

GLENBROOK SOUTH College Counseling Center

A Newsletter for Glenbrook South Seniors and Families

UPCOMING EVENTS

Senior Individual College
Counseling Meetings
BEGIN AUGUST 25

Virtual Senior Common App
Workshop
SEPTEMBER 1 - 8:15-9:15AM

College Rep Visits Begin
SEPTEMBER 7

Senior College Finance Night
SEPTEMBER 27

FAFSA 2022 Opens
OCTOBER 1

Individual FAFSA Assistance
Appointment Calendar Opens
OCTOBER 1

SENIOR YEAR EXPERIENCE



Welcome to Senior Year!

Welcome to your senior year at Glenbrook South and the College Counseling Newsletter. As you embark on your senior year and the college process, we want to share a few things that will help you stay organized and feel prepared throughout the year. Please feel free to reach out to either of the college counselors with questions or assistance during this exciting new venture.

Senior college counseling appointments have begun! If you would like to meet with a college counselor, [please use this link to book an appointment.](#) **All appointments this year will be in person unless otherwise requested.**

If you haven't had a college appointment yet, we can't wait to meet you and assist you through this process. Please be sure to fill out the [student conference form](#) prior to your appointment. This will provide us with valuable information in your college search. Don't forget, parents are welcome to join the meeting too!



Navigating the College Application Process - A Night for Seniors and Parents

For those of you who were unable to attend Wednesday night's webinar, Navigating the College Application Process, [here is the link to the recording](#). As always, if you have any questions please reach out to your counselor or anyone in the College and Career Center.

College Rep Visits

Throughout the fall, Glenbrook South will host in person and virtual college visits. Representatives from a variety of colleges will meet with students for approximately 45 minutes throughout the day. Visits will be added continually through mid-November. Naviance will have the most up-to-date list. We encourage students to register for the visits in Naviance so that we are able to accommodate the group.

In an attempt to reach as many students as possible, we will link the visits in the Weekly Update also. Please encourage your students to take advantage of these visits. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the College and Career Center.

COLLEGE DEADLINES

Please be sure to check out the [link](#) to college transcript request deadlines. All transcript requests MUST be submitted AT LEAST 15 school days prior to the college application deadline. For questions, please see your counselor.

Remember to send your test scores to your colleges and universities through [ACT.org](#) and [College Board](#). Glenbrook South does not have the ability to submit your scores.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela

LINKS

College and Career Website

Naviance for Guests
password: **titans**

Transcript Request Form

GBS Testing Information

ACT Information

SAT Information

Common App

Common App Tip Sheet

College Application
Checklist

How to Write an Awesome
Essay

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Illinois legislation **requires** public high school students to complete the FAFSA or a state aid application as a condition of obtaining your diploma. If your family chooses not to fill out FAFSA, you will need to complete the FAFSA-Non-Participation Form and scan or email it to jswanson@glenbrook225.org. The FAFSA for seniors will be available starting October 1. Individual FAFSA assistance appointments will be available beginning in early October. Detailed information will be sent via email and will also be posted on the College and Career website and in the Weekly Update.

Letters of Recommendation:

Some, but not all, colleges require one or more teacher and/or counselor recommendation letters. Please check your colleges' websites to confirm whether you need a letter. Think about two of your junior academic class teachers whom you would like to ask to write on your behalf. Simply email or talk to your teachers and ask if they would be willing to write for you. **Do NOT request these letters through Common App.** We will review the process at your counselor meeting.

Counselors require that you complete the Counselor Letter of Rec Questionnaire and the Parent Brag Sheet found in your counselor's google classroom or on the "About Me" tab in Naviance before asking for a counselor letter of recommendation. Complete this as soon as possible to save time this fall!



NEWS YOU CAN USE

Help with your college list from a college counseling veteran

Well, for most high school students, constructing a college list is a daunting, overwhelming task—but it needn't be. Read on for tips to craft your college list.

Fact: You should apply to 8 to 12 colleges to ensure that you will have many happy choices in the end. (I know, I know—your parents only applied to a handful of colleges—but times have changed.)

Fiction: The more colleges you apply to, the better chance you have of admission. Nope. Applying to more than 12 colleges means less time to spend writing quality supplements—those pesky short answers some colleges require—and less time for school work (still the most important factor in college admissions). Instead of making it longer, make your list strategic, with a balance of reach (long shot), target (50-50 chance), and likely (safe bet) schools.

So, where do you start? Think of the list like an ice-cream cone: it starts off big and as it goes down, it gets smaller. You should start with a list of 15 to 20 colleges of varying sizes, locations and campus vibes. No need to eliminate anything this early.

Take advantage of trustworthy online search engines like those in your high school's college counseling program (such as SCOIR, Naviance, Maia Learning, Ciafo, etc.), web-based resources like The College Board's Big Future, or books like The Fiske Guide.

These resources can be overwhelming so stay focused by thinking about what is important to you....use the LIST acronym to start identifying schools that might be a good fit..

Location: Are green spaces (think tossing a frisbee on the quad) important to you? Or perhaps you like non-stop action and access to the city?

Interests: In your free time, do you enjoy outdoorsy activities like skiing or hiking? Or maybe you are eager to paint your face and cheer on the college sports teams? Perhaps you would rather catch a concert or a comedy show in the city?

Size: Take a big state school, for example. When classes change, there will be a sea of people. Do you find that overwhelming or energizing? Are you okay with being in a lecture hall of 300 students? Or on the flip side, would you rather be at a smaller school where your professors know you well, and classes are more discussion-based? Maybe medium-sized is your "Goldilocks" (just right!) fit.

Type: Not sure what you want to study? Liberal arts colleges give you the opportunity to dabble in different subject areas. All about engineering? Technology-focused schools may be your vibe!

So... what's next?

After you have compiled a working list of 15 to 20 colleges, start with virtual visits. Better to visit from your couch to see if you like the look and feel of the college than to take time off from school/work and pay for a hotel, flight, car rental, etc. only to find out it is not for you.

Like what you see? Put brief notes in a Google Doc. Invite your parents to do the same—they can do virtual tours in their own time as well.

Then, plan on visiting in-person your top three to five colleges. Be sure to put notes in your Google Doc after seeing the campuses as well. This will help you distinguish between the colleges as they tend to blend together—and it will help you add details to those pesky supplements which ask, "Why do you want to attend our college?"

Remember, this is a process—you will start with a big list and then whittle it down as you explore online and in-person. Aim to have your list of colleges finalized by August 1 of your senior year so that you can begin your applications and supplements before school kicks into gear in the fall.

And, now that you know how to create your college list, you can focus on that Bucket List!

by Kathleen Glynn-Sparrow

Answers to Common Questions about Test-Optional Admissions

To help families make sense of the 'new normal' that is test-optional admissions, we offer answers to the (many!) questions we have been hearing about Test Optional admissions and how students can best use these policies to their advantage during this admissions cycle.

"I heard the tests are optional this year."

Let's start with a bit of clarification – taking the SAT or ACT has always been optional for students unless it is required by their state for graduation. In the past, when a student opted not to take the tests, they were also opting out of applying to most of the selective colleges and universities in the United States, since those schools typically required standardized testing as part of their application process. As a result of the testing challenges fueled by the ongoing global pandemic, more than two-thirds of colleges in the US have at least temporarily dropped their testing requirements for admission. Under these policies, students have the option to withhold test scores that may not boost their chances for admission.

However, strong test scores can strengthen an application and heighten one's chances of securing merit-based financial aid at select colleges. Just as students have long had the choice to submit or withhold AP and IB scores, which are not required for admission, students now have the similar choice of whether to submit or withhold SAT and ACT scores. Typically, it is in a student's best interest to try the tests and see whether their scores could be an asset in the application process. Appplerouth offers free practice tests almost every weekend to help students determine if the tests may play a role in their college search and application process.

"So what does test optional mean then?"

A test-optional policy simply means that a college will consider an application complete and review it, even if the student has not submitted SAT or ACT scores. (As noted above, before the pandemic, most selective colleges previously required SAT or ACT scores for the application to be considered complete.) Test optional means you, the student, can choose whether or not to include your test scores as part of your application to a test-optional school, much like how you'll choose which extracurriculars to list in your application. It also means that the college will receive some applications with scores and some without. For applications with test scores, the college will review the scores as part of the admissions decision.

The National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) invited member institutions to sign a pledge that their test-optional policy really meant that testing was optional and to date, over 550 schools have done so.

MORE NEWS YOU CAN USE



"What about test blind or test flexible?"

For the coming admissions cycle, a small number of colleges, under 50, have elected to go test blind (also known as test free or score free), which means that even if scores are submitted, they will not be considered as part of the application review. Twenty colleges and universities have adopted this position permanently and another twenty or so have engaged in pilot programs to evaluate the outcomes before making a long-term decision.

Test flexible means that the college offers an alternate admissions path to students. Students can opt out of submitting scores if their grades are above a certain threshold or they can submit some combination of other standardized test scores (like results from AP Exams) and/or writing samples in lieu of submitting the SAT or ACT.

"Will submitting test scores help or hurt my chance of admission?"

Like so many things in the college application process, the answer is, 'it depends.' There are some colleges where your scores will make you a stand-out applicant, perhaps even eligible for a merit scholarship, and there are other colleges where your scores might be a detriment to your application.

by Jed Appplerouth, PhD and Ginger Fay

College/ University	Admit Rate w. Tests	Admit Rate w/o Tests	Testing Advantage
Emory	17%	8.6%	98%
Colgate	25%	12%	108%
Georgia Tech	22%	10%	120%
Vanderbilt	7.2%	6.0%	20%

KNOW YOUR DATES

COLLEGE APPLICATION DEADLINES

TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED
AT LEAST **15 SCHOOL DAYS** PRIOR TO THE DEADLINE

COLLEGE DEADLINE	TRANSCRIPT REQUEST DUE TO COUNSELOR
NOVEMBER 1	OCTOBER 11
NOVEMBER 15	OCTOBER 21
DECEMBER 1	NOVEMBER 3
JANUARY 1	NOVEMBER 28
JANUARY 15	DECEMBER 8

A good rule of thumb is that if your test scores fall at or above the school's pre-pandemic middle 50% range, your scores won't hurt your application and in many cases can help demonstrate that you are prepared for the challenges that await in college. Colleges individually will determine how much weight they place on testing and other factors in the application.

For those looking for quantitative data regarding any test-submission advantage, unfortunately, this data is extremely hard to come by. Colleges do not have to report this information. Educational researcher and author, Jeff Selingo, reported the following data from his discussions with admissions officers. It is clear that some colleges admitted test score submitters and non-submitters at differential rates in 2021. (see chart to the left)

It's important not to make too many assumptions from this data. The schools on this list were reading applications without test scores for the very first time, and it complicated matters that many students had fewer opportunities to test during the pandemic. Additionally, the group of score submitters and non-submitters were not a perfectly matched sample, and may have had other factors influencing their differential admit rates.

To add a level of nuance to this data, Jeff Selingo reported that some colleges have been putting more emphasis on test scores for students applying to STEM and business programs. So while test scores may factor in less for an aspiring general education major, they may loom larger for an aspiring engineer.

"Is it worth prepping for the SAT or ACT if the schools I am applying to are all test optional?"

Again, it depends. If your scores on a practice test are within striking distance of scores that would be compelling to some of your top choices, then it is probably worth your time and effort to try and improve your scores through focused preparation. This investment may pay meaningful dividends in your application process. However, if your scores are a long way away from being competitive at your target and reach schools, then you are probably better off putting that time and energy into other parts of your application, like your GPA, commitment to extracurricular activities, or your essays. In the end, almost every part of a student's application is optional – including even applying in the first place! Test-optional admissions policies put students firmly in the driver's seat, so take the wheel and steer yourself where you want to go.