EA College Counseling:

DEMONSTRATED INTEREST

WHAT IT IS

DEMONSTRATED INTEREST is how a student engages with a college and shows genuine consideration, investment, and alignment with that institution. Colleges that track demonstrated interest may monitor activities such as opening emails, attending events, visiting campus (in person or virtually), meeting admissions representatives, or completing optional interviews and essays.

Not all colleges consider demonstrated interest, and many highly selective schools do not track it. However, at schools that do, it can help indicate a student's likelihood of enrolling and may play a role in admissions decisions.

Demonstrated interest should be a natural result of a thoughtful college search—not simply checking boxes. By engaging meaningfully with colleges, students explore fit, advocate for themselves, and show that they are proactive and invested.

WHY IT MATTERS

For colleges that track it, demonstrated interest can signal a student's likelihood of enrolling and alignment with the institution. For students, it offers a chance to explore fit, advocate for themselves, and take ownership of one piece of the admission process they can control.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Examples of demonstrated interest include:

- Opening and engaging with a college's emails
- Registering for and attending events (virtual or in person)
- Visiting campus or taking a virtual tour
- Connecting with admissions officers at school visits or college fairs
- Participating in optional opportunities such as interviews and video submissions
- Writing thoughtful, specific supplemental essays
- Engaging with your application portal after applying
- Submitting applicaton and financial aid documents

FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS

Do all colleges track demonstrated interest?
No. Many colleges—especially large public universities and some highly selective schools—do not consider demonstrated interest at all.

How can I find out if a school tracks interest?
You can find this information in several places:

- Ask your college counselor
- Review the college's admissions website
- Check the Common Data Set (Section C7)
- Use tools like the College Kickstart Appendix

Does more contact with a college improve my chances?
Not necessarily. Quality matters more than quantity. Engagement should help you learn about a college.

Do I need to visit campus to demonstrate interest?
No. If visiting isn't feasible, virtual programs, regional events, college fairs, and other accessible opportunities can be meaningful ways to explore and engage.

Are we behind if we haven't started demonstrating interest yet?
No! Most colleges do not expect students to demonstrate interest early in high school. What matters is engaging thoughtfully over time, starting when it makes sense for you.

psst! timeline on reverse!

A DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE APPROACH

Demonstrated interest develops naturally over time. Check out the timeline below!

9TH–10TH GRADE: *explore*

GOAL: *Discover your preferences*

- Learn what different colleges offer
- Begin thinking about interests and strengths
- Visit campuses casually (in person or virtual) if convenient
- Pay attention to what stands out—size, location, culture, academics, community
- There is no expectation to demonstrate interest at this stage. This is about exploration.

11TH GRADE: *engage*

GOAL: *Focus your exploration*

- Visit campuses (in person or virtual)
- Attend information sessions and tours
- Connect with admissions officers visiting EA (when schedules allow)
- Attend the Shipley College Fair (mid-May) and other regional fairs
- Take advantage of interviews (some open the summer before senior year)
- Explore programs and departments in more depth
- Engagement becomes more purposeful as students explore fit and begin communicating genuine interest.

12TH GRADE: *follow through*

GOAL: *Demonstrate investment, initiative & fit*

- Meet admissions representatives visiting EA or the Philadelphia area
- Read and engage with a college's email communications
- Take advantage of interview opportunities, when available
- Submit complete applications on time
- Consider early application options (ED/EA), if appropriate
- Write specific, thoughtful supplemental essays
- Add optional materials (e.g., Glimpse video statements, or creative or maker portfolios) if they strengthen your application
- Check portals regularly and respond promptly
- Submit application and financial aid documents before deadlines
- Senior year is about putting interest into action—showing initiative, organization, follow-through, and genuine fit.

the BOTTOM LINE

Thoughtful engagement is about more than showing interest. It helps students **explore fit, advocate for themselves, and take ownership of their college search**. When a college considers demonstrated interest, that engagement can also communicate **genuine investment** and **alignment**.

REACH OUT.

The EA College Counseling team is always here to help.
If you have any questions along the way, please do not hesitate to reach out to your EA college counselor!