



To CPCS Students and Parents:

This handbook is intended to provide information and give you an overview of the college search and application process. It will also help explain to you how this progression takes place at CPCS. Please remember that a “good college” is one that is a good fit for a student, one where he or she will be comfortable enough to thrive, and one where he or she will be able to continue their spiritual, academic, social and emotional development. There are hundreds of outstanding colleges in our country and although searching for the right one can be a long (and frustrating) process, it can also be an exciting one as you explore the possibilities of life after high school. Walk confidently through this process knowing that God has a plan for you and you are in His Hands!

As students begin the second semester of junior year, the college planning process typically begins in earnest for most students. This is when students are registering for the standardized tests necessary for the college application process, researching colleges and setting up college visits. We hope that this guide will assist you with specific high school procedures. However, if individual questions arise about the college planning process, please feel free to make an appointment to meet with me. The college planning process is very individualized and can be very complex, depending on the student, and I am happy to help in any way that I can. It is also helpful to attend a CPCS College Planning and Information Night that is offered twice per school year.

*Always* remind yourself of Proverbs 3:5-6

“TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND DO NOT  
LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING.

IN ALL YOU WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE WILL MAKE  
YOUR PATHS STRAIGHT.”

# WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR



## ADMISSION CRITERIA

How do you begin the college application process? For starters, it is important to understand what college admission officers are looking for. Colleges are interested in the information listed below when deciding whether or not to admit an applicant. Individual colleges differ in how they evaluate and use this information in these areas.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>GPA (Grade Point Average)</b> | <b>Activity involvement &amp; awards</b> |
| <b>Class Rank</b>                | <b>Coursework</b>                        |
| <b>Transcript</b>                | <b>Leadership</b>                        |
| <b>School Profile</b>            | <b>Recommendations</b>                   |
| <b>Community Service</b>         | <b>Personal essays</b>                   |
| <b>SAT/ACT Test scores</b>       | <b>Interviews</b>                        |

## GRADE POINT AVERAGE

A student’s grade point average (GPA) is important for college admission. Colleges evaluate students on their *cumulative GPA*, which is the average of a student’s grades, starting with freshman year. Applications will ask if a GPA is *weighted* or *unweighted*. By this, they want to see if the GPA is calculated using a different point system for harder classes. CPCS does not weight grades, or GPA. Most colleges end up recalculating any weighted grades because not every school or every district weights grades in the same way. Some colleges will recalculate a GPA according to their standards. They are always interested in how a student compares to their peers at the same school. Students who have a high grade point average are more likely to continue to excel academically in college. The higher the GPA, the greater the college and scholarship opportunities.

## CLASS RANK

Class rank indicates where a student stands academically in relation to the other members of his or her graduating class. Class rank is often presented with the student’s place in the class followed by the total number of students in the class (e.g., 59/100). Rank can be important when applying for scholarships because many scholarships stipulate that a student must be in the top 10% (or 20%, etc.) of his or her class.

## **TRANSCRIPT**

A transcript is a document that outlines a student's academic achievement in high school. Students receive an unofficial transcript in the spring of their junior year. Study and carefully proofread your student's high school transcript prior to having it sent to an admissions office at any college or university. Look for errors in classes taken or grades earned.

All college applications and some scholarship applications request that an OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT be submitted with the application. An official transcript must have a signature, stamp, or seal, verifying its authenticity. An unofficial transcript is the same as an official transcript except there is no official signature, stamp, or seal.

## **SCHOOL PROFILE**

A Cedar Park Christian School profile is included with each transcript. Our profile includes pertinent information about our school such as the size, the percentage of students who go on to college, the average SAT scores of the previous graduating class, and course information about the high school.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Admissions officers know that an altruistic student, one who contributes to community life without regard for compensation, is likely to contribute to college life and be academically successful. Although a strong community service record is highly regarded by colleges, it is probably the weakest area for most high school students. Most scholarships list community service as one of their most important qualifiers.



## **TEST SCORES**

Planning and organizing your student's standardized testing schedule reduces stress and maximizes scores. The following tests may be considered:

***PSAT/NMSQT*** (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test): The PSAT is a very important test for our students as it qualifies juniors for National Merit Scholarships and is also a practice test for the SAT. It is given each October to juniors and sophomores. The PSAT is divided into five sections (two verbal, two math and one writing). The PSAT Score Reports, released in mid-December, highlight academic areas that need reinforcement before taking the SAT. The PSAT is best used for practice and as a benchmark for future testing. Scores are not sent to colleges for entrance purposes.

### ***ACT:***

The ACT is a college entrance exam (similar to the SAT) which is also accepted by most colleges. It is generally taken during the junior and/or senior year. Students receive scores in English, Reading, Math and Science Reasoning, as well as a Composite score. A perfect ACT score is 36. Students can register online for the ACT at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org). If a student is taking

the ACT in lieu of the SAT, they should make sure they take the optional writing portion of the test as well. Some students perform better on the ACT because it is considered more knowledge-based than the SAT.

***SAT REASONING TEST*** (Scholastic Aptitude Test):

*Please do not confuse this test with the Stanford Achievement Test offered at CPCS every year:* This test was formerly known as the SAT I. Although a student may take the SAT at any time, it is recommended that all college-bound juniors take the SAT in the spring of their junior year, and then again in the fall of their senior year. By that time, students will have completed the course work needed to do their very best on college admission tests. Students receive scores in critical reading, math, and writing. Register online for the SAT at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), which will give you testing dates and sites plus other valuable information about this test. Because test sites do fill up, it is recommended that you sign up well in advance to guarantee a site close to your student's home.



Many of our students take the SAT two times although there is no limit (and no penalty) as to how many times a student may take a college admission test. A common practice is for colleges to combine the highest reading score with the highest math score from different testing dates, if necessary. Currently, the writing section is generally used for placement purposes. Starting with the class of 2010, students can choose which scores to submit to a college from one sitting.

Students registering for the SAT will print out an admission ticket. This admission ticket, along with picture identification, must be presented in order to be admitted to the test. Scores are available online about two to three weeks after the test date. You will need to create an account on the College Board website ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)), so make sure you keep track of your user name and password. You will need it throughout the college admissions process.

Colleges require that test scores be forwarded to them directly from the testing company. Check with admission offices regarding this requirement. You may go online to College Board to request that scores be sent to the colleges that you are applying to. Students can have score reports sent to four colleges for free from each test date. All additional score reports cost \$9.50.

The SAT tests critical thinking and problem solving, and is divided into three sections: math, critical reading (sometimes referred to as verbal) and writing. Each section is scored separately and 800 is a perfect score; 500 is considered average. As of February 2009, only the math and critical reading are used for admissions.

***SAT SUBJECT TESTS:***

SAT Subject Tests are one hour tests that measure a student's knowledge of specific subjects, and his or her ability to apply that knowledge. These tests are required by some, but not all, colleges. Generally, the more competitive colleges require applicants to take one or more of these tests for admission and/or placement. Registration and preparation materials are available online at the College Board website.

***AP EXAM (Advanced Placement):***

CPCS offers a Christian curriculum in all of our classes. As a result, we do not offer AP classes, since they are secular in nature. However, the opportunity for college credit is only given for students who take and score well on the AP exam itself. Any student can take an AP exam and we have had CPCS students who have taken these! AP tests are administered in May, but a student must sign up in March. Cost is approximately \$80 per test.

***ASVAB*** (The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery): This test is available to juniors in the spring of their junior year. The results give a student self-knowledge about his or her natural aptitudes. This information can be helpful in career planning.

**ACTIVITIES**

Colleges are looking for students who are active in a variety of activities, both in and out of school. Admissions officers are impressed by **quality** of involvement, not the number of activities. A student with significant involvement in a limited number of activities is more attractive to an admissions committee than a student who is overextended and demonstrates no depth of experience. We often think that colleges prefer “well-rounded” students however “well-lopsided” might be a better description of what colleges are looking for when it comes to activities. In addition to an activities list, college applications ask for evidence of leadership. If your student has leadership potential, encourage him or her to develop this skill by assuming leadership roles in clubs and teams. Depth of involvement shows focus and commitment. A student who has special talents or abilities needs to make sure that the college application reflects these abilities.



Significant volunteer experience is impressive and valued by both college admissions and scholarship committees! Yet this is often the area that is lacking most for high school students. Although most students meet their community service requirements through random projects throughout high school, we encourage all students to find an area that they are interested in and commit to an organization for a consistent period of time.

***HINT: Develop an ongoing list, or keep a folder, of school activities, honors, awards, leadership positions, employment, volunteer work, community activities, etc.:*** This will be very helpful later when you are required to list activities on applications. It is also helpful to give this list to anyone your student asks to write a letter of recommendation. Make sure you fill out the Senior Information Form (included) before your senior year, if possible.

An activities profile details and documents how a student uses free time during their high school years. This includes school-based clubs, organizations, and community activities. Students are not usually admitted on grades alone, but on the combination of academics and activities, especially at the more competitive colleges. Remember, colleges are looking for students who can make a contribution to their campus, as well.



## WHAT ARE YOUR COLLEGE OPTIONS?

What is important when selecting a college? There are several types of post-secondary schools.

### **Liberal Arts Colleges**

Liberal arts colleges offer a broad base of courses in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Most are private and focus mainly on undergraduate students. Classes tend to be small and personal attention is available.

### **Universities**

Generally, a university is bigger than a college and offers more majors and research facilities. Class size often reflects institutional size and some classes may be taught by graduate students.

### **Community or Junior Colleges**

Community colleges offer a degree after the completion of two years of full-time study. They frequently offer technical programs that prepare you for immediate entry into the job market. Community colleges are usually less expensive and although they do not require SAT scores for admission, usually require entrance exams in English and math.

### **Public vs. Private**

On the one hand, public colleges are usually less expensive, particularly for in-state residents. They get most of their money from the state or local government. On the other hand, private colleges rely on tuition, fees, endowments, and other private sources. Private colleges are usually smaller and can offer more personalized attention (and some believe, more prestige).



SEARCHING FOR COLLEGES



When trying to decide whether a school is “good” or not, be careful when looking at college rankings. The criteria used for rankings may not match your own criteria, and may be of little use to you in selecting a college. A school may be ranked high on one list and not even appear on another list.

There are over 3,000 colleges and universities in this country and the task of compiling and narrowing the list of potential colleges can be overwhelming. As you start this process, consider the following:

### **LOCATION**

SIZE  
COST  
FACILITIES  
AVAILABLE MAJORS  
REPUTATION

### **COMPETITIVENESS**

COMMUNITY  
SPORTS ACTIVITIES  
STUDY ABROAD  
URBAN or RURAL  
PROGRAMS (CO-OP and INTERNSHIPS)

Questions to help evaluate your college preferences

1. What degree of academic challenge is best for you?
2. Why do you want an education? Why are you going to college?
3. How do you want to grow and change in the next few years?
4. What kind of environment would stimulate or inhibit that growth?
5. What interests do you want to pursue in college?
6. How would you enjoy living in a different part of the state or country?
7. What kinds of surroundings are essential to your well-being?

After you have determined your priorities and identify the “drivers” in your college search, it is time to look for the schools that meet your criteria. The Internet and individual college websites will give you a wealth of information. Contact admissions offices and ask to be placed on mailing lists so you will receive information pertaining to visitation days and upcoming events. Visitations, preview days, and open houses can be informative, as they are held specifically for prospective students. They may provide opportunities to visit a class, tour the campus, or give information on specific majors and financial aid.

## COLLEGE VISITS TO CPCS

Every fall, college admission representatives visit our campus to meet with prospective students. This is a good opportunity to learn more about the college and introduce yourself to the admissions counselor. It is usually this person who will first read your application and possibly recommend you for specific scholarships. In order to participate in these sessions, you must sign up in advance and get permission from the teacher whose class you would miss, since these visits take place during the school day.

## VISITING COLLEGES

To make the most of a college visit, make sure you do the following:

1. Research the college before visiting; have a list of questions. See the appendix for a list of potential questions to ask on a campus tour.
2. Take a tour. Every campus has a personality. How do the students look? What is the atmosphere? Talk to students and ask their opinion of the school.
3. Attend information sessions for parents and students.
4. Ask to see the facilities for the major you are considering and try to talk to someone who is in the same program.
5. Does the college have a placement office?
6. Does the college have an honors program? What unique opportunities does the school have?
7. Ask to see a dorm room. Eat in the cafeteria. Visit the student union, and the library. What do the students do on weekends? Read a campus newspaper. Check out the bulletin boards.
8. Inquire about any program of interest to your student (academic support, musical activities, and sports).
9. Make an appointment with a financial aid counselor. Inquire about scholarship opportunities.
10. Concerns parents may want to address could include: campus safety; the practice of teaching assistants teaching classes or labs instead of professors; the possibility for a student to complete their program in four years; the percentage of returning students; the average GPA for entering students; and the cost of the college.
11. Drive around town to become familiar with the area. Do students feel comfortable in the atmosphere?



## **INTERVIEWS**

Some campuses offer the opportunity for students to interview, either at the college or with a visiting college representative or a local alumnus. Many schools regard the interview as an optional activity. Many interviews are informational and do not weigh heavily in the admission decision. Some competitive schools use interviews to evaluate candidates and the evaluator's impressions are regarded as part of the application.

A student should be prepared to answer questions about academic history, interests, school and community activities, etc. The interview is a good time to address issues that you would like the college to know about. Be prepared to discuss why you are interested in attending that particular school. Questions will usually be straight-forward, but you may want to expand on the answers.

Questions a student may be asked in an interview:

1. How did you become interested in this school?
2. What are your criteria for choosing a college?
3. What courses have you taken that you enjoyed, and why?
4. What do you plan to contribute to our campus?
5. How do you plan to spend your free time?
6. Have you worked up to your potential in high school?
7. What is your biggest achievement to date?
8. List some words that describe you.
9. What do you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses?
10. What books or magazines have you read recently?
11. What current events are of most interest to you?
12. What is the most difficult situation you've faced?
13. Is there anything of special interest to you that you would like to talk about?
14. What do you plan to do after you graduate from college?



A prospective student should be prepared with some questions of their own. He or she may want to ask for clarification about things they have seen, heard, or read. This is a good way to demonstrate a student's level of curiosity and understanding.

## **COLLEGE FAIRS**

College fairs are another opportunity for students to learn more information about colleges. These fairs offer the opportunity for students to interact with admission representatives from a wide variety of colleges and universities. Students are able to discuss course offerings, admission and financial aid requirements, and college life in general. There is a national conference put on by NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org)) each fall. For students interested in the arts, you can attend the Performing and Visual Arts Fair usually held in the fall at the Fisher Pavilion at the Seattle Center. There is also a Christian college fair offered by NACCAP every fall in the Seattle area. For more information check their website: <http://www.naccap.org>.

## THE APPLICATION

Before you start filling out college applications, you should:

1. Research the colleges that you are considering.
2. Narrow your list of schools to which you are going to apply to four to seven. The cost to apply to most schools averages around \$50 each, so narrowing the number of colleges to those you are really interested in attending is cost effective and saves you unneeded work.
3. Copy the application for practice and as a work copy. **READ THE APPLICATION DIRECTIONS BEFORE YOU START FILLING IT OUT!**
4. Make sure that your SAT and/or ACT scores are sent by the testing company to each college where you apply.
5. Ask teachers for letters of recommendation if they are required by the college. You will know this by **READING THE APPLICATION DIRECTIONS BEFORE YOU START FILLING IT OUT!**
6. Submit transcript request forms if they are required by the college. Most colleges do!
7. Submit any forms to the guidance counselor. You will know if your college requires this by **READING THE APPLICATION DIRECTIONS BEFORE YOU START FILLING IT OUT!**
8. If possible, fill out any forms on-line, but if you must do so by hand, write neatly in **BLACK INK!**

## COLLEGE ESSAYS

The essay is a chance for students to share what is meaningful, important, unique, or challenging in their lives. It gives applicants an opportunity to make a connection between the other aspects of the application. It is the one place in the application where students get to be themselves, represent how they think and explain whatever needs explaining. The essay questions may be an important factor in the admissions committee's decision. Colleges will usually ask two types of questions: open-ended questions and analytical questions. The options for a topic may be very broad or exceptionally specific. Many questions are autobiographical in nature. The essay is judged by the content, by a student's use of English, and on their ability to express themselves. After a first draft is completed, the essay should be discussed with an English teacher or counselor. Essays should be answered honestly and sincerely. Be yourself; use natural language; don't use gimmicks, exaggerate, get too personal, brag, or give excuses. For more information on your college application essays, see additional information at the back of this handbook.



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## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION


When letters of recommendation are required, it is important to choose the right people to do so. Please give them plenty of time and instruction on how to do it. The most valuable letters share specific anecdotes that reveal a student's character. IF recommendations are required (many public universities do not) one letter should be from a teacher in whose class you excelled. Don't rule out a teacher who witnessed you develop and mature academically. This teacher can praise your work ethic; determination, perseverance and unwillingness to give up. All students who desire a recommendation from the school must fill out the Senior Information Form. An example is given in the Appendix. If the college requires a recommendation form filled out by the teacher or counselor and it gives you the option "to waive your rights" you should check "yes" and sign your name.

**Teacher Recommendations:** Most colleges will require students to submit teacher recommendations. When a student asks a teacher to write him or her a recommendation, the student must supply the teacher with a stamped envelope(s) addressed to the institution(s) and any recommendation forms that were provided by the college, along with an unofficial transcript and a resume (a copy of the Senior Information Form can be substituted for the resume). This recommendation request should be done well in advance of any deadlines. We suggest that a student submit the request in a pocket folder with all deadlines clearly marked. Teacher recommendations are not processed through the counseling office.

**Counselor Forms and Recommendations:** Many colleges require either a form and/or a recommendation from the Guidance Counselor. Students will need to submit any requests in a pocket folder with clear instructions and deadlines. Students must submit the Senior Information form first in order to receive a recommendation from the Guidance Counselor.

**Other Recommendations:** Many colleges also ask for letters of recommendation by other people that know you well and can tell them about you outside of school. This can include pastors, coaches, peers, and employers. If you are submitting a recommendation from any of these sources, make sure that you give them very clear instructions, since they may not be familiar with the process of writing a recommendation!

Sample of a stamped, addressed envelope to be provided with transcript or recommendation requests.

Cedar Park Christian School 16300 – 112 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Bothell, WA 98011	
Eagle University Admissions Office 1234 Rolling Drive Eagleton, WA 98890	

## ADMISSION OPTIONS

### **EARLY ACTION**

Schools that offer EARLY ACTION admissions are willing to notify candidates of acceptance earlier than the usual date. Deadlines vary from school to school but are usually in the fall of the senior year. Students may still apply to other schools.

### **EARLY DECISION**

If a student is positive he or she wants to attend a certain school, sometimes an option is the *Early Decision Plan*. The deadline for the application is early fall, usually no later than November 15. All testing must be completed before the fall of the senior year. Under early decision (which is binding) a student agrees that if he is offered admission to the college, he will withdraw any other applications and attend that college. Once accepted by early decision, the student is finished with the entire application process. If a student is not accepted under early decision, his or her application is reconsidered without bias under the college's regular admissions plan.

### **REGULAR DECISION**

Colleges with fixed deadlines and notification dates may have several admissions plans. Under regular decision, most application deadlines occur between January 1 and February 1. Notification of admission will be on or around April 1. The student usually has until May 1 to commit.

### **ROLLING ADMISSIONS**

*Rolling Admission* schools process applications as they arrive and usually notify students within six weeks of receiving the application. This admission option is most common at public universities. Applications need to be submitted early to maximize chances of admission.

### **OPEN ADMISSIONS**

*Open Admission* schools accept almost every student who has a high school degree without regard to test scores, grade average or class rank.

Eventually, you must evaluate options and select a college. Once the decision has been made, complete the required forms and notify the other colleges. Be sure to submit any required housing deposit before the deadline if you are planning to live on campus.





## COLLEGE AND YOUR FINANCES



Just about everyone is interested in information on financial aid. Don't assume that you cannot afford a particular college or university until you have investigated all aspects of financial aid. Generally, private schools offer more financial aid to their students and a good student can often get the price of a private school down to the cost of an in-state public school. However, you will not know until you apply and go through the entire process.

There are two basic categories of financial aid, *merit-based* and *need-based*. *Merit-based* is generally given in recognition of special skills, talents and/or academic ability. These include: merit scholar, top ten percent of the class, outstanding athlete, accomplished musician, etc. The second category, *need-based*, represents the major portion of help available for post-secondary education. *Need-based* (commonly called financial need) is the difference between what it will cost to attend the post-secondary institution and what the family will be able to pay (expected family contribution). There are basically four categories of financial aid:

GRANTS - money given to the student, usually because of financial need

SCHOLARSHIPS - money awarded because of academic achievement, outstanding talent or skill, and/or financial need

WORK STUDY - money the student earns through a job on campus

LOANS - money that must be paid back

Grants and scholarships are free money that do not have to be paid back. Loans and work study jobs are considered self-help. It makes sense to apply for grants and scholarships before taking out loans. A college will put together a financial aid "package". This package may be a combination of grants, scholarships, loans, and/or work study, but a student can accept or reject any part of the package. Packages vary from college to college so it is important to compare financial aid packages. Colleges usually send out their financial aid awards in late March or early April.

### APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

There are two financial aid forms, required by some colleges and universities, that you need to be aware of: the FAFSA (Free Application for Free Student Aid) <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov> (please make sure you access this website, and not a knock-off!), and the CSS/Profile, <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>

The FAFSA must be completed by all families interested in obtaining financial aid. The form is submitted on-line after January 1 of the student's senior year. It is recommended that families complete their income tax form before completing the FAFSA, as much of the same information will be needed. However, you can submit the form with estimates and go back later to revise, if needed. After you have submitted the FAFSA, you will receive a SAR (student aid report) which will inform you of your EFC (estimated family contribution). This is the amount they have determined you can afford to pay for your son or daughter's education that year. If the cost

of the college is more than your EFC, you have a financial need and should be eligible for financial aid. This aid may come in the form of grants and/or loans.

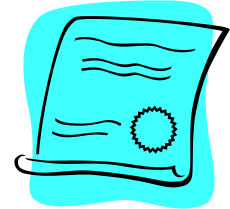
In addition to the FAFSA, some private colleges require submission of the CSS/Financial Aid Profile. The Profile is a supplemental need-analysis document used to determine eligibility for private, non-federal funds. The Profile requires a registration fee and an additional fee for information sent to each college.

Complete the FAFSA as early as possible, even if you feel you will not qualify for any need-based aid because of your income. Colleges verify that students are not eligible for federal or state aid before they award institutional and/or private funds. Some loan programs require the FAFSA. Make a copy of your FAFSA before you submit it. Also keep a copy of your income tax return forms. The FAFSA must be completed in order to be eligible for a federal PELL GRANT.

Parents and students often find that they must take out a loan to finance educational expenses. Lending institutions provide Stafford loans to students and PLUS loans to parents. Repayment of a Stafford loan begins after the student has graduated. The Subsidized Stafford Loan is for students with financial need and the unsubsidized Stafford Loan is for students without financial need (the government pays the interest on the Subsidized Stafford Loan). PLUS loans are not based on financial need.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Many scholarships have very specific eligibility criteria. Academic scholarships generally require at least a 3.0 GPA or better, above average SAT scores, excellent recommendations, and **high involvement in** extracurricular and community activities. Athletic scholarships or special talent scholarships go to the student who has demonstrated outstanding abilities. When looking for scholarships, consider the following:



1. Most scholarships are available to seniors, but it doesn't hurt to look before that.
2. Check out the college website or contact the financial aid office when applying to colleges to learn about scholarship opportunities.
3. Apply for local scholarships. Remember that the smaller the pool of applicants, the better your chances!
4. Scholarship deadlines are not flexible. Be sure to read the instructions carefully!
5. Scholarship opportunities are sometimes overlooked. Be sure to check with your place of employment, your church, and other organizations that you or your family are associated with to see what scholarship opportunities they offer.
6. Check to see if financial aid and scholarships are renewable.
7. Check out scholarship search engines like FastWeb [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) or SchoolSoup [www.schoolsoup.com](http://www.schoolsoup.com). Although it is not likely that you will be able to finance your college education from sites like these, it does provide you with the opportunity to see what kind of scholarships you might qualify for. Often you can take that information and search on your own for local scholarships that you may have a better chance at securing.

<b>ATHLETICS</b> COLLEGE	<b>IN</b>
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*If you are interested in playing a sport in college, the first step you should take is to go to their website and submit an Athletic Recruiting Form. You should also:*

- Start early. Begin thinking about your collegiate athletic and academic plans in your high school sophomore year.
- Maintain good grades. You won't be playing at a college unless you have the minimum requirements to attend. More opportunities are available to the athlete that has excelled academically as well.
- Collect news articles and videotapes that demonstrate your athletic performance.
- Talk to your high school coach about which athletic programs fit your qualifications.
- Select the schools that are right for you, taking into consideration the quality and admission requirements of the athletic and academic programs.
- Find the name of the coach of your sport at each college you are considering. Submit an Athletic Recruiting Form. Write letters stating your interest in their programs and your academic and athletic goals and achievements. Include statistics, records, honors, clippings and videotape, if applicable, and let them know you if require financial aid.
- Apply. College coaches will take more of an interest in you once they see you are serious about coming to their school.
- Keep in contact with the coach by inquiring about the status of your application and by visiting the school.

Most collegiate athletic programs belong to an association. Each association has different regulations regarding eligibility and financial aid. Become familiar with the specific rules—you don't want to ruin your chances on a technicality. Consult these Web sites for more information:

- **NCAA** - <http://www.ncaa.org>
- **NAIA** - <http://naia.cstv.com>
- **National Junior College Athletic Association** - <http://www.njcaa.org>

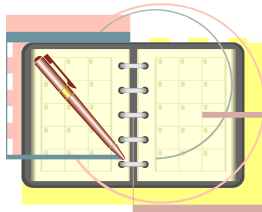
If you would like more information on Athletic Recruiting, please see me for more information.



## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

### *Action Plan for Freshmen and Sophomores*

1. All freshman and sophomore courses, grades and credits will be included on a high school transcript and will be used to calculate grade point averages. **Academics are important!** Activities, awards and honors will be listed on college and scholarship applications. Students need to explore and become involved in meaningful activities, develop good study habits and a strong work ethic.
2. Sophomores may benefit from taking the PSAT as the scores will be a benchmark for future progress. The score report identifies areas that may need reinforcement.
3. Continue or begin a consistent community service record.



### *Action Plan for Juniors*

#### **Fall**

1. Student should prepare to take the SAT or ACT. The best preparation is to practice the test. Test preparation can vary in commitment and cost. Students may find test review helpful in preparing for their first SAT in the spring of their junior year.
2. Juniors need to plan their college admissions testing schedule. The College Board recommends juniors begin SAT testing in the spring of their junior year. SAT Subject Tests are also offered in May and June. Students need to research if SAT Subject Tests are required for admission to the colleges to which they are planning to apply. Most four year schools require the SAT Reasoning Test for admission.

#### **Spring**

1. Register early for the SAT ( [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)) so you can be at the test center of your choice. Waiting too long to register may mean that you will be assigned to an open test center that may be inconvenient. We have had students forced to travel quite a long way to test due to late registration
2. Prepare for the SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject Tests scheduled for the spring.
3. Take the SAT. Remember, many students take the SAT more than one time.
4. Attend the College Overview for Juniors given here at CPCS.
5. Explore college options. Develop a short list of schools that interest you. Start visiting schools on that list. Check the individual school websites for special junior open house dates.

6. Plan senior courses. Senior courses and grades are more important than ever. After you are sure that your graduation requirements have been met, you should then consider courses that can support the “theme” of your application. Some seniors may desire to “take it easy” but colleges are looking for students who continue to take a strong and challenging course load. Senior courses are listed on the high school transcript.
7. Plan for summer activities that will help strengthen your application such as community service, test prep, or a job.
8. *Remember that this is your last chance to improve your transcript, since college will receive a transcript reflecting the first six semesters of high school.*

## **Summer**

1. Continue to visit colleges and adjust your list accordingly. Take campus tours and schedule interviews with admission counselors. As your list is refined, divide the college choices into three categories: *REACH* schools, *REALISTIC* schools, and *SAFETY* schools. A good resource is [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) or [www.collegedata.com](http://www.collegedata.com) for determining these schools.
2. Begin looking at applications and possible essay questions for colleges that you might be interested in. However, many colleges will not have the application ready on-line until August.
3. If you were dissatisfied with your SAT/ACT scores, plan to review for the fall test dates.



## ***Action Plan for Seniors***

### **Fall**

1. Re-evaluate and regroup. Refine your list of colleges and the information you have.
2. Consider taking the ACT in September
3. Review your testing schedule and scores to determine if you need to take the SAT again in October, November or December
4. Create a master calendar and list that includes the following:
  - College application due dates
  - Required financial aid applications and their deadlines
  - Recommendations, transcripts and other necessary materials
  - High School deadlines for application requests, such as your transcript
  - Test dates, fees, and deadlines
5. Ask teachers for recommendations. Colleges prefer teachers who have seen a full year’s worth of academic work. Teachers of seniors may find it difficult to evaluate a student’s performance based on a few weeks of academic work.

6. Continue to work on your college essay(s). Get feedback from different people on your first draft.
7. Consider attending the college fairs in Seattle in October.
8. College representatives visit CPCS in the fall. Sign up in advance!
9. Early action or early decision applications may be due as early as November 1<sup>st</sup> – plan accordingly. Complete the CSS/Financial Aid Profile if required by your schools.
10. Applications for colleges with rolling admissions deadlines should be completed as soon as possible in the fall of the senior year. Other applications may have specific deadline dates, usually somewhere between January 1 and March 1.

### Winter

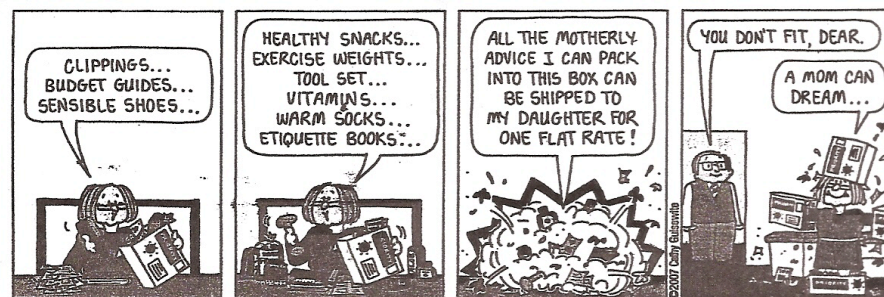
1. **FAFSA** (Free Application For Federal Student Aid) can be filed after January 1. Many college financial aid deadlines fall in February. Be sure to apply online by the priority date. Keep copies of everything you send to the schools.
2. If your college requires a Mid-Year Report, submit all necessary forms and transcript requests to process after seventh (fall) semester is finished.

### Spring

1. Registration for AP (Advanced Placement) exams takes place in March. Exams are scheduled for the first two weeks in May.
2. Acceptance letters (or denial of admission letters) and financial aid offers should be received shortly after April 1. Compare awards from different colleges and talk to financial aid officers if you need additional aid. Additional funds may be available from other sources.
3. If you haven't already done so, be sure to visit the college you are planning to attend for the next four years before accepting. Colleges often offer an "Accepted Students Day" in the spring that could be valuable for you to attend.
4. Students must notify every college of acceptance or rejection by May 1. Some deadlines are earlier. A deposit may need to be sent to the college you choose.
5. Many colleges require students to take English, math, and possibly science placement tests before registering for freshman courses. Contact the college you are attending to make arrangements for placement testing.

### Summer

1. Final transcripts are sent to colleges in June.
2. Take placement tests and register for classes! Make sure to find out who your advisor will be and contact him or her. You are on your way!



## COLLEGE INFORMATION WEBSITES

**ACT:** <http://www.act.org>

**Campus Tours:** <http://www.campustours.com>

**Christian Colleges:**

<http://www.cccu.org>

<http://christianteens.about.com/od/schoolstuff/tp/tencolleges.htm>

[http://www.college-scholarships.com/christian\\_colleges.htm](http://www.college-scholarships.com/christian_colleges.htm)

<http://www.christiancollegeguide.net>

<http://www.collegeview.com/product/christian>

**College Board On-Line:** <http://www.collegeboard.org>

**Site for career search:** <http://www.collegeboard.org/career/html/searchQues.html>

**College Confidential:** <http://www.collegeconfidential.com>

**Colleges That Change Lives:** <http://www.ctcl.org>

**College View:** <http://www.collegeview.com>

**Common Application:** <http://www.commonapp.org>

**Embark:** <http://www.embark.com>

**Peterson's Guide:** <http://www.petersons.com/ugrad>

**Princeton Review:** <http://www.review.com>

**The U.com:** <http://www.TheU.com> (Student produced campus life videos)

**Think College-Learn for a Lifetime:** <http://www.ed.gov/thinkcollege>

**US News and World Report:** <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/college>

**Washington Colleges and Universities:** [http://www.college-scholarships.com/washington\\_traditional.htm](http://www.college-scholarships.com/washington_traditional.htm)

**Western Undergraduate Exchange Program (WUE):** <http://wue.wiche.edu>

## CAREER INFORMATION

**Career Net:** <http://www.careers.org>

**Career Path:** <http://www.careerpath.com>

**Career Planner:** <http://www.careerplanner.com/Career-Test-Career-Search/Career-Test-for-Highschool-Students.cfm>

**College Board:** <http://www.collegeboard.org/career/html/searchQues.html>

**Mapping Your Future:** <http://mappingyourfuture.org>

**Military Career Guide on Line:** <http://www.militarycareers.com>

**Occupational Outlook Handbook:** <http://www.bls.gov/OCO>

**Office of Postsecondary Education:** <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/index.html>

**Quintessential Careers:** <http://www.quintcareers.com>

**US News College and Career Sites:** <http://www.usnews.com/sections/business/best-careers/index.html>

## FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

**FastWeb:** [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) (scholarship search engine)

**Financial Aid:** <http://www.finaid.org> (a comprehensive student guide to financial aid)

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

**Sallie Mae:** <http://www.salliemae.com> (financial aid and loan information)

**Financial Aid Information:** <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov>

**Student Financial Assistance:** <http://www.edgov.com>

**US News and World Report:** <http://www.usnews.com/sections/business/paying-for-college/index.html>

## SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION WEBSITES

**FastWeb:** [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) (scholarship search engine)

**College Board :** [http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch\\_ss/welcome.jsp](http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp)

**Scholarships:** [http://www.collegeanswer.com/paying/scholarship\\_search/pay\\_scholarship\\_search.jsp](http://www.collegeanswer.com/paying/scholarship_search/pay_scholarship_search.jsp)

**Scholarship Scams:** <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship/>

**Scholarships:** <http://www.scholarships.com>

**State of Washington financial aid information:**  
<http://www.hecb.wa.gov/financialaid/index.asp>

