



DA VINCI HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE HANDBOOK

Your counselor is looking forward to working with you as you begin your journey on college selection and admissions. Our goal is to make this process manageable and understandable for you and your family.

Use this handbook as a starting place and a reference guide. Meet with your counselor to individualize the search so that your college list reflects your career interests and goals.

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College Counseling Handbook

Da Vinci High School Code Number
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051082

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Naviance and Family Connection

Your counseling office is delighted to offer a comprehensive website that you can use to help in making decisions about colleges and careers.

Using Family Connection you will be able to:

- **Keep track of the process**
 - Maintain a list of colleges you are thinking about
 - Manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges and careers
 - Build a resume
- **Research colleges**
 - Compare GPA scores
 - Compare SAT scores
 - Compare other statistics
- **Sign up for college visits**
 - Find out which colleges are visiting Davis High School
 - Sign up to attend the sessions that are of interest to you

Family Connection lets us share information with you about up-coming meetings and events, local scholarship opportunities, and other Web resources for college and career information. You can use the site to send your counselor an e-mail message.

We have provided you with a personal access code and instructions for accessing Family Connection. We hope that you will find this resource helpful. If you have further questions about Family Connection, please contact your counselor.

CREATING YOUR FAMILY CONNECTION ACCOUNT

1. Sign up for “Family Connection”

- Go to: <https://student.naviance.com/davinci>
- Type in your registration code given to you by your counselor.
- Once you are registered, type your email address and create a password.
- In the future, you will sign in under “Return User” and won’t need your registration code.

Overview – Types of Colleges

Community Colleges in California

California is particularly fortunate in having many excellent state supported community colleges. There are 114 publicly supported community colleges located throughout the state of California. They offer low-cost education to more than 2.1 million students annually. To be eligible for admission to a community college, a student must be 18 years of age, a high school graduate, or possessing the equivalent of a high school diploma. At the community college, students who plan to transfer to a four-year college as a junior will take regular lower division college classes, completing their general education requirements and/or major requirements before beginning work in their major at the four-year institution. Students planning on transferring to a UC or CSU should check ASSIST.org for transfer requirements for specific majors and which courses are accepted. Students may also earn an Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree, or complete a certificate program in vocational training. Several community colleges offer study abroad programs and Honors programs that enrich academic opportunities.

The Community College may be a good choice for you if:

- You plan on four years of college, but for financial or other reasons, you prefer to stay at home for the first two years.
- You plan on four years of college, but you haven’t met the academic requirements to directly enter a four-year college.
- You know you want to attend college, but you are unsure of where to attend or what your career focus should be, so you want to complete your general education requirements first with fewer costs.
- You wish to attend a college that will train you in two years for a vocation.

California State University

Ranging from Humboldt near the Oregon border to San Diego near the Mexican border, there are currently 23 campuses in the California State University system with an enrollment of almost 480,000 students. CSU is committed to enrolling the top third of California high school graduates who have met the CSU minimum eligibility requirements. Each campus has its own unique geographic and curricular character. All campuses offer undergraduate and graduate instruction for professional and occupational goals as well as broad liberal education. The SAT or ACT is required.

Application filing period: October 1st - November 30th

Application deadline: November 30th

CSU web site: <https://www2.calstate.edu/apply>

University of California

With over 251,000 students, including undergraduate and graduate students, the University of California (UC) has ten general campuses offering instruction in a wide range of fields. Among the campuses are five medical schools, three law schools, and a school of veterinary medicine, as well as many professional schools including business administration, education, engineering, and oceanography.

Admission to the University of California is quite competitive. The UC currently selects freshman applicants from the top 12.5 percent of California's high school graduates. UC guarantees a place at one of their campuses to all eligible California students who apply on time (may not get into the campus of their choice).

Keep in mind that competitive campuses and programs look for applicants who exceed the minimum requirements when selecting students. To be eligible for admission to the UC system as a freshman, you must meet the "A-G" Subject Requirements, the examination requirements, and the academic eligibility requirement. Admission is very selective at the highly competitive campuses.

Standardized testing required: Scores on the ACT Assessment plus Writing or SAT Reasoning Test. Students are not required to take SAT subject tests, although some majors at some campuses may recommend particular tests.

Students applying as freshman to a UC must demonstrate their command of the English language by fulfilling the **Entry Level Writing Requirement**. Students can meet this requirement by scoring 30 or better on the ACT Combined English/Writing test, 680 or better on the SAT writing section, or 3 or above on AP English exam. Students may also satisfy this requirement through college level coursework in English or the UC Analytical Writing Placement Exam.

Application filing period: November 1st – November 30th

Application deadline: November 30th

UC web site: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions

A – G Requirements for CSU and UC Universities

A grade of **C or better** in the following college preparatory course requirements, plus an acceptable standardized test score on the SAT or ACT is required in order to meet the *minimum* standard of admission to the CSUs and the UCs:

“a” -- History/Social Science	2 years (including 1 year of US History or one semester of US History and one semester of American government)
“b” -- English	4 years (no more than 1 year of ESL/ELD courses)
“c” -- Mathematics	3 years, 4 recommended (Algebra 1/IM 1, Geometry/IM 2, Algebra II/IM 3)
“d” – Laboratory Science	2 years with lab, 3 recommended (at least 1 year of physical science and 1 year of biological science)
“e” – Language Other Than English (LOTE)	2 years of same world language (3 recommended) (American Sign Language is acceptable)
“f” -- Visual and Performing Arts	1 year (selected from music, drama, art)
“g” – College Preparatory Elective	1 year of an elective chosen from any area on approved “a-g” course list (see DVCA catalogue)

Private Colleges and Universities

Among the 200 colleges and universities in the state of California, there are approximately 70+ private schools. These colleges do not have direct financial support from and control by the state of California. This independence means that they have greater freedom in designing programs, defining admission criteria and procedures, and determining the focus and culture of the school. They are large, medium, and small; nonsectarian and religious; greatly selective to very modestly selective; traditional to innovative; specialized and liberal arts. Some are nonprofit; some are for-profit businesses. Campuses vary widely in location, environment, goals, admission requirements, and programs and degrees offered. There are hundreds of out-of-state private colleges. A good resource book about private colleges is “*Admission Matters*” by Sally Springer, Jon Reider, and Marion Franck, which is available from your counselor and online. The book also provides useful information for students applying to public universities as well.

There are four types of private, four-year colleges:

- **Research institutions** such as the University of Southern California or Stanford University.
- Small, **comprehensive universities** such as the University of the Pacific or Santa Clara University.
- Small **specialized schools** such as Harvey Mudd College and the California Institute of the Arts.
- Small **liberal arts colleges** such as St. Mary's College and Occidental College.

In addition to four-year institutions, there are **private two-year liberal arts colleges**, such as Marymount College in Rancho Palos Verdes, that award Associate (AA) degrees or offer transfer programs. There are also private career colleges that offer Associate or Bachelor Degrees or certificate programs (ex. Academy of Art University, San Francisco).

Factors to take into account when applying to private colleges:

- Your high school record
- College admission tests
- Extracurricular activities
- Essay
- Recommendations
- Interview
- Special talents/achievements
- Personal background

Factors to take into account by all colleges:

- A sound college preparatory program
- Challenging course selection that requires critical thinking
- Participation in extracurricular activities
- Participation in community activities
- Good writing skills
- Indication of personal development (maturity, responsibility, ability to collaborate, decision-making skills, and flexibility).

The single most important thing you can do to improve your overall level of education is to read. Reading is the key to academic development, personal development, better standardized test scores, and wider knowledge.

Math proficiency is essential in admission to colleges, vocational training programs, and various majors (such as engineering). Math is the gatekeeper for many programs, including vocational training.

Seven Myths About College Admissions

Myth #1: Colleges receive so many personal essays they probably only glance at them.

Fact: Private college admission officers read personal essays with great care (same for the UC, now that they have the Comprehensive Review of applications). Writing about yourself in a way that makes you unique is the one significant thing you can do to overcome lackluster test scores and a mediocre school record. Don't wait until just before the deadline to rush to write your essay just to get the application in the mail on time. Even at the UC, a well-written essay can tip the scales in your favor; the personal essay *can make a difference*.

Myth #2: Colleges don't look at the senior year grades.

Fact: Private college admissions committees analyze not only senior year grades in the first semester, but also the degree of difficulty of the senior year course of study. As for the second semester grades, if there is a significant change (decline) in academic performance from February to June (spring semester), the college that originally accepted you might require summer school work, put you on probation for the first semester of college, or **rescind** your acceptance on the grounds that you are not the same strong student they originally admitted. The University of California will not officially accept you until they see your final transcript. Since that arrives in July or August after high school graduation, there are serious consequences for you if your admission offer is rescinded one month before the fall term begins.

Myth #3: It is important to have as many extra-curricular activities as possible to impress college admission people because it "looks good."

Fact: Colleges are "looking" for *quality* of involvement, not simply *quantity*. They want a well-rounded student body made up of students who are passionately interested in particular activities; those who haven't spread themselves so thin that their extra-curricular commitments are superficial. Colleges prefer, for example, the student solely dedicated to being the yearbook editor over the student who has some participation in 10 different activities. This is what is called "productive follow-through."

Myth #4: It is better to go to a big university that is well known than to a small college that few people have heard of.

Fact: This generalization about large versus small schools is quite misleading. While a large university with wide name recognition (such as UC Berkeley) may be ideal for many students, others may perform better in a smaller, more personalized environment (such as the University of the Pacific). Just because your next-door neighbor hasn't heard of a particular college doesn't mean the school is not prestigious or that you won't get a fine education there. Graduate schools and employers make it their business to know which colleges turn out the brightest and most capable graduates. The size of the school has very little to do with it. It is important to define the things *you* want in a college – to understand yourself, not to be unduly influenced by the opinions of others.

Myth #5: The only private colleges worth applying to are the Ivy League colleges.

Fact: This is another myth. The eight Ivy League colleges are among the most selective schools in the nation, but they may not offer what *you* want. Besides, did you know that the “Ivy League” is simply an athletic league like the Big 10 or the Pac 10? Certainly the Ivy League is known for its academic quality, but it does *not* have a monopoly on academic quality. Suggested reading: “*Looking Beyond the Ivy League*” or “*Colleges that Change Lives*” by Loren Pope.

Myth #6: Colleges just don’t have enough money to give families financial aid.

Fact: Financial aid continues to be more readily available than you might think in the forms of grants, loans, work-study, and merit scholarships. Read the financial aid section in this handbook, attend the Financial Aid Workshop at Davis Senior High in December, and investigate websites such as www.fastweb.com or www.finaid.org.

Myth #7: If I make the wrong decision about college, my life will be ruined.

Fact: You need to remember to keep things in perspective. There are many colleges that will be a good match for you. Every experience, whether positive or negative, provides you with a learning opportunity to grow and improve. As a life long learner, you will continue to take classes throughout your lifetime. It is important to realize the significance of your college choice, to take the college exploration process seriously, and to be conscientious about the college selection process. You will make many decisions throughout your lifetime that will affect you in different ways. Remember, there is more than one college that will be a good match for you.

Where to Start

The admissions process is an attempt by colleges and universities to select the most qualified students for their particular institution, carefully matching student and program. The basis of this selection is determined by an evaluation of the following:

Academic Information

- 1) The transcript which includes:
 - a) Academic grades
 - b) Type and number of courses
 - c) Level of courses (rigor)
 - d) Grade point average
- 2) Test results
 - a) SAT or ACT
 - b) Subject Tests

Personal information contained in:

- 1) Autobiographical essay/writing sample
- 2) Resume of extracurricular activities:
 - a) Leadership roles
 - b) Activities and clubs
 - c) Sports participation
 - d) Work and travel experiences
 - e) Unique talents and interests
 - f) Volunteer service
- 3) School Recommendation
- 4) A personal interview
- 5) Letters of recommendation by two teachers
- 6) Letter of recommendation by counselor

Academic

More than anything else, strong academic credentials build the foundation for college admissions. These credentials include your scholastic record and standardized test results. While scores on the SAT and ACT can be significant, especially for the University of California and other state institutions, the most important criteria will be performance shown by your four-year classroom record. Admissions officers place a high value on students with consistent academic success in demanding programs. A simple rule-of-thumb for courses and grades: Take the hardest schedule you can handle without getting a “C”. “C’s” are acceptable in college admissions, but “acceptable” doesn’t mean “desirable.” Of course, you should always do the best you can, and sometimes a “C” is doing the best you can. If the best you can do is a “C” in a high-level class, you are going to have to be very realistic about your chances at selective colleges/universities. Colleges do not accept courses in which you earn “D’s” or “F’s”. “D’s” or “F’s” must be made up in summer school, if available, or repeated during the school year if there is room in your schedule.

Some Perspective from the College Board

College Board surveys colleges annually to find out which admissions criteria are most important. The following criteria was rated “very important or important” by 1,841 four-year colleges:

School Achievement	93%
Test Scores	87%
Recommendations	49%
Essay	42%
Interview	34%
Activities	30%

School achievement has been the single most important factor in the admissions decisions since College Board began tracking this information in the early 1980’s.

Develop Good Study Habits

We have study guide books in our library to assist you. We offer homework club twice per week and peer tutors are available upon request.

Personal

Getting your academic house in order is the first rule for progress in the college application process. After that, it is time to find out who you are, what you are good at, and what your interests are. Achievements outside the classroom are an additional factor in admission of an applicant, and for many of the selective colleges, a student’s non-academic record can allow him or her to be accepted before applicants with similar academic credentials. Colleges are not as interested in students who participate or dabble in a large number of activities as they are in applicants who have become sincerely involved in a few meaningful endeavors. Choose the activities that interest you most and make a real commitment to them. If possible, work toward a leadership position in your activity. Spend time thinking about what intrigues you and what you are curious about. If you think you would be good at public speaking, take a class or become involved in student government. If you would like to develop artistic talent, take advantage of the excellent visual arts programs at Da Vinci and in Davis.

It is important that you learn about yourself and develop yourself as a person in the college admissions process. Colleges are looking for interesting people. You will hear that they want people who have a passion. Perhaps some of your classmates have already found theirs, but maybe you are still looking. There are unlimited opportunities for exploration. If you get stuck, see your counselor for ideas about volunteering, interesting classes, or summer opportunities. A growth curve is important. Most colleges are looking for students who are growing steadily as a student and a person. Achieving just a satisfactory level of performance and staying there often indicates complacency and a lack of motivation. If you apply yourself daily and pursue real interests, you will enter the college application process with confidence and direction.

Where Do I Apply?

Let's start with a reality check: Does it make sense to limit your college search to only highly selective colleges? Only *you* can answer that. Ideally, you will have a range of colleges on your list, based not only upon selectivity, but also upon other important considerations: environment, programs, majors, sports, and the chance to be challenged both personally and academically. In the field of college counseling, we call this *the right match*. And there is no *perfect* college for you. There are a number of colleges that may be right for you. While it is true that there is undoubtedly a type of college which is more suited to your needs than another type, it is not wise to narrow your sights to only one or two colleges. A better plan is to investigate several possible options and you will discover that each one has its own advantages. There are 1685 2-year colleges and 3039 4-year colleges in the U.S. (National Center for Education Statistics).

Step 1: Factors to Consider in Researching and Selecting a College

What Not To Do:

- Put any faith in *US News and World Report* or similar rankings

Just because a school is highly ranked doesn't mean that you will like it or that it will suit your needs. The rankings are based on factors that include things like faculty salaries, average spending per student, alumni giving rate, and the number of students who transfer. While these factors are important to the college, they have little or nothing to do with whether or not you will be happy there.

- Your best friend's boyfriend didn't like the school he attended.

Just because he didn't like the college doesn't mean that you won't. There might be a very specific reason that he was turned off by the school – a weird freshman year roommate or a professor with whom he didn't click. Those things can happen at any school. Be your own person in researching colleges.

- "I heard that . . ."

Much of the information that floats around about particular colleges is at least 10 years old, sometimes older. Many colleges that had fairly lightweight academic reputations in the 70's or 80's have refocused their priorities and are now top institutions. Similarly, some schools were considered party schools, and others were considered easy to get into. Schools have changed, and the way they might have been 10, 20, or 30 years ago is the way they might seem to your parents. Do your research. What are the social and academic realities *now*?

- I've never heard of it.

Many of the small, liberal arts colleges are actually some of the best colleges in the country, and they might be some of the best-kept secrets too. The average well-educated person can probably name only a small number of the 4724 2-year colleges and 4-year colleges in the United States. These tend to be older Eastern schools, the large state universities, those with outstanding athletic teams, or those that happen to be near home. It is important to remember that a college which may be right for you may be one that is unknown to you now, while some of the universities you are most familiar with may not be appropriate choices.

Start by making a list of things you want in a college. Some suggestions for consideration:

- **Size:** Do I want the relative anonymity of a large school versus the personal attention from professors at a smaller school? Think about the learning environment in a lecture hall of 400, where you might be able to go through four years without being called on more than a few times; as opposed to the smaller **class size**, even seminar classes at small schools, where your participation is expected. It is much easier to have a big impact on life at a smaller school, since you will be better able to get to know the administration and many of the other campus leaders personally. At large schools, meetings will be announced, but unless you seek them out, clubs and organizations won't come to find you.
- **Weather:** Can I live through wind, snow, rain, and sleet? – in a word: weather. This is an important question if you are considering attending a college outside of California.
- **Location:** Have I visited a school in a suburban or rural area, so that I know what it means to distinguish between urban, suburban, or rural campuses?
- **Programs:** Am I looking for a specialized school? (engineering, music, fashion design)
- **Co-Curricular Activities:** Do I want to attend a school with a strong sense of campus community? Big-time sports can make you feel like you belong the minute football season begins. Do you like the tradition that goes along with big-time sports programs? Or are you trying to find a school with an orchestra, an award-winning student newspaper, political demonstrations, or important guest speakers?
- **Academic Atmosphere:** What environment suits me? Tense or relaxed, competitive or geared to individual progress, high or low academic expectations, opportunities for recreational and cultural activities to supplement academics, honor systems and academic discipline codes.
- **Graduation in 4 years:** Is it important to you to graduate in four years? You may not know that the norm for colleges to quote graduation statistics is now *six years*, as in “We graduate 65% of our students in 6 years.” It is possible to graduate in four years. Be sure to find out how many students do that at the school you are considering. Ask: “What is the graduation rate for 4 year graduates?”
- **Social Structure and Campus Lifestyle:** Is a residential campus important? Would you be comfortable at a college where most of the students commute? Week end social life, on and off campus, types of entertainment favored by the students, fraternities and sororities, and system of student rules are all important factors in the daily life of a student.
- **Position in the incoming class:** Do you want to be one of the better students at the school, or do you want the challenge of working extra hard to keep up with the top 25%? Would you consider entering an Honors program at a somewhat less competitive school in order to get the best education possible at a large school in a smaller group experience? For example: Arizona State University or U Mass–Amherst.
- **Calendar:** Is the school's calendar important to you – semesters or quarters?
- **Your Own Priorities:** Think about the dozens of other things that you as an individual might consider: athletics, performing arts, distance from home or relatives, cost, public/private, religious affiliation, specific programs or interdisciplinary majors, . . .add your own special considerations.

Step 2: Honestly Assess Your Profile

A realistic self-assessment will help you examine your academic and personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as your reasons for going to college and what you are seeking in a college education. The process involves a combination of looking back at your high school career and looking ahead to how a college education will prepare you for your post-collegiate years. Answer these questions in an honest and thoughtful manner. A self-evaluation will help you understand what to look for in your selection of prospective schools, and it can prepare you for statements you will be asked to make about yourself in essays and interviews when you apply.

Goals and Values

What is your main educational goal?
What values do you consider most important?
What kind of person would you like to become?
Which of your unique gifts and strengths would you like to develop?
What events or experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

Education

What are your academic interests?
Which courses have been most satisfying for you?
What interests beyond daily class assignments have you pursued in research papers, through independent projects, and recreational reading?
How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss issues and exchange ideas?
What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience in recent years?
In what academic areas do you feel confident? Inadequately prepared?
Are there outside distractions which have interfered with your academic performance?
Consider such things as family problems, health, after-school job responsibilities.

Activities and Interests

What activities outside of the daily school routine do you enjoy the most?
Which have meant the most to you?
Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence or contribution?
What do you do for fun and relaxation?
What concerns you most about the world around you?
What would you do if you could change certain aspects of your world?

Personality and Relationships with Others

Are you competitive? If so, to what extent?
What kind of a person are you?
What three adjectives would you use to describe yourself?
How would someone who knows you well describe you?
What are your finest qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings?
How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself?

Step 3: Create a List of Colleges to Investigate

You might want to create a section of a notebook for keeping track of your research. Make notes initially about size, location, selectivity, and special features based upon some of the qualities/characteristics noted in Step 1. Be honest about the kind of student you are. In terms of grades and standardized test scores, what kind of student are you?

- An A student with 2100-2400 on the SAT or 28-36 on the ACT can consider competitive colleges (more applicants meet their admission requirements than they are able to accommodate).
- A B student with 1800-2100 on the SAT or 22-27 on the ACT can consider selective colleges (many applicants meet their explicit requirements).
- A B- to C student with 1400-1800 on the SAT or 18-21 on the ACT can consider open admission colleges (colleges accept virtually all interested students; some institutions have selective requirements for specific programs such as nursing).

Once you can be honest with yourself, you can begin to categorize colleges as *Reach/Risky*, *Realistic/True Possibility*, and *Likely/Safety*.

Help in your research:

- Talk with your counselor who is a professional in the area of college counseling. Meet with the counselor and keep open lines of communication. Counselors are there to answer questions and make suggestions, but they are not there to do your work for you.
- Take advantage of some of the excellent guidebooks available in the reference area of our library, including individual college catalogues and guidance books prepared by College Board and Princeton Review.
- You can do searches online through Family Connection/Naviance, College Board, and California Colleges.edu. These programs allow you to identify particular aspects of colleges, then they will yield a list for you to research. Almost all colleges have websites to provide students with information. You can submit your name online to get on a particular college's mailing list. They will follow up with catalogs, view books, and applications.
- Don't forget the visits by college representatives to DSHS (and a few at Da Vinci) in the fall. These are great opportunities to meet with the person who will probably be reading your application.
- Don't forget to take advantage of our college based website, Family Connection/Naviance. You can access the site at: <https://student.naviance.com/davinci>. Ask your counselor in help in resetting your password if you have forgotten it.

A list of 20 or more colleges to research is reasonable. You need to begin narrowing your list down to a reasonable six to ten colleges. Narrowing down the list is a task made successful by good research. A good list will include some reach, target, and safety schools.

Step 4: Visiting Colleges

Beyond all of your research on the internet, in general reference materials, books, video tapes, catalogues, and brochures from individual schools, there is nothing like visiting a campus and

seeing for yourself what a school is like. You will want to visit the schools that especially interest you, and certainly the ones that accept you, once you have completed the application process. If you are lucky enough to be able to visit major cities with loads of colleges, like Boston or Washington D.C., then by all means go and see as many schools as you can. If you are not, we recommend that you visit some campuses in northern California. You can visit virtually any type of college right here within driving distance. Some of the area colleges might approximate the size and setting of an out-of-state school that you may be considering.

Before the Tour

- The timing of a visit can make a significant difference in your impressions and opinion of the school. Try to plan your visit when school is in session, if possible.
- Advance planning with the college's admission office is important to help you make the most of your visit. Most colleges encourage campus visits, and many publish special brochures to help you plan one. The admission office can assist you with travel information, driving directions, and scheduling your itinerary (distances/driving times to nearby schools, the feasibility of visiting their school and another on the same day, etc).
- Call the admissions office, and set up a day and time for a tour. If this is a serious visit, you might want to ask about staying overnight in a residence hall. Ask if they can make arrangements. If this is not possible, ask for assistance in finding lodging for the night if you need a place to stay. Some offices have arrangements with hotels or motels in the area.
- During your visit, try to meet with someone from the admission office, attend an information session, and take a tour of the campus.
- Learn all you can and take notes. You will never be indifferent after a college visit. You will have strong impressions. Write them down, good or bad, and start learning about what you want in terms of size, type of school, people, dorms, activities, etc. You might want to make a comparison chart to take with you if you plan to see several schools at one time. If you do not make notes of some kind, you will find that your memory of specifics becomes vague after visiting several schools.
- Follow up with a thank you note to the admissions person who helped you arrange your tour, or who spent time with you on campus.

What to Look for On a Tour

- General appearance of the campus (poor maintenance, vandalism, campus pride)
- Student attire (J. Crew, Gap, very casual,)
- Friendliness (eye contact, offer to help, hello's)
- Student conversations (topic, tone, classes, papers, books, parties)
- Transportation (bikes, cars, foot, shuttles)
- Faculty presence (office hours posted, open doors, student interaction)
- Library (hours, easy access)
- Laboratory and computer facilities (hours, easy access)
- Fine arts facilities (studios, practice rooms, performances)

- Residence Halls (singles, doubles, suites, coed, substance free or wellness, guaranteed housing)

Questions to Ask Campus Representatives on a College Visit

What percent of applicants are accepted?
 What percent of first year students return as sophomores?
 What percent of entering students actually graduate? In how many years?
 How much flexibility will I have in my curriculum?
 Can I double major?
 Is a core curriculum required?
 What is the average class size?
 What is the faculty/student ratio?
 Will graduate assistants teach me?
 What percentage of the faculty teach first and second year students?
 How many credits/classes do students usually take in one term?
 What percent of graduates who apply to law school are admitted? Medical school?
 MBA programs?
 Honors programs?
 Financial Aid?

Questions to Ask Students on a College Visit

Stop several students and ask them about the school and their programs. Watch for their facial expressions and any hesitation in their voice. Some sample questions you could ask:

If they were choosing a college today, would this college be their first choice?
 Is there anything about the school they wish they could change? If so, what would it be?
 What are the school's strongest or most popular majors?
 Is housing guaranteed for freshmen?
 Will you need a car?
 Can you have a car on campus?
 Parking Costs?
 Is there public transportation to nearby destinations (shopping, museums, etc)?

Also, ask questions about your own particular interests, such as internships in your field, fraternities/sororities, student organizations, intramural leagues and/or club sports, student government, and what campus life is like on the weekends.

Other Helpful Activities When You Are on a Campus

Look at school newspapers, kiosks, and bulletin boards for activities that interest you and give you insight into issues students care about.
 Eat in the dining hall (you might need permission from the admissions officer).
 Visit the student union.
 Talk to professors of classes or majors you may be interested in.
 Talk to coaches if you plan to play a sport.

Visit the housing complexes.
Visit the libraries.

Step 5: Meet with College Representatives at Davis High and/or Da Vinci

You can take advantage of meeting college admissions representatives who visit DSHS. Look for information listed on Naviance and sign up to attend presentations there. Juniors and Seniors may attend college presentations.

How Do I Apply?

Step 1: Start the College Applications

You know your sixth semester grades (end of junior year); you know your SAT or ACT scores (you might test again, but you have to go with what you know for this step); and you have done your research. You have your final list categorized by *Reach/Risky*, *Realistic/True Possibility* and *Likely/Safety*. Run the final list by your counselor for input and information that may be new to you. All college applications, including UC and CSU, will be submitted online.

The ***Common Application*** is used by more than 700 colleges and universities. View the colleges at: www.commonapp.org or view them in *College Maps* in Naviance. See if two or more of the schools on your list use the Common Application. If so, you may want to fill out the ***Common Application***, rather than the institutional applications to save repeating the same information over and over. If you use the ***Common Application***, be sure to look for supplements required by many colleges.

Organizational Note: Set up a filing system or use a spreadsheet that works for you. See your counselor for support in creating a college matrix.

Step 2: Keep a Log of Deadlines

Chart each application deadline, counselor/teacher recommendation(s) required, personal essay requirement, SAT/ACT test dates and scores, and date mailed. Applying to colleges can be a draining and time-consuming business. Organization of files and information will help alleviate some of the stress during this time.

Deadlines are critical. Given that deadlines are as varied as the 4352 colleges out there, keeping track of them is crucial. In California, we have very early deadlines for our state university systems. You may apply on-line to the **California State University (CSU) from October 1 - November 30**, and to the **University of California (UC) from November 1 - November 30**. Note the other school's deadlines carefully, as well as any standardized testing deadlines if you plan to test in the fall. If mailing the application, use registered mail, return receipt requested. Some highly competitive colleges have deadlines called **Early Decision and Early Action**. ED and EA deadlines are usually November 1st, with a promise of an early answer, usually December 15th.

Early Decision (ED): If you are admitted as an Early Decision applicant, you must attend that college, and you must withdraw all other applications. This is a highly competitive applicant pool, but because the college can get the best applicants early out of this pool, they sometimes take students with *slightly* lower overall grades/test scores than it might in the regular application pool. The real issue for counselors, and hopefully for you, too, is that you might change your mind between December and the universal May 1st decision date. Most high school seniors do, and if you are accepted ED, the entire process of decision-making is short-circuited. You absolutely must see your counselor before you can send in your ED application anyway, since he or she must sign it. Be certain that you absolutely want to attend this school if accepted. There is no room for doubt – ***Early Decision is a binding contract.***

Early Action (EA) refers to a *non-binding* early admission program. Students admitted under this program are not committed in any way, and may, if they wish, file admissions applications to other colleges. Colleges that have **Restrictive Early Action** programs do not allow candidates to apply to other schools via Early Action or Early Decision. Students *can apply rolling or regular admission* at any time and do not need to wait for the Restrictive Early Action decision. Students receiving deferral notifications will be reconsidered with the regular applicant pool. Early action pools are also very strong, so if you aren't that strong, you might actually run the risk of being rejected outright. Talk it through with your counselor. There are issues concerning Financial Aid with both ED and EA, so again, speak with your counselor regarding these early deadlines.

Finally, you should be aware that if you file an application as an Early Decision or Early Action applicant to a school and are denied admission, you may not apply again to the same school for the same admissions year as a regular admissions applicant.

Rolling Admissions: With rolling admissions, the admission application is reviewed as soon as the file is complete. The college notifies the student of its decision within a short time, usually four to six weeks. Due to the increasing competitiveness of college admissions, it is a good idea to apply early to these colleges.

Open Admissions: Some colleges do not practice selective admissions and offer admission to all students who apply. Generally, there are no admission deadlines for colleges that follow this policy. The community colleges are an example of this type of admission.

Step 3: Complete the Applications

Do not procrastinate. Do not treat the deadlines as though they are flexible. Be sure you mark your progress on your Deadlines Chart. Welcome your parents reminding you to stay on top of the deadlines. You will appreciate their support, guidance, and encouragement.

As soon as the applications for CSU/UC are available online, you may begin filling them out. The applications can be submitted October 1 (for the CSU) or November 1 (for the UC).

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO FILE UC OR CSU APPLICATIONS. Computer systems have been known to crash due to overload.

Private school applications will generally require a **School Report** and one or more Teacher Recommendations (forms also found in the applications). As soon as you receive or download an application, fill in the top portion of the forms.

Complete the **College and Career Questionnaire**. Complete the **transcript request** process in the office—there is a sign on the desk of our registrar, Sandy Ferguson.

If applying to private schools, write an autobiographical **resume**. Most college applications will contain sections that ask for your activities and interests outside of the academic classroom setting. Completing these sections on several applications can be tedious and time consuming. Once you develop a resume, you can include it with your application and bypass these sections on every form, noting “*See attached resume.*” (Some applications including the Common Application, ask you to complete the form even if you submit a resume. The resume gives you more space, however, and a more flexible format.) You may already have done this for a job, a summer experience, or in Family Connection/NAVIANCE. The resume will be used by your counselor, teachers writing recommendations, admissions officers, and possibly a coach or interviewer. Your resume should include information such as:

- Personal data: full legal name, address, telephone number, and email address.
- Educational background: school(s) attended.
- Extracurricular, personal, and volunteer activities you have done either in the summer or during the school year while in high school – community service; scouting; church, synagogue, or youth group projects or activities; school activities outside of class (sports, theatre, musical talents, art projects, student committees, etc); significant travel experiences; summer camps or special outdoor programs; independent projects you have completed.
- Include specific events, major accomplishments, special awards, or honors in any of these activities (musical instruments played, acceptance to a program by audition, elected offices held, varsity letters, workplace awards, etc.), and note any leadership roles you may have held.
- Indicate your level of involvement with each item (hours per week, weeks per year, or overall time involved). The length of time spent in each of your endeavors is not the most crucial factor since the type of venture or your level of responsibility may be more important. However, time spent reveals the degree of your commitment.
- Special interests and hobbies: This category usually includes activities that show great dedication and participation over a long period of time.
- Work experience: Not only should you list your job(s), but also the number of hours you worked during the period(s) of employments.

Note: Separate athletic, drama, music or other specialized resumes are very significant when applying for competitive programs.

Sample Resume

First Name, Last Name
Da Vinci Charter Academy
Davis, CA
Graduating Senior, Class of 20__

Academic Awards/Achievements

Top Student Award – Biology	10 th
Top Student Award – Chemistry	11 th

Extracurricular Activities and Leadership Positions

Speech/Debate Club	10 th , 11 th , 12 th grades 11 th - Two individual bronze medals, regional competition Team silver medal, regional competition
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Basketball	12 th – Elected team Co-Captain 10 th – Junior Varsity, 11 th /12 th – Varsity 10 th – Captain, Voted MVP 11 th – Voted Most Improved
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ASB Class Representative	9 th , 10 th
Class Vice-President	11 th
Student Body Vice President	12 th

Community or Volunteer Service

Habitat for Humanity	Helped build houses	8 hours on seven Saturdays, 2009
Hospital Volunteer	Assist nurses, visit patients	4 hours per week, 11/2009- Present

Talents/Special Honors

Voice: Sing in school choir	11 th and 12 th grades
Public Speaking	Won Rotary Four-Way Test Speech Contest, 11 th

Employment/Summer Activities

Courtesy Clerk	Local grocery store, Summers 2009, 2010	25-35 hours per week
Foreign Language Program	Spent two months with a host family in Spain, Summer 2008	

Limit your requests for **teacher recommendations** to one or two teachers (as specified by the college). Colleges rarely ask for more than two teachers. Some colleges ask for a 3rd optional (ex: coach, music teacher). It is important that you personally ask a teacher to complete the teacher recommendation form. The teacher you choose should know you well enough to give several specific examples describing your characteristics as a person and student, your written work, the degree and quality of class participation, and your interest in the subject. This is not necessarily the teacher who gave you an “A.” Recommendations should come from junior or senior level teachers. Here are some ways you can make this task easier for your teachers:

1. If recommendations are required, forms are usually included with the application or completed via the Common Application. Fill out the top of the teacher recommendation form completely. You should mark that you waive your right to see the letter of recommendation and sign it. Just so you know-- the federal law governing this aspect of your application states that you *only have the right to see the letter once you have been admitted and you actually attend that school*. Then you have the right to go to the admission office once you are on campus and read the letter. If you are rejected from a school, you have no right to see the letter at any time. (FERPA-Family Education Rights & Privacy Act) Meet with the teacher **IN PERSON** *minimum of three weeks* before your first deadline and ask them to write you a letter. You need to invite them on the Common Application, so make sure you have the **CORRECT** email address.
2. Check with each teacher a week to 10 days before the application is due to be sure that the letter of recommendation has been sent. (You can submit your application prior to the completion of the letter. **Remember to give your teacher a thank you note.**

NO LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION ARE REQUIRED OR PERMITTED
FOR UC OR CSU APPLICATIONS.

Letters of Recommendation: What Not To Do

- Assume that recommendations are quickly and easily prepared (they are not).
- Ask a teacher to write a recommendation on the day it is due – give them a *minimum* of three weeks notice.
- Ask more than two teachers to write recommendations for you unless special circumstances dictate. This is an inefficient use of teachers’ time and is considered to be an imposition on the third teacher when only one or two recommendations are needed.
- Neglect to thank the teacher for his or her help.
- Neglect to let the teachers know where you have been admitted, especially if he/she wrote and sent a letter of recommendation to a school where you have been accepted.

Writing Your Essays

There will be a prompt in the application if an essay is required. This can be anything from “Tell us something about yourself” to something off-the-wall that will enable the creative student to do his or her thing. Usually, prompts look something like this:

- Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.

- Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
- Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
- Describe a character in fiction, an historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and describe that influence.
- Topic of your choice.

Essays are important, so do not leave this piece until the night before the application is due. Write it (three or four rough drafts is the norm for writing a good essay), set it aside, revise it, have someone else edit it, and then finalize it when you know it really reflects who you are. If you are short on ideas, one of these might help:

- Do you participate in class? Think of a time when something you said sparked an interesting discussion.
- Think of your best qualities: leadership, persistence, compassion, humor. Tell a story about a time when that quality exhibited itself in your life.
- Do you excel in some extracurricular activity? Do you play the French horn? Do you tear up the soccer field? Do you write so beautifully that it brings tears to eyes of the reader? Tell an anecdote from your life concerning your talent.
- Do you bring diversity to the (future) campus? If you have a different perspective to add to the student body at your hoped-for college, talk about it.
- Was there a time in your life when you failed at something, and now, looking back, you can see how much you learned from your failure/mistake?
- Did you gain insight after an experience, or after meeting someone special, that changed your outlook on a person, a group, or a situation? Talk about that personal growth.

Essays: What to Do

- Be original in your word choices and the way you present your ideas.
- Personalize your essays. The admissions reader wants to know about you.
- Avoid generalities.
- Keep your essays short, and stay within the space provided whenever possible.
- Have someone else read your essay and give suggestions. Your English teacher and counselors are good resources.
- Write about something you really care about.

Essays: What Not To Do

- Try to write a funny essay if you are not a good comic writer.
- Repeat information from other parts of your application.
- Use your essay to list things you have done.
- Write about “last summer” unless it is really important to you.
- Write your essay for the admissions reader. Write it for yourself, but make it interesting for the people evaluating your essays.

You are responsible for sending **official test scores** to each college. If you coded colleges on your standardized test registration forms, then you have already sent official copies. If you

didn't, contact the College Board www.collegeboard.com or ACT www.act.org and send the scores immediately. There are charges for sending scores after you take the test, but the CollegeBoard and ACT do have the option of sending scores FOR FREE PRIOR to taking the test—take advantage of this option!

Interviews might be required or recommended for some colleges. (Recommended really means required.) If so, there may be a representative coming to the Sacramento area or the school may arrange for alumni in the area to interview students. **You must call and schedule the interview according to the instructions given in the application.** Sometimes interviews are optional. If you are a borderline student, you should try to interview. Once the interviewer sees that you are a great student who would be an asset to the school, the input from the interview just might tip the balance in your favor. Interviews are rarely make-or-break events, so *relax and be yourself*. Dress appropriately, speak well, make eye contact, and be confident that the interviewer will only ask you questions for which you know answers. Counselors are happy to do mock-interviews to help you prepare.

Step 4: Submit the Applications

Try very hard not to submit the applications the night before they are due. You will receive an acknowledgement via E-mail from each college confirming receipt of your applications. You will also receive login information for the school's portal. This is critical information, as schools will communicate messages to you via this portal. Failure to respond to messages will result in incomplete applications or missed opportunities to apply to specific programs.

Step 5: Mid-Year Reports

Most private colleges require your 7th semester (fall semester, senior year) grades. Private colleges often have a **Mid-Year Report** form in the application. Your counselor will complete this task for you when grades have been finalized in early February.

Note: Transcripts are not submitted to the UC or CSU during the application process, nor do they accept mid-year reports; therefore, you do not need to send transcripts to these schools. The final transcript is sent in July once you have been admitted and graduated from Da Vinci. (Recently, some CSU's have requested transcripts. You only send the transcript if requested by the college.)

Step 6: Communicate Any Changes

Take responsibility for communicating with the college admissions office if anything should change *after* you file your application. For example, if you drop a class that you listed on your application, you must notify the college in writing that you have done so. If you stated that you planned to be on a team or club during the year and you decided later not to participate, you must notify the college in writing of this change. If you receive a "D" or an "F" in a college prep class first semester, you must also either write or call and discuss the impact this might have on your application with an admissions counselor. See your counselor to discuss anything that you have doubts about.

Testing

PSAT

The PSAT is offered one time each year in October. Juniors are strongly advised to take the PSAT. The test is normed to juniors, so it is a valid indicator of where an individual stands in relation to the other college-bound juniors all over the country. It is also considered a strong indicator of the anticipated range of scores you will earn on the SAT. For those juniors whose test results rank in the top 2% in the nation, the PSAT also functions as the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program.

The PSAT is administered at Da Vinci in October. Registration takes place in September. (Sophomores may register if space is available.)

SAT and Subject Tests

The majority of colleges require either the SAT with writing or the ACT with writing for admissions consideration. Some highly selective colleges also require Subject Tests. It is advisable for Juniors to take the SAT and two SAT Subject Tests by June of their junior year. Typically, students who are interested in STEM majors need to take the SAT Subject Tests. Seniors have four test dates remaining for Fall admissions: August, October, November, and December. All SAT exams are administered on Saturdays at national test sites. DSHS offers the SAT in March and November. **Registration is available online at www.collegeboard.com.** Make sure to observe registration deadlines. Students who need special accommodations need to be approved well in advance (at least six weeks for appeal process). See your counselor for details.

The SAT Subject Tests are approximately one-hour in length. You can take up to 3 subject tests on one test date. It is not possible to take SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests on the same day. Two test dates are required if you plan to take both. Students can still choose to submit their scores for consideration as part of their application, just as they do now with AP scores. Subject tests may also be recommended for certain majors.

2019-2020 SAT Test Dates

Test dates and Fees Change Every Year. Visit www.collegeboard.com for up-to-date information. Here are tentative test dates and deadlines:

Test Dates	Registration Deadlines	
	Regular	Late fee required
Saturday, August 24, 2019	July 26, 2019	September 6, 2019
Saturday, October 5, 2019	September 6, 2019	October 18, 2019
Saturday, November 2, 2019	October 3, 2019	November 15, 2019

Saturday, December 7, 2019	November 8, 2019	December 20, 2019
Saturday, March 14, 2020	February 14, 2020	March 27, 2020
Saturday, May 2, 2020	April 3, 2020	May 15, 2020
Saturday, June 6, 2020	May 8, 2020	July 15, 2020

ACT

The ACT is a “separate, but equal” college admissions test. This means that it is accepted in place of the SAT at every school in the country. For the UC System, it is possible for students to use the ACT with Writing plus the Subject Tests, rather than SAT and the Subject Tests for admissions. The ACT is administered on Saturdays, just as the SATs are, but never on conflicting dates. The ACT has four sections, each of which count as 25% of the composite score: Reading, English, Science, and Math. The ACT offers a Writing section in order to make their test equivalent to the SAT. Registration is available online at www.act.org.

ACT General Test Dates and Fees for 2019-2020. Visit the website for exact locations and times.

The Optional Writing Test is available for all test dates.

Test Date	Registration Deadlines	
	Regular	Late Fee Required
September 14, 2019	August 16, 2019	August 30, 2019
October 26, 2019	September 20, 2019	October 4, 2019
December 14, 2019	November 8, 2019	November 22, 2019
February 8, 2020	January 10, 2020	January 17, 2020
April 4, 2020	February 28, 2020	March 13, 2020
June 13, 2020	May 8, 2020	May 22, 2020
July 18, 2020*	June 19, 2020	June 26, 2020

Test Preparation

Test preparation is valuable if the student experiences test anxiety, if the student does not understand test-taking strategies, or if the student needs review of material studied several years ago (e.g., student took Algebra 1 in 8th grade, or geometry in 9th grade). Directly partnered with the College Board, KhanAcademy.org offers free PSAT/SAT test prep. ACT Academy at act.org is a free online test practice program to prepare students for that test format.

FEE WAIVERS FOR STUDENTS ON FREE/REDUCED LUNCH PROGRAM

SAT tests – juniors/seniors may receive **4 fee** waivers – 2 for SAT and 2 for SAT subject tests and score reports sent up to four colleges.

ACT tests – juniors/seniors may receive **2 fee waivers** and score reports sent up to four colleges.

SAT provides seniors up to **four** Request for Waiver of College Application Fee forms for out of state and private colleges (see counselor for list of colleges accepting the fee waiver form).

California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) give a maximum of **four** fee waivers. Students can apply automatically for a fee waiver within the online application.

PSAT – fee waiver available upon request.

AP (Advanced Placement Exam) - fee waiver available upon request.

Financial Aid

The first smart step in the college application process is to apply to a college where the tuition fees and housing costs make the most sense for your financial situation. For middle-income families, the two-year community colleges or the CSU or UC systems might be the best choices available.

Who is most likely to get financial aid?

- Eligibility for most federal student aid programs is based on financial need rather than on academic achievement. To have financial need determined, a student must file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- To be eligible for federal student aid, a student must have a high school diploma or its equivalent; enroll as a regular student in a degree or certificate program; be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen; have a valid Social Security number, and make satisfactory academic progress.
- College-sponsored financial aid and scholarships can be based on need or need plus additional criteria, such as academic achievement, special achievements, community activities, talents, leadership potential, ethnic or racial heritage, athletic ability, field of student, career plans, etc.

Next, apply for financial aid. **You should apply for financial aid even if you think you don't qualify.** Aid is intended to make a college education available for students of families in many financial situations. Aid is awarded to many families with incomes they thought would disqualify them. Several types of federal and state based aid, such as grants, loans, and work-study, are only available to students who submit the FAFSA. College financial aid

administrators often take into account not only income, but also other family members in college, home mortgage costs, and other factors to determine how aid is allotted. Many colleges will be sensitive to a family's specific financial situation, especially if certain special circumstances arise, such as unusually high medical bills, or a layoff. If the FAFSA has been filed, it ensures the student will be considered for financial aid if special circumstances do occur.

The first step to getting money for college is to complete the FAFSA. Apply early and meet the deadline because financial aid funds are often limited. Also, explore private scholarships, tax credits, private loans and other options for paying for college. Your school counselor or Scholarship and Financial Aid Office is a good place to start.

Be sure to meet each college's financial aid deadlines. Check with each college. For early decision and early action, deadlines can be as early as October of the senior year.

There are three main financial aid forms. The most important one is the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. It is best to fill out this form as soon as possible after October 1st of your senior year. The **deadline** is March 2nd. If your parents' tax returns are not finalized by that date, they must use estimates rather than miss the deadline. There is time to file an amendment if the estimates are way off – just don't miss that deadline. The FAFSA form is available online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

The FAFSA is automatically reviewed for:

- **Federal Pell Grants:** Unlike a loan, a Federal Pell Grant does not have to be repaid. Generally, Pell Grants are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned a BA or professional degree.
- **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG):** A FSEOG is for undergraduates with exceptional financial need and gives priority to students who receive Federal Pell Grants. The FSEOG does not have to be paid back.
- **Federal Work-Study:** The Federal Work-Study Program provides jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money at a campus job to help pay education expenses. The total Federal Work-Study award depends on when you apply, your level of need, and the funding level of your school.
- **Federal Perkins Loan:** A Federal Perkins Loan is a low-interest loan for both undergraduate and graduate students with financial need. Your school is your lender, with government funds, with a share contributed by the school. You must repay this loan to your school.
- **Federal Stafford Student Loan:** These loans may be subsidized or unsubsidized. Subsidized loans are awarded based on need, and interest does not accrue until after you have completed your studies. Unsubsidized loans are not based on need and start accruing interest during your studies.
- **Federal PLUS Loan:** These are loans available to parents of dependent students.

CAL GRANT: If you list a *California college* on your FAFSA form, then you will automatically be considered for a Cal Grant, which is state-funded money you do not repay. Da Vinci submits your **GPA Verification** by March 2. For complete information about different Cal Grant program and eligibility requirements, please visit: www.calgrants.org.

- **CAL GRANT A** – The purpose of the Cal Grant A is to provide financial assistance to students from low and middle income families in meeting tuition and fees. Cal Grant A recipients are selected on the basis of financial need and academic ability. The amount of a student's award may vary depending on the institution they attend. A student who decides to attend a community college must request that this grant be held in reserve until they transfer to a four-year institution.
- **CAL GRANT B** – The Cal Grant B is for high potential students from disadvantaged or low-income families who otherwise would not be able to pursue a post-secondary education. Cal Grant B awards for first-year students are usually limited to assisting with living expenses, books and supplies, and transportation.
- **CAL GRANT C** - the Cal Grant C was developed to assist vocationally orientated students to acquire a meaningful and marketable job skill in occupations designated by the states as being in demand. This grant may not be used to pursue a four-year degree program. To qualify, vocational training must be on a full or part-time basis. There are a limited number of Cal Grant C awards made on an annual basis.

CALIFORNIA COLLEGE FEE WAIVER FOR DEPENDENTS OF U.S. VETERAN:

The California College Fee Waiver (CFW) program benefits the spouses and children of U.S. veterans. Students meeting the eligibility criteria may get their college fees waived if they attend a California Community College, a California State University, or a University of California campus. Eligibility is determined by the Count Veteran Services office: www.cacvso.org. For more information regarding eligibility questions, contact the appropriate Veterans Service Office.

Once you have filed your FAFSA form, it will be processed and a **Student Aid Report (SAR)** will be mailed to you. If there are corrections to be made, make them at once and return the form as instructed. Remember that accurate figures from completed income tax returns are necessary.

The third form you might be asked to fill out is the **CSS/Profile**. This is a financial form used in addition to the FAFSA by *some* private colleges. If the school you are applying to is listed on the CSS Profile registration form, then you must fill it out. Go to www.collegeboard.com to complete your personalized Profile application. Site opens October 1st. It is not free, so be sure to fill out the registration form and send in the correct payment well in advance of January 1st. Individual forms customized for each college will be sent to you so that you can file them during the same time period as the FAFSA, available on line at: www.fafsa.org.

Be sure to attend DSHS's **FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOP** in November. A professional college financial aid administrator will assist you with questions and updated information regarding financial aid changes.

Scholarships: Most students who receive large scholarships earn them from the institution they end up attending. There are, however, thousands of outside scholarships that range from very small amounts (\$25) to very substantial amounts (\$10,000). Most of these scholarship applications will ask for an essay. Here are some ideas for researching scholarships:

- If your parents work for a large company, be sure they check with their Human Resources office to see if scholarships are offered to children of employees.
- The most reliable website for scholarships out there is www.fastweb.com. It is really difficult to get through the thousands of entries, but there is a search engine that can help you sift through some of it. It is not always realistic in its search results, but at least it will narrow the list of those you have to read.
- If you belong to an ethnic group with an active club, they will likely offer scholarships. Call and find out.
- Local chapters of civic organizations such as the Optimists/Soroptimists, Rotarians, Elks, etc. all offer some type of scholarship. Call the local offices and ask.
- Watch for announcements and advertisements in the local newspaper. It is amazing how many organizations decide to offer a scholarship and simply tell the local press.
- View the scholarship list on Family Connection/Naviance.
- Meet with our Scholarship Coordinator, Julie Clayton, at the DSHS College and Career Center for support.

Note: Whatever you do, **stay away from the scholarship scam artists.** You will receive very official looking envelopes that offer to do the scholarship search for you. If you have to spend money, then it is a scam. If they promise to find money for you that no one else can find, then it is a scam. There is no scholarship out there that a scam artist can find for you that you cannot find for yourself. Do not fall for their promises. Let your counselor know about these organizations if you are not sure about something you receive in the mail. It is imperative that they are reported to the Federal Trade Commission, who attempts to prosecute the worst of them.

Students with Learning Differences and/or ADD/ADHD

If you have an IEP or 504 accommodation plan, you have received accommodations during high school. You might be tempted to “go it alone” in college, but this might set you up for failure. You may be missing one of the most important lessons college has to offer: how to find and use help. This step toward becoming an independent learner is crucial to success in college. Students with learning differences would be well advised to get all the assistance available at the beginning of the college experience.

No college has the right to ask an applicant if he/she has a disability. However, there may be very good reasons to self-disclose this information, such as:

- Grades in classes such as math or English were consistently lower than other classes.
- The disability was identified at a certain point in high school and grades improved dramatically once the student began receiving accommodations.
- The student was unable to pursue a high level of study in a certain subject, such as foreign language, due to the disability.

There are three categories of assistance provided by colleges:

- **Structured Programs:** Colleges with structured programs offer specific programs for students with LD/ADHD that go well beyond mandated services. These services might include special admissions procedures, specialized and trained professionals, compensatory strategies, one-on-one tutoring, additional fees, compulsory participation, and monitoring.
- **Coordinated Services:** Colleges with coordinated services offer programs for students with LD/ADHD that might be somewhat involved with the admissions decisions and might include voluntary participation, services beyond those that are mandated, low or no fees, and less structure.
- **Basic Services:** Colleges with basic services comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, but rarely have specialized LD staff, do not have monitoring, and are totally dependent on student advocacy.

The student with LD/ADHD must take these steps when applying to college in order to be eligible for services:

- Self-disclose the LD or ADHD
- Request accommodations
- Submit current and appropriate documentation

The colleges will then exercise their right to independently examine the documentation and identify the services they feel are reasonable and appropriate.

The following is a sampling of colleges that have support programs for students with Learning Differences:

Arizona State University
 Boston College, MA
 Brigham Young University, UT
 California State University campus
 College of William and Mary, VA
 Colorado State University
 Hofstra University, NY
 Green Mountain College, VT
 Curry College, MA
 Lake Forest College, IL
 Landmark College, VT
 (Serves only LD/ADD students)
 Linfield College, OR
 Menlo College, CA
 Mitchell College, CT
 Old Dominion University, CA

New York University
 Regis University, CO
 University of Arizona, SALT program
 University of Colorado, Boulder
 University of Denver, CO
 University of Nevada, Las Vegas
 University of Oregon
 University of the Pacific, CA
 University of Pittsburgh, PA
 University of Redlands, CA
 University of San Francisco
 University of Wisconsin
 Washington State Universities
 Western Maryland College, MD
 Whittier College, CA

Community Colleges:

American River College, CA
Colorado Mountain College, CO
Dixie College, UT
Grossmont Community College, CA
Lane Community College, OR

Marymount College, CA
Northern Idaho Community College
Santa Barbara City College, CA
Santa Monica Community College, CA
Sierra College, CA

Reminder: Programs change when key personnel move on. When you visit colleges, be sure to meet with personnel at the Disability Resource Centers to determine what types of services they provide to disabled students and their attitude towards this special group of students.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ATHLETES
NCAA Eligibility Center

www.eligibilitycenter.org

General Information on the Eligibility Center Web site

- Register and update information for the eligibility center.
- Link to an information and resource page for prospective student-athletes and parents.
- Online version of the NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete.
- Core-course listings for high schools.
- Home school information.
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Information for students with education-impacting disabilities
- Division I and II initial-eligibility standards (including Division I sliding scale)
- Division I & II worksheet

Fee Waiver

U.S. student-athletes are eligible for a fee waiver if they have already received a fee waiver (not state voucher) for the ACT or SAT. The high school counselor will also be required to submit an electronic fee waiver verification on their behalf (high school counselors with PIN access may submit waivers for eligible students from the high school administrator section of the eligibility center Web site).

Eligibility Center Services

NCAA Eligibility Center

P.O. Box 7136
Indianapolis, IN 46207

Customer service hours - 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern time Monday through Friday.

Customer service toll-free line - 877/262-1492 Fax number: 317/968-5100

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics website: <http://naia.cstv.com>
Information about athletic offerings at small colleges.

JUNIOR CHECKLIST

Spring/Sophomore year

- During scheduling, be sure to choose classes that will meet college entrance requirements.

September/October

- Register for the PSAT at Da Vinci (test given in October).
- Pay attention to college admission representative visits at DSHS and Da Vinci. Sign up in advance if you want to attend and speak with the representative.
- Keep your schedule strong and work hard. The grades you earn this year will finalize the GPA with which you apply to college next fall.

November/December

- December: Registration deadline for the January SAT

January/February

- January: Registration deadline for the February ACT
- December: Registration deadline for the January SAT
- Make your final exams count. This semester will finalize your 5th semester cumulative GPA. One more semester and you will know the GPA with which you apply to college in the fall.

March/April

- March: Registration deadline for the April ACT
- March: Registration deadline for the May SAT & Subject Tests

May/June

- April: Registration deadline for the June SAT & Subject Tests
- May: Registration deadline for the June ACT
- Take AP exams in May (results arrive in July)
- Make plans for summer college visits. If interviews are available, make an appointment. Be sure to follow visits/interviews with thank you notes.
- Start a file of brochures and applications for schools you like.
- Finalize plans for summer jobs, camps, and educational opportunities.
- Review scholarship list in Naviance.

Advice to Juniors from Graduating Seniors

- The college GPA you have by the end of your Junior year is the GPA you will put on your college application. Work hard now. It is harder to raise your GPA in the senior year than you think it will be.
- Start looking at colleges in the spring
- Start your essays over the summer.
- When visiting campuses, ask yourself, “Could I feel at home here?”
- Ask about the negatives when you visit colleges.
- Quick campus tours can help you narrow your list. Fully visit your final choices.
- Like your back-up schools – you may need them.
- Don’t just pick a school because your friend likes it.
- Don’t get hooked on just one school – you might not get in there.
- Your ideas about what you want will change over time.
- Don’t obsess over the college process – you still need to do well in school.
- Don’t just focus on school. Find something you love and make a difference.
- Don’t let the college process dictate what activities you do.
- Start forming good relationships with teachers now so you have people you can ask to write recommendations for you.
- Ask your teachers early to write letters for you so they have time.
- If you want to submit artwork with your applications or audition, talk to your art, drama, or music teachers now about what you will need to do.
- Look at some applications (paper and online) now to learn what they ask.
- Plan carefully to take your SAT and Subject Tests (where they are required) so you can fit them all in.
- Consider taking the ACT. Research ACT and SAT differences and similarities. You may find that you are better suited to one over the other. Current experts advise: pick one test and prepare for one test.
- Use the Common Application if at least two schools you are applying to use it.
- Save an excellent, highly graded writing sample from junior year.
- Thank your parents, teachers, counselors, administrators and friends for the support they have given you during high school.

Senior Checklist

Spring/junior year

- Be sure to finalize your schedule making certain that you have all the classes you need to graduate and to meet college entrance requirements.

August

- Registration for the September ACT
- Begin to finalize your college list, request applications if they are not available online.

September/October

- September: Registration for the October SAT & Subject Tests
- September: Registration for the November SAT & Subject Tests (including Language with Listening)
- Pay attention to the schedule of college visits to DSHS. Finalize your college essay.
- Finalize your college application list.
- Applications are accepted by the CSU campuses beginning October 1st. Go online to www.csumentor.edu. The final application filing deadline is November 30th.
- Attend CSU and/or UC application workshops given by counselors & colleges.
- Give teachers and counselors at least three weeks notice to write letters of recommendation for you. Provide them stamped envelopes addressed to each private college. No letters of recommendation are required or permitted for the CSU or UC systems.
- Begin filing applications. Complete the transcript request card for the Da Vinci registrar.
- Senior Boys: You must register with Selective Service on your 18th birthday. Those not registered break the law. You also will not be eligible for financial aid for college or graduate school, nor will you ever be able to be hired by state (most states) or federal agencies.
- October: Registration for the December SAT & Subject Tests

November/December

- Applications accepted by the UC System beginning November 1, deadline is November 30th. Go online to www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions. Attend UC application workshops at DSHS.
- Observe all college application deadlines.
- Be sure all applications are sent before Winter Break. Remember, many colleges have a January 1 deadline. You will not be able to reach teachers or your counselor during the Winter Break if you have forgotten to request letters of recommendation or transcripts.
- Reminder: FAFSA needs to be completed in January. Review website at: www.fafsa.ed.gov
- If applying to private schools, find out whether they require the CSS PROFILE supplemental financial aid form. Fees are required for filing the CSS. Check with your

counselor for the CSS Registration Guide Booklet that explains everything and has a list of schools that require the CSS. Website: www.collegeboard.com or call 1-800-778-6888.

January/February

- Submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to the processor as soon after October 1 as possible (but no later than the March 2nd deadline). www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Parents must get income tax forms prepared early; schools may request them to prove eligibility for financial aid.
- By the beginning of February, you should have submitted all 7th semester transcript requests (Mid Year Reports) for private colleges/universities (not CSU/UC's).
- If you are still submitting applications, make certain it is filled out completely, accurately, and legibly. Submit applications online whenever possible.
- Rank your finalized list of colleges.

March/April

- Receive college admissions notifications.
- Plan time to discuss your options with family, teachers, and counselor
- Carefully compare various financial aid packages.
- If you are waitlisted, decide on your options
- Return all paperwork on time, paying special attention to the **May 1 deadline** by which many colleges must have your decision and a deposit.
- If you have filed the FAFSA (by March 2 latest), look for the SAR within 4-6 weeks. Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-433-3243 if it is not received.
- Visit campuses of schools you have not seen if still in doubt about a final college decision
- Continue to apply for private and independent scholarships.
- Notify other colleges that you will not be attending.

May/June

- It is still not too late to apply to colleges with rolling admissions (but don't expect financial aid). Seniors still looking for colleges can visit this website May 5 for a list of colleges with space available for qualified students: <http://www.nacacnet.org>
- Fill out and return all college papers regarding housing, student orientation registration, loan applications, etc.
- Make certain that your final transcript request has been requested at the counseling office.
- Notify your counselor which school you have chosen to attend.
- Notify our Scholarship Coordinator of any awards or scholarships you have received.
- Pick up your high school diploma in the main office after graduation.

There are extensive resources available on the Internet for you to collect information on colleges and universities. Try some of these favorites.

Colleges

<http://connection.naviance.com/dshs>

Family Connection/NAVIANCE

www.collegeboard.com

Do a college search, research colleges in the United States and beyond, find National College Fairs and Visual and Performing Arts College Fairs.

www.californiacolleges.edu

Information about all colleges in California.

www.universityofcalifornia.com

Explore campuses, file your UC application online.

www2.calstate.edu/apply

Explore campuses, file your CSU application online.

www.nacacnet.org

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) has over 1200 member colleges who report space available at member colleges on May 5. In 2009, they reported 258 openings in May and 394 openings by the end of summer.

www.commonapp.org

One application for 414 colleges.

www.ctcl.com

Colleges That Change Lives. Different perspectives on choosing a college.

www.collegesofdistinction.com

A college guide with a unique approach asking about what really matters: which colleges are the best places to learn, grow and succeed?

www.gustavus.edu/oncampus/careercenter/planning/majors/

Allows students & parents to see the practical application of college majors.

www.wiche.edu/sep/wue

Western Undergraduate Exchange is a program which allows students in western states to enroll with a tuition reduction.

www.assist.org

ASSIST is a computerized student-transfer information system that can be accessed over the World Wide Web. It displays reports of how course credits earned at one California college or university can be applied when transferred to another. ASSIST is the official repository of articulation for California's colleges and universities and therefore provides the most accurate and up-to-date information available about student transfer in California.

Vocational Schools

<http://www.rwm.org/rwm/>

Good source of information on private career schools which offer vocational training. Organized by state and job skill involved.

Testing

www.act.org

Register for the ACT.

www.collegeboard.com

Register for the SAT.

Virtual Campus Tours

www.campustours.com

Virtual college tours, web cams, interactive college maps, college videos, movies, and pictures.

Athletics

www.eligibilitycenter.org

Information for high school athletes regarding Division I, II, or III sports in college and NCAA Eligibility Center.

www.naia.cstv.com

Information about athletic offerings at small colleges.

Financial Aid

www.fastweb.com

Comprehensive list of private scholarships; scholarship search.

www.finaid.org

Reliable information about financial aid, estimating family contribution, scholarship scams.

www.csac.ca.gov

California Student Aid Commission – Information on Cal Grants. Assists in the search for state, federal, and institutional financial aid information for funding post-high school education.

www.fafsa.ed.gov

Guide to applying for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Provides eligibility requirements and guidelines for those applying for federal student loans and aid.

www.questbridge.org

QuestBridge prepares outstanding low-income high school juniors to apply for admission to leading colleges across the country. College Prep Scholarship allows students to access many opportunities through one application including:

- 10 full scholarships to college summer programs at Emory, Harvard, Notre Dame, Penn, Stanford and Yale
- 40 awards of college admissions counseling provided by QuestBridge staff
- 1,000 invitations to QuestBridge College Admissions Conferences at Stanford and Yale
- 100 all-expense-paid campus visits to selective colleges

www.collegeanswer.com

Solid base of information on costs by college along with a list of thousands of sources of financial aid.

Engineering

<http://tryengineering.org>

An excellent site to learn more about engineering education and careers. It is sponsored by IBM, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, TryScience, and the Sloan Career Cornerstone Center. Some of the most useful sections include Explore Engineering, Opportunities, Find a University, and Ask a Question.

Learning Disabilities Association of America

www.ldaamerica.org

Information about learning disabilities, diagnosis and advocacy.

Glossary

ACT: Abbreviation for the American College Test. This is an assessment in English, mathematics, reading, and science; writing is optional. Accepted by most colleges in lieu of the SAT.

Associate's Degree: An Associate of Arts (AA) degree is traditionally earned in two years at a community college.

Bachelor's Degree: BA – Bachelor of Arts, BS – Bachelor of Science. A diploma earned after successful completion (traditionally in four years) of required courses at a college or university.

Calendar: The system used by an institution to divide its year into instruction periods. The most common are semester, quarter, and 4-1-4.

- A **semester** system is a division of the school year into two parts, usually 18 weeks in length. Schools may have an additional 8-week summer session.
- A **quarter** system is a division of the school year into three quarters, usually 11 weeks in length. Students take three or four courses per quarter rather than the traditional five in a semester system.
- A **4-1-4** system consists of two terms of about 16 weeks each, separated by a one month intersession used for intensive study in one area, research, or internships.

Candidate Notification Date: The date by which colleges notify students of admission decisions.

Candidate Reply Date: The date by which students must reply to the colleges that admitted them. The universal date is May 1st.

CEEB: Abbreviation for the College Entrance Examination Board, which creates and supervises the administration of the SAT and the Subject Tests. The **CEEB code for DSHS is 050730**. You will need this number every time you register for an SAT, ACT, or apply to college.

College: The term commonly used to describe any institution of higher education. This is usually an institution that grants a Bachelor degree. A college may also be one part of a university. For example, undergraduates apply to Harvard College, not Harvard University. Columbia College is the undergraduate division of Columbia University.

Common Application: A form devised and accepted by 414 colleges as equal to their own institutional application. The Common Application makes things easier for the student who can fill out one application for many colleges, rather than repeat basic information over and over again. See www.commonapp.org for additional information and a list of colleges who accept the Common Application.

CSS/PROFILE: A financial aid form used by some private colleges and universities in addition to the FAFSA (see section on Financial Aid in this handbook).

Early Action: An admission plan whereby the student submits an application by November 1st and receives a decision by mid-December. If accepted, the student is not required to enroll, but is expected to notify the college about his/her decision by May 1st.

Early Decision: An admission plan whereby a student can apply to a first-choice college by November 1st and receive a decision by mid-December. Upon making the decision to apply early decision, the student agrees to enroll if accepted. Also, the student is expected to make no other application if accepted and withdraw all other applications already submitted.

EAP: The Early Assessment Program (EAP) is an academic preparation program to help high school students meet college readiness standards in English-language arts and mathematics before admission to a CSU campus. EAP results may be used to validate the Entry Level Math

(ELM) and/or English Placement Test (EPT). The optional EAP college readiness exams are administered during the spring semester of the 11th grade as part of the required California Standards Test (CSTs). If students score high enough on this test, they may skip the required CSU English and/or mathematics placement tests.

EOP: The Educational Opportunity Program is designed to improve access and retention of historically low-income and educationally disadvantaged students. The program provides admission and academic assistance to EOP eligible undergraduate students. In many cases, the program offers financial assistance to eligible students. Support services include: academic advising, tutoring, developmental workshops, study skills courses and a **Summer Bridge Program** (a comprehensive transitional program designed to assist incoming freshmen prepare for the rigors of university work.)

ETS: An abbreviation for the Educational Testing Service, an organization utilized by the College Board to write and administer its tests (SAT and Subject Tests).

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (see more in the Financial Aid section).

General Education Requirements: Courses required by all candidates for the bachelor degree at a college.

Graduate School: Usually part of a university, graduate school is an institution for students who have already earned the bachelor degree.

Greeks or Greek Life: At a college campus, the collective term for members of sororities and fraternities. See www.GreekPages.com for information.

Ivy League: The term used to designate highly selective eastern colleges. Strictly speaking, however, it is an athletic league comprised of the following colleges: Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale.

Legacy: An applicant who is the son or a daughter of an alumnus or alumna (or sometimes a more distant relative). Private colleges sometimes give special consideration to such candidates.

Liberal Arts: The studies in a college (such as language, history, mathematics, literature, and science) intended to provide chiefly general knowledge and to develop the general intellectual capacities, such as reason and judgment, as opposed to professional or vocational skills.

Major: The field of concentration or specialization for a college undergraduate. Usually students are asked to declare a major by the end of their sophomore year. A student normally spends one quarter to one third of their total undergraduate work in their major field.

Minor: A secondary area of academic concentration, but requiring fewer courses than a major, which may or may not be required by an institution.

Need Aware: Means the college is likely to admit applicants who are willing to pay the full sticker price.

Need Blind: Means colleges have made the commitment to take in all eligible students, regardless of ability to pay.

NMSQT: The **National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test** is combined with the PSAT, taken in October of the Junior year. Scoring well on this test is the first requirement toward recognition in the National Merit Scholarship competition.

PSAT: The **Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test** is a scholastic assessment test administered to high school juniors. Scoring well on this test is the prerequisite towards qualifying for the **National Merit Scholarship**. Scores are reported on a scale from 20-80 for verbal, quantitative aptitude, and writing skills.

Rolling Admissions: A decision notification program whereby colleges inform applicants of admission decisions throughout the year on a “rolling” basis, rather than by a specified date. Students who apply to a college with a rolling admission program usually learn the admission decision within 4-6 weeks after the application is submitted.

SAR: Student Aid Report, mailed to you after you complete the FAFSA application.

SAT Reasoning Test: This is a multiple choice test made up of Verbal, Math and Writing sections designed to measure skills that are related to college success. Students receive three SAT scores, **Verbal, Math & Writing**, each reported on a scale of 200 to 800.

SAT Subject Tests: Curricular-based tests that measure achievement in a particular subject. Each test is one hour in length and is scored on a scale from 200 to 800. It is advisable for students to take the Subject Test while studying or immediately upon completing study of the subject.

Scholarship: Money or aid awarded that does not have to be repaid. Some scholarships are based on need, but most are awarded for exceptional talent or achievement in academics, athletics, or for special characteristics. In addition to awards offered by the colleges, many scholarships are awarded by corporations, ethnic organizations, and religious groups. Each scholarship opportunity has different eligibility criteria.

Selectivity: A term used by admission offices to describe the ratio of admitted applicants to the total number of applicants at a given institution.

Seven Sisters: Refers to Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Radcliffe, Smith, Vassar, and Wellesley Colleges. All are women’s colleges except Vassar. Today, the Radcliff campus functions as a research institute within Harvard, known as the Radcliff Institute for Advanced Study.

Transcript: The complete official listing of a student’s academic record (courses, grades, credits). In the college admission process, this document is traditionally given the most weight.

Undergraduate: A college student who is a candidate for a Bachelor’s Degree or a program of study leading to a Bachelor’s Degree.

University: A public or private institution that has both undergraduate and graduate programs.

WUE: The Western Undergraduate Exchange is a program which allows students in Western states to enroll in participating two-year and four-year public college programs at a reduced tuition level: up to 150 percent of the institution's regular resident tuition. Resident students from the following states may participate, if they meet eligibility requirements: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington & Wyoming. To learn of the wide array of programs available, go to: www.wiche.edu/sep/wue

Yield: The number of students admitted to a college who ultimately attend that college. The yield is usually extremely high at selective colleges.

We want to express our gratitude to the counseling departments at Davis Senior High School and Beverly Hills High School for giving us permission to adapt their College Handbook for Da Vinci High School.