WALL HIGH SCHOOL

Building a Tradition of Excellence

Postsecondary Planning Guide

Juniors

Wall High School

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Post Secondary Opportunities

Community Colleges/Two Year Colleges

When students enroll at a community college, they may choose to earn an Associate's Degree and transfer after two years to a four-year institution, or they may choose a career program designed to prepare them for a job upon graduation.

> **Associate's Degree** An undergraduate academic degree awarded by community colleges upon completion of a course of study usually lasting two years.

Four-Year Colleges and Universities

Students who wish to pursue a specific academic program often choose a four-year college or university. Four-year colleges and universities offer bachelor's degrees. These degrees lay the foundation for more advanced studies and professional work.

> **Bachelor's Degree** Typically a four-year degree program. The subject of focus is called the student's 'major' or 'concentration.'
>
> **Master's Degree** Post-graduate degree.

Trade/Technical Schools

A number of privately owned schools provide technical or trade training. Areas of specialization include computer certification, medical and technical training, cosmetology, fashion, auto mechanics, and many more.

Armed Services

Opportunities in education and training are available in all branches of the Armed Forces upon completion of high school. If you are interested in speaking to a recruiter, see your counselor.

Workforce

Some students choose to go directly into the workforce after high school. There are many reasons as to why they may select this path: financial, personal, or undecided regarding future goals.

Gap Year

A period, typically an academic year, taken by a student as a break between high school and higher education. Gap years are often used for personal growth, to gain life experience, and/or to further explore options. There are organizations that can offer gap year programs.

College Application Terminology

- Regular Decision - Students must submit an application by a specified date and will receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time. **Commitment: Non-Binding**

- Rolling Admission - Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle. **Commitment: Non-Binding**

- Priority - If you apply before this deadline, you have a higher chance of getting admitted and/or receiving a scholarship to a college. Many colleges use priority deadlines to encourage early applications. **Commitment: Non-Binding**

- Early Action (EA) - Students apply early and receive an admissions decision earlier than the institution's Regular Decision applicant pool. **Commitment: Non-Binding**

- Early Decision (ED) - Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they will definitely enroll. The application deadline and admission decision occur earlier than the Regular Decision applicant pool. Students may only apply to one school under Early Decision. Students must withdraw all other applications if accepted. ****Commitment: *Binding***

- Restrictive Early Action (REA) - also known as Single Choice Early Action - Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. **Commitment: Non-Binding**

- Waitlist - A response to an applicant indicating that their application is acceptable, but the limit of accepted students has already been reached; waitlisted students may be admitted after May 1st, if space becomes available.

- Conditional Acceptance - Admission is offered on the condition that the student successfully completes specified requirements such as attending a summer program, taking remedial courses, or maintaining a certain GPA during the first semester of study.

- Admissions Deferral - The application will be reconsidered and a decision will be rendered by the college at a later date.

What Colleges Look For...

- **Transcript -** academic record including cumulative grade point average and class rank
- **Standardized test scores -** (SAT/ACT)
- **Extracurricular activities/Resume**
- **Honors and awards**
- **Volunteer work**
- **Student essay**
- **Letters of Recommendation**
- **Demonstrated Interest -** The degree to which an applicant shows a sincere interest in and curiosity about attending a college. Examples: attending campus tours and communicating with admissions representatives.
- **Interviews -** Colleges may require or offer this opportunity to get to know candidates better.

Individual college expectations and requirements may change from year-to-year. Therefore, obtain specific information directly from the college.

Standardized Tests

Some colleges and universities require candidates to submit scores from either the SAT or the ACT. Standardized testing is only part of all the information that represents you and your accomplishments. Students must instruct testing companies to send their scores directly to colleges and universities. **Wall High School does not release test scores.**

Some colleges will not require standardized test scores (SAT/ACT) as part of the application. At these colleges, students can choose to submit scores they feel will enhance their application. **Test optional policies vary from college to college, and students who choose not to submit scores may have additional requirements.**

- Link to Test Optional Schools

SAT

Register at www.collegeboard.org

SAT testing is offered at Wall High School

The SAT exam is intended to assess a student's readiness for higher education and is used as a tool for college admissions. This 2 hour and 14 minute digital test assesses (1) critical reading and writing and (2) mathematical reasoning. Each of these areas has a total possible point score of 800 and is reported as part of the top score of 1600. Colleges have the option of Superscoring (taking your best scores from all the tests you have taken) or they may choose to select the best combination of scores taken on any one date. Check the SAT website (https://www.collegeboard.org/) for registration information and test dates.

ACT

Register at www.actstudent.org

ACT testing is NOT offered at Wall High School

The ACT exam is intended to assess a student's readiness for higher education, and is used as a tool for college admissions. It includes five different subject areas: English, Math, Reading, Science and Writing. The test consists of five 35-60 minute sections. Students receive four separate scores plus a composite score ranging from 1-36. Check the ACT website (www.actstudent.org) for registration information and test dates.

AP (Advanced Placement Tests)

AP exams are also administered by the College Board once a year in May. These exams are based on college-level courses taken in high school. The scores are primarily used for college placement, credit, or advanced standing.

Researching Colleges

- **Utilize SCOIR**
- **Explore Individual College Websites**
- **Attend College Fairs**
- **Visit College Campuses**
- **Meet with College Representatives at Wall High School**

Utilize SCOIR

Once you create your account, take the college match quiz. Use the program to easily search and discover colleges that match your preferences. Using advanced search options, you can quickly jump to pages most relevant to you.

Explore Individual College Websites

The most up to date information about colleges can be found directly on individual college websites. Take time to explore what each college offers so you can make informed decisions.

Attend College Fairs

In the Fall and Spring, many schools and organizations, including the National Association for College Admission Counseling, sponsor college fairs.

Visit College Campuses

Visiting or revisiting a college campus will help you make the 'right' choice for you. While we realize that it can be very costly to visit all the colleges before you apply, it is essential to try to visit the colleges after you have been accepted and before you make your final decision. If it is not possible to attend a campus tour in person, check if the college offers a virtual tour.

Meet with College Representatives at Wall High School

Each year, many college representatives visit Wall High School to meet with prospective students. The majority of these visits occur during the fall.

The representative provides current, accurate information about the institution and the admission policies. The representative is a point of contact for you with the admissions office. The representative with whom you speak will most likely be the same one who will process your application and participate in your admission decision.

The schedule of college visits can be found on ***SCOIR***, and will be on the WHS Morning Show.

Evaluate Your Academic Record and Plan Accordingly

Utilize **SCOIR** and **CollegeBoard** to help determine your best academic fit. Apply to colleges within your reach, but take some chances too.

- **Reach School**: Your academic credentials fall below the school's range for the average accepted student from previous years.

- **Target Schoo**l: You have a reasonable likelihood of being accepted. Your academic credentials are in the same range as the average accepted student from previous years.

- **Safety/Likely School**: Your academic credentials are above the school's range for the average accepted student from previous years. You can be reasonably certain that you will be admitted to your safety schools.

Important to Consider

Majors
Many students change their majors at least once during their college careers. Make sure you pick a college that not only offers your major but offers a broad spectrum of majors to choose from.

Geographic Location
For some students, attending a college close to home is a priority while others choose to be far away. Perhaps as important as the distance from home is the surrounding area (suburban, rural, city).

Size of Campus
- Large- 15,000-50,000 students
- Medium- 5,000-15,000 students
- Small- fewer than 5,000 students

Affordability
Students should calculate what it costs to attend a selected college for a year. Also, calculate the cost of college on a four-year basis. Identify ways you can pay for these costs.

Housing, food, books, and the cost of participating in extracurricular activities are part of the college expenses. Students should also take into consideration the cost of travel to and from home.

Colleges may offer scholarships, grants, loans, or employment programs that can assist in financing education. Learn the application deadlines and which programs are available to freshmen.

Students with Special Needs
Colleges also provide a number of services to help students with special needs. Support services range from minimal support to comprehensive programs depending on individual assessments of students' needs. Tutoring, writing and mathematical labs, and career guidance are generally available to all students. Investigate the nature of these services.

Questions to Research… Questions to Ask College Representatives

It is important to do research and visit campuses to determine if a school is right for you. With that in mind, we compiled a list of questions you may want to get answered during your campus visits.

Academics

- What is the largest class size on campus? The smallest?
- What is the student to faculty ratio?
- Are classes taught by professors or graduate assistants?
- What are the most popular majors?
- Is there an honors program? If so, is there a separate application?
- Are there study abroad opportunities?
- What is the 4-year graduation rate?

Academic Support

- Are there academic support services on campus such as tutoring and writing centers?
- How available are professors or advisors for consultation? Do they have regular office hours?

Campus Life

- Is housing guaranteed? For how long?
- What are the housing options for freshmen? For upperclassmen?
- How are roommates selected?
- Are underclassmen allowed to have cars on campus?
- What is the surrounding area like?
- Is there transportation on and off campus? Is it easy to get to town and/or home?
- How does the meal plan work? What is the quality of dining facilities and food on campus?
- What types of extracurricular activities are there on campus?
- What athletic events are popular on campus?
- Are there fraternities and sororities? How strong are they on campus?
- What is the security situation on campus?

Career Readiness

- Are there career counseling services on campus?
- What do your students do just after graduating?
- What are the undergraduate opportunities for internships, research, and employment?
- What percentage of students find summer internships and/or jobs before graduating?
- Do you offer alumni networking events for future employment opportunities?

Admissions

- What are the application deadlines for admission?
- Do you have a priority deadline for scholarship consideration?
- What is the average high school GPA of the entering freshman class?
- Is the ACT or SAT required?
    - If yes, what is the average ACT and SAT of the entering freshman class?
    - If test optional, what additional requirements are there? Does not submitting these scores negatively affect anything?
- How much weight is given to the SAT/ACT in the admissions decision?
- Are there different admissions requirements (GPA, SAT/ACT, additional essays, etc.) for different departments or majors?
- Do you require SAT Subject Tests?
- Do you have to declare a major when you apply? If not, when must I choose a major?
- If I apply to a certain major and am not accepted, how can I get into that major as a sophomore?
- Is applying undecided an option? If so, is that a good idea?
- Do you accept Advanced Placement credits?

Scholarships & Financial Aid

- Do you offer Merit Based Scholarships? If yes, what are the criteria? Is there a priority deadline for my regular application to be submitted to be considered for these scholarships?
- Do you offer other scholarships?
- When is the deadline for financial aid applications?
- What kind of financial aid is available?
- What percentage of students receive financial aid?

Recent Common Application Essay Prompts

(Check Common App for most up-to-date prompts in the Spring)

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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 faced 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 all 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.