T-shirts or other casual clothing.

Be Sure to Ask Questions

Asking questions shows that you're interested in the college and what the admission officer has to say. You should try to ask questions that indicate you've done some research about the college and know why you consider it a good fit for you. Also, asking questions can help you discover characteristics that colleges can't convey in a catalog. Interviews are not automatically part of the visit. Some schools require or recommend interviews while others do not, although you can request an interview if you want one. Parents are welcome to attend but do not participate in the interview. Schedule your interview well in advance of your visit. Competitive colleges strongly recommend interviews. Since competitive schools conduct a lot of interviews, call early. Interviews last from 35 to 40 minutes.

Preparing for an Interview

Before you do the real thing, try a practice interview. Invite a family member or friend to practice with you, each of you taking turns as the interviewer and the interviewee. That way, you'll have experience both asking and answering questions.

Don't Memorize Responses

Do have some starting points for your answers and questions, but don't memorize a speech to sound rote or practiced. Preserve your spontaneity and ability to respond to the interviewer as a real, live person.

Know What to Expect

Very often, the questions most asked by college interviewers remain the same at different schools. Admission staff just wants to make sure that you can speak intelligently about your grades, scores and goals. They'll ask questions like:

- Why do you want to attend our university?
- What will you contribute?
- What courses have you enjoyed most?
- Are your grades an accurate reflection of your potential?
- Which one of your activities is most rewarding and why?
- What has been your biggest achievement?
- What's your opinion on (fill in current event)?
- How did you spend last summer?
- What do you plan to do after you graduate from college?
- What's the most difficult situation you've faced?
- If you could change one thing about your high school, what would it be?

When the Questions are Tough, or You Don't Know the Answer

"Can you conduct this entire interview without using the word "I"? There isn't any way to prepare for a curve-ball question except to recognize that the possibility exists. If you get frazzled, you can respond, "I'll have to think that over. "Is it okay if I write you about this?" Remember, it's much better to say "I don't know" than to pretend to be an expert.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ASKING A COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE

Students always want to know what they should ask a college representative - either during their visit to a college campus or when a representative visits their school. The questions listed below are a sampling of the kinds of questions that you might want to ask. It will obviously depend on whether or not you are in a one-on-one situation or if you are in a large group, or if you have visited the campus previously. Use good common sense and you'll be fine!

Pay attention to the answers and the way your questions are answered. If your representative "back-pedals" or "side-steps" your answer, there might be reason to be concerned. If the representative doesn't know the answer to your questions, be sure that you arrange to have him/her call or write to you with the appropriate answer.

It is sometimes helpful to ask the same questions to a series of representatives to see how they each answer as this may offer some helpful comparisons.

- 1. What type of student is happiest at your college?
- 2. What type of student is most successful at your college?
- 3. What are the three most popular undergraduate majors?
- 4. What is considered to be the strongest department? Why?
- 5. What is unique about your college?
- 6. What does your college see as the purpose of a college education?
- 7. How does your college respond to its writeups in the various subjective college guides?
- 8. How diverse is the student body?
- 9. What do you look for in an applicant?
- 10. Do you take into consideration that some secondary schools are more difficult than others?
- 11. How is my school viewed at this college?
- 12. What is the most important aspect of a student's application?
- 13. In the admissions decision process, what weight do you give to:
 - a. Grades?
 - b. Test Scores?
 - c. Essays?
 - d. Recommendations?
 - e. Legacies?
- 14. Do you limit the number of students that you will accept from any one school?
- 15. Are there quotas for men and women? For graduates of independent schools? For students from a particular area of the country?

- 10. If I have particular skills/talents that I feel are exceptional in nature, should I contact anyone in addition to the Admissions Office?
- 11. Do you give credit for Advanced Placement for having taken the Advanced Placement tests?
- 12. What is the typical course load or program for a first-year student?
- 13. What type of advising program is there for first year students?
- 14. Do students get their choice of first term classes do first year students have to take what's left over after everyone else registers?
- 15. Can I accelerate my program and graduate in 3 years?
- 16. Does your college have a program for helping/assisting undecided students?
- 17. Where do students go when they are not in class?
- 18. What is there to do that's fun?
- 19. What percentage of students participate in:
 - a. Sports?
 - b. Cultural activities?
 - c. Spectator cultural activities?
 - d. Intellectual pursuits outside of the curriculum?
 - e. Religious activities?
- 20. What percentage of students can be found on your campus on a typical weekend?
- 21. What speakers have recently been on campus? Were they well attended?

THE COLLEGE VISIT (A way to keep track of important information.)

| Name of Institution |
|--|
| Location: |
| Admissions Representative: |
| Admissions Rep. Phone: |
| Admissions Rep. E-Mail: |
| 1) How many undergraduates enrolled in your school? |
| 2) % Male % Female |
| 3) What is the Faculty/Student ratio? |
| 4) What percentage of first year classes have a class size of 20 or less? |
| 5) What percent of first year students return the following year? |
| 6) What percent graduate in four years? |
| 7) How many students apply? What percentage enroll? |
| 8) What percentage of students applies for Financial Aid? Percent given aid Percent with need fully met |
| 9) What financial forms do you require? FAFSA CSS Profile Institutional |
| 10) Do you accept the Common Application? Can you apply online? |
| 11) Do you offer early action? Early Decision? What percent of early applicant are accepted? How does this compare to regular decisions? |
| 12) What is the application deadline? When notified of decision? |
| 13) Do you require SAT's/ACT's ? |
| 14) What high school courses do you recommend? |

(Below is a list of questions you may wish to ask depending on your own interests. Be sure to check them ahead of time to choose those that are important to you.)

- 15) What are some of the most popular recent majors?
- 16) What special degree programs is your school known for?
- 17) Do you have an honors program? What does it entail?
- 18) Do you have study abroad programs?
- 19) What are some of your more popular campus organizations?
- 20) What services are available for career planning/placement?
- 21) What percent are placed in a job in their chosen field within 6 months?
- 22) What services do you offer for student wellness?
- 23) What programs do you have to assist students with the transition to college?
- 24) Do you offer on-campus housing? Is it available for 4 years?
- 25) What NCAA athletic programs do you offer? What intramural sports?
- 26) What security measures do you have on campus?
- 27) What programs do you have to encourage diversity amongst your student body?
- 28) How do you handle "undecided" students? Any special programs?
- 29) What is there to do on the weekend?
- 30) How is the food?
- 31) How would you describe the "typical" student?
- 32) What personal qualities do you look for in a student?
- 33) What programs do you have for students with disabilities?

EARLY DECISION AND EARLY ACTION

Early Decision/Early Action policies vary considerably from school to school; please check their policies prior to applying. If your college research is complete, you have a strong academic background, and you are passionate about one school, you can apply early decision. When applying **Early Decision**, you are entering into a binding agreement with that one particular school. If accepted, you must enroll. **Early Action**, on the other hand, is a non-binding policy that allows you to apply early to a college. You need not accept the college's offer of admission and you may apply to other schools as well. Listed below are the pros and cons of early decision/early action:

Pros

At some schools, there is an increased chance of acceptance for students applying early decision/early action. Check the colleges' statistics of acceptance rates for early decision/early action versus regular admission.

The college makes the acceptance decision generally before the December holiday break. If accepted, it makes the season brighter and less stressful knowing where you are going after graduation in June.

Cons

Early Decision candidates must accept the financial aid package awarded by the college. Obviously, negotiating power is usually lost because you have no other colleges with which to compare your award package.

The student needs to be 100% certain the college is a perfect fit. If accepted Early Decision you are obligated to enroll. College research needs to be conducted prior to the senior year.

The competition for Early Decision/Early Action is keen and the colleges heavily rely on your transcripts for the first three years. Therefore, you must be highly qualified academically.

Organization is key when applying Early Decision/Early Action. The senior interview, teacher and counselor recommendations, SAT, and the college essay all need to be complete in the early fall of the senior year.

NCAA ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY FOR DIVISION I & DIVISION II

If you are planning on attending a NCAA Division I or Division II institution and would like to compete on one of their varsity sports teams, there are eligibility guidelines that you must meet. You may find these guidelines at: **www.eligibilitycenter.org**

COLLEGE TESTING

Extensive advanced planning should go into your college testing schedule. If you need assistance, contact your counselor.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) a practice test for the SAT; also used to determine National Merit semifinalists (juniors only). It is given each October to juniors and sophomores. The PSAT is divided into five sections (two verbal, two math, and one writing). It's important to review these results and then your answers at www.collegeboard.com/psatextra. This is an excellent way to learn about your academic strengths and areas that may need improvement.

The SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) - a college entrance examination taken in the spring (March through June) of the junior year and typically the fall of the senior year. The main purpose of the SAT is to provide information about students' critical reading, math, and writing skills to the colleges to which they are applying. Each section of the test is scored using the 200 to 800 scale. There are numerous books, tapes, computer programs and preparation courses available to students. Talk to your counselor about the best ways for you to prepare for the test.

ACT (American College Test) a college examination used widely in the south and Western part of our country. It is generally taken during the junior and/or senior year. Students receive scores in English, Reading, Math and Science reasoning as well as a composite score. Many colleges today will accept the SAT or the ACT. Institutions may have a preference, so ask admissions offices which is used primarily for their school.

AP EXAM (Advanced Placement) The purpose of taking AP tests is to earn you credit or advanced standing once you get there. AP tests are administered in May and should be taken as soon as possible after taking a related AP course. Colleges differ as to what score is required for granting college credit or advanced placement.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Most colleges are interested in the information listed below when deciding whether or not to admit an applicant, although individual colleges differ in how they evaluate this information; that is, each component below is utilized by admissions but may be valued differently depending upon the uniqueness of each college/school. Some may even require only a few of the components, but not all. Research each individual college to determine what will be required.

- Difficulty of courses and final grades in those courses
- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- SAT and/or ACT scores
- Recommendations school counselor, teacher, community member
- Activity involvements/awards
- Personal essays
- Interviews
- Class rank if given (CHRHS is a non-rank school)

Grade Point Average

The GPA is the average of a student's grades starting with the freshman year. A student's grade point average (GPA) is important for college admission. The higher the GPA, the greater the college and scholarship opportunities for students.

Transcript

A transcript is a document that outlines a student's academic record in high school. The CHRHS transcript contains the following information.

- Courses, grades, and credits for each grade level completed beginning with grade 9.
- Current yearly and cumulative GPA.
- Status of curriculum standards met

All applications request that an official transcript be submitted with the application. An official transcript must have a signature and seal verifying its authenticity. An unofficial transcript is the same as an official transcript except there is no official signature and seal. You may request an unofficial transcript for personal use (e.g. to take with you on a college visit) by contacting the Counseling Office.

School Profile

A Camden Hills Regional High School Profile is included with each transcript. Our profile includes pertinent information about our school such as size, the percentage of students who go on to postsecondary education, the average SAT scores of the previous graduating class, and course information about the high school.

COLLEGE AND YOUR FINANCES

Just about everyone is interested in information on financial aid. Don't assume that you cannot afford a particular college or university until you have investigated all aspects of financial aid. There are two basic categories of financial aid: merit-based and need-based.

Merit based is generally given in recognition of special skills, talents, and/or academic ability. These include merit scholarships to top ten percent of the class, outstanding athlete, accomplished musician, etc. The second category - need based - represents the major portion of help available for post-secondary education.

Need-based (commonly called financial need) is the difference between what it will cost to attend the post-secondary institution and what the family will be able to pay (expected family contribution). There are four categories of financial aid:

- . Grants money given to the student, usually because of financial need
- . <u>Scholarships</u> money awarded because of academic achievement, outstanding talent or skill, and/or financial need
- . Work Study money the student earns through an on-campus job
- . Loans money that must be paid back

Grants and scholarships are free money that does not have to be paid back. Loans and work-study jobs are considered self-help. It makes sense to apply for grants and scholarships before taking out loans. A college will put together a financial aid "package". This package is a combination of grants, scholarships, loans, and/or work-study. A package varies from college to college, so it is important to compare financial aid packages.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

There are two financial aid forms that you need to be aware of: the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and the CSS Profile.

All students interested in obtaining financial aid must complete the FAFSA. This form will be available October 1st of the senior year. If you complete the FAFSA online, you will receive a SAR (student aid report) upon completion that will inform you of your EFC (estimated family contribution). This is the amount determined that you can afford to pay for education that year. If you mail your FAFSA you will receive a SAR in approximately three weeks. If the cost of the college is more than your EFC, you have a financial need and should be eligible for financial aid. This aid may come in the form of grants and/or loans.

In addition to the FAFSA, some private colleges require submission of the CSS/Financial Aid Profile. The Profile is a supplemental need analysis document used to determine eligibility for private, nonfederal funds. The Profile requires a registration fee and an additional fee for information sent to each college. We recommend that this form be completed only when required by a school. This form can be completed during the fall of the senior year.

Complete the FAFSA as early as possible, even if you feel you will not qualify for any need-based aid because of your income. Colleges verify that students are not eligible for federal or state aid before they award institutional and/or private funds. Some loan programs require the FAFSA. Make a copy of your FAFSA before you mail it. Also keep a copy of your income tax return forms. The FAFSA must also be completed in order to be eligible for a Federal Pell Grant.

Parents and students often find that they must take out a loan to finance educational expenses. Lending institutions provide Stafford Loans to students and PLUS loans to parents. Repayment of a Stafford Loan begins after the student has graduated. The Subsidized Stafford Loan is for students with financial need and the unsubsidized Stafford Loan is for students without financial need (the government pays the interest on Subsidized Stafford Loan). PLUS loans are not based on financial need and repayment begins within 60 days.

Other ways to finance a college education include co-op programs and military programs. Money can be saved by attending a local community college and then transferring to a Maine four-year college after one or two years. A student can also commute to college, saving room and board expenses.

It is important to note that if a student plans to attend a community college in Maine, and then transfer out-of-state, you MUST check "transfer equivalencies" at the receiving college, as some courses/credits may not transfer. You would then end up taking more courses, and paying more money, when your hope was to spend less.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship money sometimes goes unclaimed because many scholarships have very specific eligibility criteria. Academic scholarships generally require a high GPA and high SAT scores, excellent recommendations, and high involvement in extracurricular and community activities. Athletic scholarships or special talent scholarships go to the student who has demonstrated outstanding abilities. Others may offer opportunities based on a unique interest or community/work/vocational interest.

When looking for scholarships, please consider the following:

- Start looking for scholarships during your child's junior year.
- Attend "Scholarship Night" in February of senior year.
- Apply for local scholarships. The Registrar maintains an extensive list of scholarship opportunities and will have a packet available about local scholarships for seniors in February.
- Contact the financial aid office when applying to colleges to learn about scholarship opportunities.
- Scholarship deadlines are not flexible. Some scholarship applications are due soon after being publicized.
- Scholarship opportunities are often overlooked. Be sure to check with your place of employment, your church, and other organizations that you are associated with to see what scholarship opportunities they offer.
- Check to see if financial aid and scholarships are renewable.

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Before you apply...

You have a responsibility to research and understand the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application/supplements and fees, financial aid, scholarships, and housing. If you consider applying under an early admission or early decision plan, you should fully understand the process and procedures regarding this decision.

As you apply...

You should complete all materials required for the application and/or college supplement on or before published deadlines. You should be the sole author of your applications. You should seek the assistance of your school counselor early and throughout the college application process.

You are responsible for completing all of the required RED FOLDER paperwork and submitting to the CHRHS Counseling Office at least TEN SCHOOL DAYS prior to your first deadline. You will also need to schedule a final senior interview at this time, so that your counselor can complete a letter of recommendation for you. You will need to ask teachers to write additional letters of recommendations.

After you receive admission decisions...

You must notify each college or university that accepts you whether you plan to accept or reject its offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision, but generally no later than May 1st. You may confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on a wait list by a college and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify the college at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll.

If you accepted under an early decision plan, and have received financial aid information, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and make no additional applications. If you are applying early decision, be sure to request early financial aid information if needed.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION/EVALUATION FORMS

Counselor Recommendations:

In September of your senior year, you will receive information on how to complete the paperwork necessary for your counselor to write a comprehensive letter of recommendation for you. It will be important that the paperwork is submitted to our department at least ten days prior to your first college application deadline. This letter will be developed through personal contact with you, information gathered from you and your family, your school record and feedback from others that know you well. This descriptive letter is sent with your transcript, secondary school report, and school profile to all of the colleges that you request.

Teacher Evaluation Forms Requested by the Colleges:

If a college requires a letter of recommendation from your teachers, they may include these forms in their application or on-line. It is strongly recommended that these letters and evaluation forms be written by your junior or senior year teachers, as colleges want to hear about your most recent academic performance. You should first inquire whether a teacher is willing to write a letter for you, and if they agree, you should provide a stamped, addressed envelope to them with a list of the colleges and deadlines, along with the appropriate evaluation form. Teachers will send these directly in the envelope you provide. Teachers may choose to send these letters via the internet though the Common Application (CAO). If so, you will need to invite them via an email invite through the CAO website. Some teachers may require you to complete paperwork prior to them writing your letter. Always remember to provide your teacher with a thank you note after they write a letter for you.

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS ON-THE-JOB TRAINING VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS MILITARY RECRUITERS, AND JOB SEARCH WEBSITES

Maine Apprenticeship Program

Apprenticeship is still a mystery to many, who never get the chance to capitalize on the opportunity to "earn while you learn" because they do not even know it is an option.

The Maine Apprenticeship Program helps to raise awareness of Apprenticeship and all of the doors it can open for the future.

The Maine Apprenticeship Program assists in setting up structured, yet flexible training programs designed to meet the specific needs of Maine employers through on-the-job training (OJT) and related classroom instruction

The Maine Apprenticeship Program may reimburse up to 50% of an apprentice's tuition for college credit courses. In addition, the Apprentice works full-time for their sponsor (employer), applying related coursework and newly acquired skills to accomplish occupational tasks in a hands-on environment. They also have a Pre-apprenticeship Program, which is offered to juniors and seniors in high school who are at least 16 years old and on track for graduation.

For a list of apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs in Maine, go to:

www.msaa.maine.edu

Bath Iron Works Apprenticeship Programs

Manufacturing Apprenticeship Programs:

Carpenter, Machinist, Marine Electrician, Outside Machinist, Pipefitter, Structural fitter, Tinsmith, Welder Design Apprenticeship Programs:

Electrical design, Hull Outfit Design, Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning Design, Piping Design, Structural Design

For additional program information email: biwcareers@gdbiw.com

Cianbro

The CIANBRO INSTITUTE was established to address the skills shortage of human capital in the construction industry.

Vision - Attract, develop and retain the best workforce within the construction industry.

Mission - To be the best at delivering safe, cost effective and efficient training, and career development in a work style environment through partnerships with educational institutions, employment organizations, industry and business, and government agencies.

www.cianbro.com

Job Corps

Job Corps is a no-cost education and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 through 24 get a better job, make more money, and take control of their lives.

At Job Corps, students enroll to learn a trade, earn a high school diploma or GED and get help finding a good job. When you join the program, you will be paid a monthly allowance; the longer you stay with the program, the more your allowance will be. Job Corps provides career counseling and transition support to its students for up to 12 months after they graduate from the program.

If you're interested in joining the Job Corps program or finding out more about it, call (800) 733-JOBS or (800) 733-5627. An operator will provide you with general information about the program, refer you to the admissions counselor closest to where you live and mail you an information packet.

Website for Job Corps in Maine: www.jobcorps.dol.gov/centers/me.htm

The New England School of Metalwork - Mobile Training Center

(888) 753-7502

This may be connected with Maine OXY.

Women Unlimited

103 Winthrop St Augusta, ME 04330 (800) 281-5259

www.womenunlimited.org

Women Unlimited improves the financial independence of Maine's women, minorities, and disadvantaged workers by providing the training and access to jobs with livable wages for careers in trades, construction, technical, and transportation industries.

They offer both basic and advanced training, job-placement assistance, advocacy, and networking opportunities.

The University of Prescott (UP)

UP prepares students for careers in waterworks through a 2-year training program. Students receive instruction and hands on training on all aspect of their business.

Maine Competitive Skills Scholarship

Competitive skills scholarship program enacted to provide access to post-secondary education for people below 200% of the poverty level.

www.mainecareercenter.com/skillsscholarship

Maine Adult Education Association

PO Box 187 Greenwood, ME 04255 207-875-2722 info@maineadulted.org

Maine College Transition Program (MCT)

The Maine College Transition Program provides high-quality, cost-effective and accessible pathways to postsecondary education for adults. Specifically, it will: (a) help adults who are studying to earn high school degrees to transition to college, (b) provide preparatory support to adults who have a high school degree but are not academically prepared to take college courses, and (c) provide counseling, mentoring and support services to enable these adults to successfully transition to college and earn degrees.

Telephone: (207) 756-8560

E-Mail: mainecollegetransitions@gmail.com

ME go to College

Maine College Transitions (800) 322-5455

The Career Center

Breakwater Building 91 Camden Street, Suite 201 Rockland, ME 04841-3424 (207) 596-2600

www.mainecareer.com

The New England School of Metalwork - Mobile Training Center: (888) 753-7502

Plumbers and Pipefitters – UA Local 716

United Association of Journeymen ad Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry

John Napolitano 207-621-0555 office

New England Regional Council of Carpenters

Portland - 207-874-8052 Augusta- 207-621-8160

U.S. Military Contacts:

U.S. Army: Office: 622-4910

U.S. Marine Corps: Recruiting Command Office #: 622-0896

United States Coast Guard: Recruiting Command #: 761-4307

U.S. Navy: Navy Recruiting Station Brunswick Office: 729-3197

U.S. Air Force: Recruiting Office: 622-2065

Job Search Websites:

Maine Job Bank www.Americasjobexchange.com

www.indeed.com Indeed-One Search Bangor Daily News www.bangornews.com

Portland Press Herald www.mainejobs.mainetoday.com

& Kennebec Journal

Knox Village Soup www.knox.villagesoup.com www.waldo.villagesoup.com Waldo Village Soup

www.jobsinme.com Jobs in ME Jobs in Maine www.jobsinmaine.com www.careerbuilder.com Career Builder Go Jobs www.gojobs.com

www.mesda.com/jobboard Computer Jobs www.maine.gov/labor Maine Department of Labor

CAREER EXPLORATION SURVEY

- 1. Nature of Work: What does a worker in this occupation do? What specific tasks would I perform on this job?
- **2. Working Conditions:** Working conditions involve such things as what you like to work with and how you like to do your job. Does this occupation require work that may be dangerous or be a physical or health problem for me? Does this occupation require doing physically strenuous work or working outdoors? Does this occupation often require working or locations that might be a problem for me (frequent overtime, evening or weekend work, travel away from home)?
- 3. **Physical Setting & Place of Employment:** By the setting of a job, we mean its geographic location as well as its specific working environment. Are there jobs in this occupation in my town or state? (If yes/no where?)
- **4.** What financial and psychological rewards and satisfaction are likely to be found in this **occupation?** Financial rewards include not just *how much* money you make, but how you are paid, your benefits, job security, and so on. Psychological rewards relate to your passions and your values. What things are missing?
- **5. I would find this job particularly satisfying because:** (Consider your passions, values, interests, and life goals for guidance.)
- 6. What interests, abilities, knowledge and skills are helpful in this occupation?
- 7. **Employment Outlook:** What is the employment outlook for/trends of this occupation? Will there be many job openings when I am ready to go to work? How might societal, economic, and technological changes impact this career? Does the outlook make any difference to you? Why or why not?
- **8. Earnings:** What is the typical starting salary in this occupation? What is an average mid-career salary (10-15 years)? Is job security an issue with this kind of work?
- **9. Advanced Opportunities:** What opportunities for growth and advancement might be available to someone employed in this occupation in the future? How might I prepare for advancement?
- **10. Self-Employment:** Could you be self-employed or run a small business with this career (business owner, freelance work, consulting, and the like)? If yes, would this interest you? Why or why not?
- 11. Education and Training: What can I do today to begin preparing for this job? What classes must I take in high school to prepare for this job? What training/education is needed for this job? What academic subjects should I take to prepare for this job? Are there specific tests, licenses, or certifications needed for this job?
- 12. Related Occupations: What are some similar/related occupations?
- 13. Family plans & lifestyle: How does this career mesh with my family plans? Is it consistent with my desired lifestyle?

Sources of Information

Websites:

- Choices Planner http://access.bridges.com Site ID: 1018253 Password: Jammer
- O-Net Online http://online.onetcenter.org/ Click on: Find Occupations
- CareerZone http://www.nycareerzone.org/index.jsp Click on: Cluster Area or Search
- America's Career InfoNet http://www.acinet.org/acinet/default.asp
- U.S. Dept. of Labor, Dictionary of Occupational Titles http://www.oalj.dol.gov/libdot.htm
- U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor & Statistics http://www.bls.gov/
- What You Need to Know About Career Planning http://careerplanning.about.com/
- Career Consulting Corner http://www.careercc.com/careerexp.shtml
- Quintessential Careers http://www.quintcareers.com/career_exploration.html
- eCampusTours.com http://www.eCampusTours.com

A sample of books available in the School to Career Office:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Enhanced Occupational Outlook Handbook, 4th Ed.
- Guide for Occupational Exploration, 3rd Ed.
- Military Careers: A Guide to Military Occupations
- America's Top 300 Jobs
- America's 101 Fastest Growing Jobs
- America's Top 101 Computer & Technical Jobs
- America's Fastest Growing Jobs

** Information for this guide was compiled from a variety of sources.

** See your school counselor for additional information.

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