PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

Tips for Success

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION
People you should ask for a letter of recommendation:
- Teachers who know you well (at least two)
- School counselor or Administrator
- Coach or Club Advisor
- Community Service supervisor

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION
- Create a high school resume. Include rigorous coursework you've completed (Pre-AP, AP, IB, dual-credit and honors courses); Honors & awards received in academics, sports and scholarships; Participation in clubs & activities; Community service (describe what you did and total hours for each); Employment/work history; and personal interests.
- Know the field of study you want to pursue. If unsure, explore careers and complete an interest inventory in preparation for choosing a major.
- Attend college fairs and be prepared to ask recruiters questions that reflect your interests and/or concerns (Admission requirements, affordability, housing, campus life, social life, athletics, campus environment, majors offered, graduation rate, etc.)
- Prepare & practice for the ACT and SAT exams. Scores are still important for placement and scholarship opportunities.

CREATING A COLLEGE LIST
- Create a balanced list of colleges. Include safety, target, & reach schools
- Research admissions requirements & majors for colleges on your list
- Think about location and campus size
- Consider the cost of tuition, room & board, meal plans, fees
- Check the type of scholarships or need-based financial aid they offer

WRITING AN ESSAY
- Think about your personal strengths and what you have overcome.
- What qualities do you have that would enhance a college campus?
- Describe how you have a range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences that can add to the educational mix.
- Describe an experience from your personal background that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity on you.

GETTING FINANCIAL AID
- Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible (Opens October 1st)
- Apply to colleges prior to January 1st to get an early idea of what you will need financially to attend
- Some schools use the CSS Profile (Collegeboard) Non-federal financial aid, also opens October 1st. There are application fees ($25 for one school, $16 for each additional school) Fee waivers are available for low-income students.
- Apply for as many scholarships as you can find to reduce your need for student loans.

SELECTING A MAJOR
- Make a list of your strengths & weaknesses, favorite subjects & hobbies
- Take a personality quiz to explore your career interests
- Think about causes you’re passionate about
- Research career salaries to find what fits your income expectations
- Explore college websites to learn what majors they offer
- Talk to professionals in different fields