

## Beyond High School

There are many post-secondary options open to high school graduates. The most commonly followed are attending a two-year college, technical school, or four-year college, joining the military or the work force or some combination of these.

For those going directly to **full-time employment**, the question may be, “*How do I find a job?*” Here are a few hints for finding that first full-time job.

- Visit the Career Center and study career materials, especially the Occupational Outlook Handbook: review with your counselor your past record and vocational test material
- Talk with family and friends about the kind of work they think you are best suited for and ask them for leads on where to find jobs.
- Register with the Maryland Department of Labor and Licensing. They can assist you with testing, placement services and job searches. The telephone number of the Waldorf office is 301-645-8714.
- Check the want ads, especially the Washington Post Employment Classified section. Look through the Yellow Pages in the telephone book, “Let your fingers do the walking!”
- Become familiar with and practice good job interviewing techniques. Prepare a resume. Review some of the books on interviewing and resume writing that are available in the Career Center.

Learn more about **apprenticeship** programs. Some students like to work with their hands and have the skill, patience, and temperament to become expert mechanics, carpenters or electronic technicians. If you think you’d enjoy a profession like this and feel that college training isn’t for you, then you might want to think about a job that requires apprenticeship training. More information is available in the Career Center or you can visit this Web site [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)

All high school graduates are eligible to attend the **College of Southern Maryland**. This is another possibility for many graduates who want to work full-time or part-time and also take college level courses. Most of CSM’s programs can be completed in two years or less and prepare students for direct entry into a variety of occupations. The College of Southern Maryland has also developed several new relationships with four-year colleges which include Bowie State University, Capitol college, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, St. Mary’s College of Maryland, Towson University, University of Baltimore, University of Maryland College Park, Villa Julie & UMUC), which will enable students to complete a four-year degree through their partner programs. [www.csmd.edu](http://www.csmd.edu).

Much has been written and is available on applying to and selecting a **four-year college**. Visit the Career Center for these materials.

The **Armed Forces** offer yet another alternative to high school graduates. Valuable training and educational benefits are available through the military. A wide range of opportunities are open to you. To find the type of technical training you are best suited for, take the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery). This test is given here twice (Once for seniors and once for juniors) during the school year free of charge. Seniors who are considering the military should plan on taking the ASVAB this fall. Recruiters from all services visit the high school throughout the year and are always happy to answer your questions. The recruiters can be reached at the following numbers: Army (301-645-9190); Navy (301-843-8572); Air Force (301-645-5570); Marines (301-843-0353) and the Coast Guard (703-960-5923). For more information contact [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com), [www.navy.com](http://www.navy.com) [www.uscg.mil/jobs](http://www.uscg.mil/jobs), [www.dcandr.ang.af.mil](http://www.dcandr.ang.af.mil), [www.airforce.com](http://www.airforce.com), or [www.usmc.mil](http://www.usmc.mil)

**Start planning NOW!** Your Career Center is designed to provide you with the most up-to-date information to help you make the best possible choices. If you have absolutely no idea in which direction you are headed, come to the Career Center. There are several aptitude tests for you to take which might help you to find a direction.

## WHERE THE JOBS WILL BE

### FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS

Database administrators, computer support specialists, and computer scientists	Human service workers
Computer engineers	Data processing equipment repairers
Systems analysts	Medical record technicians
Personal and home-care aids	Dental hygienists
Physical and corrective therapy	Amusement and recreation attendants
Home health aides	Physician assistants
Medical assistants	Respiratory therapist
Desktop Publishing	Engineering, science and computer systems managers
Physical therapists	Manicurists
Occupational therapy assistants and aides	Residential counselors
Paralegal	Coaches, sports and physical training
Occupational therapists	Dental assistants
Teachers, special education	
Securities and financial services sales workers	

### OCCUPATIONS WITH LARGEST JOB GROWTH

Cashiers	Child care workers
Systems analysts	Clerical supervisors and managers
General managers and top executives	Food, counter and related workers
Registered nurses	Guards
Truck drivers, light and heavy	Waiters and waitresses
Home health aides	Social workers
Teacher aides and educational assistants	Food preparation workers
Nursing aids, orderlies and attendants	Cooks
Receptionists and information clerks	Food service and lodging managers
Teachers, secondary schools	Medical assistants

### INDUSTRIES WITH THE FASTEST JOB GROWTH

Health services	Child day care services
Residential care	Personnel supply services
Computer and data processing	Services to buildings
Individual and social services	Equipment rental and leasing
Business services	Management and public relations

## INTERVIEWING DO'S AND DON'TS

- DO** practice interviewing with a friend or family member. You'll be more polished for the real thing.
- DO** arrange your transportation in advance and allow extra time to arrive. If you're late for an interview, the employer may think you'll be late for work, too. That's reason enough to turn you down. (P.S. Wearing a watch sends the right message.)
- DON'T** bring your ride to the interview. If someone drops you off, have him or her wait in the parking lot, not the lobby. The company is hiring you, not your mother.
- DO** be prepared to break the ice with a neutral comment about the weather, the traffic or the day's news. If you're nervous, it's OK to admit it to the interviewer.
- DO** show your enthusiasm and interest, but don't appear desperate for the job. That's a turnoff.
- DO** look the interviewer in the eye. Otherwise, you'll appear untrustworthy or lacking in self-confidence. This doesn't include staring.
- DON'T** slouch, yawn, chew gum or otherwise show an attitude.
- DO** avoid one-word answers; remember this is a conversation. Avoid slang and filler words such as "um", "like", and "you know".
- DON'T** disagree about anything. Even the smallest negative comment can sway an employer to decide against you.
- DO** answer specific questions an employer asks. Otherwise, he or she will think you don't listen and don't follow directions well.
- DO** be ready with the information you'll need, such as the phone numbers of previous employers.
- DO** find out when you'll hear whether you got the job. Or say something like "I will plan to call you next week if I haven't heard from you." When you call, remind the employer who you are: "Hello. This is Chris Jones. We met last week to talk about the cashier's job."

## Here's how to handle some of the questions employers are likely to toss your way

What They Say	How To Answer	For Example
Tell me about yourself.	Be ready with some basic information about yourself that shows your ability to do well on the job. Don't ramble on about your life.	"I'm super with kids. I baby-sit a lot and lead art projects at their birthday parties, so I think I'd be a great crafts counselor for your day camp."
Do you have any work experience?	Even if you haven't held a job before, emphasize that you can handle responsibility. Point out your relevant skills with specific examples.	I've never worked as a bank teller, but I'm organized and detail-oriented and I get all A's in math.
What are your greatest weaknesses?	Be realistic. It's an old trick to sugarcoat your reply by saying you work hard or are too competitive, but this irritates some interviewers. Instead, admit to a minor problem that's not job related and say you're working on it.	"I'm shy when I meet new people but I open up when I get to know them." "I've never been great at team sports, but I love in-line skating."
Do you work better on your own or with others?	Let them know that you'll fit in well with the team and offer a specific example.	"I enjoy meeting people and working on projects with a team. That's why I volunteer for school fund-raisers."
Why do you want this job?	Let them know you are enthusiastic about the job and their company and explain why.	"I plan to major in radio and TV journalism, so your position will help me learn a lot about this field."
Do you have any questions for me?	Don't inquire about the pay. Ask one or two solid questions to show your interest.	"What's a typical day like here?" "How did you get started in the field?" "What skills are more useful for someone in this position?"
What hours are you available to work?	Be available when they need you. If you must fit the job around other obligations, let them know you will do everything you can to accommodate them.	"I can work whenever you say." "I'll be taking the bus home, and it stops running at 10 p.m., but I can come in as early as you need me."
Do you have reliable transportation?	Assure them that you will honor your commitment to show up for work on time. Don't raise doubts or go into too much detail.	"Yes, I live within walking distance." "Yes, my father will drop me off every day." Not: I have a used car that been in the shop a lot so I might have some problems if the transmission goes."

## ASSESSING YOUR CREDENTIALS

Your application and high school transcript are the culmination of the many choices that you have made throughout your high school career. College admission counselors scrutinize your academic record, which indicates not only your ability but also your desire to learn. Did you choose to take the tougher courses? Have you decided to drop languages? Have you taken courses outside Westlake or during the summer?

Colleges look at your transcript first. It is the most important academic credential. SAT scores are, in most cases, used to add objectivity to the decision. For example, if two strong Westlake students are applying to the same college and both have very similar academic records, the SAT scores may help to differentiate between the two. Also, in the situation where there are two very similar students with strong academic records from two different schools, the SAT scores may help to determine which school's program is stronger and which student is the better candidate.

Some colleges will also use the student's rank in class in order to determine how the student compares to his classmates. This might also tell them something about Westlake itself. Your class rank is determined by your cumulative grade point average at the end of the junior year with extra weight given to certain honors/AP classes. Seniors will receive a new ranking at the end of the first semester of the senior year and again at the end of their senior year. Each letter grade is assigned a point value as follows:

A = 4.0            B = 3.0            C = 2.0            D = 1.0            F = 0.0

An additional 0.5 is added to the quality point system for all honors level courses. An additional 1.0 is added for all AP level courses (See Program of Studies for complete listing). The student's total point value is then divided by the number of credits attempted and the result is the student's GPA. All subjects and all students attending Westlake High School (not alternative high school programs) are used in class ranking. Since the rank frequently changes, we do not encourage students to inquire about their rank until the college application process is started. Student rankings will be done at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> semesters in high school.

We clearly state the weighted and unweighted grade point average (G.P.A.) on every transcript sent to a college.

Many parents have asked the question, "What if my son has taken all honors courses and has had to sacrifice a higher grade in order to take a tougher course load? Do the colleges take that into consideration?"

The answer to that question is "yes". Colleges like students who challenge themselves, but in the words of Jerome Schnydam, Director of Admissions at Johns Hopkins, "a grade of C is a grade of C." In other words, if a student is applying to a very competitive school, then he must have competitive grades.

Frequently, you hear someone describe a college as "selective" or "competitive." These terms are used to help describe colleges that have more applicants than they are able to accept. The more competition there is for a spot in a particular college, the more selective or competitive a college is.

Georgetown University, for example, is considered a highly selective school. Generally speaking, Georgetown accepts one student for every five that apply. The exact degree of competitiveness may vary from one year to the next and/or one major to the next. A student applying to the Foreign Service School may face more competition than a student applying to the Business School.

Many large state institutions, such as University of Delaware or the University of North Carolina, are forced to use "cut-off" scores and G.P.A.'s because of the huge number of applications and because of state laws. If a student wishes to major in business at Delaware, he must have a particular G.P.A. and SAT scores that do not go below a certain level. On the other hand, a student wishing to major in electrical engineering might be expected to have another G.P.A. and SAT minimum.

In other circumstances, such as when a student applies to a smaller school or private school, there is a more personal approach in the selection process. Well-written essays, interviews, special interests and talents can play a role in the admission process and can, in some cases, compensate for deficiencies in other areas.

A student discovers the selectivity of a particular college by consulting the resource books, by reading material from the college, by asking the admissions counselors and by talking with the senior counselor and/or the career counselor.

# PLANNING CALENDAR

## September

- If you are planning to attend a four-year college and have not yet taken a college admission test see Mrs. Wilhelm. If you plan to retake the ACT (American College Testing) sign up for the October test; if you plan to retake the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) sign-up for the November test. Registration materials are available from Mrs. Wilhelm.
- If you have not already done so, prepare a resume. (Examples are available in the Career Center, through your English teacher and on the Westlake homepage.)
- If you have not already done so, now is the time to request materials from the colleges to which you want to apply. Check in the Career Center for current addresses, phone numbers, e-mails and FAX numbers.
- Analyze application instructions step-by-step to find out what information is required and when it must reach the colleges: ACT, SAT I, and SAT II (if required) scores, essay, application form, recommendations, etc.
- Find out the procedure for submitting a high school transcript to colleges, and make sure you have taken the necessary steps to have your transcript sent to the colleges to which you are applying.
- If you are applying for early decision, acquire and start filling out the necessary forms for application and financial aid to meet the college deadlines, which are usually in November.
- **ATTEND THE CHARLES COUNTY COLLEGE FAIR on September 15<sup>th</sup>**

## October

- **Attend College Information Night for Seniors October 9<sup>th</sup>**
- Start preparing essay notes and an outline now for any college application that requires an essay.
- Register for SAT II if the colleges to which you are applying recommend them.
- Meet with the college admission representatives visiting your school.
- Attend College Fairs held in your area.
- Schedule college campus visits.
- Talk to your teacher concerning letters of recommendation and give them copies of your resume and any forms provided by the colleges to which you are applying.
- Check in the Career Center for scholarship opportunities.
- Find the deadline date for registering for the ACT/ SAT and SAT II tests if you plan to attend a four-year college.
- Investigate NCAA application procedures. Complete the NCAA Eligibility forms if you are planning to attend a Division I or II college and you want to be considered for an athletic scholarship. Prepare a separate athletic resume for the colleges.
- Any Senior is welcome to take the ASVAB, (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) see Mrs. Stone to sign up for the test on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

## **November**

- Investigate all potential sources of financial aid. Write to private organizations for scholarship information and application materials. **LISTEN TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CHECK IN THE CAREER CENTER FOR ANY SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.**
- Apply early to colleges that have rolling admissions.
- Complete the first draft of your essay this month. Talk to your English teacher about evaluating it and leave ample time for revisions.

## **December**

- **Attend Financial Aid Night**
- To give your counselor sufficient time to complete the Secondary School Report section of your college application forms, submit the forms early in the month. Keep copies of everything you want sent to colleges/universities.
- Remind your teachers that recommendations are due soon.
- Your family should be working on the FAFSA once it is available to you. Some private colleges now require the CSS / PROFILE. |All of these forms are available in the Career Center.
- **LISTEN TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CHECK THE CAREER CENTER FOR SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

## **January**

- **File the FAFSA forms as soon as possible after January 1, 2009**
- Apply for the Maryland State Delegate Scholarships and any other appropriate Maryland State Scholarships as soon as applications are available.
- Prepare for semester exams. Your high school grades and class rank are important to colleges considering your applications.
- **LISTEN TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CHECK THE CAREER CENTER FOR SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

## **February**

- Ask your counselor to submit your mid-year grades if any of the colleges to which you have applied require them.
- Some colleges with rolling admissions require a response and deposit in early spring from students who have been accepted. Mark on the calendar any such dates that apply to you.
- **LISTEN TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CHECK THE CAREER FOR SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITES**

## **March**

- Continue to investigate all possible sources of financial aid. **LISTEN TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CHECK THE CAREER CENTER FOR SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.**

## **April**

- Most selective colleges begin announcing their decisions this month. Seniors that are accepted by more than one college must make a choice based on their individual need, interests, and preferences. You may find it helpful to visit these colleges this month before making your decision.
- If you have been accepted to more than one college but have not yet heard from your first choice, contact that college or ask your counselor for help in getting a decision before any nonrefundable deposits are due.

## **May**

- As soon as you have decided which offer of admission to accept, notify that college of your decision. Advise all other colleges to which you have been accepted of your decision.
- If you are wait-listed at a college that you are eager to attend, call or write the director of admissions and ask how to strengthen your application. Recent academic or other achievements may help.
- If you are denied admission, see your guidance counselor or career counselor at once to talk about alternatives. They may suggest steps you can take to alter a college's decision.

## **June**

- Respond promptly to all requests from your college.
- Notify your school which college you have selected so the school can submit final grades, class rank, and proof of graduation.
- Use this summer to earn money for college.

# COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTING INFORMATION

## ***What is the purpose of the College Admission Test (ACT or SAT)?***

The purpose of these tests is to try to predict a student's readiness for college course work. Because the high schools in the United States offer a great variety of courses and have many different grading standards, the ACT and the SAT provide the colleges one way of comparing students across the country. These tests are only one factor that the college admissions offices evaluate when considering a student for admission. **A student's transcript, which is judged both by the grades received and by the rigor of the courses, is the most important factor in any admissions decision.** Statistically those students who have taken the most challenging course work and have been successful usually score the highest on the ACT and the SAT.

## ***Who should take the College Admission Tests?***

This is an important question. Each student will have different testing requirements based on their post-secondary plan and on the classes they have taken in high school.

College Prep courses (Honors level courses and above) are designed for the student who wishes to be prepared to enter a competitive four-year college or university. Many competitive colleges will require much more than the minimums listed below.

## **The MINIMUM course work listed below must be successfully completed to apply to a four-year college:**

- 4 credits of College-Prep English
- 3 credits of College Prep Social Science/History
- **3 credits of College Prep Mathematics, which must include Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry.**

*Please note the following:*

*Algebra I Part I alone does not meet the algebra entrance requirement at a four-year college or university.*

*The successful completion of both Algebra I Part 1 and Algebra I Part II **may** satisfy the algebra requirement at a four-year college.*

*Most four-year colleges & universities don't consider Geometry Concepts to be a college-prep class.*

*Algebra I Part II is not the same course as Algebra II.*

- 3 credits of College Prep Science in at least two different areas with at least **two lab experiences.**

*Chem Com is not a college-prep lab science.*

- 2 credits of the same Foreign Language

*A handful of institutions will accept Advanced Technology I & II in place of Foreign Language.*

## ***When should a student take college admission tests?***

These tests were designed to be taken at the end of the junior year so that a student may finish as much course work as possible before taking the tests. If a student is on schedule to successfully complete the minimum requirements for a 4-year college with a minimum grade of a "C", then he/she should talk with the ACT/SAT Coordinator in the spring of their junior year.

If the student has not completed Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry by the end of their junior year they will not be prepared to be successful on either the ACT or SAT. Since the SAT now includes Algebra II, **it is even more important than ever that a student complete these Math classes before taking any college admissions test.** It is unfair and unrealistic to expect that a student will do well on these tests if they have not taken the courses that are covered on the test.

## **No college admissions tests are required for two-year colleges, technical schools, business or two-year art schools.**

These schools often require a placement test. This placement test is often the ACT or one that is similar to the ACT. For this reason students who are undecided about whether to attend a two or a four-year school and have met the 4-year college course requirements should take the ACT.

**A student may transfer from a two-year college to a four-year college without the ACT or SAT if they complete a minimum of 30 credit hours (approximately one year of college course work).** The reason for this is that the four-year college will base their admission decision on the quality of the course work and the grades received at the college. The college transcript will show the 4-year college admissions office how well the student has done in his first year of college and therefore they will not need a test to predict his success in college.

## ***What are the differences between the ACT and the SAT?***

	SAT		ACT
<b>TIME</b>	<b>Total – 3 HOURS 45 MINUTES</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>Total 3 HOURS 25 MINUTES W/ Optional Writing Test</b>  <b>Option #1 ACT</b> <b>Option #2 ACT taken w/Writing Test</b>
<b>CRITICAL READING</b>	<b>Critical Reading 70 Minutes</b> <b>2 - 25-Minute Sections</b> <b>1 - 20-Minute Section</b>  <b>Sentence Completion</b>  <b>Critical Reading</b> <b>Short &amp; Long Passages</b>	<b>READING</b>	<b>1 – 35 minute section 40 questions</b>  <b>Prose Fiction</b> <b>Humanities</b> <b>Social Studies</b> <b>Natural Sciences</b>
<b>MATH</b>	<b>Math 70 Minutes</b> <b>2 - 25-Minute Sections</b> <b>1 - 20-Minute Section</b>  <b>Expand Math Content To Include</b> <b>Topics From Algebra II</b>	<b>MATH</b>	<b>1- 60-minute section 60 questions</b>  <b>Pre-Algebra, Elem. &amp; Int. Algebra</b> <b>Coordinate &amp; Plane Geometry</b> <b>Trigonometry</b>
<b>WRITING</b>	<b>New Section</b> <b>Total 60 Minutes</b> <b>Multiple Choice – 35 minutes</b> <b>Essay - 25 Minute</b>  <b>Multiple-Choice</b> <b>Improving Sentences/Paragraphs &amp;</b> <b>Identifying Errors</b>  <b>Student-Written Essay</b>	<b>A. ENGLISH</b>  <b>WRITING</b>	<b>1 – 45 minute section 75 questions</b>  <b>Usage / Mechanics</b> <b>Rhetorical Skills</b>  <b>Optional Section 1–30 minute</b> <b>Student writing sample demonstrating use</b> <b>skills tested in English section</b>
<b>VARIABLE SECTION</b>	<b>Math / Critical Reading</b> <b>25 minutes</b>	<b>SCIENCE</b>	<b>1 – 35 minute section 40 questions</b> <b>Biology</b> <b>Earth/Space Science</b> <b>Chemistry</b> <b>Physics</b>
<b>B.</b>			
<b>C. SCORE</b>	<b>Critical Reading 200 – 800</b> <b>Math 200 – 800</b> <b>Writing 200 – 800</b> <b>Essay 2–12</b> <b>Multiple Choice 20 - 80</b> <b>Total 600 - 2400</b>	<b>D. SCORE</b>	<b>Option #1 Same Each section 1 - 36</b> <b>Option #2 Same Each section 1 - 36</b> <b>English Score of 1 – 36</b> <b>English combined with Writing</b> <b>(Subscore 2-12)</b>
<b>COST</b>	<b>\$45.00</b>	<b>COST</b>	<b>Option #1 - ACT -\$31.00</b> <b>Option #2 - ACT With Writing - \$46.00</b>
<b>CALCULATOR</b>	<b>Scientific Level Recommended</b>	<b>I. CALCULATOR</b>	<b>Scientific Level Recommended</b>

*What is CLEP?*

CLEP is a series of examinations that allow you to show your knowledge in a wide range of subject areas. It can help you in several ways:

- Improve your chances for admission
- Enter college with up to two years of college credit
- Save time and money getting your degree
- Bypass introductory classes in subject areas you already know
- Take courses that are exciting, interesting and challenging to you

Over 2000 institutions use CLEP in some way or another. Each college or university has its own policy toward CLEP examinations which CLEP tests it will accept for credit: the minimum scores required; and the amount of credit it will award. However, CLEP tests will not be accepted for high school credit toward graduation.

To find out the CLEP policy at a particular college, call or write the college's Admissions Office of Counseling and Testing Office. Ask for the name of the person who has the information about the CLEP credit-by-examination policy of the institution

A copy of the CLEP Colleges is available free at your local college, or by writing to CLEP, CN 6001, Princeton, NJ 38541-6601

## **Two-Year Community Colleges and Technical Schools**

Although 25% of today's careers require a four-year degree, 85% require education or training beyond high school. A four-year college education is not for everyone. In fact students can often best prepare for any of today's high growth career fields by attending a community or technical school.

All students should take as many academic courses in high school as possible. Students attending a community college or technical school, however, will not be required to complete all of the recommended college preparatory courses in high school. These students generally will not be required to take the ACT or SAT either.

Students who prefer courses that relate directly to their career goals and/or students who enjoy a more hands-on approach to education should consider a community college and/or technical school as a post-secondary option. Many of those students will later transfer to a four-year college to complete their bachelor's degree.

For more information on the College of Southern Maryland, come to the Career Center or visit the college Web site [www.csmd.edu](http://www.csmd.edu)

## THE COLLEGE SEARCH: WHERE TO BEGIN

Traditionally, 60-65 percent of the graduating class move on to some form of higher education. Therefore, a logical first step in the college search process is to think about and make a list of reasons for going to college. During this search process it is good to write things down.

Be careful here! The reasons for going to college may not be as obvious as they seem. For example, there is no guarantee that you will get a good job just because you go to college. Of course, some professions require a college degree. However, many students start college wanting to become a doctor and graduate with another degree. Many people discover while in college what it is they want to do with their lives.

A safe and sound reason for going to college is to become more educated. Again, not everyone who graduates from college is educated. A person can graduate from college with a degree in finance and go on to have a successful career in banking and still not be educated.

Think seriously about why you want to attend college. The time spent thinking about this question may give you clues about the kind of college that you want to attend.

### HOW DO COLLEGES CHOOSE STUDENTS?

Wondering what the most competitive colleges are looking for in an applicant? According to a 1994 survey of 593 private and public colleges and universities, here are the top 10 admission criteria used by highly selective colleges.

1. ***High School Record-which includes courses taken and grades in those courses***
2. ***Admission test scores***
3. ***Activities and other accomplishments***
4. ***Teacher recommendations***

### HOW DO STUDENTS CHOOSE COLLEGES?

Just as colleges place the most value on an applicant's academic record, students searching for a college look first for a good academic reputation when choosing a school.

According to a 1994 survey of 237,777 freshmen at 461 of the nation's colleges and universities, here are the top 10 criteria they note as very important in selecting a college.

1. ***Good Academic Reputation***
2. ***Graduates get good jobs***
3. ***Size of college***
4. ***Offered financial assistance***
5. ***Tuition***
6. ***Grads go to top grad schools***
7. ***Good social reputation***
8. ***Offered special programs***
9. ***Wanted to live near home***
10. ***Friend suggested attending***

## THE COLLEGE SEARCH: NARROWING THE FIELD

There are over 3,800 colleges in the United States. How do you begin to find the one that is right for you?

Consider the colleges in and around Baltimore. Each is different in academic challenge, size, location, and type of student body and cost.

Johns Hopkins University, for example, is considered extremely rigorous academically. In comparison, Washington College is less stringent.

In size, Loyola College has an enrollment of approximately 3500 and is a medium sized school. The University of Maryland has over 25,000 students and is a large school.

Mount St. Mary's College is located in a small town, but is just one hour's drive from a large city. Towson University, on the other hand, is situated in the suburbs of Baltimore.

With regards to cost, state schools will always be the least expensive. However, some expensive schools are richly endowed and able to offer good financial aid. In the initial stages of planning, don't let cost be the more important factor.

So we see that colleges vary in academic caliber, size, location, type of student body and cost. These factors are called variables. One of your first jobs in searching for a college is to rank the variables. Put them in the order of importance to you.

Two important variables are the size and the curriculum of a college.

**SIZE:** Think about which environment best suits you:

- a. A small school from 1,000 – 2,000 students? St. Mary's has 1830 students. Class sizes are probably similar to those at Westlake. St. Mary's student/faculty ratio is 17-1.
- b. A medium sized school from 2500-5000? Loyola College has 3500 students. The student/faculty ratio is 20-1 and the class sizes will probably be bigger than you are used to now. Frostburg has 4,240.
- c. A large school from anywhere above 5000 students? University of Maryland is a large school with 25,000 students. Many classes are held in lecture halls.

**CURRICULUM:**

- a. Many large universities offer different and specialized majors such as Education (adults, early Childhood, health/physical, industrial, etc.), pre-professional (dentistry, engineering, forestry, pharmacy, etc.) just to name a few.
- b. Liberal Arts involves the study of the basics such as literature, languages, history, math, science, Etc. It is similar to the subjects you have studied at Westlake, but goes much deeper. It teaches you how to use your mind in any area. Basically, you learn how to think.
- c. You may want to find a school which will offer a varied curriculum including both liberal arts courses and some specialized field.

Please remember a sound reason for going to college is to become a more educated person. Not everyone who graduates from college is educated. If a person spends his four years at a college in one very specialized area, he will be well trained for that area only.

As was mentioned earlier, size and curriculum are just two of the many variables used to *narrow the field*. It is up to you to investigate the various kinds of schools and opportunities in order to make a good decision.

Sometimes, it is easy to cut down on the number of colleges that you will investigate. For example, if you want to be an engineer, then the number of colleges for you to investigate is reduced because not all colleges grant engineering degrees. If you want to go to a college that is close to good skiing, you have narrowed the field!

Your grades and your PSAT and SAT scores and rank-in-class are only some of the factors that colleges consider.

Also, a word of advice, don't make up your mind too fast! Even if you are fairly certain that you will be going to a specific college or university, still go through the process of searching for colleges. The process of searching will help you to learn more about the ways in which colleges are different and it will also help you to know yourself better.

## THE COLLEGE LIST

As you begin to make a general list of schools that interest you, try to keep three categories in mind. Your final list should have schools that fall within the (1) safety, (2) middle ground, and (3) long shot categories. "Safety" schools are those schools for which you are a good candidate, i.e.; you meet and surpass most of their entrance criteria. "Middle Ground" schools are schools where you should have a fairly good chance of being admitted and you would be happy there. "Long Shots" are schools in which the competition is very high but where you would love to attend. As long as you have applied to some other less competitive schools, then you can safely take a chance on a very competitive one.

It is a good idea to start with a large, general list of schools and begin to narrow your choices as you find out more information. You are free to apply to as many schools as you wish. However, application fees do add up. They generally run between \$35-\$65. Also, too many choices can create confusion. Some students are certain where they want to attend and that they will be admitted. For others more uncertain, it is not unreasonable to apply to five or six schools, allowing for schools in all three categories.

Following is a chart that should be helpful.

## COMPARISON CHART OF FACTS AND IMPRESSIONS ABOUT COLLEGES

<b>Name of College:</b>					
Type (e.g., 4-year liberal arts, 2-year community college, etc.):					
Test(s) required:					
Score report(s) due:					
Application deadline:					
Total annual expenses:					
Amount of financial aid available:					
Total undergraduate enrollment: Women: Men:					
Freshman class Number that applied: Number that were accepted: Number that enrolled:					
Number of credits required in freshman year:					
Average class size:					
When must you declare a major:					
Are there programs for study abroad?					
Are there work-study programs?					
Are there internship programs?					
Do top-ranking faculty members teach undergraduate classes?					
How would you rate the school's overall academic reputation (high, average, low)?					
How would you rate the school's library facilities (good, average, poor)?					

REQUESTING INFORMATION FROM COLLEGES  
**Sample Inquiry Paragraphs**

Pick a paragraph or combination of paragraphs that might meet your needs:

Paragraph A: General information request letter

Paragraph B- Campus Visitation Letter

Paragraph C- Financial aid Letter

\*\*\*\*\*

Your Name  
Home Address  
Date

Office of Undergraduate Admissions  
Name of Institution  
Address

To Whom It May Concern:

I plan to enroll in college with the term beginning \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month & Year)

- A. Please send me an application, catalogue, and any additional information that I might need. I am considering \_\_\_\_\_ as a possible major.
- B. I would like to visit your campus and meet with an admission counselor. Since I am considering majoring in \_\_\_\_\_, would it be possible to meet with someone from that department? Please advise me of a convenient date and time for my visit.
- C. My family and I would like to further investigate college costs and potential sources of financial aid. Please send us updated information and specifics concerning how, when and where to apply for financial aid.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

## RESOURCES AND THE CAREER CENTER

The Career Center is a resource room containing information on careers, colleges, trade schools, scholarships, and financial aid. Following is a brief listing of the sources of information found in your Career Center.

### II. CAREER RESEARCH

- A. Occupational Outlook Handbooks
- B. Chronicle Guidance Vocational Library
- C. Career Assessment Surveys: COPS, Holland, Self-Directed Search; and the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)

### III. COLLEGE RESEARCH

#### A. College Guides

1. Peterson's **Guide to Four-year Colleges & Guide To Two-Year Colleges** - These guidebooks contains information similar to that in **The College Handbook**. There is also subjective information, such as entrance difficulty and descriptions of campus life. The book is organized alphabetically. The introductory pages provide a good guide to the process of choosing a college.
2. Peterson's **Competitive Colleges** is a description of the top colleges.
3. College Board's **The College Handbook** - The College Board (the organization that runs the SATs) publishes information in this "handbook" as it is supplied by the individual colleges. The information is strictly objective and offers no selection index. A good indication of how the college's financial aid is awarded appears in the section on finances. In addition, the College Board publishes two other books.
4. **The College Cost Book** provides a step-by-step guide to paying for college, including advice on making the most of your resources, how to estimate financial need and where and how to apply for resources, how to estimate financial need and where and how to apply for aid. It also lists the costs of 3500 colleges and universities.
5. **The Index of Majors**. If you are sure about what you would like to study in college, this book provides a guide to locating majors and the colleges where they are offered.
6. Peterson's **Sports Scholarships & College Programs** contain information about various sports (where the sport can be played and how many scholarships are awarded each year).
7. Peterson's **Paying Less for College** contains information about financial aid with list by state of scholarship programs.
8. **Rugg's Recommendations** contains a ranking of colleges by majors.

#### B. College Catalogues

#### C. College Applications

#### D. Scholarship Information and Applications

**E. Computerized College Search & Internet Access**

**IV. SPEAKERS**

**A. Colleges**

**B. Military**

**C. Trade and Technical Schools**

**D. Career Representatives**

**V. VIDEO TAPES**

Do you want to visit a college campus without leaving the comfort of the Career Center? Borrow a video or schedule a time to view selected colleges and universities on videotape. These are brief campus tours and informative segments about college life, admission procedures, costs, etc. for over 50 institutions. See Mrs. Wilhelm to schedule a time in the Career Center.

No doubt you will receive a great deal of information in the mail. This material comes to you mostly because of the information that you supplied when you registered for the SAT. Look over the material. If something appeals to you, keep it on file. Get rid of anything that does not interest you so that your mind is not cluttered with irrelevant ideas. Please donate extra catalogues to the Career Center.

A good thing to keep in mind is that some colleges begin to gauge your interest by how and when you make contact with them. If you pick up material at a fair, the college may not get your name. If a friend gives you some information, college may not get your name. If a friend gives you some information the college has no record of your interest in them. If you visit the school or write or call the school, the college will start a file on you.

The following are some of the videotapes available in the Career Center:

**Campus Video Tours**

***The Road To College: A Guide To College Selection And Financial Aid For Students, Parents And Counselor- National Association Of College Admission Counselors***

***Everything You Need To Know About The New SAT And The College Admission Process- Princeton Review***

***Parents In The Process- National Association Of College Admission Counselors***

***ABC's Of Eligibility For College Bound Athletes- College Board***

**VI. TRADE AND TECHNICAL SCHOOL RESOURCES:**

**A. Peterson's Guide To Trade and Technical School**

**B. Careers Without College, including *Allied Health, Business, Cars, Health Careers, Kids, Sports, Teaching and Travel***

**VII. OTHER CAREER OPTIONS**

**A. Military, enlistees and officer training programs.**

- B. Job Corps offers free job placement training services for students ages 16-24. For information, contact Job Corps recruiting at 1-800-440-1010
- C. The Department of Labor and Licensing mails a list of current employment opportunities to the Career Center once a month.

### **VIII. CAREER CENTER PROCEDURES**

Students need to have a pass when they visit the Career Center. The Career Center is open from 7:15 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Students may visit before school, after school, during their lunch or during an approved class period. If a student wishes to spend their lunch period in the Career Center they may do so after they sign-in when entering the Career Center. If a student is coming from a classroom they must bring a pass from the appropriate teacher. Sign-up sheets are available in the Career Center for a variety of college and career programs. Students may not attend more than two programs in one day and may not sign up for other students. On the day before the program, the Career Center passes will be distributed to the appropriate teacher through student aides. You must bring this pass with you to be admitted to the program in the Career Center.

## PERSONAL CONTACT

Many colleges send representatives to Westlake during the fall and winter to hand out material, meet with students and the career center coordinator, and generally to publicize their school. The opportunity to talk with admission representative should not be taken lightly. Most important, it is a chance to hear about a school's academic opportunities, admission procedures and to ask questions about the student body, the social life, or other areas of interest. Although college fairs can be crowded and hectic, you may be able to approach representatives at a slow moment. Remember! There is also a good chance that the representative who visits Westlake will also be the "reader" of the applications. Don't try to be someone you are not. At the same time, be polite and sincere in your questions. *Genuine interest always creates a good impression.*

In the same way, sincerity and interest are important ingredients in a successful interview. It is important that you are prepared for your interview. Read some of the literature and have some thoughtful questions ready. A "token" question about the school's size or the male-female ratio is more detrimental than a sign of interest. Try not to answer with yes or no responses. The admission counselor is trying to find out who you are, what you find interesting and why?

"Why" is a big question in an interview. The counselor looks to see if you have really thought about your answers, or are you just saying what you think sounds good. Here are a few typical examples: "Why do you like math?" "Why is *The Great Gatsby* your favorite book?" "Why do you want to major in history?" Be specific and be yourself! For more information on college interviews, come to the Career Center.

## COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

College selection is a process that takes time. In the same way, successfully completing an application requires time. Every college has different requirements and deadlines. If you write to a college for an application, make sure to allow enough time for the college to send the material and enough time for you to complete it carefully. **The appearance of your application is important.** A student whose application is typed carefully and proofread for spelling errors gives a much better impression than one whose application appears rushed with messy writing and grammatical errors. By taking some care with your application, you are saying to the admission counselor that you are very interested in the school and are willing to work for admission.

As you list your activities, keep in mind that the quality rather than the quantity is most important to an admission staff. A genuine interest or hobby that has been pursued over a few years is much more impressive than a long list of activities of questionable commitment.

Keep copies of everything you send to a college. **Before you fill out your college application make a working copy.** Fill out the working copy first and revise it before you transfer the information to the final application. Prepare a resume to include: your activities, part-time employment, courses taken, and honors received.

## SAMPLE RESUME FOR COLLEGE & SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

KEVIN WILLIAM KEMPS  
1255 Princeton Lane  
Waldorf, MD 20602

Westlake High School  
3300 Middletown Road  
Waldorf, MD 20603

Graduation: June 2, 2009

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

JV Football (9, 10)	15 hours/week, 13 weeks
JV Baseball (9, 10)	15 hours/week, 13 weeks
Varsity Football (11, 12)	15 hours/week, 13 weeks
Varsity Baseball (11, 12)	15 hours/week, 13 weeks
Student Council (9, 10, 11, 12)	3 hours/week, 10 weeks
Photography Club (11, 12)	2 hours/week, 18 weeks

### COMMUNITY, CHURCH, VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

St. Peter's Church Youth Group (9, 10, 11, 12)	3 hours/week, 18 weeks
4-H Group (9, 10, 11, 12)	4 hours/week, 12 months
American Legion Baseball (10, 11, 12)	18 hours/week, 13 weeks
High School Tutoring Program (11,12)	3 hours/week, 14 weeks

### LEADERSHIP POSITIONS/OFFICES HELD

Captain, Varsity Football (12)  
Captain, Varsity Baseball (12)  
Vice President, National Honor Society (12)  
Representative, Student Council (9, 10, 11, 12)  
4-H Junior Leader (11, 12)  
Church Youth Group Representative (9, 10)

### HONORS/AWARDS RECEIVED

Lettered, Varsity Football (11, 12)  
    All-County Selection (12)  
    All-Conference Selection (12)  
Lettered, Varsity Baseball (11, 12)  
    All-County Selection (12)  
    All-Conference Selection (12)  
National Honor Society (10, 11, 12)  
Academic Letter (9, 10, 11, 12)  
Boys' State (11)  
Maryland State Distinguished Scholar, Semi-finalist (12)

### WORK HISTORY

MJ Designs (National Craft & Frame store)  
June 2007-September 2008  
Cashier, Stock Inventory, Displays

\*\* See your English Teacher or visit the Career Center for more examples of Resumes.

## **When you write an essay.....**

- DO** start early. Leave plenty of time to revise, reword and rewrite. You can improve on your presentation.
- DO** read the directions carefully. You will want to answer the questions as directly as possible, and you'll want to follow word limits exactly. Express yourself as briefly and as clearly as you can.
- DO** tell the truth about yourself. The admission committee is anonymous to you: you are completely unknown to it. Even if you run into a committee member in the future, he will have no way of connecting your essay (out of thousands he has read) to you.
- DO** focus on an aspect of yourself that will show your best side. You might have overcome some adversity, worked through a difficult project, or profited from a specific incident. A narrow focus is more interesting than broad-based generalization.
- DO** feel comfortable in expressing anxieties. Everyone has them, and it's good to know that an applicant can see them and face them.
- DO** tie yourself to the college. Be specific about what this particular school can do for you. Your essay can have different slants for different colleges.
- DO** speak positively. Negatives tend to turn people off.
- DO** write about your greatest assets and achievements. You should be proud of them!

## **But.....**

- DON'T** repeat information given elsewhere on your application. The committee has already seen it-- and it looks as though you have nothing better to say.
- DON'T** write on general, impersonal topics-- like the nuclear arms race or the importance of good management in business. The college wants to know about YOU.
- DON'T** use the personal statement to excuse your shortcomings. It would give them additional attention.
- DON'T** use cliches.
- DON'T** go to extremes: too witty, too opinionated, or too "intellectual."

## **REMEMBER.....**

The personal statement is yours. If it looks like Madison Avenue, the admission committee will probably assume that it is your mother's or your father's or their secretaries'.

A "gimmick" essay rarely goes anywhere. The committee is amused, but unimpressed with your candidacy.

Write a serious essay, from the bottom of your heart, in the most mature manner possible.

# GENERAL INFORMATION ON COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

The following are necessary for admission to colleges:

- High School record (transcript)
- College Board Scores (SAT or ACT; SAT II (subject) Tests)
- Counselor and Teacher Recommendation
- List of extracurricular activities

Other factors influencing admissions to schools:

- Individual talents, interests and achievements
- Service to the School
- Part-time work experience
- Autobiography or essay
- Personal interview

## GETTING IN: WHAT COUNTS THE MOST

Here are the percentages of college admissions officers who say the following factors are "considerably important" in influencing admission decisions:

80%	Grades in college preparatory classes
43%	SAT/ACT scores
41%	Grades in all subjects
39%	Class rank
21%	Essay/writing sample
19%	Counselor/teacher recommendations
15%	Interview
7%	Work/extracurricular activities
3%	Ability to pay

## APPLICATION PROCEDURES/DEADLINES

After you have received the application materials that you have requested from a college or university, carefully note the deadline for submitting each application that you plan to complete. The deadlines, requirements, and procedures usually vary for each school.

**"Early decision" or "early action"** is an additional deadline, which some schools use. Yet even early decision procedures can vary from school to school. For example, the early decision deadline for Amherst College is November 15. This application is "binding", meaning that you sign your application in agreement that if you are accepted to the college you will withdraw any other applications and agree to attend Amherst. Early action is generally the same as a non-binding early decision. If you are planning to apply early, check whether you can be deferred in the early decision or early action process. Many colleges will "defer" candidates who are not accepted early. This means that the candidate's application is placed in with all the other applications for the regular deadline, giving the candidate another chance for consideration. Some schools will reject outright and some schools will defer. Generally, you should apply early decision or early action only if you are certain that a particular school is your first choice. The competition is often stronger during early decision or action than it is during the regular procedure. Be sure you are applying early for the right reasons and that you are an appropriate candidate. It is assumed that if you are applying for early decision or early action, then you have already completed the comprehensive process of narrowing down your list. Your application is also contingent upon your having taken the appropriate standardized tests in time for the deadline.

**Rolling admission** means that a school will decide each application as it is received. Schools with this type of policy may become more selective as their application pool increases. Therefore, the earlier you submit your application the better off you are. The only exception to this might be if your previous grades or scores are low and you think that you will probably improve in the next semester.

Throughout the application procedure, organization is important. While the format and deadlines for applications may vary, the content is usually similar. Most applications contain the following: a section for biographical information, a section for the high school to complete, a place for your signature, and instructions about the application fee. Some applications have additional forms such as secondary school report and teacher recommendation forms. There may also be a separate page or form for your essay.

**The first step with any application is to read all of the instructions.** Next complete all portions of the application that pertain to you. When the application is complete, including all additional forms, bring all of your materials to the Guidance Office. Complete a transcript request form. (See form on the next page) Your first transcript will be free. Additional transcripts may be purchased for \$3.00 each or 10 for \$25.00. This fee is payable at the time that you complete the transcript request form. The Guidance Office will need two weeks to process your request. If you wish for the Guidance Office to mail your application, you must provide them with an addressed and stamped envelope.

Some schools, such as Loyola and Towson University, have a policy called "Personal Decision". In this case, you bring a completed application and an unofficial transcript to the college and meet with one of the counselors, who will give you an indication of whether you should apply. At Loyola College particularly, they do not accept students on the spot. It is the policy NOT to give a student an official transcript. We will agree to send a transcript or give the student an unofficial one. The reason for this is to protect the student from any accusation of tampering with the transcript.

Under normal circumstances, the senior counselor will send your final transcript and verification of graduation to one school. It is your responsibility to let the career counselor know which school you will be attending in the fall. The policy of sending only one final transcript is an attempt to eliminate the possibility of a double deposit. Not only is this a waste of money, it is also unacceptable to the colleges. In some cases, if detected, both schools will drop their acceptance of the student.

In order for the counseling office to fully process each student's applications, including compiling transcripts and teacher recommendations, it is necessary to set certain deadlines. This is to ensure that all the materials will be sent in time to meet the college deadlines.

It is very important that these deadlines be taken seriously. With the volume of material that we handle (each student usually applies to three-five schools), we need 2 weeks in order to send each applications on time.

It is very important that you communicate with your counselor to enable the college application process to run smoothly. You must help yourself by being organized and responsible. Keep a folder with copies of all applications that you send to colleges and dates that your applications were mailed.

### **INFORMATION NEEDED FOR APPLICATIONS**

School Address: Westlake High School  
3300 Middletown Road  
Waldorf, Maryland 20603

School Phone Number: 301-645-8857

School CEEB Code: 211059

School Principal:	Ms. Chrystal Benson
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Vice Principal	Mr. Dean Brooks
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor	Ms. Janel Young
College & Career Advisor:	Ms. Gail Stone

Size of the Class of 2009: 332

WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL  
TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORM

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Needed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Must be at least 2 weeks from today)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID # \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Counselor is to include the following: (Please check all that apply)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Official Transcript \_\_\_\_\_ Unofficial Transcript  
(Includes current class rank, cumulative GPA, and current schedule/grades)

\_\_\_\_\_ PSAT scores

\_\_\_\_\_ SAT/ACT scores

\_\_\_\_\_ AP test scores

\_\_\_\_\_ Letter of recommendation \*(A resume must be submitted for recommendation.) **If this is not checked, the comment section on the counselor page will be left blank.**

**I would like my transcript to be:**

\_\_\_\_\_ returned to me. \*

\_\_\_\_\_ mailed separately. A legal-sized addressed envelope with 3 stamps must be provided.

\_\_\_\_\_ mailed with my completed admissions packet. At time of request, the admissions packet must be given to the secretary with all appropriate attachments such as other letters of recommendation, essays, or application fees. Correct postage and a large envelope must be included. For a full application 4 stamps are sufficient.

\*Official transcripts and letters of recommendation are sealed with a gold seal. If an official transcript is opened it will be replaced at the original cost (\$3.00). If a letter of recommendation is opened **NO FURTHER LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO THAT STUDENT BY THE COUNSELOR.**

NAME OF COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY/SCHOLARSHIP:

\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

(For office Use Only) Date of Student PU or Mailed \_\_\_\_\_ Paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2009 GRADUATE DIPLOMA ORDER**

**Please Print:**

-----  
First Name                      Middle Name or Initial                      Last Name                      (Jr., III, etc.)

By signing below, we indicate that the above information is correct and should be printed on my child's diploma. We understand that any changes to the above after the diploma has been ordered will be our responsibility to pay.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

Complete and return signed form to the guidance office by:

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2008**

## FINANCIAL AID

At the same time that you are investigating and applying to schools, you need to think about the expense of a college education. Keeping up with funding programs and loan criteria is enough to confuse anyone. While there is still money available, the chore is to find it, to get the most education for that money.

Financial aid can be one of the more important determining factors in a student and family's college decision. While initially college costs may appear beyond reach, it is very important to examine each school carefully. ***Don't eliminate schools right away because of what seem to be unreasonable costs.*** Try to apply to schools that best facilitate your interests in terms of environment, facilities, and academic and social opportunities. If you never apply to certain schools because of cost, you will never have the chance of being accepted. Obviously, you must be aware of costs but try not to let that be the overriding factor in selecting a college.

In the fall or even winter of the senior year, it is impossible to know how much money may be available through financial aid or scholarships. It is not even certain whether you will or will not be eligible for financial aid. This information will never be evident if you don't apply for aid. A better tactic might be to go ahead and apply to a school if you are seriously interested in it, despite what might seem like high costs. Also, apply to some schools that look more affordable and to which you would be willing to attend. If it appears in the end that a particular school is not an appropriate choice because of costs, then you still have other options.

The first step for any student seeking financial assistance for college is to complete the Free Application for Financial Aid (FAFSA) which may be completed online as soon as possible after January 1st of your Senior Year. In fact, students will receive their Student Aid Report much faster if the FAFSA is submitted in this manner. ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)). ***If you don't apply for aid, you will never know if you are eligible.*** Another tactic may be to go ahead and apply to a school if you are seriously interested in it, despite what might seem like high costs. Also, apply to some schools that look more affordable and to which you would be willing to attend. If it appears in the end that a particular school is not an appropriate choice because of costs, then still have other options.

Remind your parents to plan on having their income tax information organized early this year. The FAFSA is used to determine a student's eligibility for financial aid under federal, state, institutional and private financial aid programs. All schools will require the FAFSA and many may require an additional institutional financial aid form. It is advisable to submit the FAFSA for the first year of college even if you think the probability of receiving aid is low. Some schools will refuse aid to a student in his second or third year if he never applied for the first year. Approximately 3-4 days after you have filed your FAFSA, you will receive your SAR (Student Aid Report) which will inform you of your EFC (Estimated Family Contribution). The EFC is the amount that the government has determined that a parent can afford to pay for your son or daughter's education that year. If the cost of the college is more than your EFC, you have a financial need and should be eligible for financial aid. Contact the college's financial aid office for further information.

In addition to the FAFSA, some private colleges will require the submission of the CSS/Financial Aid Profile. The Financial Aid Profile is a need analysis and there is a processing fee. These forms are available in the Career Center.

There are basically two different types of financial aid: need-based and merit-based. The FAFSA form determines need-based aid and is the foundation of all need-based aid packages. Some fraternal organizations and civic groups may have special scholarships for students based on need and academic success. This aid is usually obtained by making a separate application.

The other type of financial aid, merit-based, includes academic, athletic and special talent scholarships. The purpose of merit-based scholarships is to attract students with special talents to a college. Often, schools that are trying to upgrade their academic reputation will offer attractive scholarships to entice the students of high academic ability.

Another option for some students may be the military programs. There are the Academies, (West Point, Naval, Air Force, and Coast Guard) as well as various ROTC opportunities involving tuition payments in exchange for a certain number of years of military service. Information on all these programs is available in the Career Center.

Another source of financial aid is the State of Maryland. The State offers many need-based and merit-based programs. The information from the State usually arrives in the Career Center in December or January. You can also contact the Maryland Higher Education Commission at 1-410-260-4500 or [www.mhec.state.md.us](http://www.mhec.state.md.us).

In December, there will be a workshop for parents on financial aid with the latest information on state and federal programs. A financial aid advisor will be available to talk about how to fill out the FAFSA and answer any specific questions.

*Try to be methodical about the financial aid and college process in general. While at first it may seem overwhelming, if you follow the procedures suggested here, you will have an interesting and successful college selection process. Remember that this is a year-long process, being organized will help alleviate "Senior Stress".*

**Good Luck!**

## Applying For Scholarships

You have probably heard people say that there are millions of scholarship dollars that go unclaimed each year. You have probably also heard of an outstanding student who could not get a scholarship. Both are true.

The fact is there are thousands of scholarships, however, most of these scholarships have very specific eligibility criteria. They might require that a student go to a particular college, be in the top 5% of his/her class and have an ACT of at least 28, belong to a particular ethnic group, race, religion, have overcome a great obstacle, have great leadership skills or a specific major, etc.)

When it comes to academic scholarships, students generally must have an outstanding G.P.A. (3.5 or better), high test scores (26+ ACT or 1800+ SAT), excellent recommendations, and be involved in extracurricular and/or community activities. **To receive an athletic or academic scholarship, student must truly be outstanding.**

Even though it is not easy to obtain academic or talent scholarships, students and parents, who are willing to invest the time and energy may find that their efforts payoff handsomely. When locating and applying for scholarships, keep the following in mind:

1. Start early. Be ready to locate and complete applications early in the senior year.
2. Finding and applying for scholarships takes time, energy, and persistence.
3. Colleges are usually able to award the larger scholarships. Contact the financial aid office of the colleges where you plan to apply.
4. Private colleges are often more generous in awarding scholarships, thus making private schools competitive in price with public schools.
5. Apply for local scholarships. These are generally for smaller amounts (i.e. \$100-\$1000). Since the competition is not as great, they are easier to obtain.
6. Be aware of deadlines. Scholarship applications become available throughout the senior year, and sometimes are due only weeks after being publicized.
7. Network. Become a familiar face in the Career Center. Tell everyone (including the high school counselor) that you are looking for scholarships. Check for scholarship opportunities with your parent, place of employment, your church, any organization to which your parents belong, etc. Also, look for scholarship opportunities in your local newspaper.
8. Look for books and computer programs with scholarship information. Your high school guidance office and/or the library will have books, which list numerous scholarship opportunities. Web sites can also provide current and valuable information.
9. Applying for scholarships can be frustrating. You may not get a response when you write to an address taken from a scholarship book or computer search. If you do get a response, you may find that the deadline has passed or that there is no longer funding for the scholarship.
10. Be organized.
11. Remember that students who are not able to get scholarships often are able to get need-based financial aid.

***Tip: Make copies of everything!!!***

## SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Copies of all scholarship information are kept in "The Scholarship Box" in the career center. The scholarships are filed according to the deadline dates. Please ask Mrs. Stone for assistance if you do not find the scholarship you are looking for.

Information on the Charles County Scholarships is usually available by January or February. Students must watch the deadline and criteria for these scholarships. Some of these scholarships are only to be used at the College of Southern Maryland; others may be used at the college of your choice.

If you have a special interest, talent or skill, please let Mrs. Stone know so that she can help you find scholarships for that interest.

### Web Sites

[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

[www.collegeanswer.com](http://www.collegeanswer.com)

[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

[www.gocollege.com](http://www.gocollege.com)

[www.studentservices.com/fastweb](http://www.studentservices.com/fastweb)

[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

[www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

[www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com)

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

## NCAA REQUIREMENTS

**Before an athlete can play a sport or receive an athletic scholarship at a Division I or II college or university, he or she must meet the specific academic criteria as set forth by the NCAA. To view eligibility requirements go to [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net) or call the clearinghouse at 877-262-1492. Athletes also need to complete the NCAA Clearinghouse form during their senior year in order to initiate the eligibility process.**

## POPULAR LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAMS

<b>Loan/Grant Name</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Description</b>
Stafford loan	1 <sup>st</sup> year - \$3,500 Max 2 <sup>nd</sup> year - \$4,500 Max 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> year - 5,500	Need based, FAFSA Required.
Pell Grant	\$4,310 Max	Need-based cash grants. FAFSA Required.
State Grant	Varied	You must live and go to school in that state. State grants are part of the financial aid package.
SEOG Grant	\$100 - \$4,000	Priority is given to students who receive Pell Grants and still have need
Federal Work-Study	Varied	Work-study wages.
Perkins Loan	\$Up to \$4,000	Exceptional financial need at 5% interest. Repaid when you leave college
PLUS Loans	You may borrow the total cost of education minus estimated financial aid awarded.	Your family must apply for this separately. Repayment begins 60 days after loan disbursement

## Links to Schools in Maryland

### Four-year Colleges

Baltimore Hebrew University  
[www.bhu.edu](http://www.bhu.edu)

Baltimore International College  
[www.bic.edu](http://www.bic.edu)

Bowie State University  
[www.umsa.umd.edu](http://www.umsa.umd.edu)

Capital College  
[www.capital-college.edu](http://www.capital-college.edu)

College of Notre Dame of Maryland  
[www.ndm.edu](http://www.ndm.edu)

Columbia Union College  
[www.cuc.edu](http://www.cuc.edu)

Coppin State University  
[www.coppin.umd.edu](http://www.coppin.umd.edu)

Frostburg State University  
[www.frostburg.edu](http://www.frostburg.edu)

Goucher College  
[www.goucher.edu](http://www.goucher.edu)

Hood College  
[www.hood.edu](http://www.hood.edu)

Johns Hopkins University  
[www.jhu.edu](http://www.jhu.edu)

Johns Hopkins University:  
Peabody Conservatory of Music  
[www.peabody.jhu.edu](http://www.peabody.jhu.edu)

Loyola College of Maryland  
[www.loyola.edu](http://www.loyola.edu)

Maryland Institute College of Art  
[www.mica.edu](http://www.mica.edu)

Morgan State University  
[www.morgan.edu](http://www.morgan.edu)

Mount St. Mary's College  
[www.msmary.edu](http://www.msmary.edu)

St. John's College  
[www.sjca.edu](http://www.sjca.edu)

St. Mary's College of Maryland  
[www.smcm.edu](http://www.smcm.edu)

Salisbury University  
[www.salisbury.edu](http://www.salisbury.edu)

Towson University  
[www.towson.edu](http://www.towson.edu)

United States Naval Academy  
[www.usna.edu](http://www.usna.edu)

University of Baltimore  
[www.ubalt.edu](http://www.ubalt.edu)

University of Maryland: Baltimore  
[www.umaryland.edu](http://www.umaryland.edu)

University of Maryland Baltimore County  
[www.umbc.edu](http://www.umbc.edu)

University of Maryland College Park  
[www.maryland.edu](http://www.maryland.edu)

University of Maryland Eastern Shore  
[www.umes.edu](http://www.umes.edu)

University of Maryland University College  
[www.umuc.edu](http://www.umuc.edu)

Villa Julie College  
[www.vjc.edu](http://www.vjc.edu)

Washington Bible College  
[www.bible.edu](http://www.bible.edu)

Washington College  
[www.washcoll.edu](http://www.washcoll.edu)

Western Maryland College  
[www.wmdc.edu](http://www.wmdc.edu)

### Two-year Colleges

Allegheny College  
[www.allegheny.edu](http://www.allegheny.edu)

Anne Arundel Community College  
[www.aacc.edu](http://www.aacc.edu)

Baltimore City Community College  
[www.bccc.edu](http://www.bccc.edu)

Carroll Community College  
[www.carroll.cc.edu](http://www.carroll.cc.edu)

Cecil Community College  
[www.cecil.cc.edu](http://www.cecil.cc.edu)

Chesapeake College  
[www.chesapeake.edu](http://www.chesapeake.edu)

College of Southern Maryland  
[www.csmd.edu](http://www.csmd.edu)

Community College of Baltimore County Catonsville  
[www.ccbc.cc.md.us](http://www.ccbc.cc.md.us)

Community College of Baltimore County  
[www.ccbcmd.edu](http://www.ccbcmd.edu)

Frederick Community College  
[www.frederick.edu](http://www.frederick.edu)

Garrett Community College  
[www.garrettcollege.edu](http://www.garrettcollege.edu)

Hagerstown Business College  
[www.hagerstownbusiness.col.edu](http://www.hagerstownbusiness.col.edu)

Hagerstown Community College  
[www.hagerstowncc.edu](http://www.hagerstowncc.edu)

Harford Community College  
[www.harford.edu](http://www.harford.edu)

Howard Community College  
[www.howardcc.edu](http://www.howardcc.edu)

Maryland College of Art & Design  
[www.mcadmd.org](http://www.mcadmd.org)

Montgomery College  
[www.montgomerycollege.edu](http://www.montgomerycollege.edu)

Prince George's Community College  
[www.pgcc.edu](http://www.pgcc.edu)

Wor-Wic Community College  
[www.worwic.edu](http://www.worwic.edu)

## STUDY SKILLS TECHNIQUES

Having good study skills helps to promote academic success. Many students realize this, yet are often hesitant to learn new ways to improve their study techniques. Research has shown that students who use systematic study methods, methods that provide steps to be followed on a consistent basis, tend to perform better in school than students who use ineffective study methods. Ineffective methods do not yield the desired results--success. However, many students prefer to continue using their ineffective methods rather than learn new systematic approaches to study. The following study techniques, taken in part from Raygor and Wauk's Systems for Study, will assist you in performing well academically, if you are consistent in applying them.

- ❖ Sit close to the instructor: This usually results in fewer distractions, making it easier to listen and take notes.
- ❖ Take good notes: Very important part of the study process! Copy important terms, charts, diagrams, etc.
- ❖ Review class notes on a regular basis: This helps to clarify new concepts, and is helpful during preparation for exams and quizzes. It reduces the amount of time for studying/cramming.
- ❖ Identify a quiet place to study: Put yourself in a relaxed state of mind by closing your eyes, taking a deep breath, and thinking of a pleasant experience. This clears your mind and makes it easier to concentrate.
- ❖ Set a goal for study time completion: Write down the time you expect to complete studying, prior to beginning. This forces you to strive to reach the stated goal.
- ❖ Select a special item associated with studying: Choose a special hat or object that you can use only when it's time to study. This gives significance to the process of studying.
- ❖ Review what you read: At the end of each page, think about what you have read. This helps you read/study more effectively.
- ❖ Concentrate on what you are studying: If you lose your concentration, stand up and look away. This forces your attention back to studying.
- ❖ Learn how to underline. NEVER underline a whole sentence. Underline after you have read through the material. Pick out key words that summarize the author's main point.

## **AWARDS & RECOGNITION AT GRADUATION**

- I. President's Awards for Education Excellence  
Students are required to earn a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale through the first semester of the senior year.
- II. Principal's Honors  
Students must complete the senior year with no final grade lower than A.
- III. Academic Excellence Awards, Letters and Pins:  
A student receives a letter when a final yearly weighted GPA of 3.5 minimum is achieved for the first time. Pins are awarded each the following years that a student earns the minimum GPA of 3.5. (Students are disqualified if a letter lower than a C is received.)
- IV. Certificate of Merit Requirements  
(See Program of Studies for requirements)
- V. Scholars Recognition vs. Participant  
Students identified as Scholars during grades 9-12 must graduate with at least 17 advanced credits and maintain a cumulative weighted 3.5 GPA and required merit and honors courses. Any A-level English, will eliminate a student from recognition. See the Program of Studies for more detailed information.
- VI. Honors Graduates  
Summa Cum Laude (4.0+)  
Magna Cum Laude (3.75-3.99)  
Cum Laude (3.5-3.74)
- VII. State of Maryland Merit Scholastic Awards (Top 5%)  
A weighted GPA is used.
- VIII. Scholarships Received  
Scholarships received will be announced if the Career Center has received appropriate documentation.
- IX. Post Secondary Plans  
Your final decision on the college/university you will attend will be announced if the Career Center has received the appropriate documentation.
- X. Outstanding Students in Subject Areas and Special Achievements  
The individual departments make the selection of outstanding students.
- XI. Perfect Attendance  
One-two years  
Three + years  
Perfect attendance

## **FINAL ADVICE**

1. Find out what information is available in the Career Center.
2. Register for the October or November ACT and/or SAT tests, if you are planning to attend a four-year college
3. Take the initiative. Schedule appointments with your guidance counselor or career counselor. Don't wait for us to contact you. Keep us both informed about your career and college plans. It will be your responsibility to inform Mrs. Stone about all scholarships received, as well as your final decisions regarding post-secondary plans.
4. Send for applications and catalogues. Schedule interviews, visit campuses and dorms. Most schools offer campus visitation days, which include general information sessions and a tour. If you are interested in a particular school, call their Admission Office to see what kind of programs they offer.
5. **Visit the Career Center!!!**
6. Ask teachers, employers, clergy, etc. for letters of recommendation.
7. Start working on an essay if one is required.
8. **REMEMBER - It takes time to get everything together for your applications. Watch your deadlines.**
9. Keep this booklet!!!
10. Listen to the morning announcements. Check information in your homerooms and the Career Center for an up-to-date listing of scholarships and events.
11. **Visit the Career Center!!!**