

Tips for the College Search

- Kids can be happy at many different schools.
- Not all kids are ready to start college right after graduation from high school.
- Many kids benefit from taking a gap year and either working, volunteering, or taking courses at a community college or post-secondary school.
- It is possible to apply and be accepted to a school in the senior year but defer enrollment for a year. Check with each school about their deferment policy.
- The search process can be conducted in many different ways.
- It can be a fun experience!

Where to Start

- Kids can learn a lot about different colleges from a variety of sources: Naviance, the internet, college mailings, books, meetings with college representatives who visit EHS, and by visiting different campuses.
- Naviance is an incredible tool for EHS students. It offers all sorts of information on the different colleges (size, location, majors, cost, admission requirements, etc.) and statistics on grades, test scores, etc. of kids that have been admitted to or rejected by the schools. New this year: to protect student privacy, some scattergrams will not be available because 2 or fewer students were either denied or accepted to that school.
- It's helpful to find some way of narrowing down the search – by size of school, location, academic area of interest or intended major, extra-curricular activity, etc.
- It can be very helpful to visit a couple of different campuses nearby – big, small, urban, rural, etc. Chances are he/she will have some positive or negative reaction to the different options.

Getting Started

- In some cases, it works well to take the lead from your child. They may become interested after watching their older siblings go through the process or by listening to older friends talk about colleges they are interested in. But sometimes kids need to be nudged into looking at colleges.
- It can be helpful to have a college book (like The Fiske Guide to Colleges, College Handbook, Book of Majors, etc.) or pamphlets from schools available for your child to read.
- It's a good idea to at least drive around (or take a tour) of colleges when you are on vacations.

College Visits

- It's smart to check the college website before planning a visit. It's best to visit when there are students on campus and when you can take a tour. Tours are set up through the Admissions Office.
- In addition to the information session and tour, it's helpful to eat a meal in the dining hall, check out the dorm rooms and even attend a class (if your child is interested). Sometimes you can even go to a sporting event, play, concert, etc. Take a look at the student newspaper. If you know of someone attending the school, it's really nice to look them up – the admissions office can help you find a student from Edina if you aren't sure whether anyone attends that school. Generally, college students are happy to see a familiar face and possibly even take advantage of a free meal.
- Some schools (typically smaller, more selective colleges) offer interviews for prospective students. If offered, this can be an important way for your child to demonstrate their interest in a school. The

- student should be prepared for their interview (pgs. 28-29 in the coral Planning for the Future book), have done their homework about the school and have questions to ask).
- In some cases, schools will arrange to have your child sit in on a class with a student, have a meal, spend the night or weekend in a dorm, etc.
 - It's a good idea for your child to take notes after visiting a school (likes/dislikes, etc.) particularly if you are visiting a number of schools. See the worksheet on page 23 of the coral Planning for the Future book. (It's hard to keep them all straight.)
 - When it's decision making time, "Accepted Students Days" can be very helpful as it gives them the opportunity to check out the school and to see the kids that would be in their class.

Organization

- As you get into the application process, staying organized is key. It helps to have a folder for each school he/she is interested in. A big binder of file folder with a tab for each school is helpful. This gives you a place to save all correspondence from the school.
- It's important to have a checklist for all of the things that get submitted. EHS has a checklist, but you may need to have a list for additional scholarship essays, etc.
- There are lots of deadlines to stay on top of.

Applications

- Students should apply to enough schools that they will have a choice to make, but not so many that it gets overwhelming.
- It's a great idea to work on the essays during the summer before senior year (this takes some of the pressure off because some schools may require multiple essays or short answers).
- Kids' feelings about colleges can change dramatically from the beginning of the process until the end. It's a good idea to add a school or two that are different in case their feelings change (i.e., a school close to home, a school that is a different size).

Standardized Tests

- Starting in the spring 2016, the SAT will look similar to the ACT. For more information, go to <https://www.collegeboard.org/delivering-opportunity/sat/faqs>.
- Students can take both the SAT and the ACT. Students may fare better at one test over the other, based on learning and test taking style. Each test may be taken multiple times to improve their score. Summer is a great time to prepare for taking the test one or two more times in the fall (ACT offered Sept and Oct/SAT offered Oct or Nov).
- Some schools may request that all test scores are submitted. Check with each school regarding test score submission requirements.
- It's important for kids to familiarize themselves with the test in advance so they know whether or not to guess and understand other test taking strategies. Free test prep services can be found at:
<https://mncis.intocareers.org>
Username: edinahs
Password: hornets
- Students need to find out what tests are required by the schools they are considering.