College Planning Handbook 2025-26

EASTSIDE CATHOLIC

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Welcome

Welcome to Student Services at Eastside Catholic School!

At Eastside Catholic, our Student Service Department is comprised of a dedicated group of school and college counselors who support students with a broad spectrum of resources. In middle school, students have access to a dedicated middle school counselor to address academic and social issues. High school students are assigned to a school and college counselor based on their last name.

High school counselors help with academic issues surrounding a student's schedule, outside classes for credit, social-emotional concerns and credit retrieval. They meet individually with students and offer small group discussions, large workshops and useful resources to help students and families learn how to handle adolescents' ups and downs.

Our team of college counselors strives to help students find their best path after high school. For most students, their post-secondary plans involve attending a four-year college. Our college counselors are also equipped to support students taking other routes to post-secondary success such as community college, taking a gap year, entering the workforce or enlisting in the military.

College counselors provide support through various avenues, including college planning events tailored for different grade levels, outside speaker presentations, an online library of resources on the ECHS Canvas page, facilitation of nearly 150 college visits to the EC campus, and frequent communication of important deadlines and local events.

Our school and college counselors work together to prepare Eastside Catholic students for life after high school by encouraging students to leave EC with confidence, resilience, determination and knowledge to pursue whatever path they choose.

In this Handbook, you will learn how to best work with the Student Services Team and provide additional details about the resources available to all families. We look forward to supporting you and your students on this journey as they look forward to the next phase of their life!

Meet the Team



Sidney Richardson

Department Chair, Middle School Counselor

srichardson@eastsidecatholic.org | 425-295-3053

Sidney joined the EC team in 2021. She earned her master's in school counseling at Seattle University where she also received her credential as a National Certified Counselor. After graduating with her undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Portland, Sidney completed a year of service with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. While she was there, Sidney worked at a college access program in Newark, New Jersey, where she supported first-generation and low-income students going through the college application process.



John Ward

High School Counselor - Students with last names A-F (12), A-Go (9 - 11)

jward@eastsidecatholic.org | 425-295-3144

John joins the Eastside Catholic community after relocating from Cincinnati, Ohio, where he spent 11 years as a high school counselor. He earned a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Notre Dame, a master's degree in family therapy from Syracuse University and a master's degree in school counseling from the University of Dayton.

In addition to his counseling experience, he has also worked as a family therapist in Syracuse, New York. A passionate fan of college sports, John avidly follows Syracuse basketball and Notre Dame football, often traveling back to South Bend to catch a game.



Kirsi Varsa

High School Counselor - Students with last names G-N (12), Gr-M (9-11)
kvarsa@eastsidecatholic.org | 425-295-3128

Kirsi first joined EC in 2015 as a high school counselor and was a counselor in the Issaquah School District at Pine Lake Middle School and Skyline High School for several years. Kirsi returned to Eastside Catholic as a high school counselor in 2023. Originally from Finland, she earned her master's degree in guidance and counseling from City University, and her bachelor's degree in history and secondary education from the University of North Texas. Kirsi also coaches high school tennis.



Lindsey Johnson

High School Counselor - Students with last names O-Z (12), N-Z (9-11)
ljohnson@eastsidecatholic.org | 425-295-3052

Lindsey joined EC as a school counseling intern in 2023 and became a full-time member of the Student Services Department for the 2024-25 school year. She holds a master's degree in school counseling from Seattle Pacific University and a bachelor's degree in sociology from Grand Canyon University. Lindsey began her career as a crisis counselor with Crisis Text Line and later worked at Washington Teen Link - Crisis Connections as a lead youth crisis mentor, where she supported teen volunteers as they answered calls, chats and texts. In her free time, Lindsey enjoys watching hockey (Go Kraken!), spending time with friends and family and baking.



Livia Matteucci

College Counselor - Students with last names A-Go

lmatteucci@eastsidecathlic.org | 425-295-3030

Livia joined the EC Student Services Department as a college counselor in 2022. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology at Georgetown University and went on to teach English in Washington, D.C. Livia is passionate about serving students from all backgrounds and is fluent in Italian and Spanish. She enjoys hiking, live music and exploring the Pacific Northwest in her free time.



Lillian Do-Tran

College Counselor - ***Students with last names Gr-M***

ldotran@eastsidecatholic.org | 425-295-3033

Lillian joined EC in 2023 as a high school college counselor primarily working with 9th and 10th graders. Before EC, Lillian worked in admissions, retention and academic advising. She moved back to Seattle after earning a master's degree in communications from Eastern Washington University where she also earned a bachelor's degree in communications and public relations. She is a first-generation college student and is passionate about helping students with early college and career exploration.



Samantha Dzingle

College Counselor - Students with last names N-Z

dzingle@eastsidecatholic.org | 425-295-3015

Samantha joined the EC Student Services Department as a college counselor in 2023. She earned her master's and bachelor's degrees from Gonzaga University, where she discovered her love for education. After her studies concluded at Gonzaga University, she served with AmeriCorps for a year. After completing her year of service, she transitioned to work in college admissions. Samantha is passionate about helping students find their path to future success. In her free time, she enjoys golfing, cooking, listening to podcasts and spending time with her family.



Lakshmi Palaniappan

Registrar

lpalaniappan@eastsidecatholic.org | 425-295-3051

Lakshmi joined the Student Services Department in 2022 as registrar. She most recently worked in the Issaquah School District for 16 years as a registrar while assisting in the library. She holds a master's and research degree from India, specializing in economics. Lakshmi began her career as a college lecturer in India and spent 10 years as a stay-at-home mom, raising two sons.

School Code and Information

EC CEEB Code	480067
School Address	232 228th Ave SE Sammamish, WA 98074
School Phone	425-295-3000
School Website	eastsidecatholic.org
College Counseling website	eastsidecatholic.org/academics/college-counseling

College Planning Timetable by Grade Level

Listed below is the general "overview" of when students engage with colleges and college counselors regarding their college research and applications. While most students follow the traditional path, those who want to pursue a highly competitive college should pay attention to the academic and extracurricular differences. The considerations for the NCAA applicant are also specific. Different timelines are provided so all students have the same information and opportunities.

However, the path for each student can differ and should be considered relative to each student's stress level threshold, aspirations and determination. In no way do we prioritize any of these paths over another. Our intention is to support each student on their journey, whether pursuing a four-year college, a D1 scholarship, a community college program, a gap year or any of the thousands of public or private colleges worldwide.

In general, 9th and 10th-grade students are focused on academic and extracurricular activities. For students interested in college, attending a presentation given by a college representative visiting EC or personally visiting a college campus is appropriate. This is also a good time to explore strengths and interests by completing the various assessments provided by counselors.

Juniors begin their intense interactions and college research with college counselors in December. Spring months are reserved for junior family college planning meetings and helping junior students refine their college lists.

Seniors begin working in August on their college applications and essays. During the fall, college counselors are focused on supporting seniors with their application needs and questions.
All students are invited to attend EC onsite visits by college representatives and other schoolwide college planning events hosted at EC. These events include our annual College Planning Night and other targeted college presentations and resources by grade level which can be found in Scoir, Canvas, EC This Week and the school website.

Grade	Traditional	Highly Competitive	NCAA Athlete
9	• Take appropriate course load • Determine extracurricular activities of interest • Attend college visits in the fall (open to all high school students) and college planning events	• Take challenging course load • Meet with your school counselor to determine 4-year academic plan • Determine extracurricular activities of interest • Attend college visits in the fall (open to all high school students) and college planning events • Attend fall and spring college fairs • Take PSAT 8/9	• Take appropriate course load to meet NCAA core course curriculum • Register with NCAA Eligibility Center • Meet with school counselor to determine 4-year academic plan that also meets NCAA requirements • Start using Core Course GPA
10	• Take appropriate course load • Focus on 1-2 areas of interest for resume and extracurriculars • Attend college visits in the fall (open to all high school students) and college planning events	• Take challenging course load • Reassess 4-year academic plan and when to incorporate AP classes • Pursue 1-2 areas of interest and consider how to gain depth and/or leadership in these activities • Attend college visits in the fall (open to all high school students) and college planning events • Attend fall and spring college fairs • Take PSAT and PreACT to determine which test to take junior year (compare scores)	• Take appropriate course load • Use Core GPA to make sure cumulative GPA meets NCAA expectations • Consider retaking any courses with low grades (if the core GPA is below NCAA minimum) • Create athletic resume and/or website with video • Reach out to coaches and teams, as NCAA allows

Grade	Traditional	Highly Competitive	NCAA Athlete
11	• Take appropriate course load • Pursue 1-2 areas of interest for increased depth and/or leadership • Attend college visits in the fall (open to all high school students) and college planning events • Attend spring NACAC college fair in Seattle • Take spring SAT or ACT • Meet with college counselor after December for college planning meeting • Research colleges either online or in person (continue through the summer) • Write first draft of college essay before summer • Ask and secure 1-2 letters of recommendation from EC teachers by last day of school	• Take challenging course load • Reassess 4-year academic plan and when to incorporate AP classes. Junior year is usually the heaviest academic load. • Take SAT or ACT in fall of junior year to allow time to retake several times, if desired • Continue leadership in extracurricular activities • Attend college visits in the fall (open to all high school students) and college planning events • Attend fall and spring college fairs • Meet with college counselor after February for college planning meeting • Research colleges via online or in person (continue through the summer) • Engage with colleges of interest (attend on campus events, meet with representatives at college fair, interview, etc.) • Ask and secure 1-2 letters of recommendation from EC teachers by the last day of school	• Take appropriate course load • Use Core GPA to make sure cumulative GPA meets NCAA expectations • Consider retaking any courses with low grades (if the core GPA is below NCAA minimum) • Update athletic resume and website • Actively reach out to coaches and teams, as NCAA allows • Work with EC coach, Athletic Director and college counselor to get guidance and advice • Ask and secure 1-2 letters of recommendation from EC teachers • Ask and secure the coach letter of recommendation and have it completed by summer in case an early application review is needed

Grade	Traditional	Highly Competitive	NCAA Athlete
12	• Attend summer college application workshops • Meet one-on-one with college counselor as needed for help with applications • Take SAT or ACT again, if needed, and have scores submitted to colleges • Attend college visits at EC to show demonstrated interest and ask questions • Finalize college list and determine which colleges are Early Decision, Early Action or Regular Decision • Complete applications and essays by November • Monitor your email for important information from colleges about your application and any missing materials • Research and complete scholarship applications • Make final decision by May 1	• Attend summer college application workshops • Meet one-on-one with college counselor as needed for help with applications • Attend college visits at EC to show demonstrated interest and to ask questions • Research which of your schools take SAT/ACT scores and their policies. Then, take SAT or ACT again, if needed, and have scores submitted to colleges • Finalize college list and determine which colleges are Early Decision, Early Action or Regular Decision • Monitor your email for important information from colleges about your application and any missing materials • Complete applications and essays by November • Research and complete scholarship applications • Make final decision by May 1	• Attend summer college application workshops • Meet one-on-one with college counselor as needed for help with applications • Attend college visits at EC to show demonstrated interest and to ask questions • Work with EC coach and Athletic Director for guidance about official visits, decisions • Monitor your email for important information from colleges about your application and any missing materials • Complete applications based on guidance from college coaches

SCOIR Resources

Scoir is an online college and career platform that many high schools have chosen to help students prepare for college. High schools use Scoir as a vehicle to submit documents (transcripts, letters of recommendation and reports) electronically to all colleges and universities.

Eastside Catholic juniors and seniors are required to access and utilize Scoir so college counselors can submit college application materials such as letters of recommendation, counselor recommendations, school profiles.

Many tools and resources are available on Scoir to all students including major and career explorations, personality assessments, resume tools and scholarship resources.

Career and Major Exploration Resources

Scoir provides helpful tools for students to research majors and careers, in addition to college planning. Since the college exploration and selection process can vary significantly from student to student, career and major exploration is often the best (and first) place to start. Some students may have a clearly defined educational path early on for several reasons: they have decided on a major they would like to pursue; know which institution they would like to attend or are recruited for athletics. Many students may not know what field of study they would like to pursue in college or which institution they would like to attend, which is perfectly acceptable.

Interest and Career Inventories

We recommend that all students take interest and career inventories to understand what career fields and majors they might be best suited for. Interest and career inventories are short surveys or quizzes where questions about strengths and weaknesses and areas of interest are evaluated and matched with potential majors and careers. Students can learn about skills necessary for the job, typical daily tasks and potential salaries by state within each profession. Our college counselors will provide students with opportunities to complete interest and career inventories, including, but not limited to, tutorial and mentor time.

Overview of College Admissions

Preparing for post-secondary education beyond Eastside Catholic is an exciting time for students and families. The process of exploring and applying to college will look different for every student and family.

The college counselors at EC are here to answer any questions students and families have and provide information, resources and assistance to ease the process. Over the last few years, higher education institutions have received record numbers of applications each year for a limited number of spaces. This is especially true for Ivy League institutions, highly selective institutions and even state institutions, such as the University of Washington.

We encourage students to manage a healthy balance of academics, service and extracurricular activities. It is easy for students to over-commit themselves, leaving little time for themselves to enjoy this period in their lives or dedicate enough time to their health and well-being. Institutions do not require students to participate in athletics or extracurricular activities, but they do want to see students getting involved in areas of interest. Colleges and universities have noted that the desired candidate possesses quality activities and involvement rather than quantity.

Components of the College Application

While many things have changed in college admissions over the years, colleges still consider specific categories when evaluating applicants, and it can be helpful to understand what colleges consider and how much weight they put into each component. Naturally, the value of these different pieces can and will change depending on the college's economic health and other outside factors. Regardless, colleges are trying to determine fit and interest within the application—two important criteria pieces that can be assessed through multiple aspects of a student's application.

Some of the most common factors that colleges take into consideration when reviewing an application are:

- Academics (rigor, grades and grade trends)
- Standardized Test Scores
- Essays
- Recommendations (counselor, teachers)
- Resume/Extracurricular Activities
- Other Application Components

Academics

Every high school submits a copy of its official school profile with each student's application. The school profile helps college admission representatives evaluate each transcript relative to what courses were available for each student.

Colleges want to know whether a high school offers AP or IB curriculum or no advanced curriculum at all. For example, a student in a rural community without access to AP or IB at their public high school would not be penalized in the application process because those courses were not an option. Therefore, the school profile is an important "guide" for colleges when evaluating the rigor of a student's transcript. Using the transcript, colleges will review the rigor of a student based on the number of AP, Honors and College in the High School courses on the EC transcript.

At Eastside Catholic, our school profile is crafted carefully and updated annually before the school year begins. The most current copy is available on our website for all students and college representatives. The profile highlights the unique characteristics of EC. It quantifies essential information for colleges, including the number of AP courses offered, the breakdown of cumulative GPAs for the current senior class, the grading scale and graduation requirements. Knowing all the information in the profile is important for colleges to assess what courses EC students enrolled in relative to what was offered.

The academic prerequisites differ by college, but most colleges prefer a traditional and classical college preparatory curriculum as the core foundation.

Public Universities	Private 4-Year Colleges
English, 4 years Mathematics, 4 years (WA state math-based quantitative requirement in senior year) Science, 3 years Social Studies/History, 3 years World Languages, 2-3 years Performing Arts, 1 year	English, 4 years Mathematics, 4 years Science, 3-4 years Social Studies/History, 3-4 years World Languages, 2-3 years Performing Arts, 1 year
Highly Selective Colleges	**Community College**
English, 4 years Mathematics, 4 years Science, 4 years Social Studies/History, 4 years World Language, 4 years Academic Electives, 2 years	Open door policy. Will accept EC graduation to enter community college. Might require specific academic requirements if student is applying to a specific AA or certificate program.

Please note: Senior year classes and grades matter. Colleges want to see senior-year students complete an academic schedule similar to what they took in the previous three years. Washington State public universities have a Senior Year Quantitative Math or Science requirement. Seniors are expected to take a math course in 12th grade if they have not yet completed pre-calculus. Grades are submitted after the first semester of senior year and then again after graduation. Colleges look at the final grades and can rescind an offer if a student has not maintained the same GPA and/or academic performance as previous years.

Standardized Tests

At Eastside Catholic, students are required to take the PSAT during their sophomore year.) We also suggest sophomores take the PreACT to determine which test (SAT or ACT) they want to take and submit to colleges for admission. "Testing companies such as Revolution Prep and Compass Prep have resources online that compare scores to determine which standardized test is the best fit for a student."

Students generally take all official standardized tests for college admission during their junior year and possibly some in the fall of their senior year. Taking these standardized tests senior year is not recommended as this can be a busy time with completing college applications, senior year course load and any extra-curricular activities. The testing timetable depends on when students have time to prepare for the test and whether they want to take it multiple times. It can take up to four weeks to receive the test results, so rather than taking tests back-to-back without any additional preparation, students are encouraged to plan for time in between test dates to receive the results and allow extra time to study based on their specific areas that need improvement.

Tests Offered at Eastside Catholic

All freshmen take a practice PSAT 8/9 exam in the fall when the PSAT is administered to sophomores and juniors. This test exposes ninth graders to the test structure and provides a baseline score to assess future scores.
Sophomores take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall so they can use these results to help them prepare for the SAT or ACT taken during their junior year. Juniors take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall. This is another helpful practice test before taking the official SAT or ACT.

Eastside Catholic partners with several test prep providers to offer many free practice tests, in-person and virtual. Compass Prep regularly presents to EC students in the fall about trends in testing and they offer a free virtual PSAT, PreACT, SAT and ACT to EC students. Revolution Prep offers free ACT and SAT virtual exams on several weekends throughout the year and provides workshops on executive functioning and college-ready topics. Huntington Issaquah offers in-person practice tests periodically. All these testing opportunities are free to EC students.

Please Note: All PSAT exams are required for students to take as this is the only tool we use to assess the quality, retention and synthesis of our Eastside Catholic curriculum.

PSAT

The Preliminary SAT is a practice test for the SAT. Freshmen, sophomores and juniors take this exam in October at Eastside Catholic. Juniors can qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Corporation's scholarship programs if they have top scores. The test measures verbal reasoning skills, critical reading skills, mathematical problem-solving skills and writing skills.

SAT

The College Board offers the SAT reasoning test to measure student's verbal, mathematical and writing abilities acquired through their education. Most students take the SAT for the first time in the spring of their junior year. It can be taken multiple times, although many colleges recommend limiting the number to three. While some colleges will allow students to pick and choose test scores, some colleges require students to submit all their SAT scores. During the 2025-26 academic school year, Eastside Catholic will host a school-day SAT on October 8 for EC seniors and on April 21. Registration information will be emailed to students and families prior to those dates.

The ACT

The ACT is a test of educational development that measures how much a student has learned. The test focuses on four subject areas: English, math, reading and natural sciences. Students generally take the ACT for the first time officially in the spring of their junior year. In some cases, colleges will allow students to select which subject scores they would like to send with their applications.

AP Placement Tests

Administered by the College Board, AP exams are offered in May; registration occurs in the preceding fall. Depending on the score (and the college requisite), students can earn college credit. Each college determines what score equates to credit at their institution. These are self-reported on the student application. Students

do not submit official score reports until after their senior year. At that time, the matriculating college assesses how to grant credit for the AP score results.

Please Note: It is a student's responsibility to send AP score reports and transcripts to the college or university that they decide to attend to receive college credit. All AP score reports can be requested by the student through their personal college board online account at collegeboard.org.

Test-Optional Colleges Post-COVID

As a result of the pandemic, many colleges dropped their test requirements completely. These colleges are genuinely test-blind and do a holistic evaluation of the applicant. While many colleges went test-optional during COVID and have communicated they will continue with the same policy for the near future, it may be confusing sometimes to know whether to send a test score along with your application. We recommend that every student take an SAT or ACT, so they have the option to submit or not submit their scores. Students can talk with their college counselor about whether it makes sense to submit scores to all their colleges, some of them or none.

Keeping Things in Perspective

Standardized tests are only one component of the college application. With an increasing number of colleges going test-optional, they recognize that the results of four-hour tests do not always indicate college success or a good fit. Many colleges that are now test-optional have reported inflation in their average test scores, and a dwindling percentage of students that submit scores. The EC Student Services Team does not recommend taking the test more than three times. College Board, ACT and test prep organizations make money by tapping into test anxieties, so remember to keep things in perspective. Your test score does not define you!

- Registration and more information about the ACT exam can be accessed at act.org.
- Registration and information about the SAT exam can be accessed at collegeboard.org.

A Few Suggestions

- Use free online resources to prepare for standardized tests (Khan Academy, act.org).
- Use free resources from the school or public library to supplement your preparation or purchase a test prep book so you can take several full-length practice tests.
- Take advantage of the free practice tests that Eastside Catholic coordinates through Revolution Prep or those offered for a minimal fee throughout the year (advertised in Canvas and EC This Week email).
- Only take unofficial practice tests until you are ready to take the test officially. Do not take official tests for practice as these scores might be requested when you apply.
- Plan for test preparation by choosing a time in the year when you can study. In between sports, over holidays and during the summer are good times that limit other schedule conflicts. Make test prep study time a commitment on your calendar.
- If you are taking the test at an unfamiliar facility, visit the facility beforehand so you know the route and can minimize any stress.
- The night before the exam, make sure you get a good night's sleep and eat a healthy breakfast in the

morning. Confirm you have all the required testing supplies ready to go in the morning.

Application Essay

Most colleges and universities require an essay as part of the application to their school. As mentioned in the previous section, the Common App contains several essay prompts that students can choose to respond to and submit to schools. University systems such as the University of California and public institutions in Texas (ApplyTexas) have similar structures for their applications and essays.

2025-26 Common Application Essay Prompts

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you face a challenge, setback or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?

5. Discuss an accomplishment, event or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

6. Describe a topic, idea or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Even schools that do not use the Common App can require an essay in consideration for admission. Students can often compose one “main” essay and modify it as needed to use it to apply to various schools. Some schools have supplemental essays which are typically shorter in length. Supplemental essays can vary in topic and should be regarded as an important piece in college admission. While the Common App essay prompts are confirmed
in February of each proceeding year, supplemental essays are usually not published until August 1 before the application year.

Colleges use application essays to gauge writing ability and to learn more about students. Students are encouraged to write about topics important to them and highlight their unique character.

Additional Information Essay

Sometimes colleges include supplemental questions that ask the student if there is any additional

information that a school should know about them. This question is an opportunity for students to address any hardships they may have encountered throughout high school. If a student had a particularly difficult semester or year and their grades went down, this supplemental essay is a place for them to address this occurrence. Other occurrences such as a death in the family, illnesses or depression are examples of items that can be addressed in this section. Anything that may have hindered or been a potential obstacle for a student that affected academic performance or impacted a student during high school is appropriate to address in a supplemental question that asks for additional information.

As a result of recent Supreme Court rulings, some colleges have added additional prompts where students can share pieces of their story that are not addressed in the main essay or gathered from other parts of the application. Please reach out to your Counselor if you have any questions about these.

In the Common Application, there is a dedicated space for students to address academic or personal issues not covered in other sections. The question is optional and appears in the "Additional Information" part of the application. Students can use this space to address transcript aberrations (credit recovery, courses taken outside of EC) or significant challenges that affected grades. Students are encouraged to talk with their college counselor about this additional essay and whether it would be appropriate to write.

College Essay Resources

College essay resources are posted on the College Counseling Canvas page. Additionally, college counselors host essay workshops and provide access to The College Essay Guy's resources and workshops throughout the spring and summer. Resources in Canvas include examples of powerful essays, advice for drafting the essays and the many websites and additional resources available to students.

Please Note: It is important for students to take the application essays seriously. It is always beneficial to have an adult, such as a parent, teacher, counselor or trusted advisor, proofread an essay. However, adults need to remember that essays should accurately reflect a student and their writing ability; therefore, it is best to avoid over-editing an essay. Lastly, students are encouraged to be creative. Real people are reading college essays and enjoy reading unique pieces of work.

Letters of Recommendation

Colleges and universities may require at least one letter of recommendation to be submitted as part of the college application. However, some schools will not accept any. Visit each college or university's admission webpage to determine how many letters of recommendation can be submitted and/or are required. The Common App and Scoir indicate how many letters of recommendation are requested.

Teacher Letters of Recommendation

Juniors can ask their teachers for a letter of recommendation starting in the spring of their junior year. There is a specific process to secure the letters of recommendation that must be followed and will be communicated to students via email, presentations, and Canvas.

In short, students ask their teachers face-to-face first. Students then need to fully complete the required Teacher Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire in Scoir and submit it. At that point, college counselors will request letters on behalf of the student from within Scoir, so documents can all be submitted electronically. College counselors routinely check completed teacher surveys, but students are encouraged to email the counselor to let them know the teacher questionnaire is complete. Additionally, EC teachers can set caps for the number of recommendation letters they say "yes" to, to ensure time to write detailed and thorough letters for each student.

Teachers maintain their respective lists and will not retain any students who do not follow the procedures. Some teachers have additional questions to answer. Students must recognize that teachers write these letters outside of class time, which is why the process starts in April of the junior year and requires specific steps. Teachers reserve the right to deny a student's letter of recommendation if the student has not provided enough information, the student did not request a letter in a timely manner, or the student failed to complete the tasks in a timely manner. Teacher recommendation letters and forms are submitted through Scoir.

The Process to Request a Teacher Recommendation

1. In the spring of junior year, ask a core subject teacher in person, or face-to-face. Talk with teachers when things are quiet rather than during a class or between classes. Give them time to consider the request.
2. If they agree to write the letter, complete the Required Teacher Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire in Scoir.
3. Once the survey is complete, email your counselor so they can check the thoroughness of the survey and then request letters on your behalf.

Counselor Letter

Counselors write letters for each student in their assigned pool if the student has met the required expectations. Students are asked to complete the Initial College Planning Questionnaire before scheduling a one-on-one meeting so counselors can be prepared with specific college ideas. Students are encouraged to complete the survey thoroughly as more information helps the counselor write their letter of recommendation. The more interaction a college counselor has with a student, the more detailed and informed the counselor's letter will be. Counselor recommendation letters and forms are submitted through Scoir.

Outside Letter

Students can request letters of recommendation to be submitted from people in their community or outside of their school if it is beneficial. Sometimes hearing from a coach, boss, instructor or someone else who personally knows the student outside of academics is welcomed. However, it should be noted that schools often put limits on the number of letters of recommendation that can be submitted and discourage letters of recommendation that are composed by family, friends or peers. Please consult your college counselor about how to submit outside letters of recommendation to various schools. Often, if a student wants an outside voice to be heard as a letter of recommendation, that recommender can talk to the college counselor or send them a paragraph about the student for the counselor to mention in their recommendation. This way, they are not writing an entire letter or replacing one from a teacher, but their experience with the student is still shared.

Please Note: Colleges will not read more than two core subject teacher letters of recommendation. If a student wants a third letter, they should ask someone outside of academics. EC will not allow more than two teachers to write a recommendation letter for a student unless a college explicitly states that they require more than two academic teachers.

Resume and Extracurricular Activities

Resumes are not a required part of the college admissions process, but the information listed on a resume is often comparable to what you should list on a college application or talk about during a college interview. Having a resume will be necessary when applying for a job and can be helpful when conducting college visits. Even without paid work skills, students can list skills, honors, awards, accomplishments, and activities.

The Application

College applications are typically completed during the fall of senior year in high school, although most are available starting August 1. Seniors should complete college applications independently but are welcome to meet with their counselors whenever they have questions, need clarification or need additional assistance when completing their applications. Some colleges use the Common Application, the Coalition Application or their own distinct application. Some colleges offer all types, so students can choose which one you prefer.

- The Common Application. The Common Application (referred to as "the Common App") is an online application that can be completed and submitted to many different schools. There are around 1,000 colleges and universities that utilize the Common App. By completing this single application, students can apply to more schools in less time than completing individual applications for each school.

- The Coalition Application. The Coalition for Access, Affordability and Success was created to improve the application process for students and provide a platform that allows students to organize and apply to many different schools. The Coalition comprises over 150 institutions that graduate at least 70% of their students within six years. The Coalition has created a single application like the Common App.

- University of California Application. This single application can be submitted to nine different University of California colleges. It is helpful to have a transcript handy when completing this time-intensive application.

- Cal State Apply. This application can be submitted to 23 different California State University campuses. Students do not need to submit any letters of recommendation, resumes or personal statements. Most of the admissions decisions are based off academic coursework they enter into the application.

- Apply Texas. When applying to multiple publics and some private colleges in Texas, students use this single application. Grades and classes are self-reported, so it helps to have a transcript handy when completing the application.

- Service Academy Applications. The process to apply for one of our nation's Service Academies is quite different than the traditional college application. There are specific steps to receive a congressional nomination and to submit the application and physical fitness forms. Students considering this option should meet with their college counselor early in the spring of their junior year to meet all deadlines and complete the detailed process.

- Common Black College Application. For $20, students can apply to 66 member HBCUs and specify their top four choices.

- Canadian and International Applications. UCAS is a common application shared by many international colleges (but not all). They use different criteria to assess applications and make final decisions. They are also not bound to the May 1 university college deposit deadline. Students interested in any international school should meet with their college counselor early in the spring of their junior year to understand the different criteria and processes.

- Private Applications. While many colleges use one of the applications mentioned above, some still have their own distinct applications and portals. When adding colleges to Scoir, students need to indicate which application they are using to submit all supporting documentation in a timely fashion.

Please Note: There is a fee for submitting a college application. Some colleges may offer to waive the fee and some offer "fee waivers" to students who qualify, but most schools expect the fee to be paid to consider the applicant for admission. These fees can add up as a student applies to multiple schools. It is beneficial to double-check with a school to see if they ever waive application fees or offer fee waivers (and the criteria for those fee waivers.)

To verify whether a college accepts the Common App, a student can check several spots:

1. The Common App has a list of schools that utilize the application, so students can explore schools by viewing the list.

2. When adding colleges to Scoir (My Colleges -> Applying), Scoir will identify all the different applications each college offers.

3. Students can visit individual school websites and view their admissions page. On their admissions page, schools describe their application process and often note whether they accept Common App, Coalition App or their own application.

4. Students can create a Common App account for free and then look up the schools in the application itself. It is recommended to use a personal email when creating an account on the Common Application.

Students should carefully complete all aspects of the college application as it demonstrates character and personality to the reader. Spelling, capitalization and other mistakes can affect how the application is viewed, so students are encouraged to carve out time to complete it carefully.

Transcripts

A student's transcript is the single most important item in the Admissions folder in Scoir. Course grades from freshman, sophomore and junior year are evident; and the first semester senior year courses (uploaded by your counselor). At the end of the first semester, an updated transcript is submitted to all colleges listed in Scoir. Progress reports from first-semester senior year are only sent if requested by the college; college counselors will let students know if a request for first-semester progress reports is received. This request is typical for students applying "early decision" or "early action" as colleges want to know how students are progressing before making an admission decision.

Please Note: Some colleges now accept unofficial transcripts over the official one with your application, which can be uploaded by the student. All students have access to their most recent transcript in PlusPortals in the Documents folder. This folder is accessible to both students and parents. Transcripts are emailed to students and families at the end of every semester.

Important Notes About Submission of Transcripts

High school transcripts are sent to the colleges and universities on the students' list in Scoir. Scoir must be updated to send transcripts to the correct colleges. For seniors applying to college, transcripts are automatically sent three times during the academic year; students do not need to request that counselors submit these.

- Initial Transcript: An initial transcript will be submitted at the time a student sends an application to a school, usually in November.

- Mid-Year Transcript: During senior year, once first semester grades have been posted, a mid-year transcript will automatically be sent to every college and university on a student's list in Scoir. Some colleges and universities will admit students based on their performance during the first and second semesters of senior year, so students must do their best the entire year.

- Final Transcript: A final high school transcript will be automatically sent to the college or university a senior chooses to attend. This school decision must be marked as "Enrolling" in Scoir. EC counselors only send a final transcript to one college. Double depositing is highly discouraged as it is unethical and puts all student acceptance at risk. If a college finds out a student has double deposited, they have the right to withdraw their acceptance.

Transcripts Outside of EC

College counselors upload any outside transcripts into Scoir to be submitted with the EC transcript. While EC does not include outside courses or grades on the EC transcript, we want to share this information as part of your application. We automatically upload and submit any outside transcripts (transfer, credit recovery) unless a student requests otherwise.

UWHS transcripts are generally not required as part of the application process. Once a student makes their final college decision, they should personally request an official transcript from UWHS courses. We do not have access to these transcripts.

High School Profile

Every school maintains and updates an annual school profile that helps colleges understand each school's unique characteristics. EC updates their school profile by September of each school year. The profile includes information about our curriculum, grading policies, school accreditation, standardized test scores, college matriculation and notes about our unique programs. The profile is sent to colleges with the Secondary School Report and is always located on the EC College Counseling webpage.

Secondary School Report

The Secondary School Report is completed by the school counselor and includes information about the student in the context of the EC curriculum and community. Specifically, colleges ask for the rigor of a student's curriculum compared to other EC students and any felony, suspension or expulsion violations.

Admission Interviews

An interview with an admission representative or alumnus will rarely negatively affect a college application. The recommendation of a teacher who has worked with a student for several years is far more important and insightful.

While some colleges require and recommend an interview, some will not allow students to have an admissions interview. Smaller colleges tend to value interviews and more heavily weigh this in the admissions evaluation. Each college website should explain its interview policies and procedures. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate with the college for an interview if it is allowed.

Some tips for the interview:

- Be prepared to talk about your accomplishments and activities.
- Take a resume or list of activities, so the interviewer has information in front of them about you.
- Ask before the interview about the format. Some colleges will invite family members in at the end to ask questions, so check with the rep about what is appropriate.
- Dress appropriately. Students do not need to dress in suits or fancy dress. However, first impressions are especially important and dressing in clean and tidy attire shows the student respect and values the interview.
- Arrive early. If you are going to a new location, students should arrive early so the interview can start on time.
- Prepare several questions to ask of the interviewer that cannot be answered online. Arriving prepared demonstrates a genuine interest in the college.
- Be appreciative of the interviewer and their time. Say thank you and write a thank you note (or send an email) afterward.

Other Factors

At most selective colleges, all students have demonstrated they can handle a rigorous education. It can be hard to differentiate between applicants, so colleges often look to other factors to help in their decision. Additionally, colleges have institutional priorities that influence their decisions. Listed below are some of these factors.

Demonstrated Interest

Colleges want students who will ultimately accept their offer and attend their institution. They assess this based on the number of campus visits, meetings with admission counselors and the quality of students' communication with the college, as many institutions track interactions. Demonstrated interest can be attending a college visit EC, visiting with a college representative at a local college fair, visiting the college campus for a tour, attending an information session, emailing or communicating with the admissions representative, etc. This interest indicates that students are more likely to enroll in their college than other students who have had no communication. Since colleges want to achieve the highest yield possible, they will offer acceptance to students who have shown a genuine interest in their college and programs. Larger colleges and universities do not (and cannot) track demonstrated interest.

Legacy

Most private colleges respond to their graduate's loyal support by giving an edge to the children of alumni in the admissions process. Being the son or daughter of an alum will not make much difference for candidates who fall significantly short of the acceptance averages, but it can provide an advantage for otherwise competitive applicants. Some colleges may be more influenced by legacy status than others.

Artistic Talent

Colleges are interested in unusual and unique talents. Many colleges offer the opportunity to submit a portfolio that highlights a candidate's abilities. Look for special instructions in the application about whether a college will accept these materials and how they want the pieces submitted.

Athletic Abilities

Potential athletes are in contact with college coaches well before their senior year if they are a competitive applicant. The college coach plays a significant role in whether a student is offered acceptance. The relationship between the prospective student and the coach should be a priority for any student wanting to play college-level athletics. If an EC student is interested in playing sports in college, they are encouraged to talk with their high school coach, the EC athletic director and their college counselor to help manage these contacts and responsibilities during the application process.

Diversity

As with the previous factors, it's hard to know how much this affects an admissions decision. While colleges will only accept students who can handle the academic load, they also value a diversity of cultures, languages, religions and races on campus to help prepare students for the global economy. Diversity questions are asked in every application and should be answered honestly.

Completing the College Application

Creating a Well-Balanced List

The purpose of meeting with your college counselor in the spring of junior year is to help create an appropriate list of colleges containing a mixture of safety, match and high-reach schools. Your college counselor can look at your transcript, SAT scores, resume and historical data from to help assess the likelihood of acceptance and help categorize a list of colleges.

The counselor's Junior Survey covers college size, location, academics, financial and other important issues for each student. Completing the survey helps your college counselor prepare and suggest colleges. Questions in the survey will cover these topics (and more):

Size	What is the student population? How large are typical freshman classes? Small college is up to 5,000 students; medium college is 5,00-15,000 students; and a large college is over 15,000 students
Location	How far is the college from your home? What is the area surrounding the campus like? How accessible is public transportation? Where are off-campus cultural and social opportunities?
Population	Who are the students and where do they come from? Consider race, ethnic origin, male/female ratio, geographical distribution and resident/commuter ratio.
Curriculum/ Facilities	What is the focus of the curriculum? Is the emphasis on teaching or research? What majors are available? Are there particular requirements for graduation? How about honors programs and internships? What is the quality of facilities such as science labs and athletic facilities?
Academic Rigor/Structure	Do you want an academically demanding environment, or would you prefer a school where you could do well without knocking yourself out? Do you want a highly structured academic framework, or do you want a curriculum that allows for independent projects? Do you want a liberal art or professional curriculum?
Social Opportunities	What clubs and teams are available? What intramural sports are available? Are there fraternities and sororities? Is there access to facilities such as darkrooms, practice rooms, art studios and fitness centers? What off-campus opportunities exist?

Personal Factors	Can your dietary, religious, residential and/or medical considerations be accommodated? Do you feel safe to be yourself on campus?
Cost	What is the total yearly tuition and fees, room and board, books and personal expenses? Is financial aid available (need and non-need based)? What are the limits on your family's college costs? Is it expensive to get to and from campus?
Other	Do you want to participate in off-campus internships? Would you be willing or need to work part-time while attending college? Is it important to study abroad during one or more of your college years?

During the Junior College Planning Meeting, students leave with a list of colleges to research. Your counselor will explain how to research colleges, but students need to dig deeper into qualitative and quantitative) data to assess which colleges will be a good match for them. With this information, an official test score and a solid junior year transcript, counselors can better help students create a realistic list.

Responsibilities by Application Component

The below table shows application items submitted to colleges and universities during the admissions process, broken down by student versus counselor responsibility.

Item	Student Responsibility	EC College Counselor Responsibility
Application		
College Application, as well as any other platforms for applications such as the University of California system and California State University system	X	
College Essays	X	Will provide tailored feedback
Standardized Test Scores		
ACT or SAT Score Reports	X	
AP Exam Test Scores	X	
Transcripts		
EC High School Transcript		X
UWHS and/or Seattle U Transcripts	X	
Outside Transcripts (APEX, BYU, other high school transcripts)	Students must determine if colleges will accept any outside transcripts from EC. If yes, the student is responsible for submitting.	Counselor will submit "outside" transcripts if they are on file on the EC system

Item	Student Responsibility	EC College Counselor Responsibility
Letters of Recommendation		
Teacher Letters of Recommendation	Student must request and complete Teacher Recommendation Survey	Counselor submits via Scoir
Counselor Letter of Recommendation	Student must meet with a counselor and complete the Counselor Survey	X (for students who have completed the survey and met with the college counselor)
School Report and Materials • Current Senior Year Courses • School Profile • Secondary School Report		X
Scholarships/Financial Aid		
Submit FAFSA	X	
Submit CSS Profile	X	
Student Athletes		
Register at NCAA Eligibility Center	X	
Upload transcript to NCAA Eligibility Center		X

Counselors will be in contact with seniors throughout the application process. Students are responsible for providing college counselors with their list of which colleges along with their application deadlines so that college counselors can prepare documents with enough time.

Application Options: ED, EA, REA, RD and Rolling

College application deadlines have been occurring earlier over time, so much so that students are often admitted to schools based on their academic performance from freshman, sophomore and junior years only. Seniors typically apply to colleges and universities during the fall, before first semester grades have been issued.

Students have different options regarding the timeframe for applying to colleges. A description of each application plan is listed below.

Early Application Options/Plans

- Early Decision (ED) – A binding agreement is made with the college/university that the student will attend the school they applied to with early decision if admitted. Students who apply to schools as ED applicants have a clear, first-choice school.
- Restrictive Early Action (REA) – A non-binding agreement that prevents applicants from applying to other schools early (with ED or EA). For example, Stanford allows students to apply REA, prohibiting students from applying to Ivy League schools or private colleges/universities early. Under REA, students can apply to public colleges and universities early, but not private colleges and universities. However, students can apply regular decision (RD) to private colleges and universities.
- Early Action) (EA) – A non-binding agreement, for students to submit an early application and receive an early response.

PROS of Applying Early	CONS of Applying Early
• Higher acceptance rate of applicants (depending on the college) • More scholarships awarded to early applicants • Demonstrating a high level of interest in a specific school or a few schools • Earlier notification of admission decision, usually by mid-December • Earlier notification of financial aid package • Peace of mind earlier during senior year	• More competitive applicant pool • More work to be done during the beginning of senior year • FAFSA and CSS Profile completed earlier • No ability to compare financial offers

Regular Application Options/Plans

- Regular Decision (RD) – A non-binding agreement, an application is submitted within the regular timeframe designated by an institution. Deadlines could be anywhere from November to July, most of which are due around January.
- Rolling Admission – A non-binding agreement, applications are typically accepted throughout the year and are reviewed upon being received.

Making the Final Decision

Colleges will either Accept, Deny or Waitlist a student, which will be communicated via their portal or a postal envelope.

If a student is waitlisted, here are some thoughts to keep in mind:

- Colleges use waitlists as their insurance. If a college ends up with open spaces in the freshman class (fewer students accept their offers than expected), colleges may accept students from the waitlist. The number of students taken off a waitlist varies from year to year.
- Students may not receive an offer from the waitlist until the summer before college starts. Most students want to decide by the end of their senior year to prepare for college.
- Because the waitlist is unpredictable, it's unwise to count on eventually getting an offer.
- If a student hasn't heard from a waitlist college by the May 1 deposit deadline, they should make a deposit at another college that they would be happy attending to ensure a place in the freshman

class. Students will lose this deposit if they are offered a spot on the waitlist and decide not to attend their second-choice college.

Except for students applying for Early Decision, seniors are required to make a final decision by May 1. Students can make a deposit to only one college by this date. Tools to help students make their final decision are available in Scoir.

Please Note: It is unethical and unfair to double deposit. College counselors are not allowed to send more than one final official transcript. If colleges learn about a student making a deposit to more than one college, they can rescind their offer to the student. In the end, a student who doubles deposits can lose all their college options. May 1 is the deposit deadline, so plan to make this final decision.

Learning Differences in College Admissions

Colleges must provide learning support resources for any student with current documentation of a functional limitation who self-identifies as needing accommodations. While some candidates choose to disclose this information in the application, students are not mandated to reveal any personal information. The application process for students with diagnosed disabilities is the same. However, students who need testing accommodations, note-taking support, assistive technology, and/or executive functioning resources should spend more time asking about academic support on prospective college campuses. Take the time to assess whether the academic resources and support at prospective colleges will meet your needs. There is variability in the support offered in higher education and students should proactively research the services available through the Student Access Center or Disability Resource Center of each school of interest. Keep in mind that in higher education students must initiate the process of accommodation approval and academic support resources.

While on a campus tour, students should make it a priority to visit the academic support center and learn how the college intentionally supports students. Most centers for academic support will accept visits from prospective students and welcome your questions.

Questions to ask about each college's academic support centers:

1. Is there a point person in the academic support program/office that will help the student with a plan to achieve academic success or does the student themselves do this?
2. What support services does the college provide? Students should share their specific accommodations, so they fully understand if these are easily accessible.
3. How does a student request accommodations from each of their classes? Does the academic support center communicate this or does the student need to discuss this with every professor?
4. How recent does the neuropsychic/physician evaluation need to be? When does a student submit this to the academic support office—the summer before school starts or when the student is on campus in the fall?

5. Does the school have academic requirements that might be difficult, such as a foreign language or math course? Are graduation requirements different for students with learning differences, or are waivers available for certain classes that may be difficult?
6. How does peer tutoring work at each school? Is it open 24/7 or do students need to make an appointment?
7. Is there a summer transition program for students with diagnosed learning disabilities to help prepare them for college academics?

Standardized Test Accommodations

The EC Academic Resource Department manages all the extended time or other test-taking modifications for the SAT, PSAT, AP and the ACT. Students are encouraged to apply for testing accommodations with the College Board and/or ACT after using their EC SAP (Student Academic Plan) for at least six months. The EC Academic Resources Department handles the request and delivery of all testing modifications. We recommend that a student submit the testing accommodation request in the spring of their sophomore year to use the accommodations for the fall PSAT. The College Board and ACT are separate third-party institutions. Eastside Catholic and its staff do not and cannot make decisions on accommodations for third party institutions. Only College Board or ACT approved accommodations can be used on the SAT, PSAT, AP and ACT exams. The Eastside Catholic SAP cannot be used on these exams.

College Board and ACT require current documentation and proof that students are using the accommodations in their high school setting. The Academic Resource Department will work with students and families to complete the application for accommodations for those institutions. If an application is denied, students can appeal the decision if they provide the additional information and documentation requested by College Board or the ACT

Because the time needed for College Board and the ACT to respond can be several weeks, students are encouraged to start this process at the end of their freshman year so all testing during the sophomore, junior and senior years can be approved in time for accommodations. Colleges do not know if students receive any modifications on their tests. College Board and ACT accommodations roll over each academic year; students do not need to reapply each school year for accommodations.

Colleges Designed with Unique Academic Support Programs

All colleges have a disability resource office, which encapsulates learning disabilities and supports which neurodiverse students may access. The level and type of support vary from school to school, and it is in the best interest of the student to contact the colleges directly for more information.

- Adelphi University (NY)
- American University (DC)
- Beacon College (FL)
- Curry College (MA)
- DePaul University (IL)
- Hofstra University (NY)
- Landmark College (VT)
- Lynn University (FL)
- Marshall University (WV)
- McDaniel College (MD)
- Mitchell College (MA)
- Northeastern University (MA)
- Southern Oregon University (OR)
- University of Arizona (AZ)
- University of Connecticut (CT)
- University of Denver (CO)
- University of the Ozarks (AR)

Landmark College

Landmark College in Vermont offers a fabulous summer program for high school students and students entering their first year of college, which is designed to prepare them for academic success. For students who still need to master the executive functioning skills required for academic success, summer programs are the best resources grounded in research and experience.

Athletics and NCAA

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a nonprofit organization that regulates and organizes the athletic programs of colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Additionally, it supports student-athletes who compete in athletics across 1,100 colleges and universities. Some students also choose to compete in college athletics through the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletes (NAIA), which serves 250 colleges and universities.

All students who desire to play a sport at the Division I or Division II level in college must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at eligibilitycenter.org. Registration generates an NCAA ID, which NCAA colleges require for student-athletes.

There are different eligibility requirements for Division I, Division II and Division III athletics. Division I athletics has the strictest requirements of the three divisions and Division III does not have any requirements for athletes. Further guidance is available from the NCAA, including the initial eligibility standards and a roadmap through high school and the NCAA Eligibility Center Registration checklist.

Recruitment

Colleges and universities recruit some student-athletes to play a sport for their school. If a student is recruited by a Division I or Division II school for athletics, the college application process will differ from non-recruited students. Recruited students will typically still need to submit a complete application to the university, which may include teacher letters of recommendation and essays. Policies and procedures are specific to each university. Students should communicate with the Admissions Department of each university and keep their EC college counselor informed about their steps in the process.

Student-athletes in certain sports can be recruited as early as sophomore year. It is not recommended for students to commit to playing for a specific college or university this early in high school, but for students to keep an open dialogue with all schools that may be looking at them.

CourseCoreGPA

Eastside Catholic School is proud to make CoreCoureGPA available to EC families free of charge. CoreCourseGPA will be a helpful academic tool for you and your student-athlete.

CoreCourseGPA.com incorporates the NCAA-recognized core courses for Eastside Catholic School into the online course entry forms, calculates Division I and Division II core course GPA, automatically factors weighted grades into calculations and tracks course requirements for Division I and Division II. Students' core course information is saved for the duration of their high school career. Students and families can see which EC courses are NCAA-approved by viewing the EC Curriculum Guide.

CoreCourseGPA.com also provides access to free recruiting webinars through FreeRecruitingWebinar.org, a nonprofit program. Webinar previews as well as full-length recruiting webinars may be accessed on the FreeRecruitingWebinar.org website. Viewing a full-length webinar is highly recommended to learn about the facts and rules of recruiting. The recruiting process starts in the freshman year. Make sure you are prepared.

To activate individual student accounts:

1. Visit CoreCourseGPA.com and select the blue FREE New Member Account button on the upper left-hand side of the homepage.
2. Input the EC school codes for each new faculty/student member in the New Member account creation box.
3. Contact your College Counselor or Athletic Director for the EC code and if you have questions about this tool.

College Checklist for Student-Athletes

- What is the level of competition?
- What is the team's philosophy toward sport, players and/or school?
- What is the graduation rate of the athletes?
- Do athletes have mandatory study halls?
- Are tutors available for all courses?

- How much time per week is required for practice?
- What training facilities are available?
- Does the college have a history of NCAA rules violations?
- How many other students is the coach recruiting for the same position?
- Are injuries covered by the team insurance policy?
- Can the scholarship be affected by an injury?
- What do current team members say about the college, the team and the coach?
- Are the players and coaches honest? Do they answer student questions in a straightforward and candid way?
- Are the coaches interested in academics? Did they ask about education and career interests?

Financial Aid Information

Financial aid is monetary assistance students receive to help pay for college. While most people think of loans as the main form of financial aid, financial aid consists of grants, scholarships and loans. There are two main types of financial aid — need-based aid and merit-based aid.

- Need-based Aid: Financial aid is awarded to students who demonstrate financial need. This need is determined through information provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Merit-based Aid: Scholarships awarded by colleges and universities and/or outside organizations that give money based on academic achievement, high scores on college entrance exams (ACT and SAT) or exceptional performance in activities.

FAFSA - Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Applying for financial aid is often the most misunderstood part of the college application process and is also the
most important.

- Typically, students and their families can file for financial aid on October 1.
- Applicants use prior-prior year (PPY) tax information when reporting personal and family income.

Completing the FAFSA is essential for securing most types of financial aid for colleges. In addition to federal grants and loans, many colleges, states and scholarship programs use the form to assess eligibility for their financial aid programs.

We encourage all families to complete the FAFSA even if they do not think they will qualify for aid because students and families can always decline all awarded assistance. Still, it is difficult to get assistance if needed when the FAFSA is not completed or after the application has closed. Also, most colleges and universities award need-based grants and scholarships based on information from the FAFSA. The FAFSA can be completed at studentaid.gov.

While the federal deadline for completing the FAFSA is June 30, colleges and universities may have earlier priority deadlines. It is best to consult the websites of the individual schools a student is applying to and verify the school's financial aid forms and deadlines.

College Scholarship Services (CSS) Profile

In addition to the FAFSA, some colleges and universities also require applicants to complete a College Scholarship Services (CSS) profile. The CSS profile is an online form through the College Board that examines a family's income, but it goes into more detail than the FAFSA. This form is also used to determine financial aid eligibility. Private colleges and universities that cannot rely on state funding to assist with financial aid often require the CSS profile to be completed to understand more about the amount of aid a student needs.

Scholarships

Scholarships are awarded to students through a few different means. Students automatically qualify for some scholarships by completing a college application, FAFSA, CSS profile, receiving a high score on the PSAT/NMSQT or receiving high scores on college entrance exams (ACT and SAT). These scholarships are the easiest for students to apply for because they don't require an additional application, essay or supplemental work to be completed to qualify. Students are notified of these scholarships by the institution or organization that collects the information mentioned above.

While most colleges and universities have tried to make it easy for students to qualify for scholarships by including them in the main application, some schools still have separate applications for scholarships at their schools. It is important to consult all websites of the individual schools to know if a school has a separate application required for scholarships.

Specific Scholarships

Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) is a Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Through WUE, students in western states may enroll in many two-year and four-year college programs at reduced tuition. This program offers full or partial in-state tuition for students from Washington who enroll in coursework not usually provided in Washington State. It's essential to check the website to verify any restrictions with the WUE discount.

Aside from scholarships offered by individual institutions and organizations like ACT and College Board, many scholarships available to students are from outside organizations. All students at Eastside Catholic have access to a list of scholarships in Canvas. Additionally, Eastside Catholic offers a financial aid information session each year and can provide financial aid college consultants for families who want more specific guidance and advice about scholarships and college costs.

Tips for Financial Aid Applicants

Do not eliminate a college because you think it costs too much. Apply for admission and financial aid and see what aid package is offered. Most colleges can meet demonstrated need.

Glossary of Financial Aid Terms

- **Cost of Attendance:** (COA) is the price of attending a specific school. COA is more than just tuition, it includes tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation and living expenses. The COA is different at every school to which you apply.
- **CSS Profile:** The application required by many schools to apply for institutional aid. Not all colleges require a CSS profile, so students need to check each college's website.
- **Demonstrated Need:** Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is subtracted from the Student Aid Index (SAI), resulting in demonstrated financial need.
- **FAFSA:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid, used to apply for U.S. government grants and loans, federal work-study, many state grants and institutional financial aid. Every financial aid applicant must complete this form.
- **Financial Aid:** Money that is given, lent or paid to you so you can pay for college.
- **Gapping:** The practice of meeting less than a student's full aid eligibility.
- **Merit-Based Aid:** Scholarships, grants and other aid awarded based on academic strength, artistic ability, leadership or other special talents.
- **Need Aware**: An admissions policy that considers students' financial needs before making admissions decisions.
- **Need-Based Aid:** Financial aid that is awarded based on demonstrated financial need.
- **Student Aid Index (SAI):** A calculation of the amount of need-based financial aid a student is eligible to receive.
- **Student Aid Report (SAR):** Student Aid Report is generated when the FAFSA is processed. It includes all the data entered in the FAFSA and indicates the amount of the SAI.
- **Work-Study:** A federally subsidized college program where students hold part-time campus jobs as part of their financial aid package. Students can work up to a certain number of hours each week to earn work-study funds.

College Visits

College Representatives Visiting Eastside Catholic

Student Services hosts over 100 college representatives each ~~fall~~ year who meet with Eastside Catholic students and explain more about their unique programs. Beginning in September, these college representatives will be available to meet with students and is an opportunity for the visiting representative to "sell" their school's programs. The meetings with college admissions personnel are not intended to replace a personal interview or campus visit but allow students the opportunity to gain a

general impression of a college, ask specific questions about programs, activities or admissions at that college or gather written information about the institution.

All high school students in grades 9-12 are invited to attend these college rep visits on our Eastside Catholic campus. Students are expected to RSVP in Scoir so the appropriate meeting space is reserved and will receive communications of the visit location. The college rep visit schedule will also be posted in Student Services.

Recommendations about these college rep visits at EC:

- These visits are a critical time for seniors to ask urgent questions, make final decisions and show interest. For juniors who are trying to identify colleges of interest, they might have more general questions about academics, social life, athletics, research, etc. Sophomores and freshmen may not know what questions to ask, but they are also invited to attend and listen. All questions are appropriate if they are asked politely and respectfully.
- Your behavior during a college visit represents Eastside Catholic. Please be respectful during the visits by shaking the college rep's hand, introducing yourself, asking questions when appropriate, listening to their presentation and telling them thank you before you leave. It is a privilege for students to attend these important info sessions.
- Develop a few specific questions to ask the representative. Questions might include special academic interests, particular sports, support services available or financial aid procedures. Collect written materials if you are interested in that school.
- Sign the college's prospective student inquiry card during their visit (all colleges collect the names of those in attendance). This will add your name to a mailing list to receive more information from the school. If you have already visited a college or had an interview, a quick hello to the admissions person visiting EC provides an effective way to be remembered.

Visiting a College Campus

A personal visit to a post-secondary institution is often the most useful step in helping students and their parents decide whether to apply to a particular school. Students are encouraged to make use of group tours, open house events and group information sessions as a way of obtaining first-hand impressions of schools they have previously researched.

Visiting college campuses is a great way for students to determine the best "fit." While books and websites can provide all sorts of information, students get a better sense of whether a college will be a good fit for them when they can walk around campus and talk with current students in person.

What to do during a visit

- Take a tour led by a current student. Use this opportunity to ask this student any of your concerns or questions. They are only one voice so don't be discouraged if you are not impressed with their personality.
- Utilize any formal programming that the college has to offer. Each visit event is scheduled with student and parent needs in mind and are full of great information and different perspectives.
- Attend a group information session (if they offer one).

- Schedule a formal interview. An interview is usually timed to coincide with a tour. You might prefer to have the interview before the tour depending on how nervous you might be. When you schedule the interview, take this into account.
- Pick up all the application materials and any other viewbooks about the college.
- Pick up a school newspaper to see what issues are being talked about on campus.
- Visit the academic support center to see what kind of assistance and resources are available. If you need accommodations in college, make an appointment to visit the Academic Support Center to explain the modifications you will need.
- Have lunch with a current student without your parents or guardians. This is a great chance to gain another perspective on the college. See what activities are advertised on the bulletin boards.
- Sit in on a class, preferably one that interests you. These requests need to be made in advance through the admissions office. In addition to seeing the teaching style and content in a class, you can learn about the intellectual curiosity of these college students.
- If time allows, stay overnight with a student on campus. This is the ideal way to see the campus in action.
- Meet with a coach (if this pertains to you) and visit the campus recreational facilities.
- Don't be afraid to ask students about the college – things they like and do not like. All colleges have downsides, and you need to know the full picture of each college.
- Check out the community and nearby town. Consider if this is a place you could easily get to (do students drive or walk?). Ask about transportation to and from the airport. You might do this multiple times throughout your college career.
- While on a campus tour, students should be observing any aspect of importance to them. Some questions that students might ask of themselves, or others include:

Tour of Campus

- Appearance of campus
- What is the energy like in the students? Do they seem happy?
- Does it look like a place that could make you happy?
- Would you have fun learning here?

Classroom Settings

- Can you envision yourself listening and learning to a professor in these different settings?
- Is it the right teacher-to-student ratio for you?
- What do other students say about these relationships and the availability of professors?

Technology

- Do dorms, student centers, libraries and classrooms have wireless hotspots?
- Do students come with their computers? Laptops?
- Can the computers on campus be accessed easily?

Freshman Dorms

- Are there any dorms that you would like to reside?
- How are freshmen assigned to dorms?
- Are there any special-interest floors or buildings available to freshmen?
- What about study hours? Overnight guests?

- Is housing provided beyond freshman year?

Student Union

- What is the student union like? Is it conveniently located?
- Can you see yourself studying there and hanging out?
- What types of information are posted on the bulletin boards?

Students

- What do students do for fun during the week? On the weekends? Are all students invited or does the college have a "selective" social scene?
- Do students appear stressed? Having fun? Absorbed?
- Can you envision yourself on this campus with these students?

Transportation

- Do students need to have a car to get around? Are cars allowed in freshman year?
- What is parking like on campus?
- What type of transportation system does the college offer?

Other

- How does the meal system work? Do students prepare their meals or eat primarily in the dining halls or student union buildings?
- What about sports facilities? Can you find activities that will make you happy? Is there a workout center for students? What hours are they open? Is this workout center easy to access?
- How do students get around the campus after hours? Is it safe? Is there a security guard who can escort you? What is their process for allowing strangers into the dorm? Is the campus well lit?
- What do other students have to say about the campus? Are there any concerns they have about being there? Feel free to talk with your tour guide or any other students around campus.
- For more details about arranging, attending and reflecting on college visits, check out the resources in Canvas. Document Resources maintain valuable information about this important part of the college research process.

Visits during the regular academic year provide a more accurate view of the academic and social life of a college campus, and families often use breaks or summer vacation to visit several schools at a distance. Where possible, it is best to avoid visiting schools during times of registration, final exams and special campus events such as homecomings or festivals as it may distort the experience. Several high school holidays such as Veteran's Day and February and April school breaks allow students who visit colleges to minimize disruptions to their own academic program.

Scoir has helpful information about the college visit, including questions to ask the college representative, good times to visit a college, things to see/do, timing of visits, planning for a visit and much more.

Appendix

Detailed timelines by grade level.

EC COLLEGE PLANNING ROADMAP

Ms. Matteucci (A-Go) Ms. Do-Tran (Gr-M) Ms. Dzingle (N-Z)

Throughout high school, students should prioritize maintaining involvement in extracurriculars, doing well in their classes and increasing the rigor of their course load each year. GPA and class rigor are two important factors in college admissions.

9th Grade

- Develop skills for success (study skills, organization, self-advocacy)
- Explore summer opportunities such as those on college campuses, summer jobs and internships
- Get involved in extracurriculars (sports, the arts, community service)
- Manage strong academic performance in classes; consider honors classes
- Complete Career Interest Assessment using Scoir

10th Grade

- Begin attending college visits at EC
- Begin research on colleges utilizing resources on the College Counseling Canvas page
- Consider rigorous classes such as honors, AP and dual-enrollment (college level)
- Explore summer opportunities such as those on college campuses, summer jobs and internships
- Reflect on academic interests that could translate to college majors
- Complete PrinciplesYou Character Assessment using Scoir

11th Grade - Fall

- Continue attending college visits
- Continue researching colleges and majors
- Set up a meeting with your college counselor
- Prioritize academic performance and rigor
- Junior year grades matter the most for college admissions

11th Grade - Spring

- Complete the Initial College Planning Survey on Scoir and meet with your college counselor if you have not already done so
- Begin building a balanced college list with Scoir
- Ask 1– 2 teachers for letters of recommendation and fill out the Scoir survey
- Take the ACT and/or SAT (recommended)

11th Grade - Summer

- Attend EC College Application/College Essay summer workshops (optional)
- Consider Early Action/Early Decision deadlines
- Explore summer opportunities such as those on college campuses, summer jobs and internships
- Familiarize yourself with the CommonApp platform
- Learn about college campuses via in-person visits or virtual tours
- Utilize time for finalizing college list, drafting essays and beginning applications

12th Grade - Fall

- Attend college visits at EC to show demonstrated interest, improve applications and ask questions
- Complete the FAFSA/CSS Profile for financial aid
- Finalize essays and submit applications
- Monitor your email for important information from colleges about your application and any missing materials

12th Grade - Spring

- Attend any regionally held accepted student events to meet other students and ask any final questions
- If possible, attend an in-person or virtual campus visit for your top schools
- Colleges typically send acceptance notifications by March
- Reflect on pro's and con's of each accepted school, along with any financial packages offered
- Commit to a college by May 1

Make an appointment with an EC Counselor!

Visit the EC College Counseling Canvas page.