



Senior Year

Finalizing your College Plan

Congratulations you have made it to your senior year at St. Mary's High School. We are very proud of you. This year you will be making one of the biggest decisions of your life, the decision to go to college. Take your time, talk to your parents, teachers, counselor, and make phone calls to the schools you are interested in to ask questions you have.

Senior Year

- August:** get excited it is your senior year!
- This year counts, don't get lackadaisical! Continue to strive to do your best and you will succeed
- Continue to get to know your counselor and start thinking of people who you want to write your letter of recommendations
- Look for information on off campus college fairs in the monthly guidance/college newsletter and attend these sessions
- Update your resume; give this special thought and attention
- Look for scholarship information in the monthly guidance/college newsletter
- Read the scholarship board for information; it is updated almost daily
- Aug, Sept, & Oct:** meet one-on-one discuss:
 - SMHS graduation requirements
 - Review post-secondary plans
 - Discuss college and scholarship process
- Apply on line for the ACT and SAT
- If necessary, take ACT and SAT no later than **November**
- Turn in all university and college applications by **Thanksgiving break**
- December:** do the preliminary work on the financial aid application, FAFSA
- December 1st:** ROTC scholarship application is due
- January:** complete and mail the FAFSA or Profile
- Look for information on SAT prep classes in the monthly guidance/college newsletter
- Encouraged to attend appropriate informational sessions presented by college representatives at SMHS
- Due to the overwhelming numbers of applications being turned into your counselor, give your counselor two weeks to process and send to your college/university
- When requesting a letter of recommendation from a teacher, your counselor, administrator, or anyone outside of the SMHS community give the person at least two weeks to write your letter
- When requesting the letter of recommendation give them your resume and Letter of Recommendation Request Form
- There is a **\$2.00 fee for transcript requests**
- April:** review all your acceptances and financial aid awards
- April:** call the college financial aid offices if you need clarification of your award or need to discuss the amount of your aid package
- May:** take appropriate AP exam
- May** Senior Final Plans sheet due
- May:** college/university/military academies will notify of acceptance
- May:** notify the college of your choice
- May** Graduation!

Factors To Consider When Choosing The College That Best Fits Your Needs:

ACADEMICS

- Does the school have your major?
- What is the average class size?

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

- Do your high school classes qualify you for admission to the school?
- Does the school require the ACT or SAT?
- What are the school's average ACT or SAT scores?
- Does the school accept AP scores?
- What credit do you get based on the AP scores?
- What is the average GPA for the schools acceptance?
- Does the school require an essay, letters of recommendation, and resume?

ENVIRONMENT

- What is the student population?
- Is the school co-ed?
- Is the school private or public?
- Have you made a visit to the campus?

EXPENSES

- What is the application fee?
- What is the cost of room and board?
- What are the tuition, fees and cost of books?
- Consider the cost of traveling to and from school

FINANCIAL AID

- Does the school require the FAFSA or the PROFILE?
- What percentage of students is on financial aid?
- What type of scholarships does the school offer?
- If you are involved in sports does the school offer scholarships for sports?

HOUSING

- Does the school have dorms?
- Are students required to live in the dorms?
- What is the condition of the dorms?
- What type and size rooms do the dorms have?
- Is the dorm co-ed?
- Do they have a meal plan?
- Can they accommodate you?

LOCATION

- Is the school in state or out of state?
- Is it rural or urban?
- What is the weather like in that city?

SCHOOL SIZE

- What size is the school?

SAT vs. ACT

SAT

ACT

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Private colleges & colleges on the East and west coasts.</p> <p>Nearly all U.S. colleges and universities.</p> <p>Paragraph-length critical reading Passages, an essay, and more Challenging math. No more analogies or quantitative comparisons</p> <p>Seven times per year.</p> <p>Ten-section exam: Three critical reading, three math, three writing and one Experimental. The Experimental section is masked to look like a regular section.</p> <p>Math: up to 9th grade basic geometry and Algebra II. No science section. Reading: sentence completions, short and long critical reading passages, reading comp. stresses vocab. more questions testing grammar, usage, and word choice</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>200-800 for each subject, added together for a combined score. A 2400 is the highest possible combined score.</p> <p>Yes. If a student requests a score report be sent to specific colleges, the report will include the scores the student received on every SAT taken.</p> <p>Scholarship purposes.</p> <p>At least six weeks before the test date.</p> <p>Educational Testing Service (ETS) 609-771-7600 www.ets.org The College Board www.collegeboard.com</p> | <p>Preferred by?</p> <p>Accepted by?</p> <p>What are the changes?</p> <p>When is it administered?</p> <p>What is the test structure?</p> <p>What is the test content?</p> <p>Is there a penalty for wrong answers?</p> <p>How is the test scored?</p> <p>Are all scores sent to schools?</p> <p>Are there other uses for the exams?</p> <p>Best time to register?</p> <p>Need more information?</p> | <p>Public colleges and colleges in the middle of the country. The ACT is preferred by more U.S. colleges than the SAT.</p> <p>Nearly all U.S. colleges and universities.</p> <p>Addition of an “optional” essay</p> <p>Six times per year.</p> <p>Four-section exam: English, Math, reading, and Science Reasoning. An Experimental section is added to tests on certain dates only, and is clearly experimental.</p> <p>Math: up to trigonometry. Science section included. Reading: four passages, one each of Prose Fiction, Social Science, Humanities, and Natural Science English stresses grammar</p> <p>No</p> <p>1-36 for each subject, averaged for a composite score. A 36 is the highest possible composite score.</p> <p>No. There is a “Score Choice” option. Students can choose which schools will receive their scores AND which scores the schools will see.</p> <p>Scholarship purposes. Certain statewide testing programs.</p> <p>At least four weeks before the test date.</p> <p>ACT, inc. 319-337-1270 www.act.org</p> |
|---|---|---|

(Information obtained from The Princeton Review)

Below are suggested listings of websites that could be useful for college exploration, financial aid, scholarships, etc. The websites are only suggestions and resources; they are not a guarantee by your counselor or SMHS that they will be useful

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 50states.com/college/colorado.htm | Colorado college and universities |
| Academictips.org | Study techniques and more |
| ACT.org | Registration for ACT |
| Ajcunet.edu | Jesuit colleges and universities |
| Anycollege.net | Scholarship search |
| Blackexcel.org | African American scholarships / schools |
| Bls.gov/oco | Career search |
| Campustours.com | School profiles |
| Careerkey.org/english/ | Identify personality, college major |
| Christiancollegesearch.com | Christian college search |
| Collegeaidcalculator.com | College financial planning |
| Collegeboard.com | SAT registration, college search, financial aid |
| Collegebound.net | College search |
| Collegenet.com | College search |
| College-preview.com | Finding a college |
| Collegeproowler.com | College search |
| Collegequest.com | College search |
| Collegescholarships.com | Scholarship search |
| Collegeview.com | College search |
| Collegexpress.com | College search |
| Coloradomentor.org | Scholarship search |
| Commonapp.org | Admission applications |
| Educaid.com | Learning source |
| Embark.com | College search |
| Essayedge.com | Advise on how to write a good essay |
| eStudentsLoan.com | Financial aid |
| Fafsa.ed.gov | Free Application for Student Aid – financial aid |
| Fastaid.com | Scholarship search |
| Fastweb.com | Scholarship search |
| Fedmoney.org | Financial aid |
| Finaid.org | Financial aid |
| Free-4u.com | Scholarship search |
| Gocollege.com | College information |
| Hbcumentor.org | Scholarship search |
| Hispanicfund.org | Hispanic college fund |
| Kaplan.com | Education / career goals |
| Keirseay.com | Personality indicator |
| Laef.org | Scholarship search |
| Library.uiuc.edu/edx/randings.htm | College / university rankings |
| Mapping-your-future.org | Scholarship search |
| Ncaa.org | National Collegiate Athletic Association |
| Nd.edu/~ccaa/ | Catholic college search |
| Petersons.com | Grants and scholarship search |
| Review.com | College search |
| Rotc.com | Reserve Officer's Training Corps |
| Rspfunding.com | Financial Aid |
| Salliemae.com | Financial Aid |
| Scholaraid.com | Financial Aid |
| Scholarshipexperts.com | Scholarship search |
| Scholarships.com | Scholarship search |
| Schoolsoup.com | Scholarship search |
| Sports-net.org | High school sports information |
| Srnexpress.com | Scholarship search |
| Studentloanfunding.com | Financial aid – student loan |
| Supercollege.com | Scholarship search |
| Tuitionfundingsources.com | Scholarship search |
| Usnews.com | College search |
| Winscholarships.com | Scholarship search |
| Wiredscholar.com | Scholarship search |

Checklist for Your Campus Visit

- Meet with an Admission Counselor
- Verify admission requirements
- Determine actual college cost
- What are your financial aid opportunities
- What type of scholarships are available to you
- Take a campus tour
- Look at the dorms
- Look to see what the career placement center has to offer
- Have a meal on campus
- Talk with students and faculty
- Investigate your academic program
- Attend a class you are interested in
- Pick up the school newspaper and read it
- Discuss your chances for success

. . . admission

. . . graduation

. . . placement

The Interview

Interviews can be conducted on campus or in the Colorado Springs area by a college alumni representative. The interview is an important way for the college representative to get to know you as a person and possible student of their school. It is also an avenue for you to make a good decision about the college. Below are some helpful hints and possible questions you will be asked and some questions for you to ask the interviewer:

- Be on time to your interview
- Be neat
- Dress in mass clothing
- Be prepared – have you read their catalog, let the interviewer know specifics to why you are applying
- Be specific in your answers, don't be afraid to admit you don't know something
- Know your GPA, class rank, test scores, classes you have taken and current classes you are taking and the grades
- Be yourself. Don't pretend to be something or someone you are not. The interviewer is interested in getting to know you as a person and student
- Relax. Enjoy the interview

Possible questions to expect:

- What do you know about the college?
- Why do you want to apply to the college?
- What do you hope to gain from the college experience?
- Are there skills you hope to acquire or improve?
- Which characteristics of this college are especially appealing to you?
- Have you researched the college and found that it has elements of special interest to you?
- What do you hope to do at college outside of the classroom?
- What contributions do you hope to make to student life at the college of your choice?
- What characteristics make you special or unique?
- How would your teacher describe you?
- What are your concerns about the college selection process?

Questions to ask:

- What percent of your freshman return for the sophomore year?
- Why do students leave before graduation?
- Which departments are most popular?
- What are the current student issues on campus?
- Which are the most active extracurricular clubs and organizations?
- How involved and interested are the students?
- What do your students tend to do immediately after graduation?
- How strong is your career placement center?
- What are the professional and graduate school opportunities available to your students?
- Do my academic and personal credentials fit within the range and scope of this college's student body?



Letter of Recommendation Request Form

Letters of recommendation are an integral part of the college admission process. The letters of recommendation you request from individuals should be written with a personal touch and meaningful insight to you as a student. In order to do this please take the time to respond to each question. You want your letters of recommendation to be strong and to show the readers of your recommendation letters the writer knows you as a student and as a person. Letters of recommendation are a strong part of your application. Give the person you are requesting a letter of recommendation from at least 2 weeks to complete the recommendation.

Student Name: _____ Date letter to be completed: _____

College (s) you are applying to: _____

_____ Please write the letter specifically to the above college (s)

_____ Please write a generic letter ("To Whom it May Concern")

Attach this questionnaire with your resume and give it to the individuals you are requesting to write you a letter of recommendation

What do you want to major in once in college?

What are three words that best describe you?

What would your parents say is your best attribute?

What would a teacher at SMHS say about you?

What have you gained from your community service?

Who is the most influential person in your life and why?

Describe a recent occasion when you reacted to disappointment or a setback?

What are the two best decisions you made recently?

Have you overcome any obstacles in your life? If so, what?