College Application 101 for Families

Presented by BSD School Counselors
What college is right for me?

Picking a college is like picking a new best friend...

- How do you pick your friends?
  - Spending time together (visit)
  - Learning about each other & the interests you share (research)
  - Overlooking small things that might bug you (i.e. the weather...the fact that the laundry facilities are in the basement & that the whole campus isn’t wireless)
  - Looking forward in the same direction - having the same goals (having a major that is interesting)
  - Substance (the right fit) vs. reputation & status (what is popular or following the crowd)
Your best fit should have ...

- Learning environment that supports how you learn
- Level of rigor that meets your level
- Consider campus and living arrangements
- Program/major to meet your academic needs and goals
- Research retention and graduation rates

Apply to 4-6 schools. Don’t make it a contest!
Campus Visits

- Never too soon to visit local, regional or national colleges
- Take an official campus tour
- Speak with an admission counselor
- Ask about financial aid opportunities
- Sit in on a class of interest
- Read the student newspaper
- Talk to students and faculty
- Participate in overnight stays and attend college preview days
Creating Your College List

- 3 tiers of colleges:
  - Reach (below 25% acceptance rate)
  - Moderate or Target (between 25-75%)
  - Safety (above 75%; you know you are getting in)
- Based on student profile and college profile: gpa, course rigor, test scores
- Research using Naviance
  - Size, location, major, athletics/activities, “feel” - right fit
- Attend college fairs and school college representative visits
College Admission Testing

- We recommend all students take both the SAT and the ACT in the spring of 11th grade

- Students can retest in the fall of 12th grade if needed

- Review the results of the PSAT and Practice ACT that the students took on Super Wednesday in October

- SAT Subject Tests are required and/or optional at some highly selective colleges
PSAT/Practice ACT

9th Grade – Results mid December online/paper copy to follow

10th Grade – Practice ACT

11th Grade - PSAT

- Students are given their test booklets along with their score reports.
- They can log in to the testing websites and review practice questions aimed at their weak areas of the test.
Our College & Career Specialists work closely with the School Counselors at the four comprehensive high schools:

- Meeting with students to discuss post high school options
- Answering questions about college application process
- Assisting with Naviance
- Help with the WANIC career classes
- Arrange for all of the college representative visits to the high school
- Help students with looking for scholarships and financial aid
College & Career Center

- Career Exploration:
  - Career counseling to assist students in identifying future careers and potential areas of study in college
  - Assisting students in finding and applying to vocational programs
  - Resume, Cover Letter and Interview guidance
  - Job search and job boards
  - Local volunteer opportunities
Logging on to Naviance

- Go to: https://bsd405.org/about/initiatives/college/naviance/
  - Choose your student’s high school
- Your student logs on with Clever. You will need to coordinate with your child to view their Naviance account.

- Naviance: A web-based software tool that allows you to:
  - Take Interest Inventories and Personality Assessments
  - Explore Careers
  - Research Colleges and majors
  - Research Scholarships
  - Create a resume
  - Request Letters of Rec and Transcripts
Naviance
Super Match Search Tool

Pick different criteria based on personal fit
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Highlights</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>Room &amp; Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>ACT</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
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Naviance Scattergrams
Naviance Scattergrams
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Maximum Award</th>
<th>Merit based</th>
<th>Need based</th>
<th>Essay req</th>
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<td>3/30</td>
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Components of a College Application

- Essay
- Strength of Curriculum
- Extracurricular Activities
- Grades in College Prep
- Grades in All Courses
- Admissions Test Scores (SAT/ACT)
- Teacher Recommendation
- Counselor Recommendation
- Student’s Demonstrated Interest
- AP/IB Test Scores
- Interview
- Class Rank (our district does not rank students)
High School Transcripts

- Includes a list of all classes taken, grades and cumulative GPA

- All classes taken or attempted must show on the transcript

- Some classes can be pulled up from middle school onto the high school transcript (i.e. Algebra, Biology, World Language)

- Language credit can be earned through competency-based testing
AP Classes

- How many should I take?
- How important are grades compared to taking a rigorous class load?
- What are college admission officers looking for?
- Are all AP classes created equal?
Tips for Parents

- Take them to visit local colleges
- Talk to them about how you picked your college and career
- Have them talk to friends, teachers and family, too
- Have conversations about how to pay for college
- Encourage your student to:
  - Take advantage of all the tools on Naviance
  - Get involved in clubs, sports and activities
  - Community service is a great way to build their confidence, find out about possible career opportunities, to give back to the community and to build their resume
  - Attend the college representative visits at their school