



**College Planning Handbook**  
**2011-2012**



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## Letter from the Guidance Office

Dear Tapestry Parents and Guardians:

On behalf of the staff and faculty at Tapestry Charter High School we would like to thank you for entrusting us with the education and care of your child. We are dedicated to ensuring the academic success of all students.

It is important for students and families to have useful information to plan for post-secondary education. To that end, we are providing you with the TCHS College Handbook.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our office at 204-5883 (ext.1038).

Sincerely,

The Guidance Department

## College Planning Timeline

### Freshman Year

- Understand graduation requirements and select challenging courses all four years.
  - TCHS plans for all students to take:
    1. Four credits of English
    2. Four credits of Mathematics
    3. Four credits of Social Studies
    4. Three credits of Science
    5. Four credits of Spanish/LOTE
    6. Two credits of Physical Education
    7. Two credits of Art/Music
    8. Half credit of Health
    9. Two credits of Crew
    10. One credit of Enrichment Intensive
- Earn a mastery score of 3 or better in each of your courses.
- Explore career possibilities.
- Understand your high school record including your transcript and extracurricular activities.
- Register with College Board and study for the SAT.
- Register with ACT and study for the ACT.
- Create an activities resume. Remember to include community service, extracurricular activities and work history.
- Form strong student teacher relationships.
- Set personal goals around study skills, time management, organizational skills, attendance and discipline habits.

### Sophomore Year

- Understand graduation requirements and select challenging courses all four years.
- Register for the PSAT and take this exam in October.
- Be certain that you are on track to meet high school graduation and college entrance requirements.
- Update activities resume.
- If you are an artist/musician/dancer, determine if you'll need to compose a portfolio or arrange for a special interview.
- Ask older friends/family about their college experiences.
- Research colleges in guidebooks, online, and at college fairs.
- If a college seems interesting to you, request to receive more information (on the admissions page of each college's website, or at the college's booth at college fairs).
- Organize and read college literature that arrives in the mail.
- Apply to scholarships.

## Junior Year

- Continue to focus on academics; look to take on leadership roles in your extracurricular activities; *your junior year performance will be the most important for college admissions.*
- Register for the PSAT and take this exam in October.
- Be certain that you are on track to meet high school graduation and college entrance requirements.
- If you are an athlete who wishes to compete in college, be aware of NCAA Clearinghouse guidelines.
- If you are an artist/musician/dancer, determine if you'll need to compose a portfolio or arrange for a special interview.
- Prepare for and take the SAT and/or ACT tests, preferably in the spring semester.
- Take SAT Subject Tests in the spring (if you'll apply to colleges that require them).
- If you'll need standardized testing accommodations, be aware of deadlines for required paperwork.
- Ask older friends/family about their college experiences.
- Research colleges in guidebooks, online, and at college fairs.
- If a college seems interesting to you, request to receive more information (on the admissions page of each college's website, or at the college's booth at college fairs).
- Organize and read college literature that arrives in the mail.
- Visit colleges and arrange interviews. Utilize college websites for virtual tours.
- Prepare an activities resume and bring a copy to interviews.
- Complete personal statement for college.
- Apply to scholarships.
- Attend college visits and campus tours in the spring with TCHS.
- Update activities resume.

## Summer before Senior Year

- Continue to visit colleges and arrange on-campus or alumni interviews.
- Continue to research colleges online, in guidebooks, and in person.
- Begin to narrow your list down to the colleges you'd most like to attend.
- Create a system to organize your applications; keep copies of everything you send.
- Gather applications for the colleges you're serious about, or create an online account for online applications (keep login and passwords written in a secure location at home!)
- Begin writing application essays.
- Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse (if you're hoping to play a sport in college)/  
Complete art portfolio/Prepare for musical audition, if necessary.
- Complete registrations for fall SAT/ACT tests, if necessary.
- Apply to scholarships.
- Take practice SAT/ACT exams.

## Senior Year, Fall Semester

### General

- Narrow college choices.
- Make a list of all application and scholarship deadlines.
- Update activities resume.
- Complete applications, including essays.
- Complete recommendation forms for teachers and counselor, submit to recommenders several weeks prior to the deadline. The earlier, the better!
- If you plan to ask an additional adult for a recommendation, make that request early and ask him/her to submit the letter to the guidance office.
- Send official SAT or ACT score reports to colleges that you did not originally list when you registered for the test.
- Retake SAT or ACT.
- Meet with college representatives who visit TCHS in the fall.
- Actively search for scholarships, including ones for sports, activities, service, academics, and cultural, religious, or ethnic organizations.

### October

- Applications for Early Decision/Early Action colleges will need to be submitted to the guidance office.
- Financial aid forms will need to be completed for early decision colleges so that a projected award can be calculated; official financial aid application will be completed after January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Applications for colleges that have rolling admissions can be submitted at any time — the sooner, the better!

### December

- All applications will need to be submitted to guidance during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of December\*\*.
- Write thank you notes to individuals who wrote letters of recommendation for you.
- Attend college night with your parents November 3, 2011 and Financial Aid Night January 4, 2012.

### January

- When it comes to financial aid, remember that DEADLINES MATTER!!
- Financial aid forms (FAFSA and CSS Profile) available online or in guidance; can be submitted as early as January 1<sup>st</sup>. Check each college's deadline for submission of financial aid forms! Priority deadlines can be as early as February and may not require tax returns for completion.
- Some colleges might require the CSS Profile in addition to the FAFSA. This application is available at <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>.
- Submit applications for colleges with February/March deadlines.

### April

- April 1<sup>st</sup> is the date by which all colleges must notify applicants with a decision.
- During the month of April you may consider visiting/revisiting colleges to which you were accepted. Many will hold formal programs for accepted students.
- Carefully compare financial aid award letters and determine the affordability of your options.

### May

- Notify your college of choice by May 1<sup>st</sup>. This will usually require a monetary deposit to hold your spot for the fall.

## College Selection Factors

Colleges differ greatly from one another and your goal throughout your search should be to determine what features might make a school a good “fit” for you. A fit means that the college suits you academically, socially, and financially. Here are some features to consider and compare:

Large campus?	May offer an abundance of different types of students, facilities, dorm options, computer labs; can be more impersonal.
Small campus?	Allows for more personal contact with faculty and classmates, access to participation in clubs/sports/extracurricular activities; can be limiting in terms of classes and opportunities (but not always).
Public school?	As a New York State resident, tuition will be much less expensive at a SUNY school; students are largely from in state.
Private school?	Could affect the level of selectivity, some have more money to offer scholarships/grants, could attract students from all over the country and world.
Located in an urban area?	Access to cultural events, may offer better opportunities for employment, internships.
Town or rural location?	Can make campus life more vibrant when students rely on the college for social life; could be safer and more of a community environment.
Far from home?	Chance to feel independent, experience life in a different part of the country; travel home can be costly or inconvenient.
Close to home?	Easy to get home on the weekend; if most students are local it can impact the campus social life.
Live on campus?	Allows you to experience campus social life and independence; adds to college fees.
Commute to campus?	Saves money; you may not feel that you experience the college scene fully.
Good student support services?	Personal and academic counseling, writing center, student groups, minority support groups, etc.
Student body?	Is it diverse? Do you feel that you can connect in and out of the classroom with your peers?
Strong faculty?	Will courses be taught by professors, graduate students, or a combination of both? Do a majority of the professors hold advanced degrees? Are there realistic opportunities to work alongside faculty to do research?

Availability of special programs?

Will the school hold freshman orientation programs? Can you earn a combined BA/MA? Will you be able to study abroad? Are there internship/co-op opportunities? Are there programs for students who enter early?

Quality of programs?

Is the school known for its strong science majors, writing programs, pre-med advising system, etc.? Determine what they're most proud of. Most importantly, do they offer strong programs in the fields you'd like to study?

Cost?

What percentage of students receive financial aid? Does the college promise to meet a family's demonstrated need? Are there specific scholarships for which you might qualify? What is the total cost of attendance (tuition, room and board, books, transportation, etc.)? Is tuition less for in-state students?

Athletics/Activities?

Does the college offer the sport (intercollegiate, club, or intramural) that you want to play or observe? Will it be realistic for you to participate in clubs and activities, such as write for the school newspaper or join student government, or is there a lot of competition for those positions?

## **More Questions to Consider...**

### **Academics:**

How many terms make up a school year (typically 2 or 3)?  
How many weeks is each term?  
How many classes do full-time students take at once?  
What is the size of a typical freshman class?  
Is there a core curriculum? How many required courses are in the core?  
Is there a minimum number of office hours professors must hold each week?  
When do students declare their major?  
If I change majors, will it impact my graduation date?  
Can I double major? Minor?  
Is there a foreign language requirement?  
Will I be taught by graduate teaching assistants? Or will these TAs lead sessions in addition to the course taught by a professor?

### **Academic Advising:**

Will I have an advisor who helps me choose and register for courses?  
Is there a writing center where I can get help with my essays?  
Who will I contact if I need accommodations for a learning disability?  
What services are offered for students with learning disabilities?  
Will my parents automatically receive a copy of my grades?  
Where would I go if I find that I am struggling with a class?

### **Extracurricular Opportunities**

Is there a career center? How do they assist students?  
Will I have an opportunity to study abroad? How much might that cost in addition to my regular tuition?  
Are students required to complete an internship for certain majors or programs?  
Are there any varsity sports? Club sports? Intramurals?

### **Freshman Orientation:**

What freshman orientation activities does the college offer?  
Is there any type of required freshman seminar? Will it cover academic and social issues?

### **Life on Campus:**

Are there adult advisors in the dorms?  
Where would I go if I became sick or injured?  
Am I required to have a meal plan?  
Is there a variety of dining facilities where I can redeem my meal plan?  
What do students do on the weekends?  
Do many students leave campus on the weekends?

## INTERNET RESOURCES

If you have access to the Internet, you can find a great deal of useful information related to the college search. The following websites may be useful:

*\*Remember to keep all of your login/password information in a secure folder at home!\**

### **Tools for Your College Search:**

- Each college's own website will have pages for admissions information, athletics contacts, a 'virtual' tour, the college newspaper, the names and contact numbers for admissions representatives, and a link to the application.
- The Princeton Review's "College and Careers" page: [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)
- The College Board's "College Search Engine": [www.collegeboard.com/student/csearch](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/csearch)
- Colleges That Change Lives: [www.ctcl.com](http://www.ctcl.com)
- Campus Tours Online: [www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com)

### **Standardized Testing:**

- SAT and SAT Subject Tests (Register for the tests, check your scores, and send official score reports to colleges): [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)
- ACT with Writing (Register, check scores, send score reports to colleges): [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)
- Free Practice Tests: [www.testprepreview.com](http://www.testprepreview.com)

### **Applying for College:**

- Each college's own website will have directions about how to apply online (which many prefer) or how to request a paper application.
- The Common Application (an online application accepted by 300+ colleges and universities): [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).

### **Scholarships and Financial Aid:**

- FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)
- CSS Profile (Required by some college in addition to the FAFSA): <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>
- Fast Web Scholarship Search: [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

## What Colleges Look For

*In order of importance*

*As reported to the National Association of College Admissions Counselors*

- A . Grades in College Prep Courses  
The quality of academic work a student completes in high school is the single most important record for the college, since the colleges have found that “the past predicts the future”. It is important to remember that ninth grade marks are part of the college admission record as are poor grades and failures, even though they may have been made up later. Colleges are especially interested in the marks received in academic subjects (math, science, English, foreign language, social studies) and in the caliber of courses taken. A minimum of 16 academic units is usually necessary. Colleges have found that high school grades in college-preparatory classes indicate an ability to succeed in college work. If a student chooses to attend a community college after high school graduation, the grades in those college classes will form the basis of the transfer application.
- B . Admission Test Scores  
College Board Examinations (SAT and SAT Subject Tests), and/or the American College Testing Program (ACT), should all indicate potential for college work.
- C . Grades in all Subjects and Mid Year Grades Senior Year
- D . Class Rank  
\*\*note: Tapestry Charter High School does not rank students. Colleges will need to evaluate applicants from our school based on other factors. Only about 50% of high schools in the US rank students.\*\*
- E . Essays/Writing Sample
- F . Counselor Recommendation
- G . Teacher Recommendations
- H . Interview
- I . Special Talents, Interests, Skills  
Colleges are interested in knowing about the meaningful extracurricular school, community, travel, and work experiences of the student. At times specific talents are taken into consideration.
- J . Community Service/Work/Extracurricular Activities
- K . Personality Evaluation  
Colleges are looking for students who are mature learners; those who show intellectual curiosity and are willing to work hard. Colleges often ask secondary school personnel to evaluate the student on the basis of these qualities (letters of recommendation).

L . Ability to Pay (81% of schools state this has no importance)

## What Do *Highly Selective* Colleges Seek in Applicants?

One College's Answer...

### “Characteristics of Excellence”

Their Faculty Undergraduate Admissions Study Group identified the following “characteristics of excellence” that Princeton University should seek in the students it admits:

2. **Qualities of mind**
  - High intelligence
  - Demonstrated capacity to excel academically
  - Originality; creativity
  - Joyful engagement in learning; passion for intellectual inquiry, whatever the field
  - Mental discipline; perseverance; willingness and ability to take on difficult challenges
  - Self-motivation; eagerness to venture beyond the boundaries of assignments and stated expectations
  - Ability to challenge and contribute to the learning of others by offering differing perspectives
  - Disposition to make the best use of the educational resources that Princeton has to offer
3. **Qualities of character**
  - Integrity; responsibility; sense of values
  - Demonstrated ability to look beyond oneself; concern for the well-being of others; concern for and contributions to the quality of life of the community
4. **Capacity to enrich and contribute to the University community**
  - Effective commitment to an activity or activities outside the classroom, whether intellectual, artistic, athletic or service-oriented in nature
  - Energy
  - Capacity for leadership
5. **Potential for life-long leadership and service in one's community and profession**

The Study Group agreed, further, that diversity is an essential component of long-term excellence. By diversity it means that the men and women who study at Princeton should be drawn from the widest possible variety of backgrounds—socioeconomic, racial, religious and other—and should bring to the University a wide range of values, beliefs, experiences and interests.... In the view of the Study Group, diversity—and the experience of dealing with diversity—are integral elements in the preparation of effective citizens and leaders.

## Overview of Standardized Testing

Many colleges and universities require applicants to submit scores from standardized tests. These tests are generally taken during spring of the junior year and/or fall of the senior year. The best way to register for these tests (and check scores and submit scores to colleges) is online.

### **Planning for College Admissions Tests**

- Planning the timing of your college admissions testing and registering for the tests is YOUR responsibility.
- Take the SAT or ACT at least once before the end of your junior year.
- Some students may want to take 2 or more SAT Subject Tests at the end of sophomore or junior year.
- Scores are available about one month after a test is taken. It also takes this long for scores to be reported to colleges, so plan ahead. Some early college applications will be due in November of the senior year!

**SAT:** Officially named the SAT Reasoning Test, it requires you to respond in three general areas.

- *Critical Reading* covers reading, comprehension, and understanding of the English language.
- *Math* covers basic computation, understanding, and application of mathematical concepts. The majority of the math portion covers concepts you should have mastered by the time you have finished Algebra 1 and Geometry, although harder concepts and problems are also included.
- *Writing* assesses a student's understanding of standard written English. There are multiple-choice questions as well as a written essay.
- Each of these three sections is scored on a scale of 200-800.
- The three scores added together form a "composite score" (could be 600-2400 points). If you take the test more than once, most colleges will mix and match the best scores from each section to give you the best composite.
- Website: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

**ACT:** Officially named the ACT plus Writing, it tests students in four subject areas as well as writing.

- Measures skills in English, math, reading, and science. The writing component tests planning and command of written language.
- It is accepted in place of the SAT by colleges and can sometimes be submitted instead of SAT Subject Tests.
- Scores range from 1-36.
- Website: [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

**Subject Tests:** Officially called SAT Subject Tests, these are required by a limited number of colleges. It's important for students to determine if any colleges to which they'll apply require these tests.

- Offered in 20 subject areas.

- Each test is 1 hour in length, students can take up to 3 tests in a single day.
- Website: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

**PSAT/NMSQT:** The “Practice” SAT that is given to 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> graders in preparation for the SAT. Juniors who take the test are automatically entered into a scholarship contest, so it is also referred to as the National Merit Scholar Qualifying Test.

**Official Score Reports:** The colleges to which you apply will often ask that you have **official** SAT and ACT score reports sent directly to them. **Official score reports** mean that the scores are sent directly from the College Board or ACT to the colleges and not from TCHS. Arrange for four colleges to receive your official scores **at no cost to you** by simply entering their college code numbers at the time of registration. You can also have score reports sent after you have taken the SAT and ACT for a fee.

**Test Optional Colleges:** A substantial and growing number of colleges allow students to apply without submitting ACT or SAT scores. Typically, colleges will require a graded writing sample and/or a personal interview in the place of standardized tests. One source that lists colleges that are test optional is Fair Test, [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org).

## 2011-2012 SAT Registration Information

You cannot take the SAT and Subject Tests on the same day. You must register separately for each date that you plan to take the tests.

<b><u>TEST DATE</u></b>	<b><u>TEST(S)</u></b>	<b><u>REGISTER BY:</u></b>
November 5, 2011	SAT/Subject Tests	October 7, 2011
December 3, 2011	SAT/Subject Tests	November 8, 2011
January 28, 2012	SAT/Subject Tests	December 30, 2011
March 10, 2012	SAT	February 10, 2012
May 5, 2012	SAT/Subject Tests	April 6, 2012
June 2, 2012	SAT/Subject Tests	May 8, 2012

### TAPESTRY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL CEEBS CODE 331087

- Register online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) or pick up a registration booklet in the high school guidance office.
- Check the website/booklet for information on SAT /Subject Tests registration/late registration deadlines.
- When you register, you have the option to send official score reports to 3 colleges for free; additional scores can be sent for a fee.

## 2011-2012 ACT Registration Information

You must register separately for each date that you plan to take the test. Most colleges will require the ACT plus Writing.

<b><u>TEST DATES:</u></b>	<b><u>REGISTER BY:</u></b>
December 10, 2011	November 4, 2011
February 11, 2012	January 13, 2012
April 14, 2012	March 9, 2012
June 9, 2012	May 4, 2012
September 8, 2012	Available on <a href="http://www.actstudent.org">www.actstudent.org</a> March 2012
October 27, 2012	Available on <a href="http://www.actstudent.org">www.actstudent.org</a> March 2012
December 8, 2012	Available on <a href="http://www.actstudent.org">www.actstudent.org</a> March 2012

### TAPESTRY CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

CEEB CODE: 331087

- Register online at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) or pick up a registration booklet in the high school guidance office.
- Check the booklet for information on ACT registration deadlines.
- When you register, you have the option of sending official scores to 4 colleges for free. You should also have official scores sent to TCHS. Additional reports are \$9.00+

## Campus Tour Guidelines

THE COLLEGE OF  
**WOOSTER**  
NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Jeffrey G. Hanna  
330-263-2082

[jhanna@acs.wooster.edu](mailto:jhanna@acs.wooster.edu)

### *Visiting a Campus? Plan Ahead.*

WOOSTER, Ohio – Most college admissions officials agree that nothing substitutes for a campus visit when it comes to selecting a college.

But what constitutes a successful campus visit?

Ric Martinez, associate director of admissions at The College of Wooster, says a successful visit begins with careful planning on the prospective student's part and good communication between student and the admissions office.

"For students to get the most out of a visit, they need to spend some time thinking about just what they want to accomplish," says Martinez. "If they give an admissions office plenty of notice, a visit can be tailored to their specific needs. There is nothing worse than taking the time to travel to a campus and then discovering a particular class is not scheduled for that day or a particular professor or coach is unavailable."

According to Martinez, campus visits fall into two categories. The first is primarily informational and often occurs over the summer when students and their families tour a number of campuses, meeting primarily with admissions representatives, often taking an official tour and having the admissions interview.

"This is a visit to get a feel for the campus and determine whether or not to keep it on the list," says Martinez.

The second kind of visit is more investigative and should be made when the college is in session.

Martinez believes that a second visit should include several elements:

- Visit one or more classes. "The key question that prospective students need to answer during a visit is how the college's academic program will suit them," says Martinez. "The best answer is to go to one or two classes, perhaps one class in an area in which the student has an interest and another class in a totally different area."
- Arrange to meet with a faculty member. "Like many schools our size, Wooster

emphasizes personal interaction between faculty and students,” says Martinez. “Because of this emphasis, it’s important for prospective students to talk with a faculty member. Not only can this conversation be used to discuss possibilities in a specific major or program in which the student has interest, but it can also be a chance to ask the faculty member why he or she teaches at Wooster in order to get a sense of the less tangible benefits of the institution.”

- Meet with a coach or faculty member in an extracurricular area of interest. “A prospective student athlete should certainly take time to talk with the coach of that sport, and prospective musicians or actors should meet with faculty members in those areas,” Martinez says.
- Eat a meal in the dining hall. “This isn’t just to find out what the food is like,” Martinez adds. “You can get a chance to see how the students interact with one another in this setting.”
- Spend some time wandering the campus on your own. “If students get to the campus the night before their visit, they can gather some important impressions merely by looking around on their own without an admissions guide providing directions,” says Martinez. Reading signs, posters, and calendars of events on bulletin boards is a good way to judge the level of student involvement, to see what might be the hot issues on campus, and to get a sense of the variety of social options. “While the student center and the Career Services office should be on the official campus tour, I always encourage students to drop in and simply ask what goes on in these facilities.”
- Make it an overnight visit if possible. “Overnights are invaluable in assessing a college. In this way, students can see the integration of academic, social, and cultural life; the interaction of students with one another; the level of academic interest,” says Martinez. “The one question that prospective students should ask themselves over and over again during the process, and especially during an overnight stay, is ‘Will I be comfortable here for four years?’”
- Contact students from your high school who are on the campus. “The admissions office can identify students from the same high school and help make the connection,” adds Martinez. “Oftentimes, this provides useful points of comparison.”

Martinez emphasizes that colleges are anxious to assist in the planning of a campus visit to make certain that students have every opportunity to evaluate those areas that are most important to them.

## College Tour Worksheet

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

College name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Activities Completed (circle all that apply):**

Info session      Tour      Class visit      Interview      Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Admissions Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of tour guide: \_\_\_\_\_

**Fill in the blank questions:**

Two year or Four year? \_\_\_\_\_

Public or Private? \_\_\_\_\_

Campus surroundings: Rural      Suburban      Urban

Closest major city: \_\_\_\_\_

Enrollment size: \_\_\_\_\_

# of undergraduates: \_\_\_\_\_

% of students who live on campus: \_\_\_\_\_

% of students who receive financial aid: \_\_\_\_\_

% of students who are minorities: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of majors offered: \_\_\_\_\_

Average class size: \_\_\_\_\_

Student/faculty ratio: \_\_\_\_\_

Acceptance rate (%): \_\_\_\_\_

**Open ended questions:**

1. Describe the physical features of the college. What kind of area/neighborhood is it in? What are the buildings like? Would you feel comfortable on this campus?

2. How would you describe the student body? Are they busy, laid back, liberal, conservative, friendly, etc.? Is it an ethnically diverse student body? Would you feel comfortable being a student here?

3. List three interesting facts you learned from your tour guide:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you like about this college?

5. What do you dislike about this college?

6. How interested would you be in attending this college?

*Very interested    Somewhat interested    Neutral    Somewhat disinterested    Very disinterested*

Why or why not?

## College Athletics: An Overview

If you intend to participate in athletics at the college level, you must plan ahead and make sure you meet certain eligibility requirements. The two main organizations who govern college athletics are the NCAA and the NAIA; visit their websites for more information and a list of colleges that participate.

### **NCAA – National Collegiate Athletic Association** **Website: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)**

**If you intend to participate in NCAA Division I or II athletics as a freshman, the NCAA Clearinghouse must certify you. See your counselor for help in determining whether or not initial eligibility standards apply to you. If you wish to play on a NCAA Division III team, see the college's own site for eligibility requirements.**

Remember, unless you are a heavily recruited Division I or II “Special Talents” athlete, simply meeting minimum eligibility requirements will not get you into a good four-year school.

The key is to let your sport help get you into the college of your choice. If you meet the college's basic admissions criteria, coaches can help you get admitted. The student athlete needs to do well academically in high school so coaches can help him/her! Very few athletes have colleges begging for their services. Student athletes must put themselves in a position so that their coaches can help them get recruited. Coaches and parents should work with the guidance counselor on strategies for college admissions.

### **NAIA – National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics** **Website: [www.naia.cstv.com](http://www.naia.cstv.com)**

#### **TO BE ELIGIBLE TO REPRESENT A MEMBER INSTITUTION IN ANY MANNER (SCRIMMAGES, INTERCOLLEGIATE):**

As a first-time entering freshman you must meet **two of three** entry-level requirements:

- A . A minimum score of 18 on the ACT or 860 on the SAT (critical reading + math sections). Tests must be taken on a national testing date. Scores must be achieved on a single test.
- B . Achieve an overall high school grade point average of 2.000 on a 4.000 scale
- C . Graduate in the top half of your high school graduating class.

## Overview of Admissions Plans

Understanding when and how to apply to college can be confusing. Most colleges have several plans to choose from, so it is imperative that applicants understand each plan, its implications, and the deadlines.

### **Non-Restrictive Application Plans:**

**All of these plans allow students to wait until May 1 to confirm enrollment.**

**Regular Decision:** A student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction.

**Rolling Admission:** An institution reviews applications as they are completed and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admission cycle. Students may receive a decision within 3-5 weeks of submitting the completed application. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction.

**Early Action (EA):** Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Students who are admitted under Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1. Under *non-restrictive* Early Action, a student may apply to other colleges.

### **Restrictive Application Plans:**

**These are plans that allow institutions to limit students from applying to other early plans.**

**Early Decision (ED):** Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. While pursuing admission under an Early Decision plan, students may apply to other institutions, but may have only one Early Decision application pending at any time. Should a student who applies for financial aid not be offered an award that makes attendance possible, the student may decline the offer of admission and be released from the Early Decision commitment. The institution must notify the applicant of the decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time after the Early Decision deadline. Usually, a nonrefundable deposit must be made well in advance of May 1.

The institution will respond to an application for financial aid at or near the time of an offer of admission. *(TCHS note: if a student applies to a college under the Early Decision plan, he/she must accept that he won't be able to compare multiple financial aid offers from colleges. If a family plans to utilize financial assistance in order to pay for college expenses, it might not be advisable to apply ED.)*

Institutions with Early Decision plans may restrict students from applying to other early plans. Institutions will clearly articulate their specific policies in their Early Decision agreement.

**Restrictive Early Action (REA):** Students submit an application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution’s regular response date. Institutions with *Restrictive Early Action* plans place restrictions on student applications to other early plans. Institutions will clearly articulate these restrictions in their Early Action policies and agreements with students. Students who are admitted under Restrictive Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution’s offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1.

(from the NACAC Statement of Principles of Good Practice, approved in 2007)

## The College Interview

You may get the opportunity to have a personal interview at some of the colleges to which you apply. Though it can be intimidating, an interview can be a great way to help the admissions committee see you in a positive light. Most of the ‘highly selective’ colleges utilize interviews as an official part of the selection process, though many other schools offer interviews that serve a variety of purposes. Depending on the school, interviews can be required, recommended, or optional; the results can be either evaluative or informative.

Be sure to thoroughly research the interview policies at any schools to which you’ll apply or visit; you should always seek an interview if you feel it will help you gain admission to a school on your list. A strong interview leaves a positive impression and can certainly help the admissions committee decide on a borderline candidate.

A college might offer on-campus interviews with a member of the admissions staff or a senior student, or they may offer interviews in your geographic area with an alumnus or alumna. Use the time to help the interviewer understand you and your interests; also consider the time as a great opportunity to ask questions about the college. If you arrive prepared and put your best foot forward, chances are you’ll have a great interview. Who knows—you might even enjoy yourself!

### Prior to the Interview

1. Prepare an Activities Resume that lists extracurricular activities, volunteer work, athletic participation, honors and awards, and/or employment.
2. Find out the interviewer’s name.
3. Research the school using college guides and the internet. Learn the basic facts that are readily available.
4. Schedule a tour and information session prior to the interview so that you’re more informed about the college.
5. Prepare questions that aren’t easily answered through the reading materials; this will allow the interviewer to really show off the merits of the school.
6. Prepare answers to anticipated/common questions, such as
  - Why do you want to attend this school?
  - What are you interested in studying?
  - How did you learn about this school?
7. Be prepared to talk about yourself! The interviewer will want to learn about your academic and extracurricular interests.

8. Choose your attire. You should look respectful but wear something that's comfortable in case you take a tour first. No shorts, t-shirts, jeans, sneakers, or hats.

DO...

- ✓ Bring several copies of your Activities Resume, and know what it says!
- ✓ Arrive 5 minutes early
- ✓ Greet the interviewer by name
- ✓ Take the interviewer's cue to shake hands; be sure your right hand is free and dry, and squeeze as tightly or loosely as he/she does
- ✓ Make eye contact throughout the interview and smile at appropriate times
- ✓ Be honest, enthusiastic, and energetic
- ✓ Listen to the questions and take a moment to reflect before you answer
- ✓ Ask questions; ideally the interview will evolve into a great conversation
- ✓ Watch for signals as to when the interview is over. Sum up your interest in the college succinctly and then stop
- ✓ Thank the interviewer for his/her time and ask for a business card/email address

DON'T...

- ✓ Take anyone with you to the interview (parents should wait in the car or outside the admissions office)
- ✓ Try to be someone you aren't
- ✓ Recite a prepared speech
- ✓ Be too boastful or too modest about your accomplishments
- ✓ Exaggerate or try to be funny (humor is great, but an interview is a place for more serious discussion)
- ✓ Put your belongings on the interviewer's desk or rearrange the furniture before you sit down
- ✓ Make ANY negative comments about a teacher, acquaintance, or anyone else!
- ✓ Volunteer negative information about yourself or apologize for your weaknesses
- ✓ Show strong feelings or emotions
- ✓ Interrupt or argue with the interviewer
- ✓ Discuss other colleges that you're interested in. If asked directly, you can reply that you're doing a lot of research and trying to find a school that is a great fit for you.
- ✓ Chew gum, eat or drink, bite your nails, play with your hair, or fidget.

## After the Interview

1. Analyze what transpired during the interview. This will help you prepare for subsequent interviews.
2. Write or email a brief note to the interviewer expressing appreciation for the time he/she spent with you. In a sentence, express your continued interest in the college or university. This is also a good opportunity to restate an answer (if you think it's appropriate or necessary).

## Letters of Recommendation

Each college applicant will need:

- 1 letter of recommendation from guidance counselor
- 2 letters of recommendation from academic teachers
- Depending on your extracurricular activities and what you plan to study in college, you may want to have an additional recommendation from a non-academic teacher, a coach, or an adult who has supervised you in a work or club setting.

Your guidance counselor will write a letter that helps explain the positive contributions you've made to TCHS and the greater community. This is the purpose for the BRAG SHEET; It will help your counselor understand ALL the things you've done outside of the classroom starting in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. This would include activities in which you participate at TCHS as well as jobs and activities you're a part of at school.

Two academic teachers will each write a letter that explains your strengths as a student in the classroom. The purpose is not simply to state your grade in the class—it's to help the admissions team understand your style as a student. You should request letters from the teachers who know you best—even if you didn't earn a perfect 4, these teachers might be able to best capture your positive qualities in a letter. Colleges prefer to receive letters from teachers who taught you in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, though 10<sup>th</sup> grade teachers are acceptable. Most colleges advise applicants not to request letters from teachers who ONLY taught the applicant in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

Extra recommendations: You should only request an additional recommendation if the writer would be able to tell the admissions committee something about you that is very different from the other 3 letters. Talk with your guidance counselor if you have someone in mind—you can decide together if this extra letter is worth pursuing.

### **PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

1. Make the request **AT LEAST 3 WEEKS BEFORE IT'S DUE**. The earlier you make the request, the more time your teachers will have to write a thoughtful letter.
2. Approach your teacher when he/she has a spare moment—not directly before a class or a meeting.
3. Ask him/her if she would be willing to write a letter of recommendation on your behalf.
4. If he/she says yes, provide the "Letter of Recommendation: Teacher" form.
5. Ask the teacher if there is any information he/she needs to complete the letter (for example, some teachers would like to see a copy of work you completed in their classes).

## Glossary of Terms

**Candidate's Reply Date:** Students have until May 1<sup>st</sup> of their senior year to make a final decision about which college to attend.

**CEEB Code:** A unique identification number assigned to every high school. Students will need to use this code when they register for the SAT and ACT, apply for scholarships, and apply for college. **TCHS CEEB code: 331-087**

**Common Application:** A universal application accepted by hundreds of colleges and universities. Students can complete the application online and submit it directly to the college. Most colleges that use the common application also require a supplement, which could include extra essays.

**CSS Profile:** The College Scholarship Service Profile is an additional financial aid application required by certain colleges.

**Engineering or Technical College:** a college that provides training in a highly specialized field such as engineering, computers, or a physical science. They often have "Institute of Technology" or "Polytechnic Institute" in their name.

**FAFSA:** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This is a government form that families MUST complete in order to be eligible for ANY sort of need-based financial aid (loans, grants, institutional scholarships, work study programs). Although paper versions of the application are available, the computerized application is becoming the preferred method for most families. This form will be filed AFTER January 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year the student will enter college.

**GPA:** The average of all course grades, calculated and reported to colleges on the transcript. TCHS reports the GPA on a scale from 1.0-4.0.

**Joint Admissions Program:** a program whereby students are admitted to a 2-year and 4-year college simultaneously. This can save money because the community colleges are much less expensive.

**Liberal Arts College:** A 4-year college that grants Bachelor's degrees. Students typically take classes in a wide variety of subject matter during the first two years and focus on an area of study for their major during the final 2 years.

**Rank:** This refers to a student's standing in comparison with his/her classmates. Some high schools rank students in order from first to last based on their GPA and report that number to colleges. Tapestry DOES NOT rank students, so colleges will need to use other factors to evaluate applicants. Approximately 50% of U.S. high schools no longer rank.

**School Profile:** A document that helps admissions officers understand the curriculum and unique features of TCHS. A copy of the school profile will be mailed to colleges along with the transcript.

**SUNY:** The State University of New York system, which includes 64 colleges and universities. The SUNY system includes community colleges, technical and trade schools, liberal arts colleges and major research universities. Because taxpayer dollars support the SUNY schools, tuition is discounted for NY state residents.

**Technical School:** A 2-year institution that provides occupational training that can lead to immediate employment in technical/engineering/computer/science-related fields.

**Transcript:** An official record of high school coursework and grade performance.

**Two-Year College:** Also referred to as a community or junior college, these schools grant Associate degrees and a variety of certificates. Some students choose to take their general education classes at a community college and then

transfer to a 4-year college to complete coursework and earn a Bachelor's degree.

**University:** An institution that grants Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD degrees, and often Medical, Dental, and Law degrees. These schools are much larger and broader in scope than liberal arts colleges.

**Work Study:** A government-supported financial aid program. Students may be offered a work-study position on the college campus as a part of their financial aid package.