

THE GOVERNOR'S ACADEMY



The Governor's Academy
College Counseling Guidebook



College Counseling at The Governor’s Academy – 2019-2020

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COLLEGE COUNSELING AT THE GOVERNOR'S ACADEMY—A STATEMENT OF APPROACH

At Governor's, we expect our students to be lifelong learners and we encourage them to embrace the challenges of academic life. Whether in the classroom, in the art studio, on the stage, or on the athletic fields, students at Governor's consider the relevance of their education and the value it brings to their endeavors.

The college process at Governor's builds on the Academy's commitment to developing collaborative thinkers prepared to make wise and enduring decisions. As their college search begins, Academy students are encouraged to articulate their values, consider what motivates them, and appreciate how their actions make a difference in the lives of others. This broad approach holds practical application as students learn to match their diverse personal and school experiences with the colleges they pursue.

While the college process begins in earnest for juniors at Governor's, the College Counseling curriculum includes ninth and tenth graders. Ninth and tenth graders meet as a class with the College Counseling Office (CCO), once in the fall, and again in the spring. The all-class meetings for underclassmen offer a broad overview of the college process while identifying practical issues including course scheduling and a suggested standardized testing timeline. The College Counseling curriculum also includes a developmental component, including learning style assessments, and personality inventory concepts.

While individual college counseling meetings begin junior year, all Governor's students are paired with a College Counselor in their first semester on campus for insight on course selection, advice regarding extracurricular pursuits, and guidance for the athletic recruitment process.

In December, juniors at Governor's begin to engage fully in the process of identifying and researching optimal college matches. Within our signature *College Search Seminar Series*, juniors both identify and learn to use wide-ranging college research resources. In addition, juniors participate in a *College Essay Writing Unit*. Juniors also participate in aptitude and interest inventories, mock college admission interviews, and an optional athletic recruitment session. Juniors also sit for both an SAT and ACT diagnostic exam with leading test prep agency, ArborBridge, followed by a two-hour individual SAT or ACT tutorial session with ArborBridge (all at no additional cost to students).

The college admission landscape is increasingly competitive and the College Counselors at Governor's appreciate the unique importance the college search holds for our students. Admission to selective colleges is largely credential driven. Rigor of academic program, quality of grades, standardized test scores, and extracurricular endeavors are primary considerations. However, colleges are not looking simply for high achieving applicants. They also seek accomplished students who appreciate and generously share their educational experiences.

In addition, each college sets its unique agenda in crafting its freshman class. Colleges within urban centers for example, often receive more applications than rural campuses. And undergraduate schools of engineering typically receive more male applicants than female applicants. Likewise, liberal arts colleges typically attract more female applicants. The College Counselors at Governor’s help students navigate the increasingly complicated college admission landscape and to thoughtfully consider their options.

Students, College Counselors, and parents must work together and communicate clearly and honestly regarding all aspects of the college search process. And we must be objective about abilities, interests,

and information regarding the colleges. Our collective goal is to guide students in identifying college matches at a range of schools on all levels—academic, extracurricular, and social. Students are the driving force in determining whether a college is an appropriate match. The more they engage in researching the colleges, the more confident they become. And the more compelling their admission candidacies will be.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: STUDENTS, COUNSELORS, AND PARENTS

The College Counseling Office at Governor’s is committed to helping each student identify a range of optimal colleges from which to craft a balanced college list. To help students reach this important goal, it is important to clarify the College Counselor’s role, as well as identify the responsibilities each student must take to ensure a successful college search.

College Counselors at Governor’s: The College Counselor at Governor’s is an advocate and adviser for each student engaged in the college search process. As an *adviser*, the College Counselor offers the latest and most relevant advice specific to each student. As an *advocate*, the College Counselor represents each student to the colleges using a fair and objective approach.

College Counselors at Governor’s are purposefully not identified as “College Placement Officers,” as the admission outcome at any college cannot be guaranteed. Rather, College Counselors help students and parents identify important information regarding today’s college admission landscape, while helping students and families process the range of experiences and emotions the college process often evokes.

In addition, counselors provide information relevant to each student’s academic record, individual experiences, and goals and expectations for the college process. So while the College Counseling Office at Governor’s offers a decided *College Counseling Curriculum*, our advice and insight consider each student’s individual experiences, goals, and expectations for the college search. College Counselors at Governor’s are committed to helping students craft their optimal college list—and to create their most compelling admission candidacy at the colleges they choose to pursue.

Specifically, the College Counselor at Governor's:

- Gets to know and develops rapport with each student to offer relevant advice regarding colleges, including specific programs and opportunities the student may find especially promising.
- Suggests college matches to individual students based on a range of criteria including the student's goals and school record, as well as specific college offerings.
- Helps students refine their college list, using the selectivity categories (likely, possible, and reach) as a guide. *Counselors encourage students to apply to two to three colleges in each selectivity category to ensure optimal college choices.*
- Develops and maintains a college counseling curriculum that informs and guides students throughout the process. The curriculum includes, but is not limited to: College Search Seminar Series, College Essay Writing Unit, Common Application Completion Seminar, Athletic Recruitment Session, Mock Admission Exercise, goal setting strategies, periodic all-class meetings, standardized test prep, college admission fairs, and college transition information for seniors.
- Partners with the Governor's junior-year English teachers in assigning juniors one complete college essay
- Crafts a comprehensive college recommendation for each senior
- Forwards admission documentation (not including standardized testing) to colleges including transcripts, recommendations, and other required admission documents

A Student Seeking College Admission:

- Makes the most of her or his opportunities at The Governor's Academy—both in and outside the classroom
- Engages in the process of self-assessment and reflection with an open and curious mind. This process includes, but is not limited to, an honest assessment of strengths, weaknesses, goals, and expectations
- Completes a prescribed student questionnaire before the first junior-year individual college counseling meeting

- Meets all CCO Curriculum deadlines including required Naviance updates, completes student questionnaire, writes a full college essay draft, completes standardized testing registration, and registers on Naviance for fall visits by college admission officers
- **READS AND RESPONDS TO EMAIL MESSAGES DAILY**
- Researches colleges of interest using CCO Curriculum strategies and resources, and refines the college list using the tools and criteria identified by the CCO
- Owns and ultimately directs his or her individual college process
- Prepares for and sits for required (and recommended) standardized tests
- Consults with the College Counselor in sending standardized test scores to colleges
- Consults with the College Counselor in requesting required college recommendations from appropriate teachers
- Completes required admission applications, accompanying forms, and essays before published deadlines (giving the College Counselor sufficient time to review before student submits to the colleges)
- Communicates consistently throughout the process with the College Counselor, including periodic conversations, Naviance updates, email exchanges, etc.
- Schedules at least two individual college counseling meetings during spring term, junior year – and at least two meetings fall term, senior year

Parents' Role in the College Process

The parents' role in the college process varies among families. Some parents step back, giving their student full freedom to make decisions. Other parents assert more control. There are differing views on how parents can best support their student in the college process. However, the College Counselors at Governor's suggest a balanced approach—one in which positive parental support evolves throughout the process, giving students both the freedom and responsibility to manage their college process directly.

In This Context, Parents are Encouraged to:

- Be realistic in matching expectations with those of the student. In concert with the College Counseling Office, the student should optimally craft a college list spread evenly among the selectivity categories (likely, possible, reach, far reach/unlikely).
- Help the student organize and plan for college visits when possible. We also suggest students schedule the visits with your help. The more initiative they take (including meeting

deadlines, completing required applications, forms, etc.), the more prepared for college—and life beyond—they will be.

- Stay informed throughout the process. Take time to read CCO emails and check Naviance. And feel free to check in with your student's College Counselor with specific questions or concerns.
- Engage early with the Financial Aid process. Let your student know if you will apply for aid so you both can communicate effectively with the College Counseling Office.
- Avoid the temptation of managing (or completing) your student's application or application essay. The college search provides students necessary practice in navigating myriad similar processes well into adulthood. We as adults are here to guide our students—and to be a sounding board for their ideas and goals. But doing too much can alter their voice and ultimately disadvantage their admission candidacy.

The CCO Offers These Additional Thoughts

- Don't make the mistake of letting an admissions committee determine your child's (or your) value and esteem. While college admission is a significant step in a high school student's life, the CCO acknowledges the complicated calculus of life—which cannot be reduced to the application evaluation process.
- Rejection is never easy, no matter how well prepared we are. Know how your child manages disappointment, both within the safety of her immediate family, and also with teachers and friends. A balanced college list can help reduce disappointment, and, of course, yields appropriate college choices.
- Let your student know you are proud of his or her accomplishments at Governor's—and that no college decision will ever change that.

COLLEGE ADMISSION

The National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) has surveyed multiple colleges to determine the factors which most significantly influence college admission decisions. There is nuance to every college admission decision, but the survey results are worth noting:

Admission Factor	Considerable Importance %	Moderate Importance %	Limited Importance %	No Importance %
Grades in college prep courses	83.4	12.3	2.7	1.6
Strength of curriculum	65.7	25.7	4.7	3.9
Standardized Test Scores	59.3	29.4	7.0	4.3
Grades in all courses	46.2	42.1	10.2	1.6
Essay or writing sample	26.6	33.0	22.9	17.6
Student's demonstrated interest	23.0	30.9	26.6	19.5
Class rank	21.8	37.2	25.9	15.0
Counselor Recommendation 1	9.4	45.0	23.1	12.4
Teacher Recommendation	19.0	44.2	24.5	12.3
Subject test scores (AP, IB)	9.6	32.4	32.6	25.3
Interview	9.2	22.7	33.0	35.2
Extracurricular Activities	7.4	42.3	35.1	15.2
Portfolio	5.9	12.9	32.9	48.2
SAT subject test	5.3	11.8	24.9	58.0
Student Employment	1.9	20.3	47.2	30.6

As the data above indicate, academic achievement within a strong college preparatory program is the most influential factor in the college admissions process. But even the importance of academic achievement varies among college admission processes. Some state universities for example (particularly those that evaluate a high volume of applications) rely heavily on the academic record and standardized test scores. The transcript evaluation can also vary by school. Most colleges consider the applicant's grade trend, the increase (or decrease) in the academic program's rigor, etc.

The data also show that standardized test scores are a significant factor in many colleges' admission evaluation process. And while most students correctly assume colleges utilize standardized test scores to evaluate their individual candidacy, colleges also use test scores to bolster their overall admission testing profile—which can ultimately affect college rankings. In this context, it is important to remember that test scores impact admission decisions in myriad ways. Their significance depends both on the student's individual record and the institution's specific goals for building its freshman class.

Extracurricular Activities and Letters of Recommendation

The letters of recommendation from the College Counselor and teacher provide a composite narrative of each student's character, interactions with peers and adults, and unique contributions to the Governor's school community. From students' participation in extracurricular activities and school community, admission officers gain a sense of each student's overall motivation, organization, integrity, and her or his role among peers and adults.

Most admission committees pay close attention to students' endeavors within the Governor's community and beyond. The activities students pursue outside the classroom including the performing arts, leadership positions, athletic pursuits, philanthropic efforts—all help reveal the kind of contributions students will likely make within a collegiate community. Colleges are often drawn to long-term commitments to these pursuits, though they also value entrepreneurial activities and students' willingness to risk what is comfortable to try something new.

Students at Governor's have myriad opportunities to lead, to serve, and to pursue activities that make a positive difference. How students invest their time—both in and outside the classroom—is an important indicator of character and social potential. The most selective colleges receive more academically qualified students than they can admit. In these cases, the deciding factor may rest in part, with a qualified student's special talent, her leadership contributions, or tangible, enduring commitment to her school community.

The Essay

A college's offer of admission is not simply an acceptance to the college. It is an invitation to join the school's community. Contrary to the advice found in many "how to" college admission guides, there is not a single approach or formula that yields an effective college essay. A successful college essay depends much on the applicant's experiences, personality, and writing style.

College admission officers sometimes read up to 50 applications (and therefore, essays) a day. And they do not expect a revolutionary approach from each. But they do expect an authentic voice that reveals something compelling about the student not otherwise found in the student's application information. It isn't always necessary to pin the essay message on a particular event or topic, though doing so can be effective. But oftentimes, a straightforward, direct narrative can effectively engage the reader.

Remember: it is the applicant's task to make the match between who s/he is and her or his experiences, and the college s/he hopes to attend. In this context, the essay should offer insight into the student's motivation, her or his values, and how s/he connects with and relates to others. It should also offer the reader insight into how the student's values and experiences might make a difference within a collegiate setting.

GPA and Class Rank

The Governor's Academy calculates a weighted grade point average for each semester, and at the end

of each year. A cumulative GPA is not calculated. Like most independent schools of our academic profile, Governor's also does not report class rank to the colleges.

Each transcript the College Counseling Office submits to the colleges is accompanied by *The Governor's School Profile*, which provides necessary context for our students' academic achievement.

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE SELECTIVE COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS

It seems everyone has an opinion or an experience to share regarding today's selective college admission process. And while there is often a dimension of truth to each scenario, the information we hear often lacks full context—including each college's goals for building its unique first year class.

Common myths the CCO has encountered:

“Likely” schools on a student's list can be taken for granted

The college admission landscape is increasingly competitive. And as colleges seek ways to distinguish themselves (including jockeying for positions in the rankings), they pay particular attention to yield (the number of admitted students who enroll). Therefore, the applicant's demonstrated interest plays an increasingly important role at a number of institutions, regardless of the institutions' rates of admission.

The College Counselor directs admission officers within the college admission process

College Counselors—particularly at Governor's—vigorously advocate for our students, most significantly in our comprehensive letters of recommendation. We also exchange periodic emails with college admission officers and speak during scheduled telephone conversations. But it is important to remember that each college has a unique agenda in building its class. And its criteria for selection can change each year. Most often the CCO's communication with colleges helps clarify students' candidacies, and ensures the college is evaluating the latest (and most accurate) information (including correct grades, highest test scores, all recommendations, etc.).

“My friend, or classmate, or cousin, etc. was admitted to the college to which I applied and I was denied. My record is stronger, so I don't understand the college's decision”

Student's academic records are confidential. Most students are not privy to their peers' full (or accurate) academic record. And, as noted, each college sets its unique goals and agenda in building its class. And while the academic record is often the most significant consideration for most colleges in evaluating admission applications, other factors including demographics, student leadership, and extracurricular pursuits are all considered.

The college process is simply a means to an end. Therefore the outcome is most important

While admission is the goal of the college process, the PROCESS is increasingly important. Unless students are organized, pay attention to detail, and take the college RESEARCH process seriously,

they cannot craft their optimal admission candidacy. Self-reflection and meaningful college research build students' confidence, give them a unique voice, and yield life lessons from which they can benefit long after the college process is complete.

The Junior year is the most important

Indeed, colleges look closely at the junior year grades and experiences. But most selective colleges consider grade trend, rigor of curriculum, and extracurricular involvement in all grades, nine through twelve. In this context, the senior year is very important.

The CCO sends fall quarter grade reports for all seniors (for early applications), at the end of the first (fall) semester for seniors, and at the end of the senior year. The last report (including spring semester) is particularly important for students who pursue admission from a college's waitlist. Finally, all offers of admission are conditional upon successful completion of senior year course work. Colleges can rescind offers of admission when academic performance drops significantly after the offer of admission is made.

The College Process Outcome is the "Pay-Off" to my High School Experience

Students should not make the mistake of giving a college admissions committee control of their confidence and self-esteem. While admission to college is, indeed, an important life experience, the college a student attends does not, of course, determine his or her success. What students make of their college experiences is typically a more significant determinant of success than the college she ultimately attends.

The College Athletic Coach will get me in

College coaches can express sincere interest in a "recruited" athlete, but the admissions offices ultimately make the decisions. Virtually all college coaches must "court" more student athletes than they can accommodate to ensure a full roster. Student athletes must do their homework and communicate consistently with both their Governor's Academy varsity coach and their College Counselor. Before a college coach can make any "promises" of admission, the admission office must first read and approve the student athlete's academic credentials in a "preliminary admissions read." Until the preliminary admission read is complete (which the CCO helps students confirm), the coach cannot make a commitment.

An Alumni Connection or Personal Friend Will Make the Difference

Very few alumni or other high-profile endorsements can make a difference in today's college admission process. In fact, less than three in 3500 actually do—according to data provided by NACAC (the National Association of College Admission Counseling).

STANDARDIZED TESTING

It is the student's responsibility to confirm each college's testing requirements, and to consult with the CCO to determine the scores that should be sent to each school. It is also the student's responsibility to send scores to each college directly from the testing agency (College Board, ACT, TOEFL, etc.). At the same time, an increasing number of colleges accept student reported scores for the admission process. In this case, the college requests official scores after the student is admitted or chooses to enroll. In all cases, the student is responsible for determining test requirements for each school, including the process by which scores should be sent.

While the test descriptions and recommendations below are relevant to most students, there are exceptions. Recruited athletes for example, are often on an expedited testing timeline. Students should discuss exceptions individually with their assigned College Counselor.

Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT)

The PSAT is a two-hour critical reading, math, and writing multiple choice test. Governor's sophomores and juniors take the PSAT in October as practice for the SAT Reasoning Test. Colleges neither require nor request PSAT scores. PSAT scores largely function as a practice exam for the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT)

National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT)

PSAT results for juniors are used to determine semi-finalists (based on national performance percentiles on the PSAT), to select *National Merit and National Achievement Finalists*. Qualifiers must be either US citizens or US permanent residents.

SAT

The SAT is an evidence-based reading, math, and optional writing test. The reading and math sections are both scored on a 200-800 scale (for a total highest score of 1600). The SAT is offered seven times each year, from August to June. Many colleges require the SAT, but a growing number of colleges do not. The CCO recommends that students take the SAT for the first time in spring of junior year, and then again in August or October of senior year (and perhaps a third time in senior year). Before taking their first national SAT, juniors at Governor's sit for an SAT diagnostic exam, followed by an individualized SAT (or ACT) tutorial, all administered by leading test prep agency, ArborBridge. The CCO also recommends that students who will submit SAT scores to colleges take at least one national exam including the writing section.

ACT

The ACT is a four-part examination designed to assess the student's knowledge of, and skills in, English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. Colleges accept either the ACT or SAT. The Governor's CCO recommends that juniors take both the ACT and SAT and then pursue the more successful of the two within the senior year. Before taking their first national ACT, juniors at Governor's sit for an ACT diagnostic exam, followed by one two-hour individualized ACT (or SAT) tutorials, all administered by leading test prep agency, ArborBridge. The CCO also recommends that

students who will submit ACT scores to colleges take at least one national exam including the writing section.

Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

Advanced Placement Exams are three-hour college-level exams offered in over 30 subjects. Governor's offers AP courses in: Biology, Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Chemistry, Computer Science, English Language, English Literature, Environmental Science, French, Latin, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Music Theory, World History, Modern European History, Physics, Psychology, Spanish, Statistics, Studio Art, US Government and Politics, and US History. All Advanced Placement courses offered at Governor's have certain eligibility requirements. The exams are administered in May and are scored on a scale of 1-5. Students taking AP courses at Governor's are required to take the AP exam, but sending scores to colleges is optional. The CCO strongly recommends that each senior consult his or her College Counselor before sending AP exam results to the colleges.

SAT Subject Tests

Administered in 16 subjects and offered six times each year, the SAT Subject Tests are one-hour, multiple choice tests scored on a scale of 200-800. Many colleges do not require subject tests and those that do largely require two (typically math and a second of the student's choice). The CCO encourages students to consult with their College Counselor before taking subject tests and/or sending them to their colleges.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) The TOEFL is administered to students for whom English is not their first language (and in some cases, the TOEFL is recommended to students whose families do not speak English at home). The CCO encourages all students to consult their College Counselor before taking the TOEFL and/or sending scores to colleges.

Reporting Standardized Test Scores to Colleges

When registering for the SAT or ACT, students may send scores to four colleges at no charge. This is a helpful option for many students (since there is a charge for sending additional scores), **but students should not use this option for colleges that consider standardized testing optional.** To request scores they will send to the colleges, students should log onto their College Board account at www.sat.collegeboard.org or their ACT account at www.actstudent.org.

It is the student's responsibility to send test scores to colleges that require them. Test scores are NOT posted on Governor's Academy transcripts, and the CCO does not send them with students' admission materials (transcript, recommendations, etc.).

As noted above, some colleges are testing optional and therefore, do not require standardized testing. Students who are not sure if they should send their scores to their colleges should consult with their College Counselor.

Reporting Standardized Test Scores on the Common Application

Students who apply to test optional schools (even just one) should not report their standardized test scores on the Common Application if they do not want the test optional college to review their scores.

In this case, the CCO recommends leaving the standardized testing sections on the Common Application blank for test optional schools. Once the Common Application is submitted to all test optional schools, students can then report their scores on the Common Application and submit to their remaining colleges. In the CCO's experience, several seniors each year inadvertently report scores to testing optional schools which potentially disadvantages their admission candidacy.

Standardized Test Prep and Review— with ArborBridge

While standardized testing is an important dimension of the college admission process, it is typically not most important—though it often creates the most anxiety for applicants. To help students fare their

best on standardized testing, the College Counseling Office has partnered with leading test prep agency, ArborBridge.

Juniors sit for one SAT diagnostic exam with ArborBridge, and one ACT diagnostic exam, followed by a two hour individualized tutorial session (for either the SAT or ACT, depending on score results from both diagnostic exams).

Juniors may continue their standardized test prep with ArborBridge beyond the individualized tutorial offered through Governor's partnership with ArborBridge. Students who wish to continue their individual work with ArborBridge (beyond their one tutorial) must do so at their own expense. Limited tutorial "scholarships" are available through ArborBridge for students with demonstrated financial need.

Test Prep "Scholarships" with ArborBridge

ArborBridge offers test prep "scholarships" for juniors with demonstrated financial need. ArborBridge's methodology for determining scholarship eligibility is based primarily on each student's financial aid award package at Governor's.

Additional thoughts/suggestions in context of standardized test scores

There are hundreds of test optional colleges. For a full list visit Fairtest.org at <http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>. This site is also listed on students' Naviance Student Connection homepage.

And while test review can be an important part of improving a student's test profile, it does not guarantee the scores students often hope for or expect. There is just as much scholarly research supporting the value of test prep exercises as there are studies which refute their value. The effectiveness of test prep often depends on students' learning styles, their commitment to follow through, and in some cases, their confidence in their abilities.

For example, students should consider what kind of learner and test taker they are. Students who are not too "stressed" by testing situations can rely largely on test review exercises to improve their scores. Students who find themselves anxious in a testing situation might supplement test review exercises with a conversation with their College Counselor, becoming more familiar with their learning style,

personality type, and other test taking strategies. The CCO meets twice with both the ninth grade students and sophomore classes each year, introducing them to important learning style and personality inventory topics.

Summary of Standardized Testing Schedule

Below is a list of various standardized tests and dates most relevant to Governor's students.

Governor's students, of course, should not expect to sit for all tests listed below. But in consultation with their College Counselor, students should choose the options best suited to their college search needs and goals.

Sophomore year

October PSAT May SAT (largely for recruited athletes who must submit test scores for the athletic recruitment process) June SAT Subject test (after consulting with College Counselor and appropriate teacher(s)).

Junior year

The CCO recommends just one national SAT for most juniors. October PSAT November ACT diagnostic exam December SAT (also for recruited athletes who must submit test scores for the athletic recruitment process) January SAT diagnostic exam April ACT May SAT, AP Exams June SAT, ACT, or SAT Subject Tests July ACT.

Senior Year

August SAT or SAT Subject Tests September ACT October SAT or SAT Subject Tests, or ACT November SAT or SAT Subject Tests (many colleges—though not all—accept November testing for the early action or early decision process) December SAT or SAT II Subject Tests, or ACT May AP Exams

As noted, students are not expected to take all tests listed. In general, the CCO recommends one benchmark SAT and one benchmark ACT in the junior year. Then in consultation with the College Counselor, seniors typically take one to two SAT exams, *or* one to two ACT exams.

Students who anticipate applying to colleges that require SAT Subject Tests should typically take two subject tests: math and one additional subject (in consultation with the College Counselor). Several colleges, including Georgetown University, continue to require three SAT subject tests.

Standardized Testing and Students Requiring Accommodations

To qualify for extended time on standardized tests, including the SAT and ACT, students must provide documentation (via a current professional evaluation), affirming the necessity of testing accommodations. Included in this documentation is a statement by a qualified professional (psychiatrist, psychologist, or educational professional) which identifies the student's learning difference, describes the specific accommodations required, and which also states why the learning difference qualifies the student for accommodations on standardized tests. The request for accommodations is managed by the Learning Center Director.

All documentation must be sent in the original or photocopied form to Governor’s Academic Dean. Ultimately, the College Board (SAT), and/or the American College Testing Agency (ACT), etc. determines if students qualify for testing accommodations. The CCO assists in communicating with testing agencies and offers advice and direction to students and families. However, the CCO does not have a voice in the accommodation assessment process.

For additional information, visit the [SAT and ACT Testing Accommodations Frequently Asked Questions](#) page of The Governor’s Academy website.

CRAFTING A BALANCED COLLEGE LIST

The College Counseling Office offers a full curriculum to help students arrive at an appropriate college list. The more students know themselves, i.e., what they value, and what motivates them, the better equipped they are to identify the colleges to which they apply.

To that end, the CCO offers specific opportunities to help Governor’s students make balanced, informed decisions when considering the colleges to which they will apply.

Ninth graders and Sophomores

Ninth graders and sophomores meet by class twice each year with the CCO for a broad overview of the college process. For these meetings, the CCO also partners with The Governor’s Academy’s *Learning Center* to discuss important topics including learning styles and personality types.

And while ninth graders and sophomores are not required to meet individually with their College Counselor, ninth and tenth graders are assigned a College Counselor with whom they remain paired through graduation. Through this early pairing, the CCO works with both students (and their advisers) on issues including course selection, extracurricular choices, and the athletic recruitment process.

Juniors and Seniors

Beginning junior year, students engage fully in the process of identifying and researching optimal college matches. By partnering with their College Counselor, students use wide-ranging research resources including:

- Naviance Leading college guides such as *Fiske Online* and educational blogs including *The Huffington Post’s College Blog*

In addition, the College Counseling Curriculum includes:

- Governor’s Signature *College Search Seminar Series*
- Mock Admission Exercise facilitated by leading college admissions officers and admission deans
- College Essay Writing Unit

- SAT and ACT diagnostic exams and tutorials conducted by leading test prep agency, ArborBridge
- Mock College Admission Interviews
Athletic Recruitment Session

Students must invest sufficient time into their college search, considering their strengths, what they value, and what motivates them so they can write a compelling admission application.

To this end, students should:

- **Know themselves** and assess their high school experience objectively. Honesty and an open mind are important dimensions of this process.
- **Consider the college experiences that are important to them.** Students should begin by considering the aspects of their Governor’s experiences that motivate and inspire them. And, conversely, they should consider the dimensions of their high school experience they hope to leave behind. This reflective consideration gives students insight as they learn about the colleges, including the experiences and programs they offer.
- **Engage in meaningful research.** Through their research and conversations with college admission officers, and with their Governor’s College Counselor, students discover the schools that meet THEIR criteria. Again, students should use a variety of resources to ensure full and objective information.
- **Determine if they meet the COLLEGES’ criteria.** Students are encouraged to take a full and honest inventory of their experiences, including academic achievement, contributions to their school community, home community, their leadership, connections with others, etc. In determining their match with colleges, students are encouraged to use the many resources available to them, particularly Naviance. **Via Naviance, students can:**
 - Compare their Governor’s GPA and test scores with past Governor’s students who also applied to the same college(s)
 - Compare quantitative statistics of one college to another—or of several colleges to others
 - Search for colleges using the criteria they consider important to them (including size, location, academic program, social offerings, etc.)
- **Take a balanced approach.** Each college that students add to their Naviance account is assigned (by the College Counselor) a selectivity rating based on the student’s individual academic profile. Students are strongly encouraged to apply to two to three colleges in each of the selectivity categories, including possible, likely, reach, and far reach/unlikely. In consultation with their College Counselor, they will learn the importance of research and self-discovery to ultimately choose a balanced college list yielding their best college options.

COLLEGIATE ATHLETES

Most college athletic programs are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), an organization founded in 1906 that establishes rules on eligibility, student recruitment, and financial aid. The NCAA has three membership divisions: Division I, Division II, and Division III. Colleges are members of a division according to the size and scope of their athletic programs, and whether they offer athletic scholarships.

Students planning to enroll in college as a first year and who wish to participate in either Division I or Division II athletics must be certified by the *NCAA Eligibility Center*. The Eligibility Center ensures consistent interpretation of NCAA initial-eligibility requirements for all prospective student athletes at member institutions.

NCAA Certification The NCAA certification process typically begins in the student's junior year. To complete the Eligibility Center registration, students must:

- Register online at www.eligibilitycenter.org
- Send high school transcript to the Eligibility Center via the NCAA's online transcript request function
- Contact each high school attended (if others besides Governor's) and request that an official transcript be sent directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center. Also each high school should receive the student's individual NCAA ID number (assigned upon NCAA registration).
- Contact the College Board and/or ACT to request that an official SAT or ACT score report is sent to the Eligibility Center. The Eligibility Center order code is 9999.

Students who plan to play Division III athletics are not required to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. However, the following points are relevant to student athletes regardless of the athletic division or program they will pursue:

Important Considerations for Recruited Athletes

Prospective collegiate athletes should complete the recruitment questionnaire most colleges post on their athletics web site. They should also send a brief email to coaches at schools in which they are interested. The CCO offers several email templates to help students craft effective correspondence. Students should discuss their level of play with their Governor's coach—and/or club coach if they play their sport beyond the Academy.

Students who receive direct attention from a collegiate coach should inform both their Governor's coach and their College Counselor. Communication with the Governor's coach and College Counselor is particularly important if a collegiate coach requests a "verbal commitment" from the student. Student athletes should keep in mind that while a coach may elicit a commitment, the coach often is not able to extend that same commitment.

In addition, each collegiate coach brings varying levels of skill and experience to the athletic recruitment process. Most coaches are well-tuned to NCAA rules and the overall athletic recruitment process, while some coaches, unfortunately, are less informed.

The College Counseling Office works closely with both the Governor's Athletic Department and college athletic departments to help ensure students are on track with the athletic recruitment process. For example, with timely and appropriate updates from students (regarding their communication with college coaches) the CCO will confirm with the college coach that a preliminary admissions read is complete, i.e., that the college's admissions office has approved the student athlete for admission and that the college coach is free to "commit" to the student athlete.

The Admissions "Pre-Read"

College coaches often request a student athlete's transcript and test scores as part of the athletic recruitment process. To facilitate communication between the student, the college, the CCO, and the Governor's Athletic Department, students should request their Governor's transcript by emailing Ms. Dolan (bdolan@govsacademy.org) in the CCO. Ms. Dolan will then send the request to the student's College Counselor to ensure all parties are on the same communications page. Email requests for transcripts should include:

- The college's name
- The coach's name and contact info (email is most efficient but fax is fine)

If the coach also requests standardized test scores, let Ms. Dolan know that, too. For the athletic recruitment process, the CCO can send unofficial standardized test scores with the student's permission. In these cases, the CCO will typically choose the student's highest scores to date. In all cases, students are strongly encouraged to speak with their College Counselor before sharing standardized test scores for the athletic recruitment process.

It is also important to note that most coaches have excellent rapport with colleagues in their college's undergraduate admissions office, and some are perhaps, less organized and/or less familiar with their college's admission process.

The coach who "commits" to a student (particularly to a high school ninth grader or sophomore), could very well take a job at a different school within the year. Therefore, keeping the communication lines open with all college coaches can certainly pay off later if necessary.

One of the most important dimensions of the athletic recruitment process is the initiative the student demonstrates to the college coach(s). This means parents, counselors, and even the high school coach, all take a back seat to the student's communication with coaches. Behind the scenes, the CCO, parents, and Governor's coach can and should guide the student through the process. But college coaches invariably express appreciation for students who take the communications lead.

THE VISUAL OR PERFORMING ARTS

(From *Peterson's Professional Programs in the Visual and Performing Arts*—modified to match Governor's Program offerings and College Counseling Philosophy)

To maximize the college opportunities for artistically or musically talented students, there are particular steps to take in the college process.

Students interested in the arts may select a college that focuses primarily on the arts. Or they may choose a liberal arts college or comprehensive research university that provides greater diversity of course and program offerings. The choice, of course, depends largely on the student's goals, preparation, and expectations for the college experience.

Professional programs are often quite competitive, and the portfolio or audition is very important in the admission process. Students who are energized by being around other artists all day, every day, surrounded by music practice rooms, or in the company of other sculptors, painters, or dancers, may find an art college particularly appealing.

A liberal arts college or comprehensive research university might be more academically challenging and the student's academic profile will carry more weight in the admission process. Students who wish to focus on one of the arts, but also have opportunities to study other academic disciplines may find a comprehensive college more appealing.

Degree Options

It is important to note that "professional" degrees—including the *Bachelor of Fine Arts* or the *Bachelor of Music*—generally differ significantly from the "liberal arts" degrees—the *Bachelor of Arts* and the *Bachelor of Science*. Professional degree programs more likely require a higher percentage of work within the chosen art field. The remaining academic course work typically incorporates the arts into the curriculum.

A student enrolled in a professional degree program typically has a particular focus—a specific musical instrument or style, for example. A student working toward a liberal arts degree will typically pursue more generalized studies, covering a broad range of subject areas, with less emphasis on performance or studio work. The Bachelor of Arts (or Science) may be more appropriate for students who are unsure of the specialty they will pursue—or who wish to keep their professional options open after graduation.

Application and Admissions Process- Art

Professional art programs require a portfolio; liberal arts colleges and research universities typically do not. Governor's students are strongly encouraged to work closely with their art instructors in creating a portfolio—a collection of pieces (typically sent to colleges electronically) that offer examples of the student's artistic works. Portfolios are evaluated by artistically trained admission officers

and/or members of the college's faculty. Evaluators often look for more than "raw" talent. Indeed, they expect a particular level of competency and technical skill, as well as conceptual ability. In all professional colleges, evaluators are looking for students who demonstrate creativity, intellectual curiosity, and a serious investment in—and commitment to both pursue and create art.

Application and Admission Process: Music

Music students are typically evaluated on their academic profile, recommendations, and the audition. Each college employs a slightly different admission evaluation metric—and each school takes a unique approach to the audition process. The audition at a conservatory is the critical factor in the admission process, followed by the traditional assessment. In a liberal arts college or research university, the criteria for admission are more equally weighted. Some colleges host auditions in several regional locations, some permit electronic submission of auditions, and some require auditions on their campus. Most, however, use a combination of all three.

Teachers of the specific musical instrument typically review auditions. They are looking for innate talent, technique, musical artistry (and perhaps flair) that distinguish the musician. Auditions range from five to thirty minutes. Instructors may ask for one piece, listen for a bit, and then request a second piece. Students are strongly encouraged to prepare three pieces, typically from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries and in contrasting styles.

Application and Admission Process: Theatre

Theatre students are typically evaluated on their academic profile, recommendations, and the theatrical audition. Students interested in acting in college should research colleges that teach theatre and acting for the stage. Some colleges require a supplemental application focused specifically on theatre. The supplement typically includes questions related to theatre and an essay identifying a specific interest in (or motivation for) pursuing theatre. The "standard" audition is most often five minutes, consisting of one classical and one contemporary piece, usually two minutes each. Musical theatre auditions can require preparation of a song as well. Most colleges require the audition on their campus, though some institutions offer regional or national auditions. Audition judges are most often faculty and staff members from the institution's school of theatre. Most auditions are very formal, very professional, and, therefore, can be intimidating. Governor's students are strongly encouraged to work closely with a Governor's Fine Arts faculty member in preparing for theatrical auditions.

COLLEGE VISITS

College visits are an important part of most college processes. With Governor's rigorous schedule, our students must plan well in advance. Students must do their best to minimize conflicts with their academic and extracurricular commitments as they consider college visits.

When possible, students should visit a range of colleges with varying rates of admission. In addition, students must do their college research homework before hitting the paths and halls of any college. For example, they should review each college's website before visiting and identify at least one specific

reason they are drawn to that particular college. When visiting a college, students should be prepared to express their interest in case a forthright admissions officer or tour guide inquires.

Most colleges require online (or telephone) registration for an information session and tour. When registering for the visit, look for an admission interview reference. If the visit registration form does not mention an admissions interview, search the admissions site to determine if interviews are required, recommended, or not offered. If an interview is offered, the CCO suggests calling the college's admissions office to schedule an interview if online registration is not an option.

Students should discuss admission interview plans with their College Counselor. Some colleges interview Governor's students on the Governor's campus. In this case, the CCO recommends students participate in the college's information session and tour, and then interview with the college's representative here at Governor's. The interview is typically more memorable for the interviewer when conducted on the student's "home turf." The list of colleges that interview at Governor's is growing, so again, we suggest communicating plans to interview with the CCO.

Students should communicate all college visit and interview opportunities with their College Counselor. The more counselors are aware of students' efforts at demonstrating interest in their colleges, the more effectively they can support students' admission candidacy throughout the college search process.

Ideally, students will take advantage of school holidays to visit colleges. Many students begin visiting colleges spring break of their junior year. The summer between junior and senior year is also a good time to make multiple college visits. And while it is the CCO's hope that each student visits a variety of schools, we know—because of financial and/or time limitations—visits are not always practical. In these cases, students should communicate clearly with their College Counselor. The CCO can help students identify alternate ways of both learning about the colleges, and demonstrating interest.

Governor's students who visit colleges when school is in session must secure permission **at least three class days** before the visit. To avoid conflict, disappointment, and withheld permission, students should plan well ahead when considering visits. **The CCO especially recommends not purchasing airline tickets and other non-refundable travel-related expenses until the visit permission process is complete.**

For information on securing permission for college visits, the following excerpts from the *Governor's Student Handbook* are included below:

College Visits and Interviews for Seniors

The Academy provides a long weekend in the fall and four vacation days at Thanksgiving week during which seniors may schedule college interviews and visits (in addition to visits and interviews scheduled during the preceding summer).

Seniors may miss up to two school days within the fall semester for college visits and an additional two days in the spring semester for college “revisit days.” A College Visit Request form (available in the CCO) must be completed at least three days in advance, signed by the student’s college counselor, the Dean of Students Office, advisor, classroom teachers, and afternoon activity supervisor or coach. Unauthorized college visits resulting in missed school appointments (classes, athletic contests, and/or afternoon commitments) are considered unexcused and are handled accordingly.

College Visits for Students in Grades 9-11

Students engaged in the Division I athletic recruitment process, or a scholarship process that requires on-site interviews, *may obtain permission* for specific college visits on specific dates. The first step for students in obtaining permission for a Division I recruitment visit is a conversation with their assigned college counselor. Permission for a Division I recruitment visit will not be granted if the student has not reviewed the planned visit with her or his assigned college counselor.

Students engaged in the Division I athletic recruitment process, or a scholarship process that requires on-site interviews, must provide the CCO with confirmation of the visit from an appropriate college or organizational representative.

In addition, all juniors may miss up to two school days in the spring semester for college visits.

All students who will miss Academy commitments (as described above) must complete a College Visit Request form (including all required signatures). The College Visit Request form must be complete at least three days before the student departs for the college visit.

With the college visitation permission process complete, students receive excused absences from classes and afternoon activities, but must complete all missed assignments and responsibilities. Unauthorized college visits resulting in missed school appointments (classes, athletic contests, and/or other afternoon commitments) are considered unexcused and are handled accordingly.

The College Visit Form

The College Visitation Form is available in the CCO and must be complete **at least three school days** before the student departs for the college visit. Once the college visit form is complete, students can then also make their request on REACH. With the visitation permission process complete, students receive excused absences from classes and afternoon activities, but must complete all missed assignments and responsibilities. **Unauthorized college visits resulting in missed school appointments (classes, athletic contests, and/or other afternoon commitments) are considered unexcused.**

College Visits Spring Term

Each spring, many colleges host “revisit days” for admitted students. Seniors may miss up to two school days, second semester for these events. If additional days are necessary, seniors must gain permission from their College Counselor and the Dean of Students. A permission form must be signed **at least three school days** in advance by the student’s College Counselor, the Dean's Office, advisor,

teachers, and afternoon supervisor or coach. **Unauthorized college visits resulting in missed school appointments (classes, athletic contests, and/or afternoon commitments) are considered unexcused.**

COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

As in all aspects of the college admission process, students must make the match between who they are, (including their experiences, academic interests, values, etc.) and the colleges in which they are interested.

The college interview is an excellent opportunity for students to make this match! Students do not have to be experts on the colleges. But particularly for the interview, they must know themselves and effectively articulate what they value and what motivates their intellectual interests. They also must demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of the college's programs and offerings.

The Interviewer The college interviewer may be an admission staff member who also reads admission applications. The interviewer can also be a current student at the college, or an alumnus.

Preparation Applicants who sit for a college interview should be prepared. Excellent preparation goes beyond learning about the college. Governor's students should reflect on their high school experience, identifying experiences that motivate, challenge, inspire. Did the student, for example, develop an interest in an academic discipline in which she was previously not interested? Does she connect with (and learn from) peers whose backgrounds, experiences, and values are different from her own? Did a teacher or other adult at Governor's help him reframe a negative situation, making it a positive learning experience?

With this reflective exercise, students are better prepared to answer interview questions (and college essay prompts) in an authentic, often compelling way. For example, if an interviewer asks the student what interests him about the college, he can begin with a positive experience (a class, an inspiring group of peers, a project or extracurricular activity of which he is particularly proud). Then, he can identify a specific opportunity at the college that allows him to build on this positive experience while exploring new possibilities. *This approach demonstrates to the interviewer that the student knows both himself and the school to which he applies.*

In addition to reading each college's website to identify specific aspects of each college that interest them, Governor's students are strongly encouraged to review the *Fiske Guide* entry for each college at which the student interviews. The CCO also suggests a student's first interview should be with a college that is rated by the College Counselor as "likely" before interviewing at more competitive institutions.

Sample Interview Questions Students should be prepared to answer a variety of potential interview questions. For example:

- How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date?
- Are you the person you hoped you'd become when you arrived at Governor's? If so, in what ways?
- Is there an academic or extracurricular project of which you are particularly proud?
- What is the most compelling book or article you've read recently?
- If you could meet any historical figure, who would it be?
- In a sentence or two, what points about yourself would you like to leave with me so I can present you effectively to the admissions committee?
- Where do you get your news, and what news or current event concerns you the most?
- What would you talk about with the president of the United States if you had fifteen minutes to speak with him or her?
- How do you hope your college experience will be different from your high school experience?

And while the questions above are fairly straightforward, students should also prepare for the more ethereal or offbeat:

- If you could be any animal for a day, which would you be, and why?
- If your house were burning and you could salvage three items, which ones?
- If you were chosen the new Head of School at Governor's what is the first change you would make?

And some interview questions focus on the student's individuality:

- After you graduate from Governor's, what do you think you will remember most about your high school experience?
- What pressures do you feel that compel you to conform to societal norms?

While others focus on the student's intellectual interests and potential:

- Where and when do you find yourself most motivated intellectually?
- What books or articles have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking? Have you read in depth about a particular author or field of study?
- What are your academic interests and preferences? Which academic disciplines do you enjoy the most? Which do you find most challenging?

- Describe a project or assignment that you particularly enjoyed. Why do you think you found it so compelling?

Still other questions center on the student’s role in the school community:

- What is the most significant contribution you make or have made, to your school?
- Who are you among your peers? Are you the idea person, the supporter, the leader, the one who takes care of others?
- How often do you write for the school newspaper?
- What activities might you pursue if you enrolled at X University?

Questions for the Interviewer It is also important for students to prepare questions for the interviewer. Most questions are fair game, but by all means, students should avoid asking anything found easily on the college’s website. Stick to questions that elicit the interviewer’s insider’s perspective or opinion:

- Since you have been at X University, what changes have you seen?
- In your opinion, is there a “typical” student at X University? Are there personal qualities common to most students here?
- What advice would you give to a new freshman at X University?
- How does your dorm resident adviser system function?

APPLICATION OPTIONS OR “TYPES” (Early Decision, Early Action, Regular Decision, etc.)

As students refine their college list, they also, in consultation with their College Counselor, must determine the “type” of admission application to submit to each school. Most colleges offer some variation of the following application options or “types.” And while the CCO stands ready to guide and clarify each application type or plan, students are responsible for determining each college’s admission application types and plans, including deadlines and required documents for admission.

Rolling Admission

While some private institutions offer rolling admission, state colleges and universities most commonly offer this option. “Rolling admission” essentially means that colleges release admission decisions soon after the application is complete. Therefore, with rolling admission, there is not a set notification date. Students often receive an admission decision two to three weeks after their admission application is COMPLETE (not after it is SUBMITTED). Since admission decisions are released very early in the process, students who wish to enroll can reserve their place in the class very early in the process (and once they make an enrollment deposit, their college process is considered complete, and applications to other schools are withdrawn). Governor’s students

Early Decision

Early should submit their applications to rolling admission schools no later than November 1. Decision is a binding agreement between the college and the applicant. This means the student agrees to enroll in that college if admitted and to withdraw any applications to other colleges. Students can submit an Early Decision application to one college only—though in most cases, they can submit Early *Action* applications to other colleges as well.

Early Decision is available at many, but not all colleges. Some colleges offer only one Early Decision option. ED I deadlines typically fall on November 1, November 10, or November 15, and students typically receive their admission notification by December 15. Other colleges also offer Early Decision II. ED II applications are typically due by January 1, and students receive notification by February 15.

Early Decision is a viable option for students who:

- Have a clear first-choice school.
- Have a strong academic profile and/or a profile for which senior fall grades are likely to be on par with the student's overall academic record.

Students applying for financial aid should speak with their College Counselor before submitting an Early Decision application. Also, the section "Additional Thoughts Regarding Early Decision" on the next page offers several points relevant to students considering Early Decision who will also apply for need-based financial aid.

Early Action

The Early Action deadlines and notification dates largely mimic the Early Decision I option. However, unlike Early Decision, Early Action plans are not binding. In most cases, students can submit more than one Early Action application.

The CCO encourages all students applying to any of the above "early" application options to plan well in advance so their recommenders have plenty of time to craft thoughtful, comprehensive recommendations. The CCO requires at least TEN days lead time to guarantee recommendations are complete by the colleges' deadlines, and teachers often demand (and surely deserve) the same notification. **This notification includes updating each college on Naviance, and specifying the application option the student will pursue. If Naviance is not up to date, the CCO cannot guarantee admission material will meet the colleges' posted deadlines.**

Regular Decision

Regular Decision deadlines range mostly between January 1 and February 1, though some regular decision deadlines are set later. Most colleges commit to releasing regular decision notification by April 1, but more colleges are releasing them earlier each year—some by March 15.

Additional Thoughts Regarding Early Decision

With such fickle (and unscientific) magazine ranking systems, including *US News and World Report*, *Barron's*, *Forbes*, etc., colleges are keenly aware of their admission statistics, including rates of admission, yield rates (the number of admitted applicants who enroll), and students' academic credentials (including standardized test scores). All of these statistics can affect a college's place in the rankings. And while the Governor's CCO gives these often subjective rankings little credence, we acknowledge their impact on the selective college admission process.

Indeed, nationally published rankings (in addition to selling more publications) can affect the number and quality of applicants a particular college receives. Colleges are generally motivated to enroll students at Early Decision. They know that each student admitted at ED will enroll, thereby strengthening their admission yield rate which can positively affect their ranking. At the same time, colleges want to leave enough spaces at Regular Decision for highly competitive students not willing to commit at Early Decision. Most colleges use the Early Decision rounds to accept between 35 to 50% of their freshman class. On the whole, the ED process works well for the colleges as it gives them significant control of up to 50% of its incoming first year class as early as mid-December.

On the other hand, students must consider the advantages and challenges of Early Decision in context of their individual goals for college, their academic profile, etc.

Financial aid is another consideration for the Early Decision process. While most schools commit to meeting need for their ED applicants (indeed, many schools do all they can to meet need for admitted ED applicants), occasionally, the ED college's financial aid package is not sufficient. Most colleges will release students from the ED agreement if attending is not financially feasible. But the disappointment associated with this scenario is difficult for students and families. The CCO, therefore, strongly encourages students to seek their College Counselor's guidance in planning to submit an Early Decision application.

Meantime, students should consider the following points on choosing the application type for each college:

Consider your academic profile and overall school experience objectively

If you think you could achieve even stronger grades or improve standardized testing significantly after November, then Early Decision may not be your best option.

Question your motivation

Is the school to which you might apply Early Decision your true first choice? Or, might you change your mind in January? The CCO has worked with plenty of students who were THANKFUL they were not admitted to their ED school, as their interests and preferences changed significantly during the course of their senior year. The CCO cautions students against getting caught in the panic of "getting the process over with." This flawed rationale should not drive the decision to apply Early Decision.

Apply to a college within reasonable reach

Don't miss the opportunity to apply Early Decision to a school you love at which you have a reasonable chance of admission – as opposed to submitting an ED application to a "far reach/unlikely" school at which your chance of admission is far flung. Have a meaningful conversation with your College Counselor along these lines to assess your likelihood of admission.

Give full consideration to your family's financial need/expectations

Students who apply Early Decision typically receive a financial aid package along with the college's offer of admission. But since students must withdraw their candidacy from all other schools if admitted ED, they don't have the option of comparing out-of-pocket expenses at other schools. Families with financial need should complete the college's net price calculator (NPC), available on every college's admissions website, for a ballpark sense of what to expect from a financial aid package before applying ED.

Pay attention to all deadlines

Some colleges offer "priority" or "preferred" application deadlines as early as October 15. Most early applications are due between November 1 and November 15. And while many colleges will accept standardized testing taken in November of senior year, the CCO advises students to confirm this timeline with the college before moving forward.

Don't count on it

After submitting an Early Decision application, students must be prepared to continue the application process—i.e., submit applications for the Regular Decision round. This means maintaining a viable list of colleges on Naviance, inventorying all writing responsibilities (of each college's Common Application supplement requirements, etc.). Applying Early Decision can be an advantage for students whose credentials are close in terms of the college's admitted student profile. But for students who are significantly off the quantitative mark, the ED process may not go the student's way.

SUBMITTING THE ADMISSION APPLICATION

Many colleges accept and encourage the Common Application for Undergraduate College Admission, accessed at www.commonapp.org, or via the colleges' website. Colleges that do not accept the Common Application (Georgetown for example); typically offer their own online application. Determining whether a college accepts the Common Application is quick and easy if the student's colleges are appropriately listed on Naviance. As colleges are added to the student's Naviance account, an application code appears, indicating if the college accepts the Common Application, or an institutional online application, etc.

The Common Application

As mentioned to both juniors and seniors each year in several all-class meetings—and affirmed in multiple emails—the CCO recommends that students pay particular attention to several sections of the Common Application, including:

Extracurricular Activities

It is important that students create a succinct, yet comprehensive list of extracurricular activities including community service, summer experiences, work experiences, and leadership opportunities. Be careful to not rely on acronyms or abbreviations which admissions readers must then interpret.

Standardized Testing

Students, in consultation with their College Counselor, who plan to use the College Board's Score Choice option—or who will apply to testing optional schools— should leave the *Standardized Testing Section* of the Common Application blank. And/or they should consult their College Counselor before listing test scores on the Common Application.

Academic Interest

Academic interests should be expressed in the most thoughtful, creative terms. Specifically, students interested in professional programs including medicine, law, Business, etc., should identify the academic experiences (a project, a particular concept, an academic class or overall academic discipline, etc.) that foster the professional interest. Focusing on the professional goals of becoming a “lawyer” typically does not distinguish a student’s admission candidacy.

In addition, students applying to a specific undergraduate school at a college or university, i.e., the *Stern School of Business* at NYU, or the *Peabody College of Education and Human Development* at Vanderbilt, should know if choosing a program within *another* undergraduate school (within the same university) as a second choice is an option. Choosing two viable programs can often increase the student’s chance of admission. Students should also be aware of varying rates of admission if applying to a specialized college or major within a larger university. Business and Engineering programs, for example, are frequently more selective than liberal arts programs.

Secondary School Report

Once students submit the Common Application to a college, they then must record their submission on their Naviance account. This Naviance update is the CCO’s only way to know that CCO materials must submitted. **Students who do not keep their Naviance account current risk missing important college deadlines.**

Common Application Completion Guide

Within the College Search Seminar Series (spring of junior year), the CCO distributes *a Common Application Completion Guide* including general info Governor’s students should know in completing their application (including the Governor’s six-digit school code, counselor contact info, instructions in reporting grade point averages, etc.). With guidance from a College Counselor within the spring seminar series, juniors create a Common Application logon ID, and largely complete the Common Application.

Once seniors submit the admission application (by published fall and winter deadlines), and they’ve appropriately updated their Naviance account, the College Counselor then submits the *Secondary School Report*, along with the student’s transcript, recommendations, school profile, and other

required documents. (Remember, students are responsible for having test scores sent. **The CCO does not send standardized test scores to the colleges).**

Students applying to colleges that do not accept the Common Application should review the college's institutional application to locate the Secondary School Report (or equivalent).

Colleges that do not accept the Common Application take various approaches to a Secondary School Report, therefore students should always check with their counselor to make sure forms are submitted both correctly and on time.

Teacher Recommendation Form

Juniors are instructed to confirm two teacher recommenders late each spring. Juniors should typically choose two junior-year teachers—one Humanities (English, History, or language) and one math or science. Students must make their request for teacher recommendations in person and they are strongly encouraged to follow up with a thank you email.

An adviser or coach cannot write the teacher recommendation unless he or she taught the student in a classroom setting described above.

Unlike teacher recommendations, the counselor recommendation is a themed narrative, based significantly on comments from teachers, coaches, advisers, parents, and the student. Therefore, a separate letter from the adviser, coach, etc. is not expected by the colleges, and is often considered redundant.

Don't Procrastinate

Complete all application requirements at least one week before the college's deadline. Early completion gives the student time to consider the overall application presentation. And it provides the College Counselor the opportunity to offer insight and advice.

The week leading to a major application deadline is busy for both students and the CCO. If a significant number of students leave the application to the eleventh hour, their counselor has limited time and opportunities to offer constructive insight.

As a reminder, the CCO strongly encourages all students to review their applications, including the essay, with their College Counselor.

The Coalition Application

This group of colleges has created an alternative application to the Common Application. **Unless you are applying to the University of Washington, the University of Maryland, and/or the University of Florida which use the Coalition Application as their only application, you most likely will not use the Coalition Application.**

The Coalition Locker The Coalition colleges have also designed an online storage system wherein students can save any work done throughout high school (written, visual, audio, etc.) with the idea of potentially submitting it along with their college application in their senior year. This virtual locker debuted in April 2016. The Coalition colleges intend for the lockers to be used by students who do not have the resources available to students at Governor’s, such as dedicated College Counselors, accessible faculty, and the technology of Google Apps for Education.

THE COLLEGE ESSAY

As noted, the academic record and test scores are primary considerations for most college admission processes. The essay may not make the difference for an academic record that is well below a college’s admitted student profile. At the same time, a compelling essay may advantage an applicant whose profile is more quantitatively on the mark. In either case, the essay is often the student’s primary opportunity to communicate with colleges beyond the numbers, and beyond the list of activities, revealing more of what motivates the student. What, for example, does she value? What might she contribute to a college community?

Remember: a college’s offer of admission is not simply an acceptance to the college. *It is an invitation to join a community.* College applicants must make the case for why they are a good match with the college community to which they seek an invitation.

There is a difference then, between students’ in-school writing assignments (particularly in English classes) and the college essay. The college essay is not formulaic, and the writing for it is often a measured, reflective process. *And it typically does not rely on the kind of descriptive introductory information, or thesis statement that classroom writing assignments often require.* Students must show (reveal to) the reader something compelling about themselves—the way they think, what they value— why the chosen topic is important to the student and to her character.

Juniors participate in a College Essay Writing Unit each spring. Throughout the admission application process, Governor’s students are encouraged to work closely with their College Counselor to craft college essays that both satisfy the college’s essay assignment, and that help distinguish the student’s candidacy within a competitive college applicant pool.

Additional Essay Writing Guidelines

The College Essay assignment is designed to make students think, to consider how they can effectively communicate who they are to a broader audience. It is normal for students to find this assignment difficult. *Most every other college applicant finds the assignment difficult too.*

Students, therefore, should acknowledge the challenge and give themselves both the time and space necessary to do a good job. In other words, the essay is not a one-day project. The CCO encourages

students to give themselves plenty of time to experiment with ideas so they may move from what isn't working.

One strategy many students find helpful: Approach the college essay as a series of journal entries. Write a paragraph about something important to you, and then walk away. Pick it up the next day and write another paragraph. If you are not inspired by what you write, chances are your reader will not be inspired either. It may be necessary to choose another topic. You must, of course, take this approach early in the summer before senior year. *Seniors have neither the time nor patience to attempt this approach in the fall.*

Reflective questions to help generate essay ideas

What is interesting to you that others see as mundane?

When were you most conflicted?

When have you felt inspired?

When did you find unexpected fun?

When did you suddenly see your family in a different light?

Have you ever lost your sense of time?

When did you feel most intellectually connected?

Write simply and succinctly. There is no need to use obscure words you don't use in every day conversation. Be honest and provide specific examples of your central idea.

Students should do their own work. The more they look to others for their ideas and writing, the less authentic and compelling their message.

Again, a compelling college essay is not created in one day. The CCO suggests that students craft several essay introductions before investing fully into a single idea. Good writing is largely good *self-editing*, so leave sufficient time to pare and prune the essay well in advance of published application deadlines.

FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

What is Need-Based Financial Aid? Financial aid is money granted, lent, or paid to the student to cover all or part of a college's total costs. The largest single source of financial aid (for US citizens and US permanent residents) is the US federal government, followed by state governments, then colleges, and then private and corporate organizations.

Important Notes to Remember:

1. The methodologies that the federal government and colleges use to calculate eligibility for

financial aid are different from the methodology that The Governor's Academy utilizes. Families who qualify for financial aid at Governor's may or may not qualify for collegiate financial aid and the amount of aid may vary significantly from what the family is receiving at Governor's.

2. Most financial assistance is awarded on the basis of the family's calculated financial need. Scholarships awarded purely on merit represent a very small percentage of financial assistance awarded nationally.

3. For international students, need-based financial aid is extremely limited and the competition for those funds is intense. For those international students who are not applying for need-based aid, there are still financial documents that you will be required to submit to the colleges to which you are applying to prove your ability to fund your education. Many colleges use the College Board's *Certification of Finances* and also require notarized bank statements. Families are strongly urged to check each school's website for international applicants to determine what information is required and when it should be sent (i.e. at the time of application or at the time of matriculation).

Terms to Know In the College Financial Aid Process

1. *Expected Family Contribution (EFC)* – based on the information provided in the financial aid application, each college will calculate an amount that the family is expected to pay towards their child's education. If that amount is less than the total cost of attendance for that institution, what remains is the amount the college will strive to provide in financial aid.

2. *Need-blind Admissions* – colleges that practice need-blind admissions decide to admit, deny, or waitlist applicants without regard to their families' ability to pay. 3. *Need-aware Admissions* – colleges that practice need-aware admissions reserve the right to consider an applicant's ability to pay within the admissions review process. 4. *Meeting 100% of Demonstrated Need* – colleges that are able to meet 100% of a student's demonstrated need will offer a financial aid package composed of grants, loans, and work study that fully covers the difference between the cost of attendance at their institution and the family's EFC. 5. *Gapping* – colleges that practice gapping are not able to cover the entire difference between their cost of attendance and the family's expected contribution(EFC) and will leave some amount unaccounted for (i.e. a gap between what the family is being asked to pay and what the financial aid package will cover).

How/When Should I Apply for Financial Aid?

The "Prior Prior Year (PPY)" Financial Aid Application Process The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is available to seniors and their families October 1.

With "PPY," seniors and their families submit tax return information from two prior years. **For example, a high school senior planning to enroll in college Fall 2020 will submit the FAFSA using**

family tax information from two years ago (referred to nationally as a “prior prior year – PPY” process), i.e., from 2017.

With the FAFSA available October 1, most colleges will have modified their financial aid deadlines for early applicants. **Each college sets deadlines according to their individual process timelines. So, members of the Governor’s class of 2020 are strongly encouraged to confirm financial aid deadlines for each college to which they will apply.**

It’s never too early to begin preparing for the financial aid application process. The first step which should be taken before the fall of senior year is to utilize at least one Net Price Calculator (NPC) available online to begin to determine your EFC (Expected Family Contribution).

1. The College Board also offers an NPC at studentnpc.collegeboard.org that allows families to estimate their eligibility for financial aid at numerous institutions.
2. Wellesley College has developed a tool called My InTuition at <https://myintuition.org> which can be used to estimate the net price at a range of colleges; it asks fewer questions and is also available in Spanish.
3. The FAFSA4Caster at <https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm> can help families determine their eligibility for federal financial aid. 4. As students begin to narrow their college list, families can utilize the individual Net Price Calculators provided on each institution’s individual website.

There are two primary forms used to apply for federal and institutional financial aid:

1. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

All students seeking need-based financial aid must complete the FAFSA at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. The FAFSA should be completed well in advance of college’s published deadlines, which again, students and families must confirm. Each college sets its own FAFSA completion deadline, though the CCO strongly encourages families to complete the FAFSA as early as possible... remember, it is available on October 1 each fall. Colleges begin calculating aid packages very early in their college’s admission process. The sooner families submit the FAFSA, the sooner they may be considered for need-based financial aid—a resource that dwindles for most colleges as the admission cycle progresses. Families who are not sure they can pay full college tuition are strongly encouraged to submit the FAFSA. Even if the student is not initially eligible for aid, the FAFSA record— in case the family’s finances change— can be helpful for future financial aid cycles.

2. The College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile

The CSS Profile is sponsored by the College Board at <https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>. Many colleges use the CSS Profile to supplement the information they receive via the FAFSA. Please note that there is a fee associated with the CSS Profile, but

families who qualify for a waiver will automatically be granted one through the College Board site after completing the form.

Once the FAFSA and CSS Profile have been submitted, an increasing number of colleges require an institutional specific form to supplement both the FAFSA and CSS Profile. **Families are encouraged to check each college's Financial Aid website to confirm the forms necessary for the need-based financial aid process.**

Families are also strongly encouraged to check each college's financial aid site to inventory all required documents. **Many colleges require forms and information beyond the FAFSA and CSS Profile.**

Financial Aid administrators at the colleges to which the student is accepted will verify the information on the FAFSA and CSS Profile, determine the student's aid eligibility, and then release a financial aid award letter. This letter states the amount of aid for which the student is eligible, including the types of aid for which the student is approved.

What Are the Components of a Need Based Financial Aid Package?

A need-based financial aid package will typically be composed of three parts: grants/scholarships, loans, and work study.

Gift aid, Grants, and Scholarships

The financial aid offered by these programs does not have to be repaid. The US federal government funds two of the largest higher education grant programs—the *Pell Grant* program and the *Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grant (FSOG)* program. These grants are typically reserved for the most financially needy college applicants.

Work-Study Programs

Through the Federal Work Study program, students earn money while working a part time job—typically on the college's campus. Most work study programs are government sponsored, but colleges sometimes fund variations of the work study program as well.

Education loans

Education loans are made to students and/or parents and must be repaid. Subsidized federal loans are interest free while the student is enrolled in college; unsubsidized loans accrue variable rates of interest.

Federal Loan Programs

Subsidized Federal Stafford Loans: Stafford Loans are low interest loans made to undergraduate and graduate students attending accredited colleges and universities. Students can qualify for subsidized Stafford Loans if they demonstrate financial need as determined by a pre-set federal formula. With a *subsidized* Stafford Loan, the federal

government pays the loan's interest while the student is enrolled, or during other specified periods. 2. *Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loans*: Students who do not qualify for subsidized Stafford Loans can often receive *unsubsidized* Stafford Loans, often regardless of income (though in some cases, there are limits to the maximum amount a student may borrow). With unsubsidized Stafford Loans, students are responsible for interest that accrues during in-school, grace, forbearance, and deferment periods. Students may defer payments until after they graduate or leave school, in which case, the accrued interest is capitalized, or added to the loan principal, which increases the total repayment amount.

Federal PLUS Loans

Plus Loans enable parents to borrow for each dependent enrolled in an accredited college or university at least half time. Parents may finance up to the full cost of their student's education each academic year, less grants and other financial aid the student receives. Parents do not have to prove financial need; however, credit checks are required. PLUS borrowers must typically begin repayment within 60 days of receiving loan funds. 4. *Federal Perkins Loans* are low interest loans for undergraduate and graduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need.

Institutional (in-house) loans

Institutional loans are offered by some colleges and universities. Eligibility and loan characteristics are established by each institution. Families are encouraged to ask each college's financial aid office if the college offers similar programs.

Private loan programs

Private loans are available to parents and, in some cases, students, from banks, guaranty agencies, education loan organizations and other sources. The organization offering the loan establishes loan characteristics and eligibility requirements.

After You Receive The Need-Based Financial Package – What's Next?

If you have any questions or concerns about your financial aid award, never hesitate to contact the Office of Financial Aid at that school. Financial aid officers are very willing to answer questions and to help you understand how their formulas arrived at your EFC. They are also allowed to exercise professional judgement in cases where the information on the financial aid application forms does not adequately reflect a family's financial reality, so do not hesitate to contact the Financial Aid office at any school if you feel your EFC truly does not represent what your family can afford.

Once you have decided which college to attend, you must accept your financial aid package, which is typically done online through your student portal. Acceptance is not all-or-nothing; you are free to accept the grants and loans while declining the work study or to accept the grants and work study while declining the loans, etc.

Need-based financial aid is awarded on a year-by-year basis, so you will need to reapply each year with the FAFSA and/or CSS Profile forms. Changes in the family's financial situation will be accounted for each year.

Merit-Based Scholarships Merit Scholarships are awarded in recognition of special skills, talents, or academic achievements and are not based on financial need. The largest source of merit scholarships are individual colleges, though not all colleges award merit scholarships. Merit scholarships are also awarded by scholarship foundations, community organizations, employers, corporations, etc. Sources of information on merit-based scholarships include:

- Online resources, including fastweb.com and RaiseMe
- Naviance listings maintained by the CCO for Governor's students
- Individual college websites
- The public high school websites, the local newspaper, and the public library in your hometown
- You or your parents' employer(s)

If merit-based scholarships will be an important factor in your college decision process, your college list should include a greater proportion of schools as "likely" for admission by your College Counselor. Your academic profile will put you towards the top of the applicant pools at many "likely" schools, increasing the likelihood that they might incentivize your admission with a merit-based scholarship offer.

No legitimate scholarship opportunity (or locator service) requires a financial fee. *Students are warned to steer clear of any scholarship, or scholarship search service, that requires a monetary fee.*

RECEIVING THE NEWS: ACCEPTED, DEFERRED, DENIED, WAITLISTED

Early Decision and Early Action applicants receive admission decisions within a month to six weeks after the admission application deadline (typically mid-December) though some early Action notifications can stretch into January. Since many colleges also offer two Early Decision plans, it is important to know the colleges' admission notification dates. Even with most information online, many colleges still send notification via the US postal service. Some colleges notify exclusively on line, and some use both notification methods.

Accepted

Congratulations. You did it! Students who are admitted Early Decision **MUST** immediately withdraw their applications from other schools. Notifying colleges is quick and painless. On the "Colleges I Am Applying To" section on Naviance, each college has an "envelope" icon. Simply click that icon and the college's email address appears.

In the email's subject field, the student should list his or her name and "Governor's Academy." The email should be addressed, "Dear Admissions Committee," and then include a brief note indicating acceptance to an Early Decision college. In this email, students can either identify the college to which they were admitted Early Decision, or not. It is the student's choice.

Most colleges release a preliminary financial aid package with Early Decision notification. If there are concerns regarding the Early Decision financial aid package, students should notify their College Counselor immediately.

Students admitted Early Action should consider withdrawing applications from the colleges they are no longer considering. Before withdrawing applications, however, students should communicate clearly with both their College Counselor and family—particularly if need-based financial aid is a significant consideration.

If not admitted at either Early Decision or Early Action, students can be deferred to the Regular Decision process. In this case, the student remains active at the early school while pursuing admission at other colleges on his or her list.

Deferred from Early

Students deferred at early are encouraged to send a brief email of continued interest to the college's admission reader for The Governor's Academy (the student's College Counselor can provide this contact info). In addition to the student affirming her continued interest, colleges pay close attention to the deferred student's pending senior year grades, or they may request an additional writing sample, an example of an academic project, etc. As always, the student's College Counselor can offer specific advice and strategies relevant to both the deferred student and the school(s) to which she or he has applied.

It is also important to keep in mind that each college manages its early application process differently. Some schools do not defer at early at all—they either admit or deny. Some colleges only admit or defer etc. Knowing how each college manages its decisions can provide some context for the deferred student's chance of admission in the Regular Decision process.

Though April 1 is the traditional notification date for the Regular Decision process, many schools notify earlier—some within the second or third week of March. Students who craft a balanced college list—spread evenly among the selectivity categories—typically have at least several viable college options by April 1.

All students not accepted Early Decision must submit a matriculation deposit to their first choice school by May 1. After submitting the deposit, students should withdraw all other admission applications

UNLESS—the student is on the waitlist

To some students, the waitlist decision is the most confusing—and on some levels, the most difficult to process. Each school uses its waitlist differently. Some schools plan to take a portion of their applicants from the waitlist. Some schools hope to use it only if necessary. In either case, most schools do not know if they will use their waitlist until after the May 1 national deposit deadline.

Students waitlisted at a school in which they are still interested must move forward by submitting a matriculation deposit at ONE (and only one) school at which they are admitted.

Suggestions/strategies for the waitlisted applicant

First, waitlisted students are encouraged to consider the colleges at which they ARE admitted. If the student prefers a college to which she is admitted over the school(s) at which she is waitlisted, then, of course, she should not pursue admission from a waitlist. In this case the student should deposit at her number one choice and withdraw her candidacy from other schools (including those at which she is waitlisted).

For students who wish to remain active with a college's waiting list. The most significant factors for colleges as they consider their waitlisted students include: - Student interest - New academic information (primarily final spring grades) - The college's goals and continued needs in building its class

Student Interest

Students who will pursue admission from a waitlist should craft an email of interest to the school(s) in which they remain interested. The CCO gathers all waitlisted seniors soon after April 1, offering guidance for their letter of interest. Students should not send correspondence regarding the waitlist until AFTER an individual conversation with their College Counselor.

Ultimately, decisions regarding the waitlist are driven primarily by the college's overall goals for building its first year class. If a college knows the student is likely to enroll if admitted, it is more likely to consider the student for admission.

New Academic Information

The CCO sends spring semester grades when posted. In most cases, colleges have all the academic information necessary for their waitlisted students. Again, the colleges' decisions rest most significantly on student interest and the institution's goals for building its class.

Additional Letters of Recommendation

Additional recommendation letters are typically not necessary. In the rare instance when a letter could make a difference (typically the college will communicate with the CCO), the student should solicit JUST ONE additional recommendation.

Student Ranking on a Waitlist

Colleges typically do not “rank” their waitlist. As noted, colleges consider several factors when making decisions regarding the waitlist. Often, they are looking for students with specific qualities or experiences in filling its last few spaces. And ranking their entire waitlist is neither necessary nor practical.

Deny

Unless they are admitted at Early Decision, virtually all students will experience the disappointment of being denied admission by a college. And while rejection is never easy, it is part of today’s largely unpredictable college process.

Whether students are surprised by a deny decision or they are expecting it, the news is invariably disappointing. The CCO encourages all students to craft a balanced college list so the admission outcome is well balanced, yielding solid college choices.

COLLEGE PROCESS TIMELINE

August

- Seniors - sit for SAT (if appropriate)

September

- Ninth graders - receive College Counselor assignment as a resource for curriculum decisions, etc.
- Seniors - all-class meeting to review summer college search “homework”
- Seniors - meet individually with College Counselor to review Common Application, essay, finalize college list, etc.
- Seniors - sit for ACT (if appropriate) Seniors—meet with visiting college reps in the CCO
College Counselors - attend annual NACAC National Conference

October

- Sophomores - all-class meeting builds on learning style and personality inventory concepts. Highlights of athletic recruitment process are introduced for sophomores interested in playing collegiate sports
- Sophomores - take PSAT Juniors—all-class meeting for college process preparation
- Juniors - take PSAT
- Juniors - presentation to parents of juniors at *Fall Family Weekend* Seniors- Full morning program to discuss early application process, and Naviance update reminders.

- Seniors - continue work on applications, meet individually with College Counselor, finish Common Application supplements, etc.
- Seniors - presentation to parents of seniors at *Fall Family Weekend* Seniors—sit for SAT (if appropriate)
- Seniors - prepare early applications (if appropriate)
- Seniors - notify counselors (including Naviance update) of Early Decision/Early Action intentions Seniors - sit for ACT (if appropriate)
- Seniors - meet with visiting college reps in the CCO

November

- Ninth graders— all-class meeting for broad overview of college process. Important developmental issues are also addressed, including learning style and personality inventory concepts
- Seniors—submit applications to “rolling admission” schools by November 1
- Seniors—submit early applications (if appropriate) Seniors—continue individual meetings with College Counselor Seniors—sit for SAT, or SAT subject test(s) as appropriate
- Seniors—meet with visiting college reps in the CCO Juniors- sit for ACT diagnostic exam with ArborBridge Test Prep

December

- Juniors— all-class meeting for College Process “Kick Off”
- Juniors—receive access to Naviance Juniors—complete Student Questionnaire (posted on Naviance account) in prep for first individual college counseling meeting Seniors—meet individually with College Counselor to discuss early application results, Regular Decision applications, etc.
- Seniors—sit for SAT, or SAT subject tests, or ACT (if appropriate) Seniors—college lists must be final and current on Naviance account
- Seniors—submit Regular Decision applications before January admission application deadlines
- Seniors—all-class meeting before winter break All—Fall Semester Exams

January

- Juniors—initial individual college counseling meeting Juniors- Sit for SAT diagnostic exam with ArborBridge Test Prep Juniors—begin College Search Seminar Series (6 class sessions from late January to early May).
- Curriculum includes broad overview of college process, guidance for interpreting admission statistics, instructions for utilizing Naviance and for completing the Common Application Juniors—complete Student Questionnaire (posted on Naviance account) in prep for first individual college counseling meeting

February

- Ninth graders—all-class meeting for continued discussions of learning style and personality inventory.
- Juniors—continue college research. Research includes identifying sources of information, and then collating it into a usable format, i.e., the College Research Organizer Excel program is strongly encouraged. Through their research, juniors also learn the importance of tying their Governor’s experiences to the information they find regarding the colleges
- Juniors—second individual college counseling meeting (homework for this meeting includes posting at least 10 colleges on Naviance—several in the “likely” selectivity category, several in the “possible” category, and several “reach” schools). This assignment begins the foundation for the student’s balanced college list, spread evenly among the selectivity categories (likely, possible, reach, far reach/unlikely)
- Seniors—with guidance from College Counselor, express continued interest in the colleges to which they applied

March

- Juniors—visit several colleges if possible (with varying rates of admission)
- Juniors—continue College Search Seminar Series Seniors—receive Regular Decision notification, meet individually with College Counselor as necessary

April

- Sophomores— all-class meeting, also for continued discussions of learning style and personality inventory
- Sophomores—potentially recruited athletes meet to discuss the athletic recruitment process
- Juniors—individual SAT *or* ACT tutorial with ArborBridge Juniors—continue College Search Seminar Series
- Juniors—complete college essay writing assignment in college search seminars
- Juniors—request, in person, two teacher recommendations (typically one math/science teacher and one Humanities teacher)

May

- Juniors—third college counseling meeting (by now, juniors should offer a clear rationale for their interest in each college). Again, students are encouraged to connect a Governor’s experience with a program at each college, to begin making the match with each college to which she/he will apply)
- Juniors—national SAT Juniors—AP exams (if appropriate) Juniors—continue College Search Seminar Series

June

- Rising Seniors—college visits (students either call colleges to schedule information session and tours, or register on the college’s admission website). Rising Seniors are encouraged to visit a

variety of schools with varying rates of admission for a broad sense of options. Visits are optimal but not always practical. There are additional ways for students to express interest in a college when visits are not possible. Rising Seniors—SAT Subject tests if appropriate, and perhaps the ACT

- Rising Seniors—Division I and II recruited athletes should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (www.eligibilitycenter.org).
- Rising Seniors—SAT and/or ACT preparation