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SECTION 1: BUILDING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE FOR ALL STUDENTS

The chapters included in Section 1 are designed to help you develop an understanding of your role in developing a college-going mission for all students. Additionally, the chapters will guide you in developing approaches for communicating and working with diverse populations to remove barriers to high aspirations and achievement.

IN THIS SECTION YOU'LL FIND...

CHAPTER 1:
Role of the
Counselor in
Promoting Career
and Academic
Planning

CHAPTER 2:
Developing and
Communicating
a College-Going
Mission

CHAPTER 3:
Understanding
and Working
With Diverse
Populations

CHAPTER 1:

ROLE OF THE COUNSELOR IN PROMOTING CAREER AND ACADEMIC PLANNING

The role of the school counselor is constantly changing. Many students, parents, and faculty view counseling as little more than offering guidance to students who need it. They do not realize the critical part you play in helping students plan for a successful future. Communicating your role to these audiences will help change this perception and clear up any misconceptions.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU'LL FIND

-
- Ways to set boundaries for students
- Tips for communicating with parents
- Ideas for reaching out to faculty and administrators
- A to-do list for your next IGP meeting
-

COMMUNICATING YOUR ROLE

On any given day, you might meet with parents, request transcripts, review a stack of personal essays, talk with college admission officers, or all of the above. With so many hats to wear, how do you define and communicate your role as an academic and career planner to students, parents, teachers, and administrators?

Defining your role in the academic and career planning process can be difficult. A helpful reference is the National Association for College Admission Counseling's Statement on Counselor Competencies (Resource A1).

Communicating Your Role to Students

When it comes to applying for college, you are the resident expert, and students need to feel welcome to talk with you about their future plans. From the very beginning of your relationship, let students know that you will help them explore their short-term and long-term educational goals.

Some students may try to pass their responsibilities on to you, especially in regards to completing college applications. One way to set boundaries is by creating a list of what you will do, what you won't do, and what you expect students to do. Share the Understanding Our Roles handout (Resource C1) and ask students to sign the Student Pledge (Resource C2).

Meeting with students face-to-face is the foundation for building a relationship. However, many counselors have had success following up with students through e-mail, instant messaging, social media networks like Facebook, and other ways. It helps to connect with students where they are most comfortable, whether it's in your office, online, or both.

"School counselors should demonstrate an ability to counsel students in understanding the full range of educational and career options available to them, including the requirements for achieving success in these pursuits."

from "Statement on Counselor Competencies" by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (Resource A1)

FIVE TIPS FOR SPEAKING WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS

- 1 Explain your role.
- 2 Make a plan.
- 3 Oversimplify details.
- 4 Avoid jargon.
- 5 Ask questions.

One school counselor has had great success through a new Google communication tool. At the beginning of each year, she sends a survey to all of her students, requesting everything from their preferred method of contact to their areas of interest.

Communicating Your Role to Parents

Parental involvement is essential. When first meeting with parents, it's a good idea to open the meeting with a quick introduction about yourself. Explain your role as an academic and career planner, discuss how you will be involved in helping shape their child's future, and share the How To Help My Child Prepare for College Success handout (Resource C3).

During these meetings, some parents do not ask questions. It's better to oversimplify details than to assume that all parents understand the college application process. If it helps, you may want to apologize in advance for covering topics that are already understood.

Some parents may also feel uneasy meeting in a school setting. While a face-to-face meeting is preferred, you may have more success communicating with parents by phone, e-mail, and social media sites or by posting regular updates on a Web site or a blog.

Updating the counselor page on your school's Web site gives you the opportunity to provide your contact information and remind parents about upcoming deadlines. You might even add teaser questions or interesting facts that better articulate your role.

ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE REACHING PARENTS?

Try sending an online survey to gather valuable information and find out their preferred methods of contact.

Communicating Your Role to Administrators and Faculty

Working closely with administrators and faculty can do wonders in increasing college access. But before the collaboration can begin, you need to ensure that your coworkers understand the critical role you play in helping students go to college.

If a teacher or an administrator is confused about how you help students prepare for college, list a few of your daily activities, such as preparing transcripts or writing college recommendation letters.

One counselor recommends taking 15 minutes at the beginning of each school year to meet with the principal or vice principal. A quick meeting with a key administrator gives you the opportunity to explain your role, plan a few academic and career programs, and discuss goals for the upcoming year.

IMPLEMENTING THE INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLAN (IGP)

Part of your role as a school counselor involves helping your students map out their journey to graduation. As road maps that guide students toward their education, career, and employment goals, Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs) are indispensable tools for putting students on the right path toward starting their academic or professional career. Here are a few tips for helping students get the most from their IGPs.

“Professional school counselors are certified/licensed educators with the minimum of a master’s degree in school counseling and are uniquely qualified to address the developmental needs of all students through a comprehensive school counseling program addressing the academic, career and personal/social development of all students.”

from “The Role of the Professional School Counselor” by the American School Counselor Association (Resource A2)

Help Students Get the Most From Their IGP

- Follow the IGP checklist at every meeting.
- Make sure a parent, a family member, or a guardian is present at all meetings.
- Use the IGP as a conduit to start a conversation about college.
- Explain that the IGP is a contract between you, the student, and the parents, and have all parties sign it.
- Communicate the fact that everything counts, from GPA to course load to extracurricular activities.
- Align the IGP with class registration whenever possible.

For an abundance of IGP materials, check out Berkeley County School District’s IGP Toolbox (Resource B1) or online at berkeley.k12.sc.us/igptoolbox.

CHAPTER 2:

DEVELOPING AND COMMUNICATING A COLLEGE-GOING MISSION

What if all students truly believe they can do whatever their hearts desire? Developing a college-going mission early in the academic planning process will help students understand that there's a variety of ways for them to get where they want to be. When students walk across the stage for graduation, they should already know what their next steps are.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU'LL FIND

-
- Popular ways to create a college-going culture
- Tips for helping students overcome barriers to college
- Ideas for how to bring students together
- Strategies for winning parents' and teachers' support
-

CREATING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

By the time students reach high school, the question posed to them should not be “Are you going to college?” The question should be “Which college are you going to?”

So how do you create an atmosphere where this attitude prevails? You bring visibility to the college-going mission every chance you get. You also set expectations early for students — as young as kindergarten. If students understand college to be the most appealing option after high school, they are more likely to work toward reaching that goal.

Fostering individual relationships with colleges and universities will also help create a college-going culture. If possible, have college admission officers visit your school. Many admission officers have territories. If they know you and your school well, they are more likely to advocate for your students.

You can also encourage students to take ownership of South Carolina’s colleges and universities by letting them know that a student from another state could likely take their spot. Explain that, unlike many states, South Carolina is not required to accept a specific number of in-state college students.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S TIP

One way to keep college top-of-mind for students is making it mandatory for students to create a College Board and SC CAN account. By registering, students will periodically receive news and updates about colleges and universities. They will also have access to timely information about financial aid, scholarships, and more.

Popular Ways to Create a College-Going Culture

- Feature a college of the week during morning announcements.
- Post a map with college locations on bulletin boards.
- E-mail scholarship deadlines and updates to students, parents, and faculty.
- Host a career fair or a career day.
- Start a “Wear Your Favorite College T-shirt” Day.
- Institute a “Teacher Alumni” Day.
- Partner with a college for a food drive.
- Encourage faculty to decorate rooms with college memorabilia.
- Create college teasers: PowerPoint slides with fun facts about colleges for Smart Boards.
- Invite high school students to mentor younger students about college.

BARRIERS TO STUDENTS’ POSTSECONDARY ASPIRATIONS

There are a number of barriers that keep students from attending college. Recognizing these barriers will help you know how to address such challenges and help students overcome them.

Inability to Pay for College

Many students feel as though they cannot afford college. For middle school students, start talking about tuition and explain that a 3.0 means money for college in South Carolina. For high school students, let them know that they can save money by attending a two-year community college and then transferring to a four-year institution.

FIVE TIPS FOR HELPING STUDENTS OVERCOME BARRIERS

- 1 Reassure students by explaining your confidential relationship.
- 2 Listen objectively.
- 3 Discuss challenges and goals.
- 4 Advocate for students.
- 5 Meet with students regularly.

Special Education Challenges

Students with learning disabilities and language comprehension challenges may have special privileges. Did you know that some students can have standardized tests read aloud to them? This privilege requires proper approval, and you should work closely with special education teachers and the student's family throughout the process.

One of the best ways to help students with special education challenges is by advising them to start advocating for themselves at a young age. For additional information about helping students with disabilities, see the Office for Civil Rights: Fact Sheet (Resource B2).

Financial Independence

Some students finish high school and go straight into a family business. Other students start working for a competitively paying company after graduation. Either way, the temptation of immediate financial independence can lure some students away from continuing education. It's important to reiterate the benefits of a college education and discuss long-term goals.

Low Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem is a barrier that many students face where a lack of confidence or a fear of failure prevents the student from ever pursuing college seriously. These students need additional attention early in the academic planning process. Take time out of your day to meet with these students and use positive language to boost their self-confidence.

Lack of Awareness and First-Generation College Students

Many students are unaware of the financial aid and scholarship opportunities available, especially first-generation college students. When talking with these students, avoid jargon, and do not assume that they know fundamental details about the application process. Familiarize yourself with the College Board's guide, *Counseling First-Generation Students About College* (Resource B3).

HELPING STUDENTS FEEL CONNECTED TO THEIR SCHOOL

A strong school connectedness starts with the faculty. If teachers and administrators show enthusiasm and participate, students will follow their lead. Here are a few ideas for bringing students together:

- Pep rallies
- Reciting school pledge or singing school song (younger students)
- Mentorship programs
- Effective leadership classes
- Orientations for new students
- Fundraising campaigns
- School service projects
- Spirit week
- Field trips to local schools

FOUR WAYS TO ENCOURAGE FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

- 1 Assess interests early.
- 2 Articulate the benefits of a degree.
- 3 Involve family members.
- 4 Discuss financial aid options.

"First-generation students can come from families with low incomes, or from middle-class families without a college-going tradition. Some have parents who support their plans for higher education; others are under family pressure to enter the workforce right after high school."

from "Counseling First-Generation Students About College" by College Board (Resource B3)

GAINING FACULTY, ADMINISTRATOR, AND PARENT SUPPORT

Building a college-going culture should be a community effort, not just a school-wide campaign. However, keep in mind that teachers, administrators, and parents are busy with their own responsibilities. Find ways to make it easy for them to get involved and you will be surprised with the results.

Gaining Administrator and Faculty Support

You are more likely to increase college access when you have the full support of administrators and teachers. Meeting with key members of your school's administration at the beginning of the year will help you align your goals, whether it's increasing college awareness or improving standardized test scores.

Many counselors work closely with teachers throughout the year to incorporate college application tasks into daily lesson plans. For example, if you are working with an English teacher, you might request having students write a college essay. If working with a computer class teacher, you might request time for students to access the SAT or ACT Web sites. It's all about working together for one purpose: increasing college access.

Gaining Parent Support

The benefits of parental involvement in the academic planning process cannot be emphasized enough. Request parents to attend all IGP meetings and work around their schedule whenever possible. Parent resource centers are another excellent way to organize and publicize information about academic planning.

FOUR WAYS TO CREATE COUNSELOR-TEACHER COLLABORATION

- 1 Include college application tasks in lesson plans.
- 2 Post important deadlines in classrooms.
- 3 Plan career awareness guidance lessons.
- 4 Check-in with teachers often.

Hosting a parent night prior to IGP meetings is something that all counselors can do. At the event, try to make parents feel as comfortable as possible and open the floor for questions. One counselor has even “planted” questions in the audience, just in case parents are too embarrassed to ask “What does GPA stand for?” or “What’s the LIFE Scholarship?”

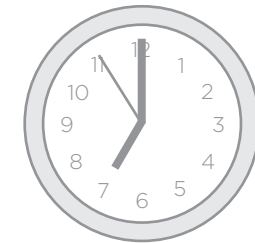
AVOIDING JARGON, ACRONYMS, AND BUZZWORDS

FAFSA, Title I, core curriculum, decoding — these are just a few terms that may be completely foreign to someone outside of the academic world. Please remember that most students and parents do not have a solid understanding of the same terminology shared by education professionals. Whenever meeting with students and parents, speak plainly and avoid jargon, acronyms, and buzzwords.

For your convenience, we have provided a Glossary of Admission Terms (Resource D1). You may find it helpful to refer to this glossary as you explain key concepts to students and parents.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Try hosting parent-attended events at two different times of the day: one in the morning and one in the evening. The additional meeting time may give parents enough flexibility with their work schedules to attend one of the meetings.



CHAPTER 3:

UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS

If you were to take a sample of your school's population, who would it include? In all likelihood, it would include students of different ethnicities, students with physical or mental disabilities, students with language challenges, and many others. Recognizing that each student's story is unique will help you better understand how to serve the greater student population.

**IN THIS CHAPTER
YOU'LL FIND**

-
- Hands-on approaches to working with diverse populations
- Tips for collaborating with other counselors
- Ways to communicate the importance of college
- Suggestions for advocating for ethical standards
-

ANALYZING THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF YOUR SCHOOL

Understanding the varied cultural landscape of your school will help you meet the needs of all of your students. So what does cultural diversity look like? For most schools, a diverse population includes one or more of the following audiences:

- Students of different ethnicities
- Students from different socioeconomic backgrounds
- Students with physical or mental disabilities
- Non-English speaking students
- Students from single-family homes
- First-generation college students
- Students from families with abuse in the home
- Students considered gifted or non-gifted

APPROACHES FOR WORKING WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS

As with all students, the most effective approach to working with culturally diverse students is developing a personal relationship. This may mean inviting a student to meet with you or connecting with a student through another teacher, mentor, or friend. The goal: to gain insight into the student's life so that you can relate to him or her on a personal level.

Many culturally diverse students do not have an advocate at home. As a counselor, you can help fill this role. Listen objectively to their post-graduation plans and hold them accountable to their goals. Check in with them periodically to see how they are doing in their classes, and follow up with them about meeting application deadlines.

“Professional school counselors have the responsibility of working to ensure that all students’ needs are met. Having the skills necessary to collaborate with students, parents, and school personnel to identify attitudes and policies that impede the learning process, professional school counselors foster increased awareness and understanding of cultural diversity in the school and community. Professional school counselors strive to ensure that all students have the opportunity to maximize their potential in a supportive environment that encourages maximum academic, personal/social and career development.”

from “Working with Diverse Populations” by the American School Counselors Association

Some counselors have found it helpful to form counseling groups to expose students to different lifestyles and backgrounds. Other counselors work closely with special education and ESL teachers to ensure that all student groups are well served.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR SENSITIVITY TO STUDENT SITUATIONS

Certain situations may be considered “ordinary” or “normal” for some students, while other students are highly sensitive to them. For example, some parents do not want their children to attend college because the parents themselves are overwhelmed by the process. However, if you are sensitive to this situation, you will be able to assuage their fears early in the application process.

At some point, you will be faced with a student situation that is challenging and completely new to you. Don't worry — there's a good chance that one of your fellow counselors has faced a similar situation. Seek help from other counselors and share your knowledge with each other. Also, if you have not done so already, it may be helpful to engage in some form of sensitivity training.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Host counseling sessions once a month in your area. Invite other counselors to join you and brainstorm new ways of working with students of diverse populations. One meeting might include sensitivity training.

COMMUNICATING THE IMPORTANCE OF GOALS AND POSTSECONDARY PLANNING

There are a variety of ways to communicate the importance of academic and career planning to culturally diverse populations. Here are a few ideas:

- Invite past high school graduates/current college students to return to school and talk about how they made a plan for college and put their plan into action. Many students learn through example, and hearing older students talk about what it's like to go to college can be a strong influence.
- Try to work around parents' schedules. If possible, provide childcare for an on-site parent meeting by asking older students to watch young children. If it's difficult for parents or guardians to find transportation, speak at a community center with a convenient, centralized location.
- Provide a translator for non-English speaking families at meetings.
- Contact your local YMCA or Salvation Army and ask them to provide an informational session about academic and career planning to parents and students who utilize before-school or after-school care.
- Find programs at colleges and universities that invite culturally diverse high school students to attend events on campus. One example is Project Uplift at UNC Chapel Hill, a program designed to enhance the diversity of UNC's undergraduate population.

FOUR GOALS OF FORMING COUNSELING GROUPS

- 1 Challenge students' perceptions.
- 2 Create a sense of community.
- 3 Develop accountability.
- 4 Pool helpful resources.

ADHERING TO ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR ASSISTING LOW-INCOME AND AT-RISK STUDENTS

As a school counselor, you have a tremendous impact on a student's life. After all, you are preparing students for life, not just for the four years after high school. Adhering to ethical standards will ensure that you reach and serve all students fairly, including low-income and at-risk students.

Part of adhering to ethical standards means standing up for what is right. If you see a set of circumstances that prevents some students from pursuing their educational and career goals, talk with your administration. It's important to act as an advocator and a leader to create equal access for all students.

"Each person has the right to receive the information and support needed to move toward self-direction and self-development and affirmation within one's group identities, with special care being given to students who have historically not received adequate educational services, e.g., students of color, students living at a low socioeconomic status, students with disabilities and students from non-dominant language backgrounds."

from "Ethical Standards for School Counselors" by the American School Counselor Association (Resource A3)

SECTION 2: COLLEGE, CAREER, AND ACADEMIC PLANNING

The chapters included in Section 2 focus on engaging students in early career awareness and planning, reviewing students' past performance to guide the academic planning process, explaining the importance of course selections and grades, and helping students find the right postsecondary fit.

IN THIS SECTION YOU'LL FIND...

CHAPTER 4:
Engaging
Students in Early
Career Awareness
and Planning

CHAPTER 5:
Guiding Students in
Academic Planning

CHAPTER 6:
The Importance of
Course Selections,
Grades, and Student
Engagement

CHAPTER 7:
College/
Postsecondary
Choices

CHAPTER 4:

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN EARLY CAREER AWARENESS AND PLANNING

Before ever entering middle school, students need to understand that a solid academic plan positions them in the best possible way for attending college or establishing a career. Engaging students early and often with career awareness and academic planning activities will help them feel excited about their future and ease their transition into high school and college.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU'LL FIND

.....
Ideas for raising awareness about careers

Ways to engage students successfully

Strategies to help students adjust to high school

Tips for planning a career center
.....

ENCOURAGING EARLY CAREER AWARENESS AND PLANNING

Although career awareness in kindergarten may sound a little extreme, it's actually an opportune time to start speaking with students about the range of careers available today. Kindergartners don't need to declare career paths, of course, but they can certainly be introduced to the idea that education not only enriches their minds but also prepares them to join the workforce in the future.

Career Awareness in Elementary School

When it comes to building career awareness among elementary students, two easy and effective strategies are introducing a Community Helper and hosting a Career Day or Week. By inviting parents and other members of the community to speak at your school, students can see firsthand how math, science, language arts, and other skills are necessary in the workplace.

Since young students are best engaged with hands-on learning experiences, you might ask parents to perform a short skit demonstrating their jobs' daily tasks. Ask a real estate agent to measure the room or an engineer to complete a few quick calculations.

For older students, you might hold a mock interview, explaining the differences between a "good" and a "bad" interview. You might also allow them to research age-appropriate Web sites that explain different job types.

"The level of academic achievement that students attain by eighth grade has a larger impact on their college and career readiness by the time they graduate from high school than anything that happens academically in high school."

from **"The Forgotten Middle"** by the ACT (Resource A4)

Career Awareness in Middle School

While career fairs can be effective for middle school students, they can also quickly turn into "social" hour. It's wise to have students sign up for specific jobs that interest them and then invite professionals in those fields to speak about the knowledge and skills required. Host these sessions at different times of the day to allow students to explore a range of careers.

Organizing a successful career fair involves careful planning and public outreach. For complete details, see the Organizing a Career Fair guide (Resource B4).

Another popular strategy is a Job Shadowing Day, where students — especially older students — are allowed to learn directly from professionals in the community. Encourage teachers and school administrators to help you recruit parents, family, and friends who might be interested in hosting students in safe, appropriate, and exciting environments.

No matter how you build career awareness, just remember: make it fun. It's possible to engage students and hold their interest while still addressing questions like "How will I ever use algebra in the real world?" Once students make the connection between their classes and their potential career, they'll understand how their hard work in school will pay off in the future.

SIX STEPS OF PLANNING A CAREER FAIR

- 1 Talk with administration.
- 2 Set the date early.
- 3 Invite guest speakers.
- 4 Reserve classrooms.
- 5 Arrange for refreshments.
- 6 Send thank-you notes to speakers.

STRATEGIES TO EASE THE TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

Studies have shown that the first year of high school often determines a student's success throughout high school as well as later in life. Ensure all freshman students set high expectations for themselves and provide them with the College Planning Calendar (Resource C4). Every conversation with a student should help him or her see the value of an ambitious yet realistic academic plan.

It's also imperative you develop strategies to help ninth-grade students adapt to their new academic setting. Plan a field trip for eighth-grade students to visit the high school or have them attend a group IGP kickoff meeting prior to starting school. Once enrolled, monitor these students closely and work with middle school counselors to provide the additional support they may need.

Barriers to a Smooth Transition

Some students may have a difficult time adjusting to high school. Create small learning communities to help them stay focused on the academic planning process. Encourage parents, teachers, and coaches to stay involved in their students' lives, and always be aware of potential outside influences, such as peer pressure, drugs and alcohol, and other common distractions that destabilize the learning environment.

"Ninth graders are adolescents undergoing the difficult transition from middle school to high school. As they face the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual challenges of this stage of development, it is easy for them to feel overwhelmed, confused, and alone."

from "Ninth Grade Academies: Easing the Transition to High School" by Carrie Cook, Holly Fowler, and Ty Harris (Resource A5)

FIVE BEST PRACTICES OF SMALL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

- 1 Close collaboration with the district
- 2 Clearly defined learning goals
- 3 Rigorous curriculum and teaching
- 4 An inclusive environment
- 5 Constant program development

USING AND ANALYZING INTEREST INVENTORIES

Interest inventories can help students identify their passions early in the academic planning process and understand how their favorite subjects might eventually translate into a rewarding career. Here are several excellent resources for helping students identify their interests and possible career paths:

- What's Your Work Type? worksheet (Resource C5)
- CLUE career workbooks (offered by SCOIS)
- CLIMB K5 computer program (offered by SCOIS)
- KUDER assessments
- PLAN - usually offered in the tenth grade
- Online assessment at explorestudent.org

Another helpful tool is a student portfolio. Ask students to track their course changes and determine which courses they enjoyed, which they disliked, and why. By analyzing a student's interests, you'll help him or her see the importance of course selection and how their efforts in middle and high school set the tone for success later in life.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

The ACT's Explore® program helps eighth- and ninth-grade students discover a variety of postsecondary opportunities and career paths. For more information, visit act.org/explore.

PLANNING A CAREER CENTER FOR THE SCHOOL

Planning a career center starts with encouraging students to utilize the media center. Most media specialists are thrilled to have an area designated for career awareness and will be happy to help you tap into local and national resources. By planning and organizing a career center, you'll help students narrow their job interests and maximize their opportunities for future job placement.

Tips for Planning a Career Center:

- Know your school's demographics and cater to students' needs.
- Create a computer workstation where students can access career-related Web sites.
- Contact your local Chamber of Commerce for educational materials.
- Lobby your PTA for additional funds and support.
- Ask parents to volunteer their time or donate materials.
- Make FAFSA and other financial aid information available.
- Provide books on careers, the interview process, and résumé writing.

CHAPTER 5:

GUIDING STUDENTS IN ACADEMIC PLANNING

Academic planning is about more than course selections and college applications. It's also about helping students align their interests with their educational goals. Starting in the eighth grade, students will establish a road map for their postsecondary aspirations, and you'll serve as an expert guide to help them reach their destination.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU'LL FIND

.....
Ways to assist in academic planning

Ideas for aligning interests with goals

At-a-glance descriptions of nontraditional courses

Tips for utilizing online calendars
.....

ASSISTING STUDENTS IN ACADEMIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR PLANNING

By the time each student reaches middle school, he or she should already have a clear understanding of what courses to take in the ninth grade. For college admission purposes, most schools focus on the student's performance in the core courses: English, Math, Science, Social Sciences, and Foreign Languages. However, every course counts, especially in regard to earning a diploma, calculating GPA, and qualifying for scholarships.

Building on a Student's Interests

Although students need to build their college résumés with challenging academic courses, they also need to schedule courses that interest them. Often, a student's interest in a subject inspires him or her to take on a leadership role. For example, a student talented in French might serve as president of the French Club. A student who likes to write might become a yearbook editor. Encourage all students to seek more responsibility in the areas that interest them.

Extracurricular Activities

When it comes to extracurricular activities, quality is more important than quantity. Most college admission officials and scholarship counselors prefer to see students who are deeply committed to a few select activities rather than students who pad their application with a wide range of hobbies and pastimes — or threaten their academics by overcommitting.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

*Students need to become intentional in their educational and career development. Ask them to complete the *Setting and Reaching Goals worksheet (Resource C6)* and show them how a college education will help them accomplish their goals.*



HELPING STUDENTS MAKE APPROPRIATE COURSE SELECTIONS

The best place to start when helping a student register for the appropriate courses is the IGP. Analyze each student's past performance and consider his or her extracurricular activities, civic participation, cultural life experiences, and home environment. When taken together, these and other factors will provide you with a better understanding of the student's capabilities.

Finding the Right Balance

What defines a rigorous course load? The answer lies in each student's capabilities and varies from student to student. What one student finds overwhelming may not be challenging enough for another. Helping students identify their strengths and weaknesses can improve his or her likelihood of making the appropriate course selections.

Remember, college admission officers like to see students challenged, not overburdened. If a student is stretched too thin, he or she may produce poor grades. Help students strike the right balance between being overly ambitious and under motivated — it will serve them well in the long run.

FOUR QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY STUDENTS' STRENGTHS

- 1 Which subjects interest you?
- 2 What are your favorite hobbies?
- 3 Which activities inspire and satisfy you the most?
- 4 What are your hopes and dreams?

EXPLAINING NONTRADITIONAL COURSE OPTIONS

Many students and parents don't understand the differences between honors, AP, and other nontraditional courses. Communicate all opportunities available, and let parents know that highly motivated students can earn college credit while gaining valuable postsecondary experience.

Dual Enrollment Courses

If there's a college or a university in your area, some students may opt for Dual Enrollment courses, where both high school and college credits are earned.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

AP courses offer students an ideal way to earn college credit while attending high school. If interested, students should check college and university Web sites routinely to learn the amount of hours/credits granted for AP Exam scores.

CLEP Courses

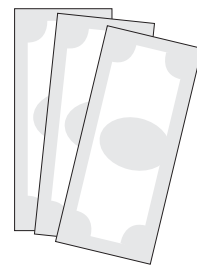
CLEP examinations allow students to earn college credit, especially in courses that students would encounter in the first two years of college. Most CLEP exams correspond to one-semester courses, although some may correspond to full-year or even two-year courses.

Honors Courses

Honors courses typically cover the same material as college-preparatory courses but in greater depth and at a quicker pace. Although college credit isn't given for these courses, they prepare highly motivated students for the rigors of college.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Paying for college is a challenge many parents and students face. Be sure to communicate that there are a range of nontraditional courses that save both time and money.



Virtual Online Courses

Virtual Online Courses combine conventional college classes with greater flexibility. Encourage students to research four-year, two-year, community, and career colleges that offer online courses in their areas of interest.

Middle College Courses

Typically an at-risk initiative for prospective first-generation college students, Middle College allows students to complete their entire 11th and 12th grade years on a college campus.

UTILIZING ONLINE CALENDARS

Online calendars provide a smart, convenient way to help students stay organized — and track and share their milestones. Google Calendar, Keep and Share, and Basecamp are three popular ways to post and share crucial college application deadlines. Pick a tool that's intuitive and easy to use for students and parents alike, and keep in mind that this technology changes rapidly.

- basecamp.com/calendar
- calendars.net
- famundo.com
- google.com
- keepandshare.com

CHAPTER 6:

THE IMPORTANCE OF COURSE SELECTIONS, GRADES, AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Both middle and high school students need to understand how their course selections — and their GPA — will impact their admission efforts with the school of their choice. Engage all students, especially those who are at risk of academic failure, by helping them establish goals and highlighting their strengths, talents, and interests.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU'LL FIND

.....
Ideas for explaining the GPA and its impact

Remedies for senioritis

Ways to identify at-risk students

Tips for engaging at-risk students
.....

CONVEYING THE IMPACT OF GPA ON POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES

When talking with students and parents, it's never too early to start explaining how competitive four-year colleges have become and how GPA impacts a student's chances of acceptance. Remind students that their GPA is cumulative and that it starts being calculated as soon as they enroll in high school courses, including Algebra I in the eighth grade.

One of the greatest motivating factors for maintaining a high GPA is that a 3.0 or higher automatically entitles students to money for college in South Carolina. As one school counselor tells his students, "Getting good grades is deferred compensation for college. Going to school is your job right now."

Some colleges calculate their own GPA by removing electives and creating GPAs based only on the core courses. It's wise, however, to reiterate that every course counts. Most scholarships are awarded according to GPAs that average all courses taken. In other words, Physical Education and English carry the same weight for scholarship purposes.

The Importance of GPA During the Senior Year

Anyone who works at a high school is familiar with the term "senioritis." Unfortunately, this lackadaisical approach to academics can be extremely harmful to students. It's highly important to convey the responsibility that students have to maintain their GPA throughout their senior year.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

During IGP meetings, provide students and parents with the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy (Resource B5), and show them how GPA is calculated — and how honors, AP, and other weighted courses compare with one another.

FOUR PRESCRIPTIONS FOR SENIORITIS

- 1 Encourage students to outperform their junior year.
- 2 Challenge students to achieve perfect attendance.
- 3 Discuss the pitfalls of procrastination.
- 4 Remind students that colleges receive final transcripts.

Admission into college is contingent upon the idea that each student maintains the level of performance in which he or she was originally accepted. Remind students that all final transcripts must be sent to colleges and that it's your ethical duty to notify the college(s) to which they've applied if they drop courses from their schedule.

Identifying Students at Risk of a Low GPA

Since the IGP is performed only once a year, find other ways to hold students accountable. Generate a list of students who are at risk of letting their grades slip, and engage their parents immediately. Some schools hold assessment meetings with teachers, counselors, and even administrators to identify at-risk students and formulate a plan to help them stay on track.

It's helpful to create a referral process that identifies struggling or unmotivated students. Establish an open-door policy with teachers and mentors who might help you "flag" students at risk of academic failure. This simple step will help keep parents involved from an early stage.

One school counselor has formed a group of at-risk students who are mentored by professionals in the community. These mentors provide much-needed support to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, broken homes, and other challenging circumstances.

Intervening With At-Risk Students

It may be necessary to intervene with students who are considering dropping out of high school or are approaching academic failure. To help you set an agenda for this meeting, see the Student Interventions worksheet (Resource B6).

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Find an official letter from a college's admission office that shows how a school will rescind their acceptance if a student becomes apathetic about academics during his or her senior year. Of course, remember to black out the name of the student involved.



FIVE STEPS OF STUDENT INTERVENTIONS

- 1 Identify at-risk students.
- 2 Notify parents.
- 3 Meet and set benchmarks.
- 4 Check in with students' teachers.

ENGAGING ALL STUDENTS IN THE COLLEGE-GOING MISSION

Some students, especially those who would be the first in their families to pursue college, might feel as if college is not in their future.

One way to engage marginalized students is through classroom guidance lessons. It's a good idea to collaborate with the teacher in advance, follow the Career Lesson Plan worksheet (Resource B7), and have the teacher present in the classroom during the lesson.

Don't forget to engage students who might be parents. Many schools now offer daycare assistance programs or teen mother support groups. Focus on any and all students who feel left out of the college-going culture, from those who have a low GPA to those who do not have transportation to visit college campuses.

IMPLEMENTING CAREER EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES

You might also engage students through career exploration activities, especially nontraditional careers such as trade positions or military service. Ask teachers to administer the ASVAB to assess interests and abilities. Invite a professional with a trade or a skill into the classroom to discuss how he or she has established a successful career. Or ask a parent who has served in the military or a member of ROTC to speak about their service and how it has helped with a career, college, and other opportunities.

CHAPTER 7:

COLLEGE/ POSTSECONDARY CHOICES

Choosing the right college or career after high school can be overwhelming for even the smartest, most talented student. As a school counselor, you can help streamline this decision-making process by evaluating student records, career assessments, and interest inventories and then making recommendations of colleges and universities that might be worth exploring.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU'LL FIND

Questions to help students narrow their choices

Recommendations for successful college visits

Tools for postsecondary planning

Ways to explain college terminology

EXPLORING THE BEST POSTSECONDARY FIT FOR STUDENTS

When helping students explore colleges, start by asking a few simple questions. *Which colleges are you interested in attending? Do you have any preconceived notions about these schools? Do you prefer public or private, large or small, in-state or out-of-state? What other aspects of a college are important to you, such as cost, location, majors, diversity, or religious affiliation?*

The article “How To Choose the Right College” by Gen and Kelly Tanabe is an excellent resource for helping students evaluate their options from every angle (Resource C7).

Helping Students Define Their Options

To help students narrow their focus, encourage each student to create a list of primary college choices, secondary college choices, and “reach” colleges (those in which the students’ grades may not meet admission requirements). Ask students to complete the College Shortlist Stats handout (Resource C8) and emphasize that, for reach schools, students must offer a differentiating benefit — a strong admissions essay, a skill or a talent, or an improved ACT or SAT score.

Two handouts that will help students — and parents — clarify their college choices are *Assessing Your List of Colleges* and *Tips for Parents on Finding a College Match*. Both are located in the College Board College Counseling Sourcebook Sampler (Resource B8).

“When you consider which college to choose to attend, remember that you’ll be living in that situation for four years or more. Think of yourself as a total person, not just a student. You want to find a place that suits you.”

from “How To Choose the Right College” by Gen and Kelly Tanabe (Resource C7)

Never discourage a student from applying to a particular school. Not only could such advice pose potential ethical and legal issues, it could also damage the student’s self-confidence. All students should have goals — no matter how lofty. However, advise students to apply to one or more colleges that are appropriate for their academic performance.

College Campus Visits for High School Students

In most cases, a visit to a college campus will help a student determine whether or not the college atmosphere is appealing. Ideally, you should plan your visits during the semester — rather than during breaks — so that students can see exactly what campus life looks like.

Organize group visits to college campuses and prearrange a meeting with admissions personnel. Lobby your district to allow seniors and juniors to take one or two days to visit colleges without being penalized for missing school. If possible, encourage students to stay on campus overnight with friends, eat in the dining facilities, or attend a campus event. Before leaving, ask students what they like and dislike about the campus and how it compares with other schools.

For more helpful tips, see the Campus Visit Checklist for Students (Resource C9) and the Campus Visit Checklist for Parents (Resources C10).

College Campus Visits for Middle School Students

There are opportunities for middle school students to tour college campuses as well. Whether it’s for a general visit or a special event, make a concerted effort to ensure that all prospective first-generation college students are in attendance.

TEN FACTORS STUDENTS SHOULD CONSIDER (IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER)

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Location |
| 2 | School size |
| 3 | Costs |
| 4 | Scholarships |
| 5 | Majors offered |
| 6 | Religious affiliations |
| 7 | Diversity |
| 8 | Sports |
| 9 | Social opportunities (e.g., Greek life) |
| 10 | Student-to-faculty ratio |

IDENTIFYING USEFUL TOOLS FOR COLLEGE PLANNING

As you talk with students and parents about finding the right college fit, it helps to have tools, resources, and Web sites close at hand. College Board's College MatchMaker is a free online tool that generates a list of universities and colleges based on the student's interests and search criteria (collegeboard.org).

Naviance is another highly recommended college planning tool (naviance.com). Not only does it allow students to take advantage of assessments and create a plan for completing college applications, it also allows parents and counselors to monitor the process. With Naviance, school counselors can even input college acceptance information so that students can view diagrams, scatter grams, and other data to see whether or not they're on track to reach their college goals.

When it comes to paying for college, one of the best resources available is the South Carolina Student Loan Organization (scstudentloan.org). Here, you'll find several financial tools and loan calculators. Below are several other popular college planning Web sites:

- ACT.org
- CollegeBoard.org
- ExploreStudent.org
- KnowHow2Go.org
- MyRoad.CollegeBoard.com
- Naviance.com
- Petersons.com
- PrincetonReview.com
- RuggsRecommendations.com
- SCCanGo.org
- SCOIS.net
- SCPathways.org
- SCStudentLoan.org

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Encourage students to create a College Board account so that they can perform searches with College MatchMaker, an online tool that compiles a list of colleges and universities based on the student's search criteria and areas of interest. For more information, visit collegeboard.org.

Search

HELPING STUDENTS AND PARENTS UNDERSTAND COLLEGE TERMINOLOGY

The IGP is often your first opportunity for educating students and parents about college terminology. As mentioned in Chapter 2, it's wise to avoid jargon during these meetings and provide students and parents with the Glossary of Admission Terms (Resource D1).

For many parents, it's been years since they were involved in the college application process, so it might surprise them as to how competitive the process has become. Explain all college application details carefully and share all college and financial planning tools with them.

Other ways to assist students and parents in becoming more familiar with college terminology include creating Junior Parent Nights, hosting financial aid workshops, and collaborating with your district to help students and parents easily transition into high school.

FIVE COMMONLY MISUNDERSTOOD ACRONYMS AMONG STUDENTS AND PARENTS

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 | SAR - Student Aid Report |
| 2 | EFC - Expected Family Contribution |
| 3 | CSS - College Scholarship Services |
| 4 | FSW - Federal Work-study Program |
| 5 | ED - Early Decision |

SECTION 3: FINANCIAL AID AND COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

The chapters included in Section 3 will help you explain the complexities of FAFSA and other financial aid opportunities, prepare students for standardized tests, and guide students and parents through the college admission process — from application to acceptance.

IN THIS SECTION YOU'LL FIND...

CHAPTER 8:
Guiding Parents and
Students Through
Financial Aid

CHAPTER 9:
Preparing
for College
Admission Tests

CHAPTER 10:
College Application
and Admission

CHAPTER 8:

GUIDING PARENTS AND STUDENTS THROUGH FINANCIAL AID

A lack of money should never prevent a South Carolina student from going to college. Between scholarships, grants, loans, and work-studies, there's more financial aid money available than most students and parents realize. And as a school counselor, you're in the unique position of communicating the myriad of opportunities available today.

**IN THIS CHAPTER
YOU'LL FIND**

.....
Definitions of grants,
loans, scholarships,
and work-studies

Ways to calculate a
college budget

Ideas for planning a
financial aid night

Strategies for
providing ongoing
assistance
.....

CONVEYING INFORMATION ABOUT THE FINANCIAL AID PROCESS

Explaining the intricacies of the financial aid process should start during IGP meetings in the eighth and ninth grades and should continue throughout high school.

Students and parents need to become familiar with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Toolkit and should know that all students are encouraged to apply (Resource B9). After all, how will students know if they qualify for financial aid if they don't apply?

Reaching Out to Students and Parents

A student's transcript is the most important tool he or she has in receiving financial aid. Ask middle school students to list their academic goals and focus on what they want to achieve. Examine various scenarios with different types of financial aid offered and be sure to emphasize the basic requirements of the South Carolina HOPE, LIFE, and Palmetto Fellows scholarships.

As your school's point of contact for all things relating to college admission, you'll receive a tremendous (almost overwhelming) amount of mail and e-mail about scholarships, grants, loans, and other financial aid opportunities. With this detailed information, create a database of financial aid opportunities that can be used by students, parents, teachers, and administrators. For helpful suggestions, see the Creating a Financial Aid Database guide (Resource B10).

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Many parents are apprehensive about entering their personal information on the FAFSA Web site due to their fears of identity theft. Reassure parents that the Web site is secure and that their information is protected by encryption.

TOP THREE FAFSA FACTS TO COMMUNICATE

- 1 Only U.S. citizens can receive financial aid.
- 2 Free FAFSA workshops are available.
- 3 FAFSA deadlines vary among schools.

Connecting With All Students

No student should be excluded from the financial aid process. Work closely with all non-English speaking students and invite translators to attend parent nights. Some ESL teachers will even translate newsletters and other important financial aid documents.

Always stress the importance of being a legal citizen. If a student isn't a U.S. citizen, he or she cannot apply for financial aid. This fact is included in the FAFSA literature, but it's wise to reiterate it again early in the process so that students and parents aren't surprised in the end.

GRANTS, LOANS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND WORK-STUDIES

To ensure students understand the range of financial aid opportunities available, visit students twice a year in the classroom. Meet at the beginning of the school year to highlight important college application deadlines, graduation requirements, and college admission requirements.

During your second meeting (ideally, in January), focus your attention on financial aid and distribute the Student Aid Program Summary handout that explains the differences between grants, loans, scholarships, and work-studies (Resource C11). You might also share the Top 10 Tips for Winning Scholarship Applications (Resource C12).

These semiannual meetings shouldn't be the first time students hear about these opportunities, since they should be discussed in annual IGP meetings. However, by reminding students about the financial aid process, you'll help them keep their options top-of-mind as their senior year approaches.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Statistically, the Hispanic-American population is the most uninformed group in regard to financial aid. Provide all non-English speaking students with an English-Spanish glossary of Financial Aid Application Terms. It's available for free at nasfaa.org. For additional information, see the Resources for College-Bound Hispanic Students (Resource B11).

HELPING PARENTS AND STUDENTS UNDERSTAND FINANCIAL AID TERMINOLOGY

For your convenience, a Glossary of Financial Aid Terms has been provided (Resource D2).

EVALUATING THE TOTAL COST OF COLLEGE

Many parents assert “college costs too much” or “we’ll never be able to receive financial aid.” It’s true that college, as a whole, is expensive. And it’s true that parents may not receive a single check to cover all of their expenses. However, it’s also true that most students and parents can receive some type of financial aid — as long as they’re prepared to work for it.

Examining the costs of tuition, housing, books, food, gas, entertainment, and other expenses can be intimidating to anyone, but it can be especially daunting for prospective first-generation college students and their families. Ask students to research college expenses and complete the Cost of Attendance Comparison worksheet (Resource C13). Then explain how certain expenses can be removed if they earn a state-funded scholarship.

You should also explain to parents that they’re expected to contribute as much as they’re able. Share the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) calculator with parents, which can be found at collegeboard.org. As College Board reminds us, “You can’t make a realistic plan to cover the student’s share if you don’t have an idea what the student’s share could be.”

SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S TIP

Did you know that some companies will pay for a student’s tuition if he or she works for them during college? Santee Cooper offers five scholarships to high school students to help pay for college, while providing them with valuable work experience. To learn more, visit santeecooper.com.

SEVEN AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENSES OTHER THAN TUITION AND HOUSING

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Food: \$2,500 - \$4,500 |
| 2 | Books: \$600 - \$1,500 |
| 3 | Laptop: \$500 - \$1,500 |
| 4 | Entertainment: \$100 - \$1,000 |
| 5 | Health fees: \$50 - \$300 |
| 6 | Lab fees and supplies: \$35 - \$800 |
| 7 | Transportation and parking: \$35 - \$300 |
- (source: sccango.org)

PLANNING A FINANCIAL AID PARENT NIGHT

Hosting a parent night or a workshop is an excellent way to communicate financial aid opportunities. If you don’t feel qualified to be the primary source of information, invite a representative from the South Carolina Loan Organization, a former student who has received financial aid, and other members of the community to speak at the event.

Some school counselors have found it beneficial to have students and parents submit questions anonymously prior to the event so that no one feels too embarrassed or insecure to ask questions. For other helpful suggestions, follow the Guide to Planning and Conducting a Financial Aid Night (Resource B12).

During these events, one important point to convey to both parents and students is that they should never pay for help with financial aid. Many companies solicit students and parents, offering to help with financial aid applications for a fee.

However, there are free FAFSA workshops hosted at local colleges, community centers, and other locations throughout the year. These workshops guide applicants step-by-step through the process. Encourage parents and students to check the FAFSA Web site often for upcoming workshops in the area.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR’S TIP

Explain to all students and parents that a financial aid package typically consists of several payments, not one lump sum. It’s helpful to share the Seven Straightforward Steps to Federal Student Aid (Resource C14).

THREE SAMPLE ANONYMOUS QUESTIONS FOR FINANCIAL AID PARENT NIGHT

- 1 Is the FAFSA really free?
- 2 Do I really need my parents’ signature?
- 3 How do I get a PIN?

HOSTING INFORMATION SESSIONS WITH COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Sometimes parents and students feel more comfortable hearing directly from college financial aid and admissions officers. Contact representatives from a wide range of four-year, two-year, community, and trade schools and host informational sessions that provide students and parents with current financial aid information.

When hosting these sessions, encourage students and parents to ask questions regarding the types of aid offered by the school. While many colleges include this information in their literature, most representatives are happy to explain their financial aid opportunities in greater detail.

NCAA Opportunities

The NCAA has strict guidelines on what courses, scores, and GPA requirements must be met in order for a student athlete to be eligible. Invite high school teachers and coaches to speak about the types of financial aid available, especially merit and athletic scholarships, and distribute the NCAA Eligibility Standards handout (Resource C15).

ROTC Opportunities

There's ample financial aid assistance available through ROTC. Partner with active or retired military personnel to help students understand ROTC and how financial aid may have played a part in their journey.

Other Opportunities

Many colleges invite school counselors to breakfasts and other information sessions. Although time-consuming, these sessions are extremely beneficial. Not only will you gain relevant information about each college's financial aid process, you'll also establish a contact — someone you can call or e-mail with questions.

Attending seminars and conferences will also allow you to network and pool information with other counselors and admissions personnel. Check out the events hosted by the Carolinas Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (CACRAO), the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), and the Southern Association for College Admission Counseling (SACAC).

FIVE WAYS TO GET THE MOST FROM CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

- 1 Take notes.
- 2 Attend networking events.
- 3 Exchange business cards.
- 4 Pool information.
- 5 Stay in touch with contacts.

PROVIDING ONGOING ASSISTANCE WITH FINANCIAL AID

As students begin receiving college decision and financial aid letters, encourage them to continue to communicate with you. Many students fail to inform counselors of their college acceptance or rejection letters or become discouraged if the financial aid package is not what they had hoped for or imagined. Let students and parents know that you're available to provide ongoing support and can potentially help them find financial aid through alternate avenues.

College Goal South Carolina

This statewide volunteer program provides free financial aid assistance to students and families who are applying for loans for postsecondary education.

By attending, students and parents will receive help completing their FAFSAs from financial aid experts, learn about SAT and ACT test fee waivers, and even be entered into drawings to win free prizes.

College Goal South Carolina is hosted every spring at high schools and colleges throughout the state and should be promoted among all students. For more information, visit collegegoalsc.org.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Whether by phone, postal mail, e-mail, social media, or a Web site, let students and parents know at the start of the school year about popular resources for financial aid information. Then follow up with them to see where they are in the process and if they need additional support.

CHAPTER 9:

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTS

For many students, college admission tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT) are the most stressful aspects of applying to college. Providing students and parents with valuable resources will help calm their nerves — and help each student prepare to the best of his or her ability.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU'LL FIND

Resources for SAT and ACT practice

Tips for taking college admission tests

Requirements for test fee waivers

Steps for requesting additional testing time

ASSISTING STUDENTS IN PREPARING FOR ADMISSION TESTS

It's recommended that all students educate themselves on both the SAT and ACT. However, should a student decide early in high school not to pursue a four-year degree, he or she may opt out of these tests and focus his or her energy elsewhere. Students interested in two-year or trade schools may register for the COMPASS, a computer-adaptive placement test offered by the ACT.

Educating Students and Parents About Deadlines

For the most part, students should plan to take the SAT or ACT during their junior year, though some seniors may opt to test again during their senior year if they're trying to meet scholarship requirements. One school counselor finds it helpful to print out all test dates and, during IGP meetings, ask each student to circle the exact dates he or she plans to test.

All SAT and ACT deadlines should be communicated clearly in both printed and electronically published materials, and it's a good idea to send reminders. Parents should understand that they're required to pay an extra fee if they miss the original registration deadline. Students also need to know that they may not be allowed to test at their preferred location if they register late.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Encourage students who are interested in attending four-year colleges to register for the PSAT (pre-SAT) and PLAN (pre-ACT) as early as possible. These two precursors are excellent practice for the advanced versions of the tests.

FIVE WAYS TO SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT DEADLINES

- 1 Newsletters
- 2 Bulletin boards and handouts
- 3 Face-to-face meetings
- 4 Web sites and social media
- 5 E-mail

Suggesting Popular Resources for Test Preparation

The College Board SAT and ACT Web sites are two excellent resources where students can begin familiarizing themselves with the tests and practicing their skills for free. For example, the SAT Web site offers a practice test, test-taking tips, and a question of the day. Practicing regularly and following the experts' strategies have been proven to boost students' scores.

Many companies such as Princeton Review and Kaplan offer free workshops to help students and parents understand and prepare for a range of tests. Individual preparatory classes are offered for a fee, but these classes aren't required — or even recommended — for all students.

Tips for Taking College Admission Tests

Below are several college admission test-taking tips and strategies. For a more complete list of test-taking advice, see the Exam Day: Survival Tips handout (Resource C16).

- Read the newspaper and other newsworthy magazines like *Time* or *Newsweek* daily.
- Familiarize yourself with all test directions.
- Take timed and untimed practice tests.
- Get a good night's sleep prior to testing.
- Eat a healthy meal on the test-taking day.
- Practice, practice, practice.

HELPING STUDENTS REGISTER FOR THE APPROPRIATE TEST

Educating students about each college admission test will help them decide which test — if not both — they should take. Many parents are more familiar with the older of the two tests — the SAT — so they believe that the ACT isn't sufficient for a four-year college or university. However, most colleges today accept both SAT and ACT scores.

Communicating the Differences Between the ACT and SAT

It's commonly understood that the SAT tests a student's critical thinking ability, while the ACT evaluates high school curriculum. The excerpt below from the ACT Web site describes the similarities and differences between the two tests in greater detail.

"The ACT is an achievement test, measuring what a student has learned in school. The SAT is more of an aptitude test, testing reasoning and verbal abilities.

"The ACT has up to five components: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and an optional Writing Test. The SAT has only three components: Critical Reasoning, Mathematics, and a required Writing Test.

"The College Board introduced a new version of the SAT in 2005, with a mandatory writing test. ACT continues to offer its well-established test, plus an optional writing test. You take the ACT Writing Test only if required by the college(s) you're applying to.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Advise students to research whether or not their colleges of interest recommend — or require — the SAT Subject Tests. These tests help differentiate each student and send a clear message to admissions personnel regarding the student's eagerness to pursue a particular area of study.

"The SAT has a correction for guessing. That is, they take off for wrong answers. The ACT is scored based on the number of correct answers with no penalty for guessing.

"The ACT has an Interest Inventory that allows students to evaluate their interests in various career options."

Applying to Colleges Where Admission Tests Aren't Required

Some colleges and universities have made the SAT and ACT "optional." While this approach may seem helpful to some students, most of these colleges are academically rigorous. Students need to know in advance that these schools, while not requiring admission tests, focus closely on grades, essays, and extracurricular activities.

TEST FEES, FEE WAIVERS, AND MODIFICATIONS FOR ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

No student should be denied the opportunity to test because he or she cannot afford the test fees. Let students and parents know that both the SAT and ACT offer test fee waivers for students who are eligible. Often, students who qualify for free or reduced lunch are considered eligible. For exact eligibility requirements, see the 2011-12 Counselor's Guide to Fee Waivers for the SAT® and the SAT Subject Tests™ (Resource B13).

Test Modifications

Students who have Individual Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Plans can request college admission test modifications, including extended time. It's the test coordinator's (often the school counselor's) responsibility to identify which students have IEPs or 504 Plans.

Once you identify these students, arrange face-to-face meetings with students and provide them with the correct documentation to complete. It's important to communicate that, although you can help complete the paperwork, the final decision is made by the College Board or the ACT.

All test modification requests must be mailed to the College Board or the ACT in a timely fashion — typically early in the school year before the PSAT is administered.

SIX STEPS TO SECURE ADDITIONAL TESTING TIME

- 1 Identify students who may qualify.
- 2 Meet with each student and parent(s).
- 3 Complete the form together.
- 4 Explain the decision process.
- 5 Mail the request form by the deadline.
- 6 Await final decision.

CHAPTER 10:

COLLEGE APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

The college admission process is an exciting, yet nerve-racking time for most high school juniors and seniors. Students and parents are looking to you for assistance, guidance, and encouragement, so it's important that you make yourself available and stay organized. The goal is for this process to be as efficient — and as enjoyable — as possible.

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU'LL FIND

.....
Suggestions for communicating deadlines

Strategies for keeping track of transcripts

Ways to partner with teachers

Requirements for application fee waivers
.....

HELPING STUDENTS COMPLETE COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

As covered in Chapter 1, remember to define your role to students and parents, especially when it comes to helping students apply to college. Reiterate that it's your job to assist students, not complete applications or write essays on their behalf. Not only would doing so be unethical, it would also be detrimental to the student in the long run.

Unfortunately, there's no such thing as a "catch-all" college application checklist, since all schools are different. For the most part, however, the college application process doesn't change significantly from year to year, so students should familiarize themselves with the College Planning Calendar for Juniors and Seniors in the College Board College Counseling Sourcebook Sampler (Resource B8).

Help Students Stay Organized

Whether it's with a senior notebook or a Web-based program like Naviance, students should establish a system for keeping themselves aware of all that needs to be accomplished when applying for college.

One way to help students streamline the process is the Common Application, a standardized first-year application form that can be used for most colleges. There's no penalty or bias for using this application, and the forms can be downloaded for free at commonapp.org.

Encouraging students to create college application teams will also help them stay organized and on track. To help guide students in the process, share the Create Your Very Own College Application Team handout (Resource C17).

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Make the college application process less overwhelming for students by recommending the Common Application. This universal form allows students to complete the application once but submit it to several schools. For more information, visit commonapp.org.

Keep a Record of Your Completed Tasks

If students funnel recommendation letters through your office, make copies. Always date and log everything you mail, including transcripts. You may also want to include a stamped, self-addressed card so that admissions officers will notify you when they receive transcripts. This simple step will provide you with an additional way to double-check yourself and record your actions.

Clear Up Any Misconceptions

There's a misconception among students that they cannot apply to college until they've taken the SAT or ACT. Debunk this myth and let students know that colleges will accept a planned or future test date in lieu of a score.

Create Writing Workshops

A well-written student essay can make a lasting impression on an admissions officer. Invite college representatives to speak to students about what works and what doesn't work. Then host writing workshops during English classes or after school and hand out the Dos and Don'ts on Writing the College Application Essay handout, which can be found in the College Counseling Sourcebook Sampler (Resource B8). Another excellent handout is the Tips for Writing Your College Admission Essay (Resource C18).

FOUR EASY ESSAY WRITING TIPS

- 1 Choose a topic carefully.
- 2 Write clearly.
- 3 Edit ruthlessly.
- 4 Proofread completely.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Each year high schools across South Carolina host College Application Day, an event aimed at helping students successfully apply online to schools of their choice. To prepare students for this event, see the Preparing for College Application Day toolkit (Resource C20).

COLLABORATING WITH TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND COACHES

It's not your responsibility to encourage students to complete their college applications — it's everyone's responsibility. Ask teachers, administrators, and coaches to post application deadlines, details about upcoming college fairs, and other information that college-bound students need to know.

If your school offers a homeroom or advisory period, make sure teachers and advisors receive all senior newsletters and any other pertinent news. Often, homeroom teachers act as liaisons, reporting information back to counselors if students are struggling — or showing promise — in certain areas.

Some school counselors have found it helpful to hold faculty and staff meetings where they provided tips for writing successful letters of recommendation. To assist faculty and staff in writing these letters, provide students with the Tips for Letters of Recommendation (Resource C19) and the Student Self-Assessment handout from the College Board College Counseling Sourcebook Sampler (Resource B8).

MONITORING AND MEETING IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Post college application, scholarship, and financial aid deadlines everywhere, including letters, newsletters, Web sites, online calendars, bulletin boards, blogs, and social media sites. It's better to overdo it than to have students and parents who don't know the deadlines.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S TIP

Students may push for an easier course load during their senior year. Invite college admissions officers to visit your school or talk to students by phone to help them understand that their senior year still counts.

Hosting group senior meetings is one of your greatest opportunities for distributing detailed college application information. During these meetings, encourage students to schedule individual meetings with you so that you can allow him or her to share confidential information.

Creating a Facebook page dedicated to the college application process can be extremely effective when communicating with teenagers, but it's important to connect with students from all socioeconomic levels. Information published online should also be presented in handouts and newsletters to reach students who don't have computers at home.

COLLEGE APPLICATION FEE WAIVERS

Most college application fees today range from \$35 to \$50, which adds up quickly for students who are applying to multiple colleges. As a general rule, students who receive fee waivers for the SAT, ACT, or other college admission tests may also be eligible for college application fee waivers. The complete directory of colleges that participate in College Board's SAT Program Fee-Waiver Service is available to download for free at collegeboard.org.

Other students may be eligible for receiving fee waivers if they receive free or reduced lunches or if their family's annual income falls within certain tax brackets. To find out exact fee waiver eligibility requirements, contact the college or university to which the student is applying.

TEN S.C. SCHOOLS THAT OFFER SAT FEE WAIVERS

- 1 Anderson University
- 2 Clemson University
- 3 College of Charleston
- 4 Furman University
- 5 Lander University
- 6 Presbyterian College
- 7 South Carolina State University
- 8 University of South Carolina
- 9 Winthrop University
- 10 Wofford College

SECTION 4: RESOURCES

From checklists to timelines, worksheets to recommendations, the resources included here offer a range of helpful strategies and tips for academic and career planning. Some of these resources will guide you, and others will help students, parents, teachers, and volunteers. Feel free to add your own resources that have proven to be especially helpful.

IN THIS SECTION YOU'LL FIND...

Articles

Counselor Guides
and Toolkits

Handouts and
Worksheets

Glossaries



Resource
A1

.....STATEMENT ON.....
.....COUNSELOR.....
.....COMPETENCIES.....

from the National Association for
College Admission Counseling



National Association for
College Admission Counseling

STATEMENT ON Counselor Competencies

Approved by the Executive Board, July 2000

Introduction

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) believes there is a basic body of knowledge and fundamental skills one must possess to be effective in counseling students as they progress through school (elementary through postsecondary education) and make decisions regarding their postsecondary educational alternatives. The association believes further, that the knowledge and skills can be defined in the form of competencies that counselors working in either school guidance or college admission should possess if they are to assist students effectively in realizing their full personal and educational potential.

To this end, NACAC has had a long-standing commitment to the provision of professional educational experiences for its members and to the establishment of standards for the pre-service and in-service training of school counselors, college admission counselors, and others involved in assisting students in their educational development.

During the 1980s, NACAC assumed a leadership role in developing workshops and institutes designed to provide school and college admission counselors with the knowledge and skills necessary to assist students with educational planning and decision making and to support their transition from secondary to postsecondary education. Many programs, designed by the NACAC Professional Development Committee, are now being delivered to members and the counseling community in numerous settings across the nation.

NACAC assumed this assertive posture with respect to the professional preparation of its members because:

- Existing counselor education programs provide little or no attention to the precollege guidance and counseling aspect of the school guidance program.
- There is an absence of formal and informal training programs for professional counselors who function in admission programs and carry the admission counselor designation at the college or university level.

These facts were substantiated by a survey of members conducted in early 1990 by the NACAC Commission for the Advancement of Professional Standards (CAPS). CAPS was created in 1988 to examine professional preparation, certification, accreditation, and related credentialing issues, and the extent to which the association should become involved in sponsoring such activities. The survey of NACAC members provided substantial support for association involvement and leadership in the area of professional preparation. Sixty-five percent of the NACAC members responding rated the development of model curricula and training standards as an activity of "significant" importance. The subjective comments of respondents further endorsed the association's move in this direction.

Recognition of the Providers of Counselor Training

NACAC recognizes that a number of institutions, organizations and agencies have an appropriate role in the pre-service and in-service training of counselors, and it assumes that they will continue to perform these training functions in the future. These training agents include the graduate and professional schools at many

Statement on Counselor Competencies

colleges and universities throughout the nation. Reliable directories suggest that there are more than 400 graduate degree-granting programs for school counselors and college student affairs/development professionals.

Professional associations and organizations such as the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, The College Board, the American College Testing Program, their affiliates, and others provide professional training. NACAC, along with its state and regional affiliates, is becoming increasingly active in providing workshop and institute training for members and the counseling profession.

Finally, the identification of competencies will assist program managers and supervisors in secondary school guidance and counseling offices and college admission offices in the design and implementation of position descriptions, staff development and in-service training programs, mentorship activities, and related professional renewal efforts.

In recognition of the varied interests and capabilities of these established training agents, NACAC has chosen to identify a number of competencies, general and specific, that school counselors and college admission counselors should possess if they are to assist students effectively in their educational development and in the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

NACAC believes that the responsibility for the design of specific curricula for the teaching of the knowledge and skill areas leading to these competencies belongs to the training agent, so that each may develop its programs around its unique interests, abilities, and strengths. This will also ensure that a single, standardized curriculum, possibly presented through use of a model syllabus, will not be presented and repeated by different training agents. Thus, all training programs will approach competency development differently, utilizing the strengths of the teaching staff and institutional resources and emphasizing the unique local needs and circumstances.

Addressing the Future Training of Counselors

A number of steps must be taken to ensure that all sectors currently involved in the pre-service and in-service training of counselors address the critical body of knowledge and concomitant skills.

First, specific courses of study, institutes, and workshops (e.g., Counseling Students for Postsecondary Education) need to be designed to ensure that current and future school and college admission counselors are provided with the knowledge and skills, that, when coupled with practice and experience, will lead to the acquisition of these competencies. Whether they take the form of graduate courses at colleges and universities or workshops offered by professional associations, these programs will require syllabi, agendas, resource materials, and experiential activities that promote competency development.

Second, knowledge and skills information need to be infused into all related courses and training experiences of school and college admission counselors. For example, information about standardized college admission testing should become an identifiable aspect of the course work that school counselors receive in educational tests and measurement; furthermore, types of postsecondary training and strategies for conducting a college search should be included with the study of career and vocational exploration. Finally, the practicum or internship experience of all prospective counselors should include practical experience in dealing with students involved in the college exploration and application process.

This infusion of knowledge and skills development across the preparation of the counselors will not only lead to the acquisition of professional competencies, but will also result in a clearer understanding of the role of the guidance and counseling and college admission processes by those who are preparing to serve as school and college admission counselors. It should result in improved services to students.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

The school counselor plays a central and indispensable role in the precollege guidance and counseling

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process. Maximum effectiveness in serving students will be achieved if the school counselor possesses and demonstrates the following competencies:

Competency 1 **The Possession and Demonstration of Exemplary Counseling and Communication Skills**

School counselors should:

- Assist students in developing a sense of awareness and self-worth, and in the acquisition of personal exploration, decision making and goal-setting skills needed to facilitate their educational development.
- Possess individual and group counseling and communication skills and employ an eclectic and balanced approach to assisting students and their parents.
- Understand and be sensitive to the nature and functioning of the student within the family, school, and community contexts.
- Recognize individual differences among students, including their aptitudes, intelligence, interests and achievements, and integrate an understanding of this information into the counseling relationship.
- Assist students and their families in addressing the personal, social and emotional concerns and problems that may impede their educational development. Work with teachers, pupil service specialists (e.g., psychologists, social workers), other educators, and related community representatives in addressing these concerns and problems.
- Possess the interviewing skills necessary to establish and maintain rapport with students and to assist them in gaining maximum benefit from the counseling relationship.
- Demonstrate mastery of written and verbal skills which can be utilized with multiple audiences and in a variety of situations, including, but not limited to:
 - Counseling students and families
 - Disseminating information to students
 - Motivating & informing colleagues/associates
 - Making public and professional presentations
- Possess the ability to engage in active listening with students, parents, colleagues, administrators and others and formulate relevant responses.
- Establish productive linkages with college admission representatives.
- Demonstrate an ability to negotiate and move individuals and groups toward consensus and/or conflict resolution.
- Recognize nonverbal indicators and cues and be able to bring crisis situations to a reasonable solution. Exercise tact, discretion, and diplomacy in dealing with sensitive circumstances.

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Competency 2 **The Ability to Understand and Promote Student Development and Achievement**

School counselors should:

- Possess a knowledge of the psychology of children, adolescence and young adults, human growth and development and learning needs, and the relationship of counseling to the continuum of experiences in the lives of the students with whom they interact.
- Assist students in the assessment of their individual strengths, weaknesses, and differences, especially as they relate to academic achievement and postsecondary planning.
- Demonstrate an ability to counsel students in understanding the full range of educational and career options open to them, including the requirements for achieving success in these pursuits.
- Collaborate with teachers, administrators, and other educators in ensuring that appropriate educational experiences are provided that will allow all students to achieve success in their educational pursuits.

Competency 3 **The Ability to Facilitate Transitions and Counsel Students Toward the Realization of Their Full Educational Potential**

School counselors should:

- Provide information appropriate to the particular educational transition (e.g., middle school to high school, high school to college) and assist students in understanding the relationship that their curricular experiences and academic achievements will have on subsequent educational opportunities.
- Demonstrate an ability to counsel students during times of transition, separation, and heightened stress.
- Possess and demonstrate an understanding of the current admission requirements, admission options, and application procedures employed by colleges and universities.
- Develop a counseling network (human resources) and provide tools and materials (nonhuman resources) for use by students in personalizing the exploration of postsecondary education opportunities. Examples include the following:
 - Individual and group college guidance sessions for students and parents
 - Computerized guidance information systems
 - Workshops on topics such as test taking, application procedures, and financial aid
 - College fairs and college days/nights
 - College and career resource centers/libraries
 - High school visits by college representatives
- Assist students in evaluating and interpreting information about college and other postsecondary education alternatives so that appropriate options are considered and included in the decision-making process.
- Assist students in understanding the admission process and how colleges, universities, and other

Statement on Counselor Competencies

postsecondary institutions make admission decisions. This should include information about the relative importance of the following:

- Student achievement in college preparatory courses
 - Class rank
 - Admission test scores
 - Overall student achievement/skills
 - Counselor/teacher recommendations
 - Essays or writing samples
 - Interviews
 - Work/extracurricular activities
 - Special requirements (e.g., audition, portfolio)
 - Unique circumstances (e.g., variance in general demographic trends)
- Provide students and parents with information and assistance regarding admission application procedures and timelines.
 - Demonstrate an ability to counsel students regarding their individual rights and responsibilities in the college admission process using NACAC guidelines.
 - Establish linkages with departing students and alumni so they will feel welcome to return for continued assistance and/or to share their transition experiences.
 - Assist students and their parents in understanding the costs of postsecondary education, the various forms of financial aid, and how they may access this assistance. This information should address the following:
 - Student assistance application procedures
 - Grants
 - Scholarships
 - Loans
 - Work-study programs
 - Other sources of financial assistance
 - Financial planning programs

Competency 4 **The Ability to Recognize, Appreciate, and Serve Cultural Differences and the Special Needs of Students and Families**

School counselors should:

- Demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to the unique social, cultural, and economic circumstances of students and their racial/ethnic, gender, age, physical, and learning differences.
- Possess and demonstrate the counseling and consulting skills that will facilitate informed and responsive action in response to the cultural differences and special needs of students.
- Acquaint students with the school-based and outreach services and support systems designed to address their unique educational needs.
- Seek to improve and extend services to underserved students, especially those who are underrepresented among postsecondary education constituencies.

Statement on Counselor Competencies

Competency 5 **The Demonstration of Appropriate Ethical Behavior and Professional Conduct in the Fulfillment of Roles and Responsibilities**

School counselors should:

- Recognize the interests and well-being of the student as paramount in the counseling relationship and place student interests above those of the institution.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and ability to counsel students in accordance with the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Statement of Principles of Good Practice in the College Admission Process.
- Represent individual students, as well as their institutions, honestly, openly, and in accordance with accepted professional standards and protocol.
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the school's particular educational philosophy and mission and develop a personal professional philosophy consistent with this objective.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the professional standards, policies, and practices of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and other professional organizations.
- Engage in appropriate professional development and continuing education experiences to maintain the highest possible level of professional knowledge and skills.

Competency 6 **The Ability to Develop, Collect, Analyze, and Interpret Data**

School counselors should:

- Establish effective systems for conveying important data and information about students between educational levels.
- Understand the proper administration and uses of standardized tests and be able to interpret test scores and test-related data to students, parents, educators, institutions, agencies, and the public. These tests should include, but not be limited to the following:
 - Preliminary American College Test (PACT)
 - American College Test (ACT)
 - Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)
 - National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST)
 - Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT I)
 - SAT II
 - Advanced Placement Test
 - Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
 - College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
 - Career/vocational aptitude and interest instruments
 - General aptitude tests
 - General achievement tests
 - Tests of learning disabilities
 - State/institutional tests (as applicable)

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- Understand how individual and group data and statistics are used in building class and institutional profiles, constructing student transcripts, and preparing reports.
- Understand and interpret forms and data-driven documents that are a part of the admission and financial aid processes, including:
 - Applications for admission
 - Student descriptive questionnaires
 - Admission charts and tables
 - Letters of acceptance
 - Needs assessment documents
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid
- College Scholarship Service (CSS)/Financial Aid PROFILE®
- State scholarship forms/award letters
- Demonstrate a familiarity with available technology and the ways in which it can support the precollege guidance and counseling process:
 - Guidance information systems
 - Financial aid information and eligibility
 - Relevant record-keeping and follow-up
 - Internet services
- Use historical admission patterns and trends to assist students in gauging the appropriateness of their applications to particular colleges or universities.

Competency 7 **The Demonstration of Advocacy and Leadership in Advancing the Concerns of Students**

School counselors should:

- Advocate the educational needs of students and work to ensure that these needs are addressed at every level of the school experience.
- Provide training, orientation, and consultation assistance to faculty, administrators, staff, and school officials (e.g., school boards) to assist them in responding to the educational development and precollege guidance and counseling needs of students.
- Provide assistance to parents and families so that they will provide an informed and supportive environment in which students can become effective learners, and achieve success in the pursuit of appropriate educational goals.
- Understand the political issues and climate of the school or college and work to improve and extend programs and services that strengthen the educational experiences of all students.

Statement on Counselor Competencies

Competency 8 **The Ability to Organize and Integrate the Precollege Guidance and Counseling Component into the Total School Guidance Program**

School counselors should:

- Ensure that their respective programs meet the guidelines set forth in the NACAC Statement on Precollege Guidance and Counseling and the Role of the School Counselor.
- Promote the availability of a continuum (elementary through postsecondary education) of guidance and counseling experiences for all students addressing the precollege guidance and counseling process at all appropriate levels.
- Conduct appropriate planning, design, research, and evaluation activities to ensure that all precollege guidance and counseling services are maintained at an effective and relevant level.

COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELOR COMPETENCIES

The admission counselor at the college and university level plays a central and indispensable role in the precollege guidance and counseling and admission counseling processes. Maximum effectiveness in serving students will be achieved if the college admission counselor possesses and demonstrates the following competencies:

Competency 1 **The Possession and Demonstration of Exemplary Counseling and Communication Skills**

College admission counselors should:

- Assist students in developing a sense of awareness and self-worth, and in the acquisition of personal exploration, decision-making, and goal-setting skills needed to facilitate their educational development.
- Possess individual and group counseling and communication skills and employ an eclectic and balanced approach to assisting students and their parents.
- Understand and be sensitive to the nature and functioning of the student within the family, school, and community contexts.
- Recognize individual differences among students, including their aptitudes, intelligence, interests, and achievements, and integrate an understanding of this information into the counseling relationship.
- Recognize the personal, social, and emotional concerns and problems that may affect the students' educational development.
- Possess the interviewing and presentation skills necessary to establish and maintain rapport with students and to assist them in gaining maximum benefit from the counseling relationship.
- Demonstrate mastery of written and verbal skills that can be utilized with multiple audiences and in a variety of situations, including but not limited to:

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- Counseling students and families
- Disseminating information to students
- Making public and professional presentations
- Possess the ability to engage in active listening with students, parents, colleagues, administrators, and others and formulate relevant responses.
- Establish productive linkages with secondary school counselors, educators, and related individuals working with prospective college-bound students.
- Demonstrate an ability to negotiate and move individuals and groups toward consensus and/or conflict resolution.
- Recognize nonverbal indicators and cues and be able to bring difficult situations to a reasonable solution.
- Exercise tact, discretion and diplomacy in dealing with sensitive circumstances.

Competency 2

The Ability to Understand and Promote Student Development and Achievement

College admission counselors should:

- Possess an understanding of the psychology of adolescence and young adults, human growth and development and learning needs, and the relationship of counseling to the continuum of experiences in the lives of the students with whom they interact.
- Assist students in the assessment of their individual strengths, weaknesses and differences, especially as they relate to academic achievement and postsecondary planning.
- Demonstrate an ability to counsel students in understanding the full range of educational and career options open to them, including the requirements for achieving success in these pursuits.

Competency 3

The Ability to Facilitate Transitions and Counsel Students Toward the Realization of Their Full Educational Potential

College admission counselors should:

- Provide information appropriate to the high school to college transition and assist students in understanding the relationship that their curricular experiences and academic achievements will have on subsequent educational opportunities. Examples include the following:
 - Individual and group guidance sessions for students and parents
 - Workshops on topics such as application procedures and financial aid
 - High school visits
 - College fairs and college days/nights
- Possess and demonstrate an understanding of current admission requirements, admission options and application procedures employed by various colleges and universities.
- Assist students in evaluating and interpreting information about college and other postsecondary

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education alternatives so that appropriate options are considered and included in the decision-making process.

- Assist students in understanding the admission process and how colleges, universities, and other postsecondary institutions make admission decisions. This should include information about the relative importance of the following:
 - Student achievement in college preparatory courses
 - Class rank
 - Admission test scores
 - Overall student achievement/skills
 - Counselor/teacher recommendations
 - Essays or writing samples
 - Interviews
 - Work/extracurricular activities
 - Special requirements (e.g., audition, portfolio)
 - Unique circumstances
- Institutional priorities
- Variance in general demographic trends
- Variance in specific applicant pool
- Provide students with information and assistance regarding admission application procedures and timelines
- Demonstrate an ability to counsel students regarding their individual rights and responsibilities in the college admission process using NACAC guidelines.
- Assist students and their parents in understanding the costs of postsecondary education, the various forms of financial aid, and how they may access this assistance. This information should address the following:
 - Student assistance application procedures
 - Grants
 - Scholarships
 - Loans
 - Work-study programs
 - Other sources of financial assistance
 - Financial planning programs
- Establish linkages with incoming students so that they will feel welcome to request continued assistance and/or to share their transition experiences.

Competency 4

The Ability to Recognize, Appreciate, and Serve Cultural Differences and the Special Needs of Students and Families

College admission counselors should:

- Demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to the unique social, cultural, and economic circumstances of students and their racial/ethnic, gender, age, physical, and learning differences.

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- Possess and demonstrate the counseling and consultational skills that will facilitate informed and responsive action in response to the cultural differences and special needs of students.
- Acquaint students with the institutional-based and outreach services and support systems designed to address their unique educational needs.
- Seek to improve and extend services to underserved students, especially those who are underrepresented among postsecondary education constituencies.

Competency 5

The Demonstration of Appropriate Ethical Behavior and Professional Conduct in the Fulfillment of Roles and Responsibilities

College admission counselors should:

- Recognize the interests and well-being of the student as paramount in the counseling relationship and place student interests above those of the institution.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and ability to counsel students in accordance with the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Statement of Principles of Good Practice in the College Admission Process.
- Represent individual students, as well as their institutions, honestly, openly, and in accordance with accepted professional standards and protocol.
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the school's particular educational philosophy and mission and develop a personal professional philosophy consistent with this objective.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the professional standards, policies, and practices of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and other professional organizations.
- Engage in appropriate professional development and continuing education experiences to maintain the highest possible level of professional knowledge and skills.

Competency 6

The Ability to Develop, Collect, Analyze, and Interpret Data

College admission counselors should:

- Establish effective systems for conveying important data and information about students between educational levels.
- Understand the proper administration and uses of standardized tests and be able to interpret test scores and test-related data to students, parents, educators, institutions, agencies, and the public. These tests should include, but not be limited to the following:
 - Preliminary American College Test (P-ACT)
 - American College Test (ACT)
 - Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)
 - National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQT)
 - Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT I)
 - SAT II
 - Advanced Placement Test

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- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- Career/vocational aptitude/interest instruments
- General aptitude tests
- General achievement tests
- Tests of learning disabilities
- State/institutional tests (as applicable)

- Understand how individual and group data and statistics are used in building class and institutional profiles, interpreting student transcripts, and preparing reports.
- Understand and interpret forms and data-driven documents that are a part of the admission and financial aid processes, including:
 - Applications for admission
 - Student descriptive questionnaires
 - Admission charts and tables
 - Letters of acceptance
 - Needs assessment documents
- Free Application for Financial Aid
- College Scholarship Service (CSS)/Financial Aid PROFILE®
- State scholarship forms/award letters
- Demonstrate a familiarity with available technology and the ways in which it can support the admission process:
 - Financial aid information and eligibility
 - Relevant record-keeping and follow-up
 - Internet services

Competency 7

The Demonstration of Advocacy and Leadership in Advancing the Concerns of Students

College admission counselors should:

- Advocate the educational needs of students and work to ensure that these needs are addressed at every level of the school experience.
- Provide training, orientation, and consultation assistance to faculty, administrators, staff, and institution officials (e.g., trustees) to assist them in responding to the college admission counseling needs of students.
- Provide assistance to parents and families so that they will provide an informed and supportive environment in which students can achieve success in the pursuit of appropriate educational goals and during periods of transition from one educational level to another.
- Understand the political issues and climate of the school or college and work to improve and extend programs and services that strengthen the educational experiences of all students.

Competency 8
The Ability to Organize and Support a College Admission Counseling Program

College admission counselors should:

- Ensure that their respective programs meet the guidelines set forth in the NACAC Statement on the Counseling Dimension of the Admission Process at the College/University Level.
- Promote the availability of a continuum (through postsecondary education) of guidance and counseling experiences for all students and work with counselor counterparts at each educational level to ensure that student needs are addressed in a comprehensive, developmental, and articulated manner.
- Conduct appropriate planning design, research, and evaluation activities to ensure that all college admission counseling services are maintained at an effective and relevant level.

References

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THE ROLE OF THE
PROFESSIONAL
SCHOOL COUNSELOR

from the American School
Counselor Association



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The Role of the Professional School Counselor

Professional school counselors are certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master’s degree in school counseling making them uniquely qualified to address all students’ academic, personal/social and career development needs by designing, implementing, evaluating and enhancing a comprehensive school counseling program that promotes and enhances student success. Professional school counselors are employed in elementary, middle/junior high and high schools; in district supervisory positions; and counselor education positions.

Professional school counselors serve a vital role in maximizing student success (Lapan, Gysbers, & Kayson, 2007; Stone & Dahir, 2006). Through leadership, advocacy and collaboration, professional school counselors promote equity and access to rigorous educational experiences for all students. Professional school counselors support a safe learning environment and work to safeguard the human rights of all members of the school community (Sandhu, 2000), and address the needs of all students through culturally relevant prevention and intervention programs that are a part of a comprehensive school counseling program (Lee, 2001). The American School Counselor Association recommends a counselor-to-student ratio of 1:250.

The Professional School Counselor’s Role

Professional school counselors have a minimum of a master’s degree in school counseling, meet the state certification/licensure standards, and abide by the laws of the states in which they are employed. They uphold the ethical and professional standards of ASCA and other applicable professional counseling associations, and promote the development of the school counseling program based on the following areas of the ASCA National Model: Foundation, delivery, management and accountability.

Foundation

Professional school counselors identify a philosophy based on school counseling theory and research/evidence-based practice that recognizes the need for all students to benefit from the school counseling program. Professional school counselors act on these philosophies to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of a culturally relevant and comprehensive school counseling programs. Professional school counselors create a mission statement supporting the school’s mission and collaborate with other individuals and organizations to promote all students’ academic, career and personal/social development.

Delivery

Professional school counselors provide culturally competent services to students, parents/guardians, school staff and the community in the following areas:

- School Guidance Curriculum – This curriculum consists of structured lessons designed to help students achieve the desired competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge and skills appropriate for their developmental level. The school guidance curriculum is delivered throughout the school's overall curriculum and is systematically presented by professional school counselors in collaboration with other professional educators in K-12 classroom and group activities.
- Individual Student Planning – Professional school counselors coordinate ongoing systemic activities designed to help students establish personal goals and develop future plans.
- Responsive Services – Responsive services consist of prevention and/or intervention activities to meet students’ immediate and future needs. These needs can be necessitated by events and conditions in students’ lives and the school climate and culture, and may require any of the following:

- individual or group counseling
- consultation with parents, teachers and other educators
- referrals to other school support services or community resources

- peer helping
- psycho-education
- intervention and advocacy at the systemic level

Professional school counselors develop confidential relationships with students to help them resolve and/or cope with problems and developmental concerns.

- System Support – System support consists of management activities establishing, maintaining, and enhancing the total school counseling program. These activities include professional development, consultation, collaboration, supervision, program management and operations. Professional school counselors are committed to continual personal and professional development and are proactively involved in professional organizations promoting school counseling at the local, state and national levels.

Management

Professional school counselors incorporate organizational processes and tools that are concrete, clearly delineated, and reflective of the school’s needs. Processes and tools include:

agreements developed with and approved by administrators for each school year addressing how the school counseling program is organized and what goals will be accomplished

advisory councils include: students, parents/guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators and community members to review school counseling program goals and results and to make recommendations

the use of student data to effect systemic change within the school system so every student receives the benefit of



the school counseling program

action plans for prevention and intervention services defining the desired student competencies and achievement results

allotment of the professional school counselor's time in direct service with students as recommended in the ASCA National Model

the use of annual and weekly calendars to keep students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders informed and to encourage active participation in the school counseling program.

Accountability

Professional school counselors develop and implement data/needs-driven, standards-based and research-supported programs, and engage in continuous program evaluation activities. They also create results reports that demonstrate immediate, intermediate, and long-range effectiveness of comprehensive school counseling programs. Professional school counselors analyze outcome data to guide future action and improve future results for all students. The performance of the professional school counselor is evaluated using an instrument based on the School Counselor Performance Standards found in the ASCA National Model, and the ASCA School Counselor Competencies. These standards of practice are expected of professional school counselors when implementing a school counseling program.

Summary

Professional school counselors are certified/licensed educators with the minimum of a master’s degree in school counseling and are uniquely qualified to address the developmental needs of all students through a comprehensive school counseling program addressing the academic, career and personal/social development of all students.

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ETHICAL STANDARDS
FOR SCHOOL
COUNSELORS

from the American School
Counselor Association



Ethical Standards for School Counselors

(Adopted 1984; revised 1992, 1998, 2004 and 2010)

Preamble

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is a professional organization whose members are school counselors certified/licensed in school counseling with unique qualifications and skills to address all students' academic, personal/social and career development needs. Members are also school counseling program directors/supervisors and counselor educators. These ethical standards are the ethical responsibility of school counselors. School counseling program directors/supervisors should know them and provide support for practitioners to uphold them. School counselor educators should know them, teach them to their students and provide support for school counseling candidates to uphold them.

Professional school counselors are advocates, leaders, collaborators and consultants who create opportunities for equity in access and success in educational opportunities by connecting their programs to the mission of schools and subscribing to the following tenets of professional responsibility:

- Each person has the right to be respected, be treated with dignity and have access to a comprehensive school counseling program that advocates for and affirms all students from diverse populations including: ethnic/racial identity, age, economic status, abilities/disabilities, language, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, family type, religious/spiritual identity and appearance.
- Each person has the right to receive the information and support needed to move toward self-direction and self-development and affirmation within one's group identities, with special care being given to students who have historically not received adequate educational services, e.g., students of color, students living at a low socio-economic status, students with disabilities and students from non-dominant language backgrounds.
- Each person has the right to understand the full magnitude and meaning of his/her educational choices and how those choices will affect future opportunities.
- Each person has the right to privacy and thereby the right to expect the school-counselor/student relationship to comply with all laws, policies and ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality in the school setting.
- Each person has the right to feel safe in school environments that school counselors help create, free from abuse, bullying, neglect, harassment or other forms of violence.

In this document, ASCA specifies the principles of ethical behavior necessary to maintain the high standards of integrity, leadership and professionalism among its members. The Ethical Standards for School Counselors were developed to clarify the nature of ethical responsibilities held in common by school counselors, supervisors/directors of school counseling programs and school counselor educators. The purposes of this document are to:

- Serve as a guide for the ethical practices of all professional school counselors, supervisors/directors of school counseling programs and school counselor educators regardless of level, area, population served or membership in this professional association;
- Provide self-appraisal and peer evaluations regarding school counselors' responsibilities to students, parents/guardians, colleagues and professional associates, schools, communities and the counseling profession; and
- Inform all stakeholders, including students, parents and guardians, teachers, administrators, community members and courts of justice, of best ethical practices, values and expected behaviors of the school counseling professional.

A.1. Responsibilities to Students

Professional school counselors:

- a. Have a primary obligation to the students, who are to be treated with dignity and respect as unique individuals.
- b. Are concerned with the educational, academic, career, personal and social needs and encourage the maximum development of every student.
- c. Respect students' values, beliefs and cultural background and do not impose the school counselor's personal values on students or their families.
- d. Are knowledgeable of laws, regulations and policies relating to students and strive to protect and inform students regarding their rights.
- e. Promote the welfare of individual students and collaborate with them to develop an action plan for success.
- f. Consider the involvement of support networks valued by the individual students.
- g. Understand that professional distance with students is appropriate, and any sexual or romantic relationship with students whether illegal in the state of practice is considered a grievous breach of ethics and is prohibited regardless of a student's age.
- h. Consider the potential for harm before entering into a relationship with former students or one of their family members.

A.2. Confidentiality

Professional school counselors:

- a. Inform individual students of the purposes, goals, techniques and rules of procedure under which they may receive counseling. Disclosure includes the limits of confidentiality in a developmentally appropriate manner. Informed consent requires competence on the part of students to understand the limits of confidentiality and

therefore, can be difficult to obtain from students of a certain developmental level. Professionals are aware that even though every attempt is made to obtain informed consent it is not always possible and when needed will make counseling decisions on students' behalf.

- b. Explain the limits of confidentiality in appropriate ways such as classroom guidance lessons, the student handbook, school counseling brochures, school Web site, verbal notice or other methods of student, school and community communication in addition to oral notification to individual students.

- c. Recognize the complicated nature of confidentiality in schools and consider each case in context. Keep information confidential unless legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed or a breach is required to prevent serious and foreseeable harm to the student. Serious and foreseeable harm is different for each minor in schools and is defined by students' developmental and chronological age, the setting, parental rights and the nature of the harm. School counselors consult with appropriate professionals when in doubt as to the validity of an exception.

- d. Recognize their primary obligation for confidentiality is to the students but balance that obligation with an understanding of parents'/guardians' legal and inherent rights to be the guiding voice in their children's lives, especially in value-laden issues. Understand the need to balance students' ethical rights to make choices, their capacity to give consent or assent and parental or familial legal rights and responsibilities to protect these students and make decisions on their behalf.

- e. Promote the autonomy and independence of students to the extent possible and use the most appropriate and least intrusive method of breach. The developmental age and the circumstances requiring the breach are considered and as appropriate students are engaged in a discussion about the method and timing of the breach.

- f. In absence of state legislation expressly forbidding disclosure, consider the ethical responsibility to provide information to an identified third party who, by his/her relationship with the student, is at a high risk of contracting a disease that is commonly known to be communicable and fatal. Disclosure requires satisfaction of all of the following conditions:

- Student identifies partner or the partner is highly identifiable
- School counselor recommends the student notify partner and refrain from further high-risk behavior
- Student refuses
- School counselor informs the student of the intent to notify the partner
- School counselor seeks legal consultation from the school district's legal representative in writing as to the legalities of informing the partner

- g. Request of the court that disclosure not be required when the release of confidential information may potentially harm a student or the counseling relationship.

- h. Protect the confidentiality of students' records and release personal data in accordance with prescribed federal and state laws and school policies including the laws within the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Student information stored and transmitted electronically is treated with the same care as traditional student records. Recognize the vulnerability of confidentiality in electronic communications and only transmit sensitive information electronically in a way that is untraceable to students' identity. Critical information such as a student who has a history of suicidal ideation must be conveyed to the receiving school in a personal contact such as a phone call.

A.3. Academic, Career/College/Post-Secondary Access and Personal/Social Counseling Plans

Professional school counselors:

- a. Provide students with a comprehensive school counseling program that parallels the ASCA National Model with emphasis on working jointly with all students to develop personal/social, academic and career goals.

- b. Ensure equitable academic, career, post-secondary access and personal/social opportunities for all students through the use of data to help close achievement gaps and opportunity gaps.

- c. Provide and advocate for individual students' career awareness, exploration and post-secondary plans supporting the students' right to choose from the wide array of options when they leave secondary education.

A.4. Dual Relationships

Professional school counselors:

- a. Avoid dual relationships that might impair their objectivity and increase the risk of harm to students (e.g., counseling one's family members or the children of close friends or associates). If a dual relationship is unavoidable, the school counselor is responsible for taking action to eliminate or reduce the potential for harm to the student through use of safeguards, which might include informed consent, consultation, supervision and documentation.

- b. Maintain appropriate professional distance with students at all times.

- c. Avoid dual relationships with students through communication mediums such as social networking sites.

- d. Avoid dual relationships with school personnel that might infringe on the integrity of the school counselor/student relationship.

A.5. Appropriate Referrals

Professional school counselors:

- a. Make referrals when necessary or appropriate to outside resources for student and/or family support. Appropriate referrals may necessitate informing both parents/guardians and students of applicable resources and making proper plans for transitions with minimal interruption of services. Students retain the right to discontinue the counseling relationship at any time.

- b. Help educate about and prevent personal and social concerns for all students within the school counselor's scope of education and competence and make necessary referrals when the counseling needs are beyond the individual school counselor's education and training. Every attempt is made to find appropriate specialized resources for clinical therapeutic topics that are difficult or inappropriate to address in a school setting such as eating disorders, sexual trauma, chemical dependency and other addictions needing sustained clinical duration or assistance.

- c. Request a release of information signed by the student and/or parents/guardians when attempting to develop a collaborative relationship with other service providers assigned to the student.

- d. Develop a reasonable method of termination of counseling when it becomes apparent that counseling assistance is no longer needed or a referral is necessary to better meet the student's needs.

A.6. Group Work

Professional school counselors:

a. Screen prospective group members and maintain an awareness of participants’ needs, appropriate fit and personal goals in relation to the group’s intention and focus. The school counselor takes reasonable precautions to protect members from physical and psychological harm resulting from interaction within the group.

b. Recognize that best practice is to notify the parents/guardians of children participating in small groups.

c. Establish clear expectations in the group setting, and clearly state that confidentiality in group counseling cannot be guaranteed. Given the developmental and chronological ages of minors in schools, recognize the tenuous nature of confidentiality for minors renders some topics inappropriate for group work in a school setting.

d. Provide necessary follow up with group members, and document proceedings as appropriate.

e. Develop professional competencies, and maintain appropriate education, training and supervision in group facilitation and any topics specific to the group.

f. Facilitate group work that is brief and solution-focused, working with a variety of academic, career, college and personal/social issues.

A.7. Danger to Self or Others

Professional school counselors:

a. Inform parents/guardians and/or appropriate authorities when a student poses a danger to self or others. This is to be done after careful deliberation and consultation with other counseling professionals.

b. Report risk assessments to parents when they underscore the need to act on behalf of a child at risk; never negate a risk of harm as students sometimes deceive in order to avoid further scrutiny and/or parental notification.

c. Understand the legal and ethical liability for releasing a student who is in danger to self or others without proper and necessary support for that student.

A.8. Student Records

Professional school counselors:

a. Maintain and secure records necessary for rendering professional services to the student as required by laws, regulations, institutional procedures and confidentiality guidelines.

b. Keep sole-possession records or individual student case notes separate from students’ educational records in keeping with state laws.

c. Recognize the limits of sole-possession records and understand these records are a memory aid for the creator and in absence of privileged communication may be subpoenaed and may become educational records when they are shared or are accessible to others in either verbal or written form or when they include information other than professional opinion or personal observations.

d. Establish a reasonable timeline for purging sole-possession records or case notes. Suggested guidelines include shredding sole possession records when the student transitions to the next level, transfers to another school or graduates. Apply careful discretion

and deliberation before destroying sole-possession records that may be needed by a court of law such as notes on child abuse, suicide, sexual harassment or violence.

e. Understand and abide by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 1974), which safeguards student’s records and allows parents to have a voice in what and how information is shared with others regarding their child’s educational records.

A.9. Evaluation, Assessment and Interpretation

Professional school counselors:

a. Adhere to all professional standards regarding selecting, administering and interpreting assessment measures and only utilize assessment measures that are within the scope of practice for school counselors and for which they are trained and competent.

b. Consider confidentiality issues when utilizing evaluative or assessment instruments and electronically based programs.

c. Consider the developmental age, language skills and level of competence of the student taking the assessments before assessments are given.

d. Provide interpretation of the nature, purposes, results and potential impact of assessment/evaluation measures in language the students can understand.

e. Monitor the use of assessment results and interpretations, and take reasonable steps to prevent others from misusing the information.

f. Use caution when utilizing assessment techniques, making evaluations and interpreting the performance of populations not represented in the norm group on which an instrument is standardized.

g. Assess the effectiveness of their program in having an impact on students’ academic, career and personal/social development through accountability measures especially examining efforts to close achievement, opportunity and attainment gaps.

A.10. Technology

Professional school counselors:

a. Promote the benefits of and clarify the limitations of various appropriate technological applications. Professional school counselors promote technological applications (1) that are appropriate for students’ individual needs, (2) that students understand how to use and (3) for which follow-up counseling assistance is provided.

b. Advocate for equal access to technology for all students, especially those historically underserved.

c. Take appropriate and reasonable measures for maintaining confidentiality of student information and educational records stored or transmitted through the use of computers, facsimile machines, telephones, voicemail, answering machines and other electronic or computer technology.

d. Understand the intent of FERPA and its impact on sharing electronic student records.

e. Consider the extent to which cyberbullying is interfering with students’ educational process and base guidance curriculum and intervention programming for this pervasive and potentially dangerous problem on research-based and best practices.

A.11. Student Peer Support Program

Professional school counselors:

a. Have unique responsibilities when working with peer-helper or student-assistance programs and safeguard the welfare of students participating in peer-to-peer programs under their direction.

b. Are ultimately responsible for appropriate training and supervision for students serving as peer-support individuals in their school counseling programs.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

B.1. Parent Rights and Responsibilities

Professional school counselors:

a. Respect the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians for their children and endeavor to establish, as appropriate, a collaborative relationship with parents/guardians to facilitate students’ maximum development.

b. Adhere to laws, local guidelines and ethical standards of practice when assisting parents/guardians experiencing family difficulties interfering with the student’s effectiveness and welfare.

c. Are sensitive to diversity among families and recognize that all parents/guardians, custodial and noncustodial, are vested with certain rights and responsibilities for their children’s welfare by virtue of their role and according to law.

d. Inform parents of the nature of counseling services provided in the school setting.

e. Adhere to the FERPA act regarding disclosure of student information.

f. Work to establish, as appropriate, collaborative relationships with parents/guardians to best serve student.

B.2. Parents/Guardians and Confidentiality

Professional school counselors:

a. Inform parents/guardians of the school counselor’s role to include the confidential nature of the counseling relationship between the counselor and student.

b. Recognize that working with minors in a school setting requires school counselors to collaborate with students’ parents/guardians to the extent possible.

c. Respect the confidentiality of parents/guardians to the extent that is reasonable to protect the best interest of the student being counseled.

d. Provide parents/guardians with accurate, comprehensive and relevant information in an objective and caring manner, as is appropriate and consistent with ethical responsibilities to the student.

e. Make reasonable efforts to honor the wishes of parents/guardians concerning information regarding the student unless a court order expressly forbids the involvement of a parent(s). In cases of divorce or separation, school counselors exercise a good-faith effort to keep both parents informed, maintaining focus on the student and avoiding supporting one parent over another in divorce proceedings.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES TO COLLEAGUES AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES

C.1. Professional Relationships

Professional school counselors, the school counseling program director/site supervisor and the school counselor educator:

a. Establish and maintain professional relationships with faculty, staff and administration to facilitate an optimum counseling program.

b. Treat colleagues with professional respect, courtesy and fairness.

c. Recognize that teachers, staff and administrators who are high-functioning in the personal and social development skills can be powerful allies in supporting student success. School counselors work to develop relationships with all faculty and staff in order to advantage students.

d. Are aware of and utilize related professionals, organizations and other resources to whom the student may be referred.

C.2. Sharing Information with Other Professionals

Professional school counselors:

a. Promote awareness and adherence to appropriate guidelines regarding confidentiality, the distinction between public and private information and staff consultation.

b. Provide professional personnel with accurate, objective, concise and meaningful data necessary to adequately evaluate, counsel and assist the student.

c. Secure parental consent and develop clear agreements with other mental health professionals when a student is receiving services from another counselor or other mental health professional in order to avoid confusion and conflict for the student and parents/guardians.

d. Understand about the “release of information” process and parental rights in sharing information and attempt to establish a cooperative and collaborative relationship with other professionals to benefit students.

e. Recognize the powerful role of ally that faculty and administration who function high in personal/social development skills can play in supporting students in stress, and carefully filter confidential information to give these allies what they “need to know” in order to advantage the student. Consultation with other members of the school counseling profession is helpful in determining need-to-know information. The primary focus and obligation is always on the student when it comes to sharing confidential information.

f. Keep appropriate records regarding individual students, and develop a plan for transferring those records to another professional school counselor should the need occur. This documentation transfer will protect the confidentiality and benefit the needs of the student for whom the records are written.

C.3. Collaborating and Educating Around the Role of the School Counselor

The school counselor, school counseling program supervisor/director and school counselor educator:

a. Share the role of the school counseling program in ensuring data-driven academic, career/college and personal/social success compe-

tencies for every student, resulting in specific outcomes/indicators with all stakeholders.

b. Broker services internal and external to the schools to help ensure every student receives the benefits of a school counseling program and specific academic, career/college and personal/social competencies.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES TO SCHOOL, COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

D.1. Responsibilities to the School

Professional school counselors:

a. Support and protect students’ best interest against any infringement of their educational program.

b. Inform appropriate officials, in accordance with school policy, of conditions that may be potentially disruptive or damaging to the school’s mission, personnel and property while honoring the confidentiality between the student and the school counselor.

c. Are knowledgeable and supportive of their school’s mission, and connect their program to the school’s mission.

d. Delineate and promote the school counselor’s role, and function as a student advocate in meeting the needs of those served. School counselors will notify appropriate officials of systemic conditions that may limit or curtail their effectiveness in providing programs and services.

e. Accept employment only for positions for which they are qualified by education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials and appropriate professional experience.

f. Advocate that administrators hire only qualified, appropriately trained and competent individuals for professional school counseling positions.

g. Assist in developing: (1) curricular and environmental conditions appropriate for the school and community; (2) educational procedures and programs to meet students’ developmental needs; (3) a systematic evaluation process for comprehensive, developmental, standards-based school counseling programs, services and personnel; and (4) a data-driven evaluation process guiding the comprehensive, developmental school counseling program and service delivery.

D.2. Responsibility to the Community

Professional school counselors:

a. Collaborate with community agencies, organizations and individuals in students’ best interest and without regard to personal reward or remuneration.

b. Extend their influence and opportunity to deliver a comprehensive school counseling program to all students by collaborating with community resources for student success.

c. Promote equity for all students through community resources.

d. Are careful not to use their professional role as a school counselor to benefit any type of private therapeutic or consultative practice in which they might be involved outside of the school setting.

E. RESPONSIBILITIES TO SELF

E.1. Professional Competence

Professional school counselors:

a. Function within the boundaries of individual professional competence and accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

b. Monitor emotional and physical health and practice wellness to ensure optimal effectiveness. Seek physical or mental health referrals when needed to ensure competence at all times

c. Monitor personal responsibility and recognize the high standard of care a professional in this critical position of trust must maintain on and off the job and are cognizant of and refrain from activity that may lead to inadequate professional services or diminish their effectiveness with school community members Professional and personal growth are ongoing throughout the counselor’s career.

d. Strive through personal initiative to stay abreast of current research and to maintain professional competence in advocacy, teaming and collaboration, culturally competent counseling and school counseling program coordination, knowledge and use of technology, leadership, and equity assessment using data.

e. Ensure a variety of regular opportunities for participating in and facilitating professional development for self and other educators and school counselors through continuing education opportunities annually including: attendance at professional school counseling conferences; reading *Professional School Counseling* journal articles; facilitating workshops for education staff on issues school counselors are uniquely positioned to provide.

f. Enhance personal self-awareness, professional effectiveness and ethical practice by regularly attending presentations on ethical decision-making. Effective school counselors will seek supervision when ethical or professional questions arise in their practice.

g. Maintain current membership in professional associations to ensure ethical and best practices.

E.2. Multicultural and Social Justice Advocacy and Leadership

Professional school counselors:

a. Monitor and expand personal multicultural and social justice advocacy awareness, knowledge and skills. School counselors strive for exemplary cultural competence by ensuring personal beliefs or values are not imposed on students or other stakeholders.

b. Develop competencies in how prejudice, power and various forms of oppression, such as ableism, ageism, classism, familyism, genderism, heterosexism, immigrationism, linguicism, racism, religionism and sexism, affect self, students and all stakeholders.

c. Acquire educational, consultation and training experiences to improve awareness, knowledge, skills and effectiveness in working with diverse populations: ethnic/racial status, age, economic status, special needs, ESL or ELL, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, family type, religious/spiritual identity and appearance.

d. Affirm the multiple cultural and linguistic identities of every student and all stakeholders. Advocate for equitable school and school counseling program policies and practices for every student and all stakeholders including use of translators and bilingual/multilingual school counseling program materials that repre-

sent all languages used by families in the school community, and advocate for appropriate accommodations and accessibility for students with disabilities.

e. Use inclusive and culturally responsible language in all forms of communication.

f. Provide regular workshops and written/digital information to families to increase understanding, collaborative two-way communication and a welcoming school climate between families and the school to promote increased student achievement.

g. Work as advocates and leaders in the school to create equity-based school counseling programs that help close any achievement, opportunity and attainment gaps that deny all students the chance to pursue their educational goals.

F. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROFESSION

F.1. Professionalism

Professional school counselors:

a. Accept the policies and procedures for handling ethical violations as a result of maintaining membership in the American School Counselor Association.

b. Conduct themselves in such a manner as to advance individual ethical practice and the profession.

c. Conduct appropriate research, and report findings in a manner consistent with acceptable educational and psychological research practices. School counselors advocate for the protection of individual students’ identities when using data for research or program planning.

d. Seek institutional and parent/guardian consent before administering any research, and maintain security of research records.

e. Adhere to ethical standards of the profession, other official policy statements, such as ASCA’s position statements, role statement and the ASCA National Model and relevant statutes established by federal, state and local governments, and when these are in conflict work responsibly for change.

f. Clearly distinguish between statements and actions made as a private individual and those made as a representative of the school counseling profession.

g. Do not use their professional position to recruit or gain clients, consultees for their private practice or to seek and receive unjustified personal gains, unfair advantage, inappropriate relationships or unearned goods or services.

F.2. Contribution to the Profession

Professional school counselors:

a. Actively participate in professional associations and share results and best practices in assessing, implementing and annually evaluating the outcomes of data-driven school counseling programs with measurable academic, career/college and personal/social competencies for every student.

b. Provide support, consultation and mentoring to novice professionals.

c. Have a responsibility to read and abide by the ASCA Ethical Standards and adhere to the applicable laws and regulations.

F.3 Supervision of School Counselor Candidates Pursuing Practicum and Internship Experiences:

Professional school counselors:

a. Provide support for appropriate experiences in academic, career, college access and personal/social counseling for school counseling interns.

b. Ensure school counselor candidates have experience in developing, implementing and evaluating a data-driven school counseling program model, such as the ASCA National Model.

c. Ensure the school counseling practicum and internship have specific, measurable service delivery, foundation, management and accountability systems.

d. Ensure school counselor candidates maintain appropriate liability insurance for the duration of the school counseling practicum and internship experiences.

e. Ensure a site visit is completed by a school counselor education faculty member for each practicum or internship student, preferably when both the school counselor trainee and site supervisor are present.

F.4 Collaboration and Education about School Counselors and School Counseling Programs with other Professionals

School counselors and school counseling program directors/supervisors collaborate with special educators, school nurses, school social workers, school psychologists, college counselors/admissions officers, physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech pathologists to advocate for optimal services for students and all other stakeholders.

G. MAINTENANCE OF STANDARDS

Professional school counselors are expected to maintain ethical behavior at all times.

G.1. When there exists serious doubt as to the ethical behavior of a colleague(s) the following procedure may serve as a guide:

1. The school counselor should consult confidentially with a professional colleague to discuss the nature of a complaint to see if the professional colleague views the situation as an ethical violation.

2. When feasible, the school counselor should directly approach the colleague whose behavior is in question to discuss the complaint and seek resolution.

3. The school counselor should keep documentation of all the steps taken.

4. If resolution is not forthcoming at the personal level, the school counselor shall utilize the channels established within the school, school district, the state school counseling association and ASCA’s Ethics Committee.

5. If the matter still remains unresolved, referral for review and appropriate action should be made to the Ethics Committees in the following sequence:

- State school counselor association
- American School Counselor Association

6. The ASCA Ethics Committee is responsible for:

- Educating and consulting with the membership regarding ethical standards
- Periodically reviewing and recommending changes in code
- Receiving and processing questions to clarify the application of such standards. Questions must be submitted in writing to the ASCA Ethics Committee chair.
- Handling complaints of alleged violations of the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors. At the national level, complaints should be submitted in writing to the ASCA Ethics Committee, c/o the Executive Director, American School Counselor Association, 1101 King St., Suite 625, Alexandria, VA 22314.

G.2. When school counselors are forced to work in situations or abide by policies that do not reflect the ethics of the profession, the school counselor works responsibly through the correct channels to try and remedy the condition.

G.3. When faced with any ethical dilemma school counselors, school counseling program directors/supervisors and school counselor educators use an ethical decision-making model such as Solutions to Ethical Problems in Schools (STEPS) (Stone, 2001):

1. *Define the problem emotionally and intellectually*
2. *Apply the ASCA Ethical Standards and the law*
3. *Consider the students' chronological and developmental levels*
4. *Consider the setting, parental rights and minors' rights*
5. *Apply the moral principles*
6. *Determine Your potential courses of action and their consequences*
7. *Evaluate the selected action*
8. *Consult*
9. *Implement the course of action*



Resource
A4

THE FORGOTTEN MIDDLE

from the ACT
act.org

The Forgotten Middle

Ensuring that All Students Are on Target for College and Career Readiness before High School

Executive Summary

Today, college readiness also means career readiness. While not every high school graduate plans to attend college, the majority of the fastest-growing jobs that require a high school diploma, pay a salary above the poverty line for a family of four, and provide opportunities for career advancement require knowledge and skills comparable to those expected of the first-year college student.

ACT data show that **fewer than two in ten eighth graders are on target to be ready for college-level work by the time they graduate from high school.** This means that more than eight of ten eighth-grade students do not have the knowledge and skills they need to enter high school and succeed there. And not surprisingly, our research shows that students who are not prepared for high school are less likely than other students to be prepared for college and career by the time they graduate from high school. So although the gates of high school are technically open to all students, for more than 80 percent of them, the door to their futures may already be closed.

In recent years, there has been heightened awareness of the importance of early childhood education and high school as intervention points in the educational lives of America's children. Less attention, it seems, has been paid to the importance of the upper elementary grades and middle school and the role they must play in the preparation of

students for life after high school. The results of *The Forgotten Middle* suggest that, in the current educational environment, there is a critical defining point for students in the college and career readiness process—one so important that, if students are not on target for college and career readiness by the time they reach this point, the impact may be nearly irreversible. We must therefore also focus on getting more students on target for college and career readiness by the end of eighth grade, so that they are prepared to maximize the benefits of high school.

Moreover, this research shows that, under current conditions, **the level of academic achievement that students attain by eighth grade has a larger impact on their college and career readiness by the time they graduate from high school than anything that happens academically in high school.** This report also reveals that students' academic readiness for college and career can be improved when students develop behaviors in the upper elementary grades and in middle school that are known to contribute to successful academic performance.

The implication is clear: if we want not merely to improve but to maximize the college and career readiness of U.S. students, we need to intervene not only during high school but *before* high school, in the upper elementary grades and in middle school.

The Research Study

This study had four purposes. First, we wanted to examine in greater depth the factors that influence college and career readiness. In doing so, we wanted to identify those factors that are the most effective predictors of college and career readiness from middle school to high school. Second, we wanted to examine the effect that certain steps to improve students' level of academic preparation would have on their degree of readiness for college and career. Third, we wanted to examine the academic growth of these students during high school. Fourth, we wanted to examine the influence on their readiness of student behaviors related to academic performance. Our findings are summarized below.

Eighth-Grade Academic Achievement Is the Best Predictor of College and Career Readiness by High School Graduation

We constructed predictive models to examine the relative strengths of six factors in influencing students' college readiness, as defined by their performance on the ACT® test:

- **Background characteristics**—gender, race/ethnicity, parent educational level, annual family income, primary language spoken at home
- **Eighth-grade achievement**—ACT EXPLORE® test scores in relevant subject areas
- **Standard high school coursework**—highest level of non-advanced, non-honors courses taken in relevant subject areas
- **Advanced/honors high school coursework**—accelerated, honors, or Advanced Placement courses in relevant subject areas
- **High school grade point average**—self-reported grade average for courses taken in relevant subject areas
- **Student testing behaviors**—whether students retook the ACT, whether students provided updated coursework and grade information if retesting, age and grade level at time of testing. Because student testing behaviors are the result of student decisions about whether, when, and how often to take the ACT, these behaviors reflect traits such as motivation and students' self-perceptions about their academic abilities.

The predictive models showed that eighth-grade achievement (as measured by the four EXPLORE scores in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science) displays a stronger relationship with college and career readiness than does any other factor.

This means that eighth-grade achievement is the best predictor of students' ultimate level of college and career readiness by high school graduation—even more than students' family background, high school coursework, or high school grade point average. Compared to eighth-grade academic achievement, the predictive power of each of the other factors we examined was small, and in some cases negligible.

Improvement in Eighth-Grade Academic Achievement and Being on Target for College and Career Readiness in Eighth Grade Are More Beneficial Than Any High School-Level Academic Enhancement

We examined the impact of a variety of steps students could take to improve their college readiness during high school, including:

- **Maintaining a B average** in relevant standard high school courses
- **Earning higher grades** in relevant standard high school courses
- **Taking a core curriculum** in relevant subject areas in high school (for Mathematics and Science only)¹
- **Taking additional standard courses** in relevant subject areas in high school (for Mathematics and Science only)
- **Taking advanced or honors courses** in relevant subject areas in high school (if not already taken)
- **Meeting EXPLORE College Readiness Benchmarks²** in all four subject areas in eighth grade
- **Increasing EXPLORE scores 2 points** in each subject area in eighth grade

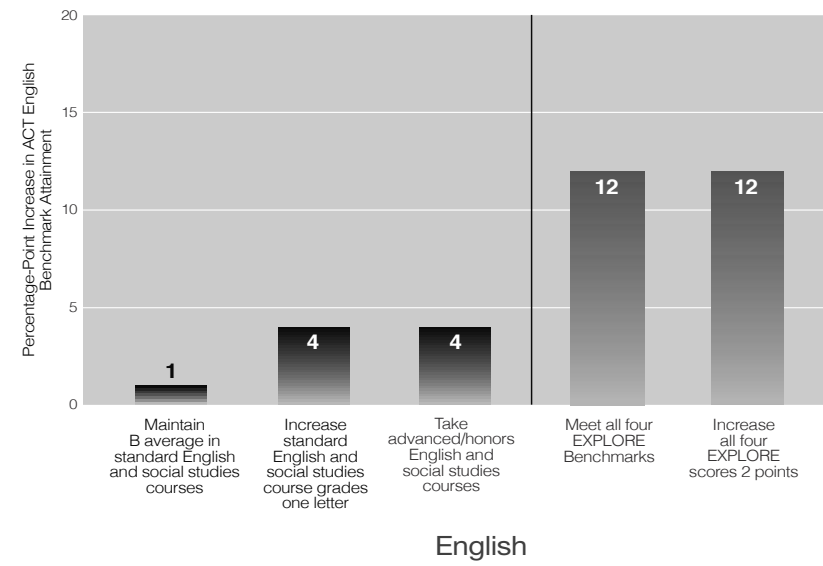
¹ The core curriculum in mathematics was defined as Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II; in science, the core curriculum was defined as Biology and Chemistry. For English and Reading, there was not enough variation in students' coursework patterns to permit meaningful enhancements with regard to taking either the core curriculum or additional standard courses (see next bullet). This is likely because high schools typically require all students to take the same English courses and many of the same social studies courses.

² ACT has developed College Readiness Benchmark scores on EXPLORE to identify students who are on target to be ready for college-level coursework in English, mathematics, science, and social science by the time they graduate from high school.

The figures below and on the following page show the additional percentages of students who would meet the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks³ in each subject area if the students took each of the seven steps independently of the others. As the figures show, being on target for college and career readiness in the eighth grade and improving the college and career readiness skills that students possess by grade 8 have the most dramatic impact on high school graduates' ultimate level of college and career readiness. This impact is much larger than that associated with any single high

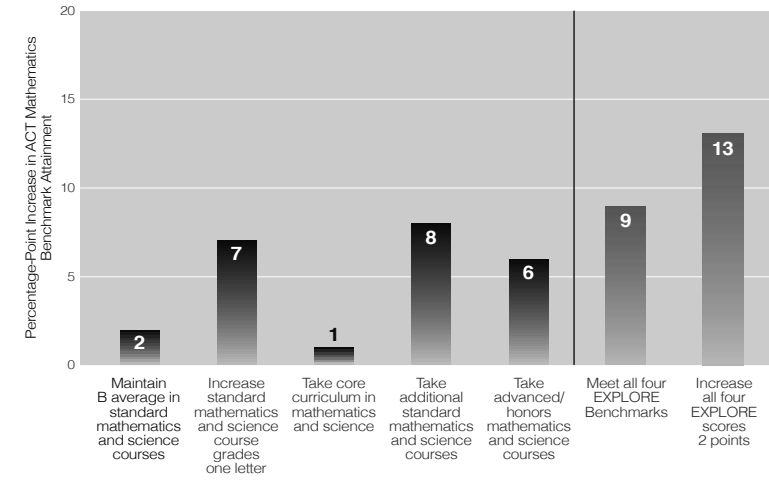
school-level enhancement. These results, however, should not be interpreted to mean that high school-level enhancements have little or no benefit for students. Rather, of the factors studied, modest increases in students' level of academic achievement by the eighth grade and being on target for college and career readiness in the eighth grade had the greatest relative impact on college and career readiness in grade 11 or 12.

Increases in ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment Associated with Various Academic Interventions

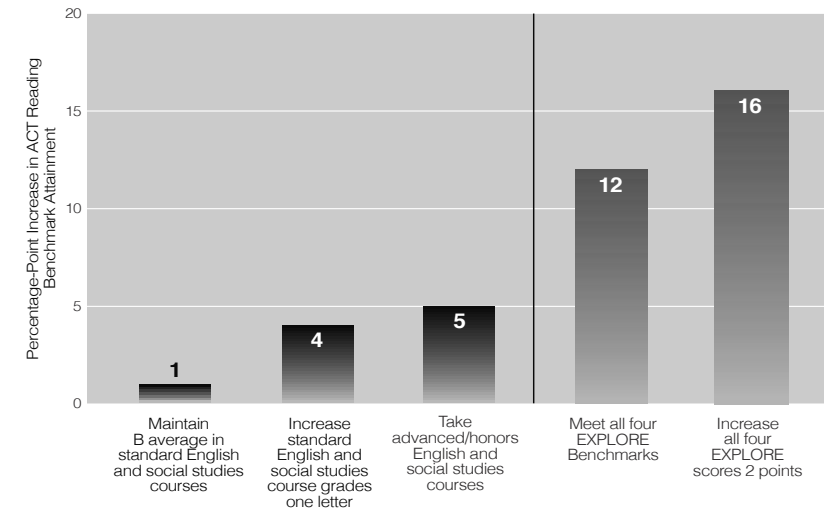


English

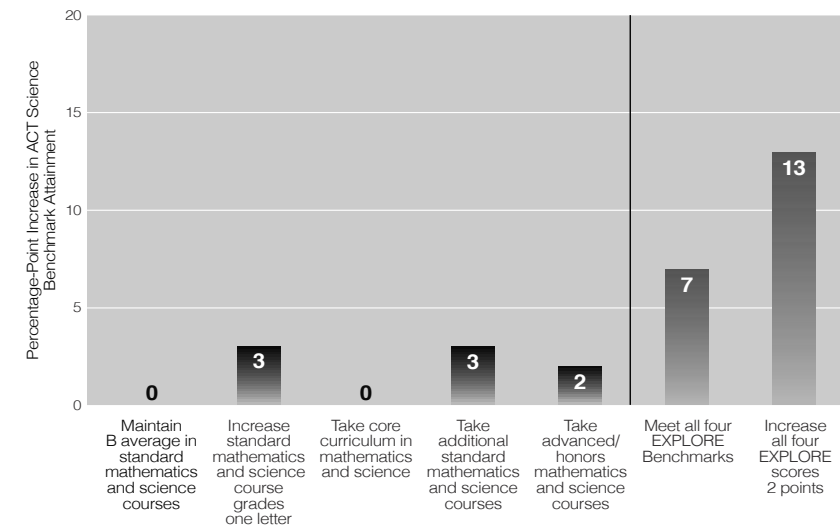
³ The College Readiness Benchmark scores on the ACT identify students who are ready for college-level coursework.



Mathematics



Reading



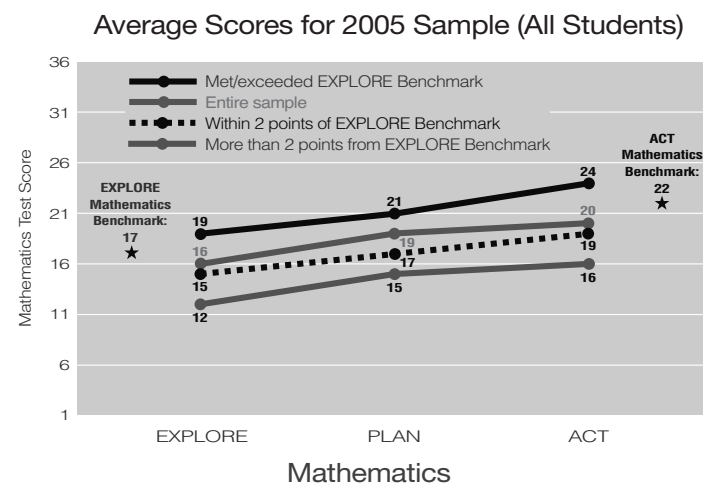
Science

The increases in Benchmark attainment associated with higher EXPLORE scores and meeting all four EXPLORE College Readiness Benchmarks were up to three times the size of the largest increase associated with any single high school-level academic enhancement.

Being on Target for College and Career Readiness in Eighth Grade Puts Students on a Trajectory for Success

Because the data for the sample used in this study ranged from the eighth to the twelfth grade for the same group of students, we were able to examine the rate of growth in students' achievement through high school. We examined growth among three categories of students in our sample: those who were on target for college and career readiness in the eighth grade, those who just missed being on target for college and career readiness (i.e., by two or fewer score points), and those who were more substantially off target (i.e., by more than two score points).

On average, only the group of students who were on target for college and career readiness by the eighth grade were ultimately ready for college and career by the eleventh or twelfth grade. Even the group of students who just missed being on target in eighth grade fell short, on average, of becoming ready for college and career by the time they reached grade 11 or 12. This was true in each of the four subject areas (the results for Mathematics appear in the figure below).



Once again, if students are on target to be ready for college and career in the eighth grade, their chances of being ready for college and career by high school graduation are substantially increased.

Improving Certain Behaviors of Middle School Students—Particularly Academic Discipline—Can Help Improve Students' Readiness for College and Career

Academic achievement is only part of what students need in order to be ready for college and career. Student readiness is also influenced by their psychosocial (that is, psychological and social) development, so we examined the role that academically related behaviors play in predicting two important indicators of students' future academic success: course failure in grade 8 and high school grade point average in grade 9.

Failing a course is a strong predictor of dropping out of high school, and our findings suggest that two academic behaviors we studied had a substantial impact on whether a course was failed in grade 8: academic discipline (i.e., good work and study habits, such as consistently completing homework) and orderly conduct.

We also examined how academic behaviors affect grade point average in ninth grade because grade point average not only predicts future academic performance but also can be used to identify students who are at high risk of experiencing academic difficulty. We found that three academic behaviors had an impact: academic discipline, orderly conduct, and having positive relationships with school personnel.

Middle school students who demonstrate those behaviors that enhance academic achievement are more likely to perform well academically in high school and be ready for college and career by the end of high school, than middle school students who do not demonstrate these behaviors. By considering these behaviors along with academic achievement, educators can more accurately identify students who are in greatest need of interventions to prevent them from failing courses and dropping out of school, thus increasing the likelihood that these students will graduate from high school ready for college and career.

Recommendations for Improving College and Career Readiness

Requiring high school students to take and pass more challenging courses and to earn higher grades, and working with teachers and administrators to improve the rigor of high school curricula, are important strategies for achieving the broad goal of improving the college and career readiness of our high school graduates. But the results of the research presented in *The Forgotten Middle* suggest that we cannot expect such activities in and of themselves to change the picture of college and career readiness among our students until more of them are ready to learn the content of rigorous high school courses. In the current educational environment, the majority of students in the eighth grade will likely not benefit enough from high school-level enhancements to be prepared for college and career by the time they graduate from high school, so we must also focus on getting more students on target for college and career readiness by the end of eighth grade so that they are prepared to maximize the benefits of high school.

Ultimately, we must reduce the number of students who are seriously underprepared by the end of middle school, which will require interventions well before grade 8. Furthermore, if we can improve students' academic skills before grade 8, then the other, high school-level enhancements will be far more effective. **Making sure that all eighth-grade students have attained the knowledge and skills that put them on target to becoming ready for college and career is the single most important step that can be taken to improve their college and career readiness.**

Given the results of this study about the relationship among high school academic readiness, high school academic success, and college academic readiness, we offer the following recommendations to improve academic achievement and college and career readiness among our nation's high school graduates:

1. Focus K–8 standards on the knowledge and skills that are essential for college and career readiness, and make these nonnegotiable for all students. A key focus for the upper elementary grades and middle school should be to prepare students for the high school curriculum by focusing on the attainment of foundational skills in English composition, mathematics, reading, and science—the *essential* skills for college and career readiness by the end of high school.

Given the crucial importance of pre-high school academic achievement level on students' eventual level of college and career readiness, it is no longer acceptable for only some students to possess these skills. Mastery of these foundational skills must therefore become a

nonnegotiable prerequisite for entry into high school. *The Forgotten Middle* identifies the essential knowledge and skills in English, mathematics, reading, and science that students need by the end of eighth grade if they are to be on target for college and career readiness.

2. Monitor student progress in becoming ready for college and career, and intervene with students who are not on track to becoming ready, beginning in upper elementary school and continuing through middle school. College and career readiness is a process, not a point in time. It is therefore important to view the process of preparing students for college and career as one that encompasses all of K–12. If students are to have a fighting chance of being ready for college-level coursework by the time they graduate from high school, their progress must be monitored so that deficiencies in their foundational skills can be identified early—in the upper elementary grades and at the start of middle school—and interventions can be made. While intervention is not the sole solution to the college and career readiness problem, it is a key element in guaranteeing that these students will have the skills they need to graduate from high school ready to succeed in college.

3. Improve students' academic behaviors. Counterproductive student behaviors that lead to putting off academic work can become habitual. Unfortunately, many students will not realize the consequences until much later, when they drop out of high school, drop out of college, or find themselves stuck in an unrewarding and low-paying career as adults. The earlier a student develops important academically related psychosocial behaviors (such as academic discipline) that contribute to college and career readiness, the more likely those behaviors are to become habitual. And these are also the same behaviors that are conducive to career success. Educators need to monitor, diagnose, and improve students' academic discipline during the upper elementary and middle school years.

4. Increase federal and state support for schools to implement intervention programs that help all students become ready for college and career. Policymakers should increase support for schools to implement interventions designed to bring students with academic deficiencies back on target for college and career readiness. This support should focus on both increasing academic preparation and improving academic behaviors that research shows support student success.

Conclusion

Eighth-grade students who are not on target for college and career readiness face severe academic obstacles in high school and are substantially more likely to be unprepared for college and career when they graduate than students who are on target to become ready for college and career in the eighth grade.

At a time when fewer than two in ten eighth graders are on target to be ready for college-level coursework by the time they graduate from high school, it is crucial that we intervene with the students in the Forgotten Middle—the upper elementary grades and middle school—to ensure that they enter high school ready to benefit from high school coursework.

The process of preparing students to make successful transitions from middle school to high school is just as important as the process of preparing them to make successful transitions from high school to postsecondary education. Obstacles to college and career readiness must be met head on. *We can* take the steps necessary to ensure that every student learns the essential skills necessary to handle the rigorous high school coursework that prepares them for college and career. Let's make these skills nonnegotiable minimum standards for all K–8 students. They deserve it.

Visit www.act.org/research/policymakers/reports/ForgottenMiddle.html to read the full *Forgotten Middle* policy report.



Resource
A5

EASING THE TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

from the Public Schools of North Carolina
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NINTH GRADE ACADEMIES EASING THE TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

By Carrie Cook, Holly Fowler and Ty Harris

Project 2.1 / October 2008



INTRODUCTION

The ninth grade is a pivotal year where suddenly students find themselves struggling to navigate large, impersonal, and competitive environments. This major transition year creates a “holding tank” otherwise known as the “ninth grade bulge” where some twenty five percent of students that fail the ninth grade are held for another year (Black). Several strategies to improve student performance and decrease retention rates have emerged over the last four decades. One strategy to decrease non-promotion and dropout rates is implementing Ninth Grade Academies. Freshman academies provide incoming ninth grade students with additional resources and personalized support to overcome transitional obstacles. A number of models (including Talent Development, Career Academy and High Schools That Work) have been created with the goal of improving academic success.

The purpose of this study is to catalog data on all existing Ninth Grade Academies in North Carolina and then analyze the comprehensive catalog to determine their impact on student retention, non-promotion, and student proficiency.

BACKGROUND

Ninth graders are adolescents undergoing the difficult transition from middle school to high school. As they face the social, emotional, physical and intellectual challenges of this stage of development, it is easy for them to feel overwhelmed, confused and alone. Subsequently, over the last thirty years the national average for ninth grade non-promotion has more than tripled from approximately four percent to thirteen percent. This retention creates the “ninth grade bulge” and “tenth grade dip” as fewer students are promoted to the next grade. State-wide data indicates the non-promotion rate for North Carolina students in 2004–2005 was 14%, a significant leap from 8.4% thirty years ago.

The increasing number of non-promoted ninth grade students both nationally and locally has become a critical focus point among all educators. Additionally, statistics indicate the importance of creating Ninth Grade Academies, as schools with operational transition programs reflect a dropout rate of only 8% on average compared to schools without transition programs at an average of 24%—three times higher (NHSC).

With the number of non-promotions and dropouts on the rise, educators desperately seek alternative strategies to ease transition challenges that leave too many students behind. The most obvious of these challenges is the physical environment. During the past 40 years, the average size of high schools has increased drastically, creating more support for smaller school settings. Recent literature on the social organization of secondary schools and on high school restructuring provides insight into practices that may increase student engagement and achievement. By focusing on

the distinction between bureaucratic and communal school organization, researchers have identified practices that may help create a sense of community within a school, leading to less student alienation and lower dropout rates (Lee & Smith, 1995; Lee, Bryk, and Smith, 1993; Johnston, 1992; Bryk & Driscoll, 1988). One organizational reform, “small learning communities,” has been promoted as a fundamental change in the movement to create more personalized and responsive high school learning environments.

The 1970’s gave rise to a wave of smaller learning community (SLC) models developed to address the complexity of high school environments. Smaller learning community models have since become a staple for ninth grade transition. Newly formed Ninth Grade Academies have utilized these SLC environments to develop several different models for success. The next section highlights national SLC models, leading the field in the development of Ninth Grade Academies for the 21st century.

CURRENT MODELS

Before examining these innovative models for success, it is important that we define Ninth Grade Academy. For the purpose of this study, a Ninth Grade Academy is defined as a year long, uniquely designed school program that provides ninth graders with the resources and support they need. A great deal of flexibility exists in creating models for supporting ninth grade students.

High Schools That Work (HSTW), Career Academy, and Talent Development are three of the many SLC models utilized for Ninth Grade Academies. The HSTW model is developed from the Southern Regional Education Board initiative that is dedicated to obtaining 85% of career bound high school students to complete a rigorous course of study and to meet or exceed the High Schools that Work performance goals in mathematics, reading and science (www.sreb.org) While the model was developed for the entire high school population, several schools are using HSTW as a framework for implementing Ninth Grade Academies. **The High Schools that Work** model revolves around ten research-based practices that include: high expectations, challenging career technical studies, rigorous academic studies, challenging programs of study, work-based learning, teacher collaborations, actively engaged students, guidance, additional help and keeping score of progress (HSTW fact sheet, Ohio Education website).

Career academies are defined as schools within schools that connect students with peers, teachers and community partners in a controlled environment which fosters academic success and improved mental and emotional health. The career academy concept encompasses three key elements which include: small learning communities; a college preparatory curriculum with a career focus; and collaborations

with employers, community members and higher education facilities (Dedmond, 2006).

The Talent Development model is designed to transform school facilitation and structure by providing a revised plan for management, organization, curriculum and to provide professional development for faculty. The model is a solution for schools that have problems with student attendance, discipline, achievement scores and dropout rates (Balfanz, R. Legters, N., & Jordan, W. 2004).

SUCCESSFUL BY DESIGN— COMMON STRATEGIES

The literature on implementing Ninth Grade Academies indicates great flexibility for success. However, four themes emerge as critical ingredients for sustaining SLC’s that foster Ninth Grade Academy success—**Authentic Learning Communities, Personalization, Rigorous and Relevant Instruction, and Professional Learning and Collaboration.**

Authentic learning experiences can be defined as those experiences that connect students to the world outside of the school environment. For example, internships, community outreach, college and business partnerships and research projects that require students to be knowledgeable of and investigate societal challenges.

Personalization may be one of the most difficult challenges encountered by classroom teachers. With the large number of distractions both inside and outside the classroom setting, it becomes increasingly important for schools and teachers to utilize the personalization strategy. Implementing this strategy includes but is not limited to more classroom based staff, smaller class sizes and more accountability (i.e. student attendance and teacher-parent communication).

Rigorous and relevant instruction is a strategy that enables students to overcome the barriers often associated with race, poverty, language or initially low academic skill. Academies that wish to prepare all ninth grade students with the tools needed to successfully transition to high school will need to develop curriculum and instruction that is demanding and relevant. Authentic learning experiences, personalization and relevant instruction work interdependently with one another, promoting a greater chance to engage students academically.

The last strategy focuses more on the development of teachers **Professional learning and collaboration** provides teachers with greater opportunities for collaboration, curriculum and instruction design, and to gain insights from their peers. This development not only increases the morale of teachers, but also transcends the learning environment, which ultimately benefits the students.

DATA

We used qualitative survey response data from Zoomerang (a web survey software tool) for our analysis. We found that North Carolina has 134 Ninth Grade Academies in 63 counties throughout the state. Of these academies, 82 qualified for our study based upon their years of operation. We used non-promotion data, student proficiency data and dropout data for students in North Carolina. In our comparison we used school summary data from similar high schools in North Carolina and examined proficiency growth data for grades 8th and 9th. In order to examine the change in performance for ninth grade students we used End of Course scores for eighth grade Reading and End of Course scores for ninth grade English. We analyzed data from 2001 to 2007 to determine whether or not there was a significant performance relationship. Because we are unable to report 2007–2008 school data, academies that began implementation in that year are not included in this study. Further, alternative schools and charter schools were not included in our data analysis because these schools often use alternative programming that cannot be controlled in our statistical model.

To access a report that outlines all of North Carolina's Ninth Grade Academies, please see the North Carolina's Ninth Grade Academies link at the following web address:
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/intern-research/reports>

METHODOLOGY

After performing an extensive literature review on Ninth Grade Academies, we began to narrow the scope of our research by identifying specific research questions and quantifiable measures. The questions we sought to answer entailed:

- Are Ninth Grade Academies affecting student performance or non-promotion?
- Are some Ninth Grade Academies having more affect than others?
- Are some models/programs better than others?
- What are some other possible impacts?

Possible Impacts: Team teaching, individualized plan, award/incentives for students, focus on math skills, focus on reading skills, curriculum integration, class size variance, and parent partnerships and home visits.

The measures we chose for this study included:

- A comparison between 8th grade reading scores and 9th grade English scores
- A comparison between Ninth Grade Academies to overall state proficiency data
- A comparison measuring the change in dropout and non-promotion rates for schools with a Ninth Grade Academy.

Additionally, we developed a comprehensive Ninth Grade Academy catalogue for the state of North Carolina.

In order to compile all of the necessary information for Ninth Grade Academy catalog, we developed a survey to determine the model type, strategies, length of operation, challenges, successes, and other details that survey respondents included. The survey was sent out via email to all superintendents and a Ninth Grade Academy contact person was established for each county. Districts with a Ninth Grade Academy were asked to fill out a fifteen minute online survey for each school containing an academy.

Once surveys were complete, we entered all data into a comprehensive catalogue and used the database to analyze and assess success of Ninth Grade Academies based on student retention (lower non-promotion rates) and student proficiency levels between 8th and 9th grades for reading and English. During our analysis we studied the selected measures to determine whether or not a significant relationship existed among the chosen variables.

- Attendance at a Type A school had a small negative effect on growth in reading and math
- Non-completion of high school by a student's parent(s) had a small negative effect on growth in reading and math
- The percentage of teachers with 0–3 years of experience had a small negative effect on growth in reading and math
- School leadership had a small positive effect on growth in reading and math
- The percentage of students in poverty had a small negative effect on growth in reading and math

FINDINGS

From 2001–2007, non-promotion rates decreased for schools with Ninth Grade Academies. Ninth Grade Academies have a non-promotion rate of fifteen percent in comparison to the twenty-two percent state average. Dropout rates also indicated a significant change. The dropout rate in Ninth Grade Academies was 6.6% compared to a state average of 12.5%, almost double that number.

While the dropout and non-promotion numbers indicate a positive change for Ninth Grade Academies, we found a statistically insignificant relationship between the proficiency growth from 8th grade Reading and 9th grade English scores. The percent change from 0.0062 for academy students and 0.0031 for all other students indicates no significant difference between Ninth Grade Academies and the state average. Therefore, End of Course scores displayed no positive or negative proficiency growth between Ninth Grade Academies and schools without Ninth Grade Academies. Additionally, we looked at the following



groups to determine a casual relationship to proficiency change. The following groups were assessed:

- All 9th graders (selected population)
- HSTW model
- Team Teaching
- Parent partnership and home visits
- Individual personalized academic plans
- Award/incentive programs
- Math skills program
- Reading skills program
- Curriculum integration
- Class size standard

However, our study did not find any specific group had any significant impact than others. In future studies, current year data will assist in finding a correlation between specific programs and implementation strategies and success indicators.

CONCLUSION

For each high school dropout, it costs a state approximately \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year. The costs to the individuals who drop out are likewise disadvantageous. Dropouts lose \$10,000 dollars each year in income after age twenty five (Bottoms). Still, the consequences of high school dropouts span far



By Carrie Cook, Holly Fowler and Ty Harris

The Financial and Business Services Area established the Research Intern Program in FY 2006–2007. The Program is designed to help build a quality research program within DPI to supplement and supply data for discussions related to procedural, process, and policy changes. The inaugural program includes five graduate students from four area universities. The intern program is managed by Jackson Miller (919) 807-3600 | intern_research@dpi.state.nc.us

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- All 8th grade students will develop an IGP that includes general graduation requirements and coursework, including out-of-classroom learning opportunities related to your chosen clusters of study.

- Your IGP will be updated annually should your interests or career goals change.

- You can also learn outside of the classroom through job shadowing, mentoring, service learning, school-based enterprises, cooperative education, internships and apprenticeships.

- By the end of 10th grade, you will choose a career major that matches your "cluster."

www.berkeley.k12.sc.us/pathways

WHAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLAN (IGP)

An Individual Graduation Plan is a school document you, your parents and guidance counselor create to help you focus on your interests, abilities and career goals and desires. And beginning in January 2008, you can complete yours online.

IGPs should:

- Be based on your selected cluster of study and an academic focus within that cluster
- Include, but not be limited to, all core academic courses (English, math, science and social studies) needed to meet state graduation requirements
- Include out-of-class, work-based learning opportunities
- Be approved by your parents or guardians



Go to scpathways.org or careerclusters.org for more information about Personal Pathways to Success and the 16 nationally recognized career clusters.

www.berkeley.k12.sc.us/pathways



Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) Worksheet

Name: _____ SUNS Number: _____ Current School: _____

Academy/School of Study: _____ Current Grade: _____

Career Clusters: _____ Majors: _____
 Declare Only Intend to Complete

_____ Declare Only Intend to Complete

Career Goal: _____

Postsecondary Plans: Workforce/Apprenticeship Two-Year College/Technical Training Four-Year College Military

	9th	10th	11th	12th
English Four Units				
Math Four Units				
Science Three Units				
Social Studies Three Units				
Requirements/ Electives				
Requirements/ Electives				
Requirements/ Electives				
Requirements/ Electives				
Required Courses for Major (Four Credits Required)	Complementary Course Work		Extended Learning Opportunities Options Related to Major	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Individual Graduation Plan should meet high school graduation requirements as well as college entrance requirements.

Student Signature _____ Date _____ Parent/Guardian/Representative Signature _____ Date _____

Counselor Signature _____ Date _____

Date: _____



8th Grade - INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLAN CONFERENCE



<input type="checkbox"/> Transcript & Course Recommendations reviewed for Accuracy
<input type="checkbox"/> Verify Accuracy of PowerSchool Demographics: <input type="checkbox"/> -Correct Legal Name <input type="checkbox"/> -Phone # <input type="checkbox"/> -Home Address <input type="checkbox"/> -Email Address <input type="checkbox"/> "Every Course Counts"
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic/Career Assessment Data Discussed:
<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORE <input type="checkbox"/> SCOIS (optional) <input type="checkbox"/> MAP <input type="checkbox"/> PASS <input type="checkbox"/> Others:
<input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary Plans Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> Career, <input type="checkbox"/> College, <input type="checkbox"/> Military, <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce, Others
<input type="checkbox"/> Graduation Requirements:
<input type="checkbox"/> College Entrance Exams <input type="checkbox"/> HSAP <input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina Diploma (Credit Requirements) <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Honors Diploma
<input type="checkbox"/> College Readiness Assessment Results Discussed:
<input type="checkbox"/> -EXPLORE <input type="checkbox"/> -PSAT (if taken) <input type="checkbox"/> College Readiness Benchmarks (EXPLORE) <input type="checkbox"/> "Localize" Predicted ACT Score
<input type="checkbox"/> Handouts Provided:
<input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Pathways Toolbox - www.berkeley.k12.sc.us/pathways <input type="checkbox"/> eIGP User Name and Password Handout <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD ACT/SAT Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Localized ACT/SAT Data – including college admissions data <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Honors Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Curriculum Framework – Pathways High School locations <input type="checkbox"/> SC Uniform Grading Scale <input type="checkbox"/> SC Graduation Requirements – SC 4 Year College Requirements <input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina Scholarship Programs Brochure – Importance of 3.0+ <input type="checkbox"/> NCAA Clearing House <input type="checkbox"/> Extended Learning Opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Resume Writing Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing <input type="checkbox"/> Soft Skills



Student Signature Date

 -Parent -Guardian -Designee Signature Date

School Counselor Signature Date

9th Grade INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLAN CONFERENCE



<input type="checkbox"/> Transcript & Course Recommendations reviewed for Accuracy
<input type="checkbox"/> Verify Accuracy of PowerSchool Demographics: <input type="checkbox"/> -Correct Legal Name <input type="checkbox"/> -Phone # <input type="checkbox"/> -Home Address <input type="checkbox"/> -Email Address <input type="checkbox"/> "Every Course Counts" <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Honors Diploma (if currently eligible)
<input type="checkbox"/> Postsecondary Plans Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> -Career, <input type="checkbox"/> -College, <input type="checkbox"/> -Military, <input type="checkbox"/> -Workforce, <input type="checkbox"/> -Others:
<input type="checkbox"/> Current Schedule reviewed to assure alignment with Graduation Requirements and Postsecondary Plans
<input type="checkbox"/> Career Assessment Data Discussed:
<input type="checkbox"/> SCOIS (optional) (www.scois.net) <input type="checkbox"/> Kuder (optional) <input type="checkbox"/> Others:
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic Assessments Discussed:
<input type="checkbox"/> HSAP <input type="checkbox"/> Others:
<input type="checkbox"/> Testing Information:
<input type="checkbox"/> ACT/SAT (4 year colleges) <input type="checkbox"/> COMPASS/ASSET (2 year colleges & certificates)
<input type="checkbox"/> College Readiness Assessment Results Discussed:
<input type="checkbox"/> -EXPLORE <input type="checkbox"/> -PSAT (if taken) <input type="checkbox"/> College Readiness Benchmarks (EXPLORE) <input type="checkbox"/> "Localize" Predicted ACT Score (and Predicted SAT score if available)
<input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina Scholarship Programs Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> -Hope, <input type="checkbox"/> -Life, <input type="checkbox"/> -Palmetto Fellows
<input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship Information available at School:
<input type="checkbox"/> (school web page, bulletin board, Senior Newsletter, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> NCAA Clearinghouse (All Student-Athletes planning to compete in college)
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Arrangements: <input type="checkbox"/> -Virtual Courses, <input type="checkbox"/> -Credit Recovery, <input type="checkbox"/> -Summer School, <input type="checkbox"/> -Evening High School Program, <input type="checkbox"/> -Middle College, <input type="checkbox"/> -STAR Academy <input type="checkbox"/> -Others recorded on the eIGP in the "Planning Notes" section
<input type="checkbox"/> Handouts Provided:
<input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Pathways Toolbox - www.berkeley.k12.sc.us/pathways <input type="checkbox"/> eIGP User Name and Password Handout <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD ACT/SAT Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Localized ACT/SAT Data – including college admissions data <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Honors Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Curriculum Framework – Pathways High School locations <input type="checkbox"/> SC Uniform Grading Scale <input type="checkbox"/> SC Graduation Requirements – SC 4 Year College Requirements <input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina Scholarship Programs Brochure – Importance of 3.0+ <input type="checkbox"/> NCAA Clearing House <input type="checkbox"/> Extended Learning Opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Resume Writing Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing <input type="checkbox"/> Soft Skills



Student Signature Date

 -Parent -Guardian -Designee Signature Date

School Counselor Signature Date

10th Grade - INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLAN CONFERENCE



<input type="checkbox"/>	Transcript & Course Recommendations reviewed for Accuracy <input type="checkbox"/> Verify Accuracy of PowerSchool Demographics: <input type="checkbox"/> -Correct Legal Name <input type="checkbox"/> -Phone # <input type="checkbox"/> -Home Address <input type="checkbox"/> -Email Address <input type="checkbox"/> "Every Course Counts" <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Honors Diploma (if currently eligible)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Postsecondary Plans Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> -Career, <input type="checkbox"/> -College, <input type="checkbox"/> -Military, <input type="checkbox"/> -Workforce, <input type="checkbox"/> -Others: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Current Schedule reviewed to assure alignment with Graduation Requirements and Postsecondary Plans
<input type="checkbox"/>	Career Assessment Data Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> PLAN (10 th) <input type="checkbox"/> SCOIS (8 -12 optional) (www.scois.net) <input type="checkbox"/> Kuder (optional) <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic Assessments Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> HSAP (8-12 as needed) <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing Information: <input type="checkbox"/> ACT/SAT (4 year colleges) <input type="checkbox"/> COMPASS/ASSET (2 year colleges & certificates)
<input type="checkbox"/>	College Readiness Assessment Results Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> -PLAN <input type="checkbox"/> -PSAT (if taken) <input type="checkbox"/> College Readiness Benchmarks (PLAN) <input type="checkbox"/> "Localize" Predicted ACT Score (and Predicted SAT score if available)
<input type="checkbox"/>	South Carolina Scholarship Programs Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> -Hope, <input type="checkbox"/> -Life, <input type="checkbox"/> -Palmetto Fellows
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship Information available at School <small>(school web page, bulletin board, Senior Newsletter, etc.)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> NCAA Clearinghouse – (All Student-Athletes planning to compete in college)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handouts Provided: <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Pathways Toolbox - www.berkeley.k12.sc.us/pathways <input type="checkbox"/> eIGP User Name and Password Handout <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD ACT/SAT Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Localized ACT/SAT Data – including college admissions data <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Honors Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Curriculum Framework – Pathways High School locations <input type="checkbox"/> SC Uniform Grading Scale <input type="checkbox"/> SC Graduation Requirements – SC 4 Year College Requirements <input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina Scholarship Programs Brochure – Importance of 3.0+ <input type="checkbox"/> NCAA Clearing House <input type="checkbox"/> Extended Learning Opportunities? <input type="checkbox"/> Resume Writing Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing <input type="checkbox"/> Soft Skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Arrangements: <input type="checkbox"/> -Virtual Courses, <input type="checkbox"/> -Credit Recovery, <input type="checkbox"/> -Summer School, <input type="checkbox"/> -Evening High School Program, <input type="checkbox"/> -Middle College, <input type="checkbox"/> -STAR Academy <input type="checkbox"/> -Others recorded on the eIGP in the "Planning Notes" section



Student Signature Date

-Parent -Guardian -Designee Signature Date

School Counselor Signature Date

11th Grade - INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLAN CONFERENCE



<input type="checkbox"/>	Transcript & Course Recommendations reviewed for Accuracy <input type="checkbox"/> Review transcript and current year's schedule for accuracy <small>(including <input type="checkbox"/> -GPA and <input type="checkbox"/> -class rank)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> "Every Course Counts" <input type="checkbox"/> Verify Accuracy of PowerSchool Demographics: <input type="checkbox"/> -Correct Legal Name <input type="checkbox"/> -Phone # <input type="checkbox"/> -Home Address <input type="checkbox"/> -Email Address <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Honors Diploma Checklist (if eligible previous year) <input type="checkbox"/> S.C. Graduation Requirements & Four-year college entrance requirements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Postsecondary Plans Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> -Career, <input type="checkbox"/> -College, <input type="checkbox"/> -Military, <input type="checkbox"/> -Workforce, <input type="checkbox"/> -Others: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recommended Senior Schedule based on credit check and postsecondary plans to assure alignment with <input type="checkbox"/> -Graduation Requirements and <input type="checkbox"/> -Postsecondary Plans <input type="checkbox"/> -AP/Dual Credit
<input type="checkbox"/>	Career Assessment Data Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> - PSAT <input type="checkbox"/> - PLAN <input type="checkbox"/> - SCOIS (www.scois.net) <input type="checkbox"/> -Kuder (www.scpathways.org) <input type="checkbox"/> - ASVAB (www.asvabprogram.com)
<input type="checkbox"/>	College Assessment Results Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> -ACT (PLAN ___) <input type="checkbox"/> -SAT (PSAT ___) <input type="checkbox"/> College Readiness Benchmarks: <input type="checkbox"/> PLAN ___ or <input type="checkbox"/> ACT ___ (if available) <input type="checkbox"/> "Localize" College Entrance Testing Requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Counselor's Testing Recommendation ACT ___ SAT ___ Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing Data & Information: <input type="checkbox"/> ACT/SAT (4 year colleges) - www.actstudent.org ; www.collegeboard.com <input type="checkbox"/> COMPASS/ASSET (2 year colleges & certificates) www.act.org/compass ; www.act.org/asset <input type="checkbox"/> WorkKeys (Workforce) - www.act.org/workkeys <input type="checkbox"/> ASVAB (Military) - www.asvabprogram.com
<input type="checkbox"/>	South Carolina Scholarship Programs Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> -Hope, <input type="checkbox"/> -Life, <input type="checkbox"/> -Palmetto Fellows, <input type="checkbox"/> -Lottery Tuition Assistance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scholarship Information available at School (school web page, bulletin board, Senior Newsletter, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce FAFSA/Financial Aid - www.fafsa.ed.gov <input type="checkbox"/> NCAA Clearinghouse – (All Student-Athletes planning to compete in college) <input type="checkbox"/> Military Academy Application Process & Nominations (if interested) <input type="checkbox"/> ROTC Scholarships (www.military.com)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic Assessments Discussed (only if student has NOT passed): <input type="checkbox"/> HSAP (Met requirements ELA ___ Math ___)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handouts Provided: <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Pathways Toolbox - (www.berkeley.k12.sc.us/pathways) <input type="checkbox"/> eIGP User Name and Password Handout <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD ACT/SAT Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Localized ACT/SAT Data – including college admissions data <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Honors Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Curriculum Framework – Pathways High School locations <input type="checkbox"/> SC Uniform Grading Scale <input type="checkbox"/> SC Graduation Requirements – SC 4 Year College Requirements <input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina Scholarship Programs Brochure – Importance of 3.0+ <input type="checkbox"/> NCAA Clearing House (www.eligibilitycenter.org) <input type="checkbox"/> Extended Learning Opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Resume Writing Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing <input type="checkbox"/> Soft Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Military Academy Process
<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Arrangements: <input type="checkbox"/> -Virtual Courses, <input type="checkbox"/> -Credit Recovery, <input type="checkbox"/> -Summer School, <input type="checkbox"/> -Evening High School Program, <input type="checkbox"/> -Middle College, <input type="checkbox"/> -STAR Academy <input type="checkbox"/> -Others recorded on the eIGP in the "Planning Notes" section



Student Signature Date

-Parent -Guardian -Designee Signature Date

School Counselor Signature Date

12th Grade - INDIVIDUAL GRADUATION PLAN CONFERENCE



<input type="checkbox"/>	Transcript & Course Recommendations reviewed for Accuracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review transcript and current year's schedule for accuracy (including <input type="checkbox"/>-GPA and <input type="checkbox"/>-class rank) <input type="checkbox"/> "Every Course Counts" <input type="checkbox"/> Verify Accuracy of PowerSchool Demographics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/>-Correct Legal Name <input type="checkbox"/>-Phone # <input type="checkbox"/>-Home Address <input type="checkbox"/>-Email Address <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Honors Diploma Checklist (if eligible previous year) <input type="checkbox"/> S.C. Graduation Requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Four-year college entrance requirements (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Postsecondary Plans Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> -Career, <input type="checkbox"/> -College, <input type="checkbox"/> -Military, <input type="checkbox"/> -Workforce, <input type="checkbox"/> -Others: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Career Assessment Data Discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/>-SCOIS (www.scois.net) <input type="checkbox"/>-Kuder (www.scpower.org) <input type="checkbox"/>- ASVAB -Others: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	College Assessment Results Discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/>-ACT ___(PLAN ___) <input type="checkbox"/>-SAT ___(PSAT ___) <input type="checkbox"/> "Localize" College Entrance Testing Requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Counselor's Testing Recommendation ACT _____ SAT _____ Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing Data & Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> ACT/SAT (4 year colleges) - www.actstudent.org ; www.collegeboard.com <input type="checkbox"/> COMPASS/ASSET (2 year colleges & certificates) www.act.org/compass ; www.act.org/asset <input type="checkbox"/> WorkKeys (Workforce) - www.act.org/workkeys <input type="checkbox"/> ASVAB (Military) -www.asvabprogram.com
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina Scholarship Programs Discussed: <input type="checkbox"/> -Hope, <input type="checkbox"/> -Life, <input type="checkbox"/> -Palmetto Fellows, <input type="checkbox"/> -Lottery Tuition Assistance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scholarship Information available at School (school web page, bulletin board, Senior Newsletter, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss FAFSA & Financial Aid Night Date: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> NCAA Clearinghouse - (All Student-Athletes planning to compete in college)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic Assessments Discussed: (only if student has not passed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> HSAP (Met requirements ELA _____ Math _____)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handouts Provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Pathways Toolbox - www.berkeley.k12.sc.us/pathways <input type="checkbox"/> eIGP User Name and Password Handout <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD ACT/SAT Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Localized ACT/SAT Data - including college admissions data <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Honors Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> BCSD Curriculum Framework - Pathways High School locations <input type="checkbox"/> SC Uniform Grading Scale <input type="checkbox"/> SC Graduation Requirements - SC 4 Year College Requirements <input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina Scholarship Programs Brochure - Importance of 3.0+ <input type="checkbox"/> NCAA Clearinghouse (www.eligibilitycenter.org) <input type="checkbox"/> Resume Writing Brochure <input type="checkbox"/> Interviewing Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Soft Skills <input type="checkbox"/> CTAP Credit Opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Arrangements: <input type="checkbox"/> -Virtual Courses, <input type="checkbox"/> -Credit Recovery, <input type="checkbox"/> -Summer School, <input type="checkbox"/> -Evening High School Program, <input type="checkbox"/> -Middle College, <input type="checkbox"/> -STAR Academy <input type="checkbox"/> -Others recorded on the eIGP in the "Planning Notes" section



Resource
B2

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS: FACT SHEET

from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights



Student Signature Date

-Parent -Guardian -Designee Signature Date

School Counselor Signature Date



FACT SHEET

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services • Office for Civil Rights • Washington, D.C. 20201 • (202) 619-0403

YOUR RIGHTS UNDER SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

What Is Section 504?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal department or agency, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). These organizations and employers include many hospitals, nursing homes, mental health centers and human service programs.

Section 504 forbids organizations and employers from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services. It defines the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in, and have access to, program benefits and services.

Who Is Protected from Discrimination?

Section 504 protects *qualified individuals with disabilities*. Under this law, *individuals with disabilities* are defined as persons with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. People who have a history of, or who are regarded as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, are also covered. Major life activities include caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, and learning. Some examples of impairments which may substantially limit major life activities, even with the help of medication or aids/devices, are: AIDS, alcoholism, blindness or visual impairment, cancer, deafness or hearing impairment, diabetes, drug addiction, heart disease, and mental illness.

In addition to meeting the above definition, for purposes of receiving services, education or training, *qualified individuals with disabilities* are persons who meet normal and essential eligibility requirements.

For purposes of employment, *qualified individuals with disabilities* are persons who, with reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job for which they have applied or have been hired to perform. (Complaints alleging employment discrimination on the basis of disability against a single individual will be referred to the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for processing.)

Reasonable accommodation means an employer is required to take reasonable steps to accommodate your disability unless it would cause the employer undue hardship.

Prohibited Discriminatory Acts in Health Care and Human Services Settings

Section 504 prohibitions against discrimination apply to service availability, accessibility, delivery, employment, and the administrative activities and responsibilities of organizations receiving Federal financial assistance. A recipient of Federal financial assistance may not, on the basis of disability:

- ✗ Deny qualified individuals the opportunity to participate in or benefit from federally funded programs, services, or other benefits.
- ✗ Deny access to programs, services, benefits or opportunities to participate as a result of physical barriers.
- ✗ Deny employment opportunities, including hiring, promotion, training, and fringe benefits, for which they are otherwise entitled or qualified....

These and other prohibitions against discrimination based on disability can be found in the DHHS Section 504 regulation at 45 CFR Part 84.

For information on how to file a complaint of discrimination, or to obtain information of a civil rights nature, please contact us. OCR employees will make every effort to provide prompt service.

Hotlines: 1-800-368-1019 (Voice)

1-800-537-7697 (TDD)

E-Mail: ocrmail@hhs.gov

Website: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr>



Resource
B3

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COUNSELING
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FIRST-GENERATION
.....
STUDENTS ABOUT
.....
COLLEGE
.....

from the College Board
collegeboard.org

First-Generation Students

Counseling first-generation students about college

Working with first-generation students—those who will be in the first generation of their families to go to college—presents a counselor with special challenges as well as great potential rewards. **What particular needs do first-generation students have, and how can you best guide them?**

Who are first-generation students?

First-generation students can come from families with low incomes, or from middle-class families without a college-going tradition. Some have parents who support their plans for higher education; others are under family pressure to enter the workforce right after high school.

Often these students don't know what their options are regarding higher education, have fears about going to college, and have misconceptions about college and its costs.

Strategies for working with these students

1. Reach out early.

Identify your first-generation students as early as possible so that you can begin to talk with them and their families about college and about what high school course work will prepare them for college:

- Talk to them about taking AP and honors courses to prepare for college-level work.
- Make sure that they take a solid, challenging course load they meet the requirements for college admission—even if they're not yet sure they'll go.
- Encourage them to take the PSAT in 10th grade and then make full use of the free skill-assessment and building tools on My College QuickStart.

You might want to print out and distribute *Why Get a College Degree?* and *Seven Excuses Not to Go to College*.

2. Extend the scope of your counsel; cover the basics of self-assessment, college, and careers.

First-generation students may never have been encouraged to assess their talents and weaknesses with a view toward higher education. They are also likely to have slim knowledge of what educational requirements are needed for certain professions.

"Sometimes, they don't know the difference between a doctor and someone who draws blood. You have to educate them about the different professions and how their skills and interests play a role in making appropriate choices," says Scott White of Montclair High School, New Jersey.

Help first-generation students understand how their interests and skills can connect to a career and higher education options:

- Conduct early aptitude assessments.
- Talk to them about their skills and interests and which career paths these might point to. Probe. If a student says he wants to be an architect, ask what he thinks architects do and how much education they need.
- Give them the Student Self-Assessment (.pdf/79K) and encourage them to fill it out.

- Be honest with them about where they are and what they should focus on.

3. Involve the family.

Working successfully with the families of first-generation students may take different strategies. You will likely meet a wide range of attitudes about college (from supportive to obstructive) and may have to explain college basics or make the case for the value of higher education. Consider printing out *Is College Right for Your Child?* to give to parents.

For more information, see the article *Helping Families Research Colleges*.

4. Give special help with college search and selection.

When discussing college options with these students, take time to describe the different types of colleges in the United States. You may have to explain terms like "liberal arts college."

Be aware that some colleges seek first-generation students. Try to identify these schools and pass the information on to your students.

Watch for (and combat) students' preconceptions that they can't afford college at all, or the reverse—that they will easily get full scholarships. And watch for (and combat) students' or families' fixations on "name" colleges.

Make sure students know that private colleges may be financially feasible thanks to grants and financial aid (many students will assume that they can only afford a public university).

Encourage students to visit colleges. Organize school-led trips, if possible. And make sure they take advantage of your college fairs and information nights.

Talk to students about community college. This is a good fit for some first-generation students. Point them to the article *Why Community College* for more information.

5. Give special help with college applications.

First-generation students from families with low incomes may qualify for waivers of test fees and of college application fees. Make sure they're aware of this early on.

Educate students about application deadlines. Some of these students may not understand that these deadlines are firm.

Counselors report that first-generation students are more hesitant than other students to apply online.

If they file paper forms:

- Stress the importance of neatness and of making copies of all parts of an application.
- Remind them to use their full name consistently.
- If you can, review the forms with students before they send them to colleges.

6. Give special help with financial aid applications and packages.

See the *Explaining Financial Aid* section for detailed articles and information about financial aid.

Families unfamiliar with college financing are easy targets for scams. Let students and families know that they should not pay anyone to help them find scholarships, fill out the FAFSA, or handle any other aspect of the financial aid process.

7. Explain what college will be like.

Research shows that first-generation students report being challenged by their lack of experience with time

management and money management; by the economic realities of college; and by the impersonal nature of institutions of higher learning. (Richardson and Skinner, *New Directions for Community Colleges*, no. 80, 1992)

Talk with your students about what college will be like. They may feel more adrift than most first-year college students. Tell them that there are support systems on campus and that the tuition and fees they pay gives them free access to these services. Point them to the articles [Free College Resources](#) and [College Survival Tips](#).

8. Work with other organizations.

Consider developing college-awareness events with the local middle schools.

Let students know that they can take classes at local community colleges and earn both high school and college credit.

Develop relationships with community groups and outreach organizations that provide academic help to young people.

Research programs for first-generation and other "at-risk" students such as AVID, CollegeEd, Talent Search, Upward Bound, Urban League, and summer bridge programs.



**Resource
B4**

ORGANIZING A CAREER FAIR

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

ORGANIZING A CAREER FAIR

Below we have organized a suggested timeframe and checklist on how to plan a successful career fair for your students. Remember to leave yourself at least five or six months to plan and secure venues, rentals, speakers, and volunteers. You may also need time to secure the proper funds for your event by applying through your school, fundraising, or reaching out to corporate sponsors and foundations.

SIX (+) MONTHS BEFORE

- Determine ideal dates
- Identify your needs (rentals, supplies, etc.)
- Develop a budget and start fundraising, applying, and reaching out to sponsors
- Begin a list of potential guest presenters

TIP

Develop a team of leaders that will be able to help you with large aspects of the fair such as sponsors, information packets, presenters, etc. These leaders can even be students who are interested in leadership and event planning.

FOUR TO FIVE MONTHS BEFORE

- Start contacting venues to see if your ideal date works
- Continue your efforts to obtain the money you need
- Create a list of presenters you wish to reach out to
- Develop an advertising strategy targeted toward students (flyers, e-mails, ads, etc.)
- Decide how students will register or RSVP (form, Web site, etc.)
- Decide if you will create a program

TIP

Your own school is a great venue to hold the event. If the weather is nice enough, host the event outside to draw more street traffic.

THREE MONTHS BEFORE

- Set the final date, time, and place
- Begin calling your list of presenters
- Secure sponsors
- Make sure you are aware of timing for any ads you may be placing in newspapers, magazines, etc.
- Create your registration and Web site (if applicable)

TIP

Offer advertising space in your program to sponsors to offset the costs of printing.

ONE TO TWO MONTHS BEFORE

- Finalize your presenters: request a copy of their bio and a picture of them. Know their title/work history and contact information.
- Finalize the schedule for the event
- Start advertising to students and parents
- Collect sponsors' details, logos, contact information, and ads (if applicable)
- Arrange pickup/drop off information on your rentals
- Arrange catering
- Secure any audio-visual equipment for the event
- Send your program to the printer (if applicable)
- Confirm your volunteers

TIP

Stay organized by filing all information immediately upon receiving it, even print out any information sent electronically so it is easy to reference on the day of the event.

ONE TO TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- Continue your advertising campaign
- Confirm your contact information, directions, parking, building access, etc. with your presenters and volunteers
- Finalize agenda details, make sure all parties have a copy, and post to your Web site (if applicable)
- Make sure all legal releases (photography, etc.) are taken care of
- Send out the agenda, reminders, directions/parking, and weather information (if applicable)
- Make the folders/packets for attendees that include the program, evaluation, and agenda
- Confirm with your caterers
- Test all audio-visual equipment (microphones, projectors, etc.)
- Create all badges and signs for the event
- Develop a press release to send to media
- Secure all thank you gifts for presenters and any other significant persons
- Assign spaces/tables to attendees (if applicable)
- Make a checklist of all the supplies, contacts, and presenters for you and your staff of volunteers
- Develop a sign-in/registration sheet

TIP

Have volunteers that cannot be present the day of the event help you with making badges, signs, buying gifts, and creating packets during these two weeks.

DAY BEFORE

- Run through checklist to ensure you have all supplies, vendors, and presenters in line
- Arrange a packet and badge for any press that may attend
- Back up all presentations you have on a flash drive
- If allowed, set up all tables, chairs, screens, etc. that you may need the day of the event

TIP

Relax, celebrate — you are one step closer to the day that you have been planning for months!

DAY OF EVENT

- Ensure all tables, signs, chairs, tents, etc. are set up
- Final check on audio-visual equipment
- Check in all volunteers and make sure they know where they need to go and what they need to do
- Make sure breakfast/lunch/dinner is distributed smoothly and effectively
- Be prepared to answer lots of questions; have a list handy of everyone's contact information

TIP

If your event is in a school, ensure all papers with names and grades are taken down as not to release information your students may not want to share with a large number of people.

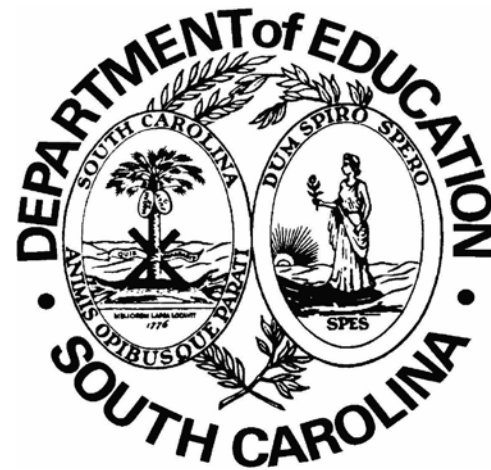


Resource
B5

SOUTH CAROLINA
UNIFORM GRADING
POLICY

from the South Carolina
Department of Education

South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy



Issued by the
South Carolina Department of Education

Inez Moore Tenenbaum
State Superintendent of Education

January 9, 2007

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The Legislative Mandate

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-5-68 (2004) reads as follows:

The General Assembly finds that given the fact the State provides substantial financial academic assistance to students of the State based on cumulative grade point averages and districts currently use a variety of grading scales, it is in the best interest of the students of South Carolina for a uniform grading scale to be developed and adopted by the State Board of Education to be implemented in all public schools of the State. Therefore, the State Board of Education is directed to establish a task force comprised of superintendents, principals, teachers, and representatives of school boards and higher education no later than June 30, 1999. The task force shall make recommendations to the board including, but not limited to, the following: consistent numerical breaks for letter grades; consideration of standards to define an honors course; appropriate weighting of courses; and determination of courses and weightings to be used in the calculation of class rank. The task force shall report its findings to the State Board of Education no later than December 1, 1999. The State Board of Education shall then adopt and school districts of the State shall begin using the adopted grading scale no later than the 2000-2001 school year.

The State Board of Education adopted a uniform grading policy for South Carolina's public schools in December 1999. That policy, which applied to all students who first enrolled in the ninth grade in the 2000-01 school year, has now been revised. The particulars of the state's revised uniform grading policy are set forth in the pages that follow here.

The new uniform grading scale and the system for calculating grade point averages (GPAs) and class rank will be effective for all students in the 2007-08 school year. Recalculations will be limited to the use of the three-decimal-place conversion factors specified in the South Carolina uniform grading policy's grade point conversion chart. Increased quality points for dual credit courses and full credit for dual credit courses will not be figured into recalculations.

Grade Point Conversion Chart

South Carolina Uniform Grading Scale Conversions				
Numerical Average	Letter Grade	College Prep	Honors	AP/IB/ Dual Credit
100	A	4.875	5.375	5.875
99	A	4.750	5.250	5.750
98	A	4.625	5.125	5.625
97	A	4.500	5.000	5.500
96	A	4.375	4.875	5.375
95	A	4.250	4.750	5.250
94	A	4.125	4.625	5.125
93	A	4.000	4.500	5.000
92	B	3.875	4.375	4.875
91	B	3.750	4.250	4.750
90	B	3.625	4.125	4.625
89	B	3.500	4.000	4.500
88	B	3.375	3.875	4.375
87	B	3.250	3.750	4.250
86	B	3.125	3.625	4.125
85	B	3.000	3.500	4.000
84	C	2.875	3.375	3.875
83	C	2.750	3.250	3.750
82	C	2.625	3.125	3.625
81	C	2.500	3.000	3.500
80	C	2.375	2.875	3.375
79	C	2.250	2.750	3.250
78	C	2.125	2.625	3.125
77	C	2.000	2.500	3.000
76	D	1.875	2.375	2.875
75	D	1.750	2.250	2.750
74	D	1.625	2.125	2.625
73	D	1.500	2.000	2.500
72	D	1.375	1.875	2.375
71	D	1.250	1.750	2.250
70	D	1.125	1.625	2.125
69	F	1.000	1.500	2.000
68	F	0.875	1.375	1.875
67	F	0.750	1.250	1.750
66	F	0.625	1.125	1.625
65	F	0.500	1.000	1.500
64	F	0.375	0.875	1.375
63	F	0.250	0.750	1.250
62	F	0.125	0.625	1.125
0-61	F	0.000	0.000	0.000
61	FA	0.000	0.000	0.000
61	WF	0.000	0.000	0.000
—	WP	0.000	0.000	0.000

Courses Carrying Carnegie Units

The uniform grading scale and the system for calculating GPAs and class rank will apply to all courses carrying Carnegie units, including units earned at the middle or junior high school level.

All report cards and transcripts will use numerical grades for courses carrying Carnegie units. Transcripts and report cards will specify the course title and the level or type of course the student has taken (e.g., English 1, Algebra 2 honors, AP U.S. History). The grading scale must be printed on the report card.

Honors Courses

Honors courses, which extend and deepen the opportunities provided by courses at the high school level, are designed for students exhibiting superior abilities in the particular content area. The honors curriculum places emphasis on critical and analytical thinking, rational decision making, and inductive and deductive reasoning.

School districts may designate honors courses and give the assigned weighting under the following conditions:

- A. An honors course must have a published syllabus that verifies rigor sufficiently beyond the College Preparatory (CP) requirements.
- B. Textbooks and other course materials must be differentiated and more rigorous than those used in CP courses.
- C. Honors courses may be offered in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Honors weighting may be designated in other content areas for the third and fourth level of the courses, provided that the two above standards are met. Honors weighting may not be designated in any physical education courses.

One half of a quality point (.5) is added to the CP weighting for honors courses that meet the three criteria listed above. These criteria apply to all courses, including those offered online and in other nontraditional settings and those recorded on a transcript from an out-state-school that is accredited under the regulations of the board of education of that state or the appropriate regional accrediting agency: the New England Association of Colleges and Schools, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the Western Association of Colleges and Schools, or the Northwest Association of Colleges and School (as specified in State Board Regulation 43-273, Transfers and Withdrawals).

Dual Credit Courses

Dual credit courses—whether they are taken at the school where the student is enrolled or at a postsecondary institution—are those courses for which the student has been granted permission by his or her home school to earn both Carnegie units and college credit for those particular courses.

One quality point is added to the CP weighting for dual credit courses that are applicable to baccalaureate degrees or to associate degrees offered by accredited institutions (see State Board of Education Regulation 43-234, Defined Program, Grades 9–12, and Regulation 43-259, Graduation Requirements).

College orientation courses offered by postsecondary institutions carry CP weighting and do not receive honors or dual credit quality points.

Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Courses

The following criteria apply to the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) courses and to International Baccalaureate (IB) courses—including those offered online and in other nontraditional settings and those recorded on a transcript from an out-state-school that is accredited under the regulations of the board of education of that state or the appropriate regional accrediting agency: the New England Association of Colleges and Schools, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the Western Association of Colleges and Schools, or the Northwest Association of Colleges and School (as specified in State Board Regulation 43-273, Transfers and Withdrawals).

- Only AP or IB courses can be awarded a full quality point above the CP weighting. Seminar or support courses for AP or IB may be weighted as honors but not as AP or IB courses.
- An AP course can carry only *one* quality point.
- A standard-level (SL) IB course can carry only *one* quality point. However, two quality points of IB credit can be granted for higher-level (HL) courses in the IB program that require a minimum of 240 hours of instruction.

End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) Courses and the Credit Recovery Option

Students who are enrolled in courses requiring state end-of-course examinations must take the examinations and fulfill all requirements outlined in Regulation 43-262.4. Students will be allowed to take the examination only *once*, at the end of the regular course duration and not at the end of an extended period granted through the credit recovery option. Students who repeat the course must be treated as though they are taking the course for the first time, and all requirements will apply.

Computing Grade Point Averages

GPA's already earned by students will be recalculated on the basis of the revised policy's three-decimal-point scale.

All South Carolina public schools will use the following formula to compute all GPA's:

$$\text{GPA} = \frac{\text{sum (quality points x units)}}{\text{sum of units attempted}}$$

STUDENT EXAMPLE

Course Taken	Numerical Average	Quality Points	Unit
English 1	91	3.750	1
Algebra 1	87	3.250	1
Physical Science	94	4.125	1
World Geography, Honors	83	3.250	1
Physical Education	92	3.875	.5
French 1	84	2.875	1

COMPUTATION

Quality Points	Units		
3.750	x 1.0	=	3.750
3.250	x 1.0	=	3.250
4.125	x 1.0	=	4.125
3.250	x 1.0	=	3.250
3.875	x .5	=	1.9375
2.875	x 1.0	=	2.875
sum of units attempted →	5.5		19.1875 ← sum of quality points x units

$$\frac{\text{sum of quality points x units}}{\text{divided by sum of units attempted}} \rightarrow 19.1875 \div 5.5 = \mathbf{3.488636} \rightarrow \text{student's GPA}$$

Computations will not be rounded to a higher number.

The establishment of criteria for determining honors graduates, including the valedictorian or salutatorian, is a local decision. Local boards may establish earlier cutoffs (e.g., the seventh semester of high school, the third nine weeks of the senior year) when ranking students for any local purpose. However, class rank for LIFE Scholarships is determined at the conclusion of the spring semester of the senior year.

Converting Grades on Transcripts

When transcripts are received from accredited out-of-state schools (or in state from accredited sources other than the public schools) and numerical averages are provided, those averages must be used in transferring the grades to the student's record. If letter grades with no numerical averages are provided, this conversion will apply: A = 96, B = 88, C = 80, D = 73, F = 61. If the transcript indicates that the student has earned a passing grade in any course in which he or she had a numerical average lower than 70, that average will be converted to a 73 numerical grade on the new scale. See State Board of Education Regulation 43-273 for complete information on transfers and withdrawals. The criteria for accepting transcripts from homeschools are a local decision.

If the transcript shows that the student has earned a grade of P (passing), that grade will be converted to a numerical designation on the basis of information secured from the sending institution as to the appropriate numerical value of the P. If no numerical average can be obtained from the sending institution, the student's cumulative transfer GPA will be calculated and the corresponding number equivalent will be assigned to replace the P. (For example, if a student transfers with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 on the CP scale, the grade of P would be converted to an 89. A grade of P, in other words, will neither positively nor negatively impact the student's transfer GPA.)

Withdrawing from a Course

With the first day of enrollment in the course as the baseline, students who withdraw from a course within three days in a 45-day course, five days in a 90-day course, or ten days in a 180-day course will do so without penalty.

Students who withdraw from a course after the specified time of three days in a 45-day course, five days in a 90-day course, or ten days in a 180-day course shall be assigned a WF, and the F (as a 61) will be calculated in the student's overall grade point average.

The three-, five-, and ten-day limitations for withdrawing from a course without penalty do not apply to course or course-level changes approved by the administration of a school. Withdrawal limitations for distance learning courses will be established by local districts.

Students who drop out of school or are expelled after the allowed period for withdrawal but before the end of the grading period will be assigned grades in accordance with the following policies:

- The student will receive a WP if he or she was passing the course. The grade of WP will carry no Carnegie units and no quality points to be factored into the student's GPA.
- The student will receive a WF if he or she was failing the course. The grade of WF will carry no Carnegie units but will be factored into the student's GPA as a 61.

If a student fails a course due to excessive absences, an FA will be recorded on his or her transcript. The grade of FA will carry no Carnegie units but will be factored into the student's GPA as a 61.

Retaking a Course

Students in grades nine through twelve may retake a course at the same level of difficulty if they have earned a D or an F in that course. The student's record will reflect all courses he or she has taken and the grades he or she has earned.

The student may retake the course either during the current school year or during the next school year but no later than that second year. In addition, the student must retake the course before he or she has enrolled in the next sequential course (unless the student is granted approval by school administration to do so).

A student who has taken a course for a Carnegie unit prior to his or her ninth-grade year may retake that course regardless of the grade he or she has earned. In such a case, only the retake grade will be used in figuring the student's GPA, and only the retake attempt will show on the transcript. This rule will apply whether the retake grade is higher or lower than the grade the student previously earned.



Resource
B6

.....STUDENT.....
.....INTERVENTIONS.....

from SREB's *GoAlliance* CCTI Project and
Its Member State Agencies in Alabama, Delaware,
Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina

Module Two: Student Interventions

Your Name: _____ School: _____

Student A subgroup	
<input type="checkbox"/> White	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic	
<input type="checkbox"/> Native American	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student in Free/Reduced Lunch	
<input type="checkbox"/> ELL	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student with IEPs	
Data indicating the need for intervention (include nonacademic factors)	
Intended impact (goal):	
Description of the intervention	
Materials/Resources needed	
Steps to be taken	

Optional:

Student B subgroup	
<input type="checkbox"/> White	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic	
<input type="checkbox"/> Native American	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student in Free/Reduced Lunch	
<input type="checkbox"/> ELL	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student with IEPs	
Data indicating the need for intervention	
Intended impact (goal):	
Description of the intervention	
Materials/Resources needed	
Steps to be taken	



Resource
B7

CAREER LESSON PLAN

from SREB's *GoAlliance* CCTI Project and
Its Member State Agencies in Alabama, Delaware,
Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina

Module Two: Career Lesson Plan
[Optional]

Your Name: _____ School: _____

Name, grade and content area of teacher with whom you are collaborating:

Provide a brief overview of the lesson. Include the length of the lesson, i.e. one class period or more?

List 2-3 goals you want students to reach during this career lesson:

What materials or equipment will you need? Will students need to access the Internet? (If so, plan to arrange time in the computer lab.)

Describe the procedure for this lesson.

Assessment: How will you know students attained the goals you and the teacher set for this lesson?



..... COLLEGE BOARD
..... COLLEGE COUNSELING
..... SOURCEBOOK SAMPLER

from the College Board
collegeboard.org

College Counseling Sourcebook Sampler

2007

Time-saving handouts for busy counselors

- Use these time-saving handouts to move your students along the road to college.
- Duplicate and use at college planning events or in one-on-one meetings.

Permission granted to copy these handouts for educational purposes.

These handouts have been selected from the 500-page College Counseling Sourcebook: *Advice and Strategies from Experienced School Counselors*, published annually by the College Board. This resource, written by counselors, for counselors, covers every aspect of the college preparation, planning, and selection process. See back for purchasing information.

Handouts

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A planning list for parents of ninth- and tenth-graders

It may seem early to start thinking about getting your child ready for college, but it really isn't—important groundwork should take place in ninth and tenth grade. Here's a list to help you make sure your child is on the right track:

Grade 9

1. **Create a four-year high school plan.** Once your child is settled into ninth grade, introduce the idea of preparing an overall plan for high school that relates to his or her goals.
 - Make sure you and your child know what high school courses are required by colleges, and that your child's ninth-grade courses are on the right track.
 - Map out when these courses should be taken.
 - Familiarize yourself with the various levels of courses offered by your child's school.
2. **Start your child thinking about careers.** Encourage your child to develop a tentative career goal. Of course it will change—often—but it's the thought process that counts.
 - Help your child to identify interests—likes and dislikes—not just in academics but in all areas. This will help your child focus on goals.
 - Encourage your child to discuss career options with others, such as the school counselor, teachers, recent college graduates who are working, professionals in the community, etc.
3. **Suggest extracurricular activities.** Encourage your child to actively take part in a sport, school club, music or drama group, or community volunteer activity.
 - Remember that colleges would rather see real involvement in one activity than a loose connection to several activities.
 - If your child may want to play sports in college, research the National College Athletic Association eligibility requirements. The NCAA requires completion of certain core courses; you can find the specifics at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.
4. **Meet with the school counselor.** The school counselor knows how to help your child get the most out of high school. Make sure your child has an opportunity during the school year to discuss post-high school plans with the school counselor.
 - You should participate in this meeting, too.
5. **Save for college.** It's still not too late to start a college savings plan, if you haven't already. Every little bit helps!
 - Investigate state financial aid programs and 529 plans.
6. **Obtain a social security number for your child if you don't already have one.** This is often required for applications, testing, scholarships, and other opportunities.

A planning list for parents of ninth- and tenth-graders (page 2)

Grade 10

1. **Meet with the school counselor—again.** Make sure your child meets with his or her school counselor to ensure that he or she is enrolled in college-preparatory courses.
 - Check to see that your child is taking any prerequisites to advanced-level junior- and senior-year courses.
2. **Ask if the PSAT/NMSQT® if offered to tenth-graders.** While this test is usually taken in the eleventh grade, it is also often offered in the tenth. That's because it provides invaluable feedback on the Student Score Report; tenth-graders can then work on any disclosed academic weaknesses while there is still ample time to improve them.
3. **Is your child interested in attending a U.S. military academy?** If so, he or she should request a precandidate questionnaire and complete it.
4. **Attend college and career fairs.** These often take place in the fall, at your school, or in your area.
5. **Support your child's participation in a school activity or volunteer effort.** Extracurricular activities help students develop time-management skills and enrich the school experience.
6. **Tour college campuses.** If possible, take advantage of vacation or other family travel opportunities to visit colleges and see what they're like.
 - Even if there is no interest in attending the college you are visiting, it will help your child learn what to look for in a college.

Source: The College Board

College planning calendar for juniors

Fall

Start with you: Make lists of your abilities, social/cultural preferences, and personal qualities. List things you may want to study and do in college.

Learn about colleges. Look at their Web sites (www.collegeboard.com has links). Talk to friends, family, teachers, and recent grads of your school now in college. List college features that interest you.

Resource check: Visit the counseling office and meet the counselors there. Is there a college night for students and families? When will college representatives visit your school? (Put the dates in your calendar.) Examine catalogs and guides.

At school, sign up early to take the PSAT/NMSQT®, which is given in October. If you plan to ask for testing accommodations (because of a disability), be sure your eligibility is approved by the College Board. Check with your school counselor.

Make a file to manage your college search, testing, and application data.

If appropriate (for example, if you're interested in drama, music, art, sports, etc.), start to gather material for a portfolio.

With your family, start to learn about financial aid. Read the Department of Education's *Funding Your Education* (about federal aid programs). Use *Getting Financial Aid* published by the College Board and the financial aid calculator at www.collegeboard.com to estimate how much aid you might receive.

Winter

Make a family appointment with your counselor to discuss ways to improve your college-preparation and selection processes.

Sign up to take the SAT® and/or ACT at least once in the spring and again next fall. Register online or through your school. Fee waivers are available for students with financial need. To prepare, download practice booklets from www.collegeboard.com (for the SAT) or from www.act.org (for ACT).

College planning calendar for juniors (page 2)

Begin a search for financial aid sources. National sources include the *College Board Scholarship Handbook* and electronic sources. Don't overlook local and state aid sources (ask a counselor or check your public library).

Ask a counselor or teacher about taking the SAT Subject Tests™ in the spring. You should take them while course material is still fresh in your mind. You can download "Taking the SAT Subject Tests," which offers test-prep advice, from www.collegeboard.com.

If you're in Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) classes, register for AP Exams, given in May. You can earn college credit for courses not given in the AP Program by taking CLEP® tests at a college test center. See www.collegeboard.com to learn more.

Spring

Visit some local colleges—large, small, public, and private. Get a feel for what works for you. Attend college fairs, too.

Scan local newspapers to see which civic, cultural, and service organizations in your area award financial aid to graduating seniors. Start a file.

Develop a list of 15 or 20 colleges that attract you. Request viewbooks and information about financial aid and academic programs that interest you. Visit some colleges over your spring break.

If you are considering military academies or ROTC scholarships, contact your counselor before leaving school for the summer. If you want a four-year ROTC scholarship, you should begin the application process the summer before your senior year.

Summer

If you are an athlete planning to continue playing a sport in college, register with the NCAA Clearinghouse (www.ncaaclearinghouse.net).

Find a full-time or part-time job, or participate in a camp or summer college program.

Visit colleges. Take campus tours and, at colleges you're serious about, make appointments to have interviews with admissions counselors.

Create a résumé—a record of accomplishments, activities, and work experiences since you started high school.

Download applications (or request paper copies) from colleges to which you'll apply. Check application dates—large universities may have early dates or rolling admissions.

Source: *The College Board*

College planning calendar for seniors

September

- Narrow your list of colleges to 5 to 10. Meet with a counselor about them and, if you've not yet done so, download college applications and financial aid forms. Plan to visit as many of these colleges as possible.
- Create a master list or calendar that includes:
 - tests you'll take and their fees, dates, and registration deadlines.
 - college application due dates.
 - financial aid application forms required and their deadlines. (Note: Aid applications may be due before college applications.)
 - other materials you'll need (recommendations, transcripts, etc.).
 - your high school's own application processing deadlines.
- If you can't afford application or test fees, a counselor can help you request a fee waiver.
- If you have not had your test scores sent to the college to which you are applying, be sure to contact the College Board or ACT to have your scores sent.

October

- Try to finalize your college choices.
- Prepare Early Decision, Early Action, or rolling admissions applications as soon as possible.
- Ask for counselor or teacher recommendations if you need them. Give each teacher or counselor an outline of your academic record and your extracurricular activities. For each recommendation, provide a stamped, addressed envelope, and any college forms required.
- If you're submitting essays, write first drafts and ask teachers and others to read them. If you're applying for Early Decision, finish the essays for that application now.
- If you have not had your test scores sent to the college to which you are applying, be sure to contact the College Board or ACT to have them sent.

November

- November 1–15: For Early Decision admissions, colleges may require test scores and applications between these dates.
- Complete at least one college application by Thanksgiving.
- Counselors send transcripts to colleges. Give counselors the proper forms at least two weeks before colleges require them.

College planning calendar for seniors (page 2)

December

- As you finish and send your applications and essays, be sure to keep copies.
- If your college wants to see seventh-semester grades, be sure you give the form to your counselor.

January

- If you apply to colleges online, be sure to have your high school send a transcript—it goes to colleges separately, and by mail.

February

- No senioritis, please! Accepting colleges do look at second-semester senior grades.

March

- Keep active in school. If you are wait-listed, the college will want to know what you have accomplished between the time you applied and learned of its decision.

April

- You should receive acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April. If you've not done so yet, visit your final college before accepting. As soon as you decide, notify your counselor of your choice.
- If you have questions about housing offers, talk to your counselor or call the college.

May

- May 1: Colleges cannot require a deposit or commitment to attend before May 1. By that postmarked date, you must inform every college of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid. (Questions? Talk to your counselor.)
- Send your deposit to one college only.
- Wait-listed by a college? If you will enroll if accepted, tell the admissions director your intent and ask how to strengthen your application. Need financial aid? Ask whether funds will be available if you're accepted.
- Work with a counselor to resolve any admissions or financial aid problems.

June

- Ask your high school to send a final transcript to your college.

Source: The College Board

Assessing your list of colleges

As you develop a list (mental or otherwise) of colleges that interest you, be sure you can answer these questions about them.

The basics

- Where is the college? Can you locate it on a map? Is it too close to home? Is it too far? Is it too cold or too hot there?
- Have you taken the course work the college requires for admission?
- What size is the college? How many students are undergraduates?
- What is the college's selectivity ratio (what proportion of applicants were admitted last year)?
- Does the college offer majors that interest you?
- Is the college coed or single sex?
- What percentage of students live off campus?
- How many of the students graduate in four years? Five years? Six years?
- How many first-year students return for their sophomore year?
- How much does the program cost? What is the total per-year expense?
- What type of financial aid is available?

Where would you fit in?

- What are the college scores for the SAT® or ACT? Where does that place you?
- What were the high school GPAs of most of the freshmen last year?
- Are freshmen guaranteed on-campus housing? If not, where do they live?
- Are there extracurricular activities that interest you?

Visit the colleges' Web sites, read the guidebooks, and look at their literature

- What are their strong academic programs? (Ask a college representative, students, graduates, and teachers.)
- What courses are required for graduation?
- Are the courses you need/want available each semester? At convenient times?
- Are there special programs that interest you (study abroad, internships, etc.)?
- What is the social life like? What percentage of students join fraternities or sororities?
- Do the pictures and the language the college uses to describe itself attract you?
- What is your general impression of the college?

Assessing your list of colleges (page 2)

- Is the school accredited?
- If professional certification is required for employment in the field that interests you, how many students enrolled in the school's program pass the certification exam?

Admissions process

- When are applications due?
- Does the college accept the Common Application? If so, does it require supplemental forms?
- What does the application contain? Are essays required?
- Is an interview suggested or required? Is an interview available from staff or alumni?
- When may you visit the college? What is its policy regarding campus visits?
- What are the financial aid deadlines? What financial aid forms are required?

Now answer these questions

- Am I a strong candidate for admission to this college?
- If I am not a strong candidate, what are my chances?
- Do I want to visit this college?
- What additional information do I need?

Source: Susan Staggars, Cary Academy, North Carolina

Tips for parents on finding a college match

How can your child find colleges that match his or her needs? First, identify priorities. Next, carefully research the characteristics of a range of schools. Finally, match the two. Here are some college characteristics to consider.

Size of student body

Size will affect many of your child's opportunities and experiences:

- range of academic majors offered
- extracurricular possibilities
- amount of personal attention your child will receive
- number of academic resources (e.g., books in the library)

In considering size, your child should look beyond the raw number of students attending. For example, perhaps she's considering a small department within a large school. She should investigate not just the number of faculty members, but also their accessibility to students.

Location

Does your child want to visit home frequently, or is this a time to experience a new part of the country? Perhaps he would like an urban environment with access to museums, ethnic food, or major league ball games. Or maybe he hopes for easy access to the outdoors or the serenity of a small town.

Academic programs

If your child knows what she wants to study, she can research the reputations of academic departments by talking to people in the fields that interest her. If your child is undecided, as many students are, she may want to choose an academically balanced institution that offers a range of majors and programs. Students normally don't pick a major until their sophomore year, and those students who know their major before they go to college are very likely to change their minds. Most colleges offer counseling to help students find a focus.

In considering academic programs, your child should look for special opportunities and pick a school that offers a number of possibilities.

Tips for parents on finding a college match (page 2)

Campus life

Your child should consider what college life will be like beyond the classroom. Students have to maintain a balance between academics, activities, and social life. Before choosing a college, your child should learn the answers to these questions:

- What extracurricular activities, athletics, clubs, and organizations are available?
- Does the community around the college offer interesting outlets for students?
- Are students welcomed by the community?
- Is there an ethnic or religious group in which to take part?
- How do fraternities and sororities influence campus life?
- Is housing guaranteed?
- How are dorms assigned?

Cost

In considering cost, look beyond the price tag. For most students, today's college costs make finances an important consideration. At the same time, most colleges work to ensure that academically qualified students from every economic circumstance can find financial aid that allows them to attend.

Diversity

Your child should explore what she might gain from a diverse student body. The geographic, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of the students can help students learn more about the world. Investigate which student organizations or other groups with ethnic or religious foundations are active and visible on campus.

Retention and graduation rates

One of the best ways to measure a school's quality and the satisfaction of its students is to learn the percentage of students who return after the first year and the percentage of entering students who go on to graduate. Comparatively good retention and graduation rates indicate that responsible academic, social, and financial support systems exist for most students.

Source: www.collegeboard.com

Recommendations: Student self-assessment

This form assists your college counselor in writing your recommendation. The more specific details you can give us, the more thorough your college recommendation will be. This form will also help you with the entire college application process, especially in preparing for interviews and writing admissions essays. Expect to spend three or four hours on this task, which should result in a document of three to eight pages.

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. School activities: List the activities you have participated in, the number of years, and the amount of time per week you spent, and what you have gained or learned from each activity. Consider artistic, athletic, literary, community service, and leadership positions.
2. Which activity was most important to you? Why?
3. What do you consider your most important activities outside of school? List jobs, paid or voluntary; religious activities; hobbies; travel; music; art; and drama. Include the number of years of your involvement and the amount of time you spent on the activity weekly, and explain why this activity was significant to you.

Handout 5E page 1 of 2

Recommendations: Student self-assessment (page 2)

4. In or out of school, which awards and honors have you received? Which elected offices have you held?
5. What book(s) have had the greatest impact on you? Why?
6. Describe the academic accomplishment (major paper, science experiment, artistic project) you are most proud of, and tell why you take pride in it.
7. What kind of learner are you? Which academic setting or assignments make you thrive? What interests you?
8. List your three most distinguishing or most admirable qualities. Explain each in several sentences.
9. What do you hope to accomplish in college and after? Consider your career goals and your broader goals.

Source: Jim Bell, Lick-Wilmerding High School, California

Handout 5E page 2 of 2

Dos and don'ts on writing the college application essay

A great application essay will present a vivid, personal, and compelling view of you to the admissions staff. It will round out the rest of your application and help you stand out from other applicants. The essay is one of the only parts of your application over which you have complete control, so take the time to do a good job on it. Check out these tips before you begin.

DOs

Keep your focus narrow and personal

Your essay must prove a single point or thesis. The reader should be able to find your main idea and follow it from beginning to end. Ask someone to read just your introduction to see what he or she thinks your essay is about.

Essays that attempt to be too comprehensive end up sounding watered down. Remember, it's not about telling the committee members what you've done—they can pick that up from your list of activities—but about showing them who you are.

Prove it

Develop your main idea with vivid, specific facts, events, quotations, examples, and reasons. There's a big difference between simply stating a point of view and letting an idea unfold in the details:

- **Okay:** I like to be surrounded by people with a variety of backgrounds and interests.
- **Better:** During that night, I sang the theme song from *Casablanca* with a baseball coach who thinks he's Bogie, discussed Marxism with a little old lady, and heard more than I ever wanted to know about some woman's gallbladder operation.

Be specific

To avoid clichéd, generic, and predictable writing, use vivid, specific details.

- **Okay:** I want to help people. I have gotten so much out of life through the love and guidance of my family, I feel that many individuals have not been as fortunate; therefore, I would like to expand the lives of others.
- **Better:** My mom and dad stood on plenty of sidelines until their shoes filled with water or their fingers started to freeze or somebody's golden retriever signed its name on their coats in mud. I think that kind of commitment is what I'd like to bring to working with fourth-graders.

Dos and don'ts on writing the college application essay (page 2)

DON'Ts

Don't tell your readers what you think they want to hear

Most admissions officers read plenty of essays about the charms of their university, the evils of terrorism, and the personal commitment involved in being a doctor. Bring something new to the table, not just what you think they want to hear.

Don't write a résumé

Don't include information that is found elsewhere in the application. Your essay will end up sounding like an autobiography, travelogue, or laundry list. Yawn.

- **Overloaded:** During my junior year, I played first singles on the tennis team, served on the student council, maintained a B+ average, traveled to France, and worked at a cheese factory.

Don't use 50 words when 5 will do

Eliminate unnecessary words.

- **Okay:** Over the years, it has been pointed out to me by my parents, friends, and teachers—and I have even noticed this about myself, as well—that I am not the neatest person in the world.
- **Better:** I'm a slob.

Don't forget to proofread

Typos and spelling or grammatical errors can be interpreted as carelessness or just bad writing. Don't rely on your computer's spell-checker. It can miss spelling errors like the ones below.

- After I graduate **form** high school, I plan to work for a nonprofit organization during the summer.
- From that day on, Daniel was my best **fried**.

Source: www.collegeboard.com, based on information from *The College Application Essay, rev. ed.*, by Sarah Myers McGinty (New York: The College Board, 2004).

Twelve myths about paying for college

Billions of dollars in financial aid are available to those who need help paying for college. Yet a lot of misinformation clouds the facts about what type of aid is available and who is eligible. Here are some myths dispelled for those confronting the process of securing financial aid.

College is just too expensive for our family

- Despite the media hype, a college education is more affordable than most people think, especially when you consider that college graduates earn an average of \$1 million more over the span of their careers than high school graduates. The average yearly tuition at a four-year public college in 2006–2007 was just \$5,836. There are some expensive schools, but high tuition is not a requirement for a good education.

There's less aid available than there used to be

- In fact, student financial aid in 2006–2007 rose to a record level of \$135 billion. Most students receive some form of aid. Less of this aid now comes in the form of grants, however; most aid is awarded through low-interest loans or institutional and other grants. You should carefully consider the financing packages you've been offered by each college to determine which makes the most financial sense.

My family's income is too high to qualify for aid

- Aid is intended to make a college education available for students of families in many financial situations. College financial aid administrators often take into account not only income but also other family members in college, home mortgage costs, and other factors. Aid is awarded to many families with incomes they thought would disqualify them.

My parents saved for college, so we won't qualify for aid

- Saving for college is always a good idea. Since most financial aid comes in the form of loans, the aid you are likely to receive will need to be repaid. Tucking away money could mean that you have fewer loans to repay, and it won't make you ineligible for aid if you need it. A family's share of college costs is based mostly on income, not assets such as savings.

I'm not a straight-A student, so I won't get aid

- It's true that many scholarships reward merit, but most federal aid is based on financial need and does not even consider grades.

If I apply for a loan, I have to take it

- Families are not obligated to accept a low-interest loan if it is awarded to them. One financial aid administrator recommends applying for aid and comparing the loan awards with other debt instruments and assets to determine the best financial deal.

Twelve myths about paying for college (page 2)

Working will hurt my academic success

- Students who attempt to juggle full-time work and full-time studies do struggle. But research shows that students who work a moderate amount often do better academically. Securing an on-campus job related to career goals is a good way for you to help pay college costs, get experience, and create ties with the university.

Millions of dollars in scholarships go unused every year

- Professional scholarship search services often tout this statistic. In fact, most unclaimed money is slated for a few eligible candidates, such as employees of a specific corporation or members of a certain organization. Most financial aid comes from the federal government, although it is a good idea to research nonfederal sources of aid.

My folks will have to sell their house to pay for college

- Home value is not considered in calculations for federal aid. Colleges may take home equity into account when determining how much you are expected to contribute to college costs, but income is a far greater factor in this determination. No college will expect your parents to sell their house to pay for your education.

I should live at home to cut costs

- It's wise to study every avenue for reducing college costs, but living at home may not be the best way. Be sure to consider commuting and parking costs when you do this calculation. Living on campus may create more opportunities for work and other benefits.

Private schools are out of reach for my family

- Experts recommend deferring cost considerations until late in the college selection process. Your most important consideration is to find a school that meets your academic, career, and personal needs. In fact, you might have a better chance of receiving aid from a private school. Private colleges often offer more financial aid to attract students from every income level. Higher college expenses also mean a better chance of demonstrating financial need.

We can negotiate a better deal

- Many colleges will be sensitive to a family's specific financial situation, especially if certain nondiscretionary costs, such as unusually high medical bills, have been overlooked. But most colleges adhere to specific financial aid award guidelines and will not adjust an award for a family that feels it got a better deal at another school.

Source: www.collegeboard.com

Senior-year calendar for students applying for financial aid

September

- When you write or e-mail colleges that interest you, ask for financial aid info, including what forms to file and their due dates. Put this data on your calendar and to-do list. Note:
 - All colleges ask you to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) not just for grants/scholarships, but also for college loans. See November.
 - Some colleges require the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®. Get a PROFILE Registration Guide from a counselor or click on the Pay for College link at collegeboard.com and fill out the application online. You can register as early as October 1.
 - Ask if your colleges require their own aid forms, too.
- If you plan to apply for Early Decision, ask whether your college offers an early estimate of financial aid eligibility and which forms to file.

October

- Research aid opportunities using your library, financial aid guidebooks, and Web sites, including Scholarship Search on collegeboard.com. Your counselors may have other resources, too. Look for the following:
 - federal financial aid sources;
 - private scholarships;
 - state and local programs; or
 - scholarships, including merit and departmental scholarships, offered by colleges to which you'll apply. Reference materials include books (*College Board Scholarship Handbook*) and search engines (e.g., collegeboard.com); both report on national sources of aid. For local and state aid sources (often overlooked!), see your counselor and the public library.
- Begin work on aid applications. Private scholarship programs may have very early deadlines.
- Ask a counselor if there will be a family financial aid night at your school or elsewhere in your area this fall. Be sure to attend: The event may be your single best source of information.
- Use financial aid calculators like those at collegeboard.com to estimate your family's college costs.

Senior-year calendar for students applying for financial aid (page 2)

November

- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will be available in school and at www.fafsa.ed.gov. It can't be submitted before January 1. You can download a worksheet to organize your information.
- Visit www.pin.ed.gov and get a personal identification number (PIN). You will need a PIN to use as an electronic signature if you complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov (not at www.fafsa.com, which is a Web site that charges at least \$79.95 for its services).

December

- You and your family may want to save final pay stubs for the year. On aid forms that you'll file early in the new year, use the stubs to estimate income.

January

- Submit your FAFSA as soon as you can after (but not before) January 1. Men 18 or older must register for the Selective Service to receive federal financial aid. To register, complete a check-off box on your FAFSA, or register at any post office.

February

- Parents and students are encouraged to complete and file income tax returns as soon as possible. Colleges may request copies of your tax returns to finalize aid offers.

March

- As you receive letters of acceptance, check with aid offices to see if additional documentation must be submitted. Some colleges may request copies of your family's income tax forms, W-2 forms, and other materials.

April

- Use the online Compare Your Aid Awards tool at collegeboard.com to help you understand and compare financial aid award offers from two or more colleges. Talk with financial aid officers if you have questions. If you get no aid (or not enough), ask whether other financing plans are available.

May

- If you've been offered aid from your chosen college, be sure to accept the offer as instructed in your award letter. (Note: You'll need to reapply for financial aid every year.)
- If you've received aid from other schools, let them know that you won't be attending.

Source: *The College Board*

Avoiding scholarship scams

Scholarship scams have been around for years. According to the Federal Trade Commission, if you hear these lines from a scholarship service, you may be getting duped:

- “The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.” No one can guarantee that you’ll get a grant or a scholarship. Refund guarantees often have conditions or strings attached. Get refund policies in writing, and read the fine print.
- “You can’t get this information anywhere else.” There are thousands of scholarships you can research through free means. It’s highly doubtful that a company would have an exclusive list of scholarships that you can’t find through another source.
- “I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship.” Don’t give your credit card or bank account number without getting information in writing first. You might become the victim of an unauthorized withdrawal from your account.
- “We’ll do all the work.” Don’t be fooled. You must apply for scholarships or grants yourself.
- “The scholarship will cost money.” Don’t pay anyone who claims to be “holding” a scholarship or grant for you.
- “You’ve been selected” by a “national foundation” to receive a scholarship, or “You’re a finalist” in a contest you never entered. Before you reply to a scholarship offer you didn’t initiate, check it out. Make sure the foundation or program is legitimate.

What to do if you suspect an offer is a scam

Start with your school counselor. Also, the following organizations can help you decide if an offer is legitimate. They will tell you whether they have received any complaints about the company, or whether the company is currently under investigation. Look for these organizations online or call for more information:

- Better Business Bureau (BBB) in the city where the scholarship service is located
- Federal Trade Commission, 1 877 FTC-HELP or www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams
- State bureau of consumer protection
- State attorney general’s office
- National Fraud Information Center (NFIC), www.fraud.org

For more information about scholarship scams, visit www.finaid.org.

For more information about college costs and financial aid, visit the Pay for College section at www.collegeboard.com.

Source: *Education Loan Program, The College Board*

Handout 8K

Is community college for you?

- You know where you want to be but need some training to get there
- You want to explore different choices before settling on a path
- You need to cut the cost of a four-year college degree
- You want to sharpen your study skills before enrolling at a university
- You want small classes and personal attention during your first college years
- You want to continue to work at your job while going to college
- You want to live at home

If you checked even one box on the quiz, you may want to check out a community college. You won’t be alone—45 percent of all first-year college students start at a community college.

These institutions offer two kinds of education:

1. If your goal is a four-year degree, you can earn a two-year (associate) degree at a community college, then transfer to a four-year college as a junior.
2. You can earn an occupational degree or certificate in two years or less, then start working immediately in a high-demand field.

Many community college students have jobs and family responsibilities. Scheduling classes may be a big challenge. So community colleges tend to offer courses during the day, in the evening, and on weekends. They have pioneered new teaching methods, too. Some offer courses online (distance learning), combine Internet and classroom learning, give interactive TV courses, condense semester courses into shorter time frames, and more.

Interested? You don’t have to wait. Consider taking a community college course during high school. You will learn what college work is like, and rack up some college credits, too.

Source: *The College Board*

Handout 9C

“The *College Counseling Sourcebook* picks up the ball where graduate school ended and tells you everything you need to know: What to do, when to do it, how to do it, and most importantly, why to do it.”

Lauri S. Benton, head counselor, Columbia High School, Decatur, Georgia

These Handouts have been selected from the 500-page *College Counseling Sourcebook: Advice and Strategies from Experienced School Counselors*.

The 4th edition (June 2007) covers:

- 1: College counseling: One dimension of school counseling
- 2: Helping students prepare for college
- 3: Helping students research colleges
- 4: The college application process
- 5: Recommendations
- 6: The application essay
- 7: Tests
- 8: Financial aid
- 9: Counseling first-generation students about college
- 10: Counseling student athletes
- 11: Counseling students with special needs

Plus: College awareness and planning activities

The *Sourcebook* contains more than 80 handouts for students, parents, teachers, and counselors, and dozens of tips to help busy counselors work with every type of student.

4th edition, print, in binder: \$49.95. Updates available annually for \$12.95.
Also available as a PDF.

To order, call 800 323-7155 and ask for item number 060532057.



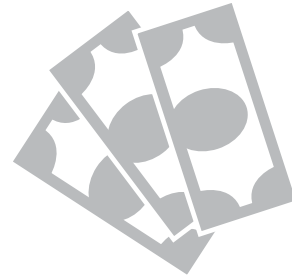
Resource
B9

FAFSA TOOLKIT

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

FAFSA TOOLKIT

THE BIG PAYOFF



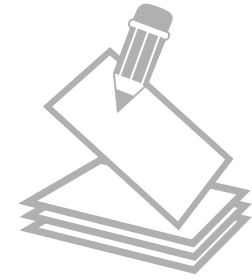
IT'S A FACT. Most people with a college degree make, in their lifetime, almost twice as much money as those with a high school diploma.* Whether you've been accepted, have just applied, or are not even sure college is in your future, one thing remains — there is college money to be had. And all you have to do is apply for it.


The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** is required to apply for federal student aid, such as federal grants, loans, and work studies. The FAFSA is also used to apply for most state and college aid, in addition to some private financial aid. No matter what type of funding you're looking for, the FAFSA application is a MUST. There's no way around it. Sure, it may look daunting, but we've broken it down for you in the following pages. As you flip, you'll see checklists and key answers that will help you understand why filing your FAFSA application isn't a hard thing — as long as you're prepared.


Money FOR college = money AFTER college.
Now go get yours.


*EarnMyDegree.com


PREPARING TO COMPLETE THE FAFSA





 **CHECK YOUR ELIGIBILITY**
Before you get started, be sure you meet all the eligibility requirements. Log on to studentaid.ed.gov to review the list of requirements.


 **COMPLETE THE CHECKLIST**
There are a lot of moving parts to the FAFSA. Collecting all the information you need before you sit down to complete it will save you a lot of time and headaches.

 **RESEARCH FAFSA DEADLINES**
There are federal and state deadlines. But each college may have a different deadline as well. Check with the college(s) you are interested in attending. You may also want to ask your college about its definition of an application deadline — whether it is the date they receive your FAFSA, or the date your FAFSA is processed.

 **IDENTIFY A GO-TO PERSON**
As you get started preparing for the FAFSA, you will probably have questions. Identify a person who can help answer questions and point you in the right direction. A parent, your school counselor, or a friend who has recently completed the FAFSA are good places to start.

 **REVIEW THE APPLICATION**
It's like prepping for a test — the best way to get familiar with the FAFSA application is to review it. By logging on to studentaid.ed.gov, you can download a copy of the FAFSA on the Web Worksheet, which will give you an idea of what kind of information you will need to provide.

 **DECIDE HOW TO SIGN YOUR APPLICATION** If submitting the FAFSA online, you will need a PIN. Your PIN serves as your electronic signature and provides access to your personal records, so you should never give your PIN to anyone, including commercial services that offer to help you complete your FAFSA. Be sure to keep your PIN in a safe place.

 **ATTEND COLLEGE GOAL SOUTH CAROLINA** College Goal South Carolina is a series of statewide events where you can receive FREE help filing your FAFSA application. Once you're ready to complete the application, let a trained expert be the one to help you. Log on to collegegoalsc.org to find an event in your area or to register to attend.

TIP

One of the biggest mistakes that students make is assuming that they either won't qualify or that they're overqualified for financial aid. How will you know if you don't apply? The FAFSA opens doors to financial aid sources that you didn't even know were there. So how would you know if you're ineligible? APPLY and FIND OUT!



CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS & PARENTS

STUDENT INFORMATION

- Your Social Security Card or Number
- Your Driver's License or Number (if any)
- Your Alien Registration or Permanent Resident Card (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Your 2012 Federal Income Tax Return (see below)
 - IRS 1040, 1040a, 1040 Ez,
 - Foreign Tax Return, or
 - Tax Return for Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Federal States of Micronesia, or Palau
- Your 2012 W-2 Forms and Other Records of Money Earned
- Your 2012 Untaxed Income Records
- Your Current Bank Statements
- Your Current Business and Investment Mortgage Information, Business and Farm Records, Stock, Bond, and Other Investment Records
- Your FAFSA PIN for Online Filing
- Federal School Codes (for the colleges that you want to receive your FAFSA information)

TIP

You may need to refer to records of income earned in the year prior to when you will start school. For the 2013-2014 school year, you will need financial information from 2012. You will also need records of your parents' income information if you are a dependent student.

Use these checklists to get ready to complete your FAFSA application. While this checklist includes many of the items you'll need to bring with you, you may also wish to print and complete a FAFSA on the Web Worksheet before you begin entering your information online to be sure you don't miss anything.

PARENT INFORMATION

- Father's/Step-Father's Social Security Number
- Father's/Step-Father's Full Name (last, first, middle initial)
- Father's/Step-Father's Date of Birth
- Father's/Step-Father's Highest Level of Schooling
- Mother's/Step-Mother's Social Security Number
- Mother's/Step-Mother's Full Name (last, first, middle initial)
- Mother's/Step-Mother's Date of Birth
- Mother's/Step-Mother's Highest Level of Schooling
- Parents' E-mail Address
- Your Parents' 2012 Federal Income Tax Return (if you are a dependent student)
- Your Parents' FAFSA PIN (for online filing or completed signature page)

TIP

Print a hard copy of the application. Mark the items you have questions about with a pen or highlighter and review these notes with your school counselor. This way, you know you're asking the right questions.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



IF SOMETHING IN THE INCOME SECTION DOESN'T APPLY TO ME, SHOULD I JUST LEAVE IT BLANK?

Don't leave anything blank in the income section. If it doesn't apply, select '0.' Blank answers will only delay the processing of your application.

WHO DOES "YOU" AND "YOUR" REFER TO?

These words always mean the student (you).

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I DON'T HAVE THE INFORMATION THAT I NEED WHEN I START TO APPLY?

You can begin your FAFSA application without completing it in the same session. Simply save it and log in again at a later time to complete and submit.

DO I REALLY NEED MY PARENTS' SIGNATURES?

Make sure all parties included in the FAFSA sign it. An unsigned FAFSA won't be processed.

MY PARENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT ENTERING MY INFORMATION ONLINE. HOW CAN I BE SURE IT IS SECURE?

All information passed by you to the FAFSA server will be scrambled through a process called encryption.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR GETTING A PIN?

Go to Federal Student Aid's PIN Web site at pin.ed.gov and select *Apply for a PIN*. Once you have received the PIN, do not share it with anyone. It will be connected to your personal information, so treat it as you would your social security number.

DO I HAVE TO FILE A NEW FAFSA EACH YEAR OF COLLEGE?

Yes, you have to complete this process each year that you are enrolled, but you keep the same PIN and login information.

IS THE FAFSA REALLY FREE?

Yes. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is just that — FREE. Any source or site that claims otherwise should be reported to The Department of Federal Aid.

If you've got questions about the FAFSA, you're not alone. Below are some answers to some common questions about the FAFSA process. For a full list, log on to fafsa.ed.gov and click Browse Help.

WHERE DO I MAIL MY TAX FORMS?

Your tax forms should be used as a reference for completing the FAFSA only. DO NOT mail tax forms or worksheets to Federal Student Aid.

WHAT IS THE SELECTIVE SERVICE?

The Selective Service System preserves America's ability to provide manpower in an emergency to the U.S. Armed Forces. If you are a male and are between the ages of 18-26, the FAFSA application offers you an opportunity to register. For more information, visit sss.gov.

WHO IS MY PARENT?

This is a common question when it comes to the FAFSA application. What if your parents are divorced? Remarried? What if you live with your aunt? Here are some facts that may help you:

- If your parents are married and living together, answer the questions about both of them.
- If your parents are living together, not married, but meet the criteria for a common-law marriage, answer the questions about both of them.
- If your parent is widowed or single, answer the questions about that parent.
- If your parent is remarried, answer the questions about that parent and your step-parent.
- If your parents are divorced or separated, answer the questions about the parent with whom you lived more during the past 12 months. If you split time equally, answer questions about the parent who provided more financial support.
- The following people are not to be considered your parent unless they have adopted you: grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, older brothers or sisters, uncles, or aunts.

If you have no contact with your parents, they refuse to provide information for the FAFSA, or you need additional information, visit collegegoalsc.org and click Find Answers.

FAFSA TOOLKIT

MY COLLEGE GOALS

SCHOOLS

MAJORS

WHY I'M GOING (AND WHY I DESERVE MONEY)

Why should I go to college? Primarily because I'm really good at _____ and I've worked hard at _____. It's also important for people (like admissions folks) to know that _____, which means I'll be a great _____ when I finish school. And then I'll (CIRCLE ONE) *make my mom happy / impress my future spouse / get my dream job* when _____.

submit your goal at collegegoalsc.org

MY FINANCIAL AID POSSIBILITIES

SCHOLARSHIPS

LOANS

GRANTS

TIP

Use these two pages to keep track of your college goals and financial possibilities. You may be surprised how accomplished you already feel by putting this information in writing. Who knows, you might just see your college goals broadcasted on collegegoalsc.org.



Resource
B10

CREATING A
FINANCIAL AID
DATABASE

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

CREATING A FINANCIAL AID DATABASE

As the school counselor, you'll receive an abundance of financial aid materials in the mail — and in your inbox. By collecting these materials and creating an electronic database, you'll have quick, easy access to local, state, and national types of financial aid. Your database should grow and evolve over time to help you recommend the most relevant opportunities available to students.

- Collect all brochures, letters, and financial aid packets from colleges and universities.
- Choose a program like Microsoft Excel to create your database.
- Enter all financial aid types: grants, loans, scholarships, and work-studies.
- Research minority scholarships that fit your school's demographics.
- Organize the information so that it makes sense to you.
- Match each student's interests and needs with the range of financial aid types available.
- Track the types of financial aid awarded to recent graduates.
- Share this database with students, parents, teachers, and other counselors.
- Update your database regularly to reflect accurate deadlines, eligibility, and other details.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- FastWeb.com
- CollegeAnswer.com
- FindTuition.com
- StudentScholarships.org
- ScholarshipAmerica.org
- StudentAid.ed.gov
- CollegeXpress.com
- CollegeScholarships.com
- SCStudentLoan.org
- StudentLoanNetwork.com



Resource
B11

RESOURCES FOR COLLEGE-BOUND HISPANIC STUDENTS

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

RESOURCES FOR COLLEGE-BOUND HISPANIC STUDENTS

There are many unique challenges that confront the Hispanic community when considering college, including language barriers and cultural differences. Here are several valuable resources for Hispanic students considering postsecondary education:

THE CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS INSTITUTE (CHCI)

The Institute's Web site features a bilingual Parent Handbook, as well as a thorough listing of scholarships, internship opportunities, and fellowships for Latino students pursuing college. The site also offers free publications for students and parents about planning for postsecondary education.

www.chci.org and www.chciyouth.org

THE HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (HACU)

This Web site highlights colleges and universities committed to serving the Latino community.

www.hacu.net

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION HISPANIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Search this site for financial aid options specifically geared toward Latino students who need assistance with college costs.

www.nea.org

HISPANIC OUTLOOK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This journal releases an annual list of Top 100 Colleges for Hispanic Students that ranks schools by the number of Hispanic graduates.

www.hispanicoutlook.com/top100.htm

NATIONAL HISPANIC RECOGNITION PROGRAM (NHRP)

This program identifies nearly 5,000 outstanding Hispanic/Latino students each year for academic recognition, although there is no financial award attached.

www.collegeboard.com/student/csearch/where-to-start/199867.html

THE WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS

This bilingual site features information for parents about college preparation and helping students get ready to search for and apply to schools.

www.yesican.gov

*Source: South Carolina Commission on Higher Education / sccango.org



Resource
B12

GUIDE TO PLANNING AND CONDUCTING A FINANCIAL AID NIGHT

from the National Association of Student
Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)

GUIDE TO PLANNING AND CONDUCTING A FINANCIAL AID NIGHT

Guide to Planning and Conducting a Financial Aid Night

INTRODUCTION

High school and financial aid counselors, as well as counselors employed by community social service agencies, are major sources of information about financing education beyond high school. Counselors share their basic knowledge and information about financial aid with interested students and family members via many different methods.

Perhaps the most obvious way of providing financial aid information to students and parents is through individual counseling sessions. However, individual sessions may not be practical given increasing student to counselor ratios and other counselor duties. Other methods, such as financial aid newsletters and brochures, the Internet, group sessions, e-mail, and public presentations are more efficient in getting basic and essential information to those who are preparing financially for college.

Conducting a financial aid information night is a great way to deliver important financial aid information to students and families. Properly planned and executed, it can save counselors hours of time in disseminating information. Due to unique family circumstances, individual sessions still may be necessary and desirable for some families. By providing general information in a written format and group presentations to the majority of families, more time will be available for those families who require special attention.

NASFAA has developed its *Financial Aid Night* materials to assist counselors in planning and conducting a financial aid night for students and parents. It is divided into three parts:

1. Part one is this ***Guide to Planning and Conducting a Financial Aid Night***.
2. Part two is ***What You Need to Know about Financial Aid***, a financial aid night presentation slide show and a presentation guide providing the basic information students and families need to know when applying for financial aid.
3. Part three consists of handouts that can be copied and given to students to help them through the financial aid application process. These include:
 - ***Student Aid Program Summary***: This chart describes the eligibility requirements and features of the various aid programs. It should be used in conjunction with the financial night presentation.
 - ***Financial Aid Application Checklist***: This running list of necessary actions has space for the student to enter due dates and to check off accomplished items. Designed to be used over a period of months, it can be used independently by the student or serve as a progress review sheet in counseling sessions with individual students.
 - ***Application Form Tracking Worksheet***: A student should use one of these worksheets to keep track of the many application and documentation requirements for each school to which he or she applies. Like the *Application Checklist*, it can also be used as a review sheet in counseling sessions.

- ***Cost of Attendance Comparison Worksheet***: This chart allows the student and parent to record and compare the costs for each school under consideration. Using this worksheet ensures that the family has *all* costs for each school. Wide discrepancies in estimates for living costs (expenses other than tuition and books) should be questioned. It can also be used by the counselor to help focus a student's expectations on what is reasonably manageable given the family's financial situation.
- ***Award Package Comparison Worksheet***: Once actual aid offers are received from the schools to which the student has been admitted, this tool guides the family and counselor in comparing aid packages.
- ***Financial Aid Consultants and Scholarship Search Services Fact Sheet***: Should a family pay for someone to help them through the financial aid process? This fact sheet helps families avoid being scammed by unnecessary and costly reliance on paid consultants to obtain help and advice that is available from true experts at no charge.
- ***Sample Scholarship Inquiry Letter***: This letter suggests how a student might inquire about financial aid from a private organization (that is, a source of funding other than the school or a government agency).
- ***Financial Aid Glossary***: Financial aid is full of unique terms and acronyms. The glossary defines many of the terms that students and families will encounter as they navigate the financial aid process.

Counselors who do not have a financial aid knowledge base should consider asking a financial aid administrator from a nearby college or a representative of the state student assistance agency to conduct a financial aid information night. Many state associations of financial aid administrators routinely conduct or provide support for such presentations. The following ***Eight Steps from Start to Finish*** will be helpful to the presenter in making the necessary arrangements.

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING A FINANCIAL AID NIGHT: EIGHT STEPS FROM START TO FINISH

1 Setting the date

Selecting an appropriate date for a financial aid information night is critical to its success. When selecting a date, consider the following:

- **Do** pick a date far enough in advance of the application deadline for your state's student assistance program(s) and the priority filing dates announced by the schools to which your students typically apply. Check state and institutional application instructions, websites, and catalogues to determine these dates and count back four to six weeks to allow sufficient time for application completion and processing.
- **Do** pick a date that complements other school-related activities for families. For example, you might make the financial aid information night part of the program for a monthly PTA meeting. If not, be sure to pick a date that does not compete with the PTA meeting or other school or community events appealing to college-bound students and their parents.
- **Do** be sensitive to religious observances affecting the families that may need financial aid information.
- **Don't** pick a date too close to major holidays or holiday weekends. Family scheduling conflicts will affect your attendance.
- **Don't** host a Financial Aid Night without the FAFSA on the Web (FOTW) Worksheet. It is available before students can file the FAFSA. This "pre-application" worksheet includes many of the questions on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). It is available for download and printing via the Federal Student Aid Publications website at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/fafsaworksheet.jsp?tab=preparing>.

Though students are encouraged to file the FAFSA on-line, the on-line version is not available until on or after January 1 each year. The paper FAFSA on the Web Worksheet is normally distributed to secondary schools in October, although changes to the Worksheet or procedures for distributing it may delay its availability. Since one of the main presentation items is the proper completion of the FOTW Worksheet, it would be difficult to proceed without it.

- **Don't** try to compete with entertainment or athletic events that attract parents and students.
- **Don't** ignore the possibility of inclement weather. Plan for and advertise inclement weather procedures and an alternate date.

2 Setting a time

Financial aid is a topic that concerns most families, so you should hold financial aid presentations at a time convenient to students and families, most likely weekday evenings or weekends. To schedule the presentation during the day when parents or other family members are working deprives you of many of your potential participants and deprives families of the information they seek.

3 Selecting a facility

Based on anticipated attendance, identify a facility with a room that will comfortably accommodate the group and the following:

- **Tables, or at least chairs with writing arms**, since many participants will take extensive notes;
- **Lighting control** to accommodate visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations, etc.;
- **Data projector and screen**, if required by the presenter;
- **Chalkboard or flipchart** at the front of the room for impromptu notes and calculations; and
- **Microphone** if the presenter or the size of the room requires it.

The facility should be readily accessible to individuals with disabilities and from available parking areas. Plan to provide signs that direct participants to the appropriate location. Some facilities require special notification or arrangements for meetings held after normal business hours. To avoid problems with heat, air conditioning, lighting, and so on, be sure that the proper persons are advised of your meeting and what is needed.

4 Advertising the event

Once the date, time, and facility have been determined, you are ready to advertise the financial aid information night. Begin promotion at least two to four weeks in advance so that families can "pencil it in" their calendars, yet late enough that they don't forget about it.

Beyond the obvious announcements at schools and in flyers sent home, consider using public service announcements by local television and radio stations, news or calendar items in local newspapers, items in PTA or school newsletters, posters in shopping areas, social networking, public address announcements at sporting events and other school or community activities. If possible, send an e-mail announcement to families at your school who might have interest in your event.

5 Determining the presenters

If you are making the presentation yourself, you may want to consider getting assistance from others with specialized information to share with your audience. It is likely not easy for you or the audience to cover all the information by yourself, and it frequently makes for a more interesting presentation to have an occasional change of pace and voice.

Since it may be impossible for you to be an authority on all aspects of college financing, consider bringing in an outside “expert.” Having additional speakers often increases the credibility of the presentation. We suggest inviting a local financial aid administrator to address federal assistance and a representative from the state agency to describe state aid programs. These outside presenters will add a positive touch to most presentations.

6 Making a list, checking it twice

The rest of the planning process involves following up to make sure that all arrangements are implemented as requested. Confirm everything about a week before your presentation and then again the day before. It is only human to forget, and periodic reminders are more easily managed than a last-minute frantic phone call ten minutes after the auditorium should have been opened, with 50 participants waiting in the hallway.

7 Delivering the information

With thorough planning, the presentation should go smoothly. Arrive well in advance of the stated starting time to make sure doors are unlocked, the lights are on, the room is properly arranged, and audiovisual equipment is set up and in working order. Put out directional signs early and as necessary to help people find their way. Have the registration materials organized and set up by the time the first audience member arrives.

Make every effort to start at the scheduled time. If anyone is to miss a portion of the session, it should be those who arrive late, not those who arrived on time but had to leave before you were finished.

Leave ample time for questions either during or after the formal presentation. The presenter(s) should expect that some families will want to ask personal questions after the session.

8 Finishing touches

If the room and/or building needs to be secured after the event, be sure you have made those arrangements with the appropriate individuals.

If outside presenters have assisted with the financial aid information night, thank them both publicly during the presentation and in writing shortly thereafter. Also be sure to thank those individuals who assisted with arranging and/or managing the facility where the presentation was held. In most cases, these individuals will have donated their time and perhaps some expenses for which they will not be reimbursed. A sincere and timely “thank you” may encourage them to assist you in the future.



Resource
B13

2011-12 COUNSELOR'S
GUIDE TO FEE WAIVERS
FOR THE SAT® &
SAT SUBJECT TESTS™

from the College Board
collegeboard.org



2011-12

Counselor's Guide to Fee Waivers for the SAT® and the SAT Subject Tests™



About the SAT Fee-Waiver Service

The SAT Fee-Waiver Service provides much more than simply the waiver of test fees — it gives low-income students access to a comprehensive set of tools that help them realize their college dreams. Fee waivers are available for low-income, college-aspiring high school students who meet the eligibility guidelines given in this pamphlet. The College Board has been offering fee waivers for more than 30 years, and recently more students than ever have taken advantage of the full suite of services offered, giving them access to both the SAT® and SAT Subject Tests™, score sending to colleges, SAT practice tools, and other valuable resources. For this service to be successful, we depend on counselors and other student advocates like you to carefully identify eligible students, to judiciously distribute fee waivers to qualified students and to encourage each recipient not only to register, but to be present on test day.

Improving Test-Day Attendance

We are extremely proud of the broad reach and positive impact of our fee-waiver service; however, we remain concerned about the increase in students who register for the SAT using a fee waiver but do not show up to take the test on test day. You can help increase access to the tests in the following ways:

- Distribute fee waivers only to eligible students who intend to test.
- Help students connect to our practice tools so that they'll feel more prepared to then sit for the tests.
- Provide assistance with directions and travel arrangements to the test center.

When distributing these fee waivers, please remind students how important it is to take the tests for which they register. Fee-waiver recipients who do not test miss out on several valuable opportunities, and their absenteeism may also prevent other students from using available space at the test center.

Allocating and Reordering Fee-Waiver Cards

High schools and qualifying agencies receive allocations of cards based on the number of fee waivers that their students actually used for testing in the October 2010 through January 2011 administrations of the SAT and SAT Subject Tests. Your high school or agency code allows us to match fee-waiver usage to your school or agency for this allocation process. Be sure to write the code on the cards you distribute.

If, after distributing the fee-waiver cards to eligible students at your institution, you need to reorder, please call the Educator Help Line at 888-SAT-HELP (728-4357) or +1 212-520-8600 internationally.

More than Just a Waiver

The SAT and the SAT Subject Tests are more than just tests — they are keys to college. In turn, fee waivers offer more than just the waiver of test fees. An eligible student can take advantage of all the following services for free or at a reduced rate:

- Up to two registrations for the SAT and up to two registrations for the SAT Subject Tests — a total of four fee waivers. One fee-waiver card covers one SAT registration (\$49 value) or up to three SAT Subject Tests on one test day (\$66 maximum value).
- Four additional flexible score reports, which can be ordered at registration or after the student has received his or her scores (\$42 maximum value).
- The Question-and-Answer Service (QAS) or the Student Answer Service (SAS). Students must order the service when registering to receive it at no charge (\$18 maximum value).
- A \$40 discount off the regular price of The Official SAT Online Course™ with any online registration using a fee waiver.
- Coverage of the international fee and security surcharge (\$53 maximum value).
- Up to four Request for Waiver of College Application Fee forms. The *Directory of Colleges Cooperating with the SAT Program Fee-Waiver Service* lists colleges and universities that have agreed to consider waiving their application fees. For a copy of the directory and more information on the fee-waiver services and benefits, go to www.collegeboard.org/satfeewaivers.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible students must be in the 11th or the 12th grade to use fee waivers for the SAT. Students may be in any grade of high school, 9–12, to use fee waivers for SAT Subject Tests.

If a high school student requests a fee waiver, he or she must meet at least **one** of the following guidelines, subject to your confirmation:

- ✓ Be enrolled in a free or reduced-price lunch program.
- ✓ Be enrolled in a program for the economically disadvantaged (for example, a TRIO program such as Upward Bound).
- ✓ Come from a family receiving public assistance.
- ✓ Come from a family living in federally subsidized public housing.
- ✓ Be a resident in a foster home.

- ✓ Have an annual family income that falls within the levels for reduced-price lunch set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service, as noted below.

2011–2012 Income Eligibility Guidelines	
NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN HOUSEHOLD (including head of household) ¹	TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME (in preceding calendar year) ²
1	\$20,147
2	\$27,214
3	\$34,281
4	\$41,348
5	\$48,415
6	\$55,482

1. The household size should be the number of household members plus the filer on the family's current tax statement. A student who is in foster care is considered a household size of one person.

2. Income levels are based on the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Income Eligibility Guidelines used by schools, institutions and facilities participating in the National School Lunch Program. To view the full table, go to www.fns.usda.gov/cnd and select "Income Eligibility."

More than six members in the household?
To determine income levels for families with more than six household members, take the annual allowance for six members (\$55,482) and add \$7,067 for each additional member.

Note: Fee-waiver eligibility may be subject to audit. Make sure to complete the counselor section on the front of every fee-waiver card you distribute.

International Students

- You may distribute fee-waiver cards to eligible U.S. citizens who will be testing outside the United States. The fee waivers cover the cost of regular registration, the international fee, and the additional surcharge for testing in India or Pakistan. The student is responsible for all other fees.
- You may distribute fee-waiver cards to eligible students who are foreign nationals who live and test in the United States or U.S. territories.

Home-Schooled Students

Home-schooled students must provide proof of eligibility (tax records, public assistance records or record of enrollment in an aid program). We know these students are not part of the population you normally serve, and we thank you for helping us give them access to the SAT and SAT Subject Tests. When you provide a card to a home-schooled student, print "970000" instead of your regular College Board high school or agency code on the card.

Completing and Distributing Fee-Waiver Cards

Fee-waiver cards are to be judiciously distributed to eligible low-income, college-aspiring students on a case-by-case basis. You can issue up to four fee-waiver cards (two for the SAT and two for SAT Subject Tests) to an eligible student as follows:

1. Fill out the first section of the fee-waiver card completely. **Cards that are incomplete will be returned unprocessed to the student.**
 - Fill in the College Board high school code or agency code. This number, combined with the preprinted number on the card, creates a unique 12-digit fee-waiver code. (Required)
 - Print and sign your name to confirm student's eligibility. (Required)
 - Fill in one or more of the ovals to indicate the eligibility criteria that the student meets. (Required)
2. Instruct the student to complete the student information section, and provide a copy of the *Guidelines for Families*, which is also available in Spanish at www.collegeboard.org/fwesp. Please stress how important it is for him or her to show up on test day.

Sample of a Fee-Waiver Card with Section 1 Completed by Counselor

1. TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNSELOR (REQUIRED)											
Enter your College Board High School Code/Agency Code. This must be included to create a valid 12-digit code.											
1	2	3	4	5	6	WXYZAB					
Important: This 12-digit fee-waiver code is good for only one registration, and it can be used to register for the SAT or up to three SAT Subject Tests on a single test day.											
Ms. College Counselor											
Counselor's Name (REQUIRED — please print.)											
Ms. College Counselor											
Counselor's Signature (REQUIRED)											
By signing, I confirm that the student listed below meets one or more of the following eligibility requirements to receive an SAT fee waiver. I also acknowledge that fee-waiver eligibility may be audited.											
Fill in the ovals that apply (REQUIRED):											
<input checked="" type="radio"/> The student is enrolled in a free or reduced-price lunch program.											
<input type="radio"/> The student is enrolled in a program for the economically disadvantaged (for example, a TRIO program such as Upward Bound).											
<input type="radio"/> The annual income of the student's family falls within the USDA levels found in the <i>Counselor's Guide to Fee Waivers</i> provided online at collegeboard.org/satfeewaivers .											
<input type="radio"/> The student's family receives public assistance.											
<input type="radio"/> The student's family lives in federally subsidized public housing.											
<input type="radio"/> The student resides in a foster home.											
2. TO BE COMPLETED BY ELIGIBLE STUDENT (REQUIRED)											

Registration Using a Fee Waiver

To register online, the student uses or creates a free account at sat.collegeboard.org. During the registration process, the student will be prompted to enter the unique 12-digit fee-waiver code as well as the counselor name and eligibility criteria marked on the front of the fee-waiver card.

To register by mail, the student must indicate his or her grade level in Item 6 and print the 12-digit fee-waiver code in Item 19 on the registration form, then enclose the completed card in the envelope provided with *The Paper Registration Guide*.

Important Registration Notes

Please make sure your students understand the following points about registering with fee waivers:

- Fee waivers may not be used for standby registration, and they do not cover fees for changing a registration.
- **Students registering by mail must enclose both the registration form (with Items 6 and 19 filled in) and the fee-waiver card** in the envelope provided.
- **Fee waivers can only be used for one registration.** If the student misses the test date, she or he can transfer the registration to a new test date (a change fee will apply).
- Test fees are not refundable, even if a student who has paid test fees would have been eligible to use a fee waiver.
- **Late registration with a fee waiver is allowed for the October administration only.** Students using a fee waiver to register for testing in the United States or U.S. territories will have until the late deadline of Sept. 21, 2011, to register (with no additional charge). Late registration is not available for international registrations.
- The fee-waiver card may not be reproduced or changed in any manner. The College Board can only accept an original card that is completely filled out as payment for the test date. Reproduced, faxed, altered or incomplete cards will *not* be processed.

Helping Students Prepare for the Test

Besides providing the *Guidelines for Families*, please also distribute the *Getting Ready* booklets to fee-waiver students who have limited access to the Internet. Encourage students to use computer equipment at school or in the library to explore all the resources available at sat.collegeboard.org/practice, which have been updated for 2011-12.

Free Flexible Score Reports

Students who are eligible for fee waivers can use their flexible score reports whenever they choose: at registration or after they receive their scores. They receive a total of four credits in their testing lifetime no matter how many times they register. Flexible score reports are applied automatically; students send them just as they would send other score reports (online is the easiest way). They can also track their use of flexible score reports online at sat.collegeboard.org/scores.

If an eligible student has not used a fee waiver to register, she or he will need to enter a fee-waiver code on the screen or paper score report order form to use the flexible score reports. In such cases, you will need to issue a fee-waiver card.

For more information on how students can send score reports, go to www.collegeboard.org/satscorereports.

Request for Waiver of College Application Fees

A student who uses a fee waiver for the SAT or SAT Subject Tests and plans to enter college in the 2012-13 academic year can be given up to four Request for Waiver of College Application Fee forms. (**Note: This form is NOT a fee-waiver card.** Students should NOT SEND the forms to the College Board. They must enclose the forms with their college applications.)

Students should only send the forms to institutions included in the *Directory of Colleges Cooperating with the SAT Program Fee-Waiver Service*, which is available online at www.collegeboard.org/feewaivers. The institutions listed in the directory are not obligated to waive their application fees.

Note that the College Search feature on sat.collegeboard.org provides a quick and easy portal for students to learn about the colleges that are of interest to them.

Paying for College

Students using fee waivers for the SAT and SAT Subject Tests can learn more about scholarship opportunities and financial aid processes, including CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®, the financial aid application service of the College Board, at www.collegeboard.org/scholarships.

Have Questions?

If you have other questions about the SAT Program Fee-Waiver Service, go to www.collegeboard.org/satfeewaivers, email us at feewaiver@collegeboard.org or call the SAT Educator Help Line at 888-SAT-HELP (728-4357). If you're calling from outside of the United States, call +1 212-520-8600. Make sure to have your College Board high school or agency code available when you email or call.

About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of more than 5,900 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools.

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Resource
C1

.....
UNDERSTANDING

.....
OUR ROLES
.....

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education



UNDERSTANDING OUR ROLES

As your school counselor, it's my responsibility to help you plan for a rewarding academic and professional career. Understanding our roles in the process will help us work together in the most collaborative and effective ways possible.

I WILL:

- Help you explore your short- and long-term educational goals.
- Help you create a specific list of schools to which you will apply.
- Advise you on the SAT, ACT, and other college admission tests.
- Help you review your college admission essays and résumé.
- Write your college recommendation letter.
- Act as the liaison to colleges to provide you with the best information possible.
- Encourage you to consider specific financial aid and scholarship information.
- Send transcripts and any other information to the colleges of your choice.
- Encourage you and your family throughout the process.

I WILL NOT:

- Complete your college applications.
 - Write your college admission essays.
 - Promise your admittance to any particular college or university.
-

YOU WILL:

- Do your very best work possible.
- Meet all college application, testing, and financial aid deadlines.
- Make appointments and visit me on a regular basis.
- Make your final college decision by May 1 (the National Reply deadline).
- Enjoy the process and have fun exploring your options.

STUDENT PLEDGE

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education
sccango.org



HOW TO HELP MY CHILD PREPARE FOR COLLEGE SUCCESS

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education's
GEAR UP Program



STUDENT PLEDGE

I, _____, hereby pledge to do my part on the road to college.
*I know I cannot do it alone, but my journey starts and ends with me.
I will take responsibility for my education. I will study and work hard.
And with the help of family, friends, teachers, counselors and mentors,
I can achieve my goal of going to college — and I will.*

SIGNED _____
DATE _____

ENCOURAGE YOUR SUPPORT TEAM TO ADD THEIR SIGNATURES BELOW AS A
SHARED PROMISE TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL.

PARENTS:

TEACHERS:

COUNSELORS:

MENTORS:

HOW TO HELP MY CHILD PREPARE FOR COLLEGE SUCCESS

- Know that my child's school wants me to be involved
- Make involvement part of my routine
- Call
- Write a note
- Attend family meetings at school
- Know that I will not bother my child's teacher if I need to talk
- They are there to support my efforts and want me to know I support theirs
- Attend Open House
- Build a good relationship with my school's educators
- Volunteer if I can
- Visit the classroom
- Attend school functions
- Make sure my child has a quiet place and time to study each day
- Set rules about homework and study time
- Ask my child to review homework with me
- Encourage my child to break down big assignments into smaller ones
- Show my child through example that he or she should never give up
- Celebrate my child's successes
- Praise my child's efforts
- Avoid making negative statements
- Talk about school in a positive way
- Ask about school often
- Do not compare my child to other children
- Enjoy my child as a unique person
- Love my child
- Express my love for my child every day

**Source: South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's GEAR UP program*



Resource
C4

COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR

from CollegeAnswer.com

COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR

COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR

Stay on track with this “going-to-college” planning and paying calendar. It contains helpful reminders for tasks that need to be completed and when. As you review this list, keep in mind your calendar may differ depending on the type of education pursued.

FRESHMEN & SOPHOMORES

- Get to know your high school guidance counselor.
- Plan a family discussion about college.
- Get a Social Security Number.
- Evaluate your personality, interests, and skills.
- Explore occupations, salaries, and requirements.
- Understand basic college curriculum requirements.
- Participate in school and community activities.
- Check if your state sponsors a college savings plan.
- Start investigating how much college will cost.

JUNIORS

September

- Plan a family college discussion.
- Review your courses with your high school guidance counselor.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask college reps.
- Sign up to take the PSAT.
- Get and stay organized. Create files to keep copies of applications and correspondence. Set up a calendar to track important dates and deadlines.

October–November

- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights.
- Download College Answer’s College Fair Checklist (pdf).
- Take the PSAT.
- Start searching for scholarships and ways to pay for your education.
- Learn what components make up the cost to attend college.
- Review descriptions of the different types of schools.
- Begin to understand the basics about federal and private loans.
- Plan and make college visits.
- Download College Answer’s Campus Visit Checklist (pdf).

December

- Review your PSAT results with your counselor.
- Talk with your college friends home for break.
- Take both the SAT and ACT at least once.

January

- Identify characteristics you want in a college.
- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights.
- Clear up the financial aid myths about paying for college.
- Let your parents know that the IRS could save them money through education tax deductions and credits.

February

- Run Sallie Mae’s Free Scholarship Search.
- Register and study for the SAT and/or ACT.

March

- Plan campus visits.
- Narrow your college list to a reasonable number.
- Contact the financial aid office for each college on your list to discuss payment options.

- Keep up college discussions with your family and counselors.
- Get answers to your “going-to-college” questions.
- Estimate how much various colleges will cost.

April-May

- Select senior year classes — check with your counselor to ensure your courses meet necessary college requirements.
- Download College Answer’s Campus Visit Checklist (pdf) and start visiting colleges.
- Take the SAT and/or ACT, if necessary.
- Take Advanced Placement (AP) tests, if necessary.
- Get a summer job to save extra money.
- Considering a military academy or an ROTC scholarship? Meet with your high school counselor before leaving for summer vacation.

Summer

- Improve your reading and vocabulary skills. Download College Answer’s Recommended Reading List (pdf).
- Continue searching for scholarships and ways to pay.
- Combine vacation plans with campus visits.
- Start working on your college application essays.
- Talk to people in interesting careers.
- Decide who you’ll ask to write letters of recommendation.
- Talk with college friends home for summer.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

September

- Discuss your classes, college plans, and test scores with your high school counselor.
- Request college applications from the admissions office. Or, use College Answer’s Online Application Search to see if your school’s form is online.
- Arrange campus visits.

- Register to take the SAT/ACT, if necessary.
- Continue to search for free money (scholarships and grants) and other ways to pay.
- Run Sallie Mae’s Free Scholarship Search.
- Submit a CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE, if required.
- Stay organized: File copies of applications and correspondence. Keep your calendar up-to-date tracking important dates and deadlines.

October

- Review your transcripts to verify that the information is correct.
- Send transcripts to your selected schools — ask your counselor if you need help.
- Find out the application-of-choice used by each college.
- Ask for letters of recommendation. Most admissions and scholarship applications require these letters.
- Get some pointers on writing admissions essays and scholarship essays.
- View sample essays and essay questions.
- Download College Answer’s College Fair Checklist (pdf).
- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights.
- Candidates for early school admission (early decision, early action, early admission, etc.) should complete college applications. It’s a good idea to investigate the pros and cons of this decision and to get familiar with the early admission timeline.

November

- Continue completing your college applications.
- Early decision deadline is often November 1 or 15.
- Determine which financial aid forms the colleges on your list require — when in doubt contact the financial aid office.
- Investigate state college information and programs.
- Search for additional sources of financial aid.
- Get a jump on things by estimating your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

December

- Complete school applications ideally by December 1.
- Determine if you are eligible for financial aid.
- Understand the steps in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Determine how to submit your FAFSA (paper or on the Web).
- Important: Don't submit your FAFSA before January 1 — it will be returned not processed.
- Take SAT or Achievements, if registered.
- Stay organized. Remember to keep copies of applications and correspondence. Continue to track important dates and deadlines on your calendar.

January

- Submit your FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible. Some student aid programs award funds on a first-come, first-served basis. Waiting too long to submit your FAFSA could be costly.
- Fill out and submit required financial aid forms. Follow instructions carefully and make copies.
- When you have financial aid questions contact your financial aid office.
- Familiarize yourself with state financial aid deadlines. They tend to differ from federal and institutional deadlines.
- Let your parents know that the IRS could save them money through education tax deductions and credits.

February–March

- College decisions start rolling in.
- Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR). Carefully examine the results. A mistake could cause you to miss out on college funding.
- If there are special circumstances affecting your family's financial situation, be sure to discuss them with the financial aid office.
- Don't panic if you're selected for verification. Just provide the college with the documents they need.

- Stay on top of important financial aid deadlines.
- Respond quickly to college requests for additional documentation.
- College acceptance and financial award letters start rolling.

April

- Carefully analyze your letters — use College Answer's Online Award Analyzer.
- Make a decision and send your tuition deposit (most colleges require a response by May 1).
- Notify the other colleges that you won't be attending (other students will be happy to take your spot).
- Register for Advanced Placement (AP) tests, if necessary.
- Carefully follow the instructions in your acceptance letter. Along with important deadlines, these letters provide specific instructions on housing, financial aid, orientation, and more.
- Continue to mark your calendar with important deadlines.

May

- Mail your official transcripts.
- Respond quickly to requests and return necessary forms — when in doubt contact the financial aid office.
- Notify your financial aid office of additional funding you'll receive to pay for college (scholarships, loans, etc.).
- Take time to understand student loans and evaluate student loan lenders.
- Learn about borrowing responsibly.
- Consider a cosigner to help obtain your student loan.
- Important: If you take out a student loan, borrow only what you absolutely need to cover the cost of your education. When it's time to repay, you'll have other financial obligations — like rent, car payments, and other living expenses.

June

- Save some of your graduation money for school.
- Respond to requests from the college you will be attending. Keep copies of everything you send.



- Read and be familiar with your college catalog and semester class schedule.
- Talk with friends who are home from college.
- Make travel arrangements if necessary.
- Send thank you notes or postcards to those who helped you get into college.

July–August

- If you still need money to pay for college, consider a student loan.
- Apply online at College Answer.
- Register and attend a college orientation session.
- Confirm housing arrangements and meal plans.
- Finalize your college budget.
- Notify the financial aid office of scholarships and loans you will receive.
- Consider taking out a renter's insurance policy.
- Return borrowed items, such as library books, rental videos, and things borrowed from friends.
- Note tracking numbers of boxes you are shipping to school.
- Open a bank account near campus.
- Review your cell phone plan to limit roaming charges.
- Contact your roommate and coordinate what to pack.
- Review College Answer's College Advice for Students section and pick up a few freshmen tips.
- Download College Answer's What to Pack for College Checklist (pdf).

Congratulations!

WHAT'S YOUR WORK TYPE?

from Higher Education Awareness
Program (HEAP) and sccango.org

WHAT'S YOUR WORK TYPE?

As you read below, circle the numbers beside the entries that interest you most, then tally your results at the end.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Work on a farm or help save a rainforest | 25. Work outside in a national park |
| 2. Solve complicated math problems | 26. Research a law case |
| 3. Act in a movie or play | 27. Play a musical instrument |
| 4. Study social groups in society | 28. Work with babies or children |
| 5. Interview strangers for the TV news | 29. Run for class office |
| 6. Learn about and study the economy | 30. Work after school to save money |
| 7. Study "how-to" mechanics' manual | 31. Set up a stereo system |
| 8. Perform science lab experiments | 32. Read science fiction |
| 9. Manage an art gallery | 33. Write a short story, play or novel |
| 10. Conduct a religious service | 34. Entertain at a party |
| 11. Bargain at a flea market | 35. Work in a politician's office |
| 12. Write up graphs or charts with statistics | 36. Enter documents into computers |
| 13. Build cabinets or furniture | 37. Build a jet aircraft model |
| 14. Study nature outdoors or trace the effects of pollution on the environment | 38. Use an electron microscope or high-tech medical instrument |
| 15. Write a movie screenplay | 39. Design a new line of clothes |
| 16. Lead a cub or scout troop | 40. Read and discuss literature |
| 17. Buy merchandise for a store | 41. Debate political and social issues on TV |
| 18. Work nine-to-five in a corporate office | 42. Keep accurate records of a business |
| 19. Operate heavy machines | 43. Repair a car engine |
| 20. Play chess | 44. Identify constellations of stars |
| 21. Work on art or music magazines | 45. Take pottery classes |
| 22. Get involved in a charity or community organization | 46. Work with senior citizens |
| 23. Do fast-paced, high-pressure sales work | 47. Sell products on commission |
| 24. Design computer games and programs | 48. Set up a budget for running a large company or government agency |

Now, add up your scores by marking the ones you circled in each category. In each line, total the number of times you marked an answer in that column. Put that total in the blank space at the end of each line. (e.g. 1, 7, 13, 19, 25, 31, 37, 43 Total = 3) Which category scored highest for you?

PERSONALITY TYPE TOTALS

DOERS :: You're someone who takes action, is passionate about causes greater than yourself, is a natural leader and is always proactive when there's a problem that needs a solution.

1, 7, 13, 19, 25, 31, 37, 43 Total = _____

INVESTIGATORS :: You are naturally curious, drawn to big-picture questions that have never been answered. You're driven to fix things and understand how things work.

2, 8, 14, 20, 26, 32, 38, 44 Total = _____

ARTISTS :: You're always the most creative person in a group. Whether you're always doodling in the margins of your notebook or playing with your food, the world is your canvas and you're excited by the thought of expressing yourself.

3, 9, 15, 21, 27, 33, 39, 45 Total = _____

HELPERS :: You're encouraged by the work and mission of non-profit groups and other organizations that reach out to people in need.

4, 10, 16, 22, 28, 34, 40, 46 Total = _____

ENTERPRISERS :: You're not afraid to take the lead and be in the spotlight. You relish the attention (even the pressure) of these situations and see it as a motivator to do your best when everyone's watching.

5, 11, 17, 23, 29, 35, 41, 47 Total = _____

DETAILERS :: You may fall somewhere between "picky" and "really picky" according to your friends, but you have a knack for noticing the details. If there's fine print, you read it. If there's something to put together, you sit down and figure it out. If something's out of place, you know immediately.

6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42, 48 Total = _____

SETTING AND REACHING GOALS

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

SETTING AND REACHING GOALS

Whether it's high school graduation or acceptance into college, the below should help you identify your goals for the future. Writing down your goals is one of the first steps in achieving them. So get started, what are you waiting for?

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

What do I want to be when I grow up?

Seriously, knowing your career goals will help you determine what classes to take in high school, your college major, the appropriate colleges to apply to, and what to do when you get in.

Why do I want to achieve these goals?

Knowing the reason behind your goals is key. If there's no purpose behind these goals, then why will you still be working to reach them in four years?

While in college, what would I like to accomplish?

If you know you want to play sports, even on an intramural or club team, or if you want to travel the world through study abroad opportunities, this can help narrow down your colleges of choice. For example, some colleges have stronger theater programs while others only offer a few classes.

What skills do I have that will help me reach my goals?

Determining the skills you have will help you better reach your goals. If you're great at numbers and chemical calculations, opt for a degree in a Bachelor of Science program instead of Bachelor of Art.

What services and programs are offered to me to help me plan, develop, and implement my goals?

Ask your guidance counselors, teachers, parents, and other adults for advice on how to reach your goals.

How will I stay on track and make sure I obtain my goals?

Having a plan that will keep you organized and on track is always a good idea. Again, turn to your guidance counselors and ask for their help to create your plan.

Does anything about my goal seem impossible?

If it does, voice these impossibilities to someone who you trust and will be able to help you overcome any impossibilities you may see.

TIPS:

- Be specific when determining your goals.
- Divide and conquer — separate key points or dates for when you would like to get to a certain step in achieving your goals.
- Keep a list of your goals within sight by hanging it in your bedroom or locker.
- Tell people about your goals.
- Do your research — make sure you know which schools, majors, and classes will best help you prepare to reach your goals.
- Never give up!



Resource
C7

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT COLLEGE

by Gen and Kelly Tanabe,
Founders of SuperCollege.com

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT COLLEGE

by Gen and Kelly Tanabe, Founders of SuperCollege.com

Why do students pick certain colleges? We've heard every reason imaginable! For example, we know one student who decided to apply to a college because during the campus tour he noticed that there was a Krispy Kreme donut shop right in the center of campus. We can even tell you about a student that wanted to get so far away from home that she took out a compass and a map and drew a 400 mile circle around her house. Then she vowed never to apply to a college within that circle.

Depending on your personal priorities, these may or may not be good reasons to pick a college. And it's important to remember that what makes one school a student's dream college may make it a nightmare choice for you. Nevertheless, there are some common steps that we believe all students need to take that will help them in choosing the right college.



Imagine colleges are Neapolitan ice cream.

That's right. We want you to think of colleges as tri-flavored ice cream. Now it may have been different in your family; but in our families, when someone brought home a box of Neapolitan ice cream, the first flavor to be eaten was the chocolate, then the vanilla. Finally, when there was nothing else left, it was the strawberry.

In the same way, you need to divide your college choices into three categories. Your chocolate colleges are your top-choice schools but also those that are most difficult to get into. Your vanilla colleges are schools that you have a reasonable chance of getting into and ones you would be happy to attend. Your strawberry colleges are your "safety colleges"—those schools that you will definitely get into.

While there is no absolute rule, we recommend to most students that they have two to three colleges in each of the three different flavors. This insures that you are reaching for your fullest potential while guaranteeing that you'll be accepted to some great colleges that you can choose to attend.



Seek out personal recommendations.

The best way to get started finding colleges is to speak to those around you. Talk to your counselors, teachers, family friends and even (get ready for it) your parents. Often these people will be full of friendly advice and what's nice is that since they know you, they may have specific reasons for recommending a certain college. Take note of their recommendations but don't assume that they will give you the answers. Remember, you are just getting started. Asking the people you know for recommendations is a good way to generate a preliminary list of schools. As you research these schools, you'll begin to discover what is important to you. It may turn out that these initial recommendations were spot on or totally off.



Focus on your academic goals.

When you think about schools, you need to consider what you really want in an education. Do you want to be trained for a specific line of work or do you want a more general liberal arts education? A pre-professional education prepares you for a specific job and includes

areas such as engineering and pre-med. Some schools like M.I.T. have very strong programs for those interested in the sciences but might not be right for someone interested in literature. A liberal arts education, on the other hand, aims to equip you with general knowledge and reasoning skills suitable for many jobs.

Here's a key question to ask every college: How does the college rank in the major you want to study? Universities are stronger in some areas and weaker in others. While it may be too early for you to know whether you want to major in English or history, check out how strong the programs and professors are in the various fields you are considering. One indication of how much emphasis a university places on a major is to find out how many students are studying that major, how many courses are offered in the field and how many faculty members teach the courses associated with that major and others like it. This should give you an idea as to the size of the department and the range of courses. If you want a major in a narrow field, you might have to consider a larger university.



Don't forget to ask about the parties.

Do you want to have three Greek letters shining on your chest everywhere you go? Does the school even have a Greek system? (Harvard doesn't!) Some students are inclined to join a fraternity or sorority, while others feel that their existence on campus is overbearing for those who choose not to go Greek. It's important that you learn about this and other social aspects of your potential college. What do students do on the weekends? What extracurricular activities does the school offer? How close or far is the campus from a major city where you might go to find more cultural and entertainment venues? Are there campus life associations, service clubs or ROTC opportunities?

The social opportunities on a campus are extremely important. No matter how strong your college is academically, if you don't like the social scene, you won't be happy at that school. Be sure to consider the "big picture."



Investigate the type of digs you'll be living in.

When you consider which college to choose to attend, remember that you'll be living in that situation for four years or more. Think of yourself as a total person, not just a student. You want to find a place to live that suits you. After all, you want to enjoy coming home after classes.

Here are some questions you will want to explore: Do most students live on campus or commute? Whether students spend most of their lives on campus or off makes a big difference in the social atmosphere of the college. Can you live with strangers? Can you bathe near strangers? If you lived in the dorm, would you have roommates? How modern or ancient are the dorms? Does each room have its own bathroom or do you use a shared facility? With overcrowding a problem at many colleges, you should also ask what your chances are of even getting on-campus housing.



Snuggle up with a college directory.

One excellent place to find the answers to some of the questions you have about a college is in a book or website that profiles colleges. Often you can find information about the student population, activities, majors offered, costs and financial aid, as well as some useful statistics such as how many freshmen are admitted each year. If you're into numbers, these directories can be quite useful.

What these directories don't tell you is the personality of the college or what life is like on campus. To get that information, you need to talk to some real people who actually are from the college—alumni, recruiters, advisors, current students and others—but you want to wait to do that until you have narrowed down your choices to a "short list". That's where the directories come in. You can utilize the directories at the beginning of your college search to help you make initial selections. Then you can use other sources to pare down the list.



Attend a college fair or talk to the college rep.

Most colleges have brochures, catalogs and web sites. While these are definitely valid places to begin when you are first researching various colleges, they are just that—a good start. But before you make a life-changing choice like the selection of the college you want to attend, you should also talk to real people. Go to college fairs and speak with the college representatives. Typically high schools sponsor college fairs in the fall and college reps visit schools for quality one-on-one sessions with prospective applicants. Take advantage of these opportunities and be prepared—take a list of questions with you so that you don't get home later and wish that you had asked about a certain aspect of the college that you forgot to mention.

In addition, there are national college fairs sponsored by the National Association for College Admission Counseling <http://www.nacac.org> and other similar groups. They may be held at a hotel or convention center and often bring together a large number of colleges. When you go to a college fair, don't be shy about asking the representative all of your questions about the college—that's why they are there.



Beware of the college brochure.

No doubt you'll soon be receiving tons of beautiful full-color brochures from the colleges you've contacted. While these brochures are filled with lots of useful information, remember that they are biased and will tout only the positive aspects of the school. See the pictures of the students studying under the trees in the warm sunshine? That was taken in the early fall before the snow blanketed the campus for next four months. Always view the college's brochure with a healthy dose of caution.

Compare the brochures from the various colleges. They can be useful in helping you assemble a list of questions that you want to ask representatives later in one-to-one interviews. For example, you might see a science building in one college's brochure but wonder why such a photograph is not included in another school's brochure. Could it be that the second school doesn't have a building dedicated to science or perhaps that they share the facility with the math department? If you are looking for a school with a large science department, that might be important to you. It could be a question for the rep from that school when you talk later.



Don't rely on news magazine rankings.

One student we know used the *U.S. News & World Report* annual college rankings as her only criteria for applying to college. She was accepted by three of the five colleges to which she applied. Only one problem: She realized later that she didn't want to move to the East Coast where all the schools were located! Sure, you can use rankings as a guide to reputation (whatever that means!) but you definitely need to do your own research and have concrete reasons for applying.

Just as you used the college directories, brochures, catalogs and web sites to help you get started in your initial search for possible college choices, include news magazine rankings in your beginning research. If nothing else, the rankings might help you pose questions for representatives of those colleges. A word of advice: Keep your research organized. Too many statistics can be overwhelming if you don't keep up with what you find. Perhaps you can start a folder for each college or a notebook with pocketed dividers. Separate the information you gather for each school and put the rankings information in its place, right next to the brochures and notes you took at the College Fair.



Don't worry about money (yet).

Until now, we have not discussed what is perhaps the biggest factor in determining where you will go to college—money. Yes, it is true that college costs a bundle, with private colleges being especially guilty of exorbitant prices. However, at this point, do not let costs dictate your goals. Even if money is tight, don't make it your primary concern just yet. (If you have trouble paying for the application fee, ask your counselor about a fee waiver.) While tuition is expensive, there is also a ton of financial aid available. Just last year over \$97 billion in financial aid was given to students to help them pay for college. The real question is not how much a college costs, but how much you'll have to pay out of pocket after taking into account scholarships and financial aid.

Once you get accepted, you can work with the college to put together a financial aid package that will make the school affordable. Wait until you are accepted by the college and they have determined what kind of financial aid package they can offer you before making cost a limiting factor. It could turn out that with financial aid and scholarships, the most expensive college on your list would actually cost your family the least amount of money.



Final Thoughts ...

As you explore colleges, you'll discover that some factors are not as important to you as others. In fact, the whole point of going through the process outlined in this guide is to discover what aspects of college life will determine your focus as you research. Ultimately, you want to pick schools that meet your needs. As you do your detective work, keep in mind that your college education is one of the most important investments you will ever make in your future and it's worth spending the time to make sure you make the right decision.



Resource
C8

COLLEGE

SHORTLIST STATS

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education



COLLEGE SHORTLIST STATS

College Name: _____ Location: _____

COLLEGE CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: (____) ____ - _____ Contact Person: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Address: _____

COLLEGE INFORMATION

Type of Campus: _____ Number of Students: _____

Gender Breakdown: _____ % male _____ % female

Standardized Test Requirements (circle): SAT I SAT II ACT

Average Test Scores of Accepted Students: SAT _____ ACT _____

Average GPA of Accepted Students: _____ Percentage of Students Accepted: _____

COST

Tuition: \$ _____ Room and Board: \$ _____ Total: \$ _____

Average Financial Aid: \$ _____

Application Deadline: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Majors of Interest, Athletics, Activities, Interesting Facts, etc.)

Based on the above information and your SAT/ACT score, GPA, and overall interests, would you consider this college/university:

- A Safety School (one where you have a good chance of being accepted)
- A Target School (one you feel is a good match)
- A Reach School (one that may be difficult to get in)

Adapted from Cabral, Joshua. "Addressing the Needs of First-Generation, College-Bound Students: A Comprehensive 5th-12th Grade Approach." South Boston Harbor Academy Charter School. 2004



Resource
C9

CAMPUS VISIT CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

CAMPUS VISIT CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS

CAMPUS VISIT CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS

- Schedule a full-day visit (overnight if possible)
- Interview with an admissions officer
 - Make an appointment
 - Draft a list of questions to ask ahead of time
 - Dress appropriately
 - Send a thank you letter to follow-up
- Gather all paperwork needed for admissions, financial aid, housing, and meal plans
- Take a guided campus tour
- Sit in on a class that interests you
- Meet a professor in your area of interest
- Ask about extracurricular activities like intramural sports, Greek life, and religious groups
- Tour residence halls
- Eat on campus in the cafeteria or food court
- Read the student newspaper
- Exercise in the campus gym
- Walk through the library and student center
- Attend a sporting event (schedule and get tickets ahead of time)
- Meet with a coach if you plan to pursue a sport
- Talk with current students; they'll be glad to help
- Explore the city surrounding the campus
- Ask about orientation



Resource
C10

CAMPUS VISIT CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

CAMPUS VISIT CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

Questions for Admissions/Financial Aid

- What are the GPA and SAT/ACT requirements?
- Is there an application fee and when is it due?
- Are there tuition payment plans?
- Any institution specific scholarship programs to be aware of?

Questions for Academics

- What is the retention and graduation rate?
- What type of academic help is available for those in need? Are those services free?
- What type of job-placement or internship services do you offer?
- Are there job fairs or employer recruiting on campus?
- What is the average time taken to graduate?
- What is the student-to-faculty ratio?
- What is the average class size?
- How accessible are professors to students?
- Do you transfer in AP and college equivalent course credits?

Other General Questions

- Do students need cars to get around? Are freshman allowed to have a car on campus?
- Are there adequate computer labs on campus or will students need their own personal computer?
- What security features are there on campus? Are there campus police and emergency boxes?
- Do most students live on campus or commute?



Resource
C11

NASFAA STUDENT AID PROGRAM SUMMARY

from the National Association of Student
Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)

*In addition to the General Student Eligibility Requirements.

Program	Description	Application	Annual/Aggregate Amounts	Eligibility*	Repayment Required
Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)	Campus-based grant program. Funds awarded by institution.	FAFSA required annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$100 annual minimum. \$4,000 annual maximum (students on approved study abroad programs may receive up to \$4,400). No aggregate limit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate students without baccalaureate or professional degree. First priority given to Federal Pell Grant recipients with "exceptional financial need" (defined by law). 	No.
Federal Work-Study (FWS)	Campus-based employment program. Funds awarded by institution.	FAFSA required annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No minimum or maximum. Award amount is dictated by school policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate and graduate students. Based on need. 	No.
Federal Perkins Loan	Campus-based loan program. Funds awarded by institution. 5% interest.	FAFSA required annually. Master Promissory Note (MPN) provided by school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$5,500/year undergraduates. \$8,000/year graduate students. \$11,000 aggregate limit for students who have not yet completed 2 years of undergraduate program. \$27,500 undergraduate aggregate limit. \$60,000 combined undergraduate and graduate aggregate limit. Study Abroad: Annual and aggregates exceeding above noted amounts by as much as 20%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate and graduate students. First priority given to students with exceptional need (defined by school). Must first have determination of eligibility/ineligibility for Federal Pell Grant. 	Yes; begins 9 months after cessation of at least half-time enrollment. Deferment and cancellation provisions available.

Student Aid Program Summary



Most federal student aid is need-based, taking into account an expected family contribution (EFC). Need-based financial aid comes in three basic types:

- Grants and scholarships**, which are considered gift aid and generally don't have to be paid back (sometimes a repayment is required if a student withdraws);
- Work-study**, which is money that you earn by working part-time while in school; and
- Loans**, which are funds that you (or your parent) borrow and must be paid back, usually after you leave school.

The following chart details the main federal student aid programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Not all schools participate in all of the programs listed.

Program	Description	Application	Annual/Aggregate Amounts	Eligibility*	Repayment Required
Federal Pell Grant	Grant program (Portable).	FAFSA required annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual minimum and maximum vary. \$577 minimum for 2012-13. \$5,550 maximum for 2012-13 Receive for a maximum of 12 semesters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergraduate students without first baccalaureate or professional degree. Certain students enrolled in a post-baccalaureate teaching certification program. Based on need. 	No.
Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant	Grant Program (Conditional). ¹ (Portable). ²	FAFSA required for 2012-13.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$4,000 annual maximum. \$16,000 undergraduate aggregate limit (includes postsecondary certification). \$8,000 graduate aggregate limit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.25 GPA or qualifying score on admissions test. Agree to teach full time for at least 4 years within 8 years of graduation at a school serving a high percentage of low income students (Title I schools). Agree to teach a specific subject. 	Repayment required if student does not fulfill teaching requirement; grant funds become a Direct Unsubsidized Loan.

*In addition to the General Student Eligibility Requirements.

¹Failure to meet teaching obligation results in conversion of grant to Direct Unsubsidized Loan.

²Depending on institutional participation.

Program	Description	Application	Annual/Aggregate Amounts	Eligibility*	Repayment Required
Federal Direct Student Loan—(Direct Loan)—Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans	Funds from federal government. Fixed interest rate.	FAFSA required annually. MPN obtained from school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$3,500 1st-year undergraduates. • \$4,500 2nd-year undergraduates. • \$5,500 each remaining undergraduate year. • Undergraduate annual limits prorated for programs and remaining periods of enrollment less than an academic year. • \$2,625 for preparatory coursework necessary to enroll in undergraduate program.³ • \$5,500 for preparatory coursework necessary to enroll in graduate or professional degree program if already have baccalaureate.³ • \$5,500/year for teacher certification if already have baccalaureate. • \$23,000 undergraduate aggregate subsidized limit. • \$65,500 combined undergraduate and graduate aggregate subsidized limit.⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at least half-time. • Must first have determination of eligibility/ineligibility for Federal Pell Grant. • Must determine eligibility for subsidized Stafford Loan before determining eligibility for Direct Unsubsidized Loan. • Interest subsidy based on need. • Unsubsidized funds may be used to replace EFC. 	<p>Yes; begins 6 months after cessation of at least half-time enrollment. Deferral possible. No interest subsidy on unsubsidized loan.</p>

*In addition to the General Student Eligibility Requirements.

³Direct Loan eligibility is limited to one 12-month period for student enrolled in preparatory coursework.

⁴Effective with periods of enrollment beginning on or after 7/1/12, graduate and professional students are not eligible to borrow Direct Subsidized Loans.

Program	Description	Application	Annual/Aggregate Amounts	Eligibility*	Repayment Required
Direct Loan—Additional Unsubsidized Loan	Same as Direct Subsidized Loan.	FAFSA required annually. MPN obtained from school.	<p>Annual Loan Limits Dependent undergraduates whose parents can borrow a PLUS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2,000/year; and • Undergraduate annual limits prorated for programs or remaining periods of enrollment less than an academic year. <p>Dependent students whose parents cannot borrow a PLUS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$6,000/year 1st and 2nd undergraduate year; • \$7,000 each remaining undergraduate year; • Undergraduate annual limits prorated for programs or remaining periods of enrollment less than an academic year; • \$7,000/year for teacher certification; and • \$6,000 for preparatory coursework necessary to enroll in undergraduate program.³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have determination of eligibility/ineligibility for Federal Pell Grant. • Must determine eligibility for Direct Subsidized Loan before determining eligibility for additional Direct Unsubsidized Loan. • May be used to replace EFC. 	<p>Yes; same as Direct Subsidized Loan.</p>

*In addition to the General Student Eligibility Requirements.

³Direct Loan eligibility is limited to one 12-month period for student enrolled in preparatory coursework.

³In addition to the General Student Eligibility Requirements, Direct Loan eligibility is limited to one 12-month period for student enrolled in preparatory coursework.

Program	Description	Application	Annual/Aggregate Amounts	Eligibility*	Repayment Required
Direct Loan— Additional Unsubsidized Loan (cont'd)			<p>Independent students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$6,000/year 1st and 2nd undergraduate year; and • \$7,000 each remaining undergraduate year. <p>Undergraduate annual limits prorated for programs or remaining periods of enrollment less than an academic year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20,500/year graduate or professional students. • \$7,000/year for teacher certification. • \$6,000 for preparatory coursework necessary to enroll in undergraduate program.³ • \$7,000 for preparatory coursework necessary to enroll in graduate or professional degree program if already have baccalaureate.³ <p>Aggregate Loan Limits Dependent undergraduates whose parents can borrow PLUS: \$31,000 minus outstanding subsidized amounts. Dependent undergraduates whose parents cannot borrow PLUS and independent undergraduates: \$57,500 minus outstanding subsidized amounts. Independent graduate, professional, or post-baccalaureate students: Defined by the Department of Education.</p>		

Program	Description	Application	Annual/Aggregate Amounts	Eligibility*	Repayment Required
Direct PLUS	Funds from federal government. 7.9% fixed interest rate.	FAFSA required annually. PLUS MPN obtained from school.	No annual or aggregate amounts, except parent or graduate/professional student may not borrow more than difference between cost of attendance and other financial assistance student expects to receive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural and adoptive parents (and stepparents if included on FAFSA) of eligible dependent undergraduates enrolled at least half time and graduate/professional students. • No adverse credit history. • Must not be in default on a federal loan. • Must be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen. • May be used to replace EFC. 	Yes; first payment due within 60 days after loan fully disbursed. Deferment available.

*In addition to the General Student Eligibility Requirements.



Resource
C12

TOP 10 TIPS
FOR WINNING
SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATIONS

from Kay Peterson, Ph.D.,
FastWeb.com

TOP 10 TIPS FOR WINNING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

- 1. Apply only if you are eligible.** Read all the scholarship requirements and directions carefully. Make sure you are eligible before you send in your application.
- 2. Complete the application in full.** If a question does not apply to you, note that on the application. Do not leave a question blank. Be sure to supply all additional supporting materials, including transcripts, letters of recommendation, and essays.
- 3. Follow directions.** Provide everything that is required. However, do not supply things that are not requested--*you could be disqualified.*
- 4. Neatness counts.** Always type your application, or if you must print do so neatly and legibly. Make a couple of photocopies of all the forms before you fill them out. Use the copies as working drafts as you develop your application packet. If filling out an application online, make sure everything is typed properly.
- 5. Write an essay that makes a strong impression.** The key to writing a strong essay is to be personal and specific. Include concrete details to make your experience come alive: the who, what, when, and where of your topic. The simplest experience can be monumental if you honestly present how you were affected.
- 6. Watch all deadlines.** To help keep yourself on track, impose your own deadline that is at least two weeks prior to the official deadline. Use the buffer time to make sure everything is ready on time. Do not rely on extensions--very few scholarship providers allow them at all.
- 7. Make sure your application gets where it needs to go.** Put your name (and Social Security number, if applicable) on all pages of the application. Pieces of your application may get lost unless they are clearly identified.
- 8. Keep a back-up file in case anything goes wrong.** Before sending the application, make a copy of the entire packet. If your application goes astray, you will be able to reproduce it quickly.
- 9. Give it a final 'once-over.'** Proofread the entire application carefully. Be on the lookout for misspelled words or grammatical errors. Ask a friend, teacher, or parent to proofread it as well.
- 10. Ask for help if you need it.** If you have problems with the application, do not hesitate to call the funding organization.

Source: Kay Peterson, Ph.D., Fastweb.com



Resource
C13

COST OF ATTENDANCE COMPARISON WORKSHEET

from the National Association of Student
Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)



Cost of Attendance Comparison Worksheet

The actual cost of attendance (COA) is unique for each student at each school. While some expenses are fixed (like tuition and fees), others are influenced and controlled by the student's lifestyle (like housing and personal expenses). When considering the award package from a particular school, or in comparing packages from multiple schools, you can use this worksheet to compare your cost expectations to each school's estimated total COA. The goal of this comparison is to better decide if the resulting difference is realistically manageable given the resources available to your family and the aid being offered by each school. Copy this worksheet as needed.

School	1.		2.		3.	
	My Expectation	School's Estimate	My Expectation	School's Estimate	My Expectation	School's Estimate
Tuition and Fees	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Room	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Board	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Books and Supplies	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Computer Costs	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Transportation	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Personal:						
Clothing	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Laundry	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Medical	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Entertainment	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Other _____	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Other _____	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Other _____	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total COA	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Difference between my expectation and school's estimate	\$		\$		\$	



7 STRAIGHTFORWARD STEPS TO FEDERAL STUDENT AID

from the U.S. Department of Education
Federal Student Aid and sccango.org



SEVEN STRAIGHTFORWARD STEPS TO FEDERAL STUDENT AID

STEP ONE

Get free information and help from your school counselor, the college financial aid office, or the U.S. Department of Education (ED) at www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov or **1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)**. Help should always be free during the application process.

STEP TWO

Get a Federal Student Aid personal identification number (PIN). A PIN lets you apply, “sign” your online FAFSASM form, make corrections to your application information, and more—so keep it safe. Go to www.pin.ed.gov.

STEP THREE

Collect the documents needed to apply for financial aid, including income tax returns, W-2 forms and other records of income. A full list of what you need is at www.fafsa.ed.gov. If your tax return is not completed at the time you apply, estimate the tax information, apply, and correct the information later.

STEP FOUR

Complete your FAFSA form between Jan. 1, 2010, and June 30, 2010. To meet school and state deadlines it is best to apply as soon as possible after Jan. 1.* Apply online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

STEP FIVE

ED will send you your Student Aid Report (SAR)—the result of your FAFSA. Review your FAFSA and your SAR. If necessary, make changes or corrections and submit your SAR for reprocessing. Your complete, correct SAR will contain your Expected Family Contribution (EFC)—the number used to determine your federal student aid eligibility.

STEP SIX

Your school might request additional information from you. Be sure to respond by any deadlines, or you might not receive federal student aid.

STEP SEVEN

All applicants: Contact the financial aid office if you have any questions about the aid being offered.
First-time applicants: Review award letters from schools and decide which school to attend.

Note * You also might be able to get financial aid from your state government, your school, or a private scholarship. Research nonfederal aid early (ideally, start in the spring of your junior year of high school). Be sure to meet all application deadlines!

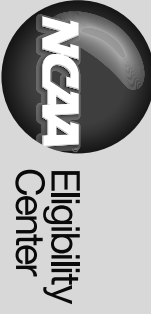


NCAA ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

from the NCAA Eligibility Center’s
2012-13 Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete



www.eligibilitycenter.org
 877/262-1492
 317/223-0700
 P.O. Box 7136
 Indianapolis, IN 46207-7136



2012-13 Path to the Student-Athlete Experience

If you wish to participate in NCAA Division I or II athletics, you need to be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center. You need to qualify academically and you will also need to be cleared as an amateur student-athlete. You are responsible for achieving and protecting your eligibility status!



colleges/universities

at more than 1,100

23 sports

participating in

student-athletes

400,000

more than

The NCAA salutes

Checklist for College-Bound Student-Athletes

- Register at the beginning of your sophomore year at www.eligibilitycenter.org.
- Ask your high school counselor to send your transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center at the end of your junior year.
- Take the ACT or SAT and use the code "9999" to have your official scores sent directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center.
- Check with your high school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate on time with your class and have the required amount of core courses.
- Request final amateurism certification during your senior year (Beginning April 1).
- Ask your high school counselor to submit your final transcript with proof of graduation.



Divisions I and II Initial-Eligibility Requirements

Core Courses

- NCAA Division I currently requires 16 core courses. NCAA Division II will require 16 core courses for students enrolling on or after **August 1, 2013**.
- Beginning **August 1, 2016**, NCAA Division I will require 10 core courses to be completed prior to the seventh semester (seven of the 10 core courses must be a combination of English, math or natural or physical science that meet the distribution requirements to the right). These 10 courses become "locked in" at the seventh semester and cannot be retaken for grade improvement.
 - Beginning **August 1, 2016**, it will be possible for a Division I college-bound student-athlete to still receive athletics aid and the ability to practice with the team if he or she fails to meet the 10 course requirement. However, the student-athlete would not be able to compete.

Grade-Point Average

- Only courses that appear on your high school's List of NCAA Courses will be used in the calculation of your core GPA. For a complete list of your school's courses, follow the instructions on the right side of this brochure.
- Currently, Division I uses a Sliding Scale to match test scores and core GPAs. The Sliding Scale can be found on page No. 10 of the Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete found at www.eligibilitycenter.org.
- Division I GPA required to be eligible for competition on or after August 1, 2016, is 2.300.
- Division I GPA required to receive athletics aid and practice on or after August 1, 2016, is 2.000.
- The Division II core GPA requirement is a minimum of 2.000.



Test Scores

- Division I uses a sliding scale to match test scores and core grade-point averages (GPA).
- Division II requires a minimum SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.
- The SAT score used for NCAA purposes includes only the critical reading and math sections. The writing section of the SAT is not used.
- The ACT score used NCAA purposes is a sum of the following four sections: English, mathematics, reading and science.

To view the Division I Sliding Scale, visit www.eligibilitycenter.org and enter as an NCAA College-Bound Student-Athlete. Then, click the "Resources" tab, then "U.S. Students" and finally, "Eligibility Quick Reference Sheet".

When you register for the SAT or ACT, use the NCAA Eligibility Center code of 9999 to ensure all SAT and ACT scores are reported directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center from the testing agency. Test scores that appear on transcripts will not be used.

Division I (16 Core Courses)

- 4 years of English.
- 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher).
- 2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school).
- 1 year of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.
- 2 years of social science.
- 4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language or comparative religion/philosophy).

Division II (*16 Core Courses)

- 3 years of English.
- 2 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher).
- 2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school).
- 3 years of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.
- 2 years of social science.
- 4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language or comparative religion/philosophy).

For a Complete List of NCAA Courses Visit www.eligibilitycenter.org and enter the site as an NCAA College-Bound Student-Athlete. Navigate to the "Resources" tab, click "U.S. Students" and then "List of NCAA Courses." Follow the prompts to search for your high school's list by name.

*For students enrolling on or after August 1, 2013.

Division I Worksheet

This worksheet is provided to assist you in monitoring your progress in meeting NCAA initial-eligibility standards. The NCAA Eligibility Center will determine your academic status after you graduate. Remember to check your high school's List of NCAA Courses for the classes you have taken. Use the following scale:

A = 4 quality points; B = 3 quality points; C = 2 quality points; D = 1 quality point.

English (4 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Example: English 9	.5		A		(.5 x 4) = 2
Total English Units					Total Quality Points

Mathematics (3 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Example: Algebra 1	1.0		B		(1.0 x 3) = 3
Total Mathematics Units					Total Quality Points

Natural/physical science (2 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Total Natural/Physical Science Units					Total Quality Points

Additional year in English, mathematics or natural/physical science (1 year required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Total Additional Units					Total Quality Points

Social science (2 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Total Social Science Units					Total Quality Points

Additional academic courses (4 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Total Additional Academic Units					Total Quality Points

Core-Course GPA (16 required) Beginning August 1, 2016, 10 core courses to be completed prior to the seventh semester and seven of the 10 must be a combination of English, math or natural or physical science.

Total Quality Points	Total Number of Credits	Core-Course GPA (Total Quality Points/Total Credits)
-----------------------------	--------------------------------	---

Division II Worksheet

This worksheet is provided to assist you in monitoring your progress in meeting NCAA initial-eligibility standards. The NCAA Eligibility Center will determine your academic status after you graduate. Remember to check your high school's List of NCAA Courses for the classes you have taken. Use the following scale:

A = 4 quality points; B = 3 quality points; C = 2 quality points; D = 1 quality point.

English (3 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Example: English 9	.5		A		(.5 x 4) = 2
Total English Units					Total Quality Points

Mathematics (2 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Example: Algebra 1	1.0		B		(1.0 x 3) = 3
Total Mathematics Units					Total Quality Points

Natural/physical science (2 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Total Natural/Physical Science Units					Total Quality Points

Additional years in English, math or natural/physical science (3 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Total Additional Units					Total Quality Points

Social science (2 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Total Social Science Units					Total Quality Points

Additional academic courses (4 years required)

Course Title	Credit	X	Grade	=	Quality Points (multiply credit by grade)
Total Additional Academic Units					Total Quality Points

Core-Course GPA (16 required)

Total Quality Points	Total Number of Credits	Core-Course GPA (Total Quality Points/Total Credits)
-----------------------------	--------------------------------	---



Resource
C16

EXAM DAY:
SURVIVAL TIPS

from the College Board
collegeboard.org

Exam Day: Survival Tips Essential Test-Taking Advice

Try out these strategies while you're still in high school, and by the time you get to college, you'll be a test-taking expert.

Before the Test

Eat well.

Studies show that you need good nutrition to concentrate and perform your best.

Bring the right supplies.

Bring your pencils, erasers, pens, rulers, compasses, calculators or whatever else you need on test day.

Review the whole test before you start.

See how many sections and what types of questions are on the test. Determine how much time to allow for completing each section.

Jot down your first thoughts.

During your first scan of the test, make quick notes about your thoughts. For example, you may want to outline your answers to written-response and essay questions right away.

During the Test

Read the directions.

It's important that you follow the instructions exactly. For example, some questions may have more than one correct answer.

Answer easy questions first.

Doing this can jog your memory about useful facts. You may also come across information that can help you with other questions.

Answer every question.

Unless there is a penalty for wrong answers, try to answer every question; you may be able to get partial credit for those you begin but don't complete correctly.

Ask questions.

If a question isn't clear, talk to your teacher. If that's not possible, explain your answer in the margin.

Identify key words.

This helps you focus on the main idea of challenging questions.

Rephrase difficult questions.

To understand questions better, rewrite them in your own words. Be careful not to change the meaning.

Organize your thoughts before you write.


Take time to organize your responses to short-answer and essay questions. You'll reduce the time you need to revise.

Write neatly.

Be sure you don't lose points on answers the teacher can't read.

Use all the time you're given.

If you finish early, don't leave. Use the extra time to proofread and review your answers.

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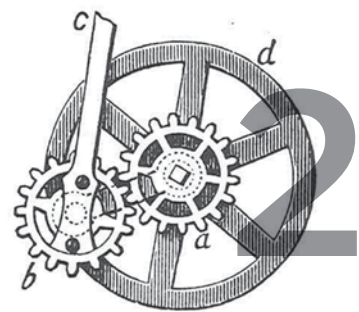
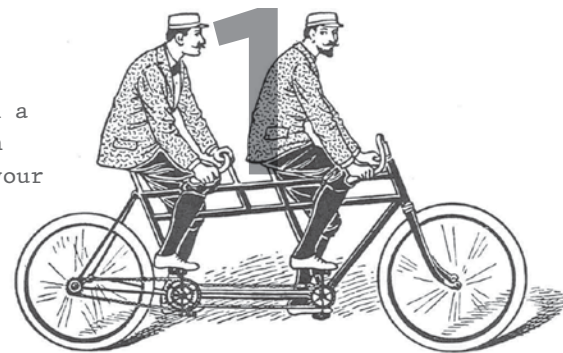
CREATE YOUR VERY OWN COLLEGE APPLICATION TEAM

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

CREATING YOUR VERY OWN COLLEGE APPLICATION TEAM

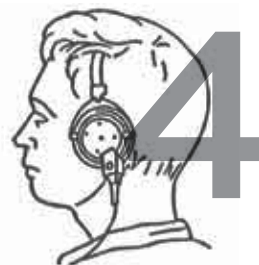
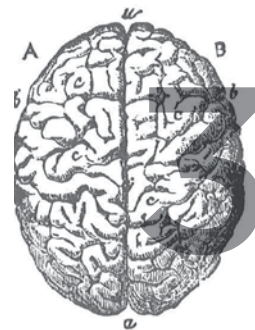
WHAT IF YOU HAD A WHOLE TEAM OF PEOPLE DEDICATED TO HELPING YOU GET INTO COLLEGE? THIS TEAM WOULD ADVISE YOU, ENCOURAGE YOU, AND REMIND YOU OF CRUCIAL DETAILS. DOES IT SOUND TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE? IT'S NOT. ALL IT TAKES IS A LITTLE ACTION ON YOUR PART AND A LITTLE HELP FROM YOUR FRIENDS.

RECRUIT A FELLOW STUDENT. Working with a few friends is a great way to hold each other accountable as you move through your application checklists.



MEET WITH YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR. Schedule a meeting with this in-school expert and take advantage of the wealth of information available.

WORK WITH A PARENT, A TEACHER, OR A COACH. You'll make several life-changing decisions in the coming months. It helps to have someone on your team that you admire and trust.



ASK A COLLEGE STUDENT. Speaking with someone who has recently been accepted to college can clear up any confusion about the admission process.



Resource
C18

TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR COLLEGE ADMISSION ESSAY

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR COLLEGE ADMISSION ESSAY

Your college admissions essay is an opportunity to communicate something about yourself that your application can't say. What you choose to write about is often your decision, but it can be one of the most important aspects of your essay. Remember that your choice can say a lot about who you are — so let your essay topic choice speak for you.

- Take your time and avoid stress. Start early enough so you don't have to rush and give yourself plenty of time to do the best you can.
- Start by creating an outline, making sure you have a clear focus. Take the time to go beyond the obvious. Think about what most students might write in response to the question and then try something a little different.
- Nothing draws a reader in more than writing that's invigorating. When choosing your topics, pick what genuinely excites you. Your enthusiasm will show through.
- Be original and keep your statements personal, accessible, and informative. Those reading your essay want to hear about you.
- Avoid clichéd, generic, and predictable writing by using vivid and specific details.
- Avoid offensive tone or language.
- Although admissions officers love essays that make them laugh, using humor for humor's sake can sometimes come across as immature or insincere. It's more important to tell an interesting story and let any humor be inherent.
- Share your opinions, but avoid anything too risky or controversial. Your essay will be read by a diverse group of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, so try to appeal to the broadest audience possible.
- Adhere to the word limit. If the school instructs you to write 500 words or less, don't write 600. And, if your essay runs a little short, don't feel obligated to fill the extra space.
- Spend the most time on your introduction. Expect admissions officers to spend 1-2 minutes reading your essay. You must use your introduction to grab their interest from the beginning.
- Conclusions are crucial. The conclusion is your last chance to persuade the reader or impress upon them your qualifications. Consider linking your conclusion to your introduction to establish a sense of balance by reiterating introductory phrases.
- Allow time for proofing and editing. Typos and spelling or grammatical errors can be interpreted as carelessness or just bad writing.
- You'll need to rewrite and edit your essay several times before you consider it final. Keep in mind that the essay must be more than interesting — it must be captivating.
- Ask a friend or family member to read a rough draft so you can correct errors and rewrite any sections that aren't clear. Limit the number of people from whom you request feedback on your essay; too many opinions can cause confusion.
- Answer each school's essay individually. Recycled "utility essays" come across as impersonal and sanitized. The one exception is an essay written for and submitted to Common Application member schools.



Resource
C19

TIPS FOR
LETTERS OF
RECOMMENDATION

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

TIPS FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

- Ask someone who is credible
- Ask those who you know best
- Ask those who know you professionally
- Ask those who view you positively
- Ask those who can speak to your strengths and best qualities
- As a rule of thumb, ask for the letter at least one month before the deadline
- Be clear in your request: make sure the recommender knows the destination of the letter, the deadline, and generally what to include
- Keep in mind that the recommender is doing you a favor by writing the letter, so be courteous, grateful, polite, and patient with the process
- Make it easy on the recommender by providing organized information about yourself including but not limited to personal accomplishments, GPA, and awards so they have easy references
- Provide the recommender with a stamped envelope addressed to the school you are sending it to, or schedule a time to pick up the letter



Resource
C20

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE APPLICATION DAY

from CollegeNet.com and the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

STUDENT HANDOUT

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE APPLICATION DAY: INSTRUCTION SHEET

COMPLETE THE COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Having this information completed before you start to apply will save a tremendous amount of time when you are completing your college applications.

RESEARCH YOUR COLLEGE OPTIONS

Check out colleges and universities on the College Search feature at www.scpathways.org. There, you can gather detailed information about a variety of college and universities. Use the checklist on the next page to keep track of college admission requirements for your top three colleges.

RESEARCH APPLICATION DEADLINES

While you are researching colleges, find out what deadlines, if any, campuses have for applications. Some schools will not accept applications after a certain date, so if you have a favorite school, make sure to find out early in your search what the application schedule is.

PREPARE FOR APPLICATION FEES

Most colleges require an application fee when you submit an online application. The introduction page to the application will inform you of the fee amount, if any. *Unless you have a fee waiver from your school counselor, you need to be prepared to enter a credit/debit card number or mail a check once you complete your online application.* If you think you may be eligible for an application fee waiver, contact your high school counselor.

PREPARE ESSAY AND/OR PERSONAL STATEMENTS

What if you are required to submit an admission essay or personal statement? Bring your essay(s) with you preloaded on a jump drive so that you can easily copy your essay into your online application. Make sure you have a hard copy as well for back-up. You will be able to upload your essay file or copy and paste it during the online application session.

Complete the student information checklist on the following form. This information will help guide you as you prepare to fill out your college application. Keep in mind that some of the information is confidential, so you should keep this document in a safe place. All colleges will not require all information, but you should record it just in case. It's better to have it and not need it than need it and not have it. Please bring your complete College Application Checklist with you to your appointment to fill out your college application.

If you have any questions, contact your guidance counselor.

STUDENT HANDOUT

ACCESSING ONLINE APPLICATIONS

On College Application Day, direct students to the SCHOLAR Web site at the following address: <http://www.sccango.org/applyscholar.html>.

This site is designed to simplify the application process for multiple South Carolina schools, public and private.

The screenshot shows the SCHOLAR website interface. At the top left is the SC CAN logo with the tagline "SOUTH CAROLINA can go to college". Below it are links for "Back to Main SC CAN Site" and "Contact Us". A sidebar on the left contains a survey link: "Please take a few minutes to complete an online survey about your recent College Application Week event." and a "Student Survey Volunteer Survey" link. The main content area features the heading "APPLY YOURSELF. SERIOUSLY." and a search bar. Below this is a descriptive paragraph about the site's purpose. The main content is organized into three columns of institutions:

- Public Institutions:** Aiken Technical College, Central Carolina Technical College, Clemson University*, Coastal Carolina University*, College of Charleston*, Denmark Technical College, Florence-Darlington Technical College, Francis Marion University*, Greenville Technical College, Horry-Georgetown Technical College, Lander University, Low Country Graduate Center, Medical University of South Carolina*, Midlands Technical College, Northeastern Technical College*, Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College*, Piedmont Technical College, South Carolina State University*, Spartanburg Community College, Technical College of the Lowcountry*, The Citadel*, Tri-Country Technical College, Trident Technical College*, USC Aiken, USC Beaufort*, USC Columbia*, USC Salkehatchie*, USC Lancaster*, USC Sumter*, USC Union*, USC Upstate*, Williamsburg Technical College, Winthrop University*, York Technical College.
- SC Independent Colleges and Universities:** Allen University, Anderson University, Benedict College, Charleston Southern University*, Christ Central Institute, Claflin University, Coker College, Columbia College, Columbia International University, Converse College, Erskine College, Furman University, Limestone College, Morris College, Newberry College*, North Greenville University*, Presbyterian College*, Southern Wesleyan University*, Spartanburg Methodist College*, Voohees College, Wofford College.
- Other Colleges and Universities:** American College of the Building Arts, Art Institute of Charleston*, Bob Jones University, Brown Mackie College, Cathedral Bible College, Charleston School of Law, Christ Central Institute, Clinton Junior College, Columbia International Seminary, ECPPI University, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine, Erskine Theological Seminary, Forrest College, Forrest Junior College, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Holmes Bible College, Fortis College, ITT Technical Institute, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Remington College, Saint Leo University, Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic, South University, Strayer University, Troy University, University of Phoenix, Virginia College, Webster University.

All of the institutions that have an asterisk (*) use the same online application service provider, CollegeNET. As previously mentioned, students can use a single login and username for any of the asterisked institutions. Aside from the asterisk, students can easily identify they are applying to a CollegeNET school by looking at the URL on the Web page. All CollegeNET schools' online application Web links begin with: <https://www.applyweb.com>.

If a school does not have an asterisk, then they are using a different online application delivery system. More than likely, students will have to create different usernames and passwords for these applications. A good rule of thumb is to advise your students to create similar usernames and passwords for all of their applications to avoid confusion.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING CollegeNET ONLINE APPLICATIONS

This only applies to schools that use CollegeNET as an application delivery system.

1. Create your account.

- Enter your account information exactly as instructed on the form.
- Click the 'Create My Account' button at the bottom of the form.
- Write down your username and password for future reference (e.g., when reentering the system).

2. Fill out your form.

You can complete your form in any order and save your work and come back to it later—even from a different computer!

- If your form has more than one page, use the navigation tools found on any of the pages to move forward and backward in the form.
- To save what you have done so far without exiting, click the 'Save' button.
- To save what you have done so far and exit (you will be taken to your Activity Log), click the 'Finish Session' or 'Save and Exit' button.
- To reaccess your form to continue working on it, return to the form menu, select the form, and enter your username and password when prompted.
- Typically, if a field is required, it will be noted with an asterisk (*).
- In most cases, each screen will indicate if information is missing or incomplete. You will be required to correct or complete the information before continuing to the next screen.

All of your saves and transmissions are logged in your Activity Log for your review.

3. Make corrections to your data.

You may see a Data Correction Page when you move from page to page, or when you submit the form.

A Data Correction Page appears if you have omitted a required field or entered data incorrectly. Changes you need to make appear in red text. Simply enter the correct data, scroll down to the bottom of the page, and click the appropriate button.

4. Submit the form.

Check your form carefully. When you are satisfied with it and are ready to send it to us, click the 'Send' button at the bottom of the last page. This saves your data in its final form and takes you to the payment page where you pay your form fee online.

Your form is not sent to us until you pay your form fee and it is authorized (step 5).

5. Pay your form fee online.

On the payment page, you can pay your form fee by debit/credit card or check (U.S. bank accounts only).

If you are paying by debit or credit card:

- Provide all information, including the complete credit card number, expiration date, and card billing information.
- Click the 'Submit This Information' button.

If you are paying by check:

- Pay by Check is available online (CollegeNET does not accept checks sent by mail) through U.S. bank accounts only.
- Please note: In order to ensure accurate processing of your check, there will be a verification period of six business days between the time you submit the electronic check payment and the time this institution receives the form.

Once payment is authorized, your form is on its way, and you can no longer make changes to it.

Security Information: Your debit/credit card information is encrypted during transmission from your browser to our server and during payment authorization. None of your debit/credit card information is stored in our database.

6. Check your Activity Log to print a copy of your form or to learn if we have received it.
7. Close your browser program when you are ready to end your Web session. This clears your password and secure connection.

HINTS FOR COMPLETING YOUR FORM

- Select the appropriate residence and/or citizenship country code using the 'Search' button: click the button and select your country code from the list. It will be entered automatically in the form.
- Check your form carefully before sending it!
- There are usually other requirements for admission such as having transcripts, test scores, and/or letters of recommendation sent to us. Be sure to fulfill these requirements in addition to submitting your form.

WEB FORM FEATURES

- The Web form server stores the information you enter under the private username and password you establish.
- You do not have to complete a form in one sitting. For example, you can start working on a Web form at your library's computer facility, save your work, access the form at home on your personal computer, and continue working from there. Wherever you have access to the Web, you have access to the information you have saved.
- When you complete more than one form, common information you provided on the first form is entered automatically in all subsequent forms. For example, if you have entered your name and address on a form and saved it, that information will be entered automatically on the next online form you access (assuming, of course, that the next form also has name and address fields). Also, if you change the information on one form, it is changed on all others.

- Your data are transmitted securely over the Internet. The information you enter is encrypted and secure when you save it and when you send it. Although general data collected on the system may be used in statistical studies and reports designed to assist institutions with planning, any information bearing your personal identification is disclosed only to the department to which you send it.
- When you save or transmit form information, a note appears in your Activity Log. You can easily check your Activity Log at any time to see your form activity and to learn when we have acknowledged receipt of your form.

Language taken from www.CollegeNET.com.

NOW THAT I'VE APPLIED, WHAT'S NEXT?

How do I pay for application fees?

You may be required to pay an application fee for some college applications or you may qualify for a fee waiver to cover the cost of application fees. For further information on fee waivers, speak directly with your school counselor.

If you are required to pay, here are a few payment options:

CHECK

Once you have submitted your online application, you can send a check in the mail to that school. Be sure to include a copy of your confirmation page with your payment.

CREDIT CARD

You can pay with a credit card online. Check to see what cards each school accepts (e.g., Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover). If you decide to pay with a credit card, the following information is required:

- Type of card
- Credit card number
- Expiration date
- Name as it appears on the card
- Security code (the three- or four-digit number on the back of the card)

If you do not wish to submit the application online, you can save it, print it, and mail it in along with your payment.

What about additional information?

Depending on the school, you may be required to submit additional information to complete the application process. They may ask you to submit essays, test scores, and/or transcripts. It is best to find out the application requirements for each school you plan to apply to prior to completing the online application. Do not delay submission of those documents. The sooner you submit them, the sooner you receive a response from the school.

How do I confirm submission of my application?

Once you have completed and submitted your application, you will be directed to a confirmation page. Make sure you print this page for your records, and some schools may require you to submit a signed copy to complete the application process.

When will I hear from the schools?

The schools' admissions offices should contact you through e-mail or by letter once you have submitted all the requirements for the application process. If you do not hear from them within one to two weeks, contact the admissions offices of the schools you applied to and follow up on your application status.

I've applied. Now how do I pay for college?

Worried about paying for college? There are plenty of resources out there to help you make it happen. To learn more about financial aid options that could work for you, visit www.sccango.org/students and click 'Paying for College.'

In order to receive any form of financial aid, you will need to complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. You may be eligible for additional aid, so it's a good idea to complete your application form early.

If you're interested in one-on-one assistance completing the FAFSA form, make sure you attend a local College Goal South Carolina event during the spring. College Goal SC provides assistance in applying for financial aid to families who need it. By delivering help to families in their own communities, College Goal SC helps to ensure that students get the help they need to qualify for financial aid. To learn more about College Goal SC visit www.collegegoalsc.org.

PARTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION

As the student, it is your responsibility to make sure that all of your college applications and all supporting materials are sent to the colleges to which you wish to apply. Your high school is responsible for sending the transcript and a secondary school report (if required). If a teacher agrees to write a letter of recommendation, that teacher is responsible for submitting it. BUT you, the student, are responsible for following your school's policy for requesting transcripts and letters of recommendations. Know what you are expected to do!

Listed below is everything that could be required, but you might not be asked to submit everything on this list to every college. For example, there are many colleges that do not require students to write essays. There also are many colleges that do not require standardized test scores.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A COLLEGE APPLICATION?

1. **Official Transcript:** Your transcript is the record of all the courses you have taken for high school credit, your grades, and credits earned. Other information that might be included on a transcript: GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, courses in progress. This is normally sent directly from your high school to the college.
2. **Standardized Test Scores:** SAT or ACT Scores
3. **The Application Form:** You are responsible for requesting an application form, completing it, and submitting it by the college deadline (by mail or online). Many colleges accept The Common Application. No matter what school or what application, these will be important components:
 - Personal and Educational Data (e.g., name, address, phone number, e-mail, citizenship and residency information, high schools you have attended, college credits you have earned, parental information, senior year schedule, standardized test scores)
 - Honors and Awards
 - Extracurricular, Personal, and Volunteer Activities
 - Employment, Internships, and Summer Activities (Some colleges allow you to submit a resume in addition to the activity section of their application.)
 - Essays, both short answer and a longer personal essay
 - Disciplinary information
 - Application Fee (Many colleges will accept fee waivers—ask a counselor.)
 - Signature
 - For certain majors, you may be required to audition or be asked to submit a portfolio of artistic work.
4. **Secondary School Report Form or Counselor Recommendation Form:** This is not required by all colleges but, if it is required, you are responsible for submitting this form to the college.

TIP: Usually the person at your school (probably your counselor) who is completing this form asks for information from students and parents ahead of time. If possible, meet with this person before he or she writes a letter of recommendation.

5. **Mid-Year Report Form:** This form is not required by all colleges, but if it is required, it will be submitted by your high school. However, you must request that it be sent. The purpose of the form is for the college to see your grades from the first term of your senior year.
6. **Teacher Recommendation Form:** This form is not required by all colleges, but if it is, the teacher is responsible for sending it. However, you are responsible for asking a teacher to complete it and giving that teacher all the necessary information. Look over this form and imagine what one of your teachers would say about you. Colleges are not only looking for teachers from courses where you have received an A, but from teachers who know you well and can talk about your work ethic, inquisitive nature, and motivation to learn.

STUDENT HANDOUT

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Write your college application user ID and password here.

User ID _____

Password _____

Full Name (First, Middle, Last) _____

Permanent Address (where all mail will be sent) _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone Number _____

Mobile Phone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Social Security Number (optional for most colleges) _____

Driver's License Number _____

Date Issued _____

Use this space to write down your credit card information. If you do not wish to write it here, please have it on the day you fill out your college application because you will need it to pay your application fee. You might also want to check with your guidance counselor to see if you are eligible for a fee waiver.

Type of card
Credit card number
Expiration date
Name on card
Security code

Parent/Guardian Full Name (First, Middle, Last) _____

Relationship to You _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Please indicate the highest education level completed by Parent/Guardian.

- Unknown
 Elementary/Middle School (K-8)
 High School/GED
 2-Year College*
 4-Year College*
 Graduate School*
 Institution* _____
 Degree* _____

Parent/Guardian Full Name (First, Middle, Last) _____

Relationship to You _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Please indicate the highest education level completed by Parent/Guardian.

- Unknown
 Elementary/Middle School (K-8)
 High School/GED
 2-Year College*
 4-Year College*
 Graduate School*
 Institution* _____
 Degree* _____

STUDENT HANDOUT

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

Name of Current High School _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Date Entering High School _____

Anticipated Graduation Date _____

Please list any other high schools you have attended.

High School Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____

Dates of Attendance _____

List any colleges you have attended for which you expect to receive college credit.

College Name _____

City, State _____

Dates of Attendance _____

List the courses you are taking during your senior year. Please indicate any that are Honor, AP, IB, or Dual Enrollment (College Courses)

Fall Semester _____

Spring Semester _____

List any other courses (summer school, online, etc.) _____

SAT Test Date (month/year) _____

Math Score _____

Verbal Score _____

ACT Test Date (month/year) _____

Composite Score _____

STUDENT HANDOUT

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

Date of Birth _____ **Place of Birth** _____

Citizenship (check one) _____ U.S. Citizen
 _____ NOT a U.S. citizen, but permanent resident of the U.S.
 Enter date of resident status granted _____
 _____ Other, give visa type _____

If not a U.S. citizen, are you a legal immigrant _____ Yes
 (permanent resident alien of the U.S.?) _____ No**

**If you answered "no" be prepared to complete the following:

Country of Citizenship _____
 Permanent Residence _____
 Resident Alien Number _____
 Country of Birth _____

List your extracurricular, community and family activities, and hobbies. Be prepared to include specific events and major accomplishments such as musical or artistic talent to volunteer services.

ACTIVITY	GRADE LEVEL				APPROX TIME SPENT		WHEN?		POSITIONS HELD, HONORS WON, LETTERS EARNED OR PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS
	9	10	11	12	HOURS/WEEK	WEEKS/YEAR	SCHOOL YEAR	SUMMER	

Work Experience

NATURE OF WORK/ POSITION HELD	EMPLOYER	DATES OF EMPLOYMENT	HOURS PER WEEK



GLOSSARY OF
ADMISSION TERMS

from EducationPlanner.org



Glossary of Admission Terms

Academic adviser — This is a senior faculty member in your area of concentration who is assigned to advise you on course selections and requirements. Before you declare your major, you will be assigned a temporary faculty adviser.

Accelerated study — This program allows you to graduate in less time than is usually required. For instance, by taking summer terms and extra courses during the academic year, you could finish a bachelor's degree in three years instead of four.

Admissions decisions

- **Admit** — You're in! You are being offered admissions to the college to which you applied. Your high school will receive notification, too.
- **Admit/deny** — You have been admitted but denied any financial aid. It is up to you to figure out how you are going to pay for school.
- **Deny** — You are not in. The decision is made by the college or university admissions committee and is forwarded to you and your high school.
- **Wait list** — You are not in yet but have been placed on a waiting list in case an opening becomes available. Schools rank their wait list in order of priority, and unfortunately, the more competitive schools have years when they never draw from their wait lists. After a certain time, a rejection notice is sent.

Advanced Placement (AP) courses — High-level, quality courses in any of twenty subjects. The program is administered through the College Board to offer high school course descriptions equated to college courses and correlated to AP examinations in those subjects. High schools provide the courses as part of their curriculum to eligible students. Based on the composite score on an AP test, which ranges from 0 to 5, a college may award college credit or advanced placement to a participating student. A score of a 4 or 5 on the AP test is usually required by colleges for credit or advanced placement in college courses. A 3 is sometimes acceptable in foreign languages and some other subject areas. Some colleges limit the number of AP credits that they will recognize. Check schools' policies on AP credits.

Alternative assessment — This method personalizes the admissions process and offers students an opportunity to be viewed more individually and holistically. Less emphasis is placed on standardized test scores and more on the interview, portfolio, recommendations, and essay.

American College Testing (ACT) Program Assessment — An alternative to the SAT, this test has gained wide acceptance by a broad range of institutions in recent years and is given during the school year at test centers. The ACT tests English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. These subject test scores can be used in lieu of SAT II subject tests, which are required for admission to some of the more competitive colleges. The score is the average of all four tests; the maximum score is 36.

Associate degree — A degree granted by a college or university after the satisfactory completion of a two-year full-time program of study or its part-time equivalent. Types of degrees include the Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.), usually granted after the equivalent of the first two years of a four-year college curriculum, and the Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.), awarded upon completion of a technical or vocational program of study.

Award package — This is the way colleges and universities deliver their news about student eligibility for financial aid or grants. The most common packages include Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, and Work Study (see below).

Bachelor's or baccalaureate degree — The degree received after the satisfactory completion of a full-time program of study or its part-time equivalent at a college or university. The Bachelor of Arts (B.A) and the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) are the most common baccalaureates.

Branch campus — A campus connected to, or part of, a large institution. Generally, a student spends the first two years at a branch campus and then transfers to the main campus to complete the baccalaureate degree. A branch campus provides a smaller and more personal environment that may help a student mature personally and academically before moving to a larger and more impersonal environment. A branch campus experience may be a good idea for a student who wants to remain close to home or for an adult learner who wishes to work and attend college classes on a part-time basis.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA) — If admitted to a college, a student does not have to reply until May 1. This allows time to hear from all the colleges to which the student applied before having to make a commitment to any of them. This is especially important because financial aid packages vary from one school to another, and the CRDA allows time to compare packages before deciding.

College-preparatory subjects — Courses taken in high school that are viewed by colleges and universities as a strong preparation for college work. The specific courses are usually in the five majors area of English, history, world languages, mathematics, and science. The courses may be regular, honors-level, or AP offerings, and the latter two categories are often weighted when calculated in the GPA.

College Scholarship Service (CSS) — When the federal government changed the FAFSA form several years ago, the College Board created this program to assist postsecondary institutions, state scholarship programs, and other organizations in measuring a family's financial strength and analyzing its ability to contribute to college costs. CSS processes the PROFILE financial form that students may use to apply for nonfederal aid. This form is submitted to some 300 private colleges and universities along with the FAFSA when seeking financial aid from these institutions. Participating colleges and universities indicate whether they require this form.

Common and Universal Applications — These college application forms can save students hours of work. The Common Application is presently accepted by about 190 independent colleges, while the Universal is used by about 1,000 schools. The colleges and universities that accept these standardized forms give them equal weight with their own application forms. Students complete the information on the standardized form and then submit it to any of the schools listed as accepting it. Some schools will return a supplementary form to be completed by the applicant, but most schools base their decisions on these documents alone. The Common Application is available on disk or as a hard copy and can be obtained from your guidance department. The Universal Application is available on the Web.

Control — A college or university can be under public or private control. Publicly controlled universities are dependent on state legislatures for their funding, and their policies are set by the agencies that govern them. Private colleges and universities are responsible to a board of directors or trustees. They usually have higher tuition and fees to protect the institutions' endowment.

Cooperative education — A college program that alternates between periods of full-time study and full-time employment in a related field. Students are paid for their work and gain practical experience in their major, which helps them apply for positions after graduation. It can take five years to obtain a baccalaureate degree through a co-op program.

Cost of education — This includes tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses. A student's financial aid eligibility is the difference between the cost of education and the Expected Family Contribution as computed by the federal government using the FAFSA.

Course load — The number of course credit hours a student takes in each semester. Twelve credit hours is the minimum to

be considered a full-time student. The average course load per semester is 16 credit hours.

Credit hours — The number of hours per week that courses meet are counted as equivalent credits for financial aid and used to determine you status as a full- or part-time student.

Cross-registration — The practice, through agreements between colleges, of permitting students enrolled at one college or university to enroll in courses at another institution without formally applying for admission to the second institution. This can be an advantage for students in a smaller college who might like to expand options or experience another learning environment.

Deferred acceptance — the admissions decision is being moved to a later date.

Double major — Available at most schools, the double major allows a student to complete all the requirements to simultaneously earn a major in two fields.

Dual enrollment — This policy allows a student to earn college credit while still in high school. Many of these course credits can be transferred to a degree-granting institution, especially if the student maintains a minimum B average. A college, however, may disallow courses taken in the major field of concentration at another institution because its policy dictates that all courses in the major must be taken at the college. When considering dual enrollment, students should talk with admissions offices at the colleges they are considering enrolling in to make sure that they will accept credit transfers.

Early Action (EA) — A student applies to a school early in the senior year, between October 30 and January 15, and requests an early application review and notification of admission. The answer usually takes three to four weeks after application. If accepted, the student is not obligated to attend that institution but can bank this admission and still apply to other colleges during the regular admission cycle.

Early admission — Some colleges will admit certain students who have not completed high school, usually exceptional juniors. The students are enrolled full-time and do not complete their senior year of high school. Colleges usually award high school diplomas to these students after they have completed a certain number of college-level courses.

Early Decision (ED) — Sometimes confused with Early Action, the Early Decision plan allows students to apply to an institution early in the senior year, also between October 30 and January 15, and request an early notification of admission. The student and guidance counselor sign a contract with the school at the time of application that indicates that if accepted, the student is obligated to attend that institution. Some colleges and universities offer both ED and EA options.

Emphasis — An area of concentration within a major or minor; for example, an English major may have an emphasis in creative writing.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) — The amount of financial support a family is expected to contribute toward a child's college education. This amount is part of the formula used by the federal government to determine financial aid eligibility using the FAFSA form.

External degree program — A program of study whereby a student can earn credit through independent study, college courses, proficiency examinations, distance learning, or personal experience. External degree colleges generally have no campus or classroom facilities. They are sometimes referred to as "colleges without walls."

Federal Pell Grant Program — This is a federally sponsored and administered program that provides grants based on need to undergraduate students. Congress annually sets the appropriation; award amounts vary based on need, and the maximum award for 2010-11 is \$5,550. This is "free" money because it does not need to be repaid.

Federal Perkins Loan Program — This is a federally run program based on need and administered by a college's financial aid office. This program offers low-interest loans for undergraduate study. Repayment does not begin until 9 months after the borrower drops to less than halftime enrollment status. The maximum loan amount is \$5,500 per year.

Federal Stafford Loan — This federal program provides low-interest loans for undergraduate and graduate students. The maximum annual loan amount depends on the student's grade level. Fixed interest rates will not exceed 6.8%. Repayment does not begin until 6 months after the borrower drops to less than halftime enrollment status. Several repayment options are available.

Federal Work-Study Program (FSW) — A federally financed program that arranges for students to combine employment and college study; the employment may be an integral part of the academic program (as in cooperative education or internships) or simply a means of paying for college.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) — This is the federal government's instrument for calculating need-based aid. It is available from high school guidance departments, college financial aid offices, and the Internet (www.fafsa.gov). The form should be completed and mailed as soon after January 1 as possible.

Gap — The difference between the amount of a financial aid package and the cost of attending a college or university. The student and his/her family are expected to fill the gap.

Grants/scholarships — These are financial awards that are usually dispensed by the financial aid offices of colleges and universities. The awards may be need- or merit-based. Most are need-based. Merit-based awards may be awarded on the basis of excellence in academics, leadership, volunteerism, athletic ability, or special talent.

Greek life — This phrase refers to sororities and fraternities. These organizations often have great impact on the campus social life of a college or university.

Honors program — Honors programs offer an enriched, top-quality educational experience that often includes small class size, custom-designed courses, mentoring, enriched individualized learning, hands-on research, and publishing opportunities. A handpicked faculty guides students through the program. Honors programs are a great way to attend a large school that offers enhanced social and recreational opportunities while receiving an Ivy League-like education at a reduced cost.

Independent study — This option allows students to complete some of their credit requirements by studying on their own. A student and his or her faculty adviser agree in advance on the topic and approach of the study program and meet periodically to discuss the student's progress. A final report is handed in for a grade at the end of the term.

Interdisciplinary — Faculty members from several disciplines contribute to the development of the course of study and may co-teach the course.

Internship — This is an experience-based opportunity, most often scheduled during breaks in the academic calendar, whereby a student receives credit for a supervised work experience related to his or her major.

Major — The concentration of a number of credit hours in a specific subject. Colleges and universities often specify the number of credits needed to receive a major, the sequence of courses, and the level of course necessary to complete the requirements.

Merit awards, merit-based scholarships — More "free" money, these awards are based on excellence in academics, leadership, volunteerism, athletic ability, and other areas determined by the granting organization, which can be a college or university, an organization, or an individual. They are not based on financial need.

Minor — An area of concentration with fewer credits than a major. The minor can be related to the major area of concentration or not; for example, an English major may have a minor in theater.

Need blind — Admissions decisions made without reference to a student's financial aid request, that is, an applicant's financial need is not known to the committee at the time of decision.

Nonmatriculated — A student who has either not been admitted yet but is taking classes or has been academically dismissed. Under this category, a student may neither receive financial aid nor participate in an athletic program at that school.

Open admissions — A policy of admission that does not subject applicants to a review of their academic qualifications. Many public junior/community colleges admit students under this guideline, that is, any student with a high school diploma or its equivalent is admitted.

Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test — This test, given in October, duplicates the kinds of questions asked on the SAT but is shorter and takes less time. Usually taken in the junior year, the test also acts as a qualifying instrument for the National Merit Scholarship Awards Program and is helpful for early college guidance.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) — Each branch of the military sponsors an ROTC program. In exchange for a certain number of years on active duty, students can have their college education paid for up to a certain amount by the armed forces.

Residency requirement — The term has more than one meaning. It can refer to the fact that a college may require a specific number of courses to be taken on campus to receive a degree from the school, or the phrase can mean the time, by law, that is required for a person to reside in the state to be considered eligible for in-state tuition at one of its public colleges or universities.

Retention rate — The number and percentage of students returning for the sophomore year.

Rolling admissions — There is no deadline for filing a college application. This concept is used most often by state universities. Responses are received within three to four weeks. If admitted, a student is not required to confirm, in most cases, until May 1. Out-of-state residents applying to state universities should apply as early as possible.

Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) I: Reasoning Test — Also known as "board scores" because the test was developed by the College Board. This test concentrates on verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities and is given throughout the academic year at test centers. The maximum combined score for both sections is 1600.

SAT II Subject Tests — These subject-specific exams are given on the same test dates and in the same centers as the SAT I. More emphasis has been placed on these tests in recent years, not only because they are used for admission purposes, but also for placement and exemption decisions.

Seminar — A class that has a group discussion format rather than a lecture format.

Silent scores — The term is applied to PSAT scores because only the student and his or her guidance counselor see the scores. They are not reported to colleges. It is the "practice without penalty" feature of the test.

Standby — If a student registers for an SAT or ACT testing date and there are no seats available, the student may accept a standby position; that is, if a seat becomes available the day of the test, the student will take the test. The student must go to the testing center and wait to see if there is an open seat. A fee is attached to standby.

Student Aid Report (SAR) — Report of the government's review of a student's FAFSA. The SAR is sent to the student and released electronically to the schools that the student listed. The SAR does not supply a real money figure for aid but indicates whether the student is eligible.

Student-designed major — Students design their own majors under this policy. It offers students the opportunity to develop nontraditional options not available in the existing catalog of majors.

Transfer program — This program is usually found in a two-year college or in a four-year college that offers associate

degrees. It allows a student to continue his or her studies in a four-year college by maintaining designated criteria set down at acceptance to the two-year program. It is not necessary to earn an associate degree to transfer.

Transfer student — A student who transfers from one college or university to another. Credits applied toward the transfer will be evaluated by the receiving school to determine the number it will accept. Each school sets different policies for transfers, so anyone considering this option should seek guidance.

Upper division — This term refers to the junior and senior years of study. Some colleges offer only upper-division study. The lower divisions must be completed at another institution before entering these programs to earn a bachelor's degree.

Virtual visit — This is the use of the Internet to investigate various colleges by looking at their home pages. A student can "tour" the college, ask questions via e-mail, read school newspapers, and explore course offerings and major requirements on line. It is not a substitute for a live visit.

Waiver to view recommendations — The form many high schools ask their students to sign by which they agree not to review their teachers' recommendation letters before they are sent to the colleges or universities to which they are applying.

Yield — The percentage of accepted students who will enter a college or university in the freshman class; these students have received formal acceptance notices and must respond by May 1 with their intention to enroll. The more competitive the school, the higher the yield percentage.



Resource
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GLOSSARY OF FINANCIAL AID TERMS

from the South Carolina
Commission on Higher Education

GLOSSARY OF FINANCIAL AID TERMS

Found a word you're not sure about? Here's a list of some terms you might come across along the way.

Ability-to-Benefit — One of the criteria used to establish student eligibility in order to receive Title IV program assistance is that a student must have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent. Students who are not high school graduates (or who have not earned a General Education Development [GED] Certificate*) can demonstrate that they have the "ability to benefit" from the education or training being offered by passing an approved ability-to-benefit (ATB) test.

Academic Year — A period of time schools use to measure a quantity of study. For example, a school's academic year may consist of a fall and spring semester during which a full-time undergraduate student must complete 24 semester hours. Academic years vary from school to school and even from educational program to educational program at the same school.

Accreditation — The school must have accreditation from an accrediting body recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to be eligible to participate in the administration of federal student aid programs. Accreditation means that the school meets certain minimum academic standards, as defined by the accrediting body.

Accrue — The process where interest accumulates on a loan. When "interest accrues on a loan," the interest due on the loan is accumulating.

Advanced Standing Credit — These are credit hours that an institution accepts toward a degree from courses that the student has earned elsewhere. Such credit may be given for work done at another higher education institution, by examination or "testing out," or by military service.

AGI — Adjusted Gross Income. Most financial aid forms require parents or students to state their taxable AGI based on income minus maximum allowable adjustments.

Agreement to Serve — An agreement under which a student receiving a TEACH Grant commits to the specific obligation to teach for four complete years in a designated high-need field at a low-income elementary or secondary school within eight years of completing or ceasing enrollment in a TEACH Grant-eligible program.

Alternative Loans — These private student loans from banks or other lending institutions are not federally supported or guaranteed. Students must be enrolled to apply for these loans.

Award Letter — An award letter from a school states the type and amount of financial aid the school is willing to provide the student if he or she accepts admission and registers to take classes at that school.

Borrower — Individual who signed and agreed to the terms in the promissory note and is responsible for repaying a loan.

Capitalized — With certain loans, such as subsidized FFEL Loans, the U.S. Department of Education pays the interest that accrues on these loans while the student is enrolled at least half-time and during periods of deferment. However, with subsidized loans in forbearance, unsubsidized loans or PLUS Loans, the student or the student's parents and graduate or professional degree students are responsible for paying interest as it accrues on these loans. When the interest is not paid, it is capitalized or added to the principal balance, which increases the outstanding principal amount due on this loan. Interest that is capitalized and, therefore, added to the original amount of the loan subsequently accrues interest, adding an additional expense to the loan.

Community College — Sometimes called junior college or two-year college. Students can take classes, and then transfer to a four-year school, or they can earn certificates, diplomas, or associate's degrees.

Consolidation — The process of combining one or more loans into a single new loan.

Cost of Attendance (COA) — This is the total cost of attending a college or university, including tuition, room and board, books, lab fees, transportation, and basic living expenses.

Credit Hour — Credit hours are units of value given to classes. Some classes may be worth two or three credits, while others are worth four credits. Credits vary by class and by school. Many schools base tuition costs on the number of credit hours taken. Some charge a specific dollar amount per credit hour.

CSS Profile — The College Scholarship Service Profile is a financial aid form that many colleges and universities use to determine how much non-federal financial aid a student may be eligible for.

Default — Failure to repay a loan according to the terms agreed to when you signed a promissory note. For the FFEL and Direct Loan programs, default is more specific — it occurs if you fail to make a payment for 270 days if you repay monthly (or 330 days if your payments are due less frequently). The consequences of default are severe. Your school, the lender or agency that holds your loan, the state, and the federal government may all take action to recover the money, including notifying national credit bureaus of your default. This may affect your credit rating for as long as seven years. For example, you might find it difficult to borrow money from a bank to buy a car or a house. In addition, the Internal Revenue Service can withhold your U.S. individual income tax refund and apply it to the amount you owe, or the agency holding your loan might ask your employer to deduct payments from your paycheck. Also, you may be liable for loan collection expenses. If you return to school, you're not entitled to receive additional federal student financial aid. Legal action also might be taken against you. In many cases, default can be avoided by submitting a request for a deferment, forbearance, discharge, or cancellation and by providing the required documentation.

Deferment — A deferment is an approved pause in repaying a student loan. For example, students may seek a deferment on undergraduate loan payments while in graduate school.

Department of Education — This government agency administers several federal student financial aid programs. Also referred to as USED (U.S. Department of Education).

Dependent Student — A student who does not meet any of the criteria for an independent student (see Independent Student).

Direct Loan — William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program. Loans made through this program are referred to as Direct Loans. Eligible students and parents borrow directly from the U.S. Department of Education at participating schools. Direct Loans include subsidized and unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loans (also known as Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans), Direct PLUS Loans, and Direct Consolidation Loans. You repay these loans directly to the U.S. Department of Education.

Disbursement — Payment of loan proceeds by the lender. During consolidation, this term refers to sending payoffs to the loan holders of the underlying loans being consolidated.

EFA — Estimated Financial Aid. This is the amount of financial aid a student will likely be eligible for. The figure is calculated based on all required financial aid forms.

Eligible Noncitizen — You must be one of the following to receive federal student aid:

- U.S. citizen
- U.S. national (includes natives of American Samoa or Swain's Island)
- U.S. permanent resident who has an I-151, I-551, or I-551C (Permanent Resident Card)

If you're not in one of these categories, you must be an eligible noncitizen, and you must have an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) showing one of the following designations:

- "Refugee"
- "Asylum Granted"
- "Cuban-Haitian Entrant, Status Pending"
- "Conditional Entrant" (valid only if issued before April 1, 1980)
- Victims of human trafficking, T-visa (T-2, T-3, or T-4, etc.) holder
- "Parolee" (You must be paroled into the United States for at least one year and you must be able to provide evidence from the USCIS that you are in the United States for other than a temporary purpose and that you intend to become a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.)

Eligible Program — A program of organized instruction or study that leads to an academic, professional, or vocational degree or certificate, or other recognized educational credential. To receive federal student aid, you must be enrolled in an eligible program, with two exceptions:

- If a school has told you that you must take certain course work to qualify for admission into one of its eligible programs, you can get a Stafford Loan for up to 12 consecutive months while you're completing that preparatory course work. You must be enrolled at least half-time, and you must meet the usual student aid eligibility requirements.
- If you're enrolled at least half-time in a program to obtain a professional credential or certification required by a state for employment as an elementary or secondary school teacher, you can get a Federal Work-Study, Federal Perkins Loan, a Stafford Loan, or your parents can get a PLUS Loan, while you're enrolled in that program.

Expected Family Contribution — Your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is the number that's used to determine your eligibility for federal student financial aid. This number results from the financial information you provided in your FAFSA application. The EFC is calculated based on this information, showing the amount of money the family can reasonably be expected to contribute to their child's education. Your EFC is reported to you on your Student Aid Report (SAR).

FAA — Financial Aid Administrator. An FAA is a college or university employee involved in the administration of financial aid. Also known as financial aid advisors, officers, or counselors.

FAF — Financial Aid Form. This is the generic term used for any financial aid form.

FAFSA — Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Filling out a FAFSA form is the first step in the financial aid process. To be eligible to receive federal financial aid, a student must complete a FAFSA.

FAT — Financial Aid Transcript. This transcript logs all financial aid a student has received.

FDSLP — Federal Direct Student Loan Program. Through this program, student loans are provided directly to the student from the federal government, rather than through commercial lenders.

Federal School Code — Also Title IV Institution Code. Each college, campus, or program has a six-character institution code. You must include the code related to each of your college applications when filling out a FAFSA. These codes are available by contacting the school or checking an online listing.

Federal Stafford Loan — Also Federal Direct Loan. These student financial aid loans are obtained through banks, lending institutions, or colleges. To qualify, students must be enrolled in a college degree program at least part-time. The loans may be subsidized (need-based, typically for low-income students), or unsubsidized (not need-based so any student can apply). Students apply by filling out the FAFSA. Formerly called the Guaranteed Student Loan.

Federal Work-Study Program — A federally-funded, need-based program administered by each school, this program allows students to work on campus in exchange for a portion of their tuition.

FFEL — Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program. Loans made through this program are referred to as FFEL Loans. Private lenders provide funds that are guaranteed by the federal government. FFEL Loans include subsidized and unsubsidized FFEL Stafford Loans, FFEL PLUS Loans, and FFEL Consolidation Loans. You repay these loans to the bank or private lender that made you the loan.

FFELP — Federal Family Education Loan Program. This federally guaranteed student loan program allows students to obtain low-interest loans from private lending institutions even if the student has no income, collateral, or credit history.

Financial Aid Package — The total amount of financial aid (federal and nonfederal) a student is offered by the school. The financial aid administrator at a postsecondary institution combines various forms of aid into a "package" to help meet a student's education costs. Using available resources to give each student the best possible package of aid is one of the aid administrator's major responsibilities. Because funds are often limited, an aid package might fall short of the amount a student needs to cover the full cost of attendance. Also, the amount of federal student aid in a package is affected by other sources of aid received (scholarships, state aid, etc.).

FSEOG — Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant. This federal government program provides need-based grants to low-income college students, and is administered through the school's financial aid office.

General Education Development (GED) — This is a certificate students receive if they've passed a specific, approved high school equivalency test. Students who have a GED may still qualify for federal student aid. A school that admits students without a high school diploma must make available a GED program in the vicinity of the school and must inform students about the program.

Grace Period — After borrowers graduate, leave school, or drop below half-time enrollment, loans that were made for that period of study have several months before payments are due. This period is called the "grace period." During the grace period, no interest accrues on subsidized loans. Interest accrues on unsubsidized loans during grace periods, and this interest is capitalized when borrowers' loans enter repayment.

Grant — A grant is money given to students for their education. Often based on need, grants may come from federal or state programs, or sometimes from private charitable organizations. It does not have to be repaid.

GSL — Guaranteed Student Loan. Now called the Federal Stafford Loan or Direct Ford Loan (see Federal Stafford Loan).

Guaranty Agency — The guaranty agency is an organization that administers the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program in your state. This agency is the best source of information on FFEL Loans. For the name, address, and telephone number of the agency serving your state, you can contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

Half-time — At schools measuring progress in credit hours and semesters, trimesters or quarters, “half-time” is at least six semester hours or quarter hours per term for an undergraduate program. At schools measuring progress by credit hours but not using semesters, trimesters or quarters, “half-time” is at least 12 semester hours or 18 quarter hours per year. At schools measuring progress by clock hours, “half-time” is at least 12 hours per week. Note that schools may choose to set higher minimums than these. You must be attending school at least half-time to be eligible for a Stafford Loan. Half-time enrollment is not a requirement to receive aid from the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Work-Study, and Federal Perkins Loan programs.

Independent Student — An independent student is one of the following: at least 24 years old, married, a graduate or professional student, a veteran, a member of the armed forces, an orphan, a ward of the court, or someone with legal dependents other than a spouse.

Interest — A loan expense charged by the lender and paid by the borrower for the use of borrowed money. The expense is calculated as a percentage of the unpaid principal amount (loan amount) borrowed.

MPN — Master Promissory Note. This form promises repayment and is signed by a student or parent when taking out a PLUS or Stafford Loan.

National Merit Scholarship Program — Students who do well on the PSAT/NMSQT may qualify for scholarships. A few students receive full scholarships.

National Student Loan Data System — The National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) is a database for federal student financial aid where you can find out about the aid you’ve received. If you’ve only just applied for aid, you won’t find any information on NSLDS yet. NSLDS receives data from schools, guaranty agencies and U.S. Department of Education programs. The NSLDS Web site is generally available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. By using your PIN, you can get information on federal loan and Pell Grant amounts, outstanding balances, the status of your loans, and disbursements made. You can access NSLDS at nsls.ed.gov.

Need Analysis — The process of analyzing a student’s financial need, known as need analysis, focuses on determining how much the family reasonably can be expected to contribute towards the student’s education. Traditionally, determination of an applicant’s need is achieved by collecting information about the family’s income, assets, and living expenses. For the federal student aid programs, the law specifies a need analysis formula that produces the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC and the college’s cost of attendance are used by the postsecondary school to establish the student’s need as well as to award grants, campus-based aid, and subsidized loans. The college might ask you to complete other paperwork to determine your need for non-federal aid.

Need-based — Need-based financial aid is reserved for low-income students based on their ability to pay.

Parent Contribution — This is the amount of money parents are expected to be able to contribute to their child’s education.

Pell Grant — This federal program provides need-based educational grants for low-income students. Because they are grants, they do not have to be repaid.

Perkins Loan Program — This federally funded, need-based loan program provides low-interest loans to both undergraduate and graduate students.

PLUS — Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students. These federal guaranteed loans are available for parents of undergraduates.

Principal — The amount of money borrowed by the student. Interest is charged on this amount.

Promissory Note — A promissory note is a binding legal document you sign when you get a student loan. It lists the conditions under which you’re borrowing and the terms under which you agree to pay back the loan. It will include information on how interest is calculated and what deferment and cancellation provisions are available to the borrower. It’s very important to read and save this document because you’ll need to refer to it later when you begin repaying your loan or at other times when you need information about provisions of the loan, such as deferments or forbearances.

PSAT/NMSQT — The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Students hoping to receive a National Merit Scholarship must take and pass this test.

Regular Student — A regular student is one who is enrolled or accepted for enrollment at an institution for the purpose of obtaining a degree, certificate or other recognized education credential offered by that institution. Generally, to receive federal student financial aid from the programs discussed in this guide, you must be a regular student. There are exceptions to this requirement for some programs.

ROTC — Reserve Officers Training Corps. In this program, the military pays a student's tuition or other expenses. The student takes part in summer training while in college, and commits to military service after college.

SAR — Student Aid Report. This report summarizes the information entered on your FAFSA form, and shows the amount of your Expected Family Contribution.

Satisfactory Academic Progress — To be eligible to receive federal student financial aid, you must meet and maintain your school's standards of satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or certificate. Check with your school to find out its standards.

Scholarships — These funds are given to, or earned by, students, and are to be used for tuition. There are numerous public and private sources for scholarships. Some are given based on need, some on merit or skill. Others have very specific stipulations on who can receive the scholarship.

Selective Service Registration — In order to be eligible for federal student aid, you must register with the Selective Service if:

- You are a male born on or after Jan. 1, 1960, and
- You are at least 18 years old, and
- You are not currently on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands or the Republic of Palau are exempt from registering.

Student Aid Report — Your Student Aid Report (SAR) summarizes the information you submit on your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and provides you with your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). After you apply for federal student financial aid, you'll get your FAFSA results in an e-mail report by the next business day after your FAFSA has been processed, or by mail within 7-10 days. This report is called a Student Aid Report, or SAR. Your SAR details all the information you provided on your FAFSA. If there are no corrections or additional information you must provide, the SAR will contain your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is the number that's used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. Whether you applied online or by paper, we will automatically send your data electronically to the schools you listed on your FAFSA.

Student Contribution — This is the amount a student is expected to contribute to his or her educational expenses.

SUB — Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan. (See Federal Stafford Loan)

Subsidized — A loan for which a borrower is not responsible for the interest while in an in-school, grace, or deferment status. Subsidized loans include Direct Subsidized, Direct Subsidized Consolidation Loans, Federal Subsidized Stafford Loans, and Federal Subsidized Consolidation Loans.

Title IV Institution Code — (See Federal School Code)

Unsubsidized — A loan for which the borrower is fully responsible for paying the interest regardless of the loan status. Interest on unsubsidized loans accrues from the date of disbursement and continues throughout the life of the loan. Unsubsidized loans include: Direct Unsubsidized Loans, Direct PLUS Loans, Direct Unsubsidized Consolidation Loans, and Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans, Federal PLUS Loans, and Federal Unsubsidized Consolidation Loans.

Verification — Verification is a process where your school confirms the data reported on your FAFSA. Your school has the authority to contact you for documentation that supports income and other information that you reported.

Work-Study — This program allows students to pay part of their tuition and school expenses by working part-time on campus.



Resource
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..... SC 2-YEAR & 4-YEAR
..... COLLEGES & WEB SITES

SOUTH CAROLINA 4-YEAR/ 2-YEAR COLLEGE WEB ADDRESSES

AIKEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE	AIKEN, SC	WWW.ATC.EDU
ALLEN UNIVERSITY	COLUMBIA, SC	WWW.ALLENUNIVERSITY.EDU
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF THE BUILDING ARTS	CHARLESTON, SC	WWW.BUILDINGARTSCOLLEGE.US
ANDERSON UNIVERSITY	ANDERSON, SC	WWW.ANDERSONUNIVERSITY.EDU
BENEDICT COLLEGE	COLUMBIA, SC	WWW.BENEDICT.EDU
BOB JONES UNIVERSITY	GREENVILLE, SC	WWW.BJU.EDU
CENTRAL CAROLINA TECHNICAL COLLEGE	SUMTER, SC	WWW.CCTECH.EDU
CHARLESTON SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY	CHARLESTON, SC	WWW.CHARLESTONSOUTHERN.EDU
THE CITADEL	CHARLESTON, SC	WWW.CITADEL.EDU
CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY	ORANGEBURG, SC	WWW.CLAFLIN.EDU
CLEMSON UNIVERSITY	CLEMSON, SC	WWW.CLEMSON.EDU
CLINTON JUNIOR COLLEGE	ROCK HILL, SC	WWW.CLINTONJUNIORCOLLEGE.EDU
COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY	CONWAY, SC	WWW.COASTAL.EDU
COKER COLLEGE	HARTSVILLE, SC	WWW.COKER.EDU
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON	CHARLESTON, SC	WWW.COFC.EDU
COLUMBIA COLLEGE	COLUMBIA, SC	WWW.COLUMBIASC.EDU
COLUMBIA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY	COLUMBIA, SC	WWW.CIU.EDU
CONVERSE COLLEGE	SPARTANBURG, SC	WWW.CONVERSE.EDU
DENMARK TECHNICAL COLLEGE	DENMARK, SC	WWW.DENMARK.EDU
ERSKINE COLLEGE	DUE WEST, SC	WWW.ERSKINE.EDU
FLORENCE DARLINGTON TECHNICAL COLLEGE	FLORENCE, SC	WWW.FDTC.EDU
FORREST COLLEGE	ANDERSON, SC	WWW.FORRESTCOLLEGE.EDU
FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY	FLORENCE, SC	WWW.FMARION.EDU
FURMAN UNIVERSITY	GREENVILLE, SC	WWW.FURMAN.EDU
GREENVILLE TECHNICAL COLLEGE	GREENVILLE, SC	WWW.GVLTEC.EDU
HORRY-GEORGETOWN TECHNICAL COLLEGE	CONWAY, SC	WWW.HGTC.EDU
LANDER UNIVERSITY	GREENWOOD, SC	WWW.LANDER.EDU
LIMESTONE COLLEGE	GAFFNEY, SC	WWW.LIMESTONE.EDU
MIDLANDS TECHNICAL COLLEGE	COLUMBIA, SC	WWW.MIDLANDSTECH.EDU

SOUTH CAROLINA 4-YEAR/ 2-YEAR COLLEGE WEB ADDRESSES

MORRIS COLLEGE	SUMTER, SC	WWW.MORRIS.EDU
NEWBERRY COLLEGE	NEWBERRY, SC	WWW.NEWBERRY.EDU
NORTH GREENVILLE UNIVERSITY	TIGERVILLE, SC	WWW.NGU.EDU
NORTHEASTERN TECHNICAL COLLEGE	CHEREW, SC	WWW.NETC.EDU
ORANGEBURG-CALHOUN TECHNICAL COLLEGE	ORANGEBURG, SC	WWW.OCTECH.EDU
PIEDMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE	GREENWOOD, SC	WWW.PTC.EDU
PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE	CLINTON, SC	WWW.PRESBY.EDU
SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY	ORANGEBURG, SC	WWW.SCSU.EDU
SOUTHERN WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY	CENTRAL, SC	WWW.SWU.EDU
SPARTANBURG COMMUNITY COLLEGE	SPARTANBURG, SC	WWW.SCCSC.EDU
SPARTANBURG METHODIST COLLEGE	SPARTANBURG, SC	WWW.SMCS.EDU
TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY	BEAUFORT, SC	WWW.TCL.EDU
TRI-COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE	PENDLETON, SC	WWW.TCTC.EDU
TRIDENT TECHNICAL COLLEGE	CHARLESTON, SC	WWW.TRIDENTTECH.EDU
USC AIKEN	AIKEN, SC	WWW.USCA.EDU
USC BEAUFORT	BEAUFORT, SC	WWW.USCB.EDU
USC COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA, SC	WWW.SC.EDU
USC LANCASTER	LANCASTER, SC	HTTP://USCLANCASTER.SC.EDU
USC SALKEHATCHIE	ALLENDALE, SC	WWW.USCSALKEHATCHIE.SC.EDU
USC SUMTER	SUMTER, SC	WWW.USCSUMTER.EDU
USC UNION	UNION, SC	HTTP://USCUNION.SC.EDU
USC UPSTATE	SPARTANBURG, SC	WWW.USCUPSTATE.EDU
VOORHEES COLLEGE	DENMARK, SC	WWW.VOORHEES.EDU
WILLIAMSBURG TECHNICAL COLLEGE	KINGSTREE, SC	WWW.WILTECH.EDU
WINTHROP UNIVERSITY	ROCK HILL, SC	WWW.WINTHROP.EDU
WOFFORD COLLEGE	SPARTANBURG, SC	WWW.WOFFORD.EDU
YORK TECHNICAL COLLEGE	ROCK HILL, SC	WWW.YORKTECH.EDU

