

College Information Night Sponsored by IHSPTA
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Minutes of November 9, 2011

See College Informational Handouts at the end of these minutes.

Websites to Narrow College Navigation: College Board.Com, IHS Student Services website(icsd.k12.ny.us) and IHS Student Services Facebook page.

Check out the IHS program called Naviance which helps students with personality/career searches. Your student will have to set this program up with their counselor and add the parents if they are interested in researching information with them.

It is recommended that students looking at colleges choose 3-5 schools – no more than 8.

NYS has some great schools and it will be less expensive for your students to stay in-state.

Things students need when applying to a college:

Transcripts– obtain from guidance office

Application – all schools have a common application (CA)

Essay – make it interesting and have “you” stand out.

Supplement Application

SAT/ACT Scores

Recommendations – 2 from academic sources, 1 from counselor/coach/boss

All students in high school should get to know their guidance counselor over the four years they are in high school – meet with them once per quarter to review their interests, challenges, successes, etc.

Note that when applying to schools the schools will only see the grades for Freshman, Sophomore and Junior Years – Make them count!!! The schools will know what courses students are taking in their senior year but not the grades.

SAT/ACT –students should try both. Not recommended to take more than twice

SAT-Subject tests (aka SAT II) – not all schools require them. The top schools will require them. Usually taken sophomore/junior and senior year in specific subjects (i.e. math,science)

Prepping for SAT tests. There is a lot of information on Naviance and there is also a program at Cornell called Let’s Get Ready. Help is also offered through the guidance department.

GRADING

Grades are weighted differently on report cards as to whether students are taking honors or regents or AP classes.(during the school year report cards are only in unweighted averages and the final report card for the year will be in a weighted average (taking into consideration AP/Honors, etc.).

Taking AP (Advanced Placement) classes is great if you are a strong student. It’s not about how many AP courses your students take, it’s making sure your student has a well balanced schedule and doing well in their subjects and extracurricular activities.

65% of Ithaca High School students are taking honors classes.

To check the average GPA for a College – look at the schools website and also you can find this information on Naviance. This way you will know whether you have the recommended GPA to get into these schools.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students should start working on your high school “resume” for extracurricular activities. Schools are looking for well-rounded students and not just those that do well in academics. Advise students to choose something they are sincere about when considering extracurricular activities.

COLLEGE VISITS

Always go visit a school before you apply.

When your student goes for a college visit it is beneficial if they can connect with a student that is there to get the ins and outs of the campus.

Get an interview with the admission office if possible – depends on the school

Financial Aid Information (FAFSA) is due in January.

If your student is interested in a gap year (i.e. taking a year off before college) it is recommended that they work or volunteer.

Calendars and lists in more specificity are available in the college and career center and also on the student services website. (http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/highschool/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=28&Itemid=93)

Below please the information handouts from this program:

College Administration Myths
The New Business of College
Melanie Shor

It’s hard to get into college these days: Since the baby boomers’ kids came of age, the number of students in classrooms and the level of competition have both surged. Luckily, there are still a few ways to guarantee Ivy League admission-high SAT scores, lots of extracurricular activities, alumni in the family and the name of a prestigious private prep school on your transcript. Right?

Wrong. Admissions offices broke the record this year of the greatest number of valedictorian rejections. Today, approximately 41% of America’s student population has a grade point average over 3.5. Yale has approximately 21,000 applicants annually and only 1300 available slots. Ninety-seven percent of Stanford’s new freshman class were ranked in the top 20% of their high schools, and 45% ranked in the top 1% or 2%. Harvard has an abundance of candidates with strong credentials, but it now accepts an estimated all-time-low 9% of them.

So what can desperate applicants do to get into the schools of their dreams and what old tricks just won’t work?

Applicants continually search for a formula to attract the attention of admissions officers, but the only thing that always works is being an all-around student. “We try to understand the student as a whole person, and also to understand how he or she has performed in the context of whatever academic and community opportunities he or she has encountered”, says Jeffrey Brenzel, Yale’s dean of undergraduate

admissions. “We seek academic excellence, evidence of leadership and integrity, and evidence of high personal impact on others.”

In the past, desperate college applicants would jazz up their applications with a little volunteer work—working in a soup kitchen or cleaning up trash in public parks. But nowadays, you’d be better off tidying up your own bedroom. Colleges are aware that many high schools enforce community service requirements, and they’re especially wary of students who volunteer their time for the sake of transcripts. Says Bruce J. Briemer, head of college guidance at the prestigious Collegiate School: “One admissions officer told me, “If I read another essay about kids building houses in Costa Rica, I’m going to scream.”

And you can forget about stacking up lots of pointless after-school activities. Among similarly qualified students, strong extracurriculars can give one candidate the edge. But admissions officers would rather see you excel in one club, rather than just show up at ten. “It’s most important to do something with enthusiasm, passion and commitment,” says James Miller, director of admissions at Brown University.

Maybe your plan is to wow the admissions office with a fantastic essay? Keep dreaming, Shakespeare. A stellar composition can’t salvage an underwhelming application, says Harvard’s current director of admissions, Dr. Marlyn McGrath Lewis. “We never base our decisions on essays. We read them carefully, but we understand how easily they can be purchased or written by anyone. They can certainly illuminate a case, but we’d be foolish to base our decisions on them.”

Even good grades won’t keep those thin rejection letters at bay. Admissions officers understand the difference between an A in an easy class and a B in a hard one. And increasingly, top colleges have staff members who become experts on high schools in specific regions. They know which schools engage in grade inflation, and which tough ones issue few high marks.

So what does ring a school dean’s bell? Admissions officers don’t have a specific pre-made profile for ideal candidates, and they don’t rely on any one factor to determine admissions. Instead, they aim to compose a diverse student body with a diverse group of individuals. “We define diversity as interests, experiences, values and background,” says Christoph Guttentag, Duke University’s head of admissions. A proficient glockenspiel player can be just as desirable as a football MVP – it simply depends on what a college is lacking.

Knowing the tricks can only get you so far. In the end, to be an ideal candidate for a college a student must work hard, develop a sense of passion, yearn for intellectual and personal stimulation, pursue activities outside of the classrooms in a profound way – and remember to breathe in the process. Says the Collegiate School’s Breimer: “Be yourself. Don’t try to beat the system.

Ithaca High School Basics:

IHS does not rank
4.33 Grading Scale
Transcript includes both weighted and un-weighted GPA

Freshman and Sophomore Year:

Find a balance - what is manageable in academic schedule?
Join clubs, teams, community service, be active outside of school!
*Continue world language
SAT Subject Exam: Possible in Biology (*case by case)

Sophomore Year:

PLAN Exam (Practice ACT)
Complete Personality and Career Inventories on Naviance
(Students May Register Individually in College and Career Center)

Junior Year:

PSAT October
All Students are registered in Naviance (take advantage of college, career and personality inventories)
SAT and ACT Exams: Spring (March – June)
Begin to research schools and possible programs (Naviance)
Questions to ask yourself: Big school? Small school? City? Town? Programs? In State? Private? Public? Four year? Two year?

SAT: Math, Reading, Writing (2400)

ACT: Math, Reading, Science, Writing (36)

SAT Subject Exam: Available in all academic areas. This standardized exam determines in depth knowledge in more specific areas. Not a requirement for all schools.

Senior Year:

(Summer: Complete Self- Evaluation. Common App. "Opens" August 1st)

Re-Take SAT/ACT (if necessary): **Not recommended to take more than twice**

Meet with Counselor

Ask for Recommendations (from teachers, coaches, counselors)

Complete Application and Supplements by Winter Break (unless earlier deadline)

FAFSA- January

IHS Award Application (Spring)

Receive Notifications for Regular Decision (Spring)

Notify Colleges by May 1st

Meet with Counselor for final meeting

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