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I. INTRODUCTION

Dear Students and Parents,

Over the next few months, you will be faced with several decisions. As with any major decision, having the appropriate information to make the decision is essential.

Presented in this booklet are important facts, procedures, and suggestions in order to help you make a decision about what to do after high school graduation. Whatever you may decide, the information included in this manual should prove to be helpful. Whether you are just beginning the decision-making process or you have already decided what you will be doing, this information can help clarify questions and be an important resource for you.

It should be stressed that the Ridgeway High School Guidance Department views the college selection procedure as a process, and an integral part of the process is the importance of early planning. By following a structured process, an individual and family will be better prepared to make the best decision, and hopefully, reduce the level of stress that may come with it.

This manual should be used as a reference to supplement the work you do with your guidance counselor. Your guidance counselor will be meeting with you on an individual basis to help you with the issues facing your decision. Be sure to utilize the numerous resources in the guidance office and career section in the school library and consult with your guidance counselor on a regular basis. You want to make certain that you are making the best decisions. This means using other people for assistance as well as a resource.

As with any book or pamphlet, the only way to utilize the knowledge it contains is to read it. You are strongly encouraged to read through this material and write down questions as they arise. In addition, you will find a glossary of terms in the Appendix section if you are unsure of what a term means. There is also a list of sources for further information if you have questions that are not answered in the text or explore a topic further.

Parents, you should also be aware of the decisions facing your son/daughter. If you have already had a child go through the transition out of high school, then you may already know some of this material, but it never can hurt to review it again. Whatever your child decides, you should be involved in the process, as your input will be important. Try to prevent yourself from making the final decision for him/her, as it really is the child's decision. This will also teach responsibility for decision making and the consequences related to that. Having your support will make their decision making process much easier and comforting. As a parent, you are the number one influence on your child and the decision s/he will make.

Good luck with the decisions that you face and please do not hesitate to contact the Guidance Office for further assistance.

Sincerely,

THE RIDGEWAY HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT

II. GETTING READY FOR COLLEGE

8th Grade Year

- Apply for a Social Security Number if you do not already have one.
- Talk to friends and family about careers and possible school choices.
- Consult with your middle and high school guidance counselors to find out which courses you should take that will qualify you to attend certain colleges and/or enter certain career fields.
- Discuss your financial situation with your parents to see how they can assist you in paying for your education. Work together to establish a savings plan in which you can participate. Learn about financial aid from your school counselor.

Freshman Year

- Build a flexible schedule allowing for study time, extracurricular activities, and your other interests. Use a daytimer, calendar or electronic organizer to help you get organized.
- Get involved only in extracurricular activities that you have a genuine interest in and those to which you are willing to make the necessary time commitment.
- Make a four-year schedule of classes that increases your eligibility to attend the college of your choice.
- Start developing a resume by keeping a scrapbook of your accomplishments including articles about yourself.
- Take your parents with you to talk to your counselor about your interests, post-secondary possibilities, and career information.
- Find out about summer jobs and how to gain the skills necessary to obtain one. Look into volunteer opportunities that will expand your experience and skills.

Sophomore Year

- Visit the guidance department and explore college catalogs and other college materials including financial aid information.
- Re-evaluate your high school course selection to make sure it meets college requirements.
- Try to complete most of your academic requirements by your junior year.
- Take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) and/or the PLAN (Preliminary ACT) in October to prepare you for college entrance exams. The PSAT may qualify you for certain scholarships.
- See your counselor to take interest inventories to discover which career(s) might be a match for you.
- If pursuing athletics, check out NCAA requirements.

III. TIMELINE FOR JUNIORS

- **Fall - August through December**

- Take the PSAT in October to practice taking entrance exams and to establish eligibility for some scholarships.
- Attend sessions with college representatives who visit your high school. You may find it helpful to visit local college fairs.
- Develop a list of possible post-secondary schools. Your counseling office and/or school library may have books and materials to help you. Send off for admissions literature and applications from the schools that are on the top of your list. Talk with an admissions representative to determine if there are any institutional scholarships for which you could apply.
- Begin researching private sources of financial aid such as scholarships and write for applications. Request financial aid bulletins from all potential schools. Estimate the costs for each school and begin identifying ways to meet them.

- **Spring - January through May**

- Take the SAT/ACT. Check with your intended college(s) about which test they prefer.
- Begin narrowing your choices for post-secondary schools. Schedule campus visits. Consider an overnight trip that would allow for you to get a feel for what life is like on that particular campus.
- Now is the time to check with your counselor, libraries, community organizations, and *Student Outreach Services* for the names and addresses of possible scholarship sources. Send for applications as soon as possible. Keep records of anyone you speak with concerning grants or scholarships.
- Start developing portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talents required for college admission and/or for scholarships.
- If you plan to play sports in college, write to college coaches at your target schools. Include a schedule of your athletic events for the upcoming year. Register with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. Develop a resume of your sports accomplishments including a highlight tape and relevant articles about your successes.

- **Summer**

- Practice writing online applications, filling out rough drafts, without submitting them.
- Review applications, especially the essays. Ask others to proof the essay for any grammar, content or punctuation errors.
- Read all college mail and send reply cards back to schools of interest.
- Apply for those scholarships whose deadlines are in the fall. You may be too busy once school starts.

IV. TIMELINE FOR SENIORS

• **Fall - August through December**

- Make sure you continue to meet high school graduation and college admission requirements.
- Organize and record relevant dates on a calendar so you can plan your year more efficiently.
- Register for the Advanced Placement (AP) tests, if needed.
- Make copies of your admissions and financial aid forms. Practice filling them out before doing the final one.
- Meet with visiting recruiters from the schools that interest you.
- Arrange visits to schools you are considering and schedule admissions interviews if required.
- Make the final preparation of your portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talent required for admission and/or for scholarships. Finalize your resume to send with your applications.
- Submit your college admissions applications. Watch out for deadlines.
- Talk with your parents about what type budget you'll be on your freshman year.
- Take or retake the ACT or SAT.
- Keep records of everything you submit.
- Identify at least two of the following to write solid recommendation forms for you: a teacher, an extracurricular advisor, a counselor, a principal, or an employer. Give the recommendation forms to teachers, counselors, etc. at least one month before they are due. Follow up on the progress of these recommendations.
- If seeking athletic scholarships, contact the coaches from the schools you are considering and include a resume of your accomplishments.

• **Spring - January through May** **Suffering Through Senioritis**

- Apply for financial aid by completing and submitting your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after January 1 as possible. The FAFSA is available from your guidance counselor, from your college's financial aid office, or online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.
- Call the school of your choice and confirm that they have received your admissions applications materials, including letters of recommendation and housing applications.
- Request that your high school send a copy of your transcript to the school where you have applied. Make sure your first semester senior year grades are included on the transcript.
- The information you receive back, after the FAFSA is processed, is the Student Aid Report (SAR). If any portion of the information on the SAR is incorrect, please correct it and resubmit it to the processing center.

- Submit any additional financial aid forms and documentation that is required by the school of your choice. Some of these forms may be available online including the FAFSA and some admission applications.
- Notify the school(s) in writing as to whether you are accepting or declining admission by the proper deadline.
- Review your financial aid award letter with your parents and be sure that you **understand** the terms and conditions that accompany each kind of aid. Sign your financial aid award letter and return it to the school.
- Notify the financial aid office of any outside scholarships or grants that you have accepted since your initial application.
- Be aware of due dates for tuition, fees, room and board, and other expenses. Find out how your financial aid will be disbursed and whether you can defer payments until the funds are available.
- Respond immediately to **all** correspondence regarding school, scholarships, and financial aid.
- Participate in summer orientation programs for incoming freshman after graduation.
- Meet all class registration deadlines.

Remember: The financial aid process begins again in January for the next year of study!

V. SELF-EVALUATION

The questions that follow can help you focus on college selection and admission or employment opportunities that you may want to pursue after graduation. You may feel embarrassed or self-conscious when you first consider these questions. Nevertheless, an honest and thoughtful self-evaluation can prepare you for questions that you will need to answer in making your decision. A serious look at yourself will help you to learn more about what you want to do with your life. Keep in mind that this process may take some time to really gain valuable insight into who you are, so don't despair if answers are not readily available. This process may even provide you with an impetus for further exploration.

YOUR GOALS AND VALUES:

1. What aspects of your high school years have been most meaningful to you? If you could live this period over again, would you do anything differently?
2. What values are most important to you? What do you care most about? What occupies most of your energy, effort, and/or thoughts?
3. How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
4. What kind of person would you like to become? Of your unique gifts and strengths, which would you like to develop? What would you most like to change about yourself?
5. Is there anything you have ever secretly wanted to do or be? If you had a year to go anywhere and do whatever you wanted, how would you spend that year?
6. What experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

YOUR EDUCATION

1. What are your academic interests? Which courses have you enjoyed the most? Which courses have been most difficult?
2. 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, independent projects; independent reading; school activities; job or volunteer work. What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?
3. How do you learn best? What methods of teaching and style of teacher engage your interest the most?
4. How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss issues, and exchange ideas? What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience in recent years?
5. How would you describe your school? Are learning and academic success respected? Has the school's environment encouraged you to develop your interests, talents, and abilities? Have you felt limited in any way? What would you preserve or change about the school if you were able to?

6. How well has your school prepared you for college or employment opportunities? In what areas of skills or knowledge do you feel most confident or least confident? Have you been challenged by your courses? If so, How?
7. Have you worked up to your potential? Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? Are your SAT scores? What do you consider the best measures of your potential for college work?
8. Are there any outside circumstances (in your recent experiences or background), which have interfered with your academic performance? Consider such factors as after school jobs, home responsibilities or difficulties, excessive school activities, illness or emotional stress, parental influences, English not spoken at home, or other factors that are unique to your background.

YOUR ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

1. What activities do you most enjoy outside the daily routine of classes and other responsibilities? What activities have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made different choices?
2. Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence, or contribution to other individuals, your family and/or school?
3. How would others describe your role in school or your home community? What do you consider your most significant contribution?
4. After a long, hard day, what do you most enjoy doing? What is fun or relaxing for you?

THE WORLD AROUND YOU

1. How would you describe your family and home? Have they influenced your way of thinking? How have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited by them?
2. What do your parents and friends expect from you? How have their expectations influenced the goals and standards you set for yourself? Have you felt it necessary to conform?
3. What is the most controversial issue you have encountered in recent years? Why does the issue concern you? What is your reaction to the controversy? What is your opinion about the issue?
4. Have you ever encountered people who think and act differently from you? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?
5. What concerns you most about the world around you? Assuming obligation and opportunity to change the world, where would you start? How would this make you feel?
6. Who are your current or historical heroes or heroines?
7. What books have you read which have changed your way of thinking? Who are some of your

favorite writers? Why?

8. How would someone who knows you well describe you? Your best qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings? Would you agree with their assessment? How have you grown or changed during your high school years?
9. Which relationships are most important to you and why? Describe the people whom you consider your best friends? Your best critics? Your best advocates? In what ways are they similar to or different from you?
10. Describe the students at your school. Which ones do you feel you are close to? Do you feel alienated from any? What kind of people do you admire the most? Generally, how do you respond to people who think and act differently from what you expect? How do you feel about your teachers?
11. How are you influenced by others who are important to you? How important to you are approval, rewards, and recognition? How do you respond to pressure, competition, or challenge? How do you react to failure, disappointment, or criticism?
12. How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself? What are the best decisions you have made recently? How much do you rely on direction, advice, or guidance from others? Have you ever chosen anything because it was new or interesting? How important are fads and fashions?

Hopefully, by answering these questions honestly, you have a better understanding of yourself and what direction you may be headed. You should also discuss your responses with your counselor.

VI. CHOOSING A COLLEGE

Choosing a college can seem like the most important decision you'll ever make. After all, your college education will affect the rest of your life. What if I make the wrong choice? What if I am not happy there? What if I don't learn anything? What if I don't get in? The college admissions process can be very scary.

First of all, relax. With the post baby-boom decline in population and economic situation, most colleges need you as much as you need them. Second, if you don't like the institution, you can always transfer to another school. There may be other problems that could be easily remedied. If you can make it through the first semester, your chances of surviving are much better. Eventually, as time goes on, you will have more friends and be participating in more activities which make this time period some of the best years of your life.

The best source of information is your high school guidance counselor. Your counselor's job is to help you determine what field you want to enter and to find the best school for a particular major or characteristic you want. The guidance office will have a variety of catalogs and brochures to assist you in researching schools and narrowing down your choices. If you aren't sure what you want to study or where you want to go, your guidance counselor can help to clarify your questions and concerns. Your family and peers can also be helpful in this process.

It is, however, up to you to answer the following questions:

1. What field do I want to study? There are numerous possibilities but you have to find the one which is best for you.

The most important reason for you to be going to college is to further your education. The learning environment and availability of your major and courses you want are important in this process.

Whether a college offers a particular major or area of study should be of great concern to you. If you are uncertain what your exact major should be at this time. You are not alone. You should do some exploratory work in your career library located in the Guidance Office. Both computer and written career decision instruments are available to assist you in this process. The Self Evaluation on page 6 is another resource to utilize. The next step is to investigate career opportunities and qualifications to determine what major is the best for you based upon your interests. Don't be afraid if you don't come up with specifics and don't let this stop you from going to college. Many students graduate with a major that has no direct correlation to their future occupations.

If you are in this situation, you should look at colleges that offer a variety of majors or majors in a career cluster which are of interest to you (ex: several majors within the health fields) so when the time does come to choose, you will have plenty of options. Some students are unable to select a major and enter college undecided or change their major. Colleges are prepared for this and have guidelines in place to assist you when and if the time comes. Usually students who are undecided can investigate different majors by taking several introductory classes in their freshmen year, so as to give you a range of possibilities. For many students, this approach is most advantageous as it may create an option not considered previously.

The important decision for students who are undecided about a major is to choose a school with which you feel comfortable and confident that you will be able to major in an area of interest.

2. What kind of college do I want to attend? There are several kinds of schools that include the following:

COLLEGE: An institution that offers educational instruction beyond high school level in a two or four year program.

UNIVERSITY: An academic institution that grants degrees in a variety of fields and is composed of a number of schools or colleges, each of which encompasses a general field of study. Universities are usually much larger than colleges and offer a wider variety of opportunities. In most cases, students apply to an individual school or college within the university.

LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE: A four-year institution that emphasizes a broad program or major. A pre-professional or professional training program may be available but it is most likely not to be stressed as much.

TEACHERS COLLEGE: A college that specializes in the training of teachers in many areas of education.

JUNIOR/COMMUNITY COLLEGE: A two-year institution that provides academic programs that lead to an Associate's Degree. Students can then transfer to a four-year institution to get their Bachelor's Degree if they so choose. Such a college may or may not be residential.

ENGINEERING OR TECHNOLOGICAL COLLEGE: Independent professional school that provides a four-year training program in the fields of engineering and the physical sciences. These are sometimes called Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL: A two-year institution that offers terminal occupational programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment in the field. These schools may also offer one-year certificate programs in certain crafts and clerical skills.

NURSING SCHOOL: There are three kinds of nursing schools. At schools affiliated with hospitals, students receive an R.N. diploma upon successful completion of training and state certification. There are also schools affiliated with four-year colleges where students receive both a B.S. and a R.N. diploma and finally, junior colleges that may offer a two-year nursing program and A.S. Degree in Nursing.

MILITARY SCHOOL: There are federal military academies that prepare officers for the Navy, Army, Air Force and Merchant Marines. To be admitted requires a U.S. Senate or Representative to nominate and recommend you. Private and state supported military institutions, including the U.S. Coast Guard, operate on a regular admissions process. Various degrees are offered, particularly in the field of military science.

BUSINESS SCHOOL: Business schools may include college specialization in business administration or a junior college degree in clerical and administrative support.

TRADE SCHOOL: Trade schools offer specialized training in specific work field such as cosmetology, computer technology, medical or dental technology, culinary arts or drafting.

PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL: Professional schools may include specialized study in areas such as art, music, dance, photography, architecture or drama.

TWO-YEAR SCHOOLS VS. FOUR-YEAR SCHOOLS

A four-year school offers a baccalaureate or bachelor's degree. A variety of majors and programs are

offered. Most schools provide residence halls and dining facilities. The programs tend to be broad and provide many opportunities for the students. Specific vocational training is often not the focus.

A two-year school can provide either additional training after high school or be a stepping-stone to a four-year school. The career or vocational program provides a student with specific training in order to learn a marketable skill. For students who plan to transfer, the two-year college provides the introductory framework you will need for advanced study. Some junior colleges offer on campus housing and dining facilities.

Community colleges are two-year state, supported schools that are primarily non-residential. They offer low tuition programs and have arrangements with many four-year schools to provide an easy transition into a bachelor degree program. Community colleges also provide career or vocational tracks.

3. What size school do I want? Do you want a school with 10,000 students or only a few hundred?

Colleges can range in size from 150 to 80,000 students. School size is broken down into categories that include small (under 1500 students), medium (1500-4000 students), and large (over 4000 students). Small schools offer you more personal involvement, a community atmosphere, and smaller classes, whereas the larger schools tend to be more impersonal, allow you to be anonymous and have much larger classes. Remember, smaller institutions may not have as many activities and opportunities to offer as would a larger institution.

Other questions to consider would include:

- What size was your high school? How did you feel about that? Do you want a similar experience in college?
- Will I feel closed in and trapped at a small college?
- Will I welcome the personal, friendly atmosphere a small college offers?
- Will I feel lost and overwhelmed at a large institution?
- Will I feel more independent and free at a large university?
- Will I want large or small classes?
- Do I want to interact with my instructors during class or would I prefer a large, more impersonalized style of instruction?
- Will I want to be at a campus that offers sororities and fraternities that I would find at larger institutions?
- Are the athletic facilities appropriate for my needs?
- Will I have other major options if I want to transfer?

4. Where do I want to be? Do you want to live close to home or far away? Being close to home can hinder your ability to experience independence, but being to far may make you lonely.

Location can be a very important factor when considering what college you attend. You need to consider the expense and distance of travel, the need for independence versus the desire to stay near your family and the effects of living in a particular climate.

5. What location do I want? Urban or rural? Rural colleges usually offer a campus atmosphere, while urban colleges tend to be in busy cities.

The campus setting is also important to your decision. Physical environment will make you feel more comfortable. Cultural, social, and economic activities are part of metropolitan areas and would be harder to find

at a rural college. You may want to be near the mountains, the ocean, or out in the country. Schools located in cities often are comprised of multi-storied buildings and high-rise dormitories with little open space, whereas schools in rural settings may be many miles from metropolitan areas. As part of your decision, you need to think about what lifestyle you are accustomed and if the school is going to meet your needs, especially since it may be your home for the next two to four years.

6. What life style do I want? There are conservative schools, athletic schools, religious affiliated schools, public vs. private, liberal schools, and fraternity/sorority schools to choose from.

In question #2 the kinds of schools available are described in detail, but there are other considerations you want to consider about the style of the school. For example, do you want to be at a conservative school versus a liberal school? The atmosphere will be very different at each institution. Other considerations include whether you want a single sex or a coeducational school. The student body type may also make a difference. Some schools place a heavy emphasis on extra curricular activities such as clubs and athletics. Whether the school offers fraternities and sororities should also be considered if you think that may be important to you. Religious affiliated schools may be another factor that may be important to you.

7. What can I afford? Do I have the flexibility of an expensive private school or I am limited to a less expensive state college?

Cost will play a major factor in making your decision. Not everyone can afford the more prestigious private schools even with the help of financial aid (see section IX page 31). Total costs per year for tuition, room, board, books, supplies, fees, personal expenses and transportation can range from a few hundred dollars to up to \$35,000, depending upon the circumstances. Thus, you have to know your limit and gauge your choices accordingly.

It is important to keep in mind that you may qualify for financial aid that would help to defray some of the expenses. Thus, you should not rule out a college until you have heard a decision from the Financial Aid Office. This will happen in the late spring, so you should choose several colleges and make decisions after you have received a financial aid package. Limiting prospective colleges on a cost basis alone may exclude some excellent colleges from your list.

8. What requirements do I need to be eligible for college?

Although this differs from institution to institution, you should work with your counselor in choosing the appropriate courses that provide you with the proper background for college. Most schools, although not all, require at least 4 years of English, 3 years of math, and 3 years of science, social studies, and a foreign language. Obviously, some schools and programs will require more of you. Consult with your guidance counselor and respective school (before your senior year) to determine the admissions course requirements and to arrange the appropriate course load for your senior year. When in doubt, taking more than the minimum will put you in a better position. Colleges will also look at the depth and difficulty of your courses when evaluating you for admission.

After you answer these questions, you need to go through one of the college handbooks and look for colleges that match your interests. Computer software is also available for this purpose. You can search by major, size, kind of school, etc. After you get a large list of schools, then you can start to narrow the choices down by doing

research specifically on each school. Career Information Systems (CIS) is available on the computer network and in the Career Center. This program allows you to do numerous searches for both career and college information. Free Internet searches are also available. (See Appendix, page 49, for specific web sites)

When your list is narrowed down, write to each school asking for an application and catalog or check in the Guidance Office to see if they have copies (see Appendix, page 59 for a sample letter). You may be able to go to the college's website to look at catalogs and apply online. In your Guidance Office there may also be other information such as videos, directories, and computer software to assist you in your search. This may eliminate your need to write to a school requesting information if you can tell from the literature that the school does not appeal to you.

The Internet is also fast becoming the method of choice to search for schools and request information. Although virtual tours can help to give you an initial look at a school, nothing can replace the campus visit (see page 15). A list of some common web pages for college searching can be found in the Appendix on page 4.

One of the common questions asked most frequently is, "How many colleges should be on my final list?" Well there is no universal answer to this question since each individual is different. Some students may only apply to one or two schools while others may select ten or twelve. Neither approach is the best. After carefully investigating your requirements of a college, you should be able to narrow your choices to approximately six or less that provide the services that you desire. You may want to consider placing the schools in the following categories:

- Category I Your top choices which would include "long shots" based upon your credentials and the admissions selectivity.

- Category II These schools should possess significant features that you want in the school and can be considered "realistic" schools.

- Category III Schools that have some of the features you are looking for and admission is highly likely. These can be called your "safety" schools.

While there is no hard fast rule regarding these categories, including one or two schools in each category is sufficient. You want to make sure that you apply to at least two "realistic" or "safety" schools to insure that you will be accepted and be able to make a choice when the time comes.

A FEW POINTS OF CAUTION

1. Many students spend hours deciding on their top few choices and very few minutes on their fifth or sixth choice. It is strongly advised that you take time in making those decisions since you may end up at one of those schools if admission and/or financial aid at your first choice(s) is not offered. You want to make sure that your "safety" schools reflect the needs that you desire, not just because they are inexpensive or admission is not as difficult.

2. Some students feel that schools that fall into Category II or III are not as good as those in Category I. This is not necessarily the case. The selectivity may be stricter in some schools, which decreases your chances of admission. A Category II or III school may be just as good as a school in Category I, which, because of the size or reputation, cannot offer admission to as many students.

3. Not all of the "good" schools are in the East. As a result of this country's growth and where the first

settlements began, the majority of colleges are located in the East. Schools outside of this region offer similar programs that may even be better than those within the region.

4. While the applicant pools at many colleges and universities are declining, this does not necessarily mean that you will be offered acceptance, especially at your top schools. Many institutions planned for the decline and adjusted budgets rather than lowering admission criteria. In fact, some of the "top" schools continue to receive as many applications that keep them just as competitive.
5. State schools are no longer as "safe" as they may have been. Students who can no longer afford the cost of a private college or university may have to look closer at public schools. Thus, competition increases especially for out-of-state students.

As part of your investigation of colleges, a visit to the campus may be appropriate, and in fact, you may want to have an interview, whether it is required or not, at the same time (interviews will be discussed in more detail in section VIII page 24). The summer before your senior year would be the best time to visit, since you would not have to miss school, but more than likely you will need time in the fall also. Many schools offer open house situations where you can attend informational sessions and learn more about the college and programs that are offered.

You should also have an opportunity to meet with college representatives when they visit your high school or are present at a local college fair. Colleges recruit heavily in the fall (Sept., Oct., & Nov.) and less so in the spring (Mar. & Apr.). By meeting with these representatives, you are able to ask questions about the college and its programs and receive literature and an application. To make these situations most advantageous, you should know which schools you want to meet with that have programs in which you are interested. Simply attending a college fair will not be useful if you have no direction. Contact your Guidance Office for specific dates and times of college visits and fairs. One important note of caution: These visits with college representatives should not take the place of a campus visit, but instead, should serve as a means of gathering information.

Even after completing this process, you may not be able to choose which colleges are for you. You are not alone. Many students wait until the very last moment to apply because they simply are not sure what they want, while others will transfer to another institution because they find that their first decision was not the best one. The decision making process comes down to two points, what criteria are you looking for in a school, and is that school a realistic option for you. Academic reputation, size, geographic location, student/faculty ratio, campus facilities, coed/single sex, extracurricular activities, social interaction, cost, financial aid, career counseling, private/public, health services, religious affiliation, academic competition, etc., are all factors which may play a part in your decision.

When investigating college admissions procedures, you should determine how selective the school is when making offers of admission. Are they looking more for high SAT/ACT scores or activities in which you were involved? If you happen to have a weak academic background, it may be best to look at less selective colleges. However, it is possible that your references and interview may be weighed more heavily than academic history. Thus, it is beneficial to investigate a college even though you may think that you have a limited chance of being admitted.

During this time you should begin to fill out your Student Data Sheet (see Appendix, page 53 for sample).

This will enable you to compile your activities and interest into one form. If you prefer, you may want to make up your own to include with your college applications.

THE CAMPUS VISIT

After you have applied to the schools of your choice, you want to make sure that you arrange for a visit, if you have not already done so. Some colleges have only certain days when they would like you to come for interviews and tours, so you need to check with them to determine what times are available. If at all possible, a visit to a college campus is critical before making a decision of acceptance.

Some schools require you to have an interview as part of the admissions process. If so, try to arrange the interview and tour at the same time. If you are not required to have an interview, you may choose to have one to learn more about the school from a professional staff member (see page 24 for more interview specifics.)

When making an appointment for a college visit you want to keep the following things in mind:

1. When do I want to visit? Is there a certain part of the year that is more convenient than another (summer vs. winter)?
2. What particular day can I visit? Planning the visit when high school is not in session may be best.
3. Have an alternate day in mind in case your first choice is not convenient for the college.
4. Who do I want to go with me? Do I want to go by myself, with my parents, with my friends, or with my family? Will I be more nervous if I am with others or by myself? If others do go with you, make sure you take the lead when you arrive by introducing yourself. Don't let someone else do it for you. If your parent(s) do go along, make sure that they know what their role will be so you will not become embarrassed or upset.
5. Plan how much time it will take you to get to the school in order to make an appointment at a convenient time for you (making an appointment for 9:00 am and it takes 5 hours to get there does not make much sense). Ask for a MAP!
6. Consider staying on campus overnight if that option is available. Eating in the cafeteria, sleeping in the dorms, and perhaps attending some classes will give you a better sense of what it is like to be on campus. You also want to check out as many of the facilities as possible.
7. If you are going to see two schools in the same vicinity on the same day, make sure that you allow enough time to see the schools without being rushed.
8. Make sure to make arrangements early enough so you are able to visit on the day of your choice. Many of the times available at popular colleges fill up very quickly.
9. Consider if you wish to meet with a coach or faculty member in your area of interest. Contact the person directly and determine if s/he could meet with you during your scheduled visit.
10. You should call the admissions office a few days in advance to confirm your appointment, especially if it was made several weeks in advance.
11. If you run into delays or get lost, call the Admissions Office to let them know that you are going to be delayed and how long it may be before you will arrive.

You may want to schedule two visits, perhaps at different times of the academic year. The summer is much more relaxed for you and for Admissions Offices. However, you miss seeing what it is like when the students are present. Thus, making two trips will enable you to see the differences. The comprehensive fall visits may be an option you want to use for your top schools.

It is best to avoid an unscheduled drop-in to an Admissions Office. Many times the counselors will already be scheduled and unable to meet with you and a tour may not be available. You may be lucky and find that they can accommodate you, but "dropping in" is discouraged and not a productive way to visit.

The college visit should be considered a time to look at the school and ask questions about programs, activities and the setting which will help you make a well informed decision if this may be the place for you. The tour of campus is one of the best times to ask candid questions about issues that the Admissions Office may gloss over. Many tour guides are students who can give insight from the student perspective.

VII. COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING

Standardized tests are only one of the many factors which colleges use in the admission process. Tests provide the admissions office with individual scores that are then compared to national performance. Tests are supposed to measure ability and achievement, yet they have been under a great deal of criticism lately. This has led to the decline in use of the scores as an indicator of college performance although most colleges still require your test results for admission. In some colleges, test scores are not used as an indicator of admission to the school, but to a particular major that may be more competitive. A brief description of the major tests and terms include:

1. THE CEEB

The CEEB (College Entrance Examination Board) is the organization that sponsors the most widely accepted battery of tests for college admissions. Registration materials are available in your guidance office and can be helpful to understanding the purpose, format, and score interpretation of the tests. The CEEB represents the Eastern half of the United States.

A. THE PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) is given in October for juniors and accelerated sophomores as a practice test for the SAT. It is a three hour test consisting of two verbal, two mathematics and one writing skills section. Detailed results help to alert students to what areas they scored best/worst in and predict an approximate equivalent score for the SAT. The PSAT is unique in that you receive your test booklet and correct answers with your results. Thus, you can go back and check your work. Of the over 1.2 million students who take the test annually, 15,000 become National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists that can later lead to academic honors. You should take the PSAT's even if you are only remotely interested in college since it gives you necessary practice.

Sophomores should only take the PSAT if they are looking seriously at selective schools and if they have had the proper courses, particularly geometry. Sophomores are not eligible for the National Merit competition.

B. THE SAT I

The SAT I (Scholastic Aptitude Test) is a multiple-choice test that measures verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities. The verbal sections consist of three parts – critical reading, analogies and sentence completion, while the math sections contain multiple choice, quantitative comparison and student generated, grid-in responses. Scores for each test range from 200 to 800 and the test takes approximately three hours to complete. SAT's are given at specific test centers throughout the country on specific dates (check online at www.collegeboard.com or with the Guidance Office for the dates and locations.) Many colleges require SAT scores as part of the application process.

C. SAT II TESTS

SAT II tests are diagnostic measures of actual knowledge acquired in specific areas. They are given in 18 different subject areas that include literature, writing, United States History, World History, Mathematics (2 levels), Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, Korean Japanese, Italian, biology (ecological/molecular) chemistry and physics. These tests are one hour in length and the scores range from 200 to 800. In general, you should not take an achievement test until you have nearly completed a subject. You can take up to three different subject tests on any one date. Not all colleges require SAT II's, so check to make sure if any are required or recommended. If you are unsure, it is best to take the English writing, the subject area in which you are going to major and another subject in which you feel most confident. Check with your guidance counselor and content teacher for their recommendation.

2. AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING (ACT)

The American College Testing (ACT) is a college entrance examination used primarily by many midwestern, western and southern colleges and universities. It tests English, reading, mathematics and science reasoning. Scores range from 1 to 36. A composite score of the four areas is given and the average composite score is 21. There is no penalty for guessing. Check with the Guidance Office for registration information and testing sites, since test areas are limited in the Northeast. If you are interested in a western college, determine if the ACT is required as soon as possible to avoid missing a local testing opportunity. In some cases, western colleges will accept SAT scores, but you would have to check with each school to see if it is acceptable.

3. TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is a standardized test primarily used for students whom English is not their native language and whose SAT scores would be negatively impacted as a result. Students whose first language is other than English should take the TOEFL rather than the SAT. However, if there is a question, contact the respective school in which you are interested to inquire as to what it would require. Students whom have demonstrated language skills may choose to take both tests.

REGISTRATION:

In order to register for the SAT I's and SAT II's, you need to obtain the Education Testing Service (ETS) registration booklet in your Guidance Office. You can also register by phone or on-line through the College Board's website (www.collegeboard.com.) Practice booklets are also available. You must fill out the registration form and mail it to the testing center in Princeton, NJ prior to the deadline with the appropriate fee. If you apply via the Internet or by phone, a credit card number will be necessary. When completing the form, you must make certain to obtain the proper school, state, and county codes in order to process your request expeditiously. When filling out the registration form, students should request scores be sent to colleges, which they are considering. Provided in the basic fee for the test would be report scores for four schools. If you are interested in more than four schools or request results be sent to additional schools after taking the test, you will need to pay an extra fee.

Waivers for the SAT tests are available for students who demonstrate financial hardship. See your counselor if you think you may qualify.

Testing dates are usually held as follows:

TEST DATES	TEST GIVEN
October	SAT I and SAT II
November	SAT I and SAT II
December	SAT I and SAT II
January	SAT I and SAT II
March/April	SAT I only
May	SAT I and SAT II
June	SAT I and SAT II

If you have missed a deadline (which means paying a late fee), you may try to take the test as a "stand by". To do this, a student must pay an additional fee (beyond the basic fee) and arrive at the testing center with no guarantee of admission. If space is available, then students can register on a first come, first serve basis. It is essential to have the registration form completed before arriving.

Students who have special needs may request untimed tests or other special provisions. For students with religious obligations that restrict him/her from taking the tests on a Saturday, special permission can be granted from CEEB to take the tests on an alternative day. Contact the Guidance Office for more information on these alternatives.

It is recommended that students take the SAT I in May of their junior year and again in November of their senior year, while taking the SAT II's in June of their junior year or December of their senior year. This is, however, arbitrary, but allows for opportunities to retake the tests to improve scores and to forward results to colleges in a timely fashion. *You cannot take both the SAT I and SAT II tests on the same day.

The SAT is the most common and widely used test and is a measure of developed verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities that predict success in college. Results of the test change as abilities develop. The majority of schools today are limiting the importance of the SAT in determining college admission, yet for some

programs it remains an important factor. Most colleges have a range of scores that they will consider when making admission decisions. DO NOT let low scores influence your chances of admission. You will never know if you do not try.

For students who are fearful of the test, consider taking special preparation programs to help improve scores. It should be noted that short-term efforts would prove little help in raising test scores. Only through long term preparation and academic courses can significant improvement occur. Students can gain practice by taking the PSAT/NMSQT, using practice tests, and by taking the SAT more than once if they want to improve their scores.

****The College Board code for the Ridgeway High School is 431-461.**

VIII. COLLEGE APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

STEPS IN APPLYING TO A COLLEGE

1. **COMPLETE YOUR STUDENT DATA SHEET** (see Appendix, page 53)

2. WRITE YOUR COLLEGE RESUME

1. List everything in chronological order beginning with the earliest and ending with the most recent. It is also permissible to reverse this order and begin with the most recent and end with the earliest.
2. Include school year in which the activity was completed. If multiple years, list in order from the earliest to the most recent using a comma between the years.
3. Include activities from grades 9 - 12 only for this resume.
4. Look carefully at your resume to locate areas where you need to make improvements. Remember, a college is a community and looks for future students who have a variety of interests.

(For a sample resume, see Appendix, page 56)

Suggested Tips:

If your parents do not allow you to work, (consider yourself lucky!) consider participating in volunteer projects that will give you work experience.

Community activities suggest that you can handle responsibility and are a self-starter with social awareness. Doing worthwhile services for your community not only provides you with experience, but also allows you to do something important for those who need extra help.

A resume that looks attractive will make a good impression. Use boldface type, bullets, indentations, and white space to make your resume look sharp. Stay with conservative fonts and paper.

***Check your resume carefully for accuracy and for correct grammar, usage and spelling!!**

Writing a resume is like writing an advertisement for yourself. It is not a conceited thing to do, but a professional way of expressing to others your accomplishment, experiences and responsibilities.

3. OBTAIN AN APPLICATION

First of all, check with your guidance office to see if they have extra applications that you could use. A sample letter requesting information is outlined in Appendix, page 59. Be sure to type or write your letter CLEARLY with your complete return address. Letters requesting an application should also include the area of study in which you are interested and any other information the school should know about you. You should also indicate if you are interested in a particular sport or activity, so appropriate material can be sent to you. You may also find it easier to request information from the school's website.

4. DEADLINE DATES AND ADMISSION PROCEDURES

After you receive the application and information, take some time to read through the information to see what is required of you and when it must be completed. Some schools have early deadlines for certain programs and strict procedures that must be followed. Most schools have their own application, however some schools have a common application that is used by several institutions. If you are unsure what application to use, see your counselor. By not paying attention to this information, you may miss an admissions opportunity. Also, do not assume that all college procedures are the same, as most are different. While studying this material, pay attention to what will be required of you if you choose to apply. While you complete this review, you should be thinking about how and who you will need to complete the requirements. Requirements may include:

- * Completed application form and appropriate fee
- * Written essays or personal statements
- * High school transcript
- * Guidance Counselor and teacher recommendations
- * SAT and/or ACT test scores
- * Personal interview
- * Portfolio of written or artistic work
- * Other pertinent requirements for your particular major

You should consider keeping a checklist for each college to organize important information. A sample is included in Appendix, page 61.

EARLY DECISION & EARLY ACTION: WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

If, during your search, you have found the perfect school for you, you may want to consider applying early decision or early action (if the school participates in such a program). In order to do this, you need to know early in the fall (before Nov. 1 for some schools) so you can complete your application.

You should only apply **early decision** to a school that is your first choice. If accepted, you are saying to the school, "I will accept your offer and withdraw all other applications". You thus become committed to attending that particular school. Because of the early deadline, you will be given a decision usually in December or January, depending upon the school. Usually, criteria for early decision are more stringent than regular admissions, so be prepared. If you are not accepted as an early decision candidate, then your application should be placed in with the rest of the applicant pool. An early decision denial does not necessarily mean an outright denial to the school. You just have to wait a while for a decision. Early decision should not be confused with simply hearing early about a decision. It is a separate program than regular admissions and thus has separate deadlines and criteria. If you are unsure about this process, check with your guidance counselor and the respective college.

Early action, on the other hand, is a program offered by some schools, which is similar to early decision, but does not lock you into a commitment to the school. You are given a limited amount of time to make a decision in case there are other schools that you are also considering. You will probably have to make a decision in early spring before the majority of the regular decision applicants would be required to do so.

Whether you apply early decision or early action, you need to keep in mind that there will be early

deadlines (this includes taking tests such as the SAT in your junior year). If you choose not to participate in the early applications, then you should apply for regular admissions, which constitutes the majority of all applicants

5. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

Most colleges and universities will want the following information:

- 1. THE APPLICATION** - This serves the purpose of identifying the student to the college (name, address, high school, etc) as well as determining the student's abilities and experiences. It is highly recommended that the application be typed, although careful and neat printing is accepted. Longhand is only suggested if the application tells you to do so. Many schools also accept applications filed on-line or by using the Common Application.
- 2. THE ESSAY/PERSONAL STATEMENT** - This portion may be part of the application or separate. Please see page 23 for more detailed information regarding your essay.
- 3. THE TRANSCRIPT** - An official copy of your transcript from your high school must be sent by the guidance office to each college. At Ridgeway High, there is a \$3.00 charge for each transcript requested. If you attended more than one high school, make sure that all of your marks from grades 9-12 are included. Your standardized test scores and class rank should also be included.
- 4. SAT/ACT SCORES** - These scores should be sent directly from the testing service to the college. However, some colleges may accept the scores if they are on your official transcript, but it is best to check with the college Admissions Office to find out the policy.
- 5. COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION** - The letter of recommendation from your high school guidance counselor is very important for the admissions committees in making their decision about you. The counselor's recommendation differs from other recommendations in that it represents the school's view of the student over a period of years rather than a specific time period. It will include the strengths of a student's performance including academic and extra-curricular activities and should include weaknesses as well. The counselor may or may not include comments from teachers in his/her letter.
- 6. OTHER LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION** - Many schools request letters from people other than your guidance counselor. Often times this will include teachers, employers, clergy or community leaders. Most schools will provide you with the appropriate forms, but others can be written on appropriate letterhead. It is important to know how many letters are needed and if they need to be from a certain group (teacher, etc.). These letters are usually more detailed about the individual in terms of applicant's ability in a certain area. Included in the letter should be an explanation of the type and length of the relationship between the student and the writer. Letters from friends or relatives are not appropriate. When you ask someone to write a recommendation, make sure that you give them ample time to complete the recommendation (one month, if possible, but no less than two weeks), that they know the exact due date, that they have any additional information which may be needed (including a copy of your resume is helpful), and provide a stamped, addressed envelope to return the recommendation. It is even wise to ask

teachers who get many recommendation requests the spring before your senior year. You may also want to set up a time to discuss your reference with the person who is to write it. If the references are mailed under separate cover, you need to double check with the writer to confirm that it was actually mailed. **Limit yourself to three references that are sent to colleges as part of your application.** You want to make sure to avoid overkill. Lastly, make sure you keep a copy of all references that are written for you in case you ever need them in the future.

THE ESSAY/PERSONAL STATEMENT - IN DETAIL

Your essay or personal statement is probably one of the most important parts of your application, so here are a few tips to help you write a good essay.

Most colleges ask you to respond to one or two questions in order to get a better sense of exactly who you are. The essay gives you the opportunity to take charge of the information that the college receives about you and to provide information that does not necessarily appear in your grades, test scores, and other information. It allows you to use your creativity, enthusiasm, talent, sense of humor, sincerity, and writing ability - traits that probably do not come across in the rest of the application.

Essays may be typed or written depending upon the instructions. Simply photocopying the essay is not recommended, as colleges ask different questions and that does not make a nice presentation. Your essay should be thoughtful and completely answer the question that is asked, unless you are allowed to explore a topic freely. If there are two parts to the question, make sure to answer them both. Sometimes you can rework a previously written essay.

The admissions staff will evaluate your essay based upon different criteria, but the most common include the following:

1. Your correct use of standard written English, which includes proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, usage and syntax.
2. The content, depth of insight, and ability to think about your own life in respect to the topic.
3. Your level of creativity and originality. Admissions counselors read hundreds of essays, so yours needs to be somehow different to attract attention. Don't over do it though.

It is suggested that you develop your essay in the following manner:

1. Give yourself plenty of time. Start formulating a series of topics to write about in the summer before your senior year since once school begins, you will have much less free time. You may even want to start a rough draft at this time. Never leave this to the last minute, as the quality will inevitably suffer.
2. Be sure you understand the question(s), which are asked of you. If you need assistance, ASK. By not understanding the question, you will likely end up with a less than exciting essay.

3. Start by jotting down ideas or list of things you want to include in your essay. Develop a focus with a clear starting point and where you want to end and then fill in the middle with supporting information.
4. Consider different writing styles. Maybe another genre other than straight prose may be more appropriate.
5. After completing a draft, put it aside for a few days and then go back to it. See if it makes sense and is structurally sound.
6. **ALWAYS** have someone else, whom you respect, read the essay to give constructive feedback. Do not let the person rewrite or change your essay, rather have him/her give specifics to tighten up what you have already written. If you ask a guidance counselor or teacher to give feedback, give them several days to read it and get back to you. **NEVER** send an unedited essay to a college!
7. If necessary, go back and repeat steps 3, 4 or 5.
8. Read your essay aloud to locate the rough spots.
9. Type or handwrite your essay (depending upon the instructions) and proofread it several times to check for errors. Have someone else also check for errors that you may have missed.
10. Make a copy of the essay for your files before you mail it in with your application. Then, sit back, relax, and wait for your hard-earned efforts to pay off.

After completing the application, there may be a section that must be completed by the Guidance Office. If so, you should give it to the Guidance Office in order for them to complete their portion. If not, then send it directly to the college. Make sure to include the appropriate application fee. **You need to give the application to the guidance office at least two weeks before the deadline. You should also make copies of the application for your records and in case it is misplaced.** You may find it more advantageous to have the guidance office send in the application to avoid having materials arriving at the college separately.

For students who have a demonstrated financial need, the guidance office should provide you with a fee waiver for your application(s). This basically waives the application fee. Check with your guidance counselor if you believe you may be eligible for such a waiver.

6. THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Whether an interview is a required part of the admission process or if it is optional, says a great deal about the importance of the interview in making a decision about a candidate. If the interview is optional, go anyway. This shows interest in the school on your part and may make the difference between acceptance and denial. You should look at the interview as an opportunity to tell the counselor about yourself and why you should be admitted to the school. You should not view the interview as being put in the hot seat, rather as a give and

take. The school will learn about you and you will be able to ask questions of them.

The interview allows you to expand your application and life experiences. You can show your attitude, commitment, creativity, interpersonal and leadership skills, sense of humor, zest for life, and overall potential for making a contribution to campus life in an interview, which is not always apparent in your application.

You may want to schedule your interview at your first choice school last for two reasons. One, you will be better able to compare it to other schools and secondly, you will have polished your interview techniques by then. Although this may be hard to do, this technique should prove to be very beneficial.

When scheduling your interview, you may want to speak with a particular interviewer. If you know someone or someone has been recommended, then inquire to see if that person is available on the day of your visit. If not, either change your visit date or take another appointment. Never insist, as that would reflect negatively upon you.

Here are some suggestions to keep in mind during the interview process:

1. Learn as much as possible about the college before your visit.
2. Prepare both questions that you want to ask and answers to questions you think you will be asked (see pages 26).
3. Talk to someone else who may have interviewed at other schools to see what the process is like, especially if it is someone who has already interviewed at the same school.
4. Arrive at least 10 minutes early as sometimes you can be seen earlier than the actual appointment.
5. Be yourself at all times! Be honest, sincere and interested. Admissions counselors are very keen and can perceive a lot about you by the way you talk, sit and present yourself. Most of all, BE POSITIVE!
6. Know your background and experiences so if asked, you don't stumble with your answers.
7. Don't read from a resume or try to impress the interviewer with all of your qualities. Let him/her ask the questions and you answer appropriately - not too short, not too long. Be sure to include specific examples.
8. Speak clearly, loudly, slowly and convincingly.
9. Be prepared to discuss your high school courses and activities including your class rank and S.A.T. scores and why you are interested in that particular college. If there are any "bombs", diffuse them now while you have the chance.
10. When asked about your activities reflect upon them, don't just list them. What gain did it have for you? Especially talk about the experiences relative to your field of study.
11. Maintain direct eye contact with the interviewer and maintain a firm body posture.
12. Don't forget to ask the questions you have prepared. The best questions are those that can't be easily

found in the literature (see pages 27-28 for some examples).

13. State and defend positions only if asked. Don't be argumentative. If you don't know something, admit it. Don't try to bluff.
14. Dress neatly and attractively, but in clothes that you feel comfortable in. Whatever you choose, make sure that you are neat and well groomed.
15. Thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration.

ALUMNI INTERVIEW

You may also have an opportunity to meet with an alumnus of the school for your interview. An alumnus usually conducts this if you live a great distance from the campus and cannot make it there for your personal interview. You may also want to have an alumnus conduct the interview even if you have a campus interview to add to your file, as an alumni recommendation may help your chance of acceptance. The procedures for the alumni interview would be the same for the campus interview. To arrange an alumni interview, contact the respective college admissions office.

7. QUESTIONS THAT STUDENTS ARE COMMONLY ASKED AT A COLLEGE INTERVIEW

The following questions are a cross section of questions that are commonly asked at college interviews:

1. How did you hear about _____ college/university?
2. Why are you interested in majoring in _____?
3. What accomplishments have you achieved or activities have you participated in that have a particular effect on you and your life? How do they relate to your intended major?
4. What kinds of things do you do outside of school?
5. What are your career goals - long and short range?
6. What has been your strongest and what has been your most challenging class?
7. Which one of your activities has given you the greatest satisfaction?
8. How familiar are you with this college and its programs?
9. Where do you see yourself in four years?
10. How would you describe your high school, and how would you make it better?

11. What are your priorities in selecting a college?
12. How has your family affected your decisions?
13. What particular goals do you have in attending college?
14. What is something you really want to do in your life, but as of yet, have been unable to do?
15. Who is a role model for you?
16. What books or articles have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking?
17. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be and why?
18. What do you have to offer to this college?
19. How would a friend describe you?
20. Is there anything you would like to discuss which we have not spoken about?

8. SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK AT THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

Some questions you might like to have answered may include:

1. What on campus social activities are available for students? How much importance is placed upon social and extra-curricular activities?
2. How many of the students receive financial aid? How does one apply for financial aid?
3. What dormitory facilities are available? What is provided in each room for students? What must they bring? How is housing assigned?
4. What security services are provided?
5. Are there any museums, theaters, or concert halls in the area, which are accessible to students?
6. What athletic opportunities are available for students?
7. What is the size of the average class and the faculty-student ratio?
8. Are professors easily accessible? Do graduate students teach any of the classes? How much emphasis is placed on faculty research?
9. What religious services are provided?

10. How adequate is the library for the number of students using it?
11. Are there adequate areas on campus for students to study outside of their dormitory rooms?
12. Do many students go home on the weekends? What is the weekend social life like?
13. Is there a dress code?
14. How close is bus, train and air service to the college? How good is the transportation?
15. What is the biggest issue facing students on campus?
16. What is the campus atmosphere like?
17. What percentage of students goes on to graduate school?
18. How are minorities and ethnic groups represented on campus?
19. How are roommates and dormitory rooms selected? Can students live off campus?
20. What computer facilities are available on campus for students? Are they adequate for all students and easily accessible?
21. Is a computer required? Can I bring my own or does the school provide one?
22. Does the college have tests to determine class placement.
23. What is parking like on campus? Are freshmen allowed to have cars on campus?
24. How difficult is it for a student to change a major or obtain a minor?
25. Are job placement services available for graduating seniors?
26. What kinds of co-ops are available? Which students are eligible?
27. Is there any interaction between local colleges?
28. (If it is a rural school) How easy is it to get into town?
29. What is the relationship between the school and the community?
30. Are cultural activities/opportunities on campus available?
31. How soon will a decision be made about my application? Have I completed all of the requirements necessary?

Obviously, you would not ask all of these questions in your interview. Hopefully, some will be answered for you. You might ask more of the technical questions during the interview and save the personal/social questions for the tour. Again, **DO NOT** ask questions which can be easily found in the college literature.

9. INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

After completing the interview and tour of the campus, it is important to make some notes about your visit as soon as possible so you don't forget. This should include the answers to your questions, your likes, dislikes and important factors that will influence your decision.

You should also send a brief thank you note to the person who interviewed with you and your tour guide (if applicable). This will show thoughtfulness, courtesy and reinforce you as an individual to the admissions counselor.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The next step is to sit back and wait, providing you completed all of the admission requirements. Hopefully, you have some time line as to when a decision will be made. Some colleges will not make decisions until your second quarter or mid-year grades are received. Others may wait until the end of the third quarter. It is important for you to be aware of the status of your application. Do not wait for the college to notify you if something is missing. You need to take the initiative.

If your application is complete, you need to decide what your first choice school is, if you have not already done so. This is important because when decision letters begin to arrive, you need to be able to determine whether you will accept the offer, decline the offer, or wait until you hear from other schools. Some schools will not require a commitment from you until you have heard from the financial aid office. Many schools operate under the May 1 Candidate's Reply Date, at which time you must make your choice and pay your deposit.

It may be appropriate for you to visit the school again during this waiting period, and some schools provide an open house for accepted students. This will give you another opportunity to see the campus, and talk with school representatives.

Make sure you find out when and how decisions are made. Most schools operate on a rolling admissions procedure, meaning that a file will be reviewed as soon as it becomes complete, and a decision would be rendered within a few weeks. Other schools, however, operate on a single decision date, meaning all decisions are held until late spring or a day determined by the Admissions Office. All schools are different, so make sure you check with them so you will know what to expect.

Hopefully, at this point you will be faced with many acceptances and must decide what school to attend. Be careful not to make hasty decisions. You want to make sure that you are making the best decision. If you are not sure, contact other people such as alumni or current students at a particular school to ask detailed questions. This will provide you with very useful information.

It is important that you pay attention to deadlines. If you need to let a school know your decision by a certain date, don't forget, or put it off. You may lose your place in the class, and all of your time and effort would be lost. If you need to postpone your decision, make sure that the college is aware of your dilemma, and has approved of a new decision date. Having this in writing will be best for you in case problems arise.

Once you have made your decision, inform the school of your decision (see Appendix, page 64), and let the other schools know of your decision not to accept their offer of admission (see Appendix, page 65).

OPTIONS OTHER THAN ACCEPTANCE INCLUDE:

Waiting List

Instead of being accepted or denied, you may be placed on a "waiting list". If a school does not consider you one of their top prospects, but does not want to deny you outright, then they may offer you the option of being put on the waiting list. If enough of the accepted students choose not to accept the school's offer of admission, then they may accept you. Basically, this keeps your chances of being admitted active. A date is usually given to you when a final decision would be made so you can make plans accordingly. Only accept this offer if you are still genuinely interested in the school. Also, it is important to keep in mind commitments you may need to make to other institutions.

Deferment

If accepted, you may choose to defer your admission for a semester or even a year. You may decide that you need time to earn some money, travel, get work experience, pursue some community service or investigate other options (writing, music, research, etc). You must ask the Admissions Office if you can defer admission and what is the procedure. If you think you may want to wait a year before attending college, it is best to apply in your senior year in high school, as it will be easier, and then defer your admission.

Denial

If you are denied acceptance to a school, all is not lost. Hopefully, you will have some idea as to the reason - poor academic achievement, low test scores or lack of experience in a particular area (ex: science or math). If, however, you do not understand the reasoning, you may want to call the Admissions Office to inquire. They may be able to provide you with some answers so that you may improve yourself in the deficit areas. If you are truly interested in that particular school, find out the procedures for transferring and what courses you should be taking in the mean time. If you were denied, then begin to concentrate on your "safety" schools.

IX. FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is perhaps the most important factor in making a decision about a college since rising costs place some institutions out of reach for many students. If you feel that you may be eligible for any form of financial aid, **it is critical that you follow the procedures of each school very closely.** Because of the increase in the need for financial aid, schools have less aid to offer, and if you fail to meet a deadline or file the proper forms, it could jeopardize your eligibility for assistance. Even if you think that you will not be eligible, apply. You have nothing to lose, and a lot to gain. Even to apply for a low interest student loan requires you to go through the financial aid process.

Although many schools have different procedures and forms, most schools require you to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and possibly the Profile® which is compiled by the College Scholarship Service (CSS) out of Princeton, New Jersey. There is a \$7.00 registration fee to process the Profile® in addition to an \$18 per school fee for each school it must be sent to. You can obtain the FAFSA in the guidance office in the fall of your senior year. It must be filled out with your parent(s) as soon after January 1st as possible, so it can be mailed to the Federal Government processing center in order to be processed and sent to the colleges' financial aid office to meet their deadline. The Profile® is available in the Guidance office in the early fall and consists of two parts. Upon receipt of part one, CSS will mail you part II. This can be completed anytime after September 15. Internet filers may find the process to be a bit quicker because the form will be processed quicker. New forms must be filled out every year. Each college will instruct you as to which form(s) are necessary. Keep copies of all forms that you submit for reference and to assist with the process next year.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid Form and the College Scholarship Service Profile® are very comprehensive and will require several hours to complete. You will be required to complete your IRS tax forms for the year prior to the year you will be in college, in addition to several other financial records of both you and your parent(s). It is important to get these forms completed quickly as some schools require it back by the end of February. You need to allow at least 3-4 weeks for processing. **You do not have to wait until the tax returns are actually filed to submit these forms. You can estimate your answers and corrections can be made later.**

The FAFSA and Profile® can also be filed on the Internet. By connecting to their web site (www.fafsa.ed.gov or www.collegeboard.com) you can submit your financial information electronically. This will eliminate much of the wait that occurs when the paper documents are filed through the mail. This process also provides online prompts so you won't omit required information and has an option of saving information as you go along.

Many schools also require that their own form be completed as well. This should be part of your application packet or should have been sent to you by the Financial Aid Office. In addition, you may also need to provide copies of your tax forms.

Financial aid comes in many forms, and students and their families need to consider all types of aid. Most institutions offer a "package" of aid, which includes a combination of grants or scholarships (money which doesn't need to be paid back), loans (money which must be paid back) and campus jobs. Since most financial aid processes are different, it is difficult to make generalizations. Thus, you must pay close attention to each

school's specifications. Each school you apply to will probably have somewhat different procedures.

A. SOURCES AND PURPOSES OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

There are two primary sources of financial aid. One is need based. Need-based forms of student aid constitute the major portion of aid available for college students. In fact, some schools operate on only a need base. Eligibility for need-based aid is based upon the difference between the cost of attendance and the family's (you and your parents) ability to pay. The second type of aid is merit based, which recognizes your special, athletic and/or academic ability. Contact the respective college Financial Aid Office for information regarding merit based need.

Within the category of need-based assistance, there are two types of financial aid: grant aid and self-help aid. Grant aid does not have to be repaid while self-help consists of loans that require repayment, and employment, which usually consists of part time jobs within the institution.

Grant aid and self-help aid are derived from institutional, private, state or federal sources. Institutional sources of aid are controlled by the particular institution, while private sources are regulated by the source, such as community organizations, foundations, professional associations, corporations or commercial lending institutions. State sources of aid will be administered by an agency and includes grants/scholarships, loans and state work-study funds.

Parents/students should refer to the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation brochure or website at www.state.tn.us/tsac for a complete list of Major Sources of Financial Aid for Tennessee Students. These are updated as changes are made.

The federal government is the largest single source of student aid funds and includes the following:

1. Pell Grant

Pell grants are awards to help students provide a foundation of your financial aid and do not have to be paid back. To apply, simply answer the appropriate question on your FAFSA. Your financial information is automatically forwarded to the Pell Grant Program and the institutions that you list to receive your information.

To determine your eligibility, the Department of Education uses a standard formula, revised and approved by Congress each year, to evaluate the information on your FAFSA. If you meet the formula criteria, then you will be granted an amount to be determined by your financial aid office depending upon your financial need and the cost of attendance. This will depend on other financial aid that you will be given. Pell awards usually have a ceiling to the amount of money that you can be given. The maximum Pell Grant award for the 2007-08 award year (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008) is \$4,310. The Financial Aid Office will either pay you directly, or credit your account, or both.

2. Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG)

A Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant is an award for students having the greatest financial need (with priority given to Pell Grant recipients) and do not have to be paid back. The amount of the award is determined by the Financial Aid Office and depends upon the amount of money that the Department of Education allocates to the school. These grants are more limited than the Pell Grants. Awards range from

\$100-\$4000. The Financial Aid Office will either pay you directly or credit your account.

3. Stafford Student Loan (SSL)

A SSL is a loan made to you by the federal government or a loan made to you by a lender, such as a bank, a credit union, or savings and loan institution to assist you in paying for your college education. There are two types of Stafford loans, subsidized and unsubsidized. The financial aid office will determine for which type you are eligible. If you have a demonstrated financial need not met by other types of aid, then you can borrow a Stafford Loan to cover all or a portion of your educational expenses. The government will pay the interest on the **subsidized loans** while you're in school and for sixth months after graduation, unless you qualify for a deferment. The interest rate will never exceed 8.25 percent. An unsubsidized loan is one for which you don't have any financial need and interest accrues from the inception date of the loan.

The college will have to determine whether you are eligible for a SSL after which you may choose a lender who provides you with an application. Check with the institution to see if there is a preferred lender. After completing your portion of the form, the college must complete its section and return it to the lender. If the lender agrees to make the loan, the lender will send the payment(s) directly to the college. The award for full-time first-year undergraduate students for the 2007-08 academic year is up to \$3,500, and the award for second year undergraduates is up to \$4,500. Independent undergraduate students or a dependent student whose parents are unable to obtain a parent loan can borrow higher amounts. You should be cautioned that there are fees associated with these loans directly deducted from the disbursement.

You should begin to look for a lender as soon as you have received your eligibility from the Financial Aid Office. After you submit your application, it may take 4 to 8 weeks for approval, so you need to give yourself as much time as possible.

You will have to repay the loan after a 6-12 month grace period (depending upon the lender) after completion of your degree. The lender will determine the exact schedule and amount. Deferments are possible, but must be approved by your lender.

4. College Work-Study Program (CWS)

The College Work-Study Program provides funding for student employment at the institution. The Financial Aid Office coordinates this process. Your pay will be at least the current federal minimum wage and perhaps more, depending upon your particular institution. You must be paid at least once a month, and usually, more often. You can either credit your earnings to your account or use it for other purposes. Your total CWS award will depend upon the amount of money your school has for this program, your need, and the amount of aid you get from other sources. You should not depend upon CWS to provide you with a great deal of funding, as you may be only able to work 10-15 hours a week. The Financial Aid Office determines the number of hours you are eligible to work. Your exact work schedule is determined by the office/department in which you are employed.

5. Carl D. Perkins Loan Program

The Perkins Loan Program is a low interest (5 percent) loan made by the Financial Aid Office to those students with exceptional need. Check with the college Financial Aid Office to find out how to apply for the

Perkins Loan Program. The amount of the loan depends upon your level of study. Repayment is determined by the amount of money that you borrow and how long you want your repayment period to be. You repay the school directly. Undergraduate students can borrow up to \$4,000 per year.

6. Plus Loans

PLUS loans are for parent borrowers. PLUS loans provide for additional funds for educational purposes. The interest rate is variable, but can never exceed 9 percent. The maximum amount parents can borrow is equal to the cost of attendance minus any financial aid you receive. PLUS loan payments are sent directly to your school in two installments. Generally, the first payment is due within 60 days after the final disbursement for the year. There is no grace period for these loans and interest begins to accumulate at the time the first disbursement is made.

7. Vocational Rehabilitation Grants

Grants are awarded to physically or emotionally handicapped individuals through the State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to attend any qualified college, trade or technical school. Contact the Guidance Office or DVR for more information.

CAUTION

Financial aid should not be taken lightly. If you take out a loan, you are required by law to repay the loan. Failure to do so may result in losing future credit rating, withholdings from your income tax return and denial of future financial aid. Be aware that some loans may require an insurance premium or origination fee. These are usually 3-5 percent of the loan and are deducted directly from each disbursement. Before signing or applying for any grant or loan, make sure you are aware of your rights and responsibilities as a borrower.

In addition, when you are completing the forms, it is important to request the information to be sent to ALL schools that you are applying for financial aid. Make sure to use the proper codes or else the information will not be sent to the intended destination. If you need to add a school after completing the forms, an additional fee will be required. Failure to do so may delay your financial aid package considerably.

To request more information regarding financial aid, you can write to:

Federal Student Aid Information Center
Box 84
Washington, DC 20044-0084

or call 1-800-433-3243

or visit the website <http://www.ed.gov/studentaid>

B. DEFINITION OF NEED

When dealing with need based aid, financial aid will be the difference between what it will cost a student to attend a college and the amount of money the family can contribute to the student's education as determined by the Financial Aid Office. Many factors go into determining how much a family can contribute including income, debt, assets, family size, the student's earnings and any extenuating circumstances.

The following is an example of how financial aid is determined for a family earning \$60,000 a year:

	<u>COLLEGE A</u>	<u>COLLEGE B</u>	<u>COLLEGE C</u>
	Resident Student 4 Yr Private	Resident Student 4 Yr Public Out of State	Resident Student 4 Yr Public In State
Total Cost of College:	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$10,000
Family Contribution:	\$5,850	\$5,850	\$5,850
\$60,000 Parent Income			
\$11,000 Parent Assets (\$1,000 Savings, \$10,000 Investments)			
2 children			
Estimated Need:	\$19,150	\$9150	\$4150

C. CHECKLIST: WHAT TO DO AND WHEN TO DO IT

- ___ Ask for information about financial aid opportunities and application procedures when writing to the Admissions Office of each college on your list.
- ___ Make certain you know what forms need to be completed and obtain them. The Profile® and the Free Federal Form (FAFSA) are the most common, but each school might also have their own forms.
- ___ Mail/submit your completed forms as soon after January 1st as possible to be processed. Allow at least four weeks before the deadline by the college or state scholarship and grant programs to which you are applying. Carefully follow the instructions for filling out the form, and check for errors in computations. (You cannot mail the FAFSA before January 1st since your income from the previous year is required). Completing the forms on line will expedite the process and in some cases help you to avoid making common mistakes.
- ___ Apply for the Pell grant by answering the appropriate question on the FAFSA form. There is no extra fee for

this service.

- ___ Review the acknowledgement you receive after submitting the forms to check for errors. If you find errors, make sure you report them immediately. Reprocessing takes another 2 to 3 weeks.
- ___ Respond promptly to any request for additional or incomplete information on the FAFSA form so there will be no further delay in processing your request.
- ___ Complete the other necessary forms required by your college as early as possible and return them to the college. Make sure to send copies of your tax forms, if required to do so.
- ___ Check for information about other aid sources. Your guidance counselor, local library or banks will often have this information. You may qualify for private scholarships, grants or loan program based upon your academic achievement, religious affiliation, ethnic or racial background, community activities, hobbies or special interests, organizational memberships, artistic talents, athletic abilities, career plans, proposed field of study or other special skills. Leave no stone unturned.
- ___ Find out if your parents' employers, professional associations or labor unions sponsor any aid programs.
- ___ Check with local community organizations including civic, cultural, religious, veterans and fraternal groups to see if they sponsor scholarship programs at the local, state or national levels. Also include organizations connected with your field of interest.
- ___ If your parents are disabled veterans or if they died in the service, you may be eligible for special assistance. Contact the Veterans Administration for further information.
- ___ Ask about benefits from vocation rehabilitation or other social services if you think you may be eligible for assistance.
- ___ Determine how payments from each source will be made to you. Sometimes payment will be made to you at the time you enroll, or it may be deferred until you successfully complete your first semester. This will be important when it comes time to pay the bill. Pay very close attention to all award letters and follow any directions so you can be certain of getting your aid.
- ___ Once you have made your decision about which colleges to attend, let the other schools know so they may use that aid for other qualified individuals.
- ___ If the college of your choice cannot provide you with enough aid to meet your needs, look into other alternatives such as loans.
- ___ Upon arrival at school, check with the Financial Aid Office to make sure that all of your paper work is in order. Inquire about work-study programs, how to apply and which departments are hiring. Then contact the department to set up an interview.
- ___ Contact the Financial Aid Office immediately if your family circumstances change.

It is important that you discuss this complex topic with your guidance counselor, as no written manual can do justice. Your guidance counselor should know the "tricks of the trade" and will especially be able to help you with local aid opportunities. You may also want to speak with your college Financial Aid Office directly since they also may be able to offer you assistance. In addition, most institutions offer deferred tuition payments, alternative loan options, and other programs to help you pay for your education. There is an abundance of aid available. Many books and resources are available which detail financial aid assistance (see Appendix, page 67). You must be aggressive in your search.

If you are faced with the dilemma that your first school choice does not offer you as much aid or is not as affordable as another school, don't automatically assume that you will not be able to attend. Take some time to consult with your family, guidance counselor and college Financial Aid Office to see if other alternatives exist. Find out if the Financial Aid Office has an appeal policy. Try not to let finances stand in your way of a college education.

At the end of the Appendix, you will find a scholarship report form designed to assist you in organizing all of your scholarship and financial aid awards into one form. In many cases, colleges have unique ways in awarding aid that may be very confusing. This sheet is intended to simplify all information onto one document and make it easier to compare numerous offers. **You must submit a completed Scholarship Report to the guidance office near the end of your senior year.**

If, on the other hand, it is impossible for you to finance the school of your choice, then you need to look at the next best alternative. Never make a decision without all of the necessary information. Proper planning may enable you to receive aid and attend a school you originally thought would be out of your reach.

PARENTS: A NOTE OF CAUTION

Financing your son/daughter's education can be an extremely difficult strain on the family. You need to take a serious look at your financial situation to determine exactly how much you can afford. **DO NOT** let finances determine to which schools your child applies. Only after a financial aid package has been made can you accurately make a decision about a particular school. If after examining all of the evidence, a school must be ruled out, then so be it. Hopefully both you and your child will agree with such a decision. Throughout this whole process, it is important to keep in mind future events and additional children's educational needs. A "quick" fix may be problematic in the future.

X. CAREER-RELATED SCHOOLS

Sometimes students may not want to go to college, but rather, to a specific vocational training school which would provide them with the necessary education in a shorter period of time. The specialized business, vocational, or technical school will be more beneficial than a two or four year college if you are interested in learning a trade. Investigations of job opportunities reveal that thousands of occupations require training that may be obtained from career-related schools and are just as rewarding as those achieved through a two or four-year school.

If you are interested in pursuing a career-related school, the process is very similar to that of the college search. It requires thoughtful exploration, writing for information and an application and following through with a visit. You will also want to read the other sections of this manual, particularly the section regarding financial aid.

The major difference between career-related schools and colleges is that in college you have more flexibility to move around in different majors, whereas in a career-related school you are more limited to a specific area. Thus, you need to know specifically what area you want to study - electronics, cosmetology, etc. If you are unsure about what career you are especially interested in, you should spend some time in the career library of your Guidance Office. You should also spend some time with your guidance counselor discussing your alternatives and complete the Self -Evaluation on page 6.

EXPLORING CAREER-RELATED SCHOOLS

The following steps may be helpful in assisting you to find the best career-related school and job training programs that are available for your interested occupation.

1. Check career school catalogs in your Guidance Office for a list of vocational schools where you can study your chosen career. When looking at prospective schools, you want to keep in mind the following:
 - * Where do I want to go to school? Is it going to be close to home or far away? If it is far away, where would I be able to live?
 - * What location do I want to be in? Will I want to be in an urban or more rural school?
 - * What size school would I like?
 - * Does the school provide practical, related experience to my area of interest? Are Co-op and Internships available to me?
 - * What life style do I want?
 - * What can I afford? Am I limited to a certain school? Remember to keep in mind supplies and materials that you may need to purchase.
2. Write to those schools that interest you and ask for descriptive information and an application. (See Appendix, page 59 for a sample letter). After you receive the information, take some time to read through the brochures to see if you might be interested in further pursuing the process. Pay close attention to deadlines and application requirements while completing this review. You should be thinking how and who you will need to complete the admissions process. Use the College Application Checklist (see Appendix, page 61).

3. Complete the application.

Make sure to inquire about what specifically you must do to complete the application. Be sure that your writing is legible, and if possible, even type the application. As part of your application, you may be required to submit personal essays, your high school transcript, test scores and recommendations. These are explained thoroughly on pages 22-24.

4. Visit the school.

This is very important to your decision. You want to know what the school looks like and if you will feel comfortable there. It also gives you the opportunity to ask some questions and get to know the school better. When planning a visit, make sure that you call and set up an appointment for a tour and interview (if applicable). You should have a specific day and alternate day planned before calling. You should arrive at least 10 minutes before your appointment.

Here are some things to consider asking when you visit if you don't already know the answers:

- How long has the school been in operation?
- What kind of financial aid is available?
- What kinds of tests are required for admittance, if any?
- Are there any special course requirements needed in addition to a high school diploma?
- Is the school accredited? Find out if you will receive a certificate granting you the right to practice in your chosen career. If the school is not accredited, you may be faced with some serious challenges in finding a job.
- Does the school have a shop set-up that duplicates a real work environment? This hands-on training enables you to get practical experience. Are Placement services available?

5. If you do have an interview, preparation is key. Please see pages 24-29 to learn more about the interview process.

6. After your application is complete, you wait for an answer and hopefully everything goes as planned. If you are applying for financial aid, you should read section IX, page 31. After you decide what school you will be attending, you need to let the other school(s) to which you applied know about your decision, so they may offer admission to someone else (see pages 64 & 65 for samples).

You should also try to talk with recent graduates of the school to get a feeling how satisfied they were with the program. They should be very candid with you and provide you with important information. You may also be able to find out information from prospective employers or other community businessmen who are familiar with the particular school.

After you have all of this information, it is now time for you to sit back and wait to hear a decision from the school. You should be formulating a first choice school that you want to attend. Hopefully you will have several offers of acceptance and be able to choose the best one for you.

Some career-related and vocational schools get a bad reputation since they are not considered "real" schools. They are every bit as real as are Harvard and Yale. If you want to be a carpenter, then a trade school is where you need to be. Within a few years you can be an apprenticed carpenter out in the world of work with a valuable skill good for the rest of your life. Don't let someone else's opinion interfere with the best decision for you. More education does not equate to better people.

There is one caution about career-related schools to keep in mind. Some non-accredited schools want to take you for a ride. Thorough research and investigation can prove the legitimacy and success of a school. Look at the history of the school, and speak with recent graduates. This will enable you to "weed out" those schools, which do not have your best interest in mind.

XI. MILITARY SERVICE

Another option for high school students is to enroll as military personnel into one of the armed services, which consist mainly of students like you, who volunteer for service.

The services provide many advantages for its members, including education and training and even money to assist with college expenses if you so choose after completion of your enlistment. There are several respected military academies that can serve dual purposes. There are also numerous job opportunities for both men and women in the military, and it allows for travel, excellent benefits and wages and pride in serving your country. Many people also choose to make a career in the military rather than a one term enlistment.

Because of the numerous programs available in the armed services, it is impossible to discuss them here in any detail. You should check with your Guidance Office to see when and if representatives will be visiting your school. You should also contact the representatives from the different branches of the service who are available in your area to discuss with you the advantages of the military. They can answer the specific questions you may have regarding this option.

If you decide to pursue this option, you will be required to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) in order to apply for commission with one of the branches of the military. The test is offered in the school in the fall or you may take it at the local recruiting office. The test is free of charge for both you and the school. The test consists of 12 subtests, which measures your aptitude in six separate career fields and provides an indication of your academic (math and verbal aptitude) ability as well. You do not incur any military obligation by taking the ASVAB, and you will not be registered for the selective service. If you so choose, your scores can be sent to selected military services, and a representative would be in contact with you. The ASVAB will indicate which military (and civilian) occupations best suit your interests and abilities.

If, after taking the test and talking with the recruiting officers, you decide to enlist for a duty, you may be required to take further tests and perform other services such as a physical examination, a formal interview and a physical abilities test. All of this, however, will be explained thoroughly by the recruiting officers. Acceptance into the military is not a given. The process is extremely rigorous and competitive.

If you are going to a non-military college, you may decide to participate in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) at your respective college. The purpose of ROTC is to prepare students in positions of responsibility as officers. You also take part in intense training exercises. Not all colleges have such programs, so you should check with the college(s) in which you are interested to see what options are available. Students may choose to participate in the ROTC scholarship program to help pay for college. **These scholarships, however, are very competitive so you must apply early.** Check with your local recruiting office for more information or write to:

Air Force ROTC/RRUF
Maxwell Air Force Base
Alabama 36112-6663

Army ROTC
Box 9000
Clifton, NJ 07015

Navy ROTC
Box 3060
Hyattsville, MD 20784

You may also choose to attend a military academy that would train you in military or naval science as well as serve as enlisted personnel. The federal military academies include the Navy, Army, Air Force, and Merchant Marines. Private and state supported academies include the U.S. Coast Guard. In order to attend one of the federal academies, you must secure approval from your U.S. Representative or Senator. You should first telephone the Representative or Senator's office to inquire about the appropriate procedures, and then follow up with a letter (see Appendix, page 66).

If you are interested in securing an appointment at one of the U.S. Service Academies, write to the Admissions Office and request a Pre-Candidate Questionnaire at the following addresses:

Admissions Office
U.S. Military Academy
West Point, NY 10996

Admissions Office
U.S. Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD 21402

Admissions Office
U.S. Air Force Academy
U.S.A.F. Academy, CO 80840

Admissions Office
Merchant Marine Academy
Kings Point, NY 10024

The Coast Guard Academy has an admissions process similar to other competitive colleges and no nomination is required. You can write directly for an application at:

Admissions Office
U.S. Coast Guard Academy
New London, CT 06320

Another option is to take part in one of the Armed Service Reserves or National Guard. You would technically be considered enlisted personnel, but only serve a few times a month (usually on the weekends) or in a national emergency. You are able to receive military benefits, but are not part of the military full time.

The programs and benefits of the different programs are routinely changed and updated. Therefore, it is important to gather plenty of information from the branches that you are investigating before making a final decision. Some branches may offer incentives that others may not, which may influence your decision. The key is to be a wise consumer before making any commitments.

Whether you actually decide to pursue a career in the military, you should keep it as an option. Keep in mind that the military offers several jobs for civilian personnel. This could provide you with the benefits of the military without the commitment and active status.

XII. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Hopefully, this manual has given you some help in determining what it is that you may want to do after you graduate from high school. As you can see, there are several options available to you. All you must do is determine which is most appropriate for you. And, don't worry if you don't know exactly what you want to do or think you may change your mind. You will not be the first person to ever do so.

Basically, the theme of this manual has been to make sure you have the necessary information needed for you to make a decision. Every option that you explore will require investigation, thought and testing. If this manual does not give you what you are looking for, then ask your guidance counselor, family members, your next-door neighbor, or with whomever you feel most comfortable talking. Be careful not to let these people make decisions for you, but instead, provide you with assistance and information that you desire. There are also other references in the appendix for further information. By talking over your issues and concerns, you will inevitably find yourself in a better position. Looking at different perspectives will open up some doors you may not have thought of before.

It is imperative that you take responsibility for your future and make some decisions prior to graduation, preferably, the sooner the better. For example, if you decide in May that you want to go to a four-year college, many options will no longer be available. Remember, you can always change your mind. Indecision and procrastination are two situations that should be avoided.

As with any decision you make, there is a constant need to redefine your goals and needs. Throughout life you should continuously be re-examining your decisions to see if perhaps there are other things that may be better for you. As we all know, many aspects of our lives change, so we must be prepared. We also need to be willing to take chances and experience new things to broaden our horizons.

You will want to keep this manual for future reference. Even if you do not use it again, it may be beneficial to someone in your family or a co-worker. And, when you need to make a decision, it might prove to be valuable for you.

Good luck!

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED TERMS

Accreditation - When a school is recognized as maintaining standards that qualify the graduates for admission to higher or more specialized institutions.

Advanced Placement (AP) - The Advanced Placement Program gives students the opportunity to pursue college level studies while still in secondary school and receive advanced placement and credit upon entering college providing that they pass the AP exam. The program provides examinations on 26 introductory college courses in 14 fields.

Alumni Interviews - Admissions interviews conducted by graduates of colleges to which you have applied. This is often done locally when a student is unable to travel to a distant college for an interview.

American College Testing Program (ACT) - see page 18.

Associate's Degree - A degree granted by most two-year colleges and some four-year colleges at the end of two years of study. A student may earn an Associates of Arts or Science Degree, depending upon their course of study.

Award Letter - A letter telling you what financial aid (if and) your college is offering to you (includes types and amounts of aid offered, specific program information, etc.). You may choose to accept some or all of what is offered.

Bachelor's Degree - A degree granted by a four-year institution after completing the degree requirements of the school. A Bachelor of Arts or Science may be given depending upon the course of study.

Candidates' Reply Date Agreement (CRDA) - The CRDA is the common date of May 1 when an accepted student must make a commitment to the institution as to whether s/he will accept the offer of admission. This allows the candidate to make informed decisions after all information is known from all of the colleges to which you have applied.

Class Rank - A student's standing based on his/her academic record compared with that of the other members of the class.

College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) - See page 17.

College Fair - A gathering of college representatives at a central location where students can talk to many of the representatives about admissions, financial aid, activities, etc.

College Level Examination Program CLEP - Credit is given to students who take one of the 30 examinations in specific subjects. If the students pass the test (passing scores are determined by the institution at which you want the credit) then credit can be given without taking the course.

College Scholarship Service (CSS) - CSS is the financial aid division of the College Board (CEEB). It provides

the needs analysis service for students and their families to assist the Financial Aid Office in determining your financial need.

College Work-Study Program - A government supported financial aid program coordinated through Financial Aid Offices, whereby an eligible student (based upon need) may work part-time while attending classes to help pay for educational and/or living expenses. These jobs are usually at the institution.

Consortium - Several colleges and universities in an area that join together and provide students opportunities to utilize other member institutions' libraries and facilities, and take courses. One or more of the members also plans joint lectures and special events.

Cooperative Education - A program in which students are able to obtain full time employment in their field of study. This may be for one semester or summer or can be done on an alternating basis with their coursework. If done on an alternating basis, degree completion may take five years.

Core Curriculum - A group of courses in a variety of areas, such as arts and sciences, which make up the general education requirements for all students at the institution regardless of their major. These also can be called "All College Requirements".

Cost of Attendance - Includes any cost associated with attending college: Tuition and associated fees, room and board, books and supplies, etc.

Credit (or Credit Hour) - A unit of measurement institutions give for fulfilling course requirements. Most colleges require that you complete a certain number in order to graduate.

Credit by Examination - A program through which some colleges grant course credit based upon successful completion of a test, which may include Advanced Placement (AP) test scores, the ACT Proficiency Examination Program (PEP), the CEEB College Level Examination Program (CLEP) or another examination developed by the college or university.

Decile - The class ranking of all students in a grade is divided into ten equal sections. A student's rank may be expressed as "in the third decile", meaning in the third group from the top.

Deferred Admission - This is an admissions plan whereby the student applies to a college and is notified of acceptance but decides to postpone admittance to travel, earn money or pursue other interests before attending college.

Early Action - A plan that would allow highly qualified candidates to apply early for admission and be given a decision in December or January. If accepted, the student does not have to make a commitment until later in the spring. The institution determines the exact date. This gives them the opportunity to pursue other schools.

Early Admissions - This plan allows high school students the opportunity to begin college coursework without completing high school requirements. This program is limited to highly exceptional students.

Early Decision - Colleges that offer this plan will require the student to complete their application early in the fall and will usually receive a decision in December or January. Students should only apply early decision to their first choice school. If accepted, the college would expect the student to withdraw other applications and make a commitment to that institution, if favorable financial aid is awarded.

Educational Testing Service (ETS) - The ETS carries out the development and administration of the College Board's major testing programs. ETS is a separate and independently governed nonprofit organization.

Enrollment Status - Indication of whether you attend full or part time. In general, you must attend at least half time (or in some cases full time) to qualify for financial aid.

Expected Family Contribution - Amount students and their family are expected to contribute toward cost of attendance.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - This form is required by all colleges and universities for students applying for financial aid. Processed by the Federal Government, the form is free and cannot be filed until after January 1st of the year the student will be entering college (see page 31.)

General Education Development Examination (GED)- A series of tests that adults, who did not complete their high school requirements, may take to receive an equivalent certificate or diploma.

Grade Point Average (GPA) - An indicator of the student's overall scholastic performance. The GPA is computed by totaling the number of grade points earned in each course (EX: A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0) and dividing the sum by the total number of credits that are taken.

Needs Analysis - The process used to evaluate an applicant's financial situation to determine how much student aid s/he needs to help meet postsecondary educational expenses.

Official Transcript - The file that bears the seal of a high school or college and a signature to certify that the grades are valid. It is also usually sent in a sealed and signed envelope.

Open Admissions - The policy of some colleges to admit virtually all high school graduates regardless of academic qualifications such as high school grades and admissions test scores.

Out-of-State Student - Generally applies to students attending a public university outside of their home state. Out-of-state students must pay a higher tuition rate unless they establish legal residency for that state.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholastic Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) - See page 17.

Private College - A college that is not funded by public sources, but owned privately. A private college may, however, receive public grants for financial aid or other projects. Fees from students and donations cover most expenses.

Profile® - The financial aid form produced by the College Scholarship Service that must be completed for

some colleges in order to qualify for financial aid. A fee is required to process this form.

Public College - A college that is operated mostly by a public entity (such as the state). Because of this assistance, expenses are usually less than a private college for its students.

Qualified Acceptance - Acceptance is made providing the student complete further requirements, such as a summer school course. Upon successful completion, the student would be able to enroll as any other incoming student.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) - ROTC programs are conducted by certain colleges in cooperation with the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force. The program combines military education and intense training for students who plan to pursue a career in the military (see page 41 for more information).

Rolling Admissions - A plan used by many colleges whereby students are notified of a decision after completion of their application. This usually occurs within a few weeks, although not at all schools. If the school operates under rolling admissions it is best to apply early since schools may stop accepting students if their quota has been filled.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) - See page 17.

State Certification - Certification by the state licensing commission in a particular trade or profession, which specifies that you meet minimum competency requirements.

Student Search Service - A College Board program that helps colleges identify potential applicants with particular academic or personal characteristics they are seeking. The students are also able to get information on colleges that have programs and characteristics they want. The College Board then provides each participating college with the student's names and addresses. The service is free for students.

Study Abroad - An arrangement by which a student completes part of his/her college program studying in another country or institution in this country. This is usually done in the student's junior year and lasts for a semester.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) - see page 18.

Transcript - A chronological listing of all subjects and grades received by a student. It also should include the standardized test scores and other objective information about the student.

Undergraduate Student - A student who has not completed a baccalaureate or first professional degree.

Unmet Need - The difference between the cost of education and the combined total of the financial aid award made by the college and the expected family contribution.

Viewbook - A booklet produced by a college or university that highlights their programs, services and activities. It may or may not include an application.

Waiting List - Students who are not accepted or denied may be placed on a waiting list for admission until a time when a space becomes available or a final decision is made.

NAVIGATING THE WEB FOR COLLEGE BOUND STUDENTS

Exploring College Options

- <http://www.collegeboard.com> - College Board home page containing college, testing and financial aid information
- <http://www.petersons.com> - Peterson's education center with a wide range of information and services
- <http://www.collegenet.com> - Provides college and financial aid search options
- <http://www.collegenight.com> - Provides links to numerous college-related sites
- <http://www.collegeview.com> - Offers college search options, financial aid and career information
- <http://www.review.com/college> – Princeton Review's site of 331 Best Colleges
- <http://www.wiredscholar.com> – College search options, scholarships, test prep information and career assessments
- <http://www.mycollegeguide.org> – College search options as well as information about the college search process
- <http://www.AnyCollege.net> – a free, non-biased and easy to navigate web site accessing over 5400 colleges
- <http://www.collegexpress.com> – College search options as well as financial aid and admission information
- <http://www.yahoo.com/Education> – Many web sites related to the college selection process
- <http://www.embarc.com> - College, career and financial aid options including online applications
- <http://www.collegelink.com> – Web site to find and apply electronically to hundreds of schools
- <http://www.gocollege.com> – Database containing free college and scholarship search options
- <http://www.clas.ufl.edu/CLAS/american-universities.html> – Links to all college and university home pages
- <http://www.ecola.com/college> – College search by city and state
- <http://nces.ed.gov/IPEDS/cool/Search.asp> – A college search provided by the Federal Government
- <http://www.massmentor.com/> - Information and search options of the 53 independent schools in Massachusetts
- <http://www.aesmentor.org/> - Information on college searching, financial aid and career planning
- <http://www.myfootpath.com/> - Admissions information as well as general articles and newsletters

Exploring Financial Aid & Scholarships

<http://www.finaid.org> – A comprehensive site with hundreds of links

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov> – File the FAFSA electronically through this site

http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/completing_fafsa/2003_2004/index.html -

Detailed information about completing the FAFSA

<http://www.profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp> – Electronic version of the CSS Profile

<http://www.fastap.org> – Large database with search options for scholarship information

<http://www.fastweb.com> – Financial aid and scholarship information

<http://www.educaid.com> – Financial aid information for both students and parents

<http://www.gocollege.com> – Database containing free scholarship search options

<http://www.college-scholarships.com> – Provides information on colleges, test preparation and free scholarship and financial aid searches

http://www.yahoo.com/education/financial_aid – An online scholarship search for private scholarship sources

<http://www.teri.org> – A private, not-for-profit organization providing education financing and loan information

<http://www.nelliemae.com> – A non-profit corporation provide college loans and information

<http://www.salliemae.com> - The home page for the Student Loan Marketing Association

<http://www.collegenet.com/mach25> - Free scholarship database sponsored by College Net

Test Preparation and Information

<http://www.collegeboard.com> - College Board's home page with links to SAT registration and information

<http://www.act.org> – Information and registration for the ACT

<http://www.kaplan.com> – Test preparation information and more

<http://www.testprep.com> – SAT study guides and information about raising one's score

<http://www.gocollege.com> – Free ACT and SAT prep information

<http://www.review.com/college> – Princeton Review's site with course offerings and study guide information

<http://www.powerprep.com/collguid/collbd.htm> – Web site that provides strategies for various tests

<http://fairtest.org/optinit.htm> – A list of SAT/ACT optional schools

Miscellaneous

<http://www.commonapp.org> – Access to the Common Application accepted at over 200 private schools

<http://www.nacac.com> – The National Association of College Admission Counseling home page including a list of national college fairs

<http://www3.zdnet.com/yil/content/college/intro.html> – Lists America’s “100 Most Wired Colleges”

<http://www.ncaa.org> – Information regarding eligibility for college bound athletes

<http://www.naia.org> – The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics’ home page

<http://www.smart.net/~pope/hbcu/hbculist.htm> – Links to historically Black college and university home pages

<http://www.uncf.org> – The United Negro College Fund site containing scholarship info. and list of affiliated schools

<http://www.eskimo.com/~jlubin/disabled/universi.htm> – Links to resources for the learning disabled

<http://www.hillel.org> – Information about Jewish life on college campuses

<http://www.christiancollegesearch.com> - Information about over 700 “church related” colleges

<http://www.catholiccollegesonline.org> - A comprehensive listing of Catholic colleges and universities

<http://www.ajcunet.edu> - Links to Jesuit college and university home pages

<http://www.greekpages.com> – A listing of national and local fraternity and sorority chapters

<http://www.co-op.edu> – Information on colleges with cooperative education programs

GRADUATION READINESS CHECK

Name: _____ ACT _____ SAT _____ Other _____

UNIVERSITY PATH

TECHNICAL PATH

COURSES	CREDITS	GRADE	COURSES	CREDITS	GRADE
English (4 credits)			English (4 credits)		
English I			English I		
English II			English II		
English III			English III		
English IV			English IV		
Mathematics (3 credits)			Mathematics (3 credits)		
Algebra I			Algebra I or IA + IB		
Geometry			Geometry		
Algebra II			Algebra II		
Science (3 credits)			Science (3 credits)		
Physical Science (1 credit)			Physical Science (1 credit)		
Biology (1 credit)			Biology (1 credit)		
Social Studies (3 credits)			Social Studies (3 credits)		
World History or World Geography (1 credit)			World History or World Geography (1 credit)		
U. S. Government (½credit)			U. S. Government (½credit)		
Economics (½credit)			Economics (½credit)		
U. S. History (1 credit)			U. S. History (1 credit)		
Lifetime Wellness (1 credit)			Lifetime Wellness (1 credit)		
Foreign Language (2 credits in same language)			Foreign Language (2 credits in same language)		
Fine Arts (1 credit)			Fine Arts (1 credit)		
Electives			Electives (3 credits)		

Total Credits: _____ (minimum of 21 credits) Total Credits _____



Ridgeway High School

Student Data Sheet

NAME: _____ SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER _____

ADDRESS: _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

Extracurricular Activities	Years Involved	Awards, Positions Held

Academic Achievements	Years Involved	Awards, Description

Community Activities	Years Involved	Awards, Positions Held

Employment	Years Involved	Duration, Responsibilities

List six adjectives that you, your family or your friends would use to describe you.

What do you think is your biggest contribution to Ridgeway High School?

PARENT RESPONSE FORM

STUDENT'S NAME _____

Father _____ Mother _____

Address _____

College _____

In order to help the college counselor get to know your child better, please respond candidly to each of the following questions and return to the guidance office as soon as possible.

Descriptive Questions:

1. What are your child's chief personal and academic strengths?

2. What are your child's chief personal and academic weaknesses?

3. Please describe anything unusual about your child's educational background and development.

4. Although your child's counselor will know him in the context of school, there are probably things she does not know. Write a recommendation for your child. You might want to consider personality traits and experiences that make your child unique, activities outside school, personal interests (i.e., horseback riding, community sports leagues, community service, scouting) and special considerations which will effect the of where to apply/attend (i.e., costs, distance from home, learning disabilities).

SAMPLE RESUME FOR COLLEGE

John Michael Doe

1420 Maple St.
Memphis, TN 38119
(901) 422-0000
JMDoe@yahoo.com

High School: Ridgeway High School

Social Security: 111-11-1111

Date of Birth: 10/23/1985

SAT: 1450

Cumulative GPA: 3.975 / 5.044

Expected Graduation: May 2004

Intended Major: Mechanical Engineering

Fields of Interest: Engineering, Physics, Architecture

Senior Courses:

AP Physics B

AP Chemistry

AP English Lit. & Com.

AP Calculus AB

Honors Senior Band I

Clubs and Organizations:

Bridge Builders Leadership Program 10, 11, 12

National Honor Society 10, 11, 12

Mu Alpha Theta 11, 12

Spanish Honor Society 11, 12

Key Club 10

Leadership:

Model United Nations 12

Bridge Builders 10, 11, 12

Bridge Builders Senior Camp 12

Bridge Builders Junior Camp 11

Student Ambassador to Spring Fine Arts Festival 11, 12

Ice Hockey Team Captain 9

Awards and Honors:

Most Intellectual 12

Distinguished Honor Roll Awards 11, 12

National Merit Commended Scholar 11

Second place in Level III of Tennessee Statewide Letters About Literature Contest 11

TMTA Regional Exam in Pre-Calculus, faculty appointed representative 11

William H. Sweet Honor Roll Award 10, 11

President's Award for Educational Achievement 9, 10, 11

Principal's (All A's) Honor Roll Awards 9, 10, 11

TMTA Regional Exam in Algebra II, faculty appointed representative 10

William H. Sweet All A's Award - All A's for each six weeks, semester average, and exams in all classes 9

TMTA Regional Exam in Geometry, faculty appointed representative, second place 9

Academic Achievement Award, highest GPA, Honors Geometry 9

Student's Full Name

SSN: xxx-xx-xxxx

Page 2

Community Service:

Tutor, elementary school students in Math 12

Tutor, AP Calculus 12

Tutor, Pre-Calculus 11

Tutor, Algebra II 10

Ambassador to Spring Fine Arts Festival 11, 12

Computer troubleshooter 11, 12

Co-Webmaster for Ridgeway High School (go.to/ridgeway) 11

Volunteer, soup kitchen 11

Project RRR website maintenance 11

Work Experience:

Webmaster for Tennessee Fabricating 9, 10

Hobbies:

Guitar

Tennis

Racquetball

Photography

Computer games

Building personal computers

SAMPLE RESUME FOR EMPLOYMENT

Jane Doe
1 Main Street
Monson, MA 01057
(413)-267-0000

OBJECTIVE: To obtain a position as a sales representative to utilize my marketing and sales skills.

EDUCATION: Monson High School, Monson, MA. 2003
Rank 25 out of 90 students. GPA = 85.3/100

EXPERIENCE:

Customer Service Representative 2002 - present
Kmart Department Store, Palmer, MA
Assist customers with purchases, stock shelves, and make nightly deposits, 25 hours per week.

Waitress 2001-2002
Mug N Muffin Restaurant, Monson, MA
Waited on customers, bussed tables, and prepared food orders, 20 hours per week.

SPECIAL SKILLS:

Computer familiarity with Microsoft Office
Working knowledge of Spanish

ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS:

Basketball Team	2000-2003
Co-Captain	2003
Debate Team	2000-2003
National Honor Society	2002-2003
Photography	
Reading	

REFERENCES: Available upon request.

REQUEST FOR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Student name _____ Date _____

Dear _____,
(Teacher's, etc. name)

Please consider this form my official request for you to write a letter of recommendation for me. I would like this letter sent to:

I have enclosed addressed and stamped envelopes for each of the schools listed above. Please have this recommendation mailed by _____.

____ YES ____ NO An official form from the college is attached and should be sent with your letter.

Thank you for your time and kind assistance. I waive the right to access this letter.

Sincerely,

Please detach bottom portion of request when letter has been mailed, and return it to the student.



TO BE COMPLETED BY TEACHER

Please sign and return the bottom portion of this form directly to the student.

Dear _____,
(Student's Name)

Please be advised that I have completed and mailed your letter of recommendation. It was sent to:

The letter was mailed to these schools on _____.

Teacher's Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

COLLEGE NAME: _____ COLLEGE ADDRESS: _____

COLLEGE TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

INFORMATION/APPLICATION REQUESTED ON: _____

CONTACT PERSON: _____

TEST SCORES

SAT ____ V ____ M ____ SAT II ____ SCORES

date _____ date _____

____ V ____ M ____ _____ SCORES

date _____ date _____

REQUIREMENTS

APPLICATION FEE: _____ HOW MUCH? _____

ESSAYS: _____

SAT I SCORES: _____ IF YES, IS THERE A CUTOFF? _____

SAT II SCORES: _____ IF YES, WHICH ONES? _____

RECOMMENDATIONS: _____ IF YES, HOW MANY? _____

INTERVIEW: _____

DEADLINES

APPLICATION: _____ DATE SENT: _____

TEST SCORES: _____ DATE SENT: _____

TRANSCRIPT: _____ DATE SENT: _____

RECOMMENDATIONS: _____ DATE SENT: _____

INTERVIEW: _____

INTERVIEW/CAMPUS VISIT

DATE SCHEDULED: _____ TIME: _____ PLACE: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

DIRECTIONS: _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

GIVE TO: _____ DATE: _____

GIVE TO: _____ DATE: _____

FINANCIAL AID

COMPLETED FORM: _____ MAILED: _____

AWARD PACKAGE: _____

DECISION

DATE OF ACCEPTANCE/DENIAL: _____

DATE OF YOUR LETTER NOTIFYING COLLEGE OF YOUR DECISION: _____

College Check Sheet

Student's Full Name _____

College or University _____

Application Due Date _____

Parent Response Form* Date Completed _____

Senior Data Sheet* Date Completed _____

Senior Resume* Date Completed _____

of Transcripts ordered* Date Paid _____

Self addressed stamped legal sized envelope or 11 x 14 manila envelope for guidance recommendation*
(2 stamps are necessary if using a legal sized envelope, 3 stamps are required if using a manila envelope)

Teacher Recommendation Date Completed _____
(It is the responsibility of the student or teacher to send the teacher recommendation to the college)

Application, including application fee Date Completed _____
(It is the responsibility of the student to send the application and application fee to the college)

Essay (if required) Date Completed _____
(It is the responsibility of the student to send the essay to the college)

Counselor Recommendation Date Completed _____
(The counselor will send counselor recommendation to college or university)

*The guidance office **MUST** have these materials **3 weeks** before the application is due so we have time to write and mail your recommendation!!!

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING AN APPLICATION

Student's Address

Date

Name of the Director of Admissions

Name of College

College Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear _____:

I am a junior/senior at _____ High School and I am interested in receiving information and an application about _____ College. I plan to enter college in the fall of ___ and I am interested in majoring in _____. I also would like information about (sport or other activity). I would appreciate if you would please send me:

1. An application form and general brochure about the admission requirements, costs, course offerings, and the campus.
2. A financial aid application (if applicable).
3. Specific information regarding (your intended major/activity).

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Student's signature
Student's name

SAMPLE LETTER WITHDRAWING APPLICATION

Sometimes, circumstances change and you decide that a particular college is of no interest to you any longer. It is always courteous to notify the college of your request to withdraw your application from consideration before a decision has been made.

Student's Address

Date

Name of the Director of Admissions

Office of Admissions

Name of College

Address of College

City, State, Zip Code

Dear _____,

I applied for admission to _____ earlier this year. At this time my plans for higher education have changed and I request that my application be withdrawn from further consideration.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Student's signature

Student's name

If you have been accepted under an early decision program at your first choice college and must withdraw your applications from other schools, this sample letter would be appropriate to send.

SAMPLE LETTER INFORMING COLLEGE OF DECISION TO ENROLL

If, after receiving your letter of acceptance, you decide that you want to accept the offer, a letter similar to the following would be appropriate.

Student's Address
Date

Name of Director of Admissions
Office of Admissions
Name of College
Address of College
City, State, Zip Code

Dear _____,

I have received your letter offering me acceptance into the Bachelor Degree program at _____. I am very happy to announce to you that I have decided to enroll at _____. I have been very impressed with the overall quality of the school and its programs since I started my college search, and _____ remained one of my top choices.

I look forward to hearing more information from you in the next few months regarding housing, orientation and registration.

Thank you once again for this wonderful news.

Sincerely,
Student's Signature
Student's Name

You may want to be much more specific especially if you have questions pertaining to financial aid or other issues that are of significant importance.

SAMPLE LETTER INFORMING COLLEGE OF DECISION NOT TO ENROLL

If, after you receive a letter of acceptance from a college, you choose not to enroll, then you should send a letter telling the Admissions Office of your decision. This is extremely important as it may open a space for someone else who wants to attend that particular school.

Student's Address

Date

Name of the Director of Admissions

Office of Admissions

Name of College

Address of College

City, State, Zip Code

Dear _____,

I have received notification of my acceptance into the Bachelor's Degree program at _____. However, since I applied several months ago, I have changed my plans. Therefore, I think it only right for me to inform you that I will not accept your offer of admission and hope that some other qualified candidate can take my place.

Thank you for your consideration and confidence that you have shown in me. I shall continue to think highly of _____.

Sincerely,

Student's Signature

Student's Name

You may choose to give the exact reason why you chose not to enroll at this particular college/university (i.e.: I will be attending..... or I did not get enough financial aid). However, use your discretion so as not to offend or put down the institution or a person connected with the school.

FORMAT FOR CONGRESSIONAL NOMINATION & REQUEST TO ATTEND A MILITARY ACADEMY

This format is only intended to be a guide. A separate letter should be sent to each United States Senator and Representative to whom you apply.

Student's Address
Date

The Honorable
United States Senate/House of Representatives
Building/Street
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear _____,

I desire to attend the Academy Name and to be commissioned in the class entering in

I have/have not requested a pre-candidate file be initiated for me at the Admissions Office.

The following data are furnished for your information:

FULL NAME:

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

TEMPORARY ADDRESS & TELEPHONE NUMBER (if different from permanent):

DATE OF BIRTH:

HIGH SCHOOL:

NAMES OF PARENT(S):

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me immediately. Thank you for your generous time and assistance.

Sincerely,
Student's Signature
Student's Name

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS:

- Barron's Profiles of American Colleges. Barron's Educational Series Inc, Woodbury, VT.
- The College Handbook and Index of Majors. College Entrance Examination Board, NY.
- Chronicle Four-Year College Data Book. Chronicle Guidance Publications, Morania, NY.
- A Handbook of Independent Schools. Educational Testing Service. Princeton, NJ.
- School Guide. The Catholic News Publishing Co., Mount Vernon, NY.
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