



EASTERN CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

College & Career PROGRAM GUIDE

YOU
CAN
GET
THERE
FROM
HERE



A RESOURCE FOR EASTERN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the College and Career office is to enable students to discover their unique gifts and develop responsibility so they can create a well-thought-out college and career plan. We want to partner with parents and faculty in the effort to be the best resource and guide for our students.

To accomplish this goal, the College and Career office works with the student services team to develop a comprehensive four-year plan. This four-year plan incorporates Naviance, a college and career readiness solution that includes fantastic career assessment inventories to help students match their gifts with possible careers and colleges. We provide evening events/workshops throughout the year and host over 50 college representatives on campus each year to help our students prepare. In addition, I personally meet with each junior and senior to discuss their post-secondary plans.

As a College and Career office, we hope this Eastern Christian College and Career Program Guide will be another useful resource for EC families as students develop their postsecondary plans.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Lim

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RESEARCHING COLLEGE OPTIONS

With over 4,000 colleges in the US alone, how do you even start your college search? First, identify your priorities. I recommended trying to identify three top priorities. Think of these as your three non-negotiables when it comes to choosing a college. Although the priorities may change throughout the year, keep three in mind to help you narrow your search.

Things to consider:

Who do you want to be in 5 years?

Before we get into the nuts and bolts, think about who you want to become 5-10 years from now from a career standpoint as well as personally, relationally, and spiritually. Keeping in mind the people, classes, extracurricular activities and overall campus life, what college will be the best environment for you to change into the person you want to become?

Size of student body

The size of the student body will affect the range of academic majors offered, the number of extra-curricular possibilities, amount of personalized attention you receive and more.

Location, location

Do you want to visit home frequently? Have you considered the cost of visiting home if you attend an out-of-state school? Do you want to be in a city, a more rural setting, college town?

Academic programs

If you have decided on your field of study, this should be near the top of your list. If you have not, there are still important questions to ask. Do they have your major? What are the unique aspects of this major? Can you wait until sophomore or junior year to pick a major? What type of counselling is offered for undecided students?

Campus life

What do students do on the weekend? Is there Greek life on campus? If so, what percentage of students participate in Greek life? What clubs and extracurricular activities are available?

Cost

See the “paying for college” section of this guide.

Diversity

Where are students from? Are they mostly local or from around the world? What geographic, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity is there on campus?

Retention and graduation rates

One way to measure the quality of a college is the percentage of freshmen students who return for their sophomore year (retention rate). Also, what percentage of students graduate in 4 years? (graduation rate).

Source: Adapted from the College Counseling Sourcebook, College Board.

Resources for College Research

Naviance student.naviance.com/easternchs
Big Future bigfuture.collegeboard.org
College Navigator nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator
College Scorecard collegescorecard.ed.gov
My Blueprint Story myblueprintstory.com

RESUMES AND APPLICATIONS

Resume

One of the best ways to begin preparing for the application process is to create a resume. At Eastern Christian, you begin this process freshman year. If you have not started yet, create your resume in Naviance. This will be a good self-evaluation, and will also provide a great place to keep track of your extracurricular activities, community service hours, summer jobs, etc. This is also where your counselor will look when writing your letter of recommendation.

Possible Resume Sections:

- Education
- Work Experience
- Volunteer Services
- Extracurricular Activities
- Awards/Certificates
- Skills/Academic Achievements
- Music/Artistic Achievements
- Athletic Achievement
- References (list two teachers who could write you a letter of recommendation)
- Leadership



"We want you to have fun, as long as it's fun that enhances a college-admission application."

Application Types

Depending on the college, you may be filling out any one of these applications.

Common Application You can fill out this application once and submit it to any one — or several — of the 800 colleges that accept it.	Coalition Application You can use this application to apply to any of the more than 90 colleges and universities that are members of the Coalition.	State Application Portals Some states have application systems for their public institutions. Apply SUNY is one example.	Individual Applications Finally, many schools have their own unique application that can be found on their website.
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Application Deadlines and Policies

Colleges will have different application deadlines and admissions policies. Here are the most frequently used deadlines and policies to keep in mind:

Rolling Admission

An admission policy of considering each application as soon as all required information (such as high school records and test scores) has been received, rather than setting an application deadline and reviewing applications in a batch. Colleges that use a rolling admission policy usually notify applicants of admission decisions quickly.

Early Action (EA)

An option to submit your applications before the regular deadlines. When you apply early action, you get admission decisions from colleges earlier than usual. Early action plans are not binding, which means that you do not have to enroll in a college if you are accepted early action. Some colleges have an early action option called EA II, which has a later application deadline than their regular EA plan.

Early Decision (ED)

An option to submit an application to your first-choice college before the regular deadline. When you apply early decision, you get an admission decision earlier than usual. Early decision plans are binding. You agree to enroll in the college immediately if admitted and offered a financial aid package that meets your needs. Some colleges have an early decision option called ED II, which has a later application deadline than their regular ED plan.

Open Admission

A policy of accepting any high school graduate, no matter what his or her grades are, until all spaces in the incoming class are filled. Almost all two-year community colleges have this policy.

Source: Adapted from College Board: bigfuture.collegeboard.org

STANDARDIZED TESTING

For better or for worse, testing is part of the college admissions process. Because curriculum, gpa, and activities differ from school to school and state to state, college testing offers one of the only national norms for colleges to compare students.

PSAT

At Eastern Christian, you have the option to take the PSAT during your sophomore and junior years. Although optional, we encourage all students to take these tests. Students can take the PSAT/NMSQT during October of their sophomore and junior years. They serve two purposes. First, it helps to prepare you for the SAT or ACT. Secondly, juniors who take the PSAT/NMSQT can qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program.



SAT and ACT

The next two pages describe the differences between the two tests and the content on each. Do not agonize over which test to take. All colleges will accept either test. In addition, students who take both tests typically get very similar scores in terms of national percentiles. As a general rule, students should plan to take the test at least twice. Colleges will typically only count your highest score. Additionally, some colleges will superscore, meaning they will look at your highest subscores from different test dates for a new, higher "superscore".

AP Tests

Due to the selectivity of some colleges, students can choose to take AP tests to bolster their college resume. Although we do not offer AP classes at EC, a number of our students still take the AP exams and do very well.

ACT**SAT**

Accepted by	All universities	All universities
Total Score Possible	36	1600
When to take the test	End of Sophomore – Beginning of Senior year	End of Sophomore – Beginning of Senior year
Sections on the Test (in order of appearance)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English (Grammar) 2. Math 3. Reading 4. Science 5. Essay (optional) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading 2. Writing and Language (Grammar) 3. Math (no calculator) 4. Math (with calculator)
Time limit	2 hours 55 minutes without Essay 3 hours 25 minutes with Essay	3 hours
Where to sign up to take test	act.org	collegeboard.org
How do I sign-up to take the test?	<p>Make an account at act.org. Write down your user name and password somewhere you won't lose it.</p> <p>Click on the link to sign up for the test and follow the directions.</p>	<p>Make an account at collegeboard.org. Write down your user name and password somewhere you won't lose it.</p> <p>Click on the link to sign up for the test and follow the directions.</p>
Where can I find my score?	When available, your scores are posted online at act.org and can be accessed using your account.	Once you receive the email from Collegeboard informing you that your scores are ready, you can view your scores online at collegeboard.org
When can I get my scores?	<p>Multiple choice score usually available within 2 weeks (but can take up to 8 weeks.)</p> <p>Essay scores are usually available 2 weeks after multiple choice scores.</p>	Multiple choice score usually available 2-4 weeks after test date.
Types of Scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Score (Composite): 1-36 • Math: 1-36 • Science: 1-36 • English: 1-36 • Reading: 1-36 • Essay: 2-12 • STEM(Math/Science): 1-36 • ELA (English Language Arts): 1-36 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Score: 400-1600 • Reading/Writing: 200-800 • Math: 200-800 • Cross-test Scores <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History/Social Science: 10-40 Science: 10-40

ACT**SAT**

Test Sections	Test Content	
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 minutes • 4 passages, 40 questions • Harder than the SAT Reading section • Multiple choice, 4 choices • Hard to finish in time given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65 minutes • 5 passages, 52 questions • Easier than the ACT Reading section • Multiple choice, 4 choices • Fair timewise
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 minutes • 1 section • Calculator OK on entire section • 60 multiple choice questions, 5 choices • More straight-forward than the SAT • Time-wise about the same as the SAT, a little hard to finish in time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 minutes, and 55 minutes • 2 sections • Calculator OK on 55 minutes section only • 45 multiple choice questions, 4 choices, 13 grid-in questions • Trickier than the ACT • Timewise about the same as the ACT, a little hard to finish in time
English (ACT) Writing & Language (SAT) (Grammar for both)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 minutes • 5 passages • Questions all passage-based • Multiple choice, 4 choices • Fair timewise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 minutes • 4 passages • Questions all passage-based • Multiple choice, 4 choices • Fair timewise
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 minutes • 6 passages • Multiple choice, 4 choices • Considered difficult • Hard to finish in time given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No separate Science section on the SAT
Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 minutes • Analyze 3 perspectives on a given issue and give your own perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discontinued

Source: Tables and SAT/ACT information compiled by Anne Delong, SAT/ACT instructor

SAT AND ACT

Important Websites

SAT & AP

Information about the tests and to sign-up
collegeboard.org

Sample Questions
collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sample-questions

Practice Tests
khanacademy.org
collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/full-length-practice-tests

Test-Optional Schools
fairtest.org/university/optional

ACT

Information about the test and to sign-up
act.org

Sample Questions
actstudent.org/testprep/

Practice Tests
powerscore.com/sat/help/content_practice_tests.cfm#official-acttest-guide.com/free-act-practice-tests.html
uniontestprep.com/act

***Test-Optional Schools**
fairtest.org/university/optional

PSAT

www.collegeboard.org/quickstart
collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10/practice

**More and more colleges are becoming test optional, meaning students can still be accepted without taking the SAT or ACT. This typically involves writing a number of essays in place of sending the test scores. While this can be a good option for some students, we recommend all students make at least one attempt at the SAT or ACT.*

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Paying for college may seem like a daunting task, but with the help of merit and need-based aid, college can be more affordable than you think.

How Colleges Determine Aid

Here are the two general types of aid that colleges grant to lower the cost of attendance.

Merit Aid	Need Based Aid
Based on grades, test scores, skills, etc.	Based on family income
Provided by the college, community based organizations, and websites.	Provided by the college, federal government, and state government.
Offered by most colleges, but rarely by selective schools.	Offered by almost all colleges.

To determine need-based aid, colleges use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). It should be completed as soon as possible after October 1st of the student’s senior year. It is a tool used to calculate how much of the family’s financial resources should be available to help pay for college. This amount is called the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). In addition, some colleges will ask for the CSS Profile, a tool that digs deeper into a family’s financial situation.

Need-based financial aid is based on the difference between the total cost of college and the EFC.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{Cost of Attendance} \\
 - \text{Expected Family Contribution} \\
 \hline
 = \text{Eligibility for Aid}
 \end{array}$$

To figure out your EFC (Expected Family Contribution), visit the following:

- **Net Price Calculator-** Every college is required to have a net price calculator on their website so families can estimate what they will pay. To find this tool online, search the name of the college followed by “net price calculator.” (Ex. “Montclair State net price calculator”)
- **College Board-** Search “College Board EFC Calculator”
- **Department of Education-** Search “Department of Education EFC Calculator”

Where Can I Find Scholarships?

This is the question we are all asking, right? In our search to reduce the cost of attendance, we don't want to leave any stone unturned. This is true, and this section will point you to some fantastic resources to find those scholarships. But first, a few truths about scholarships and why they are important to you.

Truth 1

The vast majority of scholarships will be offered directly from the college.

This is important because it tells you that paying for college is often less about writing endless scholarship essays, and more about picking the right colleges in the first place. Yes, there are good outside resources, but most of the money will come from the college just by filling out the application and completing the FAFSA. Some scholarships given by colleges will require additional essays and applications.

Truth 2

Everyone should apply for financial aid.

This is important because nearly every college in the country will look at your FAFSA and possibly the CSS Profile to determine your financial aid. Some colleges will meet 100% of your financial needs. Even if you don't think you will qualify for aid, colleges want you to apply for need-based aid before they offer you merit based scholarships.

Truth 3

Every financial aid award letter will look different.

When colleges send you the financial aid award letter (typically between February and March of your senior year), you may have trouble figuring out exactly what you will be paying. Knowing the difference between grants (free money), loans (must be paid back), and work study (given if you work on campus) is tremendously important.

Grants - free money

Loans - must be paid back

Work study - given if you work on campus

Resources

collegeboard.org

finaid.org

fastweb.net

fafsa.ed.gov

SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND PATHWAYS

Military Service Academies

For students who want to serve in the military, a service academy could be the right fit. Simply put, completing your education at one of these selective academies means you are committing to serve your country for a designated amount of time during and after graduation. One of the advantages of enlisting through a service academy is that you receive free tuition, room, and board.

The application process for the service academies is complicated and involved. Applicants must receive a nomination from a local senator and complete a vigorous fitness test among other requirements. Visit the individual military academy websites for more information.

ROTC

Founded in 1916, ROTC stands for Reserve Officer Training Corps. It's a college program offered at over 1,700 colleges and universities across the United States that prepares young adults to become officers in the U.S. military. In exchange for a paid college education and a guaranteed post-college career, cadets commit to serve in the military after graduation. Each service branch has its own take on ROTC. Visit each ROTC branch website for more details.

For more information on military academies, ROTC programs, and enlisting in the military, visit todaysmilitary.com

Technical and Vocational Schools

There are many fantastic technical and vocational schools that offer 2-year degrees. Students can study in a hands-on environment and learn skills that they can apply immediately. This route typically means less student debt!

Athletics

Interested in playing college sports? Step one, make sure that you register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3). Step two, research DI, DII, DIII and NAIA options at the following websites.

- NCAA (www.ncaa.org)
- NAIA (www.naia.org)

You can also visit this interactive map (www.ncaa.org/about/resources/research/ncaa-member-institutions) to view all NCAA member institutions. Make sure you are being proactive with reaching out to college coaches. Speak with the College and Career Counselor for tips on the recruiting, highlight tapes, etc.

Visual and Performing Arts

For visual and performing arts majors, auditions and portfolios will be a major part of the application process. Begin communicating with colleges during your junior year to identify audition and/or portfolio requirements. Some colleges will provide traveling audition dates that will be local to you. For other schools, you will need to travel to their campus. Contact the respective departments for detailed information on their requirements.

Gap Year

A growing number of high schools students are choosing to take a break between high school and college. Harvard University posted this article on their website, entitled "Should I take Time Off?" (<https://college.harvard.edu/admissions/preparing-college/should-i-take-time>) The article explains why a gap year could be a great fit for the right student.

Occupations

Some students chose to enter the workforce directly out of high school. These students often can earn a living while also pursuing degree and certificate programs relevant to their trade. At EC, students can utilize Naviance to access multiple career assessment inventories. These inventories, along with interactive resources like Roadtrip Nation, help students match their gifts with possible careers and colleges.

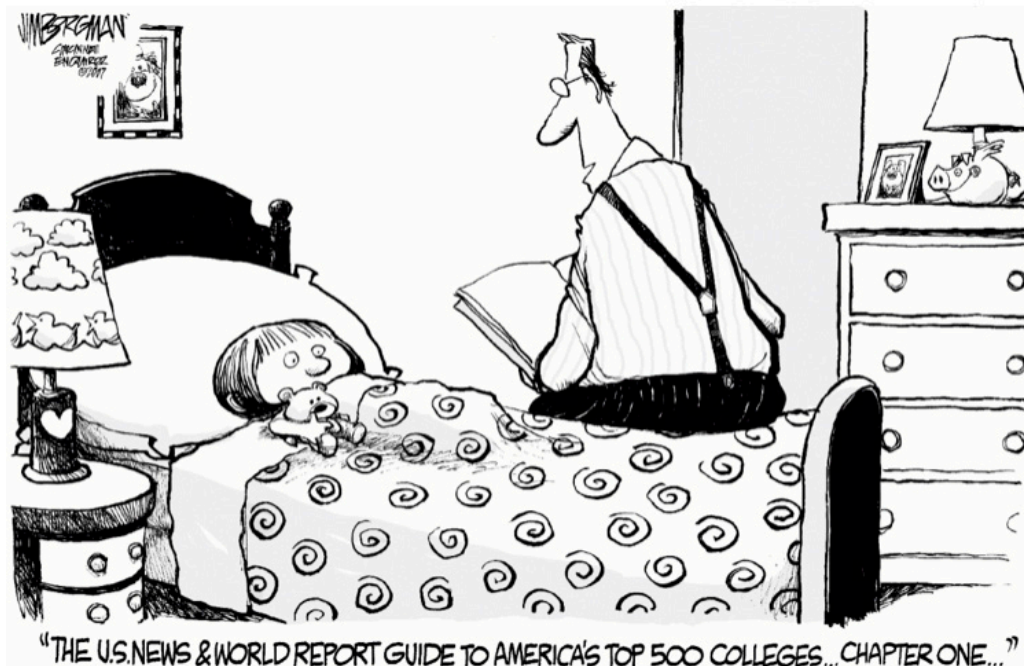
TRENDS IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Harder than ever to be accepted?

To many, it seems that it is more difficult than ever to get into college. This is simply not true. If anything, the opposite is true. The illusion of selectivity is the basis for much stress and anxiety. Being informed about current trends can help to demystify the college admissions process and give students and parents a more enjoyable admissions experience.

So why all the stress?

One reason is that everyone is applying to the same short list of schools. While most colleges accept the majority of their applicants, the most selective schools are getting even more selective. One reason for this is undoubtedly the rise of college rankings. Students and parents are relying on the rankings to choose where to apply. More applications typically equals more selectivity, and since most ranking systems use selectivity as a factor in their rankings, it creates a snowball effect. This is why it is important for students to be strategic about where they apply (more information on this topic on the next page).



Reality Check

The table below reveals some striking numbers. To begin, 80% of colleges accept the majority of their applicants. This is important because many people have a fear that no one will accept them. It is not students who should be sweating, it's the colleges! Admissions directors across the country are feeling the pressure to fill the seats at their colleges. According to the 2017 Survey of College and University Admissions Directors by Inside Higher Ed (www.insidehighered.com/news/survey/2017-survey-admissions-directors-pressure-all-around), only 34% of colleges met their new student enrollment targets in 2017, compared to 36% in 2016 and 42% in 2015.

What to Do About It?

When you are looking for colleges, make sure you apply to some schools where your GPA and test scores are above average for that college. Don't get tricked into applying only to highly selective schools where the admissions decisions are unpredictable at best. If you are applying to six colleges, at least two of the colleges should be schools where the students' GPA and test scores are above or on par with the school averages. Most importantly, don't let the subjective and typically unhelpful rankings systems determine your application list. Take a look at this article, "College Rankings Unmasked" to begin. (<https://www.ivywise.com/ivywise-knowledgebase/newsletter/article/college-rankings-unmasked-should-you-care-about-the-number-on-a-list/>) Take control of the process and make sure you will have good options when it's time to decide.

Selectivity	National share of institutions	Average number of applications per institution	National share of applications	National share of full-time, first-time degree seeking undergraduates
Accept fewer than 50 percent of applicants	19.2%	11,924	36.7%	21.5%
50 to 70 percent	35.9	5,772	33.3	34.7
71 to 85 percent	28.7	5,032	23.2	31.1
More than 85 percent	16.3	2,589	6.8	12.8

SOURCE: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2015-16). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Data Center. Washington, DC: NCES. [Includes Title-IV participating, four-year public and private not-for-profit, degree-granting (primarily baccalaureate) institutions in the US that enroll first-time freshman and are not open admission.]

WHO DOES WHAT?

The college admissions process is a unique time in the relationship between parents and students. Students are making one of the first big life decisions of their adult life; however, there are aspects of this decision that require parental participation--especially the financial aspect! This unique time can create tension in the relationship. If you are noticing this, realize that you are not alone! After hearing feedback from students and parents who have gone through this process, I want to provide a few tips and best practices.

- Instead of constantly talking about possible colleges and majors, set aside a few specific times throughout the week when “college chat” will be permitted.
- Plan fun trips and events unrelated to college admissions.
- Define your roles. See the “Who Does What” checklist on the next page. Notice that the students should be doing most of the work! This is their future.



“Sometimes I think we want this more than he does.”

WHO DOES WHAT?

Checklist Item	You	Parents
Research college options	x	x
Sign up and meet with admissions reps when they visit our high school	x	
Schedule campus visits	x	
Make travel arrangements for college visits	x	x
Ask most of the questions at college visits	x	
Complete FAFSA, CSS Profile, scholarship applications	x	x
Register for SAT/ACT testing	x	
Decide where to apply	x	
Write the essay	x	
Complete applications	x	
Provide application fee	x	x
Order transcripts	x	
Send SAT/ACT Scores to all colleges	x	
Request letters of recommendation	x	
Submit applications by deadline	x	
Provide moral support		x
Keep track of log-in, password information	x	x
Apply for scholarships	x	
Follow up with colleges that accept you	x	
Make your decision by May 1st!	x	

Source: Adapted from *Prepare, Compete, Win: The Ultimate College Planning Guide* by Peter Van Buskirk

COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

Freshman Year

- ___ Take courses appropriate to your abilities and get the best grades possible
- ___ Get involved in activities that interest you
- ___ Develop good personal and spiritual habits
- ___ Create a resume, keep track of community service hours, extra-curricular activities

Sophomore Year

- ___ Continue to take courses appropriate to your abilities and get the best grades possible
- ___ Stay involved in activities that interest you
- ___ Continue to develop good personal and spiritual habits
- ___ Take the PSAT and review results
- ___ Update your Naviance resume

Junior Year

- ___ Continue to take courses appropriate to your abilities and get the best grades possible
- ___ Stay involved in activities that interest you
- ___ Continue to develop good personal and spiritual habits
- ___ Take PSAT and review results
- ___ Update your Naviance resume
- ___ Meet with college reps when they visit Eastern Christian
- ___ Visit college campuses
- ___ Attend college fairs
- ___ List 10 Colleges in Naviance under "Colleges I'm thinking about"
- ___ Meet with Mrs. Lim during the spring semester
- ___ Take the SAT or ACT by the end of junior year.
- ___ Some selective colleges like to see good AP scores. Take these if needed.

COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

Senior Year

Summer

- ___ Visit Colleges
- ___ Update your “Colleges I’m thinking about” list as needed
- ___ Get a head start and begin work on college essays

Fall

- ___ Continue to take courses appropriate to your abilities and get the best grades possible
- ___ Complete the Senior Questionnaire
- ___ Retake the SAT or ACT if it will help with admission and scholarships
- ___ Meet with Mrs. Lim during the Fall semester
- ___ Update your Naviance resume
- ___ Finalize your college list in Naviance under “Colleges I’m applying to”
- ___ Decide if you will apply early to any schools, make calendar of deadlines
- ___ Meet with college reps when they visit Eastern Christian
- ___ Visit college campuses
- ___ Attend college fairs
- ___ Complete FAFSA and CSS Profile
- ___ Complete all applications and essays
- ___ Request letters of recommendation as needed
- ___ Request transcripts to be sent at least two weeks before the application deadline
- ___ Send SAT or ACT scores to each college

Spring

- ___ After decisions come back, rank your top choices
- ___ Make a plan to visit your top choices (stay overnight if possible)
- ___ Discuss with your parents and pray about your decision
- ___ Make your decision and send your deposit by May 1
- ___ Communicate with all schools that accepted you
- ___ Celebrate, you did it!



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