

District C Schools

College Application Tips

Creating Your College List

As you create your list of colleges where you will apply, keep the following in mind:

- ◆ Be sure your list spans a wide degree of selectivity (difficulty of getting admitted) from a few at the reach end (your dream schools), a few that you have a good chance of getting admitted, and some in the middle.
- ◆ Be sure your list spans a wide degree of cost. One end should represent colleges that your family can afford with no financial assistance. The other end should represent colleges that you can only attend if you receive some form of financial aid (unless your family does not have financial need).

Organizing and Mailing Applications

During the senior year, the student should not use a mailbox for any applications or official correspondence with colleges. Students should use the post office and work with the people in person. To ensure the safest possible method of handling applications, students should do the following:

- ◆ Get a plastic crate (like an old milk crate)
- ◆ Use a file folder for each college
- ◆ Label the folder with the name of the college and the application deadline
- ◆ Make a copy of EVERY application and keep it in the appropriate folder
- ◆ When you are ready to mail the application, go to the post office with the application (the copy is already at home in the college's folder), ask for a certificate of mailing. This costs \$.90 and is the best insurance you can buy. The person behind the counter will postmark the certificate and return it to you. Clip the certificate to your copy of the application in the folder.
- ◆ Keep all documentation regarding each college in its own folder.

Applying Online

Most colleges have their applications on their websites. Applying online is commonplace and you should not worry that the application will not get there. If you plan to apply online, remember the following:

- ◆ Bookmark the website so you can get to it easily.
- ◆ Remember to print a copy of the application before you 'submit' it (that is sending it electronically).
- ◆ You will receive a confirmation number by email. Print it out and clip it to your copy of the application. File it in the appropriate college folder.

Letters of Recommendation

If you are applying to a private college, you will probably need at least one letter of recommendation. As you ask teachers to write letters for you, consider the following:

- ◆ Do not ask teachers you had before 11th grade. If you do, colleges wonder why you didn't ask a more recent teacher.
- ◆ Do not feel that you can only ask teachers in whose class you earned an "A". Often, a teacher who gave you a "B" knows you very well.
- ◆ Think of the teachers in whose classes you were actively engaged. They can say a lot about you as a student in their class.
- ◆ Be sure to give the teacher a stamped, addressed envelope for each college that needs a copy of the letter.
- ◆ Be sure to give the teacher a lot of lead time. Do not wait until the last minute.
- ◆ Be sure to write the teacher a thank-you note. Remember, they are not required to write letters of recommendation.
- ◆ Remember to tell the teacher when you receive the decision from the college. They are always interested in knowing the results of your application process.

Final Word of Advice

Be sure that your application leaves no questions in the minds of the selection committee. If there is any issue that could cause a question, address it in an essay or have your College Counselor address it in the letter of recommendation.