

Seniors, The Counseling department has compiled this reference guide, which we hope will aid you in your college search and planning. In the following pages, you will find an alphabetical list of terms that you may encounter during your college search. We have also included some dates and other THS Class of 2018 specific information for your benefit.

Please know that we are here to help and we look forward to helping you with your post-secondary planning.

THS Counselors

1. **Academic Common Market:** For more than 35 years, the Southern Region Education Board's Academic Common Market has enabled students to pursue specialized degrees (not available at Alabama Institutions) at out-of-state colleges for discounted (in-state) tuition rates. For more information and qualification requirements see:

www.sreb.org/page/1304/academic_common_market.html/

1. **ACT:** This college admissions test, given six times a year, is accepted by all state colleges and universities in Alabama as well as many private and out-of-state schools. Visit www.actstudent.org to register for the ACT and to request an

ACT Transcript.

1. **ASVAB (ARMED SERVICES VOCATIONAL APTITUDE BATTERY).** This aptitude test is available to any interested student. Although it is used for job placement by the military, it can give all students good information about their abilities. Students interested in taking the ASVAB should check with the military liaisons.

1. **ACADEMIC GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA).** The Academic Grade Point Average is calculated by assigning points for grades that can be calculated on a 4.0 scale. A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0. The grades are converted to this numeric system and divided by the number of grades being calculated. Some colleges calculate all grades posted on a transcript; others may choose to only count core curriculum grades (English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Language classes). Students should be aware that bonus quality points awarded for AP and Pre-AP or honors level classes may *not* be recognized by colleges and universities when calculating academic grade point averages *unless* it is their policy to factor AP, Pre-AP/Honors level courses for any student from any high school. For example, you may have been given 3.5 quality points for making a "B" in PRE-AP UNITED STATES HISTORY 10 but many colleges will only give you 3.0 quality points for this class. Ask the college to verify how they will calculate your grades. GPA Calculators are available on the Internet and can be found with a google search.

1. **CLASS RANK.** Will be completed after Fall semester.

1. **COLLEGE ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS:** Every college sets their own admissions requirements. Students should contact college admissions departments directly to make sure they meet entrance requirements.

1. **COLLEGE ADMISSIONS REPRESENTATIVES.** College admissions representatives are a good source of information about the college and are the link between the college and the applicant. Students may speak with them by visiting college campuses or meeting with them when they visit the Tullahoma campus during lunch periods.

1. **COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURE.** For each college to which you think you may apply, **read the application requirements thoroughly and completely before you begin.** Generally the admissions process is found on the Admissions webpage of the university's website. Look for the "Undergraduate," "Prospective students" or "freshman" link. The requirements and process vary from college to college. Follow their instructions to apply.

1. **COLLEGE AND SCHOLARSHIP ESSAYS.** Pruffread – Proofread – **PROOFREAD!! AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!** Be who you are. Don't change what you do to impress the college. Ask your friends how you come across – funny, serious, inquisitive, etc. That's how you should come across in your essay. The essay should exemplify how you think, what you think about, and show how well you write.

- Remember the intent of the essay question. It's not about the "right answers." Show your willingness to delve into topics, demonstrate intellectual curiosity, and show off your writing prowess.
- **NO McEssays!** No five paragraph essays that contain mostly abstractions and unsupported generalizations. Pick a topic you are genuinely interested in. You can't fake it! College admissions reps have read so many college essays they will see right through a contrived interest.
- If you can put any other person's name in your essay in place of yours and it makes sense, go back to the drawing board. Use anecdotes and stories from your life that are yours and yours alone. Detail is what differentiates one essay from another, one applicant from another.

1. **COMMON APPLICATION.** This is a comprehensive college application form used by 500+ independent colleges that is available online. Generally, you need only fill out one application to submit to any participating post-secondary institution. You may be required to complete a supplemental application for a college. For more information visit www.commonapp.org.

1. **COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION & COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION FORM.** A counselor recommendation is a personalized letter of recommendation written by the school counselor on behalf of the student to help them gain college admission. Not all colleges require a counselor recommendation as a part of the application procedure. Read the college application completely and thoroughly to determine if there is a requirement for a Counselor Recommendation. Please send a Resume when requesting a letter of recommendation.

1. **EFC (Expected Family Contribution):** EFC is the "magic number" of the financial aid process. This is the amount of money you and your parents are expected to contribute to paying for college. The EFC is based on the income and other financial assets of you and your parents.

The point of any financial aid form is to figure out your EFC. Calculating the EFC is not so simple, though, because it requires extremely detailed financial information about each applicant. That's where the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and other financial aid forms come in. The information from your completed financial aid form is plugged into a series of formulas to calculate how much money your family can afford to pay for college.

1. **FINAL TRANSCRIPT.** If you will be attending a college, university, technical institute, or other type of school next fall, that school will require that you send a final transcript to the institution as proof that you have graduated. Seniors will be told when to complete the request for final transcripts through the counseling department. The first *Final Transcript* is free of charge and will be available after graduation. All other transcripts will accrue a \$2.00 fee. Final transcripts will not be sent unless they are requested. After you have graduated if you need a final transcript you can request it through Counseling Department.

1. **FINANCIAL AID.** There are 2 types of financial aid: need-based and merit-based. Financial aid does not necessarily mean “free money.” A financial aid package can include any combination of grants, loans, work-study, and EFC. The biggest mistake most families make is not completing a FAFSA. Parent income is only 1 of 7 pieces of information considered when constructing a financial aid package.

1. **FINANCIAL AID FORMS.** There are several forms which are used to apply for need based financial aid:

1* **FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)** - This form is used by *all* colleges to determine eligibility for need-based financial aid. Application is online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

1. **GRADE POINT AVERAGE.** See Academic Grade Point Average.

1. **GRADUATION CEREMONIES.** May 2018

1. **GRADUATION REGALIA AND ANNOUNCEMENT.** Visit Jostens to order online <http://www.jostens.com/contact>. Jostens will visit the school in the Fall to take orders and answer questions for students as well.

1. **NCAA:** Potential student athletes who need to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse may do so online at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. The NCAA will require official transcripts be sent once you are registered with the Clearinghouse. Students should discuss NCAA rules and eligibility with their coach and/or the THS Athletic Director’s office. The THS Counseling Office is aware of NCAA eligibility rules, however, students are advised by the Counselors based on graduation and college admission requirements only. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to ensure that NCAA eligibility rules are being followed. PLEASE NOTE: Online courses may not currently be accepted by the NCAA.

1. **ESCRIP-safe.COM.** escrip-safe.com is a third party vendor that electronically sends transcripts to in and out of state colleges.

1. **SAT.** This college admissions test, given multiple times each year, is accepted by most colleges and universities.

1* To register for the SAT, students should go online to <https://sat.collegeboard.org/register>.

1. **SAT SUBJECT TESTS:** Some colleges require subject tests as a part of the admissions process. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of each college's requirement in this area. Students need take this test only if required by a college or university to which they are applying. Subject area tests are given at the same time and location as the SAT. See CollegeBoard.com for registration information.

1. **SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION.** To keep seniors aware of current scholarship information, the THS Counseling Office posts scholarships on the Counseling webpage and sends alerts through Facebook and Twitter.

1. **TEACHER RECOMMENDATION.** If a college or scholarship requires a teacher recommendation, coordinate this **directly** with the teacher. Each teacher has their own process, so they will tell you what they need. **Always** provide the teacher with an envelope that is addressed and stamped to the admissions office or agency who should receive the teacher recommendation. Imperative: Follow up with a “thank you” note to the teacher when they have completed the recommendation.

1. **TRANSCRIPTS.** A transcript is a history of your academic record and Tennessee Academic Assessments for grades 9-12. It also shows your grade point average. Official transcripts are required for college applications. Transcripts must be ordered using the transcript request form found on the Counseling Department. Parents may NOT request transcripts for students who are over the age of 18.

- 1* **Official transcript** – Has a signature and the school seal. Required when applying to college. The Counseling Office can send it electronically, mail it directly to the college, or it can be given to students or parents in a sealed envelope.

- 2* **Unofficial transcript** – no signature or school seal. May not be used to apply for college.

1. **Z End! (almost)**

COMMON BLUNDERS OF COLLEGE APPLICANTS. *The Six Most Common Blunders of College Applicants.* Advice from Jeremy Spencer, Former Director of Admissions at Alfred University: For more detail see:

<http://collegeapps.about.com/od/theartofgettingaccepted/a/app-mistakes.htm>.

- 1) Missing deadlines.
- 2) Applying for Early Decision when it's not the right choice.
- 3) Using the wrong college name in an application essay.
- 4) Applying to college online without telling school counselors.
- 5) Waiting too long to ask for letters of recommendation.
- 6) Failing to limit parents' involvement.

USEFUL CAREER/COLLEGE PLANNING WEB SITES

v COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTS

- o www.sat.collegeboard.org/register: On-line SAT registration and test dates are available at this site. It also has college databases, a financial aid registration site, and career questionnaire plus career information.
- o www.actstudent.org: Register for the ACT. This site also provides “information for life’s transitions” including career planning, applying to college, and a financial aid need estimator.

v COLLEGE & CAREER INFORMATION

- o <http://www.nacacnet.org/PublicationsResources/steps/Pages/default.aspx>: The National Association for College Admissions Counseling’s “Steps to College” is loaded with good information.
- o www.usnews.com: (click on best colleges) Information about colleges, including rankings.
- o <http://www.bls.gov/ooh>: Occupational Outlook Handbook: Provides career information based on keyword searches and contains an index of occupations. Revised every 2 years, the Handbook describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, training and education needed, earnings, and expected job prospects in a wide range of occupations.
- o Achievealabama.org College and Scholarship search website.

v FINANCIAL AID OR SCHOLARSHIPS

- o www.fafsa.ed.gov : Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), use this site to complete your federal financial aid application
- o www.fastweb.com: Scholarship search database of over 350,000 scholarships.
- o www.finaid.com: Information about financial aid, including links to other financial aid sites.
- o www.wiredscholar.com: Help from start to finish with planning for and paying for college.
- o www.petersons.com/bcd: With BestCollegeDeals (for U.S. citizens looking for information on U.S. colleges) you get personalized financial aid guidance.