

COLLEGE PLANNING PACKET

Welcome to the College Planning Process!

The junior and senior years of high school require a decision from you that will probably be one of the most important of your lifetime: choosing a form of higher education and/or making post-secondary plans.

We recognize that each student begins the college process at a different place, and as your counselors, we hope to meet you where you are. We hope that you will take the lead in researching and applying to colleges, and we will work to support you through every step of the way.

In this packet, you will find a number of resources designed to help you stay on track and be prepared throughout the college application process. However, you are bound to have questions that are not covered in this guide that are more specific to you and your career and college choices. Junior conferences will be scheduled with your counselor in December-January so we can know how to best support you. You should also feel comfortable talking to the admissions office.

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Quick Guide to Application Plans

There are a number of different admissions plans that colleges and universities offer to students. The type of plan offered can impact the timing of submission for your applications, so it's important to know what plan(s) the colleges you're applying to offer. The possibilities include:

Rolling Admissions

Schools that use a Rolling Admissions plan generally begin accepting applications early fall, and will make decisions on applicants on an ongoing or rolling basis. Students can improve their chances of acceptance at Rolling Admissions schools by getting their applications in as early in the admissions window as possible. Since these schools fill their incoming spots over the course of a couple of months, the longer you wait to submit your application the less space they have available and the higher the admissions standards become.

Regular or Deadline Admissions

Many schools set a deadline for applications to be submitted. The deadline is usually January 1st or January 15th, though some schools might set a different deadline date. With deadline schools, all application materials must be present in the admissions office before the date set by the school. No decisions will be made on applications until after the deadline has passed and the admissions office has had the opportunity to review all applications. Therefore, the timing of your submission does not impact your admissions decision, as long as you submit prior to the deadline. Generally, decisions for deadline schools go out in the early spring, well ahead of the May 1 deadline to put in a deposit.

Early Decision (ED)

Colleges and universities that offer an Early Decision option require that these applications be submitted early, usually by November 1 or November 15. Students can only submit an ED application to one school. The benefit of applying ED is that students that apply using this option will receive a decision usually in mid-December or early January. Keep in mind, ED applications are binding; students are agreeing in advance that if the school accepts their application, they will withdraw applications from any other schools and attend their ED school. Students are required, as part of the ED application, to submit an ED agreement form, which is essentially a contract signed by the student, parent and counselor. Because these applications are binding, it's crucial that students only apply ED if they are fully confident that this is the right school for them.

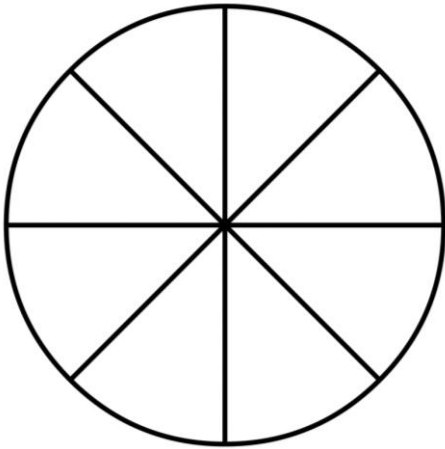
Early Action (EA)

Some schools offer an Early Action option, which provides the same benefits as an ED application (early submission date, early notification of admissions decision) without the binding contract. Students have no obligation to attend an EA school, and may submit multiple EA applications.

How to improve your chances for acceptance to post-secondary schooling

What are college admissions officers looking for in choosing to accept a student?

Pie Analogy



How "full" is your pie in comparison to others who are also competing for college AND major acceptance at college or other post-secondary training programs where you are applying?

- o What can you do NOW to improve your chances for acceptance?
- o Grades, grades, grades. This is the **last year** to improve your cumulative GPA used in applying to schools.
- o Challenge yourself regarding course levels (i.e. honors, seminar, AP) and going above East requirements (i.e. 4 years math, science, language)
- o SAT I, SAT II, ACT: Register to take a college entrance exam in the spring.
- o Activities/Clubs/Sports - quality not quantity. Become a group leader; volunteer to head a project, etc.
- o Community Service: volunteer outside of school (i.e. church, scouts, other)
- o Build your resume: think about who may write your letters of recommendation. What can you do to show your teachers something unique about yourself? Volunteer in class (show leadership); seek out help when needed (perseverance), etc.
- o Start investigating schools, look at what is required including high school courses required for your major, average GPA and SAT scores; are SAT 11's needed for major, etc?

Junior Timeline

TESTING:

- Sign up for SAT's, ACT's and/or SAT Subject Tests. You should take your SAT/ACT at *least once* in your junior year if you are planning to attend college. See your counselor to discuss when and how often you should take the college entrance exams.
 - www.collegeboard.com
 - www.actstudent.org

SCHOOL:

- Make sure you have a minimum of 6.4 credits on your schedule.
- Think about AP classes for next year (course requests for next year happen in February).
- Make sure you're taking a second/third year of the same foreign language. If you haven't done so yet, see me to discuss.
- Make sure your schedules include the highest levels of courses you are able to handle in math, English, science and history.
- Stay involved with school sports, clubs and activities.
- Keep your grades up so you can have the highest GPA and class rank possible.
- Use our Naviance program to explore colleges/majors/careers/etc.!
(<https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=wceast>)

COLLEGE/WORK:

- Start making a list of colleges that you are interested in. Request the View Books from universities.
- Meet with college representatives that visit EHS.
- Consider who you'll be asking letters of recommendations from for next year.
- Visit a college campus and/or college fair (<http://www.pacac.org/collegefairs>).
- Tour a nearby college, if possible and get a feel for college life. Spring break is the perfect time for this.
- Start working on your resume.

OTHER:

- Investigate summer enrichment programs, volunteer and community service programs.
- Junior conferences will be scheduled during the 2nd marking period (December - January) with your counselor.

SAT vs ACT

Many students and parents begin the college prep process by comparing the ACT and SAT. Two of the most common questions they ask are:

- Is the ACT easier than the SAT?
- Do colleges prefer scores from the SAT or ACT?

The SAT and ACT generally test the same types of content. Both ACT and SAT scores are used for college admissions and merit-based scholarships. The biggest differences between the tests are that the ACT has a Science Test, and there's one SAT Math Section for which you cannot use a calculator. Colleges don't prefer one over the other, so explore both tests to decide which one is right for you.

Try our QUIZ: SAT, ACT, or Both?

	SAT	ACT
Why Take It	Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships	Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.
Test Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing & Language • Math • Essay (Optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Math • Reading • Science Reasoning Essay (Optional)
Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 hours (without essay) • 3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) • 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)
Reading	5 reading passages	reading passages
Science	None	1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge)
Math	Covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arithmetic • Algebra I & II • Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis 	Covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arithmetic • Algebra I & II • Geometry and Trigonometry
Calculator Policy	Some math questions don't allow you to use a calculator.	You can use a calculator on all math questions.
Essays	Optional. The essay will test your comprehension of a source text.	Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
How It's Scored	Scored on a scale of 400-1600	Scored on a scale of 1-36

College Visit Checklist

To help you find the right college, fill out one of these forms each time you visit a school.

College Name

City

State

Size

Tuition

Room & Board

Financial Aid Options

Admissions Contact

Name

Email

Phone

To-Do Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to professors | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visit the library | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit student housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tour campus | <input type="checkbox"/> Read bulletin boards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sit in on a class | <input type="checkbox"/> Check out recreational facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eat at a cafeteria | <input type="checkbox"/> Check out student activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to admissions office | <input type="checkbox"/> Tour the city around campus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read the college newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Eat at an off-campus student hang-out |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check out computer labs | <input type="checkbox"/> Picture yourself living here |

Rate It

On a scale of 1-5, five being the best, rate the following:

People _____

Social life _____

Classrooms _____

Residence Halls _____

Town _____

Campus _____

Food _____

Ask a Student

What is the best part about this college?

What is the worst part?

What is a typical day like?

What do the students do on the weekends?

How are classes structured?

Why did you choose this college?

The best part about my visit

The worst part about my visit