

**Greenwich Public Schools  
Guidance Department  
High School Planning Guide**



**Greenwich High School  
10 Hillside Road  
Greenwich, CT 06830**

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## WELCOME TO GREENWICH HIGH SCHOOL

Students, you have many options and opportunities both during and after high school, and the choices you make will depend on your goals. The school counselors in the Guidance Department of the Greenwich Public Schools will work with you to help you maximize your academic achievement, your well-being and your opportunities. Our intention in creating this planning guide is to provide Greenwich High School students with detailed information that will allow them to benefit from the courses, programs, activities and resources available at GHS and in the wider community.

Sincerely,  
Your School Counselors in Central Middle School, Eastern Middle School,  
Western Middle School, and Greenwich High School

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

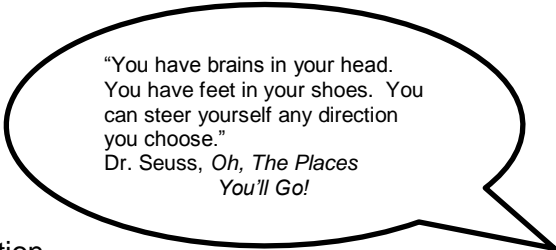
**Freshmen** should focus on making a successful transition to high school, and only need to read this guide through page 12 to be adequately informed to make the most of their first year of high school.

**Sophomores** should read the information about college admissions testing and researching post high school options, and actively participate in the programs offered at GHS by the school counselors.

**Juniors** need to spend independent time researching their options and taking steps to reach their post high school goals. They should use this guide as a reference and resource, and collaborate with their school counselor for individualized advice and decision-making.

**Seniors** need to work closely with their school counselor and guidance assistant on their post-high school planning, and should refer to this guide for details that will help make the process more efficient.

We encourage all students to work closely with their teachers and school counselors. By being well informed and following sound advice, we believe the process of planning for life during and after high school will be more manageable and enjoyable. If, after reading this guide, you have additional questions, please contact your school counselor. We are here for you and look forward to helping you make the best possible, well informed choices and decisions based on your individual needs, interests and goals.



## COURSE PLANNING & SELECTION

In addition to GHS, Greenwich residents have four regional public magnet high school options in Fairfield County: the Academy of Information Technology & Engineering, J.M. Wright Technical High School, and Westhill High School's Agri-Science Program are all located in Stamford. There is also the Center for Global Studies, a regional magnet school-within-a-school at Brien McMahon High School in Norwalk. A chart comparing these programs is available on the GHS Guidance website. Students and parents are encouraged to discuss these options with their middle school counselor early in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, since applications are due in December and January. Students will be supported in submitting applications to these schools as desired.

### Facts About Selecting Your Courses at GHS:

**The Greenwich High School Course of Study Guide** is distributed each January. The COSG outlines the GHS graduation requirements and describes the courses and course sequences available to our students. Most four-year colleges recommend that students prepare by taking college preparatory courses in the five "core subjects".

GHS Credit Requirement Classes of 2019-2022	GHS Credit Requirement Class of 2023 & Beyond
English (4 credits)	Humanities (9 credits) English = 4 credits Social Studies = 3 credits Fine Arts = 1 credit
Social Studies (3 credits)	
Math (3 credits)	
Science (3 credits)	STEM (9 credits) Math = 4 credits Science = 3 credits Technology = recommended
World Language (2 credits)	World Language (2 credits)
"Arts" Electives (1.5 credits)	Career & Life Skills (1 credit)
PE/Wellness (1.5 credits)	PE/Wellness (1 credit) Health & Safety (1 credit)
Additional credits (4 credits) TO EQUAL 22 CREDITS TOTAL	Capstone (1 credit embedded over four years) TO EQUAL 25 CREDITS TOTAL

With this in mind, your school counselors will guide you to select courses that will give you the broadest options for your future after high school. For the majority of our students, this will be a college preparatory curriculum which includes 4 years each of the five core subjects (English, Social Studies, Math, Science and World Language). For students enrolled in our Greenwich middle schools, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade counselor collaborates with the 8th grade teachers, the program leaders at Greenwich High School, and with their students and parents to help 8<sup>th</sup> graders select 9<sup>th</sup> grade courses. In January and February, individualized course placement recommendations in English, social studies, math, science and world language are provided to students and parents with the course selection materials for Greenwich High School.

School counselors and teachers will consider your talents and strengths, as well as your career interests and goals, and encourage you to consider these when selecting elective courses from the wide variety available at GHS. By developing **individual Student Success Plans**, students in grades 6-12 are taught ways to connect their academic achievement to post high school goals. Students and their parents have access to Student Success Planning tools and information through Naviance. A chart outlining the resources available in Naviance is available on the GHS Guidance Website.

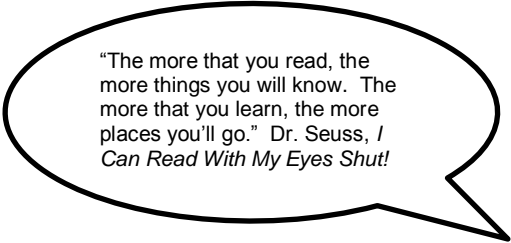
Students who transfer into Greenwich High School from private schools, other districts or other countries, are given placement tests during the registration process and meet with their GHS school counselor to select their courses. **Course selection for all students continues to be an individualized process throughout high school**, and takes place in the months of January, February and March. The school counselors are experienced in using their knowledge about their students' strengths, interests, and goals, and about the placement criteria/pre-requisites outlined in the GHS *Course of Study Guide* to develop an individualized schedule of courses for each year of high school. Our goal is to help students meet with success in courses that are both academically challenging and personally manageable while earning credits to meet graduation requirements. All students are encouraged to take courses that will broaden the opportunities available to them after high school. Counselors strive to connect students to the courses that will support their career goals and help them pursue their unique passions, interests and curiosities.

A link to the COSG is posted on the GHS Guidance website, along with links to a Four-Year Course Planning Chart. Course Sequence Charts are posted for the five core academic subjects under Academics. The GHS Guidance website also provides links to an outline of elective courses that support various Career Pathways, which are occupations and career specialties that share a common foundation of knowledge and skills for success. Selecting courses that prepare you with the knowledge and skills for careers that interest you will help you be as prepared as possible to flourish in college and the workplace.

### **Action Steps to Plan and Select Courses at GHS:**

1. Students and parents must educate themselves on available options. Carefully read the *Course of Study Guide*, noting graduation requirements, placement criteria, pre-requisites and course sequences.
2. Eighth graders take a field trip to GHS from the middle schools in January to attend an orientation "Elective Assembly" program to learn more about the electives offered at GHS.
3. Parents of 8<sup>th</sup> graders attend an evening orientation program at GHS in February to learn more about the courses in the academic and elective programs from the program administrators and teachers. Your school counselor can also answer questions.
4. Students should consider their post school outcome goals and career interests documented in Naviance, as well as the Career Pathways to help choose their electives.
5. Review the core subject area courses recommended by your teachers.
6. Use the four-year planning chart to create a draft of the courses you're interested in taking.
7. Discuss the courses and your ideas with your teachers and school counselor as needed.

8. Select elective courses that are right for you, and submit them to your school counselor by the deadline you are given.
9. Eighth graders review their courses with their new GHS counselor at their visit to the middle schools in June.

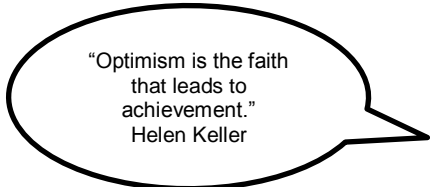


"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." Dr. Seuss, *I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!*

### **Frequently Asked Questions about Course Selection at GHS:**

- Q1. If I don't take advanced or ALP courses in middle school, is it true I can't take Honors or AP courses at GHS?
- A. No. Students are often recommended to take advanced and honors courses at GHS, and are prepared to succeed in them, without taking ALP courses in middle school.
- Q2. If I don't take Honors courses in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, can I take Honors courses later?
- A. Yes. While many students begin with college preparatory level courses in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, they successfully take honors and AP courses in subsequent years. Most course sequences are flexible. Speak to your counselor and teachers about your ideas.
- Q3. Is it true I won't be able to get into college unless I take honors and AP courses?
- A. No. While highly selective colleges expect their applicants to take the most challenging courses available in their high school, a traditional college preparatory program provides students with a foundation to apply and be accepted to the majority of bachelor's degree programs.
- Q4. How am I assigned to a house?
- A. All students are randomly assigned to one of the five houses at GHS. However, students with older siblings are assigned to the same house. Parents can "opt out" of their younger child being assigned the same house by submitting the request to our Assistant Headmaster by the deadline on the notification of this option. House placements are announced in mid-April, and parents of incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to attend a House orientation program in late April.
- Q5. How do my courses affect my GPA?
- A. The GPA is your grade point average. Marking period grades are averaged each quarter for a GPA to determine honor roll (3.6+ = honors, 4.0+ = high honors). Final grades are also calculated each year for a Cum GPA. Courses designated Honors or AP are given additional 1.0 weight in the quarterly and cumulative GPA calculation.
- Q6. How many credits do I need to graduate?
- A. The number of credits and the type of courses required for graduation depend on your year of graduation. Please see the graduation credit requirements in the COSG.
- Q7. How many hours of community service do I need to graduate?
- A. The only requirement for service hours is contained within a community service project in the required Civics/Government course (5 hours). However, all juniors who have a 3.6 cumulative GPA will be invited to apply for membership to the National Honor Society, which has a service hour requirement of 60 hours by the beginning of senior year. (Please see the GHS Student Activities website for detailed information on requirements for membership in the NHS.)
- Q8. How will my child's special education services be scheduled?
- A. An articulation PPT meeting will be held at GHS in April for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The special education teachers and support specialists in the middle schools will share information with the GHS special education teachers and support specialists in preparation for these PPTs. The GHS counselor will adjust any course requests that need to be revised as a result of the PPT process.
- Q9. What if I don't agree with my placement recommendations?
- A. The GHS program administrators continually analyze placement recommendations and student success in courses to help the faculty make knowledgeable recommendations. If you disagree with the recommended course placements, first discuss with your current teacher(s) and school counselor. They will instruct you to contact the correct Program Administrator for the subject to request an override if you continue to disagree with our reasoning behind the placement recommendation. These conversations must take place during the course selection time period from January through March each year.

- Q10. Do I have to continue to take the world language that I studied in middle school?  
 A. No. Students have the option of continuing with their world language, or they can select a new world language.
- Q11. Is it possible to fill all 48 blocks?  
 A. No. We don't recommend that you request courses to fill all blocks. The GHS rotating block schedule was designed for students to have time during the school day to access learning centers or work with their teachers or counselors. We recommend that students have between three and six "opens" or learning centers (unscheduled blocks) so they can complete homework, study for tests and get support as needed. Because science and English/social studies courses have additional blocks for labs and seminars, it is unusual for a student's schedule to fill all 48 blocks. All freshmen are assigned to learning centers during unscheduled blocks.
- Q12. What if I can't get all my courses because of conflicts?  
 A. The master schedule is created to have the fewest conflicts possible, but not every combination of classes will fit together. The priority is to schedule all core academic courses first and every effort will be made to schedule first and second choice elective courses.
- Q13. What is the deadline for course selection and registration?  
 A. The course requests entered by your counselor are used to determine the number of sections needed of each course and to create the master schedule. This process takes a number of months, so school counselors must enter all course registrations by the end of March.
- Q14. What if I change my mind about the courses I requested?  
 A. Our course selection and registration process provides you with the opportunity and the responsibility to carefully consider your courses. Students and parents are provided with a final list of requests, which they need to review by a set deadline each spring. We expect students to commit to their original course requests. If you need to change a course, you may request this by communicating with your school counselor. Late changes to requests may not be possible, but we will do our best to meet your needs.
- Q15. When do I get my class schedule?  
 A. Class schedules are distributed to all students on the first day of school each fall.
- Q16. What if I realize I need to change my schedule after school starts?  
 A. All new classes must be added within the first 8 days (one cycle) of school. The ability to revise your schedule may be limited, as we cannot overload classes nor exceed teacher contract max.



## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SUPPORTS AT GHS

The faculty and staff of GHS are very invested in student success. We help students identify their interests and strengths, set goals, and encourage their participation in activities in and out of school that will help them reach their goals. While we expect a great deal of independence and personal responsibility from our students, we also provide a great deal of structure and support.



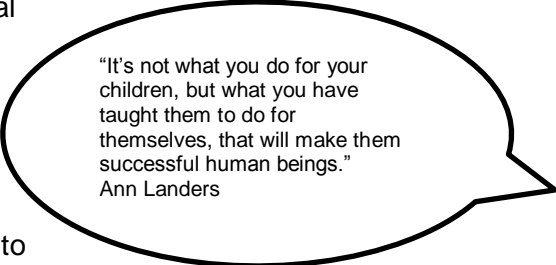
"How To Do Well In School Without Studying" is over there in the fiction section."

Each student is valued as an individual. In high school, students will encounter both opportunities and challenges. We encourage students to give their best effort every day, and respond to failures and successes with reflection and resilience.

- Attendance – The most important thing students can do to achieve academic success is to attend school every day.
- Time on task – Students will learn to prioritize responsibilities and manage time. Students in grades 10-12 at GHS have "opens" or learning centers during the school day to study, do their homework, or meet with teachers/counselors. 9<sup>th</sup> grade students do not have unstructured time and are scheduled for Learning Centers when they do not have a class. The amount of time and quality of time

students spend on schoolwork makes a significant difference in their success.

- Self-advocacy – It's essential for students to communicate directly with their teachers when they have questions or concerns. Meet with your school counselor when you need help advocating or learning to advocate for yourself.
- High expectations – High school is challenging, and getting good grades is important. Students are encouraged to take on what they can manage, and when things get in the way of academic progress, teachers and school counselors will help students identify strengths and weaknesses, help problem solve, and create plans to improve academic skills and habits.
- Health – Research is clear that lack of sleep, excessive screen time, poor diet, and use of drugs or alcohol negatively impact health, relationships, and academic performance. Students can meet with a nurse in our health office, school counselor or school social worker if they are struggling with physical or mental health and well being.
- Stress Management – It's normal to experience moments of stress and difficulty focusing. When a person is feeling overwhelmed, a helpful strategy to refocus one's mind is to ask a question: "What's the next thing that I have to do?" Take a moment to breathe, and focus on the very next thing you have to do...nothing beyond that. Breathe...think...just, the next, thing. If moments of stress become extended periods of stress, speak to a trusted adult about your concerns.



"It's not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings."  
Ann Landers

Parents have a vital role to play in supporting activities and setting up structures that will enhance their children's academic achievement and well-being. The school counselors, teachers, social workers and school psychologists at GHS will collaborate with you and advise you as best they can. At home, it's best to establish clear and reasonable expectations, healthy routines, and to encourage discussion and collaborative decision-making between you and your child. Research in self-determination theory shows that clearing away all obstacles undermines a person's sense of competence and autonomy, leading to higher levels of anxiety and depression, lower grades in school, and less satisfaction with life. Parents are encouraged to adjust their involvement to a level that is developmentally appropriate, as their children get older, so their children can acquire the skills they need to function as adults. (Holly Schiffrin, University of Mary Washington)

**Working together, each student can realize the Greenwich Public Schools' Vision of the Graduate, by maximizing his or her individual capacities to:**

- Pose and pursue substantive questions
- Critically interpret, evaluate, and synthesize information
- Explore, define, and solve complex problems
- Communicate effectively for a given purpose
- Advocate for ideas, causes, and actions
- Generate innovative, creative ideas and products
- Collaborate with others to produce a unified work and/or heightened understanding
- Contribute to community through dialogue, service, and/or leadership
- Conduct themselves in an ethical and responsible manner
- Recognize and respect other cultural contexts and points of view
- Pursue their unique interests, passions and curiosities
- Respond to failure and successes with reflection and resilience
- Be responsible for their own mental and physical health

"A goal without a plan is just a wish." Antoine de Saint-Exupery

## POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING

**Post High School (Transition) Planning** involves developing goals as well as creating a plan to achieve those goals. Discussions during the annual course selection process and annual PPTs (if a student has an active IEP) at the high school level include reviewing a student's post high school goals. School counselors, classroom teachers, and special education teachers help students explore post high school options such as independent or supported employment, career or technical training, certificate programs, military service, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, etc. All students are supported in learning the skills and acquiring the confidence to self-advocate and problem solve in a resourceful and resilient manner when they have academic or personal difficulties.

Each year, 90% of Greenwich High School graduates plan to attend college immediately after high school. Most begin at a four-year college with the goal of earning a bachelor's degree. Some begin at a two-year college, with the goal of earning an associate degree or transferring to a four-year college. The other 10% of GHS graduates avail themselves of a variety of other opportunities including military service, workforce, and post-graduate and gap-year programs.

All of the members of the GHS faculty and staff take pride in working with students to help them develop their own interests and reach their own goals. The school counselors are skilled in assisting students with the post high school planning process and the college / career application process. In the broadest sense, "college and career ready" means that students will graduate high school with sufficient knowledge and skills to pursue their aspirations, whatever these aspirations may be.

Naviance's student-friendly career planning tools are linked to the comprehensive data available on O\*Net ([www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org)), our national database of occupations and job search tools (available in English & Spanish). For example, "Bright Outlook" highlights occupations that are projected to grow rapidly, occupations projected to have a large number of openings, as well as new and emerging occupations.

According to a recent report from the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, by 2020 65% of all jobs in the U.S. economy will require education and training beyond high school. Thirty-five percent of job openings will require a bachelor's degree, thirty percent will require some college or an associate degree, thirty-five percent will not require education beyond high school.

Given that most occupations require some specialized training after high school, to be college and career ready means that students are prepared with the knowledge and skills to pursue additional education and training beyond high school, ideally leading to a certificate, licensure, an associate degree or a bachelor's degree. The school counselors and teachers at GHS will provide students with the information and guidance to prepare for and access any of these post high school opportunities.



We strongly encourage students and parents take the time to be informed about, and be prepared to participate in, the wealth of opportunities available at Greenwich High School and in the local community.



## COMMUNICATION TOOLS & RESOURCES



There are a wide range of communication tools designed to keep students and parents well informed about individual student achievement and the resources available to make students' time at GHS productive and enjoyable.

1. Aspen Portal – provides access to student's course schedule, class attendance and grade records for each course. Need help? Use the email address under Quick Links on the GHS website.
2. Schoology Portal – provides access to course materials including learning resources and homework posted by teachers. Need help? Use the email address under Quick Links on the GHS website.
3. Naviance – provides access to career development tools, goal setting, college research tools, dates of visits by college reps, college admissions data, and management of the college application process. It's vital to keep email addresses up-to-date, as the Guidance program sends important information and reminders via email from Naviance. Need help? Contact your House's guidance assistant by email or phone.
4. Emails from the Headmaster, PTA, Student Activities, Teachers, and Guidance – it is important to read and respond to your school email address daily so you don't miss out on information and opportunities.
5. GHS Information, Student Life, Athletics, Teaching & Learning Academics and Guidance web pages – provide calendars, descriptions of activities and events, videos of information sessions, useful materials, and additional resources.
6. College & Career Update – weekly newsletter produced by the College & Career Center containing information about college representative visits to GHS, college open houses, local presentations, leadership opportunities, scholarships, etc. This newsletter is emailed to juniors and seniors, and is posted on the GHS Guidance website.
7. The College Book – annual publication of college admissions data for GHS; available for overnight loan from the GHS Media Center and all Greenwich Public Library branches.
8. Student Employment Service – The SES is open to all Greenwich residents ages 14-25. SES is staffed by community volunteers during the lunch block on school days in the Career Center at GHS. During the summer, the SES is staffed at the Greenwich Library Community Answers from 9:00-noon. The database contains part-time and full-time volunteer and paid work opportunities. The first step is to register on the website: <https://ghs-ses.org>

## MEETINGS, INFORMATION SESSIONS & EVENTS

- Orientation half-day for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders and all students transferring into grades 10, 11 and 12 which takes place the day before the first day of school for all students.
- Evening Open House for parents – grades 9 & 12 / grades 10 & 11 – parents follow their child's course schedule and learn about the courses from their child's teachers (September/October).
- College Panel – evening program for all GHS students and parents to learn about the college admissions process directly from college admissions professionals (October).
- College Night – evening college fair program with representatives from 250 colleges and career schools, targeted to 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students and their parents (October).
- PTA Presentation – morning program sponsored by the PTA for all GHS parents to learn about the college planning and admissions process from a panel of GHS school counselors (November)
- Financial Aid Nights – two evening programs for parents. Session I covers an overview of funding for college and understanding federal and institutional financial aid. Session II covers how to understand and follow up on college offers of financial aid, the importance of college costs

in deciding which college to attend, and how to access the Greenwich Scholarship Association and the Greenwich H.S. Student Loan Fund.

- College Kick Off Meetings – evening program in January targeted to GHS juniors and their parents to prepare for the individual post high school planning meeting with the student’s house counselor. Juniors and parents should attend either one of the two scheduled meetings dates. Juniors receive their planning folder at this meeting.
- Hispanic Parent Meetings – four evening programs conducted in Spanish for parents to discuss a variety of topics: Overview of Opportunities & Supports at GHS (October), College Process (November), Course Planning & Selection (March) and Wellness, Graduation Info, Welcome Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents (May)

## **THINGS TO KNOW & DO AT GHS BY GRADE LEVEL**

### **GRADE 9:**

- Do your best in your courses. Colleges consider a student’s grades in college prep courses to be the most important criteria in the admissions process. Your transcript will show final grades in all of your classes. Admissions officers are looking to see how much a student has challenged him or herself, as well as steady progress over four years.
- Participate in extracurricular activities. Sports, clubs, volunteer service and paid work provide important learning and leadership experiences that can only happen outside the classroom.
- Create a resume of your activities and accomplishments using survey tools in Naviance.
- Be mindful of your social media presence.
- Create annual goals and post school outcome goals in Naviance.
- Take the Career Cluster Finder and add careers to your list in Naviance if you didn’t do this in middle school.
- Take the Strengths Explorer in Naviance to identify your strengths and apply them toward your goals.
- Parents, save the direct phone # for your House’s attendance secretary. All absences must be called in by noon on the day of the absence. Any medical notes to document absences must be brought directly to the attendance secretary for the House.
- Take the PSAT. The Greenwich Public Schools pays for all freshmen to take the PSAT in October. No separate registration is needed.
- When PSAT scores are released, connect to Khan Academy for SAT practice. Use caution when creating your College Board account! Do not create more than one! Save your username and password!
- If you are a serious student athlete and considering playing a Division I or II sport in college, consult your school counselor to make sure you are taking courses approved to meet the NCAA Clearinghouse list of core academic requirements (NCAA Eligibility Center – [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)).
- Investigate membership requirements for the National Honor Society on the GHS Website under the Student Activities tab: Scholarship (3.6 GPA by end of junior year), Service (60 hours by start of senior year), Leadership, and Character.
- If you receive standardized testing accommodations at GHS through an IEP or 504 Plan, complete a request for testing accommodations to the College Board, Services for Students with Disabilities. Contact your school counselor or special education teacher for more info.
- Register on the Student Employment Service website ([www.ghs-ses.org](http://www.ghs-ses.org)). SES volunteers are located in the GHS Career Center during the school year and at the Greenwich Library Community Answers in the summer.

## **GRADE 10:**

- Take the PSAT. The Greenwich Public Schools pays for all sophomores to take the PSAT in October; no separate registration process is needed.
- Be mindful of your social media presence.
- Attend the College Panel to learn more about the college admissions process (students and parents).
- Attend College Night to begin the process of determining the criteria important to you in a college or other type of post-secondary education.
- Consider taking Subject Tests if you are taking AP U.S. History or Honors Precalculus. Please see your teacher or counselor for more details.
- Update your Health Assessment Record in the Nurse's Office – this form and updated physical is mandatory before starting junior year.
- Update your resume of activities and accomplishments in Naviance.
- Create annual goals and update your post school outcome goals in Naviance.
- Take the Do What You Are career assessment in Naviance.
- Meet with your counselor to map out a plan of courses for junior and senior year. Select junior year courses with an eye on what you might want to take as a senior.
- If you didn't do so in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, register on the Student Employment Service website ([www.ghs-ses.org](http://www.ghs-ses.org)). SES volunteers are located in the GHS Career Center during the school year and at the Greenwich Library Community Answers in the summer.
- When you need working papers for a job in Connecticut, get them in the Main Office of GHS. Documents & info needed are on the GHS Guidance Website. When you need working papers for a job in New York State, get them in the Main Office at Port Chester H.S.

## **GRADE 11:**

- Take the PSAT. All Juniors are encouraged to take the PSAT in October at GHS. Registration is required. Sign up in the Main Office during dates posted on the calendar.
- Take the free practice ACT offered at GHS on a Saturday for juniors each fall.
- Attend the College Panel to learn more about the college admissions process.
- Attend College Night to introduce yourself to admissions reps and learn more about colleges of interest to you.
- Attend one of the College Kick Off Meetings in January.
- Meet with admissions representatives when they visit the GHS Career Center. Ask your counselor for more information. See Naviance or the College & Career Update for dates and times of visits.
- Register to take the SAT or ACT or Subject Tests as appropriate. Fee waivers are available to students certified to receive free or reduced lunch. See your counselor for more information.
- Schedule a Junior Planning Conference with your house counselor and complete all parts of the senior packet according to the timeline you work out with your counselor.
- Research post high school opportunities. If appropriate, add "Colleges I'm Thinking About" to your list in Naviance.
- Participate in a seminar offered by the College & Career Center after attending a Kick Off meeting. After meeting with their house counselor, students may schedule an appointment with the College & Career counselor for further help researching colleges or brainstorming college admissions essays.
- Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse and submit an NCAA transcript request form to your Guidance Assistant if you are considering playing a Division I or II sport in college.
- Consider signing up to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) offered at GHS each April. Students must be between the ages of 16 and 22 years of age. This aptitude

test helps identify a variety of skills and competencies. Students may wish to use his/her ASVAB results as part of an enlistment conversation with a military recruiter.

## GRADE 12:

- Attend a mandatory morning Senior Meeting in September to connect your Common Application account to your Naviance account.
- Meet with your school counselor regularly to discuss your post-high school plans.
- Attend College Night to communicate with the representatives from the colleges to which you're applying.
- Meet with admissions representatives when they visit the GHS Career Center. View dates and times of visits in Naviance or the College & Career Update.
- Review your final list of colleges and discuss deadlines with your school counselor. Inform the teachers writing your formal recommendations of your earliest deadline.
- Submit transcript request forms to your house's Guidance Assistant at least two weeks in advance of college application deadlines.
- Send SAT or ACT scores to colleges. It is each student's responsibility to check the requirements and deadlines for each college.
- If English is a student's second language, consider taking the TOEFL for college admissions purposes.
- Complete the CSS Profile, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and/or any other required financial aid forms by each college's financial aid deadline.
- Attend Financial Aid Nights to learn more about the process of applying for federal and institutional aid for post high school studies.
- If eligible, complete the online Greenwich Scholarship Association application by the deadline in March.
- Apply to participate in a Senior Internship or Senior Project. Applications are due in early January and pre-requisites for eligibility are listed in the *Course of Study Guide*.
- Order your Cap & Gown, and Yearbook. Contact Student Activities for more details.
- Compare the total costs and programs from the colleges that have accepted you, make your final choice and notify all schools of your intentions. Send required deposit to the college of your choice by the National May 1 Reply Date.
- If eligible, complete a Greenwich High School Student Loan Fund application after May 1.
- Inform your School Counselor and Guidance Assistant of your final plans. Final transcripts are sent at the end of June to the college or other program of your choice as well as to the NCAA Eligibility Center if you are registered with them.

## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING

Most four-year colleges require applicants to submit SAT and/or ACT scores as part of the application process. A recent development by many colleges involves 'Self-Reported' scores. Colleges using this plan will allow a student to report their scores on their college application and only request an official test transcript from the testing agency if the student intends to attend that college. A growing number of colleges are "**test optional**". Information about test optional colleges and universities can be found on the FairTest website: [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org).

### **Facts about the PSAT:**

- The **PSAT** is a practice test to prepare for the SAT, one of the college admissions tests.
- PSAT results are not sent to colleges, but they are part of the student's testing record, and used by the school counselors to provide guidance in the post high school planning process.
- The PSAT is given during school on a weekday during the month of October (the exact date is set by the College Board).
- All freshman and sophomores at GHS are automatically registered to take the PSAT. The testing fee is paid by the Greenwich Public Schools. Students receive their PSAT practice booklet during their Sem Skills class.
- Juniors must register for the PSAT in the GHS Main Office during the dates noted on the calendar. The fee is \$20.00. Fee waivers are readily available to students certified to receive free or reduced lunch. Juniors are given a practice booklet when they register.
- Reviewing the information in the PSAT practice booklet is adequate preparation for most students. Greenwich's Adult & Continuing Education offers juniors a low cost PSAT prep course each fall and an SAT prep course each spring. The College Board and Kahn Academy offers free PSAT and SAT test prep. A comprehensive list of prep options is available on the GHS Guidance website.
- PSAT results are available online in mid-December. The interpretation of scores will be reviewed in Sem Skills class for freshman and sophomores. Juniors are encouraged to meet with their counselor for an appointment to review their scores and make an individualized testing plan.
- All juniors who take PSAT are considered for the National Merit Scholarship Program. Juniors who score in the top 1% on the PSAT are likely candidates for Semi-Finalist, Commended Student, or other National Merit Scholarship Program awards. Students who receive these National Merit awards are notified by their counselor in the fall of Senior year, and they and their families are invited for an awards celebration at the Board of Education.

### **Facts about the SAT and ACT:**

- Most colleges require a standardized admissions test, and the **SAT** and/or **ACT** are often taken by GHS students in the spring of junior year and/or fall of senior year. Each student is different, and your school counselor will advise you and help you decide when to take college admissions tests.
- All juniors will take the Connecticut School-Day SAT in the spring and these scores may be reported to colleges.
- The SAT Subject Tests and the SAT cannot be taken on the same test date. National Saturday test dates for the SAT and ACT are posted on the GHS calendar and on the test websites.
- Students must register for national Saturday SATs directly through the College Board website [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org), and the ACT directly through the ACT website [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org). **Record your username and password.** You will need it again! **The GHS High School Code is 070-240.** It is vital you use our high school code when registering!
- Students must bring their admission ticket and photo ID (along with #2 pencils, a calculator, water and a snack) to all SAT and ACT test administrations.
- The State of CT currently requires all Juniors to take the State School Day SAT in the spring. Since participation is mandatory for GHS students, they may decide to use these scores for college admissions purposes. Further details will be provided by GHS each school year.

## Facts about the SAT Subject Tests:

There are 20 SAT Subject Tests in five subject areas:

English	History	Mathematics	Science	Foreign Languages
Literature	U.S. History World History	Mathematics Level 1 Mathematics Level 2	Biology E/M Chemistry Physics	French      German Spanish     Italian Modern Hebrew Latin French with Listening German with Listening Spanish with Listening Chinese with Listening Japanese with Listening Korean with Listening

## Frequently Asked Questions about Subject Tests:

### Do I need to take the Subject Tests?

- Most colleges do not require the SAT Subject Tests, however some highly selective colleges (such as Johns Hopkins, Tufts, MIT, Dartmouth, Princeton) require or recommend them, either for admissions or placement purposes. Some colleges require Subject Tests only for specific programs or majors.
- Each college or university's admissions office or website is the best place to research detailed information about admissions test requirements and recommendations.
- Each student is different, so please follow this advice to help you decide when and whether you need to take Subject Tests:
  1. Research the list of colleges that require the SAT Subject Tests and confirm the information on the institution's website.
  2. Try SAT Subject Test practice questions on the College Board website
  3. Talk to your subject teacher and school counselor to see which Subject Tests are right for you.

### How many Subject Tests do I have to take?

- Most colleges that require or recommend the SAT Subject Tests want two.
- You may take up to three SAT Subject Tests on a single test date.
- You cannot take the SAT Subject Tests and the SAT on the same test date.

### When is the best time to take Subject Tests?

- You can avoid last-minute stress by taking SAT Subject Tests throughout high school when you're most prepared to do well on the specific tests. The best time to take Subject Tests is at the end of the course, when the material is still fresh in your mind.
- While the SAT and SAT Subject tests are offered several times a year, students should consider taking their Subject Tests during the May or June administrations.
- **In general, here is when students find they are ready to take SAT Subject Tests. It's best to have a conversation with your teacher and counselor before deciding.**
  - U.S. History – after AP U.S. History or Honors U.S. History
  - Biology E/M – after AP Biology or Honors Biology
  - Chemistry – after AP Chemistry or Honors Chemistry
  - Physics – after AP Physics or Honors Physics
  - Mathematics Level 1- after Honors Algebra II

- Mathematics Level 2 – after Honors Precalculus
- World Languages – after or while taking the highest level of the language offered; spring of junior year or fall of senior year. Note: world language *with listening* is only offered during the November SAT test administration.
- English Literature – in spring of junior year or fall of senior year

### **What else do I need to know?**

- The ACT with Writing may be accepted in lieu of both the SAT and Subject Tests.
- Some colleges will grant an exemption from (or grant credit for) a freshman course requirement if a student does well on a particular Subject Test.
- SAT Subject Tests can help students place into the right level course once they get to college.
- You must indicate which SAT Subject Tests you plan to take when you register. However, you may change which test(s) you actually take on test day — except for Language with Listening tests.
- The Language with Listening tests are always given in the first hour of testing. Only one listening test can be taken per test date and are only offered once a year, in November.
- Taking Mathematics 1 and Mathematics 2 does not count as two Subject Tests for colleges that require two in the admissions process.

### **Facts about Accommodations for Standardized Testing**

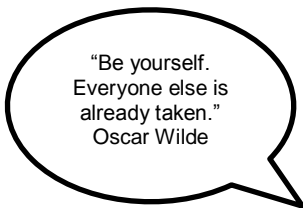
Students who receive accommodations through a 504 Plan or on an IEP must apply for accommodations directly with the College Board or ACT. Information about eligibility procedures is available from your house counselor, on the Guidance website, and from the College Board SSD website or ACT website. Only students who have approval from the College Board or ACT are eligible for accommodations on the PSAT, SAT, Subject Tests, APs and ACT.

### **Facts About “Score Choice” and “Super Scoring” in the College Admissions Process:**

- **Score Choice**: Gives students the option to choose which scores (by test date for the SAT and by individual test for SAT Subject Tests) are sent to colleges — in accordance with each college’s requirements. If students decide not to use Score Choice, all of their scores will be sent to the selected colleges. Students should still feel comfortable sending all scores, since most colleges consider a student’s highest combination of scores. Greenwich High School does not send test scores to colleges for students.
- **Super Scoring**: When a college takes the highest subscores from multiple test dates to get a new higher superscore. For example, the highest combined of the Critical Reading, Math and Writing SAT subscores from two test dates, or the highest combined subscores from each of two ACT test dates.

## SCORE CHOICE VS. SUPERSCORE

<u>SCORE CHOICE - SAT</u>	<u>SUPERSCORE - SAT</u>
<p>-Per the College Board’s explanation: Score Choice is a feature that’s offered to students to alleviate the stress of “test day.” The thinking is that “choice” will ratchet down the stress because the student is allowed to choose whether to send to colleges that day’s scores.</p> <p>- All scores from an entire SAT test are sent. Individual sections from different tests cannot be selected for sending.</p> <p><b>THE CATCH</b> is that some schools (Yale, Cornell, and Georgetown to name a few) have a non-Score Choice policy and require that <i>all</i> test scores be sent with the application. The College Board lists schools that require all scores be sent, but students opting for Score Choice are advised to confirm this on the websites of the schools they are applying to because school sites will have the most up to date information.</p>	<p>What the colleges do with your Score Choice--to position themselves in the college rankings. You submit scores from test dates of your choosing, and the schools cherry pick your best score from each section, creating a “superscore.”</p> <p><b>AN EXAMPLE:</b> Say you take the SAT three times and submit all three sets of scores. The college will extract your best Critical Reading, Math and Writing scores from the three tests and combine them into one superscore. Colleges do see all submitted scores, of course, but it’s as much in their interest as yours to use your best scores because superscoring raises the college’s average SAT scores.</p>
<u>SCORE CHOICE - ACT</u>	<u>SUPERSCORE - ACT</u>
<p>- Similar to the SAT, you can choose which full ACT test will be sent to your colleges.</p>	<p>Because of the way ACT scores are submitted to colleges, there are only a few schools that will superscore the ACT. Most will only accept the best single exam.</p>



### RESEARCHING POST HIGH SCHOOL OPTIONS

In 11<sup>th</sup> grade, we encourage all juniors to begin researching colleges, or researching career and work-force training opportunities. However, it is never too early to visit technical schools and colleges or conduct online research on your own. Preparation for accomplishing post-high school plans should not wait until senior year.

Students will be making many complex choices throughout high school. The goal is for each student (with the support of their school counselor, teachers, and parents) to proactively spend the time and effort needed to conduct their own research and determine their own path.

The post high school research process is a fantastic opportunity for students to develop communication and interpersonal skills, and to really get to know what various colleges and careers have to offer them. Being active in this process will help students when they need to make the decision on their final plans after high school, and about which college, career or work opportunity is the best fit.



Students at GHS have many excellent resources to help them with this important research:

1. **Your House School Counselor** – make appointments for individual student/parent meetings
2. **The College & Career Center** – The College Book (annual admissions data), The College & Career Update (weekly newsletter), college reference books, catalogs & viewbooks, summer programs, gap year programs, individual appointments & small group workshops with the College and Career Counselor, scheduled visits from college admissions reps
3. **GHS Faculty & Staff** – everyone is willing to share their expertise and support your interests and goals
4. **Naviance** – Career interest inventories, career research tools, information and contacts for researching colleges and majors, dates & times for college rep visits, admissions data for GHS students
5. **Web-based Resources** – In addition to Naviance, we recommend databases that contain national admissions data such as [Collegeboard.org](http://Collegeboard.org) and [Petersons.com](http://Petersons.com). Excellent specialized information can be found at reputable websites such as <http://www.ctcl.org> (Colleges That Changes Lives), <http://www.nacacnet.org> (National Association of College Admissions Counselors), <http://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/lgbtq-college-student-guide/> (guidebook to LGBTQ-friendly colleges and resources), <http://www.ct4adream.org/> (college access info for undocumented students), [www.youvisit.com/colleges](http://www.youvisit.com/colleges) (virtual tours narrated by students), [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) (NCAA Clearinghouse).
6. **Post High School Planning Folder** – This folder is distributed to each junior at the College Kick Off meetings. The forms and materials it contains can also be found on the GHS Guidance website.
7. **Reference Guides** – The school counselors use a variety of specialty guides to help you find majors and colleges you're looking for, and these are also available for students to use in the Career Center: *Fiske Guide*, *Rugg's Recommendations*, *The College Finder*, *Index of Majors*, *Insider's Guide*.
8. **Articles & Books** – Links to useful articles and books about careers and the college process are posted on the GHS Guidance website.

## POST HIGH SCHOOL OPTIONS

**Four-Year Colleges and Universities:** The four or five-year college experience with the goal of earning a bachelor's degree.

The **United States Service Academies**, also known as the **United States Military Academies**, are [federal academies](#) for the undergraduate education and training of [commissioned officers](#) for the [United States armed forces](#). There are five US Service Academies: The [United States Military Academy](#) The [United States Naval Academy](#) The [United States Coast Guard Academy](#) The [United States Air Force Academy](#) and The [United States Merchant Marine Academy](#)

**Community /Technical Colleges:** The Connecticut Community/Technical College System offers a wide range of career-oriented courses. An associate degree may be earned. Primarily for commuters, none of Connecticut's Community or Technical Colleges offer campus housing, however, many of the two year colleges in New York State (SUNY) and Pennsylvania and offer campus housing.

- Norwalk Community College offers the L.E.A.P program, an affordable option for students wanting to transfer to selective four-year colleges. More information can be found on their website: <http://www.ncc.commnet.edu/dept/admissions/leap/default.asp>

**Junior /Two-year Colleges:** Though similar in purpose to the community college, the junior college offers a private, residential (and more expensive) experience.

- **Articulation Agreement:** An articulation agreement is designed to make it easier for a student at a two-year college to transfer to a four-year college, based on an agreement between the colleges about accepting course credits. Articulation agreements spell out which courses are eligible for degree credit at the four-year college, and the grades that must have been earned.

**Armed Services:** Recruiters from all branches of the armed services are eager to explain the advantages of receiving either career training or an education through the armed services. Students who choose to serve in the military first can receive funding toward educational expenses in return for an active duty tour. Or students can serve part-time in the Reserves and receive educational funding in return for their commitment. Scholarships are offered for enrolling in ROTC classes on a college campus.

**Employment:** Some students prefer to work full time directly after high school. We strongly recommend all students talk with their school counselor and create an action plan to be ready for meaningful employment. GHS offers a variety of elective courses that can prepare students with the knowledge, skills and work experience to find employment immediately after graduation. Norwalk Community College has single courses and two - five course certificate programs that focus on specific job skills. We encourage all students to register on the GHS Student Employment Service website ([www.ghs-ses.org](http://www.ghs-ses.org)). The College & Career Center offers workshops and individual appointments to create a resume and practice your interview skills.

**Post Graduate or PG Year:** The typical PG year takes place at a boarding school, allowing students a transition year with the independence of college living and the structure of a small, attentive high school. A great website to research PG options: [www.boardingschoolreview.com](http://www.boardingschoolreview.com),

**Gap Year:** Making sure your time will be productive requires planning and setting goals. Some students travel, participate in internships, teach abroad, volunteer, or work to save money.  
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps>  
<http://www.nhheaf.org/alternative-paths.asp>

Type of Degree	What's Involved	Where You Get it
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.)	The most common degrees awarded in the United States. Degrees that typically require a minimum of 120 credits. (5 courses for 15 credits per semester.)	Public and private colleges and universities  Students can begin at a community college and transfer to a bachelor's degree program.
Associate Degrees	An associate degree is an undergraduate academic degree awarded by upon completion of a course of study usually lasting two years.	Community colleges, junior colleges, and technical colleges. Some bachelor's degree-granting colleges, and universities also offer Associate degrees.
Certificate Programs	A specialized form of training. Also, it can mean that you have the technical knowledge of a specific field. Most certification programs a year or two to complete. Typically non-credit-bearing, therefore can't be applied towards a degree program.	Community colleges, junior colleges, and technical colleges

## **Action Steps to Create A List of Colleges that “Fit” Your Needs and Interests:**

1. When you use college search databases such as those in Naviance, or the College Board or Peterson’s websites, the first step is to reflect on the criteria that are important to you. Use these search engines to create lists of colleges and schools to research further, and pare them down as you dig deeper into the facts.
2. Discuss your values, needs and interests with your School Counselor or the College & Career Counselor. There are various resources you can use to prepare for these discussions, such as self-assessments found on [www.schoolbuff.com](http://www.schoolbuff.com) (select Writing > College Planning Worksheets)
3. With the support of your counselor, categorize colleges into:
  - Likely (colleges where you have a very good chance of being accepted)
  - Target (colleges where you meet the admissions criteria and have approximately a 50/50 chance of admission based on GHS’s historical data)
  - Reach (colleges that may be your ‘dream school’, but where you are statistically unlikely to be admitted based on academic qualifications or because admission is generally ‘most competitive’).

## **Categories & Criteria to Consider When Using College Search Databases to Create Lists:**

### School type:

- Four-year college or two-year college - we recommend that you run separate searches for each type to keep the lists organized
- Public or private or both
- Coed or single sex
- Campus surroundings (rural, large city, etc.)
- College groups
- Religious affiliation

### Distance & Location:

- You can select distance from home, or you can select individual states or regions

### Student Body Demographics:

- Enrollment (size of undergraduate program)
- Minority background
- Residency – percent from in state, percent living in campus housing
- Percent male/female

### Percent Accepted:

- Naviance Advanced Search contains national admissions data, however the most reliable data for students to use is the GHS data contained in the Scattergrams and School Statistics on each college’s page in Naviance.
- Use the comparison tools to understand how your GPA and test scores match admitted students.

### Intercollegiate Sports:

- Search colleges by the type of sport, association, and division. This is especially helpful if this is something you are considering.

### Majors:

- Consider the results of your career interest inventories in Naviance and generate a variety of lists based on academic majors offered.

#### Costs:

- In state tuition, out of state tuition

#### Special Programs:

- Co-op – A program at select colleges that enables students to receive career training through paid work experience in their field of study. Well known co-op programs include those at Drexel University, Northeastern University and Rochester Institute of Technology.
- Pre-professional – Programs that guide you in selecting undergraduate majors, coursework and test preparation for admission to graduate professional schools for careers in dentistry, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary, law, etc.
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities – Students at HBCU's have an opportunity to experience an educational community as the majority.
- Hispanic-serving Institutions – Colleges and universities where the total Hispanic enrollment constitutes a minimum of 25% at either the undergraduate or graduate level.

#### **Facts about Demonstrated Interest:**

Not all colleges consider “demonstrated interest” in the admissions process, but for those that do, it's important to show your interest by doing your research and communicating how you are a good fit for their institution. This is especially important for colleges considered as “Likely”. There are several great ways for students to demonstrate interest.

1. Through contacts with admissions representatives or faculty – phone, email, rep visits to the Career Center, College Night. If the college gives you an account to check the status of your application, make sure you take advantage of this. One or two emails are sufficient.
2. Visits to college campuses – Make sure you check in or register with admissions
3. Interviews when they are available.
4. Supplemental essays – Your chance to explain how well you know the college and how you are a great fit for their educational programs and student community.
5. Social media opportunities such as live chats with current students or admissions staff.
6. Meeting with a faculty member on campus or participating in tours or info sessions about specific majors.

**Greenwich High School holds an annual College Night in the Student Center each October from 7:00-9:00pm.** Representatives from over 250 colleges and all branches of the military will be present to provide information to local high school students and their parents. GHS School Counselors will be available to answer your questions.

The focus of College Night will vary depending on whether you are in 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade. For example, if you are a sophomore or junior, your goal should be to learn a few things about a variety of colleges, and become familiar with what you'll want to consider when you are researching colleges that will be a good fit for you in a year or two. If you are a senior, your goal should be to make a strong, positive impression on the admissions representative, and take advantage of the opportunity to get answers to more complex questions that you can't get from doing other research.

GHS Guidance will promote other college fairs offered in the fall or spring in our area (Bridgeport, Hartford, Westchester, New York City), including national fairs, and specialty fairs such as those for the performing arts. To find out the dates for national college fairs, please visit [nacacnet.org](http://nacacnet.org).

**Here are some general guidelines to help you make the most of your time at “college fairs”.**

### **Before College Night:**

- A list of participating colleges will be available on the GHS Guidance website, your House’s Guidance Office and the Career Center a day or two before College Night. If you are a senior, you’ve likely narrowed down the list of schools to which you want to apply to. If you are a junior, prior to the college fair, stop in to see your counselor for his/her recommendation of a range of schools to see at the fair. Or, do a simple online college search to identify colleges that might have what you’re looking for. Websites such as [petersons.com](http://petersons.com), [collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org), [ecampustours.com](http://ecampustours.com), and Naviance contain user-friendly college search engines.
- Sophomores and juniors, you should begin to explore broadly. Seniors, are encouraged to visit the websites of the colleges on your list to learn as much general information as possible. This research will allow you to ask more in-depth questions when you talk to representatives at the fair.
- Save time filling out interest cards and use pre-printed address labels with your name, home address, email address, telephone number, your high school name, anticipated start of college and the major(s) in which you are interested.
- Dress to impress: look neat and clean. Don’t forget, first impressions are lasting impressions.

### **During College Night:**

- Students should introduce themselves and give the admissions representative an idea of who they are (your grade; what you’re interested in studying/participating in; why you’re interested in, or might be interested in, their particular school).
- Ask one or two questions you’ve prepared from the research conducted on that specific college.
- Thank the admissions representative for taking the time to speak with you.
- Pick up materials of interest (college brochures, business cards, etc).
- Take notes as needed (notebook or tablet). If a representative shares information you’d like to learn more about, or you have a question, be sure to write it down so you don’t forget.
- Ask the college representatives for their business cards as you may want to get in contact with them again if you have further questions.
- Be sure to send thank you notes to all college representatives that you meet with.
- Refrain from texting and talking on your phone during the fair (especially not in front of the admissions representatives).
- Be friendly and confident.

**Sample questions for students to ask admissions representatives at college fairs or during campus visits are listed on the next page under “Action Steps”:**

### **After College Night:**

- Organize and read the materials you’ve collected.
- Reflect on your experience at the fair, and write down further questions that have been generated, both specific to certain schools and general (about the overall college search process).
- Take your original list of schools of interest and make modifications as necessary based on your college fair experience. Add to the list “Colleges I’m Thinking About” in Naviance.
- Conduct further research on the colleges in which you are most interested; via the internet, campus visits, interviews, meeting with your guidance counselor, etc.
- To find out the dates for national college fairs, please visit [nacacnet.org](http://nacacnet.org).
- Enjoy the college search process!

## **Action Steps for Researching and Visiting Colleges:**

Take notes and look for the important differences between the schools you research or visit. This will help you make informed decisions as well as craft a well-informed “Why us?” supplemental essay.

### **Topics to Investigate:**

**ADVISEMENT** – Initial advising and ongoing advising: How am I going to be advised from day one after becoming a student? How will I be advised once I pick a major and how will I be advised over the four years? I’m interested in studying (major) - does your school offer an undergraduate program in this field? How about a graduate program? If so, are they combined so that undergraduates may take graduate level courses? When must I choose a major?

**SAFETY** – How safe is the campus and its surrounding neighborhoods? How does the college proactively manage a safe environment? (i.e. lighting, transportation, escort service) This information is available on all college websites, but is a good question to ask.

**EVALUATION OF APPLICATION** – From college to college, the relative importance/weight given to parts of the application varies: courses on the transcript, cumulative GPA, personal statement, test scores.

How are you going to evaluate my application for admission? What qualities should prospective students have? My GPA and SAT/ACT scores are (XX). How does my profile, both academic and extracurricular, compare with that of students admitted to your institution? When applying to your school, do I apply to a specific major/college/program of study? If so, how competitive is my major/college/program of study? What happens if I am undecided? Is your college “need blind” (with respect to students’ financial situations) in the admissions process?

**CLASS SIZE** – What is the typical class size, and range of class sizes? What is the faculty-student ratio? What is the access to faculty like? Just because a university is large doesn’t mean that there isn’t great access to faculty.

**YOUNG ADULT ISSUES** - How does the university take care of problems such as drug or alcohol use/abuse? How do they work in a proactive way and how do they support students? What are the mechanisms to recognize issues early on so there is intervention quickly? What are the most popular social activities on campus? What kinds of campus job opportunities are available? What is the campus environment like on the weekends?

**RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES** - What are the opportunities for undergraduate research? What are the opportunities for undergraduate internships? How are internships found? For graduate schools and for jobs, these opportunities are critical.

**CAREER CENTERS** - What does the college offer to help their students in the areas of job placement/recruitment and graduate school/fellowships? How do you help your graduates find jobs? Do your graduates get jobs in their desired field after graduation? Some colleges have excellent networks and resources to help students when they graduate with their undergraduate degree.

**SERVICES** – What services are offered for students who are struggling academically? (support such as tutoring, writing center, etc.) What services are offered for students who are high achieving? (support for medical school & law school applications, support for applying for competitive fellowships and scholarships) What programs are offered to help students adjust to college life? (activities, clubs, supports such as career counseling, study groups, etc.)

**GAP YEAR** – Will the college support students who wish to take a Gap Year between high school and college? Most colleges and universities support a gap year by deferring acceptance/admission, as long as the planned activity is a true gap year.

**BENEFITS OF ATTENDANCE** – Can you describe distinguishing benefits I will receive by attending your college/university/career program? How many freshmen return for their sophomore year? How many students graduate in four/five/six years? Is student housing guaranteed all four years? Do you offer merit-based aid? Are the qualifications for merit scholarships listed on your website? What percentage of students receive financial aid? Do you meet 100% of demonstrated need in the financial aid process?

### **Visiting Campus:**

#### **1. It is never too early to start visiting**

Most students start visiting colleges during the fall of their junior year, but consider visiting earlier if possible. Three day weekends are a great opportunity to visit – stay over Sunday night, go to classes on Monday, and go home Monday night. Some colleges won't let you sit in on classes until your senior year. Make sure you register with the admissions office as they will arrange dates and times for you to participate in scheduled information sessions, tours or interviews.

#### **2. Try to visit when the school is in session**

If you can visit when school is in session, this will allow you to interact with students, sit in on classes, see the activities and get a sense for the school. Can you see yourself fitting in with the culture of the school? If you can't, it's definitely better to visit a campus in the summer than not at all. Unless you are applying Early Decision, you can do a more in depth visit to the colleges you've been accepted to during the spring of your senior year.

#### **3. Stay overnight at a school when possible**

There's only so much you can tell about a school from a tour or a walk around campus. Staying overnight will allow you to see the social scene, visit classes, and really interact with the college students. Note- some schools do not host official overnight visits.

#### **4. Sit in on classes - especially in your possible major**

When you visit a school, make every effort to sit in on classes. The admissions office can provide you with a list of classes in various subjects. Remember the quality of teachers and classes varies, but by sitting in on several classes, you can get a feel for the type of students and professors.

#### **5. Ask students what they think!**

Current students are the most overlooked resource to finding out whether a college will be right for you. When you're on campus, seek out students and ask questions. Ask several students, anyone you find in the cafeteria, campus center, gym, etc. This is the best way to get honest opinions. College students definitely are opinionated and are often happy to share their love (or hate) of their school.

#### **6. Keep a notebook and take photos**

After visiting the colleges, your experiences will blur in your mind. Make sure to bring a notebook to each school. This is an easy way to record your feelings and experiences of that school. This notebook will be instrumental when you must choose which schools to apply to, as well as when you write your supplemental essay.

#### **7. Go off the beaten path! Don't just take the tour**

On the college tours, you are taken on a well thought out route of the campus. After the tour, go around and explore for yourself. You can discover a lot of information about the surrounding neighborhood, what the nearby town is like, and the quality of the facilities and dorms.

## 8. Read school newspapers

A school newspaper is one of the best ways to get a feel for the school and to learn about the activities on campus. Notice the main themes in the newspaper - are there a lot of stories about theft and vandalism? Are there features on student activism? If a school has multiple publications, be sure to check all of them out. This is a link to most college newspapers:

[http://www.studyworld.com/college\\_newspapers\\_online.htm](http://www.studyworld.com/college_newspapers_online.htm)

## 10. Look at "student sites"

Another good way to get a sense of the school is to look on online forums that some colleges have for students to interact and share information. Not all schools have these sites but many do. For instance, Williams College's site is: <https://wso.williams.edu>, and other schools have a Daily Jolt site, such as Brown, <http://brown.dailyjolt.com/>, and Amherst, <http://amherst.dailyjolt.com/>

## Campus Health & Safety:

With the issue of sexual assault on college campuses becoming more visible, colleges are trying a variety of approaches to address the problem. There are several consumer resources and things to consider when researching to make sure the college you attend is proactive in protecting your health and safety.

The United States Department of Education – The Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool [ope.ed.gov/campussafety/#/](http://ope.ed.gov/campussafety/#/) - provides safety and security related statistical data for each college you are interested in, including contact information for Security and Fire Safety officers. Select the link "Get data for one institution/campus".

CDC College Health and Safety Website provides valuable "food for thought" -

[www.cdc.gov/family/college/](http://www.cdc.gov/family/college/) and [www.cdc.gov/features/collegehealth/](http://www.cdc.gov/features/collegehealth/)

[www.campushealthandsafety.org](http://www.campushealthandsafety.org) - provides a variety of useful information and publications

[www.drugfree.org/resources](http://www.drugfree.org/resources) - Partnership for Drug Free Kids – provides helpful guides and resources

## Questions to ask your college or university about health and safety:

- What emergency preparedness plans are in place?
- How do you communicate with students, faculty and staff during and after an emergency on campus?
- Where can I find information about crimes, such as theft or sexual assault, reported on your campus?
- Do you inform students how to keep themselves and their belongings safe on your campus?
- Are there any bias-related or hate crimes reported?
- How do you help your students understand how to cope with social and sexual pressures?
- Do you have drug and alcohol prevention programs on campus?
- How do you help your students cope with the challenge of getting enough sleep?
- Where can students receive mental health support on campus?
- What student health services are offered? When are they available?
- Are public safety officers available 24/7?
- Are fire safety policies followed?
- Is there a "safe rides" program?

## Things to look for during campus visits:

- Are campus/university police visible?



- Are blue-light phones (connect directly to police or campus security) and escort services readily available?
- Are dorms locked and secured by limited access keys or IDs?
- Are cameras monitored to identify threats?

Questions to ask students on campus about their school:

- Do you feel safe walking on campus alone during the day?
- Is it easy to find someone to walk with you at night? Is there a formal escort service?
- Do students here look out for each other?
- Is it convenient to get health services (hours, availability, location)?
- Are there counseling services available?
- How responsive are the Resident Advisors when you have problems?
- Are the dorms quiet at night?
- Are you supported if you want to resist the temptation of alcohol or drugs?

Advice for when you get on campus

- Attend and actively participate in meetings or info sessions that describe your campus' party policies, Good Samaritan policy, drug & alcohol counseling, safety tips, etc.
- Put the phone number for the campus shuttle or other security services in your cell phone
- Don't leave phones or lap tops unattended
- Put away cell phones when you are walking
- Avoid panhandlers; don't let them get too close
- It is a felony to use a fake I.D.
- Don't be a bystander; intervene if you see risky behavior that could lead to a drug overdose, alcohol poisoning, or sexual assault; most colleges have Good Samaritan policies that protect people who call for help
- Download and use mobile phone safety apps, such as Rave Guardian, especially if your campus participates

**Facts About Applying to Art, Music, Dance or Drama Programs:**

Students who plan to major in art, music, dance or drama programs at colleges, may need to prepare supplements during the application process, such as portfolios or auditions. Because auditions and portfolios require a lot of time for planning and preparation, if you think there is a possibility you want to pursue music, art, drama or dance at the college level, begin researching school-specific application requirements early! It's very likely you will need to dedicate time during the summer between your junior and senior year to prepare audition or portfolio materials, determine an audition schedule, find and work with an accompanist, record CDs or DVDs, etc.

**Visual Arts Degrees:** Art schools, or art programs at liberal arts colleges, usually specify what kind of work they want to see during the admissions process. Carefully read the requirements on the art school or college's website. If the instructions are not clear, contact the school directly. Drawings are usually essential, especially drawings done from observation. Some art schools want to see a variety of media, while others prefer to see a lot of the particular media in which you specialize. Many art schools also like to see drawings that show a degree of "problem solving" which often means an imaginative twist or particular point-of-view on a particular subject. Art schools like to see that you have an imagination, can think visually, and can observe.

By working closely with your GHS art teacher(s), you will be able to prepare and submit a high-quality portfolio that presents thought and originality in your work.

**Performing Arts Degrees:** Prepare a resume of your specific performance experience and achievements. Drama, vocal, instrumental music and dance programs, whether at a liberal arts college or conservatory, will specify what kind of work they want to see. Expectations for every school can differ, and guidelines can be rigid and detailed. If you are unsure about something, or if it is unclear, contact the admissions office, head of the department or specific teacher directly. Students should plan ahead and prepare so they can communicate their passions to colleges in a way that effectively showcases their abilities.

Once you've acquired audition information, ask for advice from your teachers as you prepare. Your GHS theater, chorus, band, orchestra and electronic music teachers are ready, willing and able to assist you with all aspects of planning and preparing to apply for programs in the performing arts.

Participation in productions, ensembles, theory study, etc. at the high school level is important, but your audition is likely to be the most important component for admission and scholarship consideration at most institutions. Make sure you leave adequate time to practice and prepare your audition material during audition season. You may be wise to limit performance opportunities your senior year in order to have adequate time to prepare for auditions.

### **Facts about applying to the United States Military Academies:**

Attending one of the military academies provides you with a prestigious college education while serving your country through a mandatory five-year commitment as an officer. If you're unsure which branch of the military to pursue, you can explore the history, admissions procedures, and eligibility requirements for each at their respective websites. The military academies are all highly selective, four-year, coeducational institutions, and free of cost to students who are admitted. They offer summer programs for high school juniors to introduce them to their programs, life as student, and offer insight into the admissions process.

Students interested in enrolling in one of the five military academies should begin preparing early in high school, and ideally complete a preliminary application in their junior year. You can request the application from a regional command office, the institution itself, or you can apply online. You will later be required to complete additional applications for Congressional nomination and regular admissions. These applications will, in many cases, be accompanied by face-to-face interviews. While specific admissions requirements vary somewhat between institutions, military academy candidates are required to take the standardized college admissions tests that are required of most civilian students—the SAT and/or the ACT.

### **Facts About Technical/Career Certification, Licensure, Apprenticeships, and Workforce Education Opportunities:**

Through their coursework, students at GHS will learn skills in demand by all employers such as critical thinking, adaptability, problem solving, oral and written communication, collaboration, responsibility, ethics, and use of technology. United States workforce data indicates that by 2020 65% of all jobs in the economy will require education and training beyond high school. 30% of these job openings will require either some courses or training after high school, or an associate (two-year) degree. This means that high school students have many career options that do not require a bachelors (four-year) degree. (*Recovery*, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce)

The GHS guidance website and the junior planning folder contain a summary of excellent programs in our area that lead to careers in Business and Computer Technologies, Construction and Design,

Maintenance and Trades, Health Sciences, Hospitality, Engineering Technologies, Education and Human Services, Transportation Technology, Natural Resource Management, Personal Care Services, and the Arts.

### **Facts About Support Services at the College Level for Students with Learning Differences:**

In addition to the academics and general support services, other aspects of college such as the social environment, clubs, dining halls, athletic offerings, and setting – all come together to form the right college for you. In addition to working with your school counselor and your special education teacher to develop your college list, it's also vital to visit the campus and ensure that the institution is the right fit for you overall.

There are considerable differences between what students with learning differences are afforded in high school vs. college. There are no modifications made to the college curriculum. It is the job of the college to protect the integrity of the curriculum and the degree you are seeking, but they will provide the support services for students to be successful.

At college, it becomes the student's responsibility to articulate to their professors what type of disability they have and what type of services they need. College administration and faculty look for students to advocate for themselves. Therefore, it is important for students to have a clear understanding of their learning challenges, in order to communicate their academic, social, medical, and/or emotional needs effectively.

When researching or visiting a college, arrange to speak with a representative from the college's "Office of Disability Services" to find out the types of support services and accommodations that are offered through the ODS as well as the system that is used to access these services and accommodations.

### **Things to take into consideration as you are looking for support services at the college level:**

- What types of academic support services are offered to all students? Colleges often have writing centers, general and subject-specific tutoring services, and study skills workshops. Perhaps these academic supports will be all you need to find success at the college level.
- What documentation is required to become eligible to receive accommodations and services through the ODS? Are there specific evaluations or test results needed? How current should the documentation be? What is the process used to determine eligibility?
- How long has the program at the college/university been in existence?
- What are the goals and objectives of the program?
- How many of the college's students are enrolled in the program for support services? Where is the program located on campus? Is it a small or large focus on the campus?
- How many staff members are there in the ODS? Do they have experience working with students with a disability/area of need similar to my own? Who is the student's primary contact person?
- What types of accommodations and services are provided? (e.g. extended time on tests, a distraction free testing environment, use of a calculator on tests, note taking assistance, audio books, adaptive or assistive technology resources, priority registration, professional tutoring, peer tutoring, study skills training, academic advising, etc.)
- How involved are the faculty in the services offered to students? Are they trained in any way to educate students who may need supports in the classroom? How are the classes structured?
- Are students with learning differences in separate classes or integrated into the mainstream classes?
- Look at the advising model. Are there additional or separate advisors for students with learning differences during the four years?
- Are there provisions made for having to miss classes based on the nature of a particular disability or medical condition?

- Are substitutions available for particular required courses if they are needed based on the disability (i.e. world language courses)?
- How are parents communicated with when their students are receiving services?
- Take a look at costs – are the costs service by service or is there a comprehensive fee?
- Are there any considerations that students with disabilities should know about regarding the admission process at the college?
- Does the college provide information about the graduation rate/retention rate for students who are served by the ODS?

### **Resources:**

The K & W Guide to College Programs and Services for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder - available in the GHS Career Center, school counselors' offices, and house resource rooms.

Landmark College's College-Readiness Assessment - A self-assessment for students with learning disabilities or AD/HD to identify foundations of readiness for college.

Getting Ready – A Self-Assessment – Questions to help students consider their learning needs. Adapted from *Life After High School: More Than Just a Job*, brochure by Roberta Gajewski and Sylvia Panzer.

All Kinds of Minds – [www.allkindsofminds.org](http://www.allkindsofminds.org) – Founded by Dr. Mel Levine, provides excellent resources for students, parents and educators.

College Board Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) – [www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student](http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student)

ACT Services for Students with Disabilities – [www.act.org/aap/disab](http://www.act.org/aap/disab)

College Alternatives for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities -

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322676>

<http://www.thinkcollege.net/databases/programs-database>

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/eligibility/intellectual-disabilities#new-york>

### **Facts for Undocumented Students:**

College admission policies vary from state to state as well as by institution. Some require proof of citizenship or legal residency, and some do not. Tuition policies and financial aid policies also vary. The Department of Education has a booklet explaining eligibility that can be downloaded at:

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/financial-aid-and-undocumented-students.pdf>

The [National Immigration Law Center](#) tracks activities related to state funding of higher education for undocumented students.

The Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc. has resources for educators that provide an overview of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Deferred Action for Parents of Americans programs, including their benefits and risks, information about the application process and information about seeking qualified legal assistance. [Learn more](#). Catholic Charities Immigration Services of Fairfield County/Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (203) 964-8228

Connecticut Students for a Dream offers up-to-date information, support and advocacy to undocumented students and their families. [www.ct4adream.org](http://www.ct4adream.org)

Students can apply for federal financial aid even if they (or their parents) do not have a social security number. However, the FAFSA cannot be submitted online; it must be mailed.

### **Facts for English Language Learners and/or International Students:**

- Students in ESL courses at GHS need to understand that colleges require academic proficiency in the English language.
- Students whose first language is not English and who plan to continue their education at the college level in the U.S., may be required to take the TOEFL or the IELTS as part of the college admissions process. Both of these tests evaluate students' listening, reading, speaking and writing proficiency.
- The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) registration and preparation can be found at [www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl)
- The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) registration and preparation can be found at [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)

### **Facts for Student Athletes:**

- If you want to be eligible to play a Division I or Division II sport at the college level, you must take NCAA approved core courses at Greenwich High School
- Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse in your sophomore or junior year at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)
- You can save the registration fee by selecting Division III, and pay only when you know you're being recruited for DI or DII
- You must send the NCAA official transcripts from each high school you have attended.
- You must send the NCAA your SAT or ACT scores – use code 9999 either during or after exam registration.
- Create a separate “athletic resume” that you can use when communicating with coaches

## **COMPONENTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION & HOW THEY'RE USED TO ASSESS APPLICANTS**

The first and most important factor that colleges will consider in evaluating an applicant is the student's grades in their core academic classes. A student's transcript will typically first be evaluated in context of other students from that high school and then the application pool in general. The second factor considered by most colleges are standardized test scores, followed by formal recommendations and activities.

### **The Transcript**

The official transcript is a document that includes final grades of all completed classes through the end of junior year as well as the cumulative grade point average earned by the student. It also includes a list of senior year classes. Admissions staff will evaluate the transcript according to:

Rigor of courses: Has the student challenged him or herself with demanding classes?

Core courses: Has the student taken the four core academic classes (math, science, English, social studies) all four years? Has the student taken 2-4 years of a world language? Are there any gaps in core classes?

Elective courses: Does the student show a talent in a specific area (ie. band, theater)? Does the student show a wide range of interests or has the student pursued a sequence of classes (for instance, several business classes or several art classes)

Grades: Does the student have consistent grades? If there are low grades, has the student shown improvement?

Grade Point Average: What is the student's *academic* grade-point average? How does it compare with other GPAs at the student's school?

### **The Secondary School Report and Mid-Year Report**

The Guidance Office will send an electronic packet to each school to which a student applies. This packet will include a school profile (a document containing information about the school, its students and the academic programs), the official transcript and the counselor letter of recommendation.

The Mid-Year Report is automatically submitted by the Guidance Office at the end of January with first semester grades and any changes or updates to the student's academic profile.

Some colleges will also request first marking period grades if a student has applied under an early deadline. First marking period grades are only sent to colleges upon student request.

### **Admission Test Scores**

Most colleges will require that an applicant submit SAT, Subject Tests or ACT scores directly to the admissions office (this is not done by the Guidance office). Some colleges will allow self reported scores, which can be included in your application. Standardized test scores are used as part of the admissions process and the importance of standardized test scores in the admissions process varies from college to college. More selective colleges may also require Subject Tests (two-three). Some schools no longer require standardized test scores. See <http://www.fairtest.org> for a list of test-optional schools.

### **Formal Recommendations**

- **Counselor Recommendation:** Your school counselor will write a letter of recommendation to accompany your transcript. The counselors use the elements of the "senior packet" to highlight your strengths and interests. The senior packet includes the student and parent brag sheets, academic and extracurricular informal recommendations, and the resume or activity sheet. You will discuss your senior packet with your school counselor at your junior planning meeting.
- **Academic Teacher Recommendations:** Most colleges require one or two formal *academic* teacher recommendations. Recommendations are usually written by classroom teachers from the student's junior year, focus on a student's academic performance and potential, and are sent via Naviance. Some colleges require specific subject areas (ie., English and math) but most are flexible. It is important to check each school's requirements. Sophomore year teachers can also write recommendations, but you should discuss this with your counselor. Senior year teachers, unless they previously had the student in class, typically are not used for formal recommendations. The recommendation does not necessarily need to come from a class in which a student is earning the best grades. Strong recommendations can come from teachers for whom the student has worked exceptionally hard or shown growth. Teachers are NOT required to write letters for students – these are strictly voluntary.
- **Other Recommendations:** Most colleges will not accept any extra recommendations beyond the one or two formal ones. If a college you're applying to indicates they will review supplemental recommendations from religious leaders, scout leaders, employers or coaches, make sure the letters truly add an additional dimension to the application and showing a side of you that is not demonstrated elsewhere. At GHS, your counselor can incorporate supplemental information into the counselor recommendation, through "informal" comments. You will determine your plans for supplemental info in your conversation with your counselor.

### **The Application**

Typically filed online, the application is filled out by the student. It will include demographic, family, and educational information. There is usually a main essay, and some colleges may often require separate shorter essays. The activity section includes space for the student to list involvement in school and out of school activities; athletics; work experience; honors and awards; and summer activities. Some

applications provide space for students to add additional information. Most colleges accept The Common Application ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)). Students fill it out one time and sent it to multiple schools. Some colleges will require extra information on a supplement, also found on the common application website. College specific applications or the Coalition Application are used for colleges who do not accept the Common Application.

### Activities

Colleges are looking for students who will be involved in college life. One of the best ways to predict this is to assess their high school activities. Colleges are looking for students who have been active in or out of school beyond the classroom. Admissions officers understand if family obligations have prevented such involvement and there will be a way to explain this on the application. The activity section enhances the overall picture of the student. Colleges will look to see:

In which extra-curricular activities has the student participated?

What leadership roles has the student held?

What responsibility has the student shown?

What level of commitment do the activities show?

Has the student held a job?

What does the student do over the summer?

Has the student contributed to their community through service?

### The Essay

Each application will typically require a main, 650-word essay. The essay is the student's chance to stand out from other applicants. Topics are varied, but admissions officers are looking for cohesive and well-written essays that shed light on the applicant. Colleges may request that students write on a specific topic or let them write on a topic of their choice. The essay prompts for the Common Application are posted in the spring of each school year.

More competitive colleges often have two or three additional essays of 250-500 words each.

Most colleges also have short essay questions as well, typically 50-150 words. Topics can include what makes the college a good fit for you, why you chose your major, what you can contribute to the college community, etc.

GHS offers essay workshops and individual appointments through the College & Career Center, as well as an Essay Writing course. The school counselors can help students brainstorm and decide on their essay topic, and your English teacher and counselor can provide feedback on your essay as long as you plan ahead.



"OK, maybe it would be better if I interview Anne alone."

### Interviews

Not all colleges offer interviews, but if they do you should take advantage of it. Be sure to know when in the process each of your schools conducts its interviews. Some schools require you to submit the application before an interview will be granted.

Prepare by learning the basics about the school. Practice some general questions about yourself and specific questions about how your experience and interests will fit into their community.

Prepare questions to ask the interviewer about the school that will show you've done your

research and are truly interested. You can practice your interview skills by doing a mock interview with your school counselor or the college/career counselor. Interview workshops are also available in the College & Career Center in the fall of senior year.

Bring a copy of your transcript and resume. Dress appropriately, arrive on time, and be positive and honest about your personal qualities and academic background. Send a thank you note or email to your interviewer reiterating your interest in attending their institution.

### Supplemental Information

Some colleges allow students to upload additional information, such as art portfolios, music files or other materials. Requirements vary by schools; some will not accept any additional submissions. See each college's website for further information.

### **Social Media and Its Potential Impact on College Admissions:**

Many students underestimate, or don't even consider, the impact that their social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) could have on their application. An article in The New York Times illustrates the importance of understanding this. Titled, "They Loved Your GPA Then They Saw Your Tweets," it tells the story of how one young woman's tweets destroyed her chances of admission to the college.

### **APPLICATION DEADLINES & DECIDING ON THE TYPE OF APPLICATION DECISION PLAN THAT'S BEST FOR YOUR NEEDS**

When colleges have an early deadline (such as November 1), there is no advantage to applying in October. Each application received by the early deadline will be considered equally. It is important that students take the time to put their best effort into their application.

<b>Decision Plan</b>	<b>How it Works</b>	<b>Is it Right for Me?</b>	<b>Decision Outcome</b>
Early Action (EA)	Students submit an application by the school's deadline and typically receive a decision by Dec. 31 <sup>st</sup> . This plan is not binding and students have until May 1 <sup>st</sup> to make a final decision about attending. Students may submit numerous Early Action applications and one Early Decision application in this process.* (See EA Single Choice below).	Candidates usually have strong grades through junior year and have finished all standardized testing. Colleges will review 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter senior grades.	Applicants are accepted, denied or deferred to the regular pool. Accepted students have until May 1 <sup>st</sup> to finalize their decision.



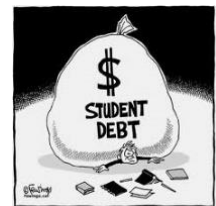
<p>Early Action Single Choice (EA/SC) or Restrictive Early Action (REA)</p>	<p>Similar to Early Action, but students are <b>NOT</b> permitted to submit an Early Decision application and may be restricted from submitting any other Early Action applications with the exception of state schools. Check with each school for its possible restrictions.</p>	<p>Candidates usually have strong grades through junior year. Colleges will review 1st quarter senior year grades. Other early application options are limited so this decision should be carefully considered.</p>	<p>Applicants are accepted, denied or deferred to the regular pool. Accepted students have until May 1<sup>st</sup> to finalize their decision.</p>
<p>Early Decision (ED)</p>	<p>Students apply by the school's deadline and are notified in late December/early January. Students may only apply ED to one school, and if accepted, must attend. It is not binding for students who are deferred and accepted from the regular pool. Students may also apply to any non-restrictive early action schools or those with rolling or priority deadlines.</p>	<p>Candidates have very strong grades through junior year, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter senior year grades will be reviewed. The ED pool is highly competitive with the most qualified applicants. A financial aid package will be issued upon acceptance. If comparing financial aid packages is important for your family, this may not be an appropriate choice.</p>	<p>Applicants are accepted, denied or deferred to the regular pool. Acceptance is binding and students <b>MUST</b> withdraw all other applications.</p>
<p>Early Decision II (EDII)</p>	<p>This is a binding plan with an application deadline in January. Students may submit one ED II application in addition to regular decision applications. If accepted, all other applications <b>MUST</b> be withdrawn. If you are accepted to other schools, you must decline those acceptances. Students deferred from an ED I plan may apply under an ED II plan (but not at the same school).</p>	<p>Candidates have very strong grades through first semester senior year. The ED II pool is highly competitive with very qualified applicants. If comparing financial aid packages is important for your family, this may not be an appropriate choice. Acceptance is binding even if a different school offered a better aid package.</p>	<p>Applicants are accepted, denied or waitlisted and are often notified in late February.</p>
<p>Regular Decision (RD)</p>	<p>Application deadlines are typically Jan. 1 to Feb. 15. Colleges will review first semester senior year grades and students should receive their notification decision in March. Students have until May 1 to finalize their decision.</p>	<p>This is the most common application plan and is especially beneficial for families wishing to compare financial aid packages</p>	<p>Applicants are accepted, denied or waitlisted and are usually notified in late February mid-March</p>

Rolling Decision (ROLL)	There are no set deadlines; students typically receive a decision within 4-6 weeks of applying. Colleges may review senior year grades that are available. Applications should be submitted as early as possible for a quick response.	This plan is popular because students receive a quick response. It is important to apply as soon as possible for full consideration. Housing may be limited for those who apply later.	Applicants are accepted, denied, deferred or waitlisted. Notification is typically 4-5 weeks after submitting the application.
Priority Decision/VIP Applications	Some colleges offer special applications to generate interest in their programs. These schools often use the Common Application as well. This application may be free or not require an essay. It is not a guarantee of admission nor does it improve a student's chances of admission.	This application is often free and may require less work than the normal application. This would be beneficial for students seeking a faster response than under the school's other application plan.	Applicants are accepted, denied, deferred or waitlisted. Notification can come as soon as four weeks after applying. Check the school's website for details.

## FUNDING YOUR EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

### Facts About Financial Aid and Scholarships:

**PAVE your way to college!** It helps to consider the financial aid process in four phases – PREPARE, APPLY, VERIFY, and EVALUATE.



### **PREPARE -**

We recommend that families begin their college cost research by calculating their **Expected Family Contribution**. This can be done as early as 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade, but must be done in the student's junior year to provide vital information during the research and application planning process. **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)** is a term used in the college financial aid process in the United States to determine an applicant's eligibility for need-based federal student aid, and in many cases, state and institutional (college) aid. Your **EFC** is **not** the amount of money your **family** will have to pay for college, nor is it the amount of federal student aid you will receive. It is a number used by colleges & universities to calculate how much financial aid you are **eligible** to receive. [www.finaid.org/calculators/](http://www.finaid.org/calculators/) or <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/next-steps/how-calculated>

Next, families need to calculate the **Cost of Attendance (COA)**. This varies by college, so families need to **research the COA reported on each college's website**. If you're attending at least half-time, your COA is the estimate of:

- tuition and fees;
- the cost of *room and board* (or living expenses for students who do not contract with the school for room and board);
- the cost of books, supplies, transportation, loan fees, and miscellaneous expenses (including a reasonable amount for the documented cost of a personal computer);
- an allowance for child care or other dependent care;
- costs related to a disability; and/or
- reasonable costs for eligible study-abroad programs.

Then, families can calculate their **Financial Need** by subtracting their Expected Family Contribution from the Cost of Attendance:

$$\text{COA} - \text{EFC} = \text{Financial Need}$$

Families also need to calculate the **Net Price** for attending each college, in order to accurately compare financial aid awards and the actual cost of attendance. **Net Price** is the amount that a student pays to attend an institution in a single academic year AFTER subtracting scholarships and grants the student receives. Scholarships and grants are forms of financial aid that a student does not have to pay back. This US Department of Education website can take you to each college's net price calculator <https://collegecost.ed.gov/netpricecenter.aspx> or you can Google net price calculator and the name of the college. The College Board website ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)) is excellent for obtaining "Financial Aid by the Numbers" – go to each college's "Paying" side tab for a distribution of aid, % of need met, etc. This website also has useful resources under Access > Pay for College > Tools and Calculators.

#### **APPLY-**

**There are often two parts to the financial aid application process, depending on the colleges you are applying to.** One part is the FEDERAL process, which includes the FAFSA and federal verification. The second part is the INSTITUTIONAL process, which includes the CSS / Financial Aid PROFILE or an institutional form and institutional verification.

#### **To complete a FAFSA:**

**The official Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form is at [www.FAFSA.ed.gov](http://www.FAFSA.ed.gov) - not a ".com" website!** If you want to apply for federal **need-based** student aid, you must complete a FAFSA. *All information is available in Spanish as well as English.*

The FAFSA website explains how to complete the FAFSA and provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs). If you have additional questions, you can call the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) or contact a financial aid administrator at any college or university.

The first step is to create a Federal Student Aid ID Number. There is a link on the FAFSA website - <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm>

Completing and submitting a FAFSA is **free**. The FAFSA requires information from 1040 tax returns, but the tax return does not have to be completed in order to apply. Print the completed application for your records.

**College Goal Sunday** – each year select colleges in the U.S. offer an opportunity for seniors & their parents to make an appointment to receive assistance from a financial aid professional to complete their FAFSA. Western Connecticut State University in Danbury and Norwalk Community College are two locations in our area. Find out more at: [www.collegegoalsundayct.org](http://www.collegegoalsundayct.org).

Federal Student Aid uses the data on your FAFSA to calculate an **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)**. The EFC is an index that the college will use to determine how much financial aid (grants, loans, or work-study) you would receive if you were to attend that school. Your application results are transmitted to the colleges listed on your FAFSA.

**Unusual circumstances** (for example: unreimbursed medical bills, disability, loss of job, caring for older parents) that affect a family's income or expenditures should be communicated in writing directly to the Financial Aid Offices at the individual colleges under consideration.

**Studentaid.ed.gov** has a great Q&A resource that explains "Financial Aid and Undocumented Students", as does CT Students For a Dream.

**Merit-based and athletic-based financial aid or scholarships may still require the FAFSA or CSS PROFILE.** Some colleges and community organizations also require the FAFSA in order to receive any type of funding.

**There are three categories of federal student aid: grants, loans and work-study.** Grants provide financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Loans provide borrowed money that must be repaid with interest. Work-study allows students to earn money to help pay for education expenses while enrolled in school. Your need-based financial aid “package”—the aid your college awards you—is likely to include funds from the federal student aid programs. Accepting federal student aid does not commit the student to military or other government service.

**In general, to receive funds from the federal student aid programs, you must meet the following requirements:**

- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen.
- Have a high school diploma, General Educational Development (GED) certificate, pass an approved “ability to benefit” test, successfully complete six credit hours or the equivalent course work toward a degree or certificate, or have completed a high school education in a home school setting that is recognized as a home school or private school under state law.
- Enroll or be accepted for enrollment in an eligible program as a regular student seeking a degree or certificate.
- Be registered with Selective Service if required (in general, if you are a male age 18 through 25).
- Meet satisfactory academic progress standards set by your school.
- Certify that you are not in default on a federal loan or owe money on a federal grant.
- Certify that you will use federal student aid only for educational purposes.

And, only if you have previously received federal student aid:

- Certify that you were not convicted for a drug offense that occurred while you were enrolled in school and receiving federal student aid.

**The CSS / Financial Aid PROFILE** is an INSTITUTIONAL financial aid form required by some colleges. The CSS / Financial Aid PROFILE is found at <https://profileonline.collegeboard.org>.

Some colleges require the CSS PROFILE for Early Decision or Early Action applicants. The CSS PROFILE typically requires more extensive financial information from one’s family. Financial aid deadlines for early decision and early action align with the application deadlines and are earlier than typical financial aid deadlines. Check each college’s website for details.

#### **VERIFY-**

It is vital for seniors to check and respond promptly to all emails or portal updates from colleges. You must meet all deadlines for financial aid verification paperwork.

The **SAR (Student Aid Report)** is the processing center’s response to the FAFSA application. You must carefully verify the information on the SAR and make corrections as necessary.

**IDOC** is the College Board’s **Institutional Documentation Service**. Some colleges contract with the College Board to collect families’ federal tax returns and other documents as part of the institutional verification process. The College Board notifies students when they are selected to submit the required documents. Students do not have to submit documentation using IDOC unless they are selected.

Colleges not using IDOCS may ask that the same materials be sent to their Financial Aid Office.

Colleges that use IDOCS as part of their financial aid process:

<https://profile.collegeboard.org/profile/ppi/participatingInstitutions.aspx>

IDOC tutorial:

<https://slides.collegeboard.org/idoc-student-dashboard>

**A Tax Transcript may be required in order for colleges to process your financial aid.** We encourage students to order this in advance: <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript>

To order and receive immediately on-line, the student needs the parent's::

- SSN, date of birth, filing status and mailing address from latest tax return,
- access to your email account,
- your personal account number from a credit card, mortgage, home equity loan, home equity line of credit or car loan, and
- a mobile phone with your name on the account.

Students and parents can also order through the mail, which takes 5-10 days.

To use this service, you need your:

- SSN or Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN),
- date of birth, and
- mailing address from your latest tax return

### **EVALUATE-**

You can download a Net Price Calculator form on the GHS Guidance website or use this online tool to compare financial aid award letters and costs to your family before deciding which college to attend:

<http://www.consumerfinance.gov/paying-for-college/compare-financial-aid-and-college-cost/>

Students and parents can go to the **U.S. Federal Student Aid's Web site** at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) for free, in-depth information on preparing for and funding education beyond high school.

**FAFSA4caster** is an online tool to provide an estimate of federal student aid eligibility before officially applying for federal student aid. FAFSA4caster estimates the user's eligibility for federal aid and allows users to factor in other aid sources. [www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov)

**Net Price Calculator** - [studentnpc.collegeboard.org](http://studentnpc.collegeboard.org) – a tool to estimate your “net price” at each college.

**Compare Aid Calculator** – [bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college)

**Affordability – US Department of Education Score Card** – <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>

**The Chronicle of Higher Education College Completion Rates** -

<https://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/>

### **Scholarships:**

The *College & Career Update* will promote all national, local and college-based scholarship opportunities received by GHS Guidance. Reputable **Scholarship Search** websites include [Fastweb](http://Fastweb), [CollegeBoard.com](http://CollegeBoard.com), [CollegeNET.com](http://CollegeNET.com), and [Scholarships.com](http://Scholarships.com). There is NEVER a reason to pay a fee for scholarship information or scholarship applications!!

**The Greenwich Scholarship Association** encourages all students who complete the FAFSA to complete a “GSA” application. These applications will be available to complete online starting in January and further information will be shared at the GHS Financial Aid Workshop II. The GSA website ([www.greenwichscholarship.org](http://www.greenwichscholarship.org)) and answers to FAQ's can be reached from the GHS Guidance website, under the College Process > Financial Aid tab. You must submit the FAFSA to apply.

**The Greenwich High School Student Loan Fund** allows GHS graduates to borrow up to \$5000 interest free each year for their four years of undergraduate study. This application is available for download from the GHS Guidance website



### **Creative Ways to Reduce the Cost of Attending College:**

- Begin with two years at a community college – save on tuition
- Live at home and commute to a local four-year college – save on living expenses
- Apply to colleges where your academic profile fits the criteria for merit scholarships
- UConn Early College Experience – earn credits while enrolled in select AP courses offered at GHS; credit is inexpensive, and no cost for students who have free or reduced lunch certification
- Norwalk Community College Dual Enrollment – earn credits while enrolled in select business and consumer science courses at GHS
- Norwalk Community College High School Partnership – register for and attend select courses at NCC while a high school student
- AP Exams – some colleges and universities award credit for AP Exam Scores – research at: <https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/creditandplacement/search-credit-policies>
- CLEP Exams – by taking and passing one of the CLEP exams, you can earn credit at many colleges – research CLEP policies at the colleges you are interested in attending at: <https://clep.collegeboard.org/overview/collegecredit>
- Military Programs – ROTC scholarships, military reserves, enlist first attend college second, U.S. military academies
- Apply to become an R.A. (Resident Assistant) in your dorm – if you are a social, mature and responsible person, this is an ideal way to save on room and board at your college or university.
- When researching colleges, keep track of those that meet 100% of demonstrated need.
- The New England Regional Student Program offers tuition breaks for certain majors at state universities in New England for out of state residents. Find out more at: <http://www.nebhe.org/programs-overview/rsp-tuition-break/overview/>

## **RECOMMENDED TIMELINE of TASKS IN THE COLLEGE RESEARCH & APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **Spring of Junior Year -**

1. Juniors and their parents should attend one of the College Kick Off Meetings held in January.
2. Make an appointment with your school counselor for a college/post-high school planning conference. This meeting will take approximately an hour in length. Your House Guidance Assistant can help schedule this appointment at a time that works for both student and parents. Complete your “Game Plan” in Naviance (About Me tab) prior to this meeting or any other required documents at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Other useful self-assessments in Naviance > About Me: Strengths Explorer, Do What You Are, Career Interest Profiler, and Career Cluster Finder.

“Your future depends on many things, but mostly on you.” Frank Tyger

3. Request formal recommendations from two teachers (max).
4. Submit your Senior Packet. These documents assist your counselor in writing the best letter of recommendation possible.
  - Student Brag Sheet
  - Parent Brag Sheet
  - Resume or Activity Sheet
  - Comment forms (aka informal recommendations) from at least two people who know you well. One of these must be from a teacher.
5. Research colleges and/or other educational opportunities using Naviance or the College Board's website. Review admissions data in last year's College Book. Travel to campuses to attend an information session, take a tour, sit in on a class, and/or have an interview (use visit form). Meet with college reps who visit the Career Center. Attend local events (info sessions, college fairs, web chats) to learn about schools, programs and other educational opportunities. Read the College & Career Update. Participate in college admission workshops offered in the Career Center. Meet with the College & Career Counselor.
6. Register for and take the SAT, Subject Tests, or ACT as needed. ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) or [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)). The GHS High School/CEEB Code is 070-240.
7. If you plan to play Division I or II sports in college, you must fill out the NCAA Eligibility Center's student release form at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). The NCAA needs an official transcript from GHS and from any other high school you attended, both at the end of your junior year, and again when you graduate. Give a Transcript Request Form (Green Sheet) to your House's Guidance Assistant. SAT or ACT are also required.
8. Schedule an individual follow up meeting with your counselor before the end of the school year.

### **Summer Before Senior Year -**

1. Create 1-2 drafts of your college essay(s) for your applications. Ensure the prompts are for the correct application year.
2. Sometime after August 1<sup>st</sup>, create a Common Application account at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). DO NOT invite your counselor or teachers to submit a letter of recommendation on your Common Application. Find GHS using our high school code: 070-240.
3. Continue to update your prospective list of colleges on Naviance (Colleges > "Colleges I'm Thinking About").
4. Develop a system to keep track of passwords, deadlines, and paperwork.

### **Senior Year -**

#### **September – November/December (First Application Deadline)**

1. Attend mandatory Senior Meeting: Seniors should bring their chromebooks with their Common Application and Naviance account information (username and password). Counselors will guide students through the process of linking Naviance and Common Application accounts as well as signing the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA) form. Students need to have

completed these two tasks or the Guidance Office cannot send their documents to colleges. Counselors will also review the application process with students at this meeting. Students may also schedule individual meetings with their school counselor at this time.

2. Participate in the workshops offered by the Career Center, or make an individual appointment with the College & Career Counselor to brainstorm/review essays, prepare for interviews, write a resume, or conduct career or college research.
3. Individual Meetings with Counselors: Seniors should schedule an appointment and meet with their counselors to review their college lists, and determine appropriate deadlines for each school.
4. Connect in person with teachers writing Formal Letters of Recommendation. Inform them when your first deadline is.
  - a. You must "Add" these 2 teachers on Naviance. Under "Colleges", scroll down to "Letters of Recommendation", click on "Letters of Recommendation" and select your teachers from the drop-down list. Be sure to request your teachers for all current and future schools you are applying to. This provides the teachers with the access they need to upload their letters.
  - b. Provide addressed & stamped envelopes to teachers *if needed* for specific colleges.
5. College Essay(s)/Supplement(s): Students should ask a counselor and/or teacher to review and provide feedback on their essay(s).
6. Before you submit your applications, make sure your college essay(s) and the application itself are looked over for spelling/grammatical errors and typos.
7. You do not have to wait for recommendation letters or transcripts to be submitted in order to submit your portion of the application. Each part can be sent separately. Don't delay!
8. You must request that your standardized test scores be sent to the schools you are applying to directly from the testing agency (SAT, ACT).
9. Colleges you are applying to may have financial aid forms, such as the CSS Profile ([cssprofile.collegeboard.org](http://cssprofile.collegeboard.org)), which you must complete by the application deadline. Early Decision deadlines apply to financial aid as well. Check each college's financial aid website for details.
10. Attend GHS College Admissions Panel and GHS College Night (College Fair)
11. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter grades will only be sent to colleges upon request of the student.
12. Seniors and their families should attend Financial Aid Presentations given by GHS. Dates are on the school calendar and on the GHS Guidance website.
13. Families applying for Financial Aid must complete the online FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) on [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). You may also need to complete the CSS Profile or other institutional financial aid forms. Note that you must meet all financial aid application deadlines for colleges.

## **December – June**

1. Mid-Year (1<sup>st</sup> Semester) grades will automatically be sent to your colleges.

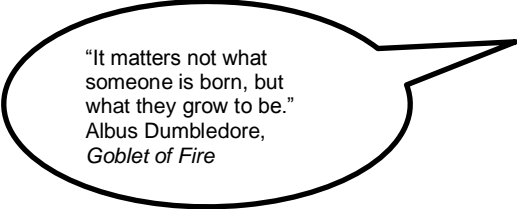


2. Students who complete the FAFSA should complete the Greenwich Scholarship Association (GSA) application.
3. Enroll and submit a deposit to the college you plan to attend in by the national reply date of May 1<sup>st</sup>, and inform your house's guidance assistant and school counselor of your plans. Your final transcript will automatically be sent to the college or school you specify.

### Ongoing During Senior Year

1. Read the College and Career Update newsletter regularly published by the Career Center for info on open houses, admissions rep visits, and scholarships.
2. Transcript Request Forms: Once you have created your college list and established deadlines with your counselor, you must complete one Transcript Request Form for each school and meet with your House's Guidance Assistant to submit these forms. **These Transcript Request Forms must be turned in at least two weeks before the deadline for the college. Please follow the deadlines located at the top of the transcript request sheet.**
3. Monitor status of applications in Naviance. When a Transcript Request Form is processed, the college will be added to Colleges > "Colleges I'm Applying To". You cannot enter this information yourself. Questions? Speak to your House's Guidance Assistant.
4. Verify that the colleges you've applied to have received necessary transcripts and letters of recommendation by checking your admissions account two to three weeks after processing / college deadlines.
5. If you are taking the SAT, Subject Tests or ACT, continue to prepare for these tests.
6. Demonstrated Interest: It is important to make contact with the colleges you are applying to demonstrate your sincere interest and make sure you are a good fit.
  - GHS College Night (College Fair, October)
  - Visit campuses
  - Visit with Representatives in the Career Center
  - Attend local Information Sessions
7. Seniors must remain in close contact with their Counselor and Guidance Assistant, updating them on all changes to their lists and outcomes of admissions decisions. Continue to research college options, complete Transcript Request Forms and submit applications as needed.
8. Thank the teachers who wrote your recommendations and keep them informed of your progress.

Best wishes on your journey!



"It matters not what someone is born, but what they grow to be."  
Albus Dumbledore,  
*Goblet of Fire*