

Sleepy Hollow High School



College Planning GUIDE

210 N. Broadway Sleepy Hollow, Ny 10591

SLEEPY HOLLOW HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the College Process! This process can sometimes seem very overwhelming, confusing and even stressful. We have found that the more active and organized you are the easier and more relaxed it will be. This guide provides you with the tools to plan and organize your junior and senior year college planning activities. It includes helpful hints, tips and insight into what colleges are looking for and how you can best showcase your talents and abilities. By being well informed you will be able to work closely with your counselor and your family to establish a systematic approach that works for you. Your School Counselor is ready and able to help you navigate this process. We expect you to have many questions, and hope this guide will serve as a resource for information as we work closely together. Our goal is to ensure timely processing of your applications and keep you on track. Please keep in mind that meeting all deadlines is critical to your success. If you have any questions along the way about your responsibilities or the counselor's role please don't hesitate to ask. We are here to help.

We look forward to working with you as you begin this new and exciting venture.

Cheryl Greene
Assistant Principal for Pupil Services

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Important Information

Sleepy Hollow High School/CEEB Code:
334220

School Counseling Office Phone Number:
914-332-6207
High School Fax Number:
914-332-6219

Address:
Sleepy Hollow High School
210 North Broadway, Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591
Website:
www.tufsd.org/guidance

Sleepy Hollow High School Counseling Staff

Mrs. Leticia Andujar: 914-332-6210; landujar@tufsd.org
Mrs. Patricia Bonitatibus: 914-332-6206; pbonitatibus@tufsd.org
Mr. Michael Kelly: 914-332-6208; mkelly@tufsd.org
Mr. David Ziegler: 914-332-6230; dziegler@tufsd.org

Calendar

Junior Year

March

- ✓ Meet with Counselor for Junior College Conference
- ✓ Develop a plan for when you will sit for one or all of the following exams: SATs/SAT Subject Tests/ACT/TOFEL. Register for exams ASAP.

April

- ✓ Begin visiting colleges
- ✓ Continue work on all Sleepy Hollow pre-application worksheets
- ✓ Schedule a follow-up meeting with your counselor re: college search
- ✓ Attend SHHS College Fair

May

- ✓ NCAA Registration (for college bound student athletes)
- ✓ Attend the Westchester County College Fair

June

- ✓ Finalize Summer Plans
- ✓ Study for Regents Exams

July/August

- ✓ Continue visiting colleges
- ✓ Complete remaining SHHS Community Service Requirement (at least 60 hours)
- ✓ Begin to record thoughts for application essays
- ✓ Review SHHS Transcript (mailed home)

Senior Year

September

- ✓ Begin a challenging senior year schedule
- ✓ Register for appropriate exams (SAT/Subject Tests/ACT) – if needed. See counselor to review your senior year fall testing schedule
- ✓ Narrow list of potential colleges
- ✓ Remind HS Teachers for Letters of Recommendation

- ✓ Make plans to attend College Night for Seniors and their Parents and Financial Aid Night – See School Calendar

October

- ✓ Decide if applying Early Decision (ED)/Early Application (EA)
- ✓ Complete CSS Profile (a financial aid form required by certain colleges)
- ✓ Continue meeting with college representatives visiting SHHS
- ✓ Discuss potential college essays with your counselor, English teacher and parents

November

- ✓ Review final list of colleges with Counselor
- ✓ Continue working on college applications

December

- ✓ Alert Counselor of all college applications with January 1st deadlines before December break
- ✓ Attempt to finish ALL college applications over the December Break

January

- ✓ File FAFSA (Financial Aid Form)

February

- ✓ Mid-Year Senior Year Grades sent to all colleges

March

- ✓ College Notifications typically arrive by this month

April

- ✓ Review financial aid packages
- ✓ If accepted, you must make an enrollment decision and follow through with deposits, housing requests, etc.
- ✓ Notify HS Counselor of college decisions

General College Admission Information

- ❖ Overall criteria used in selection decisions**
- ❖ Six factors college counselors use to determine acceptance**

College Admission Criteria (In a nutshell)

Please remember that colleges look at “the whole person” when making their selection decisions among thousands of applicants. The criteria that most admissions teams use include the following:

1. Three-year high school average
2. Level of academic difficulty of courses and number of courses taken
3. Senior mid-year grades
4. SAT I or ACT scores (see HS Counselor/Fair Test list for colleges that do not require these exams)
5. SAT Subject Test scores, if required
6. Essay(s) and/or personal statement
7. Recommendations from teachers and guidance counselor
8. School and community activities
9. Work experience
10. College interview – Check with college for policy on this
11. State residency status
12. Alumni or legacy status (i.e., Did a parent attend the school where you are applying?)
13. Portfolio, slides, tapes, or audition (if you have any special talents)

A survey of members of the National Association of College Admission Counselors provides the following information:

What Counts Most with Admissions Directors			
<i>Criteria</i>	Degree of Importance:		
	<i>Considerable</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Limited</i>
Grades in college prep courses	80%	10%	7%
Admission test scores	47%	38%	9%
Grades in all subjects	41%	40%	14%
Class rank	39%	33%	19%
Essay/personal statement	21%	34%	24%
Counselor recommendations	19%	48%	23%
Interview	15%	30%	34%
Work/extra-curricular activities	7%	35%	40%
Ability to pay	3%	7%	16%
Personal recognition programs	1%	12%	41%

Keep in mind that colleges have other priorities that impact student admission such as: geographical mix, talent mix, athletes, and overall diversity of student body.

SIX THINGS THAT DETERMINE COLLEGE ADMISSION

Outlined below a college admission counselor gives the straight facts on how colleges determine whether they will accept you.

Every spring thousands of high school seniors across the country rush home from school and ransack through the family mail with sweaty palms and pounding hearts. No, they are not hoping to find a \$10,000-offer from the Publishers Clearinghouse. They are hoping for something far more valuable: a thick envelope from a college admission office.

High school seniors have heard from students who have ripped open envelopes in springs gone by that bad news travels light, and good news arrives heavy. In other words, if a college rejects you, you receive a one-page “thanks anyway” note; if the college or university accepts; you, you receive a congratulatory note along with several pages of enrollment information.

Just how do college admission counselors determine whether your envelope is thick or thin? It is difficult to generalize about a process that involves more than 3,000 institutions of higher education and tens of thousands of students, no two of whom share the exact same academic and personal profile. But, if you are a good student, and you are applying to colleges that will admit between 25 percent and 90 percent of those students who apply, there are six factors that the school’s admission counselors (including myself) examine carefully.

1. Academic Performance



Colleges are first and foremost academic institutions. The media attention given to big-time college athletics and other special talents can lead students to believe that nonacademic talents are of equal or greater importance than academic qualities in gaining admission to college. This is simply not true. In selective college admissions, the fundamental assessment is made on your academic performance in high school and your promise for academic success in college.

The first place a college admission counselor looks is the high school transcript. This busy piece of paper with assigned grades and course listings tells the story of your progress through high school. But courses and grades are not taken at face value.

The admission counselor uses the transcript, and a school profile submitted along with it, to answer some basic questions:

- ☺ Did you, given your ability, take fullest advantage of the academic program offered at your high school? Admission counselors want to see that you have taken a course load that suits your ability. For example, Advanced Placement (AP) courses often show that you are capable of a higher-level of study. In preparation for more highly competitive colleges, it is advisable to take these courses. On the other hand, earning a C average in an AP course load suggests that the workload is too heavy for you to manage and therefore works against you.

- ☺ What trends are apparent in your performance in these high school courses? Did you take geometry one semester and get a B-, but then pursue trigonometry the next year and get a

B+? This may suggest that you are a hard worker and have the ability to improve your performance.

☺ Do you show strength in areas you intend to pursue once in college? If you are considering engineering, the admissions counselor will place more emphasis on your performance in math and science than in other courses. History or English majors should show particular strengths in areas related to writing.

☺ Are you an intellectual risk-taker? For example, if you have a concentration in math, did you take Honors English to get a more rounded education? Admissions counselors like to see that kind of attitude.

2. Standardized Tests



By now you may be asking: What about the alphabet soup of standardized testing, the SAT, SAT Subject Tests, ACT, etc.? The majority of selective colleges do require submission of standardized test scores, but contrary to popular belief, the SATs or ACTs are not the single most important factor. These standardized test results are just part of the overall assessment of your academic promise. The degree these scores influence ultimate decisions depends on the institution.

The single best predictor of academic success in college, however, is still your long-term high school performance, not a three-hour SAT or ACT snapshot.

3. The Essay



The university looks to the admission office to provide interesting people as well as excellent students. The application form gives you a chance to convey your unique qualities as a person, and the counselor will read with interest your family background, the way in which you spend time outside the classroom and the manner in which you express your values and experiences. Your application essay may prove most revealing.

The application essay is the major opportunity for you to “flush out” your personal side. The admission counselor does not want to read an essay that sounds straight from a thesaurus or written without conviction or proper form.

Whether about a book, a trip to France, or a serious personal matter, the essay should give the admission counselor a genuine feel for your personality and values. Because there are so many elements to the acceptance process, an essay cannot be singularly responsible for an acceptance or denial of your candidacy, but a well-written, insightful piece can make you stick out from the pack.

One of the best essays I remember reading was in answer to the question, “What book had the greatest impact on you and why?” Most students wrote fine, highly charged essays on books like *Crime and Punishment* and *A Separate Peace*. One young woman, however, wrote about how *The Little Engine That Could* has affected her life starting from age five. The book prompted her to climb over many obstacles that others thought she couldn’t handle. She really answered the question and made a special impression with a unique essay.

4. Recommendations



Counselor recommendations, teacher references, employer letters, and other sources also help delineate you as a person. Choosing the appropriate persons to write on your behalf is very important.

Although it may sound strange, a letter from a teacher who gave you a C may impress an admission counselor more than one from a teacher who gave you an A. For instance, Mary “M” intends on pursuing English as a major in college, yet she takes physics her senior year to get a more rounded education. She receives a C in the class. Because the teacher knows of Mary’s interest in English, he is able to write a letter commending Mary on her effort in a field of study that was unfamiliar to her. In fact, a letter from one of her higher-grading teachers would not explain the C in physics that appears on her transcript. In this way, Mary’s turned a potential negative point to her advantage. Keep in mind that supporting documents can be taken to an extreme, and bleary-eyed admission counselors may hold too many letters from your well-meaning neighbors or family friends against you. Some readers are suspicious of applicants who submit more material than is required. What is the student trying to hide under all that paper?

On the average, a submitted college application includes no more than 22 pieces of paper. If you submit 40 pages, the counselor, in general, will still consider your application for the same amount of time as the others. So the counselor may just glance at each page and not focus on your strongest points. Conforming to the application instructions always reflects well on your ability to follow directions, and it shows respect for the reader—after all you want him or her as an ally!

5. The Personal Interview



If you have the opportunity to interview at the colleges of your choice, the impression you make may further enhance the counselor’s visualization of who you really are. The function of the interview will vary from college to college. Colleges that require one will likely weigh it more heavily in the decision than those that either only recommend or limit the availability of personal interviews. In any case, speaking to an admissions counselor will increase your knowledge of the school and possibly benefit you in the admission process.

I interviewed a young man once who was good at juggling. He brought some of his equipment with him, so I asked him to teach me some moves. He went with the flow and gave me an impromptu lesson. He showed me that he could be relaxed and himself in a tough situation.

6. The “Hook”



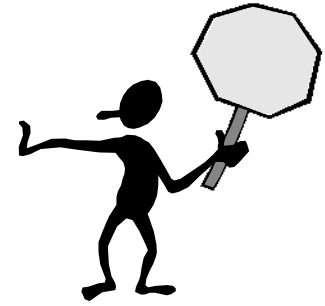
Beyond academic prestige, colleges also seek to build a diverse community of students with different ethnic and social backgrounds, athletic abilities, artistic flair, leadership qualities, and other features. In the jargon of college admission, your particular talent, background, or extracurricular involvement is sometimes referred to as the “hook” that may catch the counselor’s attention.

While colleges do not establish precise quotas on categories of students, there is an intention to meet needs in the recruitment of students. If the college’s outstanding orchestra lost most of its string section to graduation, the admission counselor will be paying particular attention to applicants who play string instruments quite well. In this given year, an equally talented trombonist will not get the same attention. The violinist may be admitted because his or her talent “hook” was sharper than the trombonist’s. Remember, though, other colleges may be in desperate need of brass wind talent!

It is important to clearly demonstrate what makes you special, to define your niche in the college’s community. This means it is no time to be overly modest. Documentation that underscores your particular talent and background should be submitted. The watchful admission counselor will recognize the degree of this “specializing” and weigh it in terms of the college’s needs.

I once had a typical C-student from Tennessee apply to Drew University. She compensated for her low-grade point average by being a young southern woman wanting to attend a northeast school. Her background would add diversity. However, she clinched her acceptance by submitting a game board detailing the admission process. It was set up like the game of Life. One square would say, “Got writer’s block trying to write essay—move back five spaces”. The goal at the end of the game was admission to Drew University. The student’s final hook was her creativity.

Before You Begin... The Most Important Step



Some Food for Thought

“Picking a college is an important decision because the experience can greatly affect the quality of one’s future. It can be the most exciting four years of your life. On the other hand, you can plod through largely untouched and unaffected. Many teenagers give more thought to learning to drive than to picking a college. Confront yourself honestly. Why, really, are you going...for fun or for some other reason? What are your abilities and strengths? What are your weaknesses? What do you want out of life, or in life, something tangible or intangible? Are you supremely confident or hesitantly unsure of yourself? Do you want to give or to get? Are you a self-starter or in need of nurture and structure? Are you socially self-sufficient, marching to your own drummer, or do you need warm, familial support? Do you live in the fast track? And so on. If the student doesn’t look to him/herself, s/he is vulnerable to herd thinking – one of the principle causes of bad decisions. It takes both clarity and courage to look at oneself probingly and then to make decisions based on what one sees there and not be influenced by friends or classmates. After you have questioned yourself you can effectively choose a college; but only after you have examined it, too.”

-Loren Pope (Author of Looking Beyond the Ivy League and Colleges that Change Lives)

“Most people think of college as preparation for a profession, a job, or graduate school. But it is also a chunk of life – six percent of our days and years. Here we make lifelong friends. We discover intellectual strengths. We begin to forge a philosophy. It can be a peak experience, exciting and enjoyable. Finding the right college is a project in itself, and is not one to be taken lightly. Since it is you who will attend, and not some statistical average, you must spend time determining your needs. What, for example, do you want out of college? What kind of person are you? What are your likes and dislikes, hopes and ambitions? Are you gregarious or solitary? Have you decided on a career, or are you still searching?

Often students pick a college more or less at random, on the chance recommendation of a friend or because of a well-known name. They commit themselves to spending four crucial years in an environment chosen by accident. It’s four years of your life. With planning and forethought, you can make them the best.”

-Dr. John Brooks Slaughter (President, Occidental College)

College Testing Information

- ❖ **SAT Test Dates and Information**
- ❖ **SAT Subject Tests**
- ❖ **ACT Test Dates and Information**
- ❖ **TOFEL Exam**

College Board SAT Test Dates

TEST DATE:

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

January 23, 2010

December 23, 2009

March 13, 2010

February 4, 2010

May 1, 2010

March 25, 2010

June 5, 2010

April 29, 2010

SAT TEST DATES FOR 2010-11

(PLEASE NOTE: These are tentative dates as of the printing of this guide)

October 9 , 2010

November 6, 2010

December 4, 2010

January 22, 2011

March 12, 2011

(SAT Only – No Subject Tests offered on this date)

May 7, 2011

June 4, 2011

The SAT:

The SAT exam measures your verbal and math reasoning abilities as well as your writing ability. It is offered seven times a year and takes three hours and 45 minutes to complete. There are three kinds of questions on the exam: multiple choice, student produced responses, and the essay question. It is machine scored, except for the essay.

There are **THREE** Sections on the SAT:

The Critical Reading Section

The critical reading section of the SAT contains two types of questions:

- sentence completions (19 questions)
- passage-based reading (48 questions)

The Math Section

The math section of the SAT contains two types of questions:

- standard multiple choice (44 questions)
- student-produced response questions that provide no answer choices (10 questions)

The Writing Section

The writing section includes both multiple-choice questions and an essay. Students will have 25 minutes to write a short essay. Students will be asked to respond to a quote or a reading passage and must take a position on the topic and support their position. The multiple-choice questions will test the following:

- improving sentences (25 questions)
- identifying sentence errors (18 questions)
- improving paragraphs (6 questions)

Please remember the SAT is one factor out of many. The transcript is the most important piece of the college application. You can find more information on the SAT by speaking with your school counselor or visiting the College Board website (www.collegeboard.com).

Adapted from the College Board

SAT Subject Tests

What are SAT Subject Tests?

They are college admission tests in specific subjects. Each test is one-hour long.

Do all colleges require SAT Subject Tests?

No. In fact, of the more than 3,000 colleges in the U.S., approximately 35-50 require SAT Subject Tests.

Which schools require the SAT Subject Tests?

Usually the most selective schools (in terms of admissions standards), such as the Ivy League schools, require SAT Subject Tests.

How many SAT Subject Tests are necessary and which subjects are required?

No college requires more than three tests; but which tests are required varies at different colleges, and in different programs within a given college. Math (either Level 1 or Level 2) is commonly required. Some college programs may require a science or a foreign language, and others will leave the selection up to you. Each college's admission materials outline specific test requirements.

If I don't know which schools I'll be applying to, should I take SAT Subject Tests this year?

The answer to this question will vary from student-to-student. If you have a serious interest in a particular college and it has SAT Subject Test requirements, you may wish to take their required tests.

Can I take SAT Subject Tests as a senior?

Absolutely! However, May or June of junior year is the ideal time to take SAT Subject Tests. This will provide an opportunity for you to retake (or take additional) SATs in October and/or November of your senior year.

How do I sign up?

You register the same as for the SAT exam. You may complete a registration form (located in the School Counseling Office), or register with the College Board online (have your credit card number and social security number handy).

Which months are best for taking the SAT Subject Tests?

The best dates are the May or June administrations. These dates coincide with the conclusion of your courses.

How many SAT Subject Tests can I take in one day?

You may take up to three on any one test day, however, you may not take the SAT exam and SAT Subject Tests on the same day.

ACT Test Dates

TEST DATE:	REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
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April 10, 2010

March 5, 2010

June 12, 2010

May 7, 2010

ACT TEST DATES FOR 2010-11

October 23, 2010

December 11, 2010

February 12, 2011

(No test centers are scheduled in New York on this date)

April 9, 2011

June 11, 2011

What is the ACT?

The ACT assessment, or A-C-T as it is more commonly known, is a national college admission examination that consists of tests in English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. An optional writing test is also available. Most students are encouraged to take the writing section of the exam. See your HS Counselor with any questions related to this.

Many students choose to take the ACT instead of the SAT, and ACT results are accepted by virtually all U. S. colleges and universities.

The ACT consists of 215 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately four hours to complete, including breaks. Actual testing time is 2 hours and 55 minutes. The optional writing test adds another 30 minutes to the overall test.

In the U. S., the ACT is given on 5 national test dates in October, December, February, April, and June. (*Note: February test date is not available in New York.*)

Why should I take the ACT?

- The ACT tests are universally accepted for college admission. The ACT is now accepted by virtually all colleges and universities in the U.S., including all of the Ivy League schools.
- The ACT assessment test is curriculum based. It is not an aptitude or IQ test. Instead, the questions on the ACT are directly related to what you have learned in your high school courses in English, Math, and Science. Because the ACT is based on what is taught in the high school curriculum, students are generally more comfortable with the ACT than they are with the traditional aptitude tests or tests with narrower content.
- The ACT is more than a test. It also provides test takers with a unique interest inventory that provides valuable information for career and educational planning.

For more information on scoring, national averages, registration information, and answers to common FAQs, you may visit the ACT website at www.act.org.

TOFEL

The TOEFL Test – *Test of English as a Foreign Language* is the most widely accepted English-Language test in the world. This test measures your ability to communicate in English in colleges and universities. More specifically, it measures how well you read, listen, speak, and write in English and use these skills together in the university classroom.

The test is given in English, has 4 sections on reading, listening, speaking and writing and takes about 4½ hours. See Table below:

<i>Section</i>	<i>Time Limit</i>	<i>No. of Questions</i>
Reading	60-100 minutes	36-70
Listening	60-90 minutes	34-51
Break	10 minutes	—
Speaking	20 minutes	6 tasks
Writing	50 minutes	2 tasks

You can take the Internet-based Test or the Paper-based Test, depending on which format is offered at your test center.

The entire test is one day, and there are many test centers to choose from.

You can retake the test if you want to improve your scores.

Tests scores are objective and unbiased. Tests are scored anonymously by ETS-certified experts.

For more information on the TOFEL exam, please go to their website: www.ets.org
or call: Phone #: 609-771-7100

Students who take the TOFEL exam must ALSO register for the SAT and/or ACT (the TOFEL does not replace these exams) to provide colleges with a math score. Students and parents are encouraged to please speak with their High School Counselor prior to registering for the TOFEL exam. It is not a test most high school students typically need to take and we want to make sure taking this exam is in your best interest.

Learning About & Visiting Different Colleges

- ❖ **Naviance Computer Program/Other Resources Available**
- ❖ **General Advice on Planning a College Visit**
- ❖ **The Admissions Interview**

Resources

There is a wealth of information available to teach you about the unique aspects of each college or university. As you spend time reading and researching, you will begin to narrow the list of colleges to which you will apply.

Sleepy Hollow's Counseling Office is well equipped with computers, software programs, college guides, viewbooks, and catalogs. The resource we would like to highlight for you is called Naviance. **Below is a brief description of the Naviance program:**

Naviance enables our counseling office to offer a comprehensive website that students and their families can use to help in making decisions about colleges and careers. Highlighted below are some of the ways the Naviance program can help you and your family:

- Keep track of the process – Build a resume, complete on-line surveys, and manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges and careers
- Research colleges – Compare GPA, SAT scores, and other statistics to actual historical data from our school for students who have applied and been admitted in the past
- Sign up for college visits – Find out which colleges are visiting our school and sign up to attend those sessions
- Scholarship Searches – Students can research scholarship opportunities
- And Much More – Learning Style Inventories, Career Searches, etc.

Students have been introduced to the Naviance Program here in school and should continue to use this throughout senior year. The Naviance program is accessible through the district website (www.tufsd.org/guidance) and it is our hope that students and parents make use of this program.

Bookstores – Offer many publications about the college admissions process, the application essay, SAT preparation, etc.

College Visits – Every fall many colleges send representatives to Sleepy Hollow High School so that students can meet with them in small groups to learn of the different offerings and requirements at each college. Dates and times are announced and advertised in the Counseling Office. Students are strongly encouraged to attend these brief but informative meetings. It is also a great way to make a “connection” with someone at a college that may interest you.

College Open Houses – During the fall, and sometimes in the spring, many colleges host an open house at their campus, during which time you and your family may meet with different college representatives, take a tour of the campus, talk with students, and attend brief information sessions.

College Fairs – Hundreds of colleges send representatives who will answer questions, put you on their mailing lists, and provide you with viewbooks, catalogs, and other free information. Please stop by to find out when and where these fairs will be held.

College Information on the Internet

The Internet has several sites available for learning about the college application process, different schools, financial aid, SATs, etc. *Please note below just a few of the many websites available.*

In addition, virtually every college and university has a web page. Addresses are located in any college guide or in the School Counseling Office. Addresses are often www.collegename.edu.

www.petersons.com - Peterson's free online service to all students. A great site!

www.collegeboard.com - Lots of useful information about campus visits, interviews, SATs, scholarships and other parts of the college search process.

www.usnews.com - College rankings, advice from high school counselors and financial aid experts, a comprehensive college search engine, and college links galore.

www.fastweb.com - The Internet's largest free scholarship search; thorough and extensive site regarding everything relating to financial aid and scholarships.

www.finaid.org - The most complete financial aid site available.

www.collegeXpress.com - Great information on thousands of colleges, "ask the expert", and lots of advice on the transition to college.

www.kaplan.com - Extensive links to colleges and universities; advice on interviews and admission.

www.princetonreview.com - A search engine with several variables including location, academics, sports, student life, and housing.

www.schoolsoup.com - With over \$32 billion in scholarships, schoolsoup.com contains more scholarships than all other online scholarship search sites combined.

Please note that the websites listed above represent just a small sampling of the information available to help students/parents on the internet. Our school counseling website contains a listing of helpful sites and we would advise that you start there: www.tufsd.org/guidance



General Advice on Planning a College Visit

1. **Visit colleges starting as early as April of your junior year .** In the fall, return to those colleges that interest you most for a day of visiting classes, talking with students, staying overnight, etc.
2. **We recommend that you limit yourself to no more than two campus visits a day.** In order to get a sense of the unique qualities of a campus, it is important for you to be relaxed and spend several hours touring the campus and talking with members of the college community. If you feel rushed and worried about timing, your visit will be less effective. Reserving an entire day and even scheduling an overnight stay on campus will give you the maximum opportunity to thoroughly explore campus life.
3. **It is best to use the college's website to schedule your visit .** Try to schedule your visit well in advance of your desired arrival date. Many states are popular summer vacation sites, and it can be difficult to make lodging reservations without at least one month's notice. Scheduling interviews should also be done at least one month in advance. Most campus tours and general information sessions do not require advance reservations, but it is important to know the schedule prior to your arrival on campus.
4. **Local chambers of commerce are excellent sources of information for planning your trip .** These organizations will be able to provide you with local maps, lodging information, tourist sights and activities, and suggestions regarding the local climate. Be sure to explore the surrounding area.

Strategies for Visiting Colleges

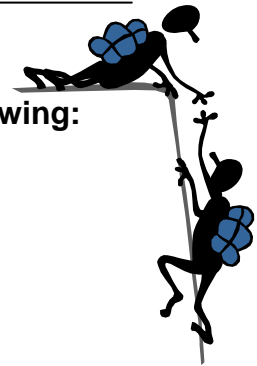
Begin your visit at the Admissions Office and obtain the following:

- ✓ Map of the campus
- ✓ Catalogue and application
- ✓ List of the day's activities
- ✓ A school newspaper
- ✓ A campus tour schedule
- ✓ Information session timetable

Speak to students on campus about:

- ✓ Their likes and dislikes
- ✓ Quality of professors
- ✓ Social life
- ✓ Academic pressure
- ✓ Type of food
- ✓ Dorm life
- ✓ Campus security
- ✓ Key campus issues
- ✓ Extra-curricular activities

Take good notes after each visit (see worksheet in back of guide).



The Admissions Interview

Each college has its own interview procedure, which varies from school to school. Some require an interview on campus; some require an interview with a college representative and/or an alumnus; some grant group interviews; others do not require any interview. It is wise, however, to have an interview whenever possible. While it is better to visit and have an interview at a college when there are students on the campus, this is not always possible. Before doing so, be sure to call the college for specific information regarding its policy on interviews and to schedule one in advance if appropriate.

Why an Interview

This is your opportunity to personalize the process. Interviews do not usually make or break admissions decisions, but you should try to interview at those schools that are of real interest to you and are realistic choices. It gives you a chance to learn first-hand whether a school is a good match and allows you to show that you are very interested in a school.

Arranging an Interview

If you are prepared, plan your interviews as part of your campus visits. Don't schedule your first interview at your first-choice school; you'll do better after you've had some experience in an interview situation. Also, try to avoid making your first-choice school your last interview, as you want to remain fresh and spontaneous in your responses.

Practice interviews are helpful to some students. Ask your school counselor to *conduct a mock interview* with you or have a family friend role-play with you.

Schedule all interviews well in advance by calling the admissions office. And, if you cannot attend an interview appointment, be sure to call and cancel. A cancellation will not be held against you, but a missed appointment probably will be.

Preparing for an Interview

Be punctual. Know the time and location of the interview, and plan to arrive early. Be sure to read the catalogue and write down a list of questions that you want to ask. Take time to think about your strengths and weaknesses, and be prepared to speak about them in a positive way. College interviews are not the time for modesty and one-word answers. At the same time, you do not want to appear boastful and arrogant. You may want to bring a copy of your transcript and an activities résumé to your interview.

Take stock of the extracurricular activities in which you have participated: your hobbies, volunteer work, and other ways that you spend your time. If there are special circumstances that have affected your academic record, you may want to bring them up at an interview. For instance, if you missed a great deal of school because your family went through a particularly grueling year, with divorce, unemployment, or sickness, you may want to talk about it with your interviewer. Take care not to sound as though you are making excuses for yourself, but rather adding to the college's understanding of who you are.

What to Wear

We recommend that you dress neatly and comfortably, while being yourself. A jacket and tie or skirt/dress are fine, as are a sweater and pants if you prefer (no jeans, caps, sweats, sneakers, shorts, etc.)

Dos and Don'ts of an Interview

Some things to do on an interview are:

- ✓ Establish eye-contact
- ✓ Show enthusiasm
- ✓ Use your natural conversational style
- ✓ Show interest in the interviewer and listen attentively
- ✓ Exhibit a positive attitude
- ✓ Be open and honest
- ✓ Ask questions
- ✓ Be specific and give concise responses
- ✓ Be Yourself!



Some things not to do on an interview are:

- ✓ Chew gum
- ✓ Complain or make excuses
- ✓ Swear or use language that is too colloquial
- ✓ Exhibit a negative attitude (bored, arrogant, etc.)
- ✓ Answer in monosyllables or one-sentence answers
- ✓ Ask questions if you have no interest in the response
- ✓ Discuss other colleges or make comparisons
- ✓ Bring your scrapbook of programs, reviews, articles, or papers for the interviewer to read
- ✓ Twitch, fidget, or slump in your seat
- ✓ Pretend to be someone you are not.

Typical Interview Questions

Every interviewer has his or her favorite questions, but there are some common areas that are covered in most interviews. These include:

- ✓ Your high school experience
- ✓ Your personal traits, relationships with others, and your family background
- ✓ Your interests outside the classroom – hobbies, extracurricular activities, summer vacations, movies you've seen, etc.
- ✓ Your values and goals, and how you view the world around you
- ✓ Your impressions of the college you are visiting
- ✓ Special circumstances that may have affected your grades
- ✓ Answering your questions.

You might anticipate questions like these:

- ✓ Tell me about your high school. How long have you attended? What are the students like? Do you like your high school? What would you preserve or change about it?
- ✓ Which courses have you liked most? Which have you liked the least? Which have been the most challenging?
- ✓ How well do you think your school has prepared you for your future study?
- ✓ How would you describe yourself as a student?
- ✓ Do you know what you want to major in?
- ✓ What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience?
- ✓ What extracurricular activity have you been involved in most? How much time do you devote to it?

Applying to Colleges

- ❖ **The Application**
- ❖ **Application Methods**
- ❖ **Letters of Recommendation**
- ❖ **The Essay or Personal Statement**
- ❖ **Understanding “Early Decision” and “Early Action”**
- ❖ **SHHS Important College Reminders**



The Application

Once you have narrowed your list of colleges, it is time to apply. Most college applications are similar in their appearance and content; however, it is important to thoroughly read each application, as there will undoubtedly be differences among them. Ordinarily, an application will consist of three main parts:

The Student's part requests some basic biographic information, and usually includes one or more essay questions or personal statement. (In pages that follow, the essay will be addressed in greater detail). Be sure to be very thorough in following directions and answering all questions. We recommend having your School Counselor review this before you complete the actual application. Also, **it is the Student's Responsibility to send testing scores (SAT, ACT, TOEFL, etc.) to each of the colleges they apply to. This is done directly through the appropriate testing agency.**

The Teacher's part is often called the "Teacher Recommendation: or "Teacher Evaluation". Many colleges will include these forms and require you to submit recommendations from two different teachers. Sleepy Hollow HS has their own teacher recommendation forms that can often replace the forms provided by the college. If no recommendation form is included, be sure to read the directions closely. The fine print may require a recommendation anyway. (Letters of recommendations will be discussed in more detail later in this section).

The School Counselor's part is usually called the "School Report Form". This part requires that your counselor provide some basic information about you and requests a counselor recommendation. Be sure to complete the top portion of this form. Once you are ready to apply make an appointment with your Counselor to give a final review of your application a "Transcript Request Form" must be completed for each college.

When colleges begin receiving any of the parts listed above, they simply create a file for you and continually add information as it arrives until your file is complete.

Please be aware of application deadlines. It is important that your counselor receive your forms at least 2 weeks prior to the deadline. Don't forget to consider Thanksgiving and December breaks when preparing applications for the School Counseling Office.

Application Methods

It will be your responsibility to decide on the application method that best suits you for each school. The traditional paper application that is obtained directly from each college is no longer the most commonly used method.

Please remember that, while there are many different options to choose from when applying to colleges, the value of your application is not diminished by the format you use provided that you prepare it neatly and carefully. Most important are all of the things that will portray your strengths and uniqueness (i.e., your transcript, essays, recommendations, extracurricular activities, special talents, etc.)

Applying Online

There is no paper involved. For students at Sleepy Hollow High School this is, by far, the most popular method of applying to college. You enter the requested data and send your application directly from your computer. Remember, if you file online, you will still be responsible for obtaining a paper copy of both Teacher Recommendation forms, School Counselor Report forms, and meeting with your counselor to complete a Transcript Request form.

The Common Application

Completing applications for several schools can be quite tedious. Colleges have joined forces to provide a single application that can be completed once and duplicated several times. The common application is accepted at many – but not all – colleges and universities. The application includes a list of all schools that will accept the common application.

If more than one of the schools to which you are applying does accept the common application and you choose to use it, this means that you will complete your part only once, and will send a copy of it to each school. (Be sure to include the appropriate application fee for each college. Fees are listed in the common application.) This also means that your counselor will complete the School Report form only once and will send a copy to each school.

The common application can be found on their web-site: www.commonapp.org

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Letters of recommendation from teachers and school counselors are used to judge the academic and personal traits of candidates. Because teachers and school counselors have had, in most cases, extended contact with the candidates, they are well prepared to provide recommendations that balance an objective evaluation of a candidate's academic performance with information on the person beyond the grades and test scores.

Ideally, letters of recommendation would include comments on a variety of key areas. Evidence that the candidate demonstrates such intellectual qualities as curiosity, originality of thought, independence of judgment, engagement with intellectual issues, and excitement over the process of discovery are sought. Evidence of specific talents and aptitudes should always be highlighted, along with information on honors and distinctions attained by the student. Comments regarding maturity, respect for others, acceptance of difference, leadership, willingness to take risks, sense of humor, and commitment are examples of important personal qualities that help to round out an overall assessment of the candidate.

The letters of recommendation that are most helpful in the process are those which provide an honest evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate, provide specific anecdotes and examples to illustrate key points, and portray the intellectual and personal qualities that distinguish the student from other candidates. Well-written and informative letters of recommendation are frank, convey something concrete and important about the candidate, to the point, and are timely in their submission. Such evaluations substantially enrich the understanding of the candidate and enhance the quality of the selection process.

Please note that all recommendations written by the Sleepy Hollow High School faculty, counselors, administrators, and other staff are confidential. Students are not permitted to read their letters of recommendations. Colleges and universities expect letters of recommendation to remain confidential and will often ask students to sign a FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) agreement. This has to do with students waiving their right to access recommendations.

Writing Your College Essay

Introduction

If you are like most students, you see the college essay as another hurdle that you must jump on the way to being accepted at the college of your choice. In fact, the essay is not a hurdle but a rare opportunity. It is a chance for you to talk directly to the college's admissions committee and to help them "see" you as a thinking and feeling person rather than simply a set of impersonal statistics. If you see the college essay in this way—as an opportunity—then it is clearly worth the effort to put some extra time, thought, and energy into writing it.

Purpose of the Essay

The college essay is extremely important for two major reasons:

1. It enables the college admissions office to evaluate your communication skills. Through your essay they can assess the clarity of your thinking and your ability to convey your thoughts in written form.
2. It enables the admissions office to learn more about you as a person, beyond what grades and SAT scores can convey. For the admissions staff, it adds another important piece to the puzzle because it distinguishes you as an individual, different from any other student who is applying.

Choosing A Topic

Many colleges and universities will either give you a topic to write about or present several rather specific topics from which you must choose. Regardless of whether you must respond to a prescribed topic or come up with one of your own, here are a few general hints about the most effective way to approach your topic.

- Narrow your topic and try to be as specific and illustrative as possible.
- The easiest topic to write about is you. One important purpose of the essay is self-revelation; it is no place to be shy or modest, although you should not exaggerate. If you choose to write about yourself, remember that little incidents and facts are often the most revealing of character and outlook.
- Do not be afraid to write about something you think is a little different. A unique

topic or approach is often refreshing to a college admissions officer who has been reading applications all day. Further, an unusual or off-beat essay is an excellent way to show your creativity.

Preparing to Write

Before actually sitting down to write a first draft of your essay, spend some time organizing your thoughts. Develop a framework for your essay so it will have a smooth and logical progression from one incident to the next. Consider your purpose in writing, what you want to convey, and the tone that you think is most appropriate for the topic. Decide on a style that is comfortable for you, not one that you think the college admissions committee prefers. Finally, remember that organizing your thoughts and deciding on a framework does not mean you must be overly rigid at the start; leave room for flexibility and creativity as you actually begin writing.

Writing the Essay

You do not have to get it right the first time! Instead, write the first draft of your essay with the main focus on content, communicating your thoughts. Then set it aside for a day or two, reread it with a fresh perspective, and make any necessary changes. This is also the point at which you should consider matters of organization, style, grammar, spelling, and tone. Once you have rewritten your first draft, you may wish to try it out on your family, friends, English teacher, or school counselor. While the final product and final "voice" should be yours, they may be able to offer helpful suggestions for technical or other improvements.

A thoughtful, well-written essay can affect, in a very positive way, that final decision. Keep this in mind and take full advantage of the opportunity that the college essay affords you.

Dos and Don'ts of Writing Your College Essay

DO start early. Leave plenty of time to revise, reword, and rewrite. You can always improve.

DO read the directions carefully. Answer the question as directly as possible. Express yourself as succinctly and clearly as you can.

DO tell the truth about yourself.

DO show your best side. You might have overcome some adversity, worked through a difficult project, or profited from a specific incident. A specific focus is more interesting than generalizations.

DO feel comfortable in expressing anxieties. Everybody has them, and it's good to know that an applicant can see them and face them.

DO tie yourself to the college. Be specific about what this particular school can do for you, and what you will bring to its student body. Your essay can have different slants for different colleges.

DO speak positively. Negatives tend to turn people off.

DO reveal yourself in your writing and write about your greatest assets and achievements. You should be proud of them.

DO write in your own "voice" and style.

BUT...

DON'T repeat information given elsewhere on your application. The committee has already seen it and it may look as though you have nothing else to say.

DON'T write on general, impersonal topics like global warming or the importance of good management in business. The college wants to know about you.

DON'T exaggerate or write to impress.

DON'T use the personal statement to excuse your shortcomings. It would only draw attention to them.

DON'T use clichés or a flowery, inflated, or pretentious style.

DON'T go to extremes—too witty, too opinionated, or too "intellectual".

REMEMBER...

The personal statement is yours. If it looks like Madison Avenue, the admissions committee will probably assume that it is your mother's or father's work.

A "gimmick" essay rarely goes anywhere. The committee may be amused, but unimpressed.

Write a serious essay, from the bottom of your heart, in the most mature manner possible.

Understanding Early Decision & Early Action

One of the most talked about topics in college admissions is the early application plan offered by many colleges. In order to decide whether you should apply under one of the early plans, it is important to understand them. The answers below to some of the frequently asked questions will help you decide if early decision is right for you.

What is Early Decision? An early decision (ED) plan allows you to apply early, usually in early to mid-November, and get an admission decision from the college by mid-December. However, early decision is binding, meaning if you are accepted, you must attend that college.

Can I apply to other schools if I apply for early decision? Yes. Although you can apply to only one college under early decision, you may apply to other colleges under their regular admission plans. If you are accepted to your ED college, you must withdraw all other applications.

What is early action? Early action (EA) is similar to early decision in terms of application and decision time frames, however, it is not binding, meaning you do not have to commit to attend if you are accepted. You may apply to other schools and make a final decision in the spring. Be sure to read carefully each college's guidelines before applying under an EA plan. Some colleges may not allow you to apply to other schools, and some may want you to decide before the spring whether you will attend.

How do I know if I should apply early? A college will offer either an ED plan or an EA plan, but not both. You should apply ED only if you are very sure of the college you want to attend. Early decision makes a lot of sense if one college is your clear preference and if your profile closely matches that of students at the college. Your counselor will help you decide if it's a good fit. Although EA is not binding, by applying early action to a college; you are telling them that you have a very strong interest in their school.

You should not apply ED if you plan to weigh offers and financial aid packages from several colleges in which you are interested. Also, if you need to "boost" your application by demonstrating improved senior year grades, it may be to your advantage to apply "regular" admission instead of early. This way, colleges will look at first and second quarter grades of your senior year before they make a decision.

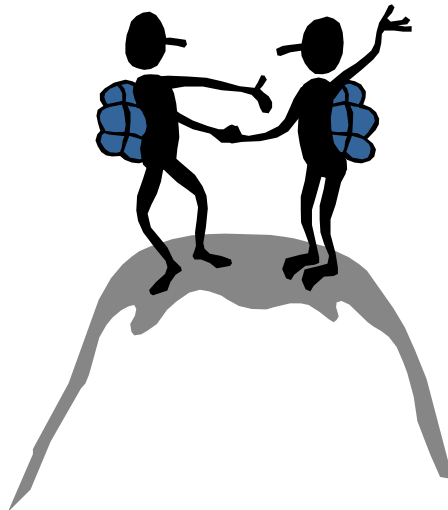
What are the advantages to applying early? Students accepted in December are spared the anxiety of waiting until spring to hear from the college. It remains unclear whether there is an advantage to applying early in general, and it varies from college to college. Your counselor will help you understand the potential advantage when you discuss specific colleges. In early action, students appear to have the best of both worlds: they know early where they stand with their preferred school, and still have the luxury of applying to other schools and waiting until all acceptance letters are in before making a decision.

Are there any disadvantages? Keep in mind that approximately 50% of ED/EA applicants are accepted. That means that the other half are deferred or rejected. A deferral or rejection right before the holidays can be upsetting to some students. If you are not accepted, you will have to prepare "back-up" applications in time for other colleges' regular decision deadlines.

Also, early acceptances sometimes foster an early onset of “senioritis” in which seniors take on a more laid-back attitude toward schoolwork as early as December. These poor study habits and weakening self-discipline can carry over into a student’s freshman year in college. Recently, some colleges have rescinded admission offers to students who did not maintain their grades throughout senior year.

What is a deferral? Students whose applications are neither accepted nor rejected are deferred for a second review in the spring. That means your application will now be placed in the regular decision pool with all of those applicants. Some students will be accepted from the deferred pool, but many will not.

How does all of this affect financial aid? Since early action is not binding, students can compare the financial packages of several schools before making a decision. In early decision, the student is obligated to attend the school upon acceptance, leaving less incentive for the college to offer more money. However, if the aid package offered by the college or university is insufficient for the family to afford the school, the student is not obligated to attend the school.



THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

At

SLEEPY HOLLOW HIGH SCHOOL

- Return completed senior packets (activity sheet, parent brag sheet and self-evaluation sheet) to your counselor
- Review your transcript so it will be ready to send once you have submitted your applications.
- Request teacher recommendations as soon as possible. If you are applying early share that with the teacher(s).
- Make sure that you sit with your counselor to review your list of schools. You want to have a range of schools. Don't be afraid to take a chance on a college where your profile does not exactly match the colleges's profile.
- If you are planning to apply early decision (ED) or early action (EA) please let your counselor know this as soon as possible. Many of the deadlines are November 1st and 15th.
- All applications or notification of filing an electronic application must be submitted to your counselor at least 10 days before the deadline. This is necessary to make sure that everything is ready for processing and sent out on time.
- Most schools will request an **official** copy of your scores direct from the appropriate testing agency. You must go on line or call to request that your scores be sent.
For SAT you can go to www.collegeboard.com
For ACT you can go to www.actstudent.org
Once you request that the scores be sent, it takes several weeks to get to the schools. Make sure your request for scores is sent in a timely manner.
- If you are planning to play a sport in college make sure you register with the NCAA online and bring both signature sheets to Mrs. Grasso in the Guidance office.
- Please **read** all of your mail from the colleges. They may be inviting you to open houses, local visit sessions, or asking for additional information. This is very important. The colleges have moved away from asking us for information they need. You are responsible for letting your counselor know that the colleges are requesting information from the School Counseling Office. So please read your mail.
- Make appointments with your counselor at periodic intervals to keep him/her apprised of your progress and decisions.

Filing Applications:

- Many of the applications can be sent electronically now. Please follow each school's specific instructions and make sure that you print us a copy for your records. We suggest that you keep photocopies of all applications just in case they get lost in the mail (electronic or postal).
- Your essay is probably the most significant part of your application after your high school record and test scores. Good essays take time and can play a major role in the admission process. Invest your time well. An essay should provide insight into you as a person and demonstrate your ability to write well. Plan ahead; don't be rushed at the last minute. If you get stuck, seek help from your counselor and /or English teacher.
- Highlight your unique talents and gifts. We want the colleges to know what makes you special and why they should choose you over another candidate.
- Paper applications should be typed or neatly printed in dark ink. An application reflects your personal qualities.
- Your counselor's responsibility will be to send your transcript, school profile, secondary school report (where applicable), teacher and counselor letters of recommendation. In order to release this information we must receive a signed transcript request form (**see the following page for an example of our transcript request form**). Please see your counselor for copies of this form. A form must be completed for each college you are applying to.
- College deadlines are precisely that – DEADLINES. Avoid the risk of missing a deadline by requesting materials to be sent at the last minute.

***REMEMBER....BE ORGANIZED, BE ACTIVE and
BE TIMELY***

SHHS Transcript Request Form

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST (BLUE SHEET)*

*EACH APPLICATION MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY THIS FORM

STUDENT: _____ DATE: _____

COLLEGE NAME: _____

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR _____

HAVE YOU VISITED THIS SCHOOL? YES, DATE: _____ NO

TYPE OF APPLICATION: DEADLINE:

- | | | |
|---|-------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EARLY DECISION | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMON APPLICATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EARLY ACTION | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ROLLING | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> RESUME |
| <input type="checkbox"/> REGULAR | _____ | |

ON-LINE APPLICATION DATE SUBMITTED: _____

- PAPER APPLICATION (ATTACH ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS, APPLICATION FORM, CHECKS, ESSAYS AND SUPPLEMENTS)

WHOM HAVE YOU ASKED TO WRITE YOUR TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING OFFICIAL TEST SCORES SENT FROM COLLEGE BOARD OR ACT: WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.COM OR WWW.ACTSTUDENT.ORG

SHHS DOES NOT SEND SAT/ACT SCORES

SEND REGENTS SCORES

SCORES HAVE BEEN SENT TO THIS COLLEGE? YES, DATE: _____ NO

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

Glossary of Terms Used in College Counseling & Admissions

The following terms are commonly used by secondary school counselors and admissions personnel when working with college-bound students in admissions, choice of testing, and in discussing college life.

Admit – A student is offered admission to a college or a university to which the student has applied.

Admit/Deny – A student is offered admission to an institution, but denied financial aid.

Accelerated Study – A college program of study completed in less time than is usually required, most often by attending classes in the summer and/or by taking extra courses during the regular academic terms. Completion of a bachelor's degree program in three years is an example of accelerated study.

Accreditation – Recognition by an organization or agency that a college meets certain acceptable standards in its educational programs, services, and facilities. Regional accreditation applies to a college as a whole and not to any particular programs or courses of study at the college. Specialized accreditation of specific types of schools, any also be determined by a national organization. Institutional accreditation by regional accrediting associations and by national accrediting organizations is included in the *Handbook's* description of colleges. Information about the accreditation of specialized programs within a college by organizations such as American Chemical Society, American Dietetic Association, etc., is given in Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education published for the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation by the American Council on Education. See "Accrediting Associations" and "Other Institutional Accreditation" at the end of the Glossary.

Advanced Placement (AP) Program – A service of the College Board that provides high schools with course descriptions in college subjects and Advanced Placement examinations in these subjects. High schools implement the course and administer the examinations to interested students, who are then eligible for advanced placement, college credit, or both, on the basis of earning satisfactory scores.

American College Testing Program Assessment (ACT) – The ACT includes tests in English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. The ACT composite score referred to in some colleges' descriptions is the average of the students' scores on these four tests.

Associate Degree – A degree granted by a college or university after the satisfactory completion of a two-year full-time program of study or its part-time equivalent. In general, the associate of arts (AA) or associate of science (AS) degree is granted after students complete a program of study similar to the first two years of a four-year college curriculum. The associate in applied science (AAS) is awarded by many colleges upon completion of technological or vocational programs of study.

Bachelors or Baccalaureate Degree – A degree received after the satisfactory completion of a four or five-year, full-time program of study (or its part-time equivalent) at a college or university. The Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BS) are the most common baccalaureates.

Branch Campus – A small campus connected to, or part of, a large institution. Generally, students spend the first two (2) years at a branch campus and then transfer to the main campus to complete a

baccalaureate degree. A branch campus provides students with a smaller and more personal environment which can help the student mature personally and academically before moving to a larger atmosphere.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA) – A college subscribing to this agreement will not require any applicants offered admission as freshmen to notify the college of their decision to attend (or to accept an offer of financial aid) before May 1 of the year the applicant applies. The purpose of the agreement is to give applicants time to hear from all of the colleges to which they have applied before having to make a commitment to any of them.

College –Level Examination Program (CLEP) – A program of examinations in undergraduate college courses that provides students and adults the opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement. The examinations are used by colleges to award credit to entering freshman and adults completing their education. They are also used by business, industry, government, and professional groups to satisfy educational requirements for advancement, licensing, and admission to training programs.

College-Preparatory Subjects – A term used to describe subjects required for admission to, or recommended as preparation for college. It is usually understood to mean subject form the fields of English, history, social studies, foreign languages, mathematics, science, and the arts.

College Scholarship Service (CSS) – A service of the College Board that assists postsecondary institutions, state scholarship programs and other organizations in the equitable distribution of student financial aid funds by measuring a family’s financial strength and analyzing its ability to contribute to college costs. CSS provides the Profile Form with which students may apply for nonfederal aid at some private colleges.

Combined Bachelor’s/Graduate Degree – A program to which students are accepted for study at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. These programs usually can be completed in less time than two individual programs.

Control – A college or a university can be under public or private control. Publicly controlled colleges are dependent on state legislative funding, and their policies are frequently influenced by the federal, state, or local (community) rules and regulations. Privately controlled colleges are responsible to a board of directors or trustees. They usually have a higher tuition to protect the institution’s endowment.

Cooperative Education – A college program in which a student alternates between periods of full-time study and full-time employment in a related field. Students are paid for their work at the prevailing rate. Typically, five years are required to complete a bachelor’s degree under the cooperative plan, but graduates have the advantage of about a year’s practical work experience in addition to their studies. Some colleges refer to this sort of program as work-study, but it should not be confused with the federally sponsored Work-Study Program.

Course Load – The number of course credit hours a student is enrolled in each semester. Twelve credit hours is a minimum to be considered a full-time student. The average course load per semester is fifteen credit hours.

Credit Hours – The number of hours per week that courses meet is counted as equivalent credits for financial aid and to determine a student’s status as full-time or part-time. Upon successful completion of a course, credit hours are applied to graduation requirements.

Cross-Registration – The practice, through agreements between colleges, of permitting students enrolled at one college or university to enroll in courses at another institution without formally applying for admission to the second institution.

Cumulative Grade Point Average – A grade point average that is based on all previously completed work (see Grade Point Average).

Deferred Admission – The practice of postponing enrollment for one year after acceptance to the college.

Double Major – Any program of study in which a student completes the requirements of two majors concurrently.

Early Action – A student applies to an institution early in the senior year and requests an early notification of his/her admission to the institution. If the student is accepted, he/she is not obligated to attend that institution.

Early Admission – The practice of admitting certain students who have not completed high school, usually students of exceptional ability who have completed their junior year to attend college. These students are then enrolled full-time at the college, and eliminate the senior year of high school. Colleges usually award a high school diploma to the early-admitted students after they have completed a certain number of college level courses.

Early Decision Plan – A student applies to an institution early in the senior year and requests an early notification of his/her admission status. It is a contract between the student and the institution. If the student is accepted, he/she is obligated to attend that institution.

English Language Learners – Limited English proficient students who speak English as a second language and who wish to take college –level courses need to demonstrate proficiency in English. TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam is a commonly used test to determine the level of English language proficiency.

ESL – English as a second language program offers a variety of courses and schedules to meet the needs of a diverse population with limited English proficiency.

External Degree Program – A system of study whereby a student earns credit toward a degree through independent study, college courses, proficiency examinations, and personal experience. External degree colleges generally have no campus or classroom facilities many are referred to as a “college without walls.”

Federal Pell Grant Program - A federally sponsored and administered program that provides grants based on need to undergraduate students. Congress annually sets the dollar range. Currently a Pell Grant cannot exceed \$2,300 per year.

Federal Perkins Loan Program – (Formerly called the National Direct Student Loan Program or NDSL.) A federally funded program based on need, and administered by colleges, that provides low-interest loans of up to \$3,000 per year during undergraduate study and up to \$15,000 for the total undergraduate program. The combined cumulative total of loan funds available to an individual for undergraduate and graduate education is \$30,000. Repayment need not begin until completion of the student’s education or after limited periods of service in the military. Peace Corps or attendance at an approved comparable program.

Federal Stafford Loan – A federal program based on need allows students to borrow money for educational expenses directly from banks and other lending institutions (sometimes from the colleges themselves). The amounts that may be borrowed depend on the student’s year in school.

Federal Work Study Program – An arrangement by which a student combines employment and college study. The employment may be an integral part of the academic program (as in cooperative education or internships) or simply a means of paying for college.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - All students must file the federally sponsored Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to apply for the federal financial aid programs. For many colleges, this may be the only need analysis form students will need to file. For other schools, particularly private colleges and some state schools, the PROFILE may also be required. To apply for state financial aid programs, the FAFSA may be all that is needed, but students should check with the state agency to learn if any other application forms need to be submitted. The forms that are most commonly required are the following:

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) of the U.S. Department of Education
- PHEAA Aid Information Request (PAIR) of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (Pennsylvania applicants only)

Gapping – The difference between what a student’s financial aid needs are and the amount of the financial aid package offered by the institution.

Grade-Point Average (GPA) – A system used by many schools for evaluating the overall scholastic performance of students. It is found by first determining the number of grade points a student has earned in each course completed and then dividing the sum of all grade points by the number of hours of coursework carried. Grade points are found by multiplying the number of hours of course work carried. Grade points are found by multiplying the number of hours given for a course by the student's grade in the course. The most common system of numerical values for grades is A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, and E or F=0.

Grants/Scholarships – Are general terms that describe the outright gift of a sum of money to a student. Most grants or scholarships are controlled by the financial aid office at the institution. While they are generally based on need, many institutions reserve some funds to award to students based on academic, leadership, or athletic excellence. The availability of these funds varies from college to college.

Greek Life – The influence of sororities and fraternities on the campus life of an institution.

HEOP/EOP – The Higher Educational Opportunity program is for students who need academic and financial support in order to compete successfully in college. These programs provide counseling, remedial instruction, tutorial services, and a financial aid stipend for educational expenses.

Honors Program – Any special program for very able students that offers the opportunity for educational enrichment, independent study, acceleration, or some combination of these characteristics.

Independent Study – An arrangement that allows students to complete some of their college program by studying independently and completing group assignments instead of attending scheduled classes. Typically, students plan programs of study in consultation with a faculty advisor or committee, to whom they may report periodically and submit a final report for evaluation and/or a grade.

Interdisciplinary – Programs or courses that use the knowledge from a number of academic disciplines, such as a combination of biology and physical science, or of engineering and business.

International Baccalaureate (IB) – A comprehensive and rigorous two-year curriculum (usually taken in the final two years of high school) that is similar to the final year of secondary school in Europe. More than 100 high schools in the United States have an IB program. Some colleges award credit or advanced placement to students who have completed an IB program.]

Internships – Short-term, supervised work experiences, usually related to a student's major field, for which the student earns academic credit. The work can be full or part time, on or off campus, paid or unpaid. Student teaching and apprenticeships are examples of internships.

Major – A major is determined by the number, concentration, or credit hours in a particular subject area.

Matriculation – A point in college admission when a student is formally admitted into a curriculum, under standard college procedures. A student must be matriculated in order to apply for financial aid and/or try out for intercollegiate athletic programs.

Merit Award of Merit Based Scholarships – Money awarded to students based on academic performance, SAT tests and other designated criteria. These scholarships are not based on financial need, and do not have to be repaid. The money must be used to cover college costs.

Need Award - Financial aid requested by a student is considered when making an admission decision.

Need Blind – Admission decisions are made regardless of a student’s financial aid request. Actually, financial need is not considered (or even known) when making an admission decision.

Non-Matriculated – A student has either not been formally admitted into a curriculum or has been academically dismissed. This classification excludes a student from financial aid and/or intercollegiate athletics.

Open Admissions – The college admissions policy of admitting high school graduates and other adults generally without regard to conventional academic qualifications, such as high school subjects, high school grades, and admission tests scores. Virtually all applicants with high school diplomas or their equivalents are accepted when an institution adheres to the open admissions policy.

Quarter – An academic calendar period of about 11 weeks. Four quarters make up an academic year, but at colleges using the quarter system, students make normal academic progress by attending three quarters each year. In some colleges, students can accelerate their programs by attending all four quarters in one or more years and completing a college program early.

Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) – Programs conducted by certain colleges in cooperation with the United States Air Force, Army, and Navy. Local recruiting offices of the services themselves can supply detailed information about these programs, as can participating colleges.

Residency Requirements – Most colleges and universities require that a student spend a minimum number of terms taking courses on campus (as opposed to independent study or transfer credits from other colleges) to be eligible for graduation. Also, residency requirements can refer to the minimum amount of time a student is required to have lived in a state in order to be eligible for in-state tuition at a public (state-controlled) college or university.

Retention Rate – The number and percentage of returning students at a given college.

Rolling Admissions – An admissions procedure by which the college considers each student’s application as soon as all required credentials, such as school records and test scores, have been received. The college usually notifies applicants of its decision without delay.

SAT Program – A program of the College Board that provides college entrance tests and services for students planning to go to college. Included are the SAT I: Reasoning Test and the SAT II: Subject Tests.

SAT II: Subject Tests – Formerly called Achievement Tests: The College Board tests students' knowledge in specific secondary school subjects, given at test centers in the United States and other countries on specified dates throughout the year. Sat II tests are used by colleges not only to help with decision about admission but also in course placement and exemption of enrolled freshman from taking certain subjects, or permitting them to take advanced courses.

Score Choice – An option in SAT II whereby a student may review his/her scores before reporting them to a college. A student may also choose which SAT II test score to release: all, some, or none.

Semester – A period of about 17 or 18 weeks that makes up half of the usual academic year in colleges using this type of calendar.

Stafford Loan (unsubsidized) – A low interest loan that is available to all students regardless of need. Interest on loan is payable while the student is attending college. All other features are the same as for the Stafford Loan – subsidized.

Stafford Loan (subsidized) – A federally subsidized, low interest loan made by a bank, credit union, or savings and loan institution. Borrowers must show need through the FAFSA.

Student Search Service – A College Board program designed to help colleges identify potential applicants with the particular academic or personal characteristics they are seeking. The service also provides students with an opportunity to learn about colleges with programs and characteristics they want. Information is gathered about students who wish to participate through the Students Descriptive Questionnaire of the SAT program and the biographical section of the PSAT/NMSQT answer sheet. The College Board then supplies each participating college with the names and addresses of the students who have the particular characteristics they specify. The service is free to students. Colleges can also identify students who participated in the Advanced Placement (AP) Program through the AP Program Search.

Study Abroad – Any arrangement by which a student completes part of the college program – typically the junior year but sometimes only a semester or a summer – studying in another country. A college may operate a campus abroad, or it may have a cooperative agreement with some other institution.

Suitcase College – A term used by students to describe a college whose resident students frequently go home on weekends, thereby creating less active student life on campus during weekends.

TAP – Tuition Assistance Program of New York State. It is a financial aid program based on an established formula.

Teacher Preparation – A college program designed to prepare students to meet the requirements for certification as teachers in elementary and secondary schools.

Terminal Program – An education program in a two-year college (or a four-year college that offers associate degrees) primarily for students who plan to continue their studies in a four-year college or university. Students do not have to earn an associate degree to qualify for transfer.

Transfer Student – A student who has attended another college for any period, which may be defined by various colleges as anytime from a single term up to three years. A transfer student may receive credit for all or some of the courses successfully completed before the transfer.

Trimester – An academic calendar period of about 15 weeks. Three trimesters make up one year. Students normally progress by attending two of the three trimesters each year, and in some colleges can accelerate their programs by attending all three trimesters in one or more years and thus be able to graduate early.

Two-Year Upper Division College – A college offering bachelor's degree program that begins with junior year. Entering students must have completed the freshman and sophomore years at other colleges.

Upper Division – The junior and senior years of study. Some colleges offer only upper-division study. Students must have completed the freshman and sophomore years (lower division) at other institutions before entering the upper-division institution to earn their bachelor's degree.

Visiting/Exchange Student Program – Any arrangement between a student and a college that permits study for a semester or more at another college.

Wait List – A student is not offered admission, but is placed on a waiting list should an opening occur. If an opening becomes available the student is admitted. After a certain time, if an opening is not available, the student receives a rejection notice.

Work Study – An arrangement by which a student combines employment and college study. The employment may be an integral part of the academic program (as in cooperative education and internships) or simply a means of paying for college (as in Federal Work-Study Program).

Yield – The percentage of accepted students who will actually matriculate at an institution.

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www.ets.org – TOFEL exam

www.nacanet.org – National Association of College Admission Counselors

Completing Sleepy Hollow High School Pre-Application Paperwork



In order for your counselor to prepare the best possible letter of recommendation for you, you must complete and submit to the School Counseling Office information about yourself. The more information we have, the easier it will be to prepare a strong letter of recommendation. **Please do your best to submit this information before leaving for summer vacation.**

- **Autobiography** completed by you and submitted to your counselor.

- **Senior Information Sheet** completed by you and submitted to your counselor.

- **Parent Bragg Sheet** completed by a parent/guardian and submitted to your counselor.

- **College Campus Visit Notes Worksheet** to be used by students when visiting colleges – this does NOT need to be submitted to your counselor.

Name _____ Social Security # _____
(optional to provide this)

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

As part of your college application, your counselor is responsible for completing a “Secondary School Report”, which includes a letter of recommendation. The counselor hopes to present some sense of your promise for further personal and intellectual growth. In order to convey the unique qualities that make you “you”, we need an honest assessment of yourself, what you have done, and what you have left to do.

Please take the time to think about whom you are and where you are headed. Don't limit yourself to discussing only what has happened to you at school; incorporate experiences and activities drawn from any part of your life, and **please be specific**.

We recommend that you make a copy of this autobiography to assist you in writing your college applications. **Please use blue or black ink only.**

1. Which courses have interested you the most? Please explain.

2. Which course has given you the most difficulty? Please explain.

3. What do you *choose to learn* when you can learn on your own? Consider interests pursued beyond class assignments: topics chosen for research papers, lab reports, individual projects, independent reading, jobs, volunteer work or hobbies. What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?

4. List two to three books you have read in the last 12 months, preferably not books assigned to class.

5. What has been your most stimulating intellectual or academic experience in recent years outside of school i.e.; summer experiences, travel. Explain how it influenced your personal growth.

6. Do you feel your high school grades reflect your ability? Yes _____ or No _____
If not, what circumstances have prevented you from realizing your full potential?

7. Are there any outside circumstances in your recent experience or background that have interfered with your academic performance? Are there any physical disabilities or difficult circumstances outside of school that may have affected you?

8. If you have traveled or lived in different localities, comment on those significant experiences.

10. What two or three issues in the world are you the most concerned about or interested in? Explain.

11. What out-of-school activities have helped you develop better interpersonal skills? Give examples.

12. Please give three words to describe yourself academically and 3 words to describe yourself personally:

Academically	Personally

13. What is your possible college major? _____

14. What do you consider your greatest strengths? Please elaborate.

15. What do you consider your weaknesses? Please elaborate.

16. How would people who know you well describe you? Would you agree with their assessment? How have you grown or changed during your high school years?

17. Who has had the greatest impact on your life and why?

18. Which of your personal and/or academic qualities do you feel are most important to bring to the attention of college admissions officials, including special talents or unique characteristics?

19. What are you enthusiastic about?

Name _____

Senior Information Sheet

Extracurricular Activities in School

Please list your extracurricular activities in the order of their importance to you. Please remember to include your intended senior year activities.

Activity	9	10	11	12	Hours per week	Weeks per year	Positions held, honors won, or letters earned

Work Experience

List any jobs including summer employment you have held during the past three years.

Specific nature of work	Employer	Approx. dates of employment	Approx. # of hours/week

Sleepy Hollow High School Parent Bragg Sheet

As a parent, since you have spent more time with your child than any person in his or her life, we ask that you please share your insights on this form.

Student's Name _____

1. In which areas have you witnessed the most development and growth in your child?

2. What are your child's outstanding personality traits?

3. If you had to describe your child choosing five or six adjectives, which ones would you use?

4. Have there been any unusual personal circumstances that have affected your child's educational experiences or personal development? Please explain.

continued...

5. Please describe your child in terms of achievement in school. What examples would you use to describe your child at his or her best in the school setting?

6. Please describe your child as a person. What qualities do you most admire? What anecdote might illustrate your child at his or her best?

7. What would you most like a college admissions officer to know about your child?

Parent signature _____ Date _____

Campus Visit Notes Worksheet

Name of College: _____ Date of Visit: _____

General Impressions:

Best thing about this college was:

Academic Offerings:

How is the curriculum structured? What are the strongest programs? Are there rigid requirements? What are the offerings in your field of interest?

Campus Facilities:

What was the appearance of the campus? Are the facilities modern and accessible? Where has the college spent its money (on classrooms, athletic facilities, dormitories, library)?

Location:

What are the plusses and minuses of the college's location?

Social Life:

What is the overall social environment on campus? Does it tend to be Greek-oriented, centered on athletics, intellectually and culturally alive?

Student Body:

If you visit in the summer, be sure not to judge a college by just one tour guide. If you visit when classes are in session, what impressions did the students leave you with? Are they outgoing and friendly or exclusive and snobby?

Overall Impressions:

Questions that still need to be answered:
