



# College Counseling Guidebook

College Counseling at The Governor's Academy  
2022-2023

|   |    |
|---|----|
| COLLEGE COUNSELING AT THE GOVERNOR’S ACADEMY– A STATEMENT OF APPROACH...                            | 3  |
| ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: STUDENTS, COUNSELORS, AND PARENTS.....                                  | 5  |
| COLLEGE ADMISSION.....  | 9  |
| MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE SELECTIVE COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS.....                            | 11 |
| STANDARDIZED TESTING.....   | 13 |
| CRAFTING A BALANCED COLLEGE LIST.....   | 17 |
| COLLEGIATE ATHLETES.....  | 19 |
| THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS.....   | 21 |
| COLLEGE VISITS.....   | 23 |
| COLLEGE INTERVIEWS.....   | 25 |
| APPLICATION OPTIONS OR “TYPES” ( <i>Early Decision, Early Action, Regular Decision, etc.</i> )..... | 28 |
| SUBMITTING THE ADMISSION APPLICATION.....   | 32 |
| THE COLLEGE ESSAY.....  | 35 |
| NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID AND MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS.....  | 37 |
| RECEIVING THE NEWS: ACCEPTED, DEFERRED, DENIED, WAITLISTED.....                                     | 42 |
| COLLEGE COUNSELING CURRICULUM TIMELINE.....   | 45 |

## 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 search process at Governor's builds on the Academy's commitment to developing collaborative, culturally fluent thinkers prepared to make wise and equitable 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.

Although the college process begins in earnest within the junior year 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) at least once each year. The all-class meeting for ninth and tenth graders offers a broad overview of the college process while identifying practical issues including course scheduling and a suggested standardized testing timeline.

While individual college counseling meetings begin junior year, all Governor's students are paired with a College Counselor in their first semester on campus (typically after Fall Family Weekend in October) for insight on course selection, advice regarding extracurricular pursuits, and (for potentially recruited athletes) guidance for the collegiate athletic recruitment process. In addition, sophomores 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).

In October, juniors at Governor's begin to engage fully in the process of identifying and researching optimal college matches. Within our **College Search Seminar Series** each spring, juniors both identify and learn to use wide-ranging college research resources and 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.

The college admission landscape is increasingly competitive. And with the COVID pandemic onset, the landscape is changing more quickly than ever. Within this context, the College Counselors at Governor's appreciate the unique importance the college search holds for our students. Admission to selective colleges remains largely credential driven. Rigor of students' 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 first year 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 and guardians 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 prevailing college admission statistics. Our collective goal in the Govs CCO 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 personal reflection and in researching 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 significant 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 colleges using a fair and objective approach. This advocacy includes a comprehensive, written evaluation for each student.

College counselors at Governor's are purposefully not identified as "College Placement Officers," since the admission outcome at any college cannot be guaranteed. Rather, college counselors at Govs 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 comprehensive college counseling curriculum, including a *College Research Seminar Series* for juniors, 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, target, and reach) as a guide. *Counselors encourage students to apply to three to four 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 College Interviews, goal setting strategies,

periodic all-class meetings, standardized test prep, college admission fairs, and college transition information for seniors.

- Offer a Google Classroom suite, including instructional videos for completing the Common Application and for optimizing our online college search platforms, College KickStart and Cialfo.
- 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

The Govs College Counseling Curriculum includes (but is not limited to) the resources below:

- *College Search Seminars* (that include) identifying and navigating available college research resources including Govs' college search platforms, *Cialfo* and *College KickStart*, online college college admission guides and scholarly articles, college admission websites, and financial aid and scholarship sources
- Individual college counseling meetings starting junior year
- All new students in grades 9-11 are paired with a college counselor during fall semester. Students remain with their assigned counselor through graduation.
- Google Classroom suite including video and written college search tools and guidance
- Reflective exercises that encourage students to consider their experiences, both in and outside the classroom, enabling them to identify their ideal college matches
- College Essay Writing Unit
- Common Application Completion Guide
- Mock College Interviews

#### **A Student Seeking College Admission:**

- Makes the most of available 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 Cialfo updates, completes student questionnaire, writes a full college essay draft, completes standardized testing registration, and registers on Cialfo for fall visits by college admission officers
- READS AND RESPONDS TO EMAIL MESSAGES DAILY during the school week
- 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 the individual college process
- Prepares for and sits for required (or 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 application to the colleges)
- Communicates consistently throughout the process with the college counselor, including periodic conversations, Cialfo 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’/Guardians’ Role**

The parent/guardian role in the college process varies among families. Some parents step back, giving their students full freedom to make decisions. Other parents assert more control. There are differing views on how parents can best support their students 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, target, and reach).
- Help the student organize and plan for college visits (either in-person or online). The CCO also suggests students schedule the visits with their parents’/guardians’ 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 Cialfo. 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 even 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**

### **Curriculum and Grades**

Most selective colleges indicate that grades earned within a challenging college curriculum are a top consideration in evaluating college applications. Most college admission committees expect students to choose the most challenging courses appropriate for their abilities and experiences. In other words, colleges do not expect students to take every challenging course available to them. They do, however, expect students to take increasingly rigorous courses that demonstrate a keen ability to both succeed and contribute within a rigorous academic environment.

With the prevalence of test optional admission processes, grades and curriculum play an increasingly important role within the college admissions process. Specifically, colleges pay close attention to follow through within academic disciplines including language, math, and science.

### **Extracurricular Activities and Letters of Recommendation**

The letters of recommendation from the college counselor and teacher(s) 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' academic experiences, their 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: applicants are tasked with making the match between who they are and their experiences, and the college they hope 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 Govs 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 first-year 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, 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 first-year 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 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), then again at the end of the first (fall) semester for seniors, and finally, 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 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 office ultimately makes 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**

While standardized testing is now optional for many colleges, the Govs CCO recommends that students engage fully with the standardized testing process. At Govs, all sophomores take a full SAT diagnostic exam and a full ACT diagnostic exam in the spring. With results from both practice exams, rising juniors, in consultation with their college counselor, can determine the test (either the SAT or the ACT) on which they should focus and the role that standardized testing will play in their candidacy..

Following the SAT and ACT diagnostic exams in spring of sophomore year, rising juniors then have access to a two-hour, individualized SAT or ACT tutorial (depending largely on their diagnostic exam results), administered by leading test prep agency, ArborBridge. The SAT and ACT diagnostic exams and the ArborBridge test prep tutorial are all at no additional cost to students.

Juniors at Govs are then encouraged to take at least one national SAT or one national ACT in the spring (again, depending largely on their diagnostic exam results). Seniors are then encouraged to take an additional national SAT or ACT during fall term.

And while many colleges continue to accept standardized testing as part of their admission evaluation process, the test optional “option” is excellent news for many students whose testing profile may fall below a college’s published testing average or “mid range.” In consultation with their college counselor, students can choose to withhold their scores from one or more colleges on their list.

Ultimately, the CCO encourages students to fully engage with the standardized testing process to determine what role, if any, standardized testing should play in their individual college process. With this comprehensive approach, students at Governor's are prepared to engage with a wide range of colleges that match their goals and interests.

### **Reporting Standardized Test Scores to Colleges**

If the student and counselor determine that standardized testing *should* be part of the student’s admissions candidacy, it is the student’s responsibility to provide testing results to each college. It is also the student’s responsibility to determine how each college expects to receive standardized test scores. For example, some colleges accept “self-reported” scores– either reported directly on the admission application form, or by uploading a screenshot of scores from the student's College Board (SAT) or ACT account.

Still other colleges require “official” score reports sent directly from either the College Board (SAT) or ACT. In all cases, the student is responsible for determining test requirements for each school, including the process by which scores should be sent.

Standardized test scores are NOT posted on Governor’s Academy transcripts, and the CCO does not

send test scores with students' admission materials (transcript, recommendations, etc.). As noted, students who are not sure if they should send their scores to their colleges should consult with their college counselor.

### **Applying “Test Optional”**

Students who choose to not send standardized testing to one or more of their test optional schools should not report their standardized test scores on the Common Application (or a college's institutional application) form.

In completing the Common Application, the CCO recommends leaving the standardized testing sections on the Common Application blank. Once the Common Application is submitted to all colleges from which testing is withheld, students can then report their scores on the Common Application and submit to their remaining colleges.

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.

For a full list of test optional colleges, visit Fairtest.org at <http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional>.

**Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT)** The PSAT is a two-hour critical reading, math, and writing multiple choice test. Students at Governor's are no longer required to take the PSAT, and it is not administered on campus. Instead, sophomores take a full SAT diagnostic exam and a full ACT diagnostic exam each spring (as explained above).

### **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).

### **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.

### **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 seniors consult their College Counselor before sending AP exam results to colleges.

### **It is the student's responsibility to send test scores to colleges that require them**

As previously noted, standardized test scores are NOT posted on Governor's Academy transcripts, and the CCO does not send them with students' admission materials (transcript, recommendations, etc.). Also as previously noted, many colleges are now testing optional and therefore, do not require standardized testing. Again, students who are not sure if they should send their scores to their colleges should consult with their College Counselor.

### **Standardized Test Prep and Review—with ArborBridge**

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

As noted, sophomores sit for one SAT diagnostic exam with premier test prep agency, ArborBridge each spring, and one ACT diagnostic exam (also in the spring), followed by a two hour individualized tutorial session (for either the SAT or ACT, depending on score results from both diagnostic exams.

Govs students 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.

### **Additional thoughts/suggestions in context of standardized test scores**

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 each academic year with both the ninth grade students and sophomore classes, introducing them to important learning style and personality inventory topics.

### **Summary of Standardized Testing Schedule**

To follow 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**

SAT and ACT diagnostic exams administered each spring by ArborBridge test prep.

**Junior year**

The CCO recommends just one national SAT for most juniors– OR, just one ACT, depending on diagnostic exam results administered to sophomores.

**Senior Year**

August SAT OR September ACT

October SAT OR ACT

November SAT (many colleges—though not all—accept November testing for the early action or early decision process)

December SAT 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.

**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, specifies required accommodations, and which also states why the learning difference qualifies the student for accommodations on standardized tests. The request for accommodations is managed by the Govs Learning Center Director.

**All documentation must be sent to the Governor’s Learning Center Director**

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.



## **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 each academic 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, they 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, juniors use wide-ranging research resources including

- The College Counseling Curriculum includes:
- College Search Seminar Series
- College Essay Writing Unit
- Individual meetings with their college counselor
- Athletic Recruitment Session
- College Search Management platforms, Cialfo and College KickStart
- Leading college guides such as *Fiske Online* and educational blogs including *The Huffington Post's College Blog*

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, student 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 Cialfo and College KickStart.

**Via Cialfo and College KickStart students can:**

Compare their Governor's GPA and test scores with past Governor's students who also applied to the same college(s) o 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 Cialfo and College KickStart accounts 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 likely, target, and reach. In consultation with their college counselor, students 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 student 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](http://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 if the student wishes their standardized test scores to be included in their eligibility review. Standardized testing is an optional part of the eligibility review process for students in the classes of 2022 and 2023. 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 website. 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 until after the college admissions office completes a

“preliminary admissions read,” indicating 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.

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 (noted above) is complete

**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](mailto: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)

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 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 AND 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 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and in contrasting styles.

### **Application and Admission Process: Theater**

Theater students are typically evaluated on their academic profile, recommendations, and the theatrical audition. Students interested in acting in college should research colleges that teach theater and acting for the stage. Some colleges require a supplemental application focused specifically on theater. The supplement typically includes questions related to theater and an essay identifying a specific interest in (or motivation for) pursuing theater. The “standard” audition is most often five minutes, consisting of one classical and one contemporary piece, usually two minutes each. Musical theater 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 theater. 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. And with the increasing availability of online college visits, students have more access to direct information from college admission staff, college professors, and even currently enrolled students. Whether students will visit a college in person or online, they must plan well in advance. For both in person or online college visits, students must do their best to minimize conflicts with their academic and extracurricular commitments as they consider college visits.

Students should visit a range of colleges with varying rates of admission. In addition, students must do their college research homework before scheduling a college visit. 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 (which can occur during in person visits as well as those online).

For both in person and online visits, most colleges require online 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 coordinate their interview schedules directly with the CCO— for Zoom sessions and/or interviews conducted 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 visits 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 for in-person college visits. Many students begin in-person college visits during spring break of their junior year. The summer between junior and senior year is also a good time to make multiple in-person college visits. With the increasing prevalence of online information sessions and college tours, it is the CCO's hope that each student experiences a variety of schools,

Governor's students who make in-person visits 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 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 in-person college visits and an additional two days in the spring semester for college "revisit days." Seniors who plan to miss an academy commitment for a college visit must first speak with their college counselor for both guidance and permission. 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 Juniors**

Juniors may miss up to two school days in the spring semester for in-person college visits. Juniors who plan to miss an academy commitment for a college visit must first speak with their college counselor for both guidance and permission. 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 9-10**

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.

All students who plan to miss an academy commitment for a college visit must first speak with their college counselor for both guidance and permission. Unauthorized college visits resulting in missed school appointments (classes, athletic contests, and/or afternoon commitments) are considered unexcused and are handled a

With the college visitation permission process complete, students receive excused absences from classes and afternoon activities, but must complete all missed assignments and responsibilities.



## **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 could also be a current student at the college, or an alum.

### **Interview Location**

Interview locations can change each year for each college. Some interviews are conducted on the college's campus. Some are conducted on the Govs campus. Others are increasingly conducted via Zoom. In all cases, students should inform their college counselor if they have scheduled an interview and/or if a college representative has contacted them to arrange an interview. College interviews should not conflict with a student's academy commitments, including scheduled classes, afternoon program and other extracurricular activities.

### **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 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). 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

selective 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). Students should submit their applications to rolling admission schools no later than November 1.

### **Early Decision**

Early 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 Cialfo, and specifying the application option the student will pursue. If Cialfo 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*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *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 first year class. On the whole, the ED process works well for the colleges as it gives them significant control of up to 50% of their 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 colleges commit to meeting demonstrated financial 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 often 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. MyIntution.com is also an excellent resource for estimating out of pocket expenses at most colleges.

**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 Cialfo, 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](http://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.

### The Common Application

As mentioned to both juniors and seniors each year in 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 will not submit test scores to test optional colleges— 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 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 Cialfo account. This Cialfo update is the CCO’s only way to know that CCO materials must be submitted. **Students who do not keep their Cialfo account current risk missing important college deadlines.**



### **Common Application College List Limit**

The Common Application limits the number of colleges to which a student can apply to 20. The College Counseling Office recommends that students apply to 12-14 colleges at most, depending on their individual college application needs and goals. Students who wish to apply to more colleges than the Common Application can accommodate must seek special permission from their college counselor. Without special permission, the CCO will not send materials (transcript, recommendations, etc.) to more than 20 colleges.

### **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 (221995), 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 Cialfo 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 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 COLLEGE ESSAY

As noted, the academic record is the primary consideration 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.

To this end, 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 other college applicants find 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 everyday 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.

## NEED-BASED FINANCIAL AID AND MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS

### Need-Based Financial Aid

Need-based 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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

- *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.
- *Need-blind Admissions* – colleges that practice need-blind admissions decide to admit, deny, or waitlist applicants without regard to their families' ability to pay.
- *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.
- *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.
- *Gapping* – colleges that "gap" financial aid applicants 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 2023 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 2020.**

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 2023 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).

- The College Board also offers an NPC at [studentnpc.collegeboard.org](http://studentnpc.collegeboard.org) that allows families to estimate their eligibility for financial aid at numerous institutions.
- 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.
- 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:

### **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.

### **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.

### **IDOC (Institutional Documentation Service)**

- Many colleges now use the College Board’s Institutional Documentation Service (IDOC). IDOC is a service that collects family financial documents and distributes them to institutions on behalf of the student.

Once the FAFSA and CSS Profile have been submitted, many 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.

Financial Aid administrators at the colleges to which the student is accepted will verify the information on the FAFSA, CSS Profile, and other required forms to 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.

### **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.

#### **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 preset 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.

### **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.

### **Federal Perkins Loans**

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 (Expected Family Contribution). They are also allowed to exercise professional judgment 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 on the college's website 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, Going Merry, and RaiseMe
- 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, some colleges still send notification via the US postal service. Some colleges notify exclusively online, 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. A quick message to the college's main admissions email address is all it takes. 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.

### **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**

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 Waitlist Notes**

Colleges rarely consider additional recommendations in managing their waitlist. 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.

Likewise, 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 COUNSELING CURRICULUM TIMELINE 2022-2023

## GRADE 9

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

### **College Counselor Assignment**

Ninth graders receive their College Counselor assignment in their first semester on campus.

### **Recruited Athletes**

Potentially recruited athletes receive guidance including an accelerated standardized testing timeline. Equally important, students hoping to play their sport in college are encouraged to connect with their assigned College Counselor for more specific guidance and direction.

### **Email "Check in" from Assigned College Counselor**

Ninth graders and their families receive an email from their assigned College Counselor, inviting them to discuss their proposed sophomore year academic schedule (after first discussing options with their Governor's advisor).

### **All-class Meeting with College Counseling Office (CCO)**

In this meeting, ninth graders are encouraged to reflect on and consider their Governor's experience to date, and to consider the experience they hope to have and create for themselves. Ninth graders are then guided through self-reflective exercises so they may begin to identify their learning style, their role(s) and interactions among their peers, and their role(s) and interactions within the classroom.

FEBRUARY-MARCH

### **Course Selections**

While the college process at Governor's begins in earnest in October of junior year, ninth graders are encouraged to seek their assigned College Counselor's advice regarding sophomore year course selections and guidance regarding extracurricular pursuits.

## GRADE 10

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

### **Fall Family Weekend**

Fall Family Weekend includes opportunities for parents and guardians of sophomores to attend sessions on financial aid and the athletic recruitment process.

OCTOBER

### **Email "Check in" from Assigned College Counselor**

Sophomores (new and returning) and their families receive an email from their assigned College Counselor, inviting them to discuss their proposed junior year academic schedule (after first discussing options with their Governor's advisor).

## NOVEMBER

### **All-class Meeting with College Counseling Office (CCO)**

In this meeting, sophomores reflect on their Governor's experience to date. They are reminded that their work in the classroom is perhaps their most important effort at this point (in context of the college search process).

This meeting also moves to more practical dimensions of the college search, including a preliminary sense of what many colleges look for in their admission applicants. For example, sophomores learn that colleges are looking not simply for accomplished students, but for students who also appreciate the significance of what they are learning, who are increasingly aware of their roles and influence among their peers. They will also receive a preview of a suggested junior year Standardized Testing Timeline.

### **Recruited Athletes**

Potentially recruited athletes receive guidance including an accelerated standardized testing timeline. Equally important, students hoping to play their sport in college are encouraged to connect with their assigned College Counselor for more specific guidance and direction.

### **Winter Family Weekend**

Winter Family Weekend includes an information session for parents and guardians of sophomores previewing the year ahead. The meeting (including all presentation materials) is summarized and emailed to all Governor's families of sophomores.

## MARCH

### **All-class Meeting with College Counseling Office (CCO)**

Sophomores meet in preparation for the SAT and ACT diagnostic exams noted directly below. This meeting is summarized and emailed to all sophomores and their families.

## APRIL

### **Full SAT and ACT Diagnostic Exams**

Sophomores take a full SAT and ACT diagnostic exam at no additional cost, with our test prep partner, ArborBridge. With both exams complete, sophomores, in consultation with their college counselor, can determine on which test (the SAT or ACT) they should focus. Sophomores then have access to a two hour tutorial focused on either the SAT or ACT, also at no cost.

## APRIL

### **Full SAT and ACT Diagnostic Exams**

Sophomores meet with the CCO for an overview of their SAT and ACT diagnostic exam results, including direction on scheduling their two-hour individual tutorial with an Arborbridge test prep professional. The session is live and online and is at no extra cost to students.

## MAY/JUNE

### **SAT or ACT**

This early test date for sophomores is primarily for potentially recruited athletes who must submit standardized testing for the athletic recruitment process.

## GRADE 11

### OCTOBER

#### **College Process Kick Off**

In this meeting, juniors are introduced to key college search concepts including:

- the value of research, including an overview of the *College Kickstart* and *Cialfo* platforms the CCO uses to manage the college search and application process
- Important dates and deadlines, and standardized testing recommendations
- Juniors also hear and see an overview of their college process in the months to come individual meetings with their college counselor (which begin in January) and the College Search Seminar Series (which also begins in January)

#### **Fall Family Weekend**

Fall Family Weekend includes an information session for parents and guardians of juniors, previewing the year ahead, including information sessions on financial aid and athletic recruitment. The meeting (including all presentation materials) is summarized and emailed to all Governor's families of juniors).

### DECEMBER - JANUARY

#### **Need-Based Financial Aid**

Families should begin discussing college finances and, if planning to apply for financial aid, should complete the *FAFSA4caster* online to approximate the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) towards college costs. *MyIntuition.com* also offers a helpful college net price calculator.

### JANUARY

#### **First Individual College Counseling Meeting**

Juniors schedule their first individual meeting with their assigned College Counselor. In this first meeting the student and counselor focus primarily on the completed *College Search Questionnaire* found on Cialfo. The conversation centers largely on the student's experiences, including the academic record, overall experience at Governor's, and hopes and expectations for their ongoing college search. Conversations centered on specific colleges typically begin within the second individual college counseling meeting.

### JANUARY

#### **College Search Seminar Series**

Juniors begin the *College Search Seminar Series* (small group classes that introduce various aspects of the college search and application process). Topics include identifying college research resources and strategies, writing the college essay, the evolving college admissions landscape, preparing for communication with college admission representatives (by email, in interviews, and at college fairs), and completing applications.

### FEBRUARY

#### **Winter Family Weekend**

The weekend includes a presentation to parents and guardians of juniors by the College Counseling staff, as well as an admissions officer or dean at a selective university. The meeting (including all presentation materials) is summarized and emailed to all Governor's parents and guardians of juniors.

### **Second Individual College Counseling Meeting**

In preparation for this meeting, juniors populate their *College Kick Start* account with colleges they sense could be an appropriate match, using skills they're learning both in the *College Search Seminar Series* and in individual conversations with their College Counselor.

## MARCH

### **College Visits**

When possible, juniors are encouraged to visit a range of college options (rural, urban, large, small, specialized academic focus, liberal arts focus, etc). In addition, juniors are encouraged to visit colleges with varying rates of admission for the broadest (and fullest) sense of their collegiate options.

College visits are now largely available online, which we strongly encourage our students to consider. Many virtual visits offer optional conversations with currently enrolled students and even professors within academic departments. Virtual visits are a terrific way to learn more about a college and to demonstrate interest in attending.

## APRIL

### **Boston Regional College Fair**

Juniors meet and interact with representatives from over 130 colleges and universities from across the country. The fair is hosted by BISCCA (Boston Independent School College Counselor Association) and is hosted by Babson College.

### **Individual College Counseling meetings**

Juniors continue to meet individually with their College Counselor.

## MAY

### **All Class Meeting with the College Counseling Office**

This session is designed to help juniors frame their college process to date and to affirm their summer college process homework (including completing the Common Application and finalizing their college essay they begin in the CCO College Search Seminar Series. The session also examines the college admissions landscape in context of Affirmative Action and preferential admission. Juniors learn how and why colleges make admission decisions in context of each college's needs and goals in crafting its first year class.

### **Teacher Recommendations**

Juniors make teacher recommendation requests with the guidance of their College Counselor.

### **College Essay Assignment**

Juniors complete a first draft college essay

### **Final Individual College Counseling Meetings**

Juniors meet a final time with their College Counselor in preparation for college search tasks during the summer months.



### **Final College Search Seminar Series Meeting**

In this meeting, the CCO guides juniors through creating a Common Application account and populating the application form.

### **Individual College Process Summary**

Each junior's assigned College Counselor emails a college process summary to both the student and her or his family. The summary includes specific college process benchmarks as well as the working college list with expected selectivity (chance of admission) ratings.

## **SUMMER (BEFORE SENIOR YEAR)**

JUNE

### **College Visits**

When possible, rising seniors are encouraged to visit colleges on their active college list, focusing particularly on those colleges for which admission is rated as "likely" and/or "target." In consultation with their College Counselor, rising seniors may also interview if the college offers a summer college interview.

### **Standardized Test Prep**

Rising seniors are encouraged to schedule and complete standardized test prep as needed (and as discussed with their College Counselor).

### **The Common Application**

Rising seniors should continue work on the Common Application and begin any individual (non Common App) college applications (i.e. the University of California schools, Georgetown University, University of Maryland, etc.)

### **Portfolios and Auditions**

Artists, musicians, dancers, and actors should review portfolio and audition requirements for each college of interest and begin preparing required materials in consultation with their teachers and counselor.

### **Recruited Athletes**

Recruited athletes at Division I or II colleges should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

## **GRADE 12**

AUGUST

### **SAT**

For most seniors who will submit SAT scores with their college admission applications.

SEPTEMBER

### **All-class Meeting with College Counseling Office (CCO)**

This meeting (scheduled during PreSeason) is in preparation for the fall application season.

Seniors submit a printed copy of their Common Application Activities page, and upload a final draft of their college essay to the CCO's Google Classroom. Seniors are also reminded of college process benchmark events including necessary Cialfo updates, communicating appropriately with their teacher recommenders, and reminders on the process of sending standardized test scores to the colleges.

### **ACT**

For most seniors who will submit ACT scores with their college admission applications.

### **First Fall Individual College Counseling Meeting**

Seniors schedule their first fall individual meeting with their assigned College Counselor. In this meeting, seniors review their completed Common Application and essay with their College Counselor and refine their final college list as necessary. Seniors also learn how to greet and communicate with college representatives who will visit the Governor's campus each fall.

### **College Reps Visit Governor's**

College representatives from around the country visit with our seniors each fall. Seniors have access to the full fall visit schedule (on Cialfo) in advance and are instructed to register in advance to speak with reps with colleges in which they are interested.

## **OCTOBER**

### **ACT**

For seniors who, in consultation with their College Counselor, have registered. Governor's is not a test site for the October ACT administration, so students must register for an alternate site, and arrange their own transportation.

### **Second Individual College Counseling Meeting**

Seniors schedule their second fall individual meeting with their assigned College Counselor.

## **NOVEMBER**

### **Early Application Deadlines**

Seniors who will submit early applications (Early Decision, Early Action, etc.) prepare for the three major early deadlines: November 1, November 10, and November 15. For these deadlines, families applying for need-based financial aid also submit required forms (the FAFSA, College Board CSS Profile, etc.).

## **DECEMBER**

### **All-class Meeting with College Counseling Office (CCO)**

Seniors meet as a class in prep for Early Application notification from the colleges to which they applied. Seniors are reminded of how and why colleges make admission decisions. And they receive instructions on how (and when) to respond to colleges at which they may be deferred.

### **ACT**

For seniors who, in consultation with their College Counselor, have registered. Governor's is not a test site for the December ACT administration, so students must register for an

alternate site, and arrange their own transportation.

### **Early Application Notification**

Colleges release Early Decision decisions (typically by December 15). Colleges will begin to release Early Action decisions, which will continue to come out through the end of January.

### **Prep for Regular Decision Applications**

Seniors who will submit Regular Decision applications continue to meet with their College Counselor to refine their college list and to review application supplements, complete mock interview sessions, etc.

## JANUARY

### **Regular Decision and Early Decision II Applications**

Seniors submit Regular Decision (and Early Decision II, if applicable) applications (most deadlines the week of January 1). For these deadlines, families applying for need based financial aid also submit required forms (the FAFSA, College Board CSS Profile, etc.).

## FEBRUARY

### **Early Decision II Notification**

Colleges release Early Decision II decisions (typically by February 15).

## MARCH

### **Regular Decision Notification**

Most colleges release Regular Decision notifications (typically within the third or fourth week of March). Virtually all colleges release decisions by April 1.

### **All-class Meeting with College Counseling Office (CCO)**

Seniors meet as a class to as a look ahead to graduation, including their transition to college. Seniors are reminded of how and why colleges make admission decisions. And they receive instructions on how (and when) to respond to colleges at which they may be waitlisted.

## APRIL

### **Waitlisted Students**

Students who will pursue admission from a college admission waitlist send an email of continued interest to the college(s) at which they are waitlisted.

## MAY

### **National Matriculation Deposit Deadline**

All seniors should have made a deposit to one college by the May 1 deposit deadline.

## JUNE

### **Final Transcripts to Colleges**

The CCO sends final transcripts to the one college at which the student has deposited.