The Orme School

College Counseling Handbook

For Students and Parents
2018-2019

CEEB Code 030-210

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INTRODUCTION

At The Orme School, college preparation begins the moment a student walks through our doors. We challenge our students and help them to grow intellectually, and we provide them with an array of activities, from the arts and athletics to clubs and service organizations, that encourage them to develop their interests and talents and pursue their passions. Parents who are concerned that their children are not starting early enough in the college selection process need only attend a play or athletic event, or visit their children's classes on Family Days to be assured that our students are very much involved in the process of preparing for their futures. In order to be ready for the college selection process that begins in the junior year, students in eighth through tenth grades should seek challenges, work hard at their studies, pursue their interests, and enjoy themselves!

College Counseling at The Orme School

The formal college counseling process at The Orme School begins in January of the junior year when students meet with the college counselor. Students are scheduled into college counseling one period every week to discuss the student's goals and aspirations and to begin an ongoing dialogue. A list of colleges suitable for preliminary investigation will be developed during these meetings.

Both students and parents fill out questionnaires that give the college counselor valuable information about what they are looking for in a college. These can be filled out in either paper form or online at our "Naviance" web site, workspacek12.naviance.com/orme. Students and parents will be given a personal registration code and will need to register before they are able to access the site.

By the junior year, some students have a good idea about the type of college or university that interests them and may already have started a preliminary college list. Other students have just begun thinking about college. This is perfectly natural. The college counselor is happy to assist students at all stages of the selection process to identify colleges that would be good matches for their interests, abilities, and preferences. The Naviance site has an excellent college search engine, as do many other web sites.

The Orme School's College Counseling Program is unique in that our counselor-student ratio is 1:35. At most independent schools, typical ratios are 1:50, and in public schools, guidance counselors often are responsible for 500 students each. The college counselor at The Orme School reviews each student's list of college choices and makes suggestions that grow from their accumulated experience with the colleges and from their personal knowledge of each student. Counselors frequently visit colleges throughout the country in order to best advise our students. Colleges recognize The Orme School Counseling Program as truly personal as well as professional.

With a small number of students, the college counselor is able to provide individual support throughout the senior year. The counselor also writes the Counselor's letter of recommendation for each student and makes sure that all necessary documents from the School are submitted to the colleges. The counselor, parents and students meet formally on Parents' Weekend, but the Counseling Center is available for meetings with parents at any time, and the counselor is always available by telephone and e-mail.

A note to parents about fees.

When students register for SAT and/or ACT tests online, and when they apply to colleges online it is necessary to pay the registration fees by credit card. We highly recommend that you supply your child with a credit card number to use for this purpose. If you do not feel comfortable doing this, it is also possible to send card numbers to the College Counseling Center where they will be kept in a locked file until needed for registration and/or college application purposes.

Independent Counselors—a note to parents.

Some families choose to hire outside counselors to assist in their student's college selection and application process. Parents sometimes feel that additional support for their son or daughter is necessary. We are confident that Orme School students already receive the most comprehensive, high-quality counseling available, and we caution those who do employ independent counselors to be aware of the pitfalls of working with someone outside of the School. Though we do not question the integrity or good intentions of independent counselors, the quality of their advising varies greatly, and counselors who take over the application process for students are inhibiting the important process of high school seniors taking responsibility for their own decisions, choices, and actions. It is not uncommon for independent counselors to compile unrealistic lists of colleges for students or to edit their essays so heavily that the writing no longer truly conveys the student's individual voice. We do, however, respect a family's prerogative to make this decision. If a student is using an independent counselor, we ask that he or she inform The Orme School Director of College Counseling so that we can attempt to coordinate our efforts.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

The most important part of a student's application to college is **not** his or her standardized test scores. College admissions officers unanimously cite the high school transcript as the most telling piece of the college application. The courses a student takes and his or her performance in those courses is the best predictor of how a student will perform in college. Also, standardized tests do **not** measure motivation, creativity, artistic skills, kindness, decency, sense of humor, enthusiasm, warmth, or pizzazz – all of which matter to colleges. While the importance of standardized test scores in college admissions decisions varies, most colleges and universities refer to national standardized test results to aid them in comparing applicants. Because applicants come from a wide variety of secondary schools, colleges need a way to measure academic potential that is more uniform than the high school transcripts they receive. A student with modest scores may be admitted to a highly selective college if his or her application shows some remarkable strength that offsets the testing, such as outstanding artistic or athletic abilities, leadership, research, or community service. Alumni children and applicants who provide diversity may also gain admission with slightly lower scores than are average for a given college.

The PSAT

Freshmen, sophomores and juniors take the PSAT in October. It is administered on a Wednesday during the school day and is proctored by Orme School faculty. Freshmen and sophomores take the test simply to become acquainted with the College Board standardized tests. Some of the test material, particularly in the Math section, may be new to freshmen and sophomores, so their scores are not considered indicative of how they will do on the actual SAT. Juniors, however, use their PSAT results to help them identify weak areas and to prepare for the SAT in the spring. Colleges never see these scores, but the juniors' test results are used by the National Merit Corporation to select students who qualify to apply for National Merit Scholarships.

Preparation booklets are distributed to students well before the test, and Math and English teachers spend class time on standardized test-taking strategies so that students feel as comfortable and confident as possible on the test day.

The Critical Reading, Math, and Writing sections of the PSAT are scored separately on a scale from 20-80, indicated on the score report. (The equivalent SAT scores would be 200-800.) The percentile, listed next to the raw score for each section on the score report, compares the student to the nationwide pool of either sophomores or juniors for that year. Below the scores are the estimated ranges for SAT Reasoning Test scores for **juniors**. (Scores are not predicted for sophomores as the test is designed for juniors.) Though these estimates are generally predictive of future scores, many students' scores improve when they have accomplished more course work.

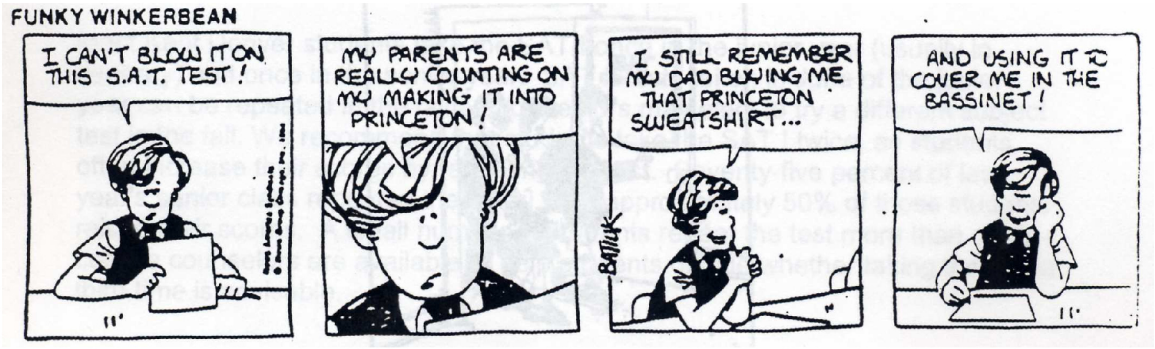
The bottom half of the score report includes an overview of the answers, indicating which questions were answered incorrectly, the answer that was given, and the correct answer. This section also indicates the degree of difficulty of each question ("E" for easy, "M" for medium, or "H" for hard). Students should use this overview along with their test booklets (which are mailed to them with their score reports) to review errors and determine areas of weakness.

"That 'Analogies' section was a snap.
It was like taking candy from a fish."

The SAT (Redesigned March 2016)

Juniors can register for the SAT test online during their weekly college counseling period. The test can be repeated in June and again in the fall of senior year, if desired. SAT Registration forms and free Test Preparation booklets are available in the College Counseling Center. Students can also register for both the SAT Reasoning and the SAT Subject Tests at **www.collegeboard.com**. ****Note** A credit card number is required in order to register!**

The SAT is administered at The Orme School in 4 times a year. The SAT consists of three sections: evidence-based reading and writing (reading test and writing and language test), math, and an essay (optional). Each section is scored on a 200-800 scale with essay results reported separately. Because there are two sections, composite scores range from 400-1600. Nationally, the most recently reported SAT mean scores (2017) were Critical Reading: 530, Math: 590. When a student first registers for the SAT, a score bank is created in which his or her scores are "deposited" every time the test is taken. Under the Score Choice Plan, students may now decide which scores to send to colleges, although some colleges still require all scores to be sent. Most colleges take the student's highest scores for evaluation.



The SAT Subject Tests

The SAT Subject Tests are required by many competitive colleges and universities and are recommended by many others. Juniors may take the tests in March at The Orme School or they may register to take the tests at a school near their home in June. It is easiest to register for the tests online at the College Board web site, **www.collegeboard.org**.

The SAT Subject Tests consist of up to three, one hour-long tests designed to test a student's content knowledge in subjects selected by the individual student. The Subject Tests are administered at the same testing locations and on the same dates as the SAT, but it is not possible to take both tests on the same day. It is permissible to take one, two, or three SAT Subject Tests at one administration. We recommend that Orme School students take the Math II Test and one or two other tests in an area of strength (usually history, foreign language, or science). **It is important that students check with individual colleges to determine their testing requirements and recommendations.** Generally it is advantageous to take Subject Tests as close to the completion of a specific course as possible.

The SAT Subject Tests are scored on the same 200-800 point scale as the SAT. All SAT Subject Test scores are now included in a student's SAT score bank.

The ACT

The ACT is an alternate national standardized test accepted by most colleges and universities in place of the SAT Reasoning Test and at some colleges in place of both the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests. It is administered at Orme School in April. It is also offered at other locations in September, October, December, February and June. The ACT differs from the SAT Reasoning Test in that it is a subject-based test with four sections: English, Reading, Math, and Science Reasoning. Sub scores are given for each section, and a composite score is awarded on a scale of 11-36. Most students who take both the SAT and ACT receive similar scores on both tests, but some students score significantly higher on one test or the other. Our experience has been that students who are strong readers often prefer the ACT, and students who have weaker math skills benefit from the math section of the test counting as only one quarter of the composite grade. Also, for repeat testers it is possible to send ACT scores from a specific administration date to colleges rather than sending all scores. Beginning in February 2005, the ACT added a Writing Test as an optional component to the ACT assessment. Students spend 30 minutes writing an essay taking a position on a given issue. (See the *Style Guide* box on the following page.) Colleges that currently accept the ACT in place of the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests are likely to require the ACT Plus Writing. Some may continue to accept the traditional ACT. As with the SAT, ***it is important that students check the specific standardized testing requirements of individual colleges and universities*.** We encourage students to try both tests, especially if they are dissatisfied with their SAT results. Registration and preparation materials for the ACT are available in the College Counseling Center. Students can also register online at **www.actstudent.org**.

ACT STYLE GUIDE

ACT essay scorers may give more points to writers who:

- **Argue** provocative or unpopular viewpoints
- **Write a conclusion** (but no penalty if time runs out)
- **Show** a writer's voice
- **Write long** (3 pages is better than 3 paragraphs)
- **Avoid obvious** transitions (first, second, finally)
- **Acknowledge** the other point of view, and give reasons for dismissing it

*****from *The Wall Street Journal*, 8/2/04

ACT/SAT Score Conversion Chart

ACT	New SAT *Beginning March 2016	Old SAT *Prior to March 2016	ACT	New SAT *Beginning March 2016	Old SAT *Prior to March 2016
36	1600	2400	23	1060-1080	1590-1620
35	1510-1590	2340-2385	22	1020-1050	1530-1575
34	1510-1550	2265-2325	21	980-1010	1470-1515
33	1460-1500	2190-2250	20	940-970	1410-1455
32	1410-1450	2115-2175	19	900-930	1350-1395
31	1360-1400	2040-2100	18	860-890	1290-1335
30	1320-1350	1980-2025	17	810-850	1215-1275
29	1280-1310	1920-1965	16	760-800	1140-1200
28	1240-1270	1860-1905	15	710-750	1065-1125
27	1210-1230	1815-1845	14	660-700	990-1050
26	1170-1200	1755-1800	13	590-650	900-975
25	1130-1160	1695-1740	12	520-580	780-870
24	1090-1120	1635-1680	11	500-510	750-765
*from *The Princeton Review*					

Notes:

Comparison of the SAT and ACT

SAT Reasoning Test	**ACT**
Questions arranged by order of difficulty from easiest to most difficult	No order of difficulty
Highest math level – Algebra/Basic Geometry (some Algebra II concepts)	Highest math level – Trig (only 2-4 questions)
Scoring: 200 to 800 for each subject added together for final score	Scoring: 0 to 36 for each subject averaged for final score
Sections Math, Critical Reading, Writing (optional)	Sections: Math, English, Reading, Science Reasoning (technical) reading comprehension), Writing (optional)
No penalty for guessing	No penalty for guessing
Writing section optional	Writing section optional
Questions focus on skills that matter most For college readiness and success	Tends to be more straightforward
Can send an individual test score	Can send an individual test score

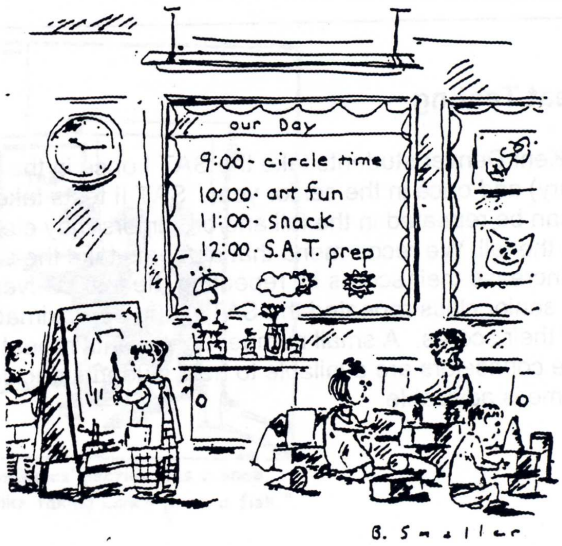
Repeat Testing

Most Orme School students take the SAT once in the junior year and once in the senior year. SAT Subject Tests taken in June of the junior year can be repeated in the fall and/or seniors may elect to try a different subject test in the fall. We recommend that students take the SAT twice, as students often increase their scores by repeating the test **if they have participated in additional preparation.** A number of students repeat the test more than once. The college counselor is available to help students decide whether taking the test a third time is advisable.

SAT Preparation

There are measures that can be taken to improve SAT scores, but it is important to keep standardized tests in perspective. Students should first and foremost concentrate on learning as much as they can from their classes. Coached students are only slightly more likely to have large score gains than un-coached students. In addition, about 1/3 of students experience no score gain or score loss following coaching. Understanding the nature of the test and working through sample questions do help, though, and this type of test preparation is a regular part of classes at The Orme School. Also, the CollegeBoard now releases to students copies of the examinations they take, their own answers, and the correct answers so that students can analyze their results, learn from their mistakes, conduct a purposeful review, and find greater success on the next test. Teachers, of course, are ready to assist them.

On the Internet, free SAT and ACT prep tutorials can be found at **www.number2.com, www.testprepreview.com** and the CollegeBoard and ACT websites offer sample questions and test taking tips. CollegeBoard has partnered with Khan Academy, offering world-class SAT practice, entirely for free. This is a great resource for students to utilize. We recognize also that some students benefit from the structure of an SAT Prep course or the individual attention of a private tutor. We do wish, however, to encourage our students to spend their time wisely and to avoid becoming overbooked and overly stressed by focusing too heavily on improving their standardized test scores. High scores do not guarantee entry to competitive colleges, and the pursuit of them can detract from the very qualities that colleges wish to see in their applicants: intellectual curiosity, a willingness to take risks, a passion for interests beyond the academic setting, and a zest for life.



Standby Registration

If you have missed both the regular and late registration deadlines, standby registration for the SAT & SAT Subject Tests and the ACT is available on a first-come, first-served basis on the morning of the test, provided that the test center has enough test booklets and space, and the student arrives early with a completed registration form, a photo I.D., and a check for the standard registration fee plus an additional standby fee. (See the registration booklet for specific amounts or go online to **www.collegeboard.com** for SAT information or **www.act.org** for ACT information.)

Non-Standard/Extended Time Testing

Students with documented learning disabilities or physical handicaps may be eligible to take SAT and ACT tests with special accommodations such as large print type, audio recordings of test questions, or extended time. There are stringent requirements to qualify for special accommodations. Students must have professional documentation of their disability on file with the college counselor at The Orme School, updated within the past three years. For further information, contact the college counselor as soon as possible.

2018-2019 SAT & ACT Test Schedule

Test Date	Test	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline*
October 6, 2018	SAT/SAT Subjects	September 7	September 26
October 10, 2018	PSAT 8/9 & PSAT/NMSQT	N/A	N/A
October 27, 2018	ACT/ACT + Writing ***	September 21	October 5
November 3, 2018	SAT/SAT Subjects	October 5	October 24
December 1, 2018	SAT/SAT Subjects ***	November 2	November 20
December 8, 2018	ACT/ACT + Writing ***	November 2	November 16
March 9, 2019	SAT	February 8	February 27
April 13, 2019	ACT/ACT + Writing***	March 8	March 22
May 4, 2019	SAT/SAT Subjects	April 5	April 24
June 1, 2019	SAT/SAT Subjects ***	May 3	May 22
June 8, 2019	ACT/ACT + Writing ***	May 3	May 17

**Note that late registration involves an additional fee*

*** *Test **NOT** administered at The Orme School*

2018-2019 TEST FEES

ACT No Writing: $50.50
ACT Plus Writing: $67
SAT: $47.50
SAT with Essay: $64.50
SAT Subject Tests: $26 Registration Fee (This covers one test date, on which you can take one, two, or three Subject Tests)
Add $22 per test – each SAT Subject Test (except Language Tests with listening)
Add $26 per test (Language Tests with Listening; only available in November)

THE COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS

In the college selection process, the primary goal of the college counselor is to assist each student in identifying a number of colleges at which she or he could be happy. We emphasize the concept of "match" in this process, seeking to aid students in finding colleges that offer the ideal combination of challenge and support, the optimum offerings of programs and activities, and a desirable setting. It is important to keep in mind that there are literally hundreds of colleges throughout the country that could be good matches for Orme School students. It is a mistake to equate the level of competition for entrance to any college or university with its potential value to our students. The “best” match for any given student is often not the college that is most difficult to get into. Too often, we have seen the psychology of college admissions in the minds of parents and students become so skewed that students actually believe that the only college worthy of striving for is the one that may be too competitive for them to be accepted.

The “perfect” college for any given student may well be one that he or she has not heard of before. There is simply no correlation between the prestige of a college or university and the success of its graduates. Academy Award winning director Steven Spielberg, for example, was not accepted to the University of Southern California’s film school and ended up attending California State University at Long Beach. President George W. Bush’s Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, earned her Bachelor’s degree at the University of Denver, and the Chairman of the Board of Walt Disney Corporation, Michael Eisner, graduated from Denison University. In his book *Harvard Schmarvard*, Jay Mathews notes that “no one knows where greatness comes from. But I think that we can agree that it does not have much to do with the name of the college on the top of a person’s diploma…A few of you are destined to be heroes, and the qualities that will make you so are already in your possession.” We cannot advise strongly enough that students and parents keep open minds as they begin this exciting process. (See the *College Lists* in the Appendix for lesser known colleges that Mathews and others recommend.)

Deciding Where to Apply

Deciding where to apply is probably the most difficult and important part of the entire college application process. Even simple applications take time in a very busy senior year, so we urge students to be thorough in the selection process so that they will not waste their time applying to colleges in which they aren’t genuinely interested or qualified.

Free advice is everywhere – the dining room table, the dentist’s office, the chairlift on the ski slopes, and even in the checkout line at the grocery store. Once it is known that a high school junior or senior is involved in a college search, almost everyone will have an opinion to share. To students, we recommend that you keep your circle of advisors small. Your college counselors, your parents, a teacher who knows you well, and former Orme School students who are currently in college all will be able to give you useful advice, but the rest can be confusing and, too often, unrealistic or discouraging. To parents, we advise that you keep the channels of communication open as much as possible, that you make sure to establish any necessary parameters, and that you allow your children to begin making adult decisions for themselves. (This is the scary part, but it is absolutely vital to the success of the high school-to-college transition.)

In order to decide where to apply, students must first make a self-assessment. What kind of a person are you? What is important to you? What have you accomplished in high school that you value? Being able to answer these questions is important not only in the college selection process but also in filling out applications. The college counselor asks students to answer these kinds of questions as well, in order to help them get to know their students better. Making lists of activities and accomplishments both in and out of school during the high school years will also

help students identify colleges that are good matches and will be useful in filling out applications.

Using the Internet

In order to identify colleges of interest, the Internet can be a useful resource. Some sites offer search programs that allow students to indicate preferences and then suggest specific colleges that meet the individualized criteria. (A word of advice: It is best to start with very general criteria with these programs – location and size, for instance – and then become gradually more specific. Sometimes, a fairly trivial criteria, such as wanting a water polo team, combined with other preferences, may result in very few, or no "matches." Orme School students can benefit from our "Naviance" website (workspacek12.naviance.com/orme) for researching purposes. Many students have reported success with *The Princeton Review* website's "Counselor-O-Matic" program. The Internet can also be valuable in researching specific colleges. Many college websites include "virtual tours" that provide a glimpse of the campus and environs, and all college websites include information about their individual admissions requirements and deadlines.

Other suggested Internet college search sites are:

- collegeboard.org
- nacacnet.org
- collegedata.com
- nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/
- usnews.com
- collegenet.com
- ecampustours.com
- campusvisit.com
- www.princetonreview.com
- www.collegeview.com
- www.gocollege.com

Additional Search Resources:

http://edonline.com/cq/hbcu is the website of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
www.hispaniconline.com provides access to the *Guide to the Top 25 Colleges for Hispanics.*
www.catholiccollegesonline.org is the website of the National Catholic College Admission Association.
www.hillel.org is the website of Hillel – The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.
www.hrc.org/links/college.asp provides links to college and university Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual,Transgender & Allies web sites.

For those interested in exploring Canadian colleges, the Association of Canadian Universities and Colleges of Canada's website is **www.aucc.ca**, and the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C. maintains the site **www.canadianembassy.org/studyincanada**. For the United Kingdom go to **www.scit.wlv.ac.uk/ukinfo/alpha.html**.

"Summer's coming. How does pre-med camp sound?"

College Guidebooks

A wide variety of college guidebooks is available in the College Guidance Center, along with videotapes, CDs, view books, and course catalogs from individual colleges. We recommend that students purchase at least one general guidebook for their own use. Following is a partial listing of the books available in the "College" section of most bookstores and public libraries:

Standard Guides:
The Fiske Guide to Colleges
The Princeton Review: The Best 376 Colleges
The College Board: College Handbook
Peterson's 4 Year Colleges
Barron's Profiles of American Colleges
America's Black Colleges: The Comprehensive Guide
The Multicultural Student's Guide to Colleges

Specialized Guides
Parham, *The African American Student's Guide to College*
Moll, *The Public Ivies*
The Yale Daily News, *The Insider's Guide to the Colleges*
Pope, *Looking Beyond the Ivy League; Colleges That Change Lives*
Mathews, *Harvard Schmarvard*

Categorizing Colleges

When building a preliminary college list and identifying colleges to visit, it is helpful for students to categorize colleges according to their own criteria. The college counselor does this when drawing up a list of suggestions for their spring student-counselor meetings, and students should do the same. Besides looking for colleges that are the size you prefer in a desirable location, it is important to determine if a student is a realistic candidate for a given school. When gathering information about colleges, students should note the SAT or ACT "score ranges" that successful applicants fall into and the percentage of applicants typically accepted. For the purpose of categorizing colleges for individual students, we use the terms "reach," "good fit," and "safety."

College Planning Case Study

Joe Student has a GPA of 3.5 and SAT scores of 600 Critical Reading and 640 Math. He is interested in attending a small, liberal arts college in the Northeast. Following, are three colleges that he might put on his list:

	St. Joseph's College Philadelphia, PA	**Bucknell University** Lewisburg, PA	**Middlebury College** Middlebury, VT
SAT verbal range	CR 510-600	CR 600-680	CR 650-750
SAT math range	M 510-620	M 630-720	M 650-740
% accepted	82.36%	29.9%	20.6%

- statistics from *Naviance* 2010

St. Joseph's: Joe's scores are well within the range for St. Joseph's, and the 82% acceptance rate combined with his B+/A- GPA makes him a very strong candidate. Joe could place St. Joseph's on his "safety" list.

Bucknell: Joe's scores place him within the range for Bucknell, though he is at the bottom of the Critical Reading range. Given that he has a solid GPA from a respected college prep school, Joe can place Bucknell on his "good fit" list. In the case of a college like Bucknell, Joe's transcript and extra-curricular involvements and accomplishments will be key. His chances of getting in will rise quickly if he has taken some honors and AP classes, and his other talents and extra-curricular activities could make him an attractive candidate. But, note that Bucknell's acceptance rate is only 29.9%. This means that they deny many students with scores and GPAs within the range listed.

Middlebury: Joe's scores place him below the range for Middlebury (dramatically below for Critical Reading), and the very low percentage of students that they admit indicates that Joe's GPA would most likely be below the average GPA of students that they will accept. It is possible that he could get in if he were being recruited for a specific talent, or if he could help provide diversity to the student body. Having a parent who is an alum could also be a factor, but it is very unlikely that Joe would be accepted. If he's had his heart set on Middlebury for years and wants to give it a try despite the odds, Middlebury would go on his "reach" list. (In the case of "reach" schools, it is also important to consider whether or not Joe would be happy at a school like Middlebury. We want him to be challenged but not overwhelmed. Why not consider colleges that offer similar features – small class sizes, excellent professors, an active outing club, and

cold, snowy winters – that fall within his "good fit" numbers. Here is where the best "match" for Joe will probably be found and where he will be the happiest. Hamilton College and Union College, for example, both fit the bill, and both have acceptance rates close to Bucknell's.)

Visiting Colleges

Visiting college campuses is an essential step in the college selection process. It is not unusual for a college that is "first choice" on paper to be crossed off a list altogether after a visit. Likewise, a previously unknown college suggested by a counselor could become a favorite after a visit.

Ideally, college visits take place when the college is in session; however, we encourage students to take advantage of family trips over vacations and summer break to tour campuses, attend information sessions, and speak with admissions representatives. Call ahead to confirm tour times and make an appointment for an interview, if interviews are offered. Then, of course, be on time!

Following are tips for making the most of a college visit:

Research each school before arriving on campus. Read about it in a college guidebook. Also, visit the college's website, read through the "undergraduate admissions" information, and take a "virtual tour," if offered.

While on campus, be sure to look at residence halls, classroom facilities, lecture halls, lab facilities, dining halls, athletic and art facilities, and the student union. Keep an eye out for bulletin boards that list activities, and look for a copy of the student newspaper in the admissions waiting area or elsewhere on campus. These are often your best sources for getting a true feeling for the flavor of a college.

Have a snack in the dining hall and "people watch" if you have time. Don't be afraid to ask a few random students what they like best and least about the college. If you're visiting when school is not in session, ask your student tour guide these questions. Also, find out what other colleges your tour guide applied to and ask why he or she chose that college over others.

Try to imagine yourself as a student on each campus you visit. Would you feel comfortable there? Does the campus seem like an exciting place? Could you see yourself spending four years there?

Take a camera and snap a few photos of the campus. Write down your impressions immediately after visiting the school. What did you like? What didn't you like? What would you like to know more about? If you're visiting more than one campus in a day (don't try to visit more than two in one day!), don't wait until after you've seen both colleges to record your thoughts. After you have visited a number of schools, details of each will begin to blur.

*See also the *College Visit Checklist* in the Appendix.

The Interview

Over the past ten years, many colleges discontinued personal interviews as part of the application process because interviews potentially put some students at a disadvantage if they did not have the resources to travel to college campuses far from home. Recently, though, the trend is swinging back toward personal interviews, given either by admissions personnel at the college or by alumni interviewers in the applicant's home town.

The most important advice for the interview: be yourself. (It also helps to be on time, to be neatly dressed, and to be prepared to ask and answer questions.) Whether a college offers interviews for purely informational purposes or requires them as part of the admissions process, interviews enable college admissions officers to associate a face, a look of intent, or an engaging smile with an applicant. This is the student's opportunity to become more than an SAT score, a GPA, or a list of activities. It is best approached as a friendly conversation. It is perfectly natural to take a moment to think before answering a question, and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers – admissions officers simply want to learn more about an applicant as a person. Students should be prepared to answer questions about themselves and to ask thoughtful questions **that are not answered in the college view book or in the college guides!** (For example, avoid general questions about the size of the school or what majors are offered.) Being as knowledgeable as possible about the college before the interview is key. It's okay to write a few questions down and refer to them during the interview, but be sure to make eye contact as much as possible, and try to relax. If something strikes you as funny, go ahead and laugh. If talking with you is an enjoyable experience for the interviewer, it can only benefit your application. Ask the interviewer for his or her business card. It never hurts to write a follow-up thank you note for their time (it might turn out to be your favorite college choice, and every advantage helps!).

The Orme School's College Visitation Policy

Seniors are allowed three days of excused absence to visit colleges. Two of those days are allowed only with appropriate college admissions appointments, and the required college visit form must be completed and filed with the college counselor. The third day may be used for college visits or as a "wild card" to complete applications in the College Counseling Center. Permission must be granted by the academic office. Any college-related absence beyond these three days will be unexcused.

Colleges Visiting The Orme School

Over 200 colleges and universities send admissions representatives to meet with students in Arizona. Most of these visits occur in October when college representatives converge on Phoenix for a series of college fairs, but some visits continue throughout the year. Students are advised of upcoming college representatives on Orme School's campus at morning announcements, via email, and a notice of scheduled appointments is posted in the College Counseling Center.

College meetings provide students with an opportunity to learn more about a college, to ask questions of an admissions officer, to collect literature about the college, and to place their names on the college's mailing list. College visitors are usually the admissions officers who are responsible for Arizona applicants. They are often the first ones to read applications from Orme School students, and they are in a position to act as advocates for a student when his or her file goes before a college admissions committee for a decision. Seniors, therefore, should be sure to attend the meetings and introduce themselves to the representatives of any colleges to which they may be applying.

Seniors and Juniors are allowed to miss classes to attend college meetings, with advance planning.

Finalizing the College List

Once colleges have been researched and visited, it's time to make a final list of colleges to which a student will actually apply. There is no magic number of colleges that we recommend for college lists, but we do advise seniors to be sure that they have made selections that will ensure they have choices when the application process is completed and colleges have mailed their acceptance letters. Keep in mind that admission decisions are often unpredictable and vary from year to year. With that in mind, we advise students to plan their college choices in three categories:

1. "SAFETY" SCHOOLS – At least two colleges in this category. Colleges for which a student is clearly qualified and where there is little doubt of his or her acceptance. One of these schools should be a state college or university in the state in which the student is a resident. (Arizona state colleges or universities **may** fall into this category.)

2. "GOOD FIT" SCHOOLS – Two to four colleges in this category. Colleges that a student would like to attend and to which he or she is a strong candidate and likely to be accepted.

3. "REACH" SCHOOLS– Perhaps one or two colleges in this category. Colleges that a student would like to attend but that might have highly competitive admissions processes or admissions criteria that the student may not fully meet.

Athletics and the College Selection Process

Athletics have played a very important part of many students' experience at The Orme School and, naturally, many hope to continue their participation at the college level. For most student-athletes, even accomplished ones, athletics will simply be part of their larger application profile, much like any other significant extra-curricular activity pursued at Orme. Each year, a few students will be "recruited" by colleges, either by mail, phone, e-mail, or in-person at summer camps. Please be cautious about what coaches say. Remember, they do not make admission decisions; rather, they have varying degrees of influence with the admission office. Unfortunately, we have seen many instances of coaches making "promises" that they could not keep, thus raising unrealistic expectations with students and leading to real disappointments down the road.

College-level athletic programs include a wide variety of competition levels, from intramural teams to club sports and varsity teams at Division I, II, and III ranked colleges and universities. Colleges are members of one or another division according to the size and scope of their athletic programs and whether they provide athletic scholarships. (Division III colleges do not offer athletic scholarships.) Those students who wish to play at the most competitive levels – Divisions I & II – must be certified by the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Eligibility Center. (Certification is not necessary for Division III sports.) Juniors are advised of this policy and will need to download the appropriate forms. To find out what division a college is in, consult a general college guide or the individual college's website, or go to: **www.ncaa.org**.

A student who thinks that athletics will play a prominent role in his or her college applications should first speak with his or her Orme School coach to determine, initially, whether the coach thinks that the student-athlete will be able to compete at the college level. Students should then write to the coaches at the colleges to which they are considering applying and include an athletics resumé and any relevant game footage. Students should also supply their Orme School coaches with the names and phone numbers of the appropriate college coaches so that Orme School coaches can make contact directly. Also, when visiting colleges, student-athletes

should schedule appointments with coaches. We caution students to beware of athletic recruiting/scholarship services that charge exorbitant fees to "represent" athletes to colleges. In fact, these agencies have virtually no influence in college athletics and admissions decisions.

Recommended reading on College Athletics and the Admissions Process:

Octameron Associates, *The Winning Edge: The Student-Athlete's Guide to College Sports*
Peterson's, *Sports Scholarships and College Athletic Programs*
Checkmark Books, *College Admissions for the High School Athlete*

Suggestions for Spring Break College Visits

For Juniors

Juniors are often anxious to begin visiting college campuses over Spring Break, sometimes combining visits with family travel. The College Counseling office has compiled the following list of colleges and universities, organized by geographic location, that have appealed to Orme School students in the past.

The suggested colleges vary widely in size, setting, and competitiveness of admissions requirements. A little research in advance can help a student determine if any given college is worth a visit. Though colleges are often not in session during our Spring Break, it is still a good time to explore some of their basic features. Because The Orme School is a relatively small school on a rural campus, a trip to NYU, for example, could be a real eye-opener. In any case, call ahead to arrange for a campus tour, and consider scheduling an interview at any college of serious interest.

Arizona

Univ. of Arizona, Arizona State Univ., Northern Arizona Univ. Grand Canyon Univ.

Pacific Northwest

Washington: Univ. of Puget Sound, Whitman College, Evergreen State College, Seattle Univ.
Oregon: Lewis & Clark College, Willamette Univ., Univ. of Oregon, Reed College.

California

Stanford Univ., The Claremont Colleges, Occidental College, Univ. of San Diego, Whittier College, Univ. of San Francisco, Univ. of California schools (esp. Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Santa Barbara, LA, Santa Cruz, & San Diego), Univ. of the Pacific, Univ. of Redlands, Menlo, Humboldt State, Chapman, Santa Clara

Southwest

New Mexico: Univ. of New Mexico, New Mexico State Univ., College of Santa Fe, St. John's College,
Colorado: CU-Boulder and CU-Colorado Springs, Colorado State Univ. at Ft. Collins and Pueblo, Univ. of Northern Colorado, Fort Lewis College, Univ. of Denver, Colorado College

Texas & Louisiana

Univ. of Texas at Austin, Trinity Univ., Southern Methodist Univ., Texas Christian Univ., Rice Univ., Tulane Univ. (New Orleans), Texas A&M

Northern Midwest

Montana: Univ. of Montana, Montana State Univ.
Minnesota: Carleton College, Macalester College, St. Olaf College
Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin
Michigan: Univ. of Michigan, Michigan State Univ.

Midwest

Illinois: Univ. of Chicago, Northwestern Univ., Lake Forest College, Knox College
Iowa: Cornell College, Grinnell College
Ohio: Kenyon College, Oberlin College, Denison U., Wittenberg U., Ohio Wesleyan Univ.,College of Wooster, Miami Univ., Hiram College
Indiana: Indiana Univ., Univ. of Notre Dame, DePauw Univ., Earlham College
Missouri: Washington Univ. (St. Louis)
Kansas: Univ. of Kansas

Mid-Atlantic

Pennsylvania: Bucknell Univ., Franklin and Marshall College, Dickinson College, Gettysburg College, Bryn Mawr College, Haverford College, Lafayette College, Lehigh Univ., Carnegie Mellon Univ., Univ. of Pennsylvania
New York: Colgate Univ., Hamilton College, Hobart & William Smith Colleges, Cornell Univ., Ithaca College, Union College, Skidmore College, Vassar College, Sarah Lawrence College, New York Univ., Columbia Univ., Fordham Univ.
New Jersey: Princeton Univ.
Maryland: Johns Hopkins Univ., Washington College, Goucher College
Washington, DC: Georgetown Univ., George Washington Univ., American Univ.

Northern New England

New Hampshire: Dartmouth College
Vermont: University of Vermont, Middlebury College
Maine: Colby College, Bates College, Bowdoin College

Southern New England

Boston Area: Boston College, Boston Univ., Tufts Univ., Babson College, Emerson College, Harvard Univ., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Wheaton College, Wellesley College (women's college)
Western Massachusetts: Amherst College, Williams College, Smith College Clark Univ.
Connecticut: Trinity College, Yale Univ., Connecticut College
Rhode Island: Brown University, Rhode Island School of Design

Southeast

Georgia: Emory Univ.
Tennessee: Vanderbilt Univ., Univ. of the South, Rhodes College
North Carolina: Duke Univ., Wake Forest Univ., Davidson College, Guilford College
South Carolina: College of Charleston
Virginia: Univ. of Virginia, Univ. of Richmond, Washington & Lee Univ., Hampden-Sydney, College of William & Mary, Mary Washington College
Florida: Univ. of Miami, Rollins College, Eckerd College, Flagler College

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

Application Plans

Many colleges and universities offer more than one application plan in order to spread out their applications and "lock in" some of their most desirable applicants early in the year. Early application deadlines are typically in November.

Early Decision

"Early decision" plans are binding: applicants may apply to only one college under this plan, and they are ethically required to attend that college if admitted. Some colleges offer two early decision plans – one in November and a second in late December or early January, which can be used by applicants who are denied early admission at an earlier date at other colleges. In some cases it is acceptable to apply to colleges with "early action" or "rolling admission" plans at the same time as applying early decision, but if a student is admitted under an "early decision" plan, he or she must withdraw his or her applications to all other schools. Students should read application forms carefully to determine individual colleges' application policies. (See the NACAC *Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities* in the Appendix for more information.)

A recent controversial trend is towards colleges accepting an increasingly higher percentage of their freshman class from the early decision pool of applicants. The advantage to colleges is that in the early decision pool they are guaranteed that any accepted applicant will attend their school, which increases their "yield" rates. Because colleges are accepting more candidates from their fall early decision pools, the acceptance rate for early applicants tends to be higher than for applicants in the winter regular decision pool. This leads many applicants to believe they must apply early in order to have the best chance of acceptance. In some instances, this reasoning is sound, but it is also sometimes faulty. A list of the advantages and disadvantages of applying early decision follows this section.

Early Action

"Early action" plans are nonbinding: applicants may often apply to more than one college under this plan and have until the standard May 1 deadline to commit to attending any college to which they are accepted. Currently, some schools that once offered early decision are switching to early action. Stanford, Yale, and Harvard have further tweaked the Early Action program by forbidding applicants to their institutions from applying early action to more than one school at a time with what they refer to as "Restrictive Early Action." (REA) In any case, students should always carefully note the requirements for an individual college's admissions programs.

Regular Decision

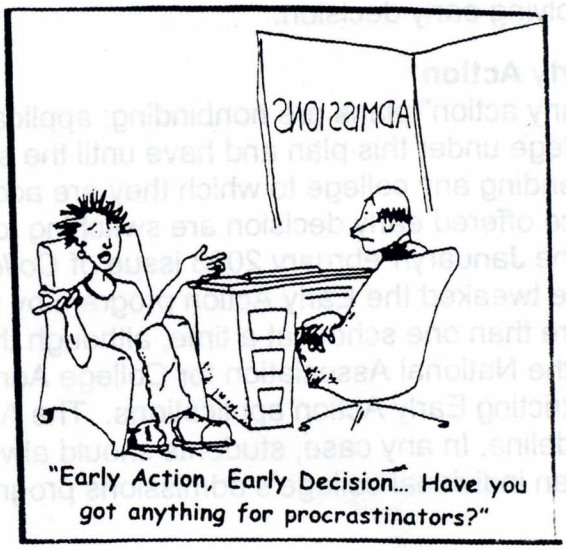
Students who apply under regular decision plans typically have an application deadline for each college, which varies from January 1 to February 15, with most deadlines in January. Decisions are then mailed in the spring, usually in late March and early April, and students have until May 1 to make a deposit at the college that they will be attending and to notify other colleges that have offered them acceptances that they will be attending elsewhere.

Rolling Admission

The other application plan used by some colleges and universities is "rolling" admission. At colleges such as ASU, students may apply as early as they wish in their senior year, and the applicant is notified a certain time after the application file is complete (usually four to six weeks after). Decisions are nonbinding – accepted applicants have until May 1 to notify colleges as to whether they will be attending – but it is often to the advantage of a student to file a deposit and secure housing early, even if he or she may choose later to forfeit the deposit and attend a different school. (This is generally the case with large universities where on-campus housing is limited.)

***Note**: **We strongly advise that students applying under regular and rolling admissions plans file their applications as early as possible.** Students should ideally file their

applications in November for the best consideration, and we encourage students to have all of their applications completed by the end of first semester. Application deadlines are **firm**, and waiting until the deadline is stressful and tempts fate. While college counselors give frequent reminders about upcoming application deadlines, it is the **student's responsibility** to keep track of his or her own deadlines and to take the necessary steps to be sure that all parts of the application are filed on time.



By Bob Thaves

The Pros and Cons of Early Decision

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
• Applying early decision demonstrates your strong and sincere interest in a college. • It is often your "best shot" at a college where one of your parents is an alum or where you are being recruited for athletics. • It eliminates the expense of sending application fees to a number of schools. • If you are turned down early your application may still be deferred to the regular pool. • You get teacher recommendations and school papers taken care of before the mid-winter crunch. • An early acceptance can enable you to relax and enjoy your senior year more. • Friends and family can shop for your holiday gifts at the college store website.	• Because of the short amount of time between early decision notification and regular decision deadlines, you will have to fill out most other applications anyway, just in case you are not accepted early. • An early decision acceptance takes away further choices – your ideas about what you want in a college may change during your senior year. • Many colleges are swamped with strong early decision candidates. Your record might stand out more when competing with the broader regular decision pool. • If your grades are on the upswing, you'd do better applying when your fall term, senior year grades are on your transcript. • The college knows you are coming and may be less generous with financial aid. • You can't compare and negotiate financial aid offers unless you receive them from several colleges.

"You got into the college of my choice, and I got into the college of your choice. Now, if we could just work something out..."

Wait Lists

Occasionally, colleges place qualified candidates for whom they cannot offer admission on "wait lists." The chances of being selected from a wait list and offered admission varies widely depending on the size of a given college's list and how many admitted students choose to enroll in a given year. Some colleges refuse to divulge the size of their wait lists, while others will only tell if asked. In 2000, Columbia University wait listed more applicants than it admitted, and Middlebury College's wait list was equal to 88% of its admitted students. The bottom line is that getting selected from a wait list can be even more competitive than gaining admission in the first place. It can, though, happen!

A student who is wait-listed at College A and has been admitted to College B (that he or she would like to attend), should request that his or her name be removed from College A's wait list. A student who wishes to remain on the wait list is advised to send a deposit to a college where he or she has gained admission. If the student is subsequently taken off the wait list and offered admission, he or she will forfeit the deposit at the other college. (Colleges are expected to notify applicants of the resolution of their wait list status no later than August 1.) Making a deposit at more than one college for any other reason is considered unethical. The Orme School will send a student's final transcript to only one college unless the student has been placed on a wait list. (See the NACAC *Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities* in the Appendix for further information.)

TIPS FOR THE WAIT-LISTED

SAY IT LOUD. Let the admissions office know you're still keen to attend and why it's your first choice. (Write, don't phone: They're busy and it may annoy them.)

MORE INFO. If you've accomplished anything note-worthy since you initially applied, send information. Newspaper clippings from sports or arts accomplishments, for example, could help. The University of Virginia once admitted a wait-listed student after she sent images of her horseback gymnastics performance.
NO BRIBE. Cookies don't sway admissions offices; sending crates of Alaskan king crab violates codes of ethics.
NO PARENTS. Do not have/let your parents call the admissions office. The college wants to see you advocating for yourself.

Filling Out Applications

Applications are generally available during the summer. The majority of college applications are now completed and submitted online. They can be accessed on the school's website under the "Admissions" tab. Keep in mind, though, that every application should be proofread carefully, and sometimes applications completed online are completed more casually, to the detriment of the applicant. Students should also be sure to check their email regularly after supplying email addresses to colleges. College admissions offices are increasingly relying on email to communicate with applicants. *Note: You will need an email address that is "generic." hotbabe@bozo.net won't necessarily help you in admissions!

The Common Application vs. Institutional Applications

The *Common Application* enables students to fill out one application for several colleges, often saving a great deal of time and avoiding the inevitable redundancy inherent in filling out applications for individual schools. Over 600 colleges and universities accept the *Common Application*, and some now use it exclusively. To find out which colleges accept the C*ommon Application* and to download the forms and apply electronically, go to: **www.commonapp.org.**

Many colleges also require a supplement to the *Common Application*, typically asking applicants to write a short essay about why they are interested in a particular institution. Colleges and universities that accept the *Common Application* pledge to give it the same consideration as their institutional applications and, in many cases, this application method makes sense for our students. We advise, though, that students using the *Common Application* take care to use it judiciously. They should be thorough and thoughtful with supplements, and they should be on the alert for questions that might apply differently to different colleges. (For example, the question, "What activities do you plan to pursue in college?" might be answered differently if the application is going to a college that has a specialized program that other colleges do not offer.) We recommend that students use individual institutional applications when applying under an

early decision plan and, regardless of the type of application used, students must take care to follow directions.

CEEB CODE

An applicant's high school CEEB code is requested on most application materials.
The Orme School code is: **030-210**

"Contact History"

When trying to discriminate among similar applicants, colleges often consult a student's "contact history" with that institution. Applicants who apply using the common application, have never made a campus visit, and have not spoken with an admissions representative who visited their high school are more likely to be rejected than a similarly qualified applicant who has demonstrated a high level of interest in a particular college.

A recent trend is for competitive colleges to reject or wait list applicants who are very well qualified but who have, based on their "contact history," made it apparent that that college is merely a "back up" choice, not one they truly wish to attend. It is most definitely to an applicant's advantage to have demonstrated genuine interest by visiting campus, having an interview (if available), making contact with an admissions representative on a high school visit, and making all inquiries personally (not relying on Mom or Dad to make arrangements or gather information).

When using the Common Application, take extra care with supplemental essay questions that ask you to indicate why you are attracted to a particular college. Avoid generic responses that could apply to a hundred other schools. Demonstrate that you've done your research by emphasizing the distinctive qualities of a given college that make it a good match for you.

John Anderson, the Director of College Counseling at Philips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, advises: *"Give as much attention as possible to every college on your list. Over the course of your college search, your interest in any one of your colleges may shift upward or downward. Do not damage your chances with a college that might have started lower on your list by ignoring it early in the process. But remember too that your list should include only colleges that are a good fit for you and that you think you would really want to attend. For each of these colleges, find the features that are attractive to you. Then, to convince a school that you're really interested, you'll need to show how the features the school offers match your own needs."*

The Activities List

Involvement in non-academic activities can be helpful when applying to college. Indeed, colleges look for applicants who are not only good students but also well-rounded individuals who pursue their interests and passions. Leadership, also, is a highly desired trait and is often evident in a student's extra-curricular activities. It is a fallacy, though, to assume that the more activities a student can list, the better, or that if a student isn't elected class president, appointed editor of the yearbook, and/or named captain of a varsity sports team, he or she won't be able to get into a selective college. Not true! Colleges look for genuine interest and commitment in the activities a student has pursued during high school. For example, a student who has taken drama classes and has been involved in several plays can demonstrate his or her high level of commitment to acting on the "Activities List" of the application. Also, a student who has pursued one meaningful community service activity will demonstrate a more genuine commitment than a student who has fulfilled our community service requirement by picking up hours randomly. Many applications (including the Common Application) ask students to indicate which extra-curricular activity has been the most meaningful to her or him, and why. The "Activities" section of the application also typically asks a student to indicate how many hours per week and weeks per year she or he devotes to each extra-curricular activity. This information helps colleges put academic achievements into perspective.

Writing the Essay

The college application essay is the student's best opportunity to distinguish him or herself from other applicants. It can be a deciding factor in the admissions process, as it presents the applicant as a person rather than a set of statistics. A good essay animates a candidate, reveals the way he or she thinks, and conveys passion, curiosity, and sense of humor, providing an insight into what is special and unique about that individual. Whatever the topic, the essay should be, first and foremost, personal. It should convey something about the applicant that does not come across elsewhere in the application. One mistake students make is trying to anticipate what topic would most impress a college. (The University of Virginia, for example, receives an inordinate number of essays about Thomas Jefferson as a personal hero.) Admissions officers read hundreds, sometimes thousands of essays every year. They appreciate a fresh, honest voice that conveys a true sense of self.

The essay is also a sample of an applicant's writing skill and should be his or her best possible effort. At The Orme School, counselors and teachers are ready, willing, and able to help seniors with their essays at any time during the fall. Guidance (and proofreading!) can be very helpful; though **it is essential the essay is the student's work**, reflecting their own interests, skills, and personality. Teachers and parents must resist the temptation to rewrite a student's essay. Jay Mathews, a *Washington Post* staff writer and author of the alternative college guide, *Harvard Schmarvard*, suggests this guideline: that parents critique student essays and offer proofreading advice verbally, without touching the essay.

The **Common Application Essay Prompts: (650 words maximum)**

- Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
- Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma – anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
- Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Recommended reading on the college essay:

- Curry and Kasbar, *Essays That Worked*
- McGinty, *The College Application Essay*

Recommended reading on the application process in general:

- Mitchell, *Winning the Heart of the College Admissions Dean*
- Robinson and Katzman, *College Admissions: Cracking the System*
- Moll, *Playing the Private College Admissions Game*
- Oliveira, et al., *Getting In*
- Mayher, *The College Admissions Mystique*
- Hernandez, *A is for Admission: The Insider's Guide to Getting into the Ivy League and Other Top Colleges*
- Gelbrand et al, *Your College Application*
- Ordovensky and Thornton, *Opening College Doors*
- Students Helping Students, *Choose the Right College and Get Accepted*
- Details, Details: Other Parts of the Application

Secondary School Reports and Transcript Requests

College applications include the student portion and also parts that are to be completed by the College Counselors, and classroom teachers. One of the challenges of the application process is making sure these additional forms get into the right hands well before the application deadlines. College Counselors help their students with this task, and many meetings in the fall are devoted to guiding students through the process. Students are also responsible for sending required standardized test scores to colleges. Organization is key – an Application Checklist is provided in the Appendix

College applications (including the Common Application) typically include separate forms that require the school to provide basic information about the applicant's academic history, (such as GPA), and ask for an evaluation from a College Counselor. Typically these forms are entitled, **"Secondary School Report," "High School Report,"** or simply, **"School Report."** Also be sure and locate the **"Mid-Year Report"** which reports first semester grades. Students should ask two teachers whose classes they are currently taking or have taken in the past year to fill out the **"Teacher Evaluation"** form. Students should fill out the "Applicant" portion at the top of these forms, including name and address, and sign the "Access Waiver." The forms then go to the College Counseling Center. The student also fills out a simple Transcript Request, for each college to which he or she is applying. **All college application forms and transcript requests must indicate the mailing deadline.** The College Counselors then assemble The Orme School's portion of the application package which includes: an official school transcript, the Secondary School Report, the College Counselor's recommendation letter, the school *Profile* (which provides information about our course offerings and our grading system) and, finally, teachers' letters of recommendation. A College Counselor then puts the entire package in the mail or submits electronically.

Please be aware that in order to ensure that deadlines are met, school report forms and transcript requests must be given to the College Counseling Center **at least one week before an application deadline. This means one week <u>before final exam week</u> of first semester.**

Ranking

The Secondary School Report form typically requests that the school report an applicant's rank in his or her class. This figure is intended to help colleges evaluate an applicant's academic performance in the context of his or her classmates. Because The Orme School is a small, college preparatory school, we find that ranking is not appropriate for our students, as our selective admissions process results in a student body that is closely grouped in ability and

achievement. The student whose official rank might be toward the bottom of the class could be an excellent candidate for many selective colleges. Therefore, The Orme School, like many similar small college preparatory schools, does not rank. Because we are nationally known as a strong school with a rigorous academic program, this policy does not put our students at a disadvantage. Colleges use other criteria to evaluate our students – primarily the high school transcript that indicates what courses a student has taken and how he or she has performed in those courses.

Teacher Recommendations

Most colleges and universities require recommendations from two of the applicant's teachers. We advise students to request recommendations from two junior year teachers before the end of the junior school year. The best teacher recommendation comes from a teacher who knows a student well and has seen a student grow intellectually, regardless of the grade the student received in his or her course. The college counselor is happy to help students decide which teachers to ask. It is also very helpful to those writing letters of recommendation to have a resumé of the student's activities, awards and accomplishments while in high school.

Students sometimes wish to send additional recommendation letters, either from an additional Orme School teacher, from a coach, or from someone outside of school. For the most part, college admission officers do not have the time to read through extra application materials. We advise that students only send additional letters if the person who is writing the recommendation knows the student very well, and his or her letter will include information and observations about the student that would not be revealed in the teacher or counselor recommendations. Sometimes an employer, for instance, or the sponsor of a community service project can provide a unique insight into an applicant. A family friend, however, who has "connections" with a college but has had only casual contact with an applicant, cannot write an effective recommendation.

A note about the "FERPA Waiver"

Some college applications request students indicate whether or not they are willing to waive their legal right to have access to their teacher or counselor recommendations. We strongly recommend that students sign this waiver as it gives recommendations much more credibility. Colleges assume that those providing the recommendations will be more candid in their evaluations if they know that the applicants will not be reading their recommendations at a later date. The college counselor and teachers have wonderful things to say about Orme School students, and we want our input to be given the greatest consideration possible.

If an Orme School student faces disciplinary action for any activity that poses a significant risk to the safety or well-being of themselves, other students, or members of the School community, or for conduct in violation of The Orme School Honor Code, the School may disclose information about that disciplinary action to officials of other schools who have a legitimate educational interest in the student's behavior.

Sending Scores

It is **NOT** The Orme School's policy to place standardized test scores reported to the school on students' transcripts. By law, these scores are the property of the student and may not be sent without the written permission of the parents of a student under age 18. Scores must be sent directly from the testing organizations. Students who indicate in the test registration process which schools should receive their scores do not need to take further action, but most students

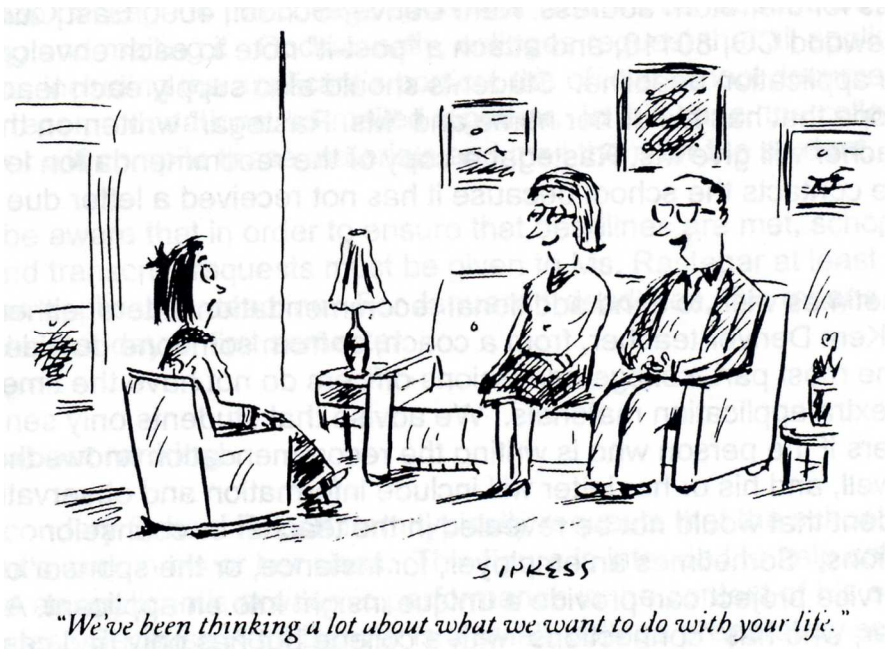
need to contact the CollegeBoard (SAT) or American College Testing Program (ACT) or ETS (for the TOEFL) to have their scores sent. This can easily be accomplished at the test companies' web sites – **www.collegeboard.com**, **www.act.org and www.ets.org/toefl**. There is a fee for this service. Once a student has enrolled at a college or university, he or she is responsible for sending official Advance Placement scores to receive college credit. (Instructions are in the "Student Pack" booklet given to students during AP testing.)

I'm In! Now What?

Students who apply under binding early decision programs are typically notified of their application decisions in mid-December (for November applicants) or mid-February (for January applicants). Those who are accepted under early decision are required to send a deposit to the college and notify the Counseling Center so that application materials that have been prepared to mail to other colleges can be placed either in the mail (for early decision applicants who were deferred or denied), or in the shredder (for those who were accepted). Mid-year and final transcripts are automatically sent to colleges that have accepted students' early decision. Mid-year transcripts are also sent to all colleges to which students have applied under regular or rolling admission programs, and final transcripts are sent to the single college that each student has chosen to attend.

A student who is accepted under early action, regular decision, or rolling decision programs has until May 1 to send in a deposit to the college that she or he has chosen to attend and to notify other colleges of her or his final decision. We advise students to notify colleges they will not be attending in writing, including a polite thank you note. Not only is such communication important in maintaining positive relationships between The Orme School and colleges, but it is also in the best interest of students who may, in the unforeseen future, wish to reopen communications with a college that was not initially a first choice. That polite note sent in April will help smooth the way!

Finally, all seniors need to be aware that no college acceptance is final until the completed high school transcript has been received and processed in June. It is an all too common misconception amongst seniors that once a college acceptance has been received, it is no longer necessary to work hard in classes. "Senioritis" often afflicts students in the spring, and the temptation to relax and enjoy the last months of school free from the encumbrance of studying is powerful, indeed. While we certainly want our seniors to savor those last months, we strongly caution them to be aware that colleges expect that their final high school transcripts will reflect the same level of scholarship in the second semester of senior year as that of the first semester. Slight decreases in grades may be overlooked, but "B" students who receive "Cs" in their second semester may be jeopardizing their college acceptances. It is not unheard of for a college to place a student on academic probation for his or her first semester in college as a result of second semester high school grades, and it is possible for a college to withdraw an acceptance based on poor performance. Most college acceptance letters include a cautionary statement on this subject. The Stanford University 2005 application states: *If you are offered admission, Stanford reserves the right to withdraw that offer of admission if: 1) you show a significant drop in academic performance or fail to graduate; 2) you have misrepresented yourself in the application process; 3) we learn that you have engaged in behavior prior to matriculation that indicates a serious lack of judgment or integrity; or 4) you are holding, beyond May 1, 2005, a place in the freshman class of a college other than Stanford.* The choice of which college to attend is one of the first adult decisions that our students make. The choice of how they will finish their senior year is another. Enough said!



"We've been thinking a lot about what we want to do with your life."

For Parents

The college counselor is charged with guiding a senior through the mechanics of the college application process. Counselors and parents offer advice and support, but please remember that **the student must ultimately be responsible for the process and the decisions**. The college counselors is happy to counsel parents through the process as well, and we recommend the following books especially for parents:

Woodacre &Bane, *Doors Open From Both Sides*
Pasick, *Almost Grown: Launching Your Child from High School to College*
Coburn & Treeger, *Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years*
Barkin, *When Your Kid Goes to College: A Parent's Survival Guide*
Borden, Burlinson & Kerns, *In Addition to Tuition: The Parents' Survival Guide to the Freshman Year of College*
MacGowan & McGinty, *50 College Admission Directors Speak to Parents*

The Transition to College

Once the college admissions process is over, it's time to start thinking about making the transition to college. While the anticipation of increased freedom is exciting, there are myriad challenges lying ahead, from figuring out how to strike a balance between academics and recreation to dealing with a roommate or handling social pressures. We recommend the following books, written by college students for college freshmen, which offer helpful and practical advice to help ease the transition (great graduation gift idea!):

Students-Helping-Students, *Navigating Your Freshman Year*
Kaufmann & Bernstein, *How to Survive Your Freshman Year*

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

College Costs

The cost of attending a college or university includes tuition, room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation expenses to and from the college campus. Following are examples of the cost estimates published by three different institutions for the 2018-2019 school year (excluding transportation costs and personal expenses, which can vary widely):

Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ (in-state, public):

Undergraduate tuition (Arizona resident)		$10,792
Room and board (average)		$12,209
Books, supplies and misc. fees (estimated)		$1,125
	TOTAL	**$24,126**

University of Washington, Seattle, WA(out-of-state, public):

Undergraduate tuition (non-resident)		$36,588
Room and board (average)		$12,798
Books and supplies (estimated)		$3,633
	TOTAL	**$53,019**

Colgate University, Hamilton, NY (out-of-state, private):

Undergraduate tuition		$55,530
Room and board (approximately)		$13,995
Books and supplies (estimated)		$2,410
	TOTAL	**$71,935**

A word about the college price tag:

While state institutions clearly charge less than private colleges and universities, private institutions generally have more funds available for merit scholarships and need-based financial aid. For example, the average freshman financial aid award at U of Arizona (combined grants and loans) was $15,801 in 2017, while at Colgate University, the average award was $51,075. Furthermore, U of A estimates the “average indebtedness” of its graduates to be $25,000, while the “average indebtedness” of a Colgate graduate is estimated at $18,000. Though it is common sense to consider a college’s cost, we encourage students who will require financial aid to search for colleges without making their published price tags a determining factor.

Financial Aid

There are three types of financial assistance available for entering college students: scholarships, need-based financial aid, and loans.

Institutional Scholarships: Scholarships are merit awards given on the basis of exceptional ability (e.g. academics or athletics). Scholarship money is not given on the basis of financial need. It does not have to be repaid. The best source of scholarship money is the colleges and universities themselves. Colleges seeking to enroll particularly desirable applicants sometimes offer unsolicited “merit scholarships" along with their acceptances as an incentive for a student to attend their institution. Other college-based scholarships must be applied for separately. Students who are planning to apply for scholarship aid should be sure to ask for scholarship and financial aid information along with other application materials.

Outside Scholarships: Every year, thousands of scholarships are awarded to students by private businesses, organizations, and foundations. They range from very small awards ($500 for one year) to full, four-year scholarships. Large scholarships of this type, however, are extremely difficult to procure. The number of scholarships awarded is typically very small, and the pool of applicants is often national. Also, scholarship money procured from outside sources is often deducted from a college or university's own financial aid awards. Scholarship books and websites are available to help search for outside money (see the list of recommendations at the end of this section). Though we certainly encourage students to pursue scholarship money, we caution against spending too much time applying for scholarships that are highly unlikely to be won. Once again, the best source of scholarship aid is the individual college or university that a student wishes to attend.

Scholarship Search Companies

In a *Wall Street Journal* article, "Services Claim to Cut College Costs" (2/25/04) Anne Marie Chaker reported on a growing number of companies that are soliciting families, offering to help find college scholarships or fill out federal forms, and others that are promoting financial aid seminars. According to Chaker, *"The underlying promise in each case – sometimes spoken, other times not – is that parents get an edge in the fierce competition for college aid. Trouble is, high-school counselors and government officials say, families rarely get any payoff for what can often be a sizeable investment. The number of complaints about financial aid outfits that over-promise rose 50% in 2002, from a year earlier, according to the Federal Trade Commission. In one case, National Student Financial Aid, a company that runs seminars in hotels, agreed last August to repay $115,000 to customers for promising that they were likely to receive more financial aid than they could get on their own."* While some financial aid counselors are considered legitimate, charging a fee but laying out clearly what they can and cannot do, scam artists abound. It is important to understand that while these counselors can answer questions about the financial aid process, it is unrealistic to expect them to be able to unlock "secrets" about the process. (See the *Warning Signs* box, for tips on identifying financial aid scams, and see *Financial Aid Help Online*, for websites with free help navigating the financial-aid process).

Warning Signs of Financial Aid Scams

If you're planning to hire professional counseling to help with your financial aid application, here are several red flags:

- A company guarantees to find you a bigger pot of financial aid
- A company guarantees to find you a scholarship
- A company charges a fee
- You are asked for credit card or bank account information
- A service promises to turn up scholarships that you can't find elsewhere
- You are called to receive an award for which you never applied.
- A sponsor does not supply valid contact information on request
- You're invited to a "free" seminar – and it turns into a high-pressure sales push.

Reduced Tuition Exchange Program

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) offers a reduced tuition program called the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE). The program offers exchanges for students on a space-available or first-come, first-served basis among state universities in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Students participating in WUE pay 150% of in-state tuition at participating universities. To be eligible, an applicant must be a resident of one of the participating states. Some colleges and universities also have additional criteria such as ACT/SAT test scores or high school GPA. Further information may be found online at **www.wiche.edu/sep/wue** or by calling WICHE-WUE at (303) 541-0214. The financial aid offices at participating universities can also explain the program and their own WUE offerings.

Financial Aid: "Financial Aid" is money given on the basis of need. "Need" is computed by the federal government using a form called the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), available on October 1, 2016. Some private colleges and universities also use a form called the PROFILE, processed by CSS (College Scholarship Service) and available in September. Many colleges depend on information from the PROFILE to compile financial aid awards for students who are applying for early decision or early action. Some colleges require that the FAFSA form be filed by all students requesting aid of any type, merit-based as well as need-based. Individual colleges and universities will inform applicants of their requirements. The PROFILE can be found at collegeboard.org and the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

When information from the FAFSA or PROFILE is sent to colleges (results are sent directly from the federal government or the College Scholarship Service), each college then "packages" a financial aid offer based on the total cost of attending the college, minus the figure calculated as the amount that a family is expected to be able to contribute. Need-based financial aid packages typically consist of the following three elements:

Grants – Money awarded by the college or university that does not have to be repaid.

Loans – Money borrowed by the student and/or parents that must be repaid. Many loans have a low interest rate, and payment often does not begin until seven to ten months after the student leaves college.

Work-Study Jobs – Students are paid by the hour for work performed on campus through a work-study program.

Evaluating Financial Aid Packages

Many colleges and universities practice "need blind" admissions, meaning that admissions decisions are made without knowledge of, or consideration given to, an applicant's financial need. Once an applicant is admitted, the college's financial aid office then puts together a financial aid package consisting of various levels of grants, loans, and work-study requirements. Colleges that pledge to meet 100% of need will put together packages that add up to the full demonstrated need of an applicant's family (based on figures from the FAFSA and/or the CSS PROFILE). Some colleges are not financially able to meet 100% of need and may offer packages that fall short of a family's demonstrated need. When financial considerations are a component of a student's college choice, it is important to carefully scrutinize financial aid offers. The college that offers more money in the form of grants, for instance, would be a better choice from a financial standpoint than the college that offers a high percentage of loans that must be repaid eventually. The *Princeton Review website's* "Aid Comparison Calculator" can be useful in comparing financial aid packages (**www.princetonreview.com/college/finance/**). It is possible, in some cases, to negotiate a financial aid offering when a preferred college offers a package that falls short of another college's offering. If a college is motivated to enroll an admitted student, it might increase its offer to meet the competition. For this reason, applying "early decision" may not be advisable for students seeking financial aid.

The Best Source of Financial Aid Advice

The college counselor at The Orme School is happy to help and support students through the financial aid process. Because financial issues are confidential between a family and individual colleges, though, the college financial aid office will often be the best source of information. College financial aid offices (separate from the admissions office) have counselors who are knowledgeable about the individual institution's scholarship and financial aid offerings and federal government programs, as well. Do not hesitate to call a financial aid officer with questions; working with students and parents is their job!

Recommended reading about the financial aid process:

- The Princeton Review, *Paying for College Without Going Broke*
- The College Board, *College Cost and Financial Aid Handbook*

Financial Aid Help Online

The following websites can be very useful in the financial aid process:

finaid.org offers a free service by which a family can calculate its estimated "Expected Family Contribution" number. This is a good place to begin, to determine if a family will qualify for need-based financial aid.

fastweb.com matches student profiles to a database containing over 600,000 scholarships. Also alerts students to application deadlines or when new scholarships are added.

collegeboard.org provides basic information about financial aid and the College Scholarship Service PROFILE forms, which can be downloaded or completed and submitted on-line. Also connects student profiles to a database containing over 2,300 scholarships, internships and loans.

freschinfo.com is another free scholarship search service.

fastaid.com provides the largest private sector scholarship database.

uncf.org provides financial aid advice and a scholarship search from the United Negro College Fund.

princetonreview.com is the *Princeton Review* website. It includes basic information about how the financial aid process works and explains what forms are needed and what types of aid are possible. There is a variety of other information at this site about the college process, as well.

hispanicfund.org provides information about scholarships for Hispanic students.

fafsa.ed.gov is the federal government's website for information about the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA). Students who apply online will get their application results 7 to 14 days faster than if they mail a paper FAFSA. Students can print a paper copy of the FAFSA to use as a worksheet. The FAFSA site has a link to the PIN site listed below – an important first step!

pin.ed.gov is where **students and parents must request a Personal Identification Number (PIN) if they are planning to file the FAFSA online**. The PIN may be used as an electronic signature for FAFSA on the Web and to access the National Student Loan Data System. It's a good idea to register for your PIN in advance of filing since it can take up to a week for your PIN to be registered. Note: Be sure to write down and save your PIN. The same PIN must be used in future years.

students.gov is the Student Financial Assistance website, which connects students with U.S. government services and information, including paying for college.

ed.gov/studentaid is a government site that contains *Funding Your Education, The Student Guide* and links to other resources.

edonline.com/cq/hbcu/ includes scholarship information and financial aid advice from the organization of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

International Students

Applying to US Colleges

There is no limit to the number of colleges to which you may apply. Make sure you request an international application from the colleges/universities that you are considering as most have different or additional requirements for international students. All colleges request significant financial documentation. These official documents must be original forms from your home financial institution. You will need several.

SAT

American colleges and universities will require you to take the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and it is also wise to plan to take SAT Subject Tests as well. You can register for these tests through the college counseling center or online. Be sure to check with individual colleges to determine which Subject Tests are required. If your first language is not English, then you must also take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) which you can schedule through the college counseling center.

Affording College in the United States

A few American universities offer need-based financial aid to international students. Many others will consider awarding financial aid for scholastic merit. Generally, more aid is available from private colleges than state universities. Other forms of financial aid to consider include athletic scholarships, or scholarships based on ethnicity. The F-1 student visa allows a student to work up to 20 hours per week which might ease the pinch of minor living expenses.

Applying for the Visa

To live in the United States as a student, you will need a non-immigrant visa. To be eligible for the visa, you must provide proof of college/university acceptance as a full-time student. The university will provide students with an I-20 document for this purpose. Additional documents required for the student visa application include:

- Birth certificate
- Current, valid passport
- I-20 form
- Evidence of financial support over the duration of stay in America
- Two passport-size photographs
- Completed non-immigrant visa application

We strongly encourage international students to carefully review the additional requirements and deadlines expected of you by American schools. Planning ahead and organization are particularly important as much of the documentation required to complete your college application must come from your native country. The fall application crunch can be made easier if you arrive in August with your financial documents ready to go.

APPENDIX

Checklist for Steps in the College Application Process

___ Read this handbook from front to back!
___ Register at the Naviance site with college counselor and keep information up to date.
___ Complete "All About You" profile.
___ Write resumé.
___ Ask teachers to write Teacher Recommendations.
___ Finalize list of colleges to which you will apply.
___ Note due dates for applications – regular and early decision – as they pertain to you.
(Due by that date or postmarked on that date? Be careful!)
___ Read application forms carefully and separate into parts.
___ Remind teachers to write recommendations. (Be sure to write *thank you notes!*)
___ Applications: Make a copy of each application to complete as a first draft. Consult counselor with questions. Complete (typed or neat ink) original form, or fill out application online. Print a copy of final application for your files.
___ Essays: Write essay(s) and review with counselor or teacher. Make corrections and print on word processor in final form. Complete a list of activities, if requested.
___ Finances: Write check for application fee. Have parent complete college financial aid forms, if appropriate.
___ Mail Applications: Proofread carefully, make copies, and mail your part of the application with sufficient postage.
___ Send your scores to colleges online at www.collegeboard.com. To send ACT scores, use www.actstudent.org.
___ Double check to make sure all parts of the application process are complete for each college.
___ Celebrate, cross your fingers and toes, and keep working hard!

Ten Myths About College Admission

Myth 1: Colleges look at grades rather than the kinds of courses taken.

Fact: All college admissions committees analyze the degree of difficulty of a student's course of study. An "A" in Comic Book Fiction is generally not nearly as impressive as a "B" in Physics. Honors and Advanced Placement courses indicate intellectual dedication, as does four years' study of a language or science rather than two.

Myth 2: If I'd gone to a public school, I could have gotten better grades and been able to get into a more competitive college.
Fact: College admissions officers are familiar with The Orme School and the rigors of our college preparatory curriculum. They take this into consideration when evaluating an applicant's course selection and grades. Our School Profile details our course offerings, our grading system, and the way we calculate our GPAs. You will not be penalized for attending an academically challenging school; quite the contrary – competitive colleges recognize The Orme School students as well-prepared for the demands of college.

Myth 3: College admission officers are looking for well-rounded applicants.

Fact: The truth is that colleges are looking for a well-rounded class, not person. They need special talents in sports, music, and visual arts, political radicals to liven up classroom discussions, student leaders to provide college solidarity and spirit, writers to publish school publications, actors to produce school plays and finally, a few solid "nice guy" kids to provide the glue to hold everyone together! Don't try to prove how well-rounded you are on your application and in your interview; rather, show your special talent. How do you stand out?

Myth 4: If I work hard enough, I can get in anywhere.

Fact: We like to think that this is true, but the top college admissions are based on hard work plus academic achievement in a demanding curriculum (including four years of work in all academic areas in Honors and AP level courses, when available) plus high aptitude as measured by national standardized tests. Test scores measure developmental learning; they are affected by your family genes, your family academic lifestyle, discussions around the dinner table, reading habits since kindergarten, and all of those long-term habits and intangibles. Hard work certainly pays off, but it's not the whole story. In any case, the best "match" for a student will often NOT be the college that is hardest to get into.

Myth 5: It is better to go to a big university that is well known than to a small college that few people have heard of.

Fact: All generalizations about large versus small schools are dangerous. A prestigious university would be ideal for many students but not for others. Many students would do better in a small, less widely known college that has exactly what the student wants as far as atmosphere and curriculum. The "good" school is the one that is a good match for you. It is, therefore, important for <u>you</u> to define what it is that you want in a college – to understand yourself – and not to be influenced by others' opinions or a college's name.

Myth 6: Ivy League colleges are the only ones worth applying to.

Fact: This is another cliché. The Ivy League colleges and the "Little Ivies" are among the most selective schools in the nation, but they may not offer what you want; and the cold eastern winters and the distance from home may not be to your liking. It is worthwhile to explore other areas of the country and to remember that many successful and prominent men and women have graduated from non-Ivy League schools.

Myth 7: Single-sex schools are passé.

Fact: Right for men (with the exception of a small number of colleges); wrong for women. During the late '60s and early '70s many single-sex colleges became coed. Several women's colleges resisted the trend, however, and are committed to women's education. These colleges offer unique ways for women to be in charge rather than to have to fight for acceptance. Also, though fewer than 1.5% of females attend women's colleges, one-third of the female board members of Fortune 1000 companies, and one-fifth of the women serving in the U.S. Congress, are graduates of women's colleges. Young women should not dismiss the option of a women's college out of hand; investigate!

Myth 8: Colleges receive so many personal essays that they probably only glance at them.

Fact: College admissions officers read personal essays with great care. Writing about yourself in a way that makes you unique is the most significant thing you can do to overcome lackluster test scores and/or a weak school record, or to set yourself apart in a pool of equally qualified applicants. Do not wait until the last minute to dash off an essay in order to get it in the mail by the deadline. Even at a large university, a well-written essay can tip the scales in your favor; the personal essay DOES make a difference.

Myth 9: My tennis will get me in; the coach promised!

Fact: Even as you are told to highlight your special talent, when we are talking about highly competitive colleges, you have to have the numbers before they will look at your special talent. In other words, a demanding curriculum, at least a B average, and a 1200 combined SAT score are numbers that won't keep you out of a college, but they won't get you in either! There are so many highly qualified applicants knocking at the doors of the top colleges that you must have challenging courses and good grades on your transcript before your special talent can give you an edge. The goal of the college coaches is to recruit the best team possible. They throw out wide nets, checking out every high school and, until they know whom they have signed for their teams, they keep everyone on the hook. Coaches sometimes advise students to send their applications directly to them. In these cases, the student often never hears from the admissions office because, in reality, he or she is not even on the books.

Myth 10: If I make the wrong decision about college, my life will be ruined.

Fact: While it is important to realize the significance of your college choice, to take it seriously and to spend time on all the steps of the college process, you should remember that if you find that, in spite of an informed choice, you are not well suited to your college, you can transfer to another college. So be conscientious about the selection process, but don't let it completely overshadow your senior year. Keep the college process in perspective and have fun!

College Lists

Hidden Gems: 100 Colleges That Are Better Than You Think

In his recent book, *Harvard Schmarvard: Getting Beyond the Ivy League*, Jay Mathews includes this list of colleges that are *"much better than their small reputations would suggest."* He polled guidance counselors and teachers who work with college-bound students for their recommendations of *"wallflower colleges that students fall in love with once they get to know them."* Mathews ranks the colleges in his list but says*, "I would not put much stock in my order of merit. I did it mostly for fun."* Consequently, they are listed below alphabetically. In any case, Mathew assures us that "all 100 colleges below are excellent and deserve to be put on your list if they offer something that pleases you."

Adelphi (NY)
Allegheny (PA)
Bates (ME)
Berea (KY)
Bowling Green (OH)
Centre (KY)
Clark (MA)
Dean (MA)
Drew (NJ)
Eckerd (FL)
Flagler (FL)
Grinnell (IA)
Hendrix (AR)
Illinois Wesleyan
Kalamazoo (MI)
Knox (IL)
Lewis & Clark (OR)
Macalester (MN)
Miami Univ. of Ohio
Nazareth College (NY)
Ohio University
Quinnipiac (CT)
Rhodes (TN)
Savannah Art & Design (GA)
Spelman (GA)
St. Joseph's (ME)
St. Olaf (MN)
Texas Christian
Tulsa, Univ. of (OK)
Univ. of the South (TN)
Washington Col. (MD)
Western Carolina (NC)
Whitman (WA)
Xavier (LA)

Agnes Scott (GA)
Augustana (SD)
Bard (NY)
Berry (GA)
Bucknell (PA)
Chapman (CA)
Colorado College
Denver, Univ. of (CO)
Dickinson (PA)
Elon (NC)
Gettysburg (PA)
Guilford (NC)
Hobart & William Smith (NY)
Ithaca (NY)
Keene State (NH)
Lambuth (TN)
Loyola (MD)
Manhattanville (NY)
Millsaps (MS)
Rochester (NY)
Paul Smith's (NY)
Randolph-Macon (VA)
Samford (AL)
Seattle Pacific (WA)
St. Andrews Presbyterian (NC)
St. Lawrence (NY)
St. Scholastica, College. Of (MN)
Trinity Univ. (TX)
Univ. of the Pacific (CA)
Ursinus (PA)
Western New England (MA)
Western Washington
Willamette (OR)
York (PA)

Alfred (NY)
Austin (TX)
Beloit (WI)
Birmingham-Southern (AL)
Carroll (MT)
Christopher Newport (VA)
Davidson (NC)
DePauw (IN)
Earlham (IN)
Evergreen State (WA)
Goucher (MD)
Hartwick (NY)
Hope (MI)
Johnson & Wales (RI)
Kenyon (OH)
Lawrence (WI)
Loyola Marymount (CA)
Mary Washington (VA)
Muhlenberg (PA)
Occidental (CA)
Puget Sound (WA)
Redlands, Univ. of (CA)
Santa Clara (CA)
Siena (NY)
St. John's (MD/NM)
St. Louis Univ. (MO)
Tampa, Univ. of (FL)
Truman State (MO)
Univ. of Scranton (PA)
Wabash (IN)
Westminster (MO)
Wheaton(IL)
Wooster (OH)

Loren Pope's *Colleges That Change Lives*

In his excellent alternative guide, *Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools You Should Know About Even if You're Not a Straight-A Student,* Loren Pope profiles 40 colleges where "faculty and students work closely together; learning is collaborative rather than competitive; students are involved in their own education; there is much discussion of values; and there is a sense of family." Following is his list, by geographic region.

Northeast
Allegheny (PA)
Clark (MA)
Goucher (MD)
Hampshire (MA)
Juniata (PA)
Marlboro (VT)
Ursinus (PA)
Western Maryland

South
Agnes Scott (GA)
Birmingham
Southern (AL)
Centre (KY)
Eckerd (FL)
Emory & Henry (VA)
Guilford (NC)
Hendrix (AR)
Lynchburg (VA)
Millsaps (MS)
Rhodes (TN)
St. Andrews Presbyterian (NC)

Midwest
Antioch (OH)
Beloit (WI)
Cornell College (IA)
Denison (OH)
Earlham (IN)
Hiram (OH)
Hope (MI)
Kalamazoo (MI)
Knox (IL)
Lawrence (WI)
Ohio Wesleyan
St. Olaf (MN)
Wabash (IN)
Wheaton (IL)
College of Wooster (OH)

Southwest
Austin College (TX)
St. John's (NM)
also Maryland
Southwestern (TX)

Northwest
Evergreen State (WA)
Reed (OR)
Whitman (WA)

Fred Rugg's *One Hundred Colleges: Just Darn Good Schools*

Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges is a highly respected source of lists of colleges and universities organized by the academic programs for which they are recommended. In the front of the book, Rugg includes his *One Hundred Colleges* list of schools *"where students maximize their education."* He calls this list, *"the most valuable list in the book,"* and he says, "I hear more nice things about these schools than any others."

Albertson (ID)
Allegheny (PA)
Auburn (AL)
Austin (TX)
Baldwin-Wallace (OH)
Barnard (NY)
Bates (ME)
Beloit (WI)
Bemidji State (MN)
Berea (WV)
Berry (GA)
Bethany (WV)
Bradley (IL)
Bryn Mawr (PA)
Butler (IN)
California, Univ. of (Davis)
Carleton (MN)
Christopher Newport (VA)
Clemson (SC)
Coe (IA)
Creighton (NB)
Dayton (OH)
Delaware, U. of
Denison (OH)
DePaul (IL)
DePauw (IN)
Doane (NB)
Drake (IA)
Earlham (IN)
Edinboro (PA)
Elon (NC)
Evanville (IN)
Roanoke (VA)
Rochester Institute of Technology (NY)
Rockhurst (MO)
St. Andrews (NC)
St. Anselm (NH)
St. Louis U. (MO)
St. Mary's (IN)
St. Michael's (VT)
St. Norbert (WI)
St. Olaf (MN)
Salisbury (MD)
Santa Clara (CA)
Seton Hall (NJ)
Simmons (MA)
South Oregon
Flagler (FL)
Franklin & Marshall (PA)
George Fox (OR)
Georgia Institute of Technology
Grand Valley (MI)
Grinnell (IA)
Hanover (IN)
Harvard (MA)
Harvey Mudd (CA)
Haverford (PA)
Hawaii Pacific
Hendrix (AR)
Hollins (VA)
Humboldt (CA)
Idaho, Univ. of
Illinois College
Illinois Wesleyan
Iowa, Univ. of
Iowa State
John Carroll (OH)
Kansas State
Keene State (NH)
Kentucky, U. of
Knox (IL)
Kutztown (PA)
Lawrence (WI)
LeMoyne (NY)
Loyola Marymount (CA)
Maine, Univ. of (Augusta)
Maine, Univ. of (Farmington)
South, Univ. of the (TN)
Southwestern (TX)
Spring Hill (AL)
Stanford (CA)
Susquehanna (PA)
Syracuse (NY)
Texas A&M
Trinity (TX)
Ursinus (PA)
Valparaiso (IN)
Vanderbilt (TN)
Virginia Wesleyan
Wabash (IN)
Washington & Jefferson (PA)
Washington, Univ. of
Marquette (WI)
Mary Baldwin (VA)
Mary Washington (VA)
Maryland, Univ. of
Michigan State
Michigan Tech
Minnesota (Morris)
Minnesota, Univ. of
Montana State
Mount Holyoke (MA)
Muhlenberg (PA)
Muskingum (OH)
Nazareth (NY)
Nevada, Univ. of (Reno)
Niagara (NY)
North Carolina State
Northern Michigan
Oberlin (OH)
Ohio Northern
Ohio State
Ohio, Univ. of
Ohio Wesleyan
Oregon, Univ. of
Pacific Lutheran (WA)
Pittsburgh, Univ. of
Pitzer (CA)
Point Loma Nazarene (CA)
Pomona (CA)
Portland, Univ. of (OR)
Regis (CO)
Rhodes (TN)
Ripon (WI)
Wells (NY)
Western Maryland
Western Michigan
Westminster (MO)
Westminster (UT)
West Virginia Wesleyan
Wheaton (MA)
Williams (MA)
Wingate (NC)
Winona State (MN)
Wisconsin, Univ. of
Wittenberg (OH)
Wofford (SC)
Wooster (OH)
Wyoming, Univ. of

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
Students' Rights and Responsibilities Revised February 2012

WHEN YOU APPLY TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES YOU HAVE RIGHTS

Before You Apply:

•You have the right to receive factual and comprehensive information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial costs, aid opportunities, practices and packaging policies, and housing policies. If you consider applying under an early admission plan, you have the right to complete information from the college about is process and policies.

•You have the right to be free from high pressure sales tactics.

When You Are Offered Admission:

•You have the right to wait until May 1 to respond to an offer of admissions and/or financial aid.

•Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission and/or financial assistance prior to May 1, must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1. They must grant you this extension and your request may not jeopardize your status for admission and/or financial aid.

•Candidates admitted under early decision programs are a recognized exception to the May 1 deadline.

If You Are Placed On A Wait/Alternate List:

•The letter that notifies you of that placement should provide a history that describes the number of students on the wait list, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing.

•Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of remaining on a wait list.

•Colleges are expected to notify you of the resolution of your wait list status by August 1 at the latest.

WHEN YOU APPLY TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Before You Apply:

•You have a responsibility to research, and to understand and comply with the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships, and housing. You should also be sure you understand the policies of each college or university regarding deposits you may be required to make before you enroll.

As You Apply:

•You must complete all material required for application and submit your application on or before the published deadlines. You should be the sole author of your applications.

•You should seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. Follow the process recommended by your high school for filing college applications.

• It is your responsibility to arrange, if appropriate, for visits to and/or interviews at colleges of your choice.

After You Receive Your Admission Decisions:

•You must notify each college or university that accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting its offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision as to the college you wish to attend, but no later than May 1. It is understood that May 1 will be the postmark date.

•You may confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on a wait list by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify a college or university at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll.

•If you are accepted under an early decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications. If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.

If you think your rights have been denied, you should contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date. In addition, you should ask your counselor to notify the president of the state or regional affiliate of the National Association for College Admission Counseling in your area. If you need further assistance, send a copy of any correspondence you have had with the college or university and a copy of your letter of admission to:

National Association for College Admission Counseling
1631 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2818

Phone: 703/836-2222
800/822-6285
Fax: 703/836-8015
www.nacacnet.org

Taking a "Gap Year": Alternatives to College

College is not the only option for everyone after graduation. In the past, a few Orme School graduates have chosen to postpone college entrance for a semester or a year in order to pursue other interests and experiences. Many colleges have a deferral policy allowing accepted applicants to put off enrollment for a year or a January/February entrance option. Washington University in St. Louis and Middlebury College, for example, admit a group of students who enter together mid-year, and Colby College runs semester abroad programs for students interested in foreign language immersion. These students begin their Colby studies on campus in January.

Following are examples of some of the alternatives students have pursued:

- Working in a restaurant for a year before enrolling in culinary school
- Taking a postgraduate year at an Eastern prep school
- Deferring enrollment at a college and traveling around Europe for a year
- Working for a year to earn money for college
- Working as an Outward Bound instructor before entering college under a January plan
- Attending the Air Force Academy preparatory school for a year before applying to college
- Attending a university in Ireland, England, or Spain before entering a college in the U.S.
- Working on a sheep station in Australia for a semester before a winter start
- Deferring enrollment to play soccer in Spain for a year

Students who are interested in exploring options other than immediate entrance into college after high school graduation are encouraged to begin researching possibilities. We advise all students, though, to apply to college in any case. Because plans can change during senior year, it is wise to maintain the option of going directly to college. Also, applying to at least one college enables the student to build an application file – complete with teacher and counselor recommendations – that can be kept here at The Orme School for future use. The college counselor remains available to help graduates through the college application process, but compiling the necessary documentation is most effectively accomplished during senior year.

Study Abroad & "Year Off" Resources

For those anxious to make the most of a summer, semester, or year in overseas study, a number of web sites offer useful information. We also recommend a guidebook from Princeton Review."

- At **www.studyabroad.com**, users can locate schools that offer international study programs by searching by school, subject, country, summer programs, year/semester, and language. Each search result features descriptions of programs, contact information, and links to helpful web sites. This site even has a section for students interested in studying abroad during high school.

- IIE Passport (**www.iiepassport.org**) lists 5,000 study options.

- AFS Intercultural Programs (**www.afs.org**) cites a number of programs including school year exchange programs.

- Languages Abroad (**www.languagesabroad.com**) is particularly strong in the area of undergraduate study opportunities.

- Yahoo provides a basic search engine that is a good starting point for learning about colleges and universities around the world: **http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Higher_Education/Colleges_and_Universities/By_Region/Countries/**.

- Princeton Review's *Taking Time Off* includes details on how students can make the most of a "year off" through work, travel, volunteering, or study abroad.

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the College Admissions Process:
More Advice On Keeping Your Sanity and Sense of Humor
(with respects to Douglas Adams)

Everyone seems so stressed about this whole college thing. Should I be as well?
You're about to experience what may well be your first major life decision, so this alone can induce at least mild levels of panic in even the most stalwart teenager; however, with this said, there's also good news. Despite what the media warns about competition being worse than ever, parents flipping out about SATs before even sending their tots off to preschool (and so on and so on), there are still hundreds of good colleges out there, many of which aren't paid the attention they deserve. In addition, the search for a college CAN actually be fun.

As an added bonus, you also get to learn about colleges and - who knows? - maybe even pick up a few things about yourself in the process.

Do I really need to read my College Counseling Handbook?
Yes.

Really?
Absolutely. Though you've probably received more than your share of handouts lately, this is one to keep. Much of the nuts and bolts information you'll need is in here.

I've probably heard the word "prestige" more in the past few weeks than in the first seventeen years of my life combined. With all this talk of "prestigious" schools, what does the word really mean?
Funny you should ask. If you look up the word "prestige" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, you will learn that the definition we typically use today ("blinding or dazzling influence; magic; glamour; influence or reputation derived from previous character, achievements or success") is merely a secondary meaning. The word actually comes from the Latin "praestigium," meaning, quite simply, "illusion," with its full definition being "illusion, conjuring trick; a deception, an imposture." And the word "prestigious" doesn't fare any better if examined a little more closely: "practicing juggling or legerdemain; cheating; deceptive, illusory." So the next time someone tells you they are only looking at "prestigious" colleges, you can just smile to yourself

In discussions about college, certain names of schools keep popping up. If I don't go to one of these schools with a magical name, will I be doomed to failure?
Definitely not. Here are a few thoughts to ponder: The "Ivy League" is simply a reference to a sports conference.

David Brennan, Dean of the University of Virginia's School of Education, stated in a 1996 book review *that "by the 1991-1992 academic year...the average class size in the social science department was 80 at Duke, 242 at Harvard, 38 at Chicago, and 24 at Carleton. At Duke, 72 percent of the courses in that discipline were taught by regular-rank faculty, compared to only 48 percent at Harvard and 42 percent at Chicago; Carleton again stands alone, at 85 percent, suggest(ing) the presence of cross-subsidy from undergraduate to graduate education in part on the back of undergraduates, who pay for it through large classes and limited access to senior faculty."* (Bill Mayher, *The College Admissions Mystique*, 16)

"Research also shows—contrary to conventional wisdom—that where you go to college is nowhere near as important as what you do when you get there, even in terms of earnings." One example of such research came from an article entitled "College Quality and Future Earnings: Where You Should Send Your Child to College," published in the *American Economic Review.* (Mayher, 2001)

Ronald Reagan attended Eureka College. (Where? My point exactly. Whether you liked the Ol' Gipper or not, you probably assumed his alma mater had a little more of a familiar ring to it.)

St. John's College—NOT a name typically on many high school students' lips—sends over 80% of its graduates on to graduate school or to study medicine or law. (Pope, 265) There are many such

excellent schools out there, but, because of small or nonexistent graduate programs and small or nonexistent sports teams, they don't end up with the name recognition so crucial to "selectivity."

But what about all this talk of "selectivity?" Isn't that the most important thing?
What some refer to as the "marketing of scarcity," which works on the open market, is also a force which works on the college selection process. Scary though it might seem, "these days the first job of every admissions office is to generate applications to their college. This in turn enables them to fulfill their second job: to reject as many of these applications as possible, which makes their college 'selective' and, therefore, desirable in the marketplace." (Mayher, 91) Interestingly, Mayher makes a connection between this same college selection process and another American phenomenon*: "For the sake of argument, one can maintain that the current fascination middle-class American culture has with selective college admissions is nearly as lavish as that of the 50's car culture. In a generation or two, it will become clear how much we have invested in the madness surrounding selective admissions and how much we have lost."*

Ever since I started talking about college, it seems like everyone has an opinion about which college is "best" for me.
Listen as you see fit, but have a grain of salt (or two) on hand.

How do I even begin thinking about where to look, then?
Collect as much information as you can. Read. Network. Ask questions. Look online. And then think about what sorts of questions matter most to you. Do you want to be at a large school where you don't have to be noticed? Do you like the thought of having dinner at a professor's house? Do you want a strong Greek system? Do you need plenty of running trails? Think about the characteristics—big and small—that could make or break a decision for you.

What can I expect from my parents this year?
Mostly support, but keep in mind that this can be a time of high emotional intensity for all involved, so just be aware and be ready to take an occasional "time out" if needed.

When visiting a college, is there anything I should keep in mind?
Quite simply, keep an open mind. It's easy to go with preconceived notions about a college and come away having learned very little. Know that elements as superficial as the weather or a tour guide can have a profound effect on the college decision. Be aware of this and don't lose interest in Beloit just because you ended up with a tour guide with "bed head" who couldn't walk backwards.

Keep in mind that just because one college might be ranked a few (or even a few dozen) marks higher on *The U.S. News and World Report* survey, this probably won't affect the day to day reality of the school itself. As Mayher recommends: *"Forget the admissions requirements of the college you are touring.instead of obsessing about test scores, just try to see what you can see; it will help everyone relax and be at their best, and you will get a clearer view."*

Don't be embarrassed by your parents. Touring families are a normal part of any college campus, so just because your mom decided to wear that funny hat with the flower in it does not mean your chances for either admission (or dating) will be affected in any way.

What about the essay? I've heard horror stories.
Basically, be original, be humble, and be yourself. In *"A" is for Admission: The Insider's Guide to Getting into the Ivy League and Other Top Colleges* by Michelle Hernandez. Hernandez notes with sarcasm, *"my favorite (essay topic) is the Outward Bound...essay, which usually starts with an enthralling description of the elements ('The icy wind bit into our limbs as we struggled desperately to reach the peak') and concludes with something incisive such as, 'And I learned that no matter how hard it is, if you really push yourself, you are sure to succeed.' Probably 20 percent of all essays in a given year at Dartmouth are a variation on that theme."* Try to avoid such overused topics and think about how the college admissions readers can get to know the real you in your essay. Chances are, the essay will not make or break your chances to get into a school, but an original, interesting one could make a reader stop and reconsider.

What's the real role of the College Counselor?
He or she is a guide and mentor, but no magician, so keep in mind that no college counselor can "get" a student into college. You can help your counselor by allowing him or her to get to know you better, but the job of college entrance is pretty much up to you (unless, of course, someone in your family happens to have donated a building or you starred in a recent Hollywood blockbuster...).

How much credence should I put on *The U.S. News and World Report* college rankings?
The rankings have to do with things like endowment, alumni giving and students accepted, but little to do with what actually goes on in the classroom. There's a smaller survey out there called the National Survey of Student Engagement, which takes these questions into account but, unfortunately, it's not nearly as flashy or fun to talk about. So read the rankings, but don't let them dominate your view of reality

What are some things I can do to make myself a more desirable candidate?
Basically, the same things you'd do to make yourself a more interesting person: turn off the TV, read, hike, learn something new, intern, keep a journal, save somebody's life (you get the idea...).

What's the real story behind the SAT?
Ever feel like a number? If you haven't before, you will now. Unfortunately, though, the SAT IS important to most schools, so you certainly want to do as well as you can. In spite of the many criticisms that have been lodged against it as an unfair test, because the CollegeBoard and its competitor the American College Testing Program are businesses with annual revenues in excess of $200,000,000, they're not likely to go anywhere. (Mayher, 116) Basically, do your best, but remember that *"one of psychology's open secrets is the relative inability of.SAT scores, despite their popular mystique, to predict.who will succeed in life."* (*Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman, 34)

Should I consider an SAT class?
Ask yourself if it's something for which you're willing to take ownership. If you're willing to put in the work and become actively involved, your scores could indeed improve some (though by how much no one can guarantee). If you're not willing to do this, don't waste your money.

What if I'm rejected from a college?
Believe it or not, rejection has happened to one or two high school students before. Try not to take it personally and remember that a college is juggling many requirements as it puts a freshman class together. Even if your scores and GPA are right where they should be, the college is trying to look at a bigger picture than just the one student. Also, though cliché, remember that saying about where one door closes. It's good to keep in the back of your mind.

How important is community service?
Know that it is important, but also realize that almost every high school student is doing some sort of service work these days. As with your academics, try to find something and stick with it. Commitment says more than you know. Find an opportunity that really could end up being meaningful to you and not just act as a transcript-filler.

Should I apply to schools even if I don't really want to go there but think I might need a "safety net"? Only apply to a school if you could be happy going there. Otherwise, the application process is not much more than an exercise in futility.

What about Early Decision and Early Action?
Early Decision is binding and should NOT be broken. Early Action is not binding.

Any other words of wisdom?
Just keep in mind that, ultimately, your education is what you make of it. Remember that scene in *Good Will Hunting* with Will and the graduate student? The learning part is up to you.

Is that all?

Okay, maybe one more thing since you're still here. Joseph Campbell's mantra to *"follow your bliss"* probably best captures the philosophy you need to have during all this. It's easy to let numbers and parents and peers and even strangers influence you more than they should, but ultimately this process is about finding a fit for YOU. Though Campbell wasn't talking specifically about colleges, his advice is still worth heeding; in this high stress world of GPAs and SAT scores, sometimes it's the simple things that elude us

For further reading:

Hernandez, Michelle. *"A" is for Admission: The Insider's Guide to Getting into the Ivy League and Other Top Colleges*. New York: Warner Books, 1997

Mayher, Bill. *The College Admissions Mystique*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1998

Mitchell, Joyce Slayton. *Winning the Heart of the College Admissions Dean*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2001.

Pope, Loren. *Colleges That Change Lives*. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.