

# THE COLLEGE PROCESS

The best indicator of future behavior is past behavior; therefore, colleges place great emphasis on your high school transcript. Colleges considered this to be the best predictor of how you will perform in college. We cannot emphasize enough how important your grades are in the admissions process.

Your cumulative grade point average (GPA) is calculated beginning in ninth grade and includes all courses you have taken. Charlotte Catholic reports a weighted GPA on your transcript. The weighted GPA considers the honors courses and advanced placement (AP) courses you have taken and that have been given 1.0 extra quality point. Colleges will review your cumulative GPA for all your ninth through eleventh grade courses. Colleges often will ask to review first semester grades of your senior year as well. At Charlotte Catholic, we will send a mid-year transcript to all colleges that require as well as an end of the year transcript to the college you are attending. Colleges will be looking at your progress senior year to make sure that you are performing as you have throughout your high school years. You cannot slack off senior year. Colleges have the right to rescind an acceptance decision once given if your performance deteriorates.

Colleges place great emphasis on your grades. They also, however, pay close attention to the rigor of your courses. How much importance of this particular factor plays in the admission decision varies by college. In general, the more selective the college's admission policies are, the more likely it is that the college will consider this factor. Students with a strong GPA with classes lacking rigor (honors and AP classes) most likely will be denied. This is especially true at very selective institutions. In general, colleges suggest that you take a more challenging course than take an easier. If you take a more challenging course and make a C it could hurt your chances for admission at a selective college. It is important to speak with your counselor about course selection with your college goals in mind.

SAT and ACT scores are an important piece of the college admissions process. However, scores differ in importance at different colleges.

Some colleges look only at the GPA and standardized test scores in terms of admissions. Many, but not all, of the larger state schools look at these two criteria. If you do not have "certain" numbers, you are most likely not getting in regardless of any of factors you may bring to the application.

Many parents and students inaccurately assume that strong SAT and ACT scores can compensate for a low GPA or less rigorous course selection. Without knowing the student, colleges reviewing an application with an above average SAT or ACT score and a low GPA and/or weak course selection will assume that the student is lazy. Strong test scores reflect strong academic potential. If you do not live up to that potential in the classroom, the college will pass judgment accordingly.

## The Holistic Review:

Letters of Recommendation, the college essay, and extracurricular activities

Many colleges talk about the holistic review process they utilize while reviewing a student's application. They want to get a feel for who you are and what you will be able to contribute to their campus community. Therefore, colleges will look at the activities you were involved in during your high school years. How did you spend your time, volunteering, athletics, theater, part-time job? You need to be involved and it is not quantity but quality.

Not all colleges require an application essay, but many do, and it requires time, detail, and attention. The essay is meant to convey to a college something about you. It is a way for the admission officer to understand how you think, to understand your personality and to evaluate your ability to write. The counseling office brings in a former CCHS English teacher and well-respected college essay expert to do a presentation May of student's junior year. Invaluable information concerning the college essay will be provided.

Just like the essay, not every college requires letters of recommendation. If a college does not require a letter of recommendation, then do not send one. A letter of recommendation requires a great deal of time for the person writing it. If the college does not require then it will not be looked at. If a letter is required, then you must seriously consider who you wish to have write that letter. It should be a person (teacher/counselor) that knows you well.

At CCHS we have a three-step process to request letters of recommendation....

1. Students must personally ask the teacher if they would be willing to write a letter of recommendation, students should give teachers at least 3 weeks' notice to write a letter.
2. Student then must request the teacher through SCOIR. Click on the "My Colleges" tab – Click on Application Documents above the "applied" section – from there you can request a teacher recommendation
3. Go to the three lines in the top right corner and click on "Surveys" then "Teacher Recommendation Student Questionnaire". Complete all required information and do not forget "Save/finished".

Please remember, however, a strong resume, essay and letters of recommendation cannot compensate for a poor GPA and SAT/ACT test score. Everything just mentioned are general guidelines. In the end, this is a subjective process that varies according to the application year, the college, and the student.

# NINTH GRADE

As a ninth-grade student, your most important task is mastering the experience of being in high school. This year, you should learn how to study effectively, and how to balance schoolwork with extracurricular activities. There is also an increase in the level of responsibility you will be given. You are assigned a computer on the first day of school. The computer is a wonderful tool but can also be a tragic distraction. Stay on task whether you are using it in the classroom or to do your homework.

As you would expect high school is harder than middle school. Some students discover that the study skills that were good enough in middle school are no longer adequate in high school. You may need to find new ways to study or to learn additional test preparation skills from your teachers or parents. Focus on study techniques such as making flash cards, rewriting, or typing notes, reading notes aloud and reciting key points, and/or being quizzed by a parent or friend on class notes.

You need to learn good time management and study skills this year as the expectations increase from middle school. The time management skills you learn now will be important as you balance having friends, participating in extra-curriculars, completing your homework, and getting a good night's sleep. Be sure to use your agenda to keep track of all you have going on in and out of the classroom. CCHS provides you an agenda at the beginning of the school year. Also remember, you and your parents can check your grades via CANVAS to find out how you performed on all graded assignments.

Please remember, your teachers are here to help you find academic success. You may want to ask them for extra help and/or spend time with them studying and reviewing before a test. Your teacher probably has good insight as to why something is difficult for you, and he/she can help you improve your study habits and work ethic. Your teachers are available throughout the day to help you. Each teacher will inform you when is the best time; before or after school and/or break. National Honor Society members offer drop-in tutoring every Wednesday after school and can tutor on a one-to-one situation based on an agreed upon schedule. Take advantage of all these resources!

The best thing to do in ninth grade as you prepare for college is to get good grades! Everything you do from the moment you enter high school matters. During the fall of your freshman year, you will learn about SCOIR, a college software program that provides information about all colleges and eventually serves as a mechanism to track applications and transcripts. Ninth grade is a good time to start learning more about specific colleges and their admissions criteria. It provides a good basis of understanding as to what you will need to accomplish in high school to potentially gain admission.

In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, it is important....

- To establish good work habits
- To study effectively
- To use your computer as a tool and not a distraction
- To see utilize your resources at school
- To see your counselor
- To learn about colleges through SCOIR

# TENTH GRADE

What was true freshman year stands true for sophomore year. You need to continue to work hard in your classes and do well. Sophomore year would be a great time to further explore SCOIR.

Knowing areas of interests for potential careers can allow students to consider certain majors. Armed with this information you can research colleges which are strong in certain disciplines of interest. It helps narrow your list of colleges. Students and parents sometimes are concerned when there is no clear major to pursue. Many students enter college “undecided”. This is perfectly fine, and it is why colleges do not require students to declare a major until sophomore year. It allows for opportunity to explore classes and material that you never had a chance to learn about. There are a few majors that dictate that you apply directly into them as a college freshman: engineering, architecture, and nursing.

The summer of sophomore year should be spent beginning to prepare for the SAT and/or ACT test that will need to be taken around December of the junior year. One strategy would be to go through the PSAT you took in October. The actual test and answer sheet was returned to all sophomores in December. Work through the incorrect or omitted problem to learn for future reference. There are many test prep books available armed with helpful hints as well as practice tests. Khan Academy is working with College Board and provided personalized test prep after you take your PSAT. Details will be provided with test results. This is a wonderful resource for students. The key is repetition to better prepare for the college entrance tests.

## SAT/ACT Test Prep

- Khan Academy
- Test Prep books offer advice and practice tests
- Collegeboard.org & ACTstudent.org provide practice questions
- Test prep classes/tutors

# Eleventh Grade

The college search process kicks into high gear junior year. Continued progress in your classes remains the priority. Remember, you apply to colleges with the cumulative GPA (9,10,11) that is attained at the end of this year. This is the year that you will take either that SAT and/or ACT and that you should visit college campuses. The Career and Aptitude Assessment is a tool that can help you discover the types of work activities and careers that match your interests.

We recommend that you take both the SAT and the ACT at least once and maybe even on test twice before the end of the year. Almost all colleges recognize both the SAT and ACT and treat the tests equally. Colleges look at the highest score available to them in their review of a student. If more than one score is submitted, the lower score will not be considered. Colleges seek to give you an advantage in test score review. They even combine your best SAT critical reading, math and writing scores, regardless of whether they were earned on different test dates, to give you the highest possible score. This is known as “super-scoring.”

There are several reasons why some students score higher on the ACT. The ACT is an achievement test that measures the knowledge you have gained throughout high school. It contains four sections: English, math, reading and science. The ACT also has an optional writing section. It is becoming increasingly common for colleges NOT to require the writing section, but it is your responsibility to know the policy of the schools to which you apply.

The SAT is an aptitude test, seeking to measure the student’s academic potential. It includes three sections: Evidence Based Reading and Writing, mathematics, and writing. Students complete two critical reading sections, two mathematics sections and one writing section throughout the test. The SAT has made the writing optional and may not be required at the colleges to which you apply.

Charlotte Catholic is a test site for certain SAT dates!

For certain test dates you can pay for the score report and test to be returned to you. This is a great tool to prepare for the next test.

Register for the SAT at  
[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

Register for the ACT at  
[www.ACTstudent.org](http://www.ACTstudent.org)

# PSAT

The PSAT is offered at CCHS in October. All freshmen, sophomores and juniors will take the PSAT.

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is a program cosponsored by the College Board and [National Merit Scholarship Corporation \(NMSC\)](#). It's a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT®. It also gives you a chance to enter NMSC scholarship programs and gain access to college and career planning tools. The PSAT is administered each October, at CCHS, to both sophomores and juniors. **While these tests are offered to better prepare students for the SAT, it is also important to note that the score students receive on the PSAT is a part of the selection process in honors level/AP classes.**

Interested in learning more and seeing practice questions for the PSAT?  
<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>

# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

For those schools that require a letter of recommendation, it would be a good idea to request these from your teachers before you leave on summer break. Most schools that utilize the Common Application will require one, maybe two letters of recommendation. Remember CCHS requires you to do three things when asking a teacher for a letter of recommendation. Refer to the beginning of this handbook for the required procedure. **DO NOT REQUEST A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FROM A TEACHER IF THE COLLEGE DOES NOT REQUIRE IT. THE LETTER WILL NOT BE LOOKED AT INITIALLY!**

There are *two requirements* that must be met for your counselor to do a letter of recommendation. Parent's must get on their Parent SCOIR Account and complete the Parent Insight Questionnaire that is located under the "Surveys" tab. Students must go on their Student SCOIR Account and complete the Student Insight Questionnaire. These items must be completed by March 1 of the junior year! It is recommended that you print a hard copy of your questionnaire as well as save and submit through SCOIR.

## RESUME

When introduced to SCOIR, students were shown the activities and achievements section under the "My Profile" tab. Once you click on "My Profile" a student can then scroll down to the "activities and achievements" section and create and add to their high school resume. It was recommended at this time that students update their resume each year. A student who has done this will find making the resume an easy task. From SCOIR a student can download a resume that they can then attach to college application if necessary. The resume helps highlight your activities throughout your high school career.

# THE COLLEGE VISIT

A college visit is perhaps the most important thing you can do to find the right match. Students who take the time to visit several campuses and form their opinions of what they do and do not like will tend to have more direction and focus throughout the application process in senior year. Most college visits should occur during junior year though can certainly happen sooner. Senior year is not a good time to start the process of looking at colleges. If a student is well informed about different colleges, he/she can be efficient in the application process. Parents should take advantage of every teacher workday or school holiday junior year to visit different colleges. Students have four college visit days they can take to see schools. All four visits can be taken in the senior or junior years. These are considered excused absences, but the appropriate paperwork must be completed prior to your visit. The “college visit form” can be obtained in the attendance office.

Many families are unsure how to begin the college visit process. First, ask yourself whether you prefer a large, medium, or small college. How far away from home would feel comfortable? Would you prefer a Catholic college? Where do you wish to be geographically, mountains or beach? Answers to these questions often narrow down the list of colleges and provide a starting point. If you are unsure about these questions, visit each type of college. It will help you develop an opinion.

Your counselor can help you generate a list of colleges to visit. Do not feel like you need to know everything about area colleges; that is the job of a college counselor. Tap into this resource by scheduling an appointment sometime during junior year to discuss which colleges would be the best place to visit. Continue to keep in touch with your college counselor after you have begun visiting and have a clearer picture of which colleges are preferred. The counselor may be able to offer additional suggestions of colleges once you know your preference.

If you are a rising eleventh grade student and you are uncertain which type of college you prefer, you are not alone. College visits help you form your opinions and decide which colleges top your list. To schedule a campus visit, call the college admissions office or get online to make an appointment. Tours are typically led by a student tour guide, often ending in the admissions office with an information session given by an admissions counselor. Some colleges offer additional services, such as class observations, financial aid counseling, and/or a matching program that will allow you to stay on campus with a student host overnight. If you would like any of these extra services, simply ask when you call to schedule the tour.

Charlotte Catholic is fortunate to have many college admissions representatives visit our school. These visits are listed on SCOIR and students are required to sign up, at least, the day prior to the information session. To attend a student register on SCOIR and print out the confirmation page. This page serves as a student’s pass to leave class.



# NCAA

Student athletes wishing to play Division I or II collegiate level athletics must be academically eligible to participate. Students must register with the NCAA eligibility clearinghouse. Information and sport specific details can be located at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org).

While we hope all our student athletes are recruited in their respected sport they wish to continue of a collegiate level, students must look at colleges that are sound fits academically and financially as well. Athletics could help “tip the scale” in terms of admissions but it is not always a given and students need to prepare a Plan B.

### Time to apply to college!

#### Types of Applications.....

The Common Application - 800 + colleges utilize [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

Coalition Application  
[www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org](http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org)

Visit the college's web page for school's application

The Common Application simplifies the application process when applying to various schools that utilize it. There is a general application that is the same for each college that uses the CA. Many colleges (especially more selective schools) will have a supplemental application as well that is required. The supplemental piece may be additional short answer questions or essays. Application fees are paid to each college.

*A college does not prefer one application over another so use the one that simplifies the process for you.*

### TYPES OF ADMISSIONS APPLICATION DEADLINES

Early decision - these programs are legally binding, meaning the student must attend if admitted. Students may apply to only one college with an early decision program. Students who submit an early decision application may also apply to other colleges on a non-binding program. Students applying on an early decision application will receive an admission decision before Christmas and will sometimes benefit from a slightly less competitive admission review process. Students should be cautious before submitting such a binding application; however, they should not submit an early decision application without being completely sure that the college is an ideal match academically, socially and financially. Once admitted through early decision you must rescind your applications at every other school to which you applied.

Early action – this is a non-binding program. Early Action does not come with the same legal requirements to attend should you be admitted. Instead, they offer you the chance to indicate that the college is one of the top two choices and to receive an earlier decision. Students may apply to more than one college on such a non-binding program.

Rolling admission - this type of admission system reviews applications upon receipt and mails decisions within approximately four to six weeks. Each applicant is considered individually in this type of admissions, and the college does not wait for all applications to be received before mailing decisions. If you are applying to colleges with rolling admission systems, submit your applications as early as possible. The sooner you submit an application to a college with rolling admissions, the sooner you will be notified and the more likely the college will have openings.

Priority deadline – A school will set specific deadlines and if you apply a certain date you will receive a decision by a specific date.

## HOW MANY COLLEGES SHOULD YOU APPLY TO??

Most students will apply to 5 to 7 colleges. One of these choices should be an in-state college that is academically “likely” as well as financially feasible. The selectivity of a college must be considered when making application.

***Reach school*** – most selective colleges across the country can be considered this for even the top students. A reach school though is a college in which your academic credentials are below typical admissions standards.

***Target*** – Colleges in which your academic credentials fall within a school typical admit range.

***Likely*** – Your academic credentials are above the typical admit range.

Utilizing the graph on SCOIR can help determine where you fall for many colleges.

Students should apply to one likely school and target schools. Students will also apply to one or two reach schools. See your counselor to gain a better understanding to which schools are best fits academically.

This helpful summary is also available on your SCOIR homepage

## College Application Process for Students

Where you should be at this point:

- Applying NOW – no advantage to waiting for SAT/ACT scores
- Have at least one “Likely” school and several realistic choices – to make sure that you fall in these categories; check college stats that can be found on SCOIR
- Have you completed student questionnaire in SCOIR that was due last spring; Did your parents complete the Parent Questionnaire?

### APPLICATIONS

Because applications are submitted online, your application will arrive at the admissions office in parts. **DO NOT PANIC** if the application portal still shows that the school has not received a transcript. CCHS requires 2 weeks’ notice to prepare transcripts and send either electronically or through snail mail. Additionally, it may take another 3 weeks or longer for the college to process the paperwork and log it into their computer systems.

- Arrange for official ACT/SAT scores to be sent directly to all colleges from testing agency.
- STUDENTS must monitor their applications to ensure that all materials are sent and received on time. Deadlines are crucial.
- Suggested site for all NC public and private universities is [www.cfnc.org](http://www.cfnc.org).
- Use Common Application or Coalition Application for many public and private schools in the US

## STEP BY STEP GUIDE

### MY PROFILE TAB:

#### *Profile Link*

- Edit your profile with any address/phone/e-mail changes.
- Your email address must be the same as the email address you use on The Common App and NCAA (if applicable).
- Your name **must** be your legal name: first, middle, and last

## **MY COLLEGES TAB:**

### ***APPLYING SECTION:***

- **Update** your list to the schools you are seriously considering applying to now, drag the schools from your “Following” section and drop into “Applying” section.
- Look at the schools: If more than one uses the Common Application, we recommend you complete a Common Application form. If the “Common App” section is blank, you will need to apply on the school’s website or Coalition.
- **APPLY:** Complete the appropriate application for each school according to their specific directions. It is your responsibility to know the type of application admission decision you are applying for, and the deadline that applies to each application. Types of Application Decisions:
  - Early Decision: a binding decision that binds a student to attend that school if accepted Early Decision. All other applications must be withdrawn upon notification of admission.
  - Regular Decision: most common; submit by a certain date and decisions will be released by a certain date.
  - Rolling Decision: colleges make and send out decisions as applications get processed.
  - Early Action/Early Notification: If a student applies “early” by a set deadline the decision is rendered early, by a set date; it is not binding.
  - Restrictive Early Action: The college sets certain restrictions; students must read the application guidelines very carefully to make sure they understand how they are applying and the rules they must follow.
  - If you need to see all your past grades, you may access them on Edline, under “Private Reports” and click on “View” Transcripts.

### Completing the Common Application **ONLY**

- Go to [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) and set up your account.
- You need to use the same email address on the Common App and SCOIR.
- Complete the Privacy Notice for Common Application (FERPA waiver) as it **is required** for ALL CCHS students. Students must complete their application (or a large portion of it) before the FERPA page will even appear and they must have at least one college saved to their CA account. To locate the page, go to the “My Colleges” tab on the Common App. On the left-hand side is the option “Assign Recommenders” – choose this. The next page will have the FERPA information and option to sign.
- Students who are using the common application need to sign the waiver within the common application.

### Other websites for applications

- [www.CFNC.org](http://www.CFNC.org) - applications for every NC public and private colleges/university
- [www.eduinonline.com](http://www.eduinonline.com) - allow you to apply to 34 historically black college & universities (HBCUs) with one single application, visit. Once completed, this application will be sent to all 34 HBCUs that are currently member institutions.
- [www.coalitionforcollegesuccess.org](http://www.coalitionforcollegesuccess.org) for the Coalition Application

**AFTER** you have submitted your application:

- Drag and drop the school from “Applying” to “Applied”
- Update the type, method, and major (if applicable)

**Transcripts:** Once you apply to the college, you will then have to update SCOIR. Updating SCOIR will then notify Mrs. Cramer and she will send the transcript to schools. **Please allow 10 working days for your request to be processed by CCHS.** When the Registrar has sent the transcript, it will be marked as **Sent**. You will be able to keep track of your application materials through this website. **Please allow at least 4 weeks for colleges to show a record of receiving your transcript on their website.**

**All transcripts (excluding NCAA) will be requested online using the SCOIR website**

- **Requesting Other Transcripts:** (Scholarships, Coaches but not NCAA)
  - Use this google form to request all other transcripts  
<https://forms.gle/sJ8oo2oQ4XkwknER6>
  - Only students will be able to request, must be signed in with cchsemail account
  - Complete all information on the form
  - Do Not Request transcripts to be sent to the NCAA as these must be handled on the NCAA website. Detailed instructions for the NCAA can be found on Naviance home page.


### **HELPFUL NOTES WHEN FILLING OUT APPLICATION**

- **SAT & ACT Scores:** Students **MUST** request scores directly from the testing agency. CCHS does NOT report standardized test scores.
- Your GPA and decile rank can be found in SCOIR; My Profile
- GPA is on a 4.0 scale
- GPA is weighted
- Your semester classes are .5 credits. Yearlong classes are 1 credit
- CCHS CEEB Code is 340665

### **Teacher Recommendations:**

- Only send teacher recommendation if the college requires it. Then if deferred, you can send additional recommendations, etc.
- Ask the teachers, in person, **at least 3 weeks in advance** and following the steps below
- Complete the Teacher Recommendation Questionnaires in **SURVEYS** in SCOIR.
- Once the above 2 steps are completed you may then “Request Teacher Recommendation” in the “Request Documents” above applied section on SCOIR. The teacher(s) will receive the request and be able to complete them (Remember: no teacher will complete a letter of recommendation without you waiving your right to access the records).
- Once you see the teacher has submitted the letter of recommendation, follow-up with a “*Thank You*” note to show your appreciation.

### **Decisions from colleges:**

-  When you receive an admission decision (Accepted, Deferred, Waitlisted, Denied, January admission, etc.), **go to the applied section and update the outcome for each school.**

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

- Give a copy to your counselor of all scholarships you receive – this is the only way to have them listed in the graduation program
- NEVER pay for any type of scholarship or scholarship search
- CSS profile is available online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). It is used to award non-federal student aid funds. File this after October 1. NCSU, UNC-CH and many private schools require this form.
- Do not limit choices based on cost until you know the bottom line, “sticker price”: however, have “an economic reality talk” with your parents.

### **REMEMBER...**

- **Grades – colleges look at the final transcript before students are accepted – until then it is conditional acceptance.**
- The most popular choice of college is not always the best choice