

College Planning Outline

A. **Choosing a College**- visit www.collegeboard.org to search for and learn important information about potential colleges

1. **Intended college major**- visit www.nycareerzone.org to learn more about careers and college majors
2. **Location**- commute vs. dorm, rural vs. urban vs. suburban
3. **Campus size**- small, medium, large
4. **Admission requirements**- GPA, SAT/ACT (some colleges require the SAT Subject test), rigor of high school curriculum, class rank, resume, essays, interview, letters of recommendations, supplemental applications.
5. **Type of admission**- please be aware that each type has very different and specific deadlines

a) **Early Decision**- a binding agreement. Your child agrees to attend the college if accepted and if the college offers an adequate financial aid package. Although your child can apply to only one college for early decision, applying to other colleges through the regular admission process is allowed. If your child is accepted by the first-choice college early, all other applications must be withdrawn. (www.collegeboard.org)

b) **Early Action**- not binding. If accepted, your child can choose to commit to the college immediately, or wait until the spring. Under these plans, your child may also apply early action to other colleges. Usually, candidates have until the late spring to let the college know their decision. (www.collegeboard.org)

c) **Rolling Admission**- colleges will continue to accept applications until major or freshman class is full, no deadline.

d) **Priority Application**- has a specific deadline, once deadline has passed, any received applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

6. **Cost**- Public vs. Private

B. **How many colleges should students apply to**- students should narrow down their choices to about 5 schools, however, they could apply to more or less.

1. **Reach School**- usually 1 school. May not meet academic requirements or may not be financially affordable. Students may have other qualities to offer campus besides grades.
2. **Good Chance Schools**- usually 3 schools. Meet most academic requirements and with some financial assistance, should be affordable.
3. **Safety Net School**- usually 1 school. Student knows they meet all requirements and can financially afford it.

C. **How to apply to colleges**

1. Apply at individual college websites
2. Paper applications
3. For SUNY schools apply at www.suny.edu . Use this site to apply to multiple SUNY schools with one application
4. For most schools apply at www.commonapp.org. Use this site to apply to as many of the 414 participating colleges of your choice with one application.

Applications will not be processed by colleges without submission of payment. If applying online using SUNY or CommonApp websites, be sure to pay for each college individually.

all paper applications or paper attachments must be sent by the counseling center

if student applies online, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the counseling center that a transcript will need to be sent, using transcript request form

- D. How to apply for Financial Aid**- Financial Aid Night time and date TBA
1. Complete the FAFSA form (www.fafsa.ed.gov) and send in any time after January 1, 2012.
 2. If applying to a NYS college, FAFSA website will direct you to www.hesc.com to apply for additional state financial aid, know as TAP.
 3. Some colleges will require you to complete a CSS Profile. Contact college financial aid offices to inquire if this is necessary.
 4. Once FAFSA form is completed your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) will be calculated and you will be notified what your financial need is.
- E. Types of Financial Aid**
1. Loans- for students and parents
 2. Grants- must meet financial criteria
 3. Work study programs- must meet financial criteria
 4. Scholarships- based on academics, athletics, special talents, physical characteristics, etc.
 - a) Counseling page of Edline
 - b) Places of employment
 - c) www.fastweb.com
 - d) www.collegeboard.com
 - e) Community organizations
 - f) Financial aid office
- F. Student athletes**- if students are interested in playing sports at a Division I or Division II school they must register with the NCAA as soon as possible. Please visit www.ncaa.org and www.eligibilitycenter.org to register and for more information. Please let your counselor know that you are interested in the NCAA.

Timeline

March-June

- Take SAT and ACT for first time
- Start asking teachers for two letter of recommendations

June-September

- Visit colleges

October

- Retake SAT or ACT to improve scores
- Request ALL letters of recommendations from teachers before October 7, 2011.

November

- Application deadline to have ALL applications and transcript request forms turned in to the Counseling Center is no later than November 23, 2011. Please be aware if application deadlines are before this date.

December

- Attend Financial Aid Night- time and date TBA

January

- Complete the FAFSA form

February-April

- Receive letters of acceptance from colleges and discuss with a family where the student has been accepted and what the family can afford

May

- Notify college of decision with deposit by May 1, 2012