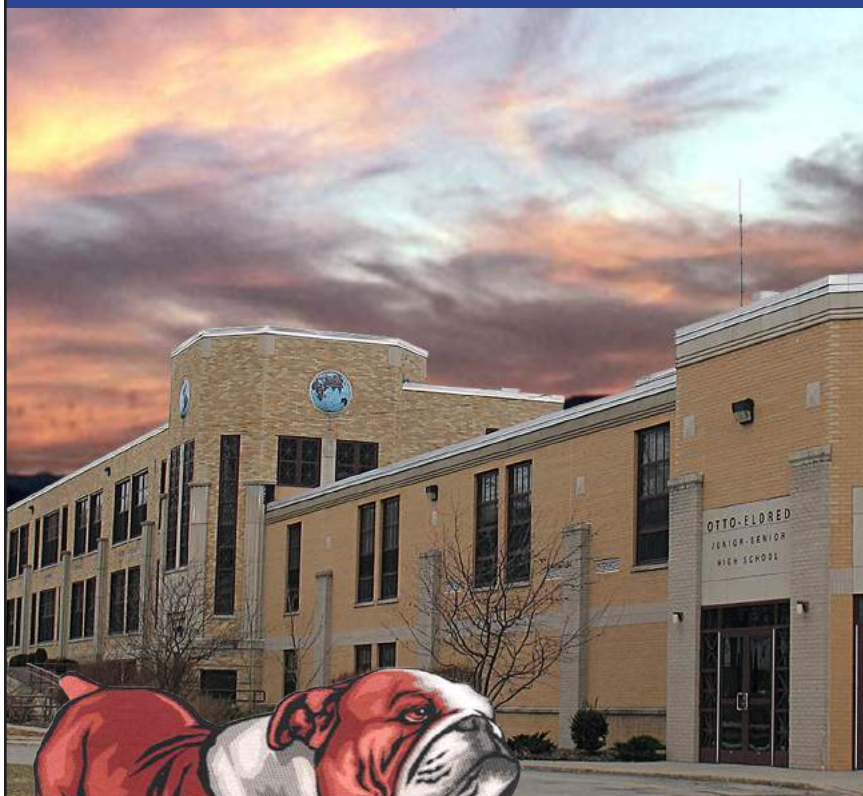


OTTO-ELDRED JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL



College Planner
& Financial Aid
Information

Martha Wolf
School Counselor
mwolf@ottoeldred.org
CEEB Code 391070

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COLLEGE TIMELINE FOR SOPHOMORES/JUNIORS

September-November

- Take challenging courses and a rigorous course load.
- Keep up your grades. Colleges look more closely at students with a 3.2 GPA or above.
- Dedicate yourself to a few extracurricular activities. Work toward a leadership position.
- **JUNIORS** take the PSAT/NMSQT in October to practice for the SAT and to be eligible for the National Merit Scholarship Award.
- **SOPHOMORES** think about taking the PSAT/NMSQT in October. Ask your Guidance Counselor for more information.
- Get a copy of some college applications to preview.
- Go online and search for colleges or careers that interest you (see page 23).

December-February

- Continue to research colleges by talking to alumni, online searches, college fairs, and various other resources found in your guidance office.
- Register and prepare for the SAT or the ACT. Ask your Guidance Counselor if you qualify for a FEE WAIVER. Borrow or purchase a preparation book or take a sample test online at www.collegeboard.com.

March-May

- Take the SAT or the ACT.
- Visit your guidance counselor to discuss your preliminary plans for applying to college and sources of financial aid.
- Attend PENN-YORK College Night at St. Bonaventure University. This is a great place to talk to college representatives in order to start narrowing down your college choices.
- Write to your US Senator or State Representative if you are considering a US Military Academy or a ROTC Scholarship.

Summer

- Find a summer job, do volunteer work, or attend a summer program (Governor's School, IU9 Summer Academy).
- Visit the college campuses that appeal to you. Look at location, size and academic majors.
- Write to colleges or go online for applications.
- Register and prepare for the SAT Subject Test (if your college requires), or the ACT. Ask your Guidance Counselor if you qualify for a fee waiver.
- Research and begin applying for scholarships.

****Parent Note****

The earlier you and your child start thinking about the college admissions process, the better. Preparing in advance allows your child to select courses, get involved in activities and community service, and cultivate relationships with teachers that will help him/her tremendously when it comes time to apply to college. By being knowledgeable about the admissions process yourself, you can encourage your child to make decisions that will help make him/her a stronger candidate for admission.

The following are some guidelines for advising your child:

- Aim for a high GPA. Admissions officers see all of your child's academic records from the 9th grade on. If your child wants to attend a selective college, advise him/her that grades certainly count.
- Don't go for the "Easy A". In other words, encourage your child to take rigorous courses.
- Concentrate on value rather than volume. Encourage your child to lead not follow. When it comes to extracurricular activities such as clubs, athletics, and volunteer work, encourage him/her to make valuable contributions to the organizations. Admissions officers are more impressed by the quality of a student's participation in extracurricular activities (i.e. leadership positions, honors, awards, beginning new programs/activities) than by the quantity of activities. Your child should work to attain as many leadership positions as possible and excel in whatever activities he or she chooses to join. Entering contests, publishing essays or poems, and starting organizations or clubs are also great ways for students to distinguish themselves from the thousands of other applicants to college.

COLLEGE TIMELINE FOR SENIORS

Otto-Eldred High School
143 Sweitzer Drive
Duke Center, PA 16729

CEEB Code 391070
Ph: 814-817-1380
Fax: 814-966-3911

Review this timeline before continuing on with the next step!! Write the date on the line next to each step when you complete it or write NA if the step was not applicable to you.

September

_____ Schedule a "Senior Interview" with School Counselor to review your credits, graduation requirements, and future plans.

Register to take SAT (or ACT) for October, November, or December. Registration booklets for SAT and ACT are available in the Guidance office. You can also register online at www.collegeboard.com. To register online, you must use a credit card to pay the fees.

_____ Discuss with your School Counselor whether or not you qualify for a fee waiver for the SAT or the ACT. You must include the fee waiver with your registration for the SAT or ACT. If you use a fee waiver, you are entitled to apply to I-4 colleges for free.

_____ Begin preparing for the SAT or ACT. Borrow one of the many available resources in the Guidance office or go on-line to find out more information about the SAT and ACT.

_____ Register to take the SAT: Subject tests for October, November, December or January (check with your colleges to see if these tests are required or recommended).

At a loss for what to choose as a college major? Here are some of the things you can do to help you with your decision:

- Borrow books/resources from the Guidance office.
- Take an interest inventory on www.Petersons.com and www.careercruising.com on the computers in the Guidance office.
- Job shadow someone in a career you are interested in.

Gather all the college applications you need. The Guidance Office has many applications available. If you decide to request the applications directly from the college, make certain you have the ones for the current school year. Many colleges are on-line only applications.

Keep in mind that most colleges encourage electronically filed applications. Applications done this way are much neater looking and make a good first impression. They are also time savers. Even if you don't have access to a computer at home, arrangements can be made for you to have access to these electronic applications through the Guidance Office. If you file electronically, request the Guidance Office to send an official transcript to the college.

Begin completing applications. It is recommended that you apply to at least 2, but no more than 6 colleges. (You can apply to more or less as you and your parents decide). Obtain fee waivers if needed or print a fee waiver from collegeboard.org.

Begin composing college application essays. You must complete the essays yourself. However, you can and should get assistance from an English teacher to check your grammar and from your counselor to give suggestions on what colleges are looking for in an essay. Not all colleges require an essay, however it is a great chance to put in writing your thoughts, goals, personal ideas, or biographical information.

Have your applications checked by your counselor. This is your responsibility. Your counselor will not be offended if you stop back and check often to determine the status of your application(s). Once the application is complete (transcripts, letters of recommendations, essays etc.), it will be mailed out through the Guidance Office within 24 hours. Remember, you only have 1-6 applications to keep track of, while your counselor has many.

If you compose an essay and or complete a personal/activity sheet, always include your name and social security number on each page.

Request recommendations if you need them or would like them for your college. Please give your teachers and counselor at least one week to complete a recommendation. Recommendation request forms are available in the Guidance Office.

In order to be eligible to participate in college level sports (Division I or II) NCAA Clearinghouse at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

October/November

- _____ Complete college applications and essays. Pay close attention to the deadlines. Many colleges recommend having applications in by THANKSGIVING.
- _____ Gather all information: applications, recommendations, transcripts, check, money order or fee waivers for applications (do not bring cash), and essays. Bring all of this information to the Guidance Office. It is recommended that all the information be sent together.
(Note: if you are retaking the SAT or ACT, you should not wait for the scores from these tests in order to mail your college application packet. You should make a note on your application that you are retaking the SAT or taking the SAT or ACT.)
- _____ Take the SAT in October or November if necessary. Remember to have your driver's license with you. If you don't have your driver's license, the Guidance Office has letters of identification.
- _____ After you have scheduled and met with your counselor for your senior interview, gather information and request applications for grants/scholarships using the information available in the Guidance Office.
- _____ Enter (or update) your information into the FastWeb scholarship search. The address is www.fastweb.com. Check your "mailbox" for scholarships. Remember your password! Keep in mind that you don't need to have access to the Internet at home in order to benefit from this search.
- _____ Check the **Scholarship Folder** in the Guidance Office-new scholarship applications arrive every day.
- _____ Complete applications for those scholarships that are due. Remember that it is your responsibility to keep track of those various deadlines.
- _____ Every year students have questions about how many times should he/she take the SAT in order to improve his/her scores. In checking with the college admissions officers, their recommendation is to take the SAT once during the spring of your junior year and once in the fall of your senior year, then take the ACT in December of your senior year. College admissions officers do not recommend taking the SAT more than 3 times total.

December

- _____ Take SAT in December if necessary. Remember to have your driver's license with you. If you don't have your driver's license, the Guidance office has letters of identification.
- _____ Continue working on scholarships.
- _____ Finish all applications to college before Christmas break, if you have not already done so. The longer you wait to apply, the harder it is to get accepted.

*** Remember to keep working in school and to continue getting good grades.**

January

_____ Take the SAT in January if necessary. Remember to have your driver's license with you. If you don't have your driver's license, the Guidance Office has letters of identification.

_____ **ATTEND THE FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOP IN DECEMBER WITH YOUR PARENTS.** The Guidance Department sponsors this annual workshop for the students and their parents. We usually have a guest speaker who knows the financial aid process and review the FAFSA form.

_____ **Register for a PIN and complete the FAFSA online @ www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA is available after mid December.**

_____ Complete the CSS Financial Aid Profile form if necessary (check with your college and scholarships to see if this is required). Remember to make a copy of this application.

February/May

_____ Take care of a variety of details: forms, fees, semester and final year reports, and anything else that the college requires.

_____ Check your SAR (Student Aid Report). The SAR is a report that is sent to you once your FAFSA has been processed. The upper right hand corner of this report has the code EFC. This stands for "Expected Family Contribution". The number after the EFC is how much money is expected to be contributed by you and your parents. This is not necessarily the final word. Work very closely with your colleges' financial aid offices.

_____ Local Scholarships will be available in the Guidance office in late February or early March. Listen to the announcements and check the daily attendance sheet.

_____ Notify all colleges you have applied to of your final decision. Notify those colleges where you decline admissions, as well as the college you have selected.

_____ Request a final transcript to be sent to the college you have decided to attend in the fall. Some colleges will provide a form for this request. **It is your responsibility to request this final transcript!!!**

Important Things To Know

- _____ Inform the Guidance Office when you have been accepted to college. Bring your acceptance letter to your counselor. The Guidance Office keeps a list of who is accepted to college. We would like to make certain your name is on the list.
- _____ Keep a notebook with all of your information concerning college. Be organized with your entries. A typewritten list of honors, accomplishments, awards, and extracurricular activities can be copied and given to the person/s from whom you requested a letter of recommendation.
- _____ Pay careful attention to deadlines (a suggestion would be to get a pocket calendar).
- _____ Keep the Guidance Office informed of all changes, additions and decisions concerning college choices, majors, and scholarships.
- _____ Always double check to make sure your applications, recommendations, transcripts, and anything else was sent. You should make a note of the date they are mailed on your calendar.
- _____ Maintain your grades or work to improve them (colleges look at your senior year grades and courses). Colleges look at grades in this order: (1st) junior year, (2nd) current senior year, (3rd) sophomore year, and (4th) freshman year.
- _____ Make certain that your senior course load is challenging. Colleges “frown” on students who weaken their course load in an attempt to improve their G.P.A. G.P.A. is important but so are the types of courses you select to take.
- _____ Write down questions you may have for your counselor as you think of them so you won’t forget before your appointment.

FINANCIAL AID

- PHEAA: State Grant**
- PELL: Federal Grant**
- SEOG: Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant**
- CWSP: College Work-Study Program**

The form to complete for these three grants and work study program is the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). If you took the SAT I or ACT during your junior year, you will automatically receive this form through the mail sometime in December. These forms will also be available in the Guidance office about the second or third week of December. You can also complete and submit an on-line version of this form via the Internet (<http://fafsa.ed.gov>). Some colleges and scholarships also require completion of the College Profile form. You should check directly with your colleges' financial aid office to determine if they require the College Profile.

Who should complete the FAFSA? **EVERYONE**. You will need to fill out a FAFSA for every year that you are in college.

REMEMBER: These forms cannot be sent until January 1st. Check with your colleges' financial aid office for the deadlines! Each college may have different deadlines. If a college's deadline is before January 1st, there is a special form you will need to get.

FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOP: Usually held in January. The Guidance Department sponsors this annual workshop for the students and their parents. We usually have a guest speaker who knows the financial aid process present this workshop. Please make a point to attend this workshop with your parents. It is extremely important!

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: If anything changes within your family that effects income negatively (such as unemployment or disability) you need to contact PFIEAA, FAFSA, and your college. This could increase the amount of aid you qualify for.

LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS/AWARDS

AMERICAN LEGION

To the three mantle winners.

TOM BARTHOLOMEW

To a senior who has overcome a learning challenge.

BEVERLY K. BOSWORTH NURSING

To a senior entering a nursing program.

MARGARET T. BRAY

To the three mantle winners.

CLOSES LUMBER

To a senior that completed a CTC (vocational-technical) program and is planning to go on to post-secondary education.

JOHN & JANE COSTELLO

To a student with “need” based on an essay.

QUINN DAVIS MEMORIAL

To a senior involved in school activities and/or sports.

JAMES M. DUFF MEMORIAL

To one or more seniors that plan on continuing their education and majoring in business.

PAUL DUKE MEMORIAL NORTHERN STAR LODGE #555 FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS

To a senior with a B average. The student must have a relative who is/was a Masonic member. If no senior meets the criteria, it will be open to all seniors.

ELDRED HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI

To a student in “need” and lives in Eldred Borough.

ELDRED KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

To a Catholic senior.

ELDRED LIONS CLUB

To a deserving senior.

BEVERLY FOSTER MEMORIAL - Eldred Nurses Association

To a student enrolling/enrolled in an LPN/RN program.

HARRINGTON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

To the academic mantle holder.

HELPING HAND

To a deserving senior.

JEANNETTE HENNIGAN-BRANDIS

To a senior with good attendance.

JOEL N. KING MEMORIAL/SENIOR SCIENCE

To the winner of junior year Bausch and Lomb Award.

PHILIP AND LILA LABELLA MEMORIAL

To a senior entering college for an education, nursing, or business degree.

TIM MURPHY MEMORIAL

LITTLE NIPPERS

To a senior going on to post-secondary (2-4 years) education that has participated in a Little Nippers sponsored activity.

GLENN & JEANETTE LOOP MEMORIAL

To one or more seniors attending a 2 year/certificate program at a vocational-technical school or community college.

MR. & MRS. H. MILFORD LOOP MEMORIAL

To one or more seniors majoring in education or engineering.

MILLIRON MARSHALL MEMORIAL

To a senior going on to post secondary education who also demonstrates a commitment to community service (essay).

GUY MOSES MEMORIAL/ELDRED VFW POST 2092

To a middle-average and deserving senior. The student must have a family member that is serving or has served in the military.

OTTO-ELDRED EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS (OEEA)

To a senior planning on majoring in education.

OTTO-ELDRED MUSIC BOOSTERS

To a senior that participates in the music program at OEHS.

OTTO-ELDRED SPORTS BOOSTERS

To a senior athlete.

OTTO TOWNSHIP CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

To a senior participating in school and community activities.

OTTO/OTTO-ELDRED ALUMNI

Under the direction of the Cattaraugus County Community Foundation.
Apply at the Guidance Office or online at www.cattfoundation.org.

OTTO TOWNSHIP LIONS CLUB

To a deserving senior.

ANGELINE PETRUZZI MEMORIAL

To a senior majoring in education.

RUSSELL-STULL-WALCH

To a hard-working, middle-average student who would not qualify for other awards.

FRANK AND ELEANOR SHICK ATTENDANCE

To the senior with best attendance record for grades 9-12.

VINCENT SILVIS MEMORIAL

To a deserving senior.

RANDY STEBBINS MEMORIAL

To a hardworking senior athlete that exhibits school spirit.

DONNA R. STULL &CHARLOTTE A. WALCH MEMORIAL

To a deserving student who has a proven potential for a career in business.

KEVIN SULLIVAN MEMORIAL

To a deserving senior nominated and chosen by a committee of teachers.

ELIZABETH TENNIES MEMORIAL

To a deserving senior going on to post-secondary education. An essay should reflect their aspiration to a career working with children.

WOLCOTT/HARRINGTON AWARD

The OUTSTANDING male and female students. The plaque reads "for outstanding dedication and achievement at the Otto-Eldred High School".

SCHOLARSHIP CHECKLIST

— Where to Look —

- _____ employers and unions
- _____ clubs and organizations
- _____ religion
- _____ colleges
- _____ majors or career fields
- _____ local based/community
- _____ armed services
- _____ academic/achievement based
- _____ leadership/community involvement based
- _____ ethnic background (race/nationality)
- _____ skills, talents, and contests

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

What is Early Decision?

If you are positive you want to attend a certain school, you can apply under their Early Decision Plan. This means that when you are accepted you will say yes and not apply to any other schools. You will need to complete your application for admission (and financial aid) early in the fall of your senior year and no later than November 15. Check with that specific college for deadlines and additional testing or requirements.

What is rolling admissions?

Some schools indicate their willingness to accept applications until school starts or until the enrollment is full. These schools process applications on a first-come, first-served basis and notify students within two-three weeks of receiving the application.

What is meant by the admission selection category of open admissions?

These schools accept almost every student who has a high school degree without regard to test scores, grade average or class rank. Some open admissions schools have selective requirements for out-of-state applicants or specific programs, such as nursing.

What is meant by the admission selection category of selective?

These schools offer admission to all or most applicants who meet their specific admissions requirements, but more applicants meet those requirements than they are willing or able to admit. The specific requirements vary from school to school and may be rigorous, but you can reasonably expect to be admitted if you meet their requirements. Most four-year colleges in the United States classify themselves as “selective.”

What is meant by the admission selection category of competitive?

These schools offer admission based on specific admissions requirements and like selective schools, more students qualify than can be admitted. You cannot be sure of admission to a competitive college, even though you satisfy the entrance requirements, because you will be competing with other equally qualified applicants.

The more competitive the college, the more likely it is to consider personal qualifications (motivation, special skills or abilities, leadership capabilities, community involvement, and good moral character) in admissions decisions.

APPLYING TO COLLEGE — THE PROCESS —

How can I make my Admissions Essay stand out positively?

Choosing a compelling topic is the best way to make your essay stand out. The topic should be personal and reveal something about your personality.

How do I go about asking my teachers to write a recommendation for me to be sent to colleges? What are the right things that I should say to the teacher to make them willing to write a recommendation for me? And a very good recommendation as well?

Colleges give very specific instructions about who they want to write your recommendations. Usually it is a teacher in an academic subject like English, Math, Science, History or Foreign Language. Some schools will even specify it has to be a particular subject. So, first check to see the requirements of each school for which you need recommendations.

Once you determine which subject teachers are required, pick the one who knows you best and can tell about your involvement in classroom discussions, your inquisitiveness, your insight into the material, your growth, and your potential. Make an appointment with the teacher so you can discuss this request in peace and quiet. Explain you are applying to colleges and will need letters of recommendations and were wondering if he/she would be interested in writing one for you.

Since you are talking to a teacher who has some idea of who you are, and hopefully, has written recommendations before, he/she should agree to write it. At this point you say, "Thank you," and schedule a time when you can meet again with all the information. You should then make up a packet with a cover letter explaining which schools and which deadlines the writer needs to follow. Provide the school's Letter of Recommendation forms, self-addressed envelopes, and a resume of your activities (both in school and out of school). You should waive your write to read the letter of recommendation. Schools feel the writer can give a more accurate indication of your strengths and weaknesses if they know you will not be seeing it. If you are careful in your choice of teachers, you have been a good student, and the teacher knows you from an academic class and clubs/athletics/music, you should receive a good recommendation.

Does the major I choose to write on my application affect my chances of being accepted at a certain college?

It depends on where you are applying. Read each school's catalogue to find out their rules on applying by major in the application process. Generally, liberal arts schools will ask just for informational purposes and your application will be compared to all those who are applying.

Other schools will ask you to apply by major so they can compare you to your peers also interested in that major and select the ones most qualified from that group. In this situation, you could be denied admission because other students are more qualified in that major. Nursing is a prime example of a major that is very competitive.

Engineering is another area where schools would like you to state your major. Engineering requires many courses and in order to finish in four years, schools like you to start your freshman year. That way you can start taking the courses and find out quickly if you want to remain in that major. You can always transfer to a non-engineering major if you do not like engineering. It is usually difficult to transfer into an engineering major because of all the pre-major requirements you will have to make up.

One thing to keep in mind, if a school has requirements for certain majors and you feel you cannot meet them as an incoming freshman and you choose an “easier” major and are accepted, you may not be able to transfer to the “harder” major once you get there.

How much does it matter if I go to a well-known school (Ivy League) vs. a less well-known - but academically well known school?

Both types of schools will serve you well. Ivy Leagues have worldwide recognition. Less well known schools would have national/area recognition which would help you if you stay in that area. The key is how you fit on the different campuses because ultimately, your success after graduation depends on your grades, leadership, research opportunities, internships, network and faculty letters of recommendation. You have to back up the schools reputation with your own personal accomplishments.

What criteria do admission officers look for in an application?

It is important for you to research the schools you are interested in to see what the criteria for acceptance is for each school. Each school has its own admissions philosophy, policy, and procedures. Basically all schools look at the same criteria which is: course work, grade point average, test scores, rank in class, activities, essays, letters of recommendations, and interviews. The importance placed on each item changes from school to school. You can find this information in the college catalogue or by talking to an admissions counselor or a college representative.

When will I find out if I have been accepted?

The usual notification methods are: April, Rolling Admissions, or Early Decisions. Most colleges notify a candidate in mid-April and ask for a reply by May 1. With rolling admissions notification is received about two or three weeks after the application is mailed to the college and students have until May 1 to reply. Early Decision candidates choose this option with the expectation on all sides that if the student is accepted, they will attend and all other applications will be withdrawn. Generally the student is notified by December 15 of the senior year and the student must respond immediately.

To how many schools should I apply?

There is no clear rule on this issue. You should only apply to schools you would really care to attend. You need to evaluate your chances at each school and then apply to one or two in each category such as two schools to which you are fairly sure you will be accepted, two that are selective and two that are long shots.

How important is the actual application?

Every step of the application process is saying something about you as an individual. You want to represent yourself as a worthy candidate for this school. Since admissions officers are reading hundreds of applications very quickly, neatness and legibility are very helpful and show you took time in preparing your application. Reading the directions, following instructions and meeting deadlines all help to make you look like a viable candidate.

The applications which require essays and short answers are looking for ways to find out how well you can articulate your thoughts on a given subject. This gives them a more personal look at you than your test scores, course work and grade point average so it is crucial you spend significant time writing your responses to reflect you at your best.

How do I get the college application?

The college applications are available on-line or hard copy from the individual school. Addresses, phone numbers, websites, and e-mail addresses are available in the college catalog. The Guidance Office also has many applications.

When do I need the college application?

You should start searching for college applications in the summer of your junior year in high school. Most colleges have their applications ready by late August. By having the application in the late summer you can review the information and start organizing your dates and make a timeline listing each school's requirements and deadlines for the application and financial aid forms.

Do all schools require an essay?

All schools do not require you write an essay as part of their application process. It is up to you to find out the application requirements of each school. This information is available in the college catalogue, application, brochures and on their web pages on the Internet.

How important is the essay?

The college application is the main way colleges can find out about you as a person. In the application you supply all the facts about your course work, grades, test scores, work, activities, honors and awards. The only place they can find out how you think or feel about life is in the essay. This is where they hear your "voice."

As they consider all your facts they are comparing you to your peers and judging your achievements. Sometimes those facts alone will win you a coveted acceptance to that college. However, sometimes they need more insight to give them a full picture of you and the essay is where that happens. It can be the deciding factor in your acceptance so never underestimate its importance. Remember, the college is asking you to write it with the idea they intend to read it so don't waste your time or their time on a haphazard effort.

How do I make myself sound interesting to a college in my personal essay?

The best way to sound interesting is to write about what you know; not what you think you should write. The biggest mistake students make is trying to sound “smart” or “highly intelligent” rather than sounding like themselves. Admissions officers are interested in your focus, perceptions and opinions because that is how they will get to know you.

They do not want a description of how you did a project but rather your perceptions of all that went right, or wrong, or how something made you look at life differently, or how you use what you have experienced in other areas of your life. Avoid facts and write about your observations, reactions, opinions, perceptions and reflections.

How do I write a good essay?

In order to do a good job on this very important part of your application. You need to commit time and energy to do it right. Start by writing what you know and care about, then have people, such as friends or a teacher, read what you have written. Be sure to spend time gathering your thoughts, finding the right opening and closing sentences, deciding what topic to write.

After you have written an essay, put it away for a few days then come back and read it. Does it still interest you? Is it written in a positive tone throughout the piece? Have you thought of a more interesting way of writing about the same topic? Your essay should evolve over time so that you can write a concise, meaningful piece that will reveal your personality.

COLLEGE VISIT — WHAT TO LOOK FOR ON TOUR —

On a campus tour you should keep your eyes peeled for clues as to what kind of experience you would have at that college. Be observant of the range of aspects of college life that are going to contribute to your overall educational experience. Weigh all the factors such as academic, the student body, facilities and the campus set up.

Academic

Sit in on a class, preferably in your intended major. Nothing can give you more of a feel for the school than going to an actual class. You will get an idea of class size, and a sense of what the students and instructors are like in action.

Student body

Do the students you meet seem content? Are they enjoying the experience at the college? Ask a selection of students, not just your tour guide!

Check out student bulletin boards, inquire about clubs, fraternities and sororities. See if you can easily find clubs and societies that you would like to belong to, or if the existing clubs are active or not.

Facilities

Get a good look at all the facilities. Visit libraries, sports fields, computer labs, etc. Since you won't be spending all your time studying, you should also look at what the school has to offer outside the classroom.

Tour the campus without a guide and try to mingle with the student population inconspicuously. Take this opportunity to visit sites of interest not on the tour. Colleges are going to show you the parts of campus that they are most proud of, so get a look at the rest of the campus on your own for a more balanced experience.

Check to see if there are enough computer terminals scattered around the campus. Observe whether or not the library is adequately stocked. Are any of your basic requirements for a college campus missing?

Campus set up

Check if the playing fields are located on campus or at some more remote location. Observe where the dorms are relative to the rest of the buildings you want access to. Try to envision yourself in the college for the next four years of your life. Consider all aspects of your experience on campus and ask yourself if it's a good fit for you.

— QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR TOUR GUIDE —

Campus tours can be a wonderful way of unearthing specific details about a college. Your time with a tour guide is valuable, so use it wisely. Focus on asking questions that have not already been dealt with in the college's published literature.

Before taking a tour, find information on the schools you plan to visit. Discover facts about schools such as size of campus, number of students, majors offered, number of libraries, male-to-female ratio, nationality of students, number of in-state/out-of-state students, college admission requirements and more.

Chances are your tour guide is also a student. If so, ask him or her whatever you like about student life, academics, and extracurricular activities. Ask what they like and dislike most about the school. Remember though that your tour guide is a chosen representative of the college whose job it is to demonstrate that the campus is an attractive one. Talk to other students independently to ensure you get a balanced perspective.

If your tour guide cannot answer your questions, he or she will refer you to someone who can. The following are shrewd questions to ask your guide, which should be combined with your own personal list for the most profitable campus tour experience.

General - Freshmen and Trends

- What is unique about your institution?
- What's it like being a student here?
- How large are freshman classes?
- How easy is it for freshmen to get the classes they want?
- How many freshmen return for their sophomore year?
- Are undergraduates considered important on this campus?
- Are you able to study in your dorm room?
- What would you most like to see improve on campus?

Academic - Standards and Staff

- What are the most popular majors? Why?
- What percentage of classes are taught by professors, and what percentage by teaching assistants?
- How accessible are the professors?
- What would you most like to see improve about the college's academic offerings or standards?
- Do most students graduate in four years? What percentage do not?
- How many graduating seniors found employment upon graduation?

Campus - Facilities and Services

- Can you access the book stacks in the library?
- Is there an academic support or writing center?
- Are computers readily available for use?
- Are computers readily available around exam time?
- Is there an internship resource center?
- Is there a job recruitment center for students who are graduating?
- What are the on-campus restaurant/cafeteria facilities like?
- What are the opening hours of the restaurants and other campus facilities?
- How good or bad is the food?
- What are the athletic facilities like?
- What facilities or services would they most like to see added on campus?

Students - Habits and Practices

- Which type of students are happiest at the college?
- Which students usually succeed there?
- What percentage of students leave campus for the weekend?
- What kind of fraternity and sorority system is there?
- What percentage of the student body becomes involved in these societies?
- Where do students live after their first year: in dormitories, in fraternity/sorority houses, off campus?
- Are the dorms co-ed?
- Are the bathrooms co-ed?

These questions, combined with your own, will allow you to develop a much fuller and more realistic picture of the colleges you are thinking about attending.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE — SCHOOL COSTS —

Are you suffering from “sticker shock”? You may be, if you’ve heard the following: the average cost of attending a public in-state school for one year is about \$20,000. If you are going out-of-state, you can add about \$5,000 to that total. And if you would like to attend a private school, it may cost about \$60,000. What expenses are included in these figures?

The Cost of Attendance is the total amount it will cost you to go to school—usually expressed as a yearly figure. Each school is responsible for determining the annual average cost of attendance for its students using a standard definition established by the U.S. Congress. This figure is used to calculate your financial aid eligibility. Remember, once you’re in school, your actual expenses will vary based on your lifestyle!

Some expenses will depend on the choices that you make—public or private school; in-state vs. out-of-state school; its location; your decision to live on-campus, off-campus, or at home. Other expenses, such as the total cost for your books, stay relatively constant regardless of which school you choose to attend.

— DIRECT COSTS —

This category typically includes tuition, fees, and room and board. You pay the money directly to your school. Tuition and fees vary by school, and if you’ve selected a state school, your tuition will depend on your residency status. The difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition can amount to thousands of dollars per year.

Tuition

Some schools base your tuition, which is the cost of your classes, on the number of credit hours you will take during an academic period. Others rely on your enrollment status (full-time vs. half-time). These details are easy to find out from the Financial Aid or Admissions Officer or school brochures.

Fees

Schools often charge additional fees for other services, activities, or facilities (e.g., insurance or use of the gymnasiums) they’re providing to you. Usually, these fees appear on your tuition bill and are not charged on a per-use basis.

Room and Board

You may choose to live on campus and eat in campus dining facilities. A variety of meal plans may be offered and costs may vary significantly based on what plan you select.

— INDIRECT COSTS —

These expenses are not paid directly to your school, but are associated with attending school. You and your family can control some of them.

Books and Supplies

Individual book costs vary greatly, depending on the courses you are taking. You may be able to purchase used books to lower these costs. Some classes also require more supplies than others—course materials, printing, copying, and computer costs.

Computer

Many schools require each student to have a PC. Check the school's admissions requirements to determine whether you need a laptop. And don't forget additional expenses, such as software and hooking up to the school network if you live off-campus.

Room and Board

If you choose to live off-campus, you will need to budget for monthly rent, furnishings, utilities, and your meals. You may want to share an apartment with other students so you can pool your funds. Now is the time to fine-tune your cooking skills. It's expensive to eat out all the time!

Transportation

These costs depend on your school's location. If you commute, be sure to factor in the cost of public transportation or gas, car insurance, and parking fees. Some schools provide free parking, while others may require you to pay for a permit. Don't forget the cost of breaks and holiday travel! For example, think about how many times you want to go home.

Personal Expenses

Your lifestyle can have a big impact on this cost category. Consider such living expenses as clothing, laundry, haircuts, phone, entertainment, etc. Try to reevaluate your priorities so you can stay within your budget.

Special Circumstances

If you have child care costs or expenses related to a disability, be sure to include them in your budget.

Other Costs

You can plan on some expenses such as special lab fees for some science courses. Other costs may be unexpected such as drop-and-add fees you may have to pay if you decide to change your course schedule. And don't forget athletic, sorority or fraternity, or other organizational expenses! Always try to keep a little extra money in your budget to cover emergencies.

— INTERNET RESOURCES —

The following are only some of the numerous sites for college/career planning, applications, financial aid, SAT/ACT registration and preparation, and various other issues in order to help you in the planning of your future.

Remember this information is free.

Do not pay a fee for college/scholarship searches, or for financial aid forms and assistance.

- _____ www.aicnet.org
- _____ www.act.org
- _____ www.braintrack.com
- _____ www.campustours.com
- _____ www.careercruising.com
- _____ www.collegeboard.org
- _____ www.collegebound.net
- _____ www.collegiatechoice.com
- _____ www.collegenet.com
- _____ www.colleges.com
- _____ www.collegesurfing.com
- _____ www.collegevrew.com
- _____ www.fastweb.com
- _____ www.4Tests.com
- _____ www.gocollege.com
- _____ www.HighFiveScholarships.com
- _____ www.ineedapencil.com
- _____ www.kaptest.com
- _____ www.khanacademy.org
- _____ www.makingcollegcount.com
- _____ www.maxthetest.com
- _____ www.ncaa.org (Div. 1&2 athletes)
- _____ www.pacareerzone.org
- _____ www.petersons.com
- _____ www.pheaa.org
- _____ www.princetonreview.com
- _____ www.students.gov
- _____ www.talbotsbook.com

If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to call (817-1380), stop in, or email me (mwolf@ottoeldred.org).

Martha Wolf — Guidance Counselor

The following is a sample “senior resume”... It can be included in a college application or given to whomever you request to write a letter of recommendation for you.

Name
Address
Phone Number
Cell Phone Number
Email address (if you have one)
Social Security Number

— EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES —

- Grades 9-12 only.
- Designate the year or years of participation after the activity.
- List activity of greatest involvement first.
- Remember to include if you held a leadership position.

— SCHOOL AWARDS —

- Grades 9-12 only.
- Continue using same format used in the Extracurricular Activities section.

— COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES —

- Grades 9 - 12
- Continue using same format as above.
- Include volunteer work.
- Include individual activities performed while a member of various groups such as Youth Groups, Peer Helpers, Student Council etc...

— EMPLOYMENT —

- Include employment history (most recent first)
- Don't forget to list names of supervisors and duties performed.

— SUMMER ACTIVITIES —

- A short descriptive of any travel (college visits) or academic workshops/internships.

— WEBSITE & PASSWORD REFERENCE PAGES —

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