

College Admissions

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Auburn University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, and the University of Georgia: these colleges are just a few that the Prince Avenue Class of 2016 have applied to attend in the fall. The process of finding, applying, and financing the right college can be a daunting task for parents and students alike. The process is lengthy and can often prove confusing as one wades through the paperwork and varying requirements for each institution. Knowing what to expect when it comes to college admissions can go a long way to making the process less stressful.

When researching colleges it is important for students to have their end goal in mind. Many occupations may require a technical degree while others may necessitate a graduate level degree. Other considerations include in-state versus out-of-state tuition, private versus public school tuition, varying educational experiences, and programs of study offered at different schools. In an effort to help students discover which school is the right fit for them, PACS allows two days for college visits for juniors and four for seniors. These absences are pre-arranged and must be approved by Prince before the visit. Students should also make sure to arrange the visit with the college or university beforehand. These visits help students better determine if a school is the right choice for them.

Another significant aspect to consider for college admissions is each school's GPA and standardized testing requirements. A college's primary consideration when determining admittance is a student's grade point average in core classes, followed by SAT or ACT scores. It is important to remember that all grades beginning with a student's freshman year will impact their final GPA submitted to colleges. Students should begin focusing on their grades freshman year to prepare for college. Also, students should be aware colleges do take into consideration the rigor of the coursework and extracurricular activities.

Students should plan to register and take the SAT and/or ACT in their junior year. A suggested approach that PACS encourages students to use is to have their test scores sent to a "dream" school, a realistic school, and a school where they are confident that acceptance will be granted. It is imperative for students to have the testing agencies report scores to these select schools, as well, as normally colleges will not take the scores from the high school transcript, only accepting directly from the testing agency.

As students start their junior year of high school, they should also begin compiling a comprehensive resume to be used for the application process. Students should provide this resume to teachers, administrators, and counselors when they request a letter of recommendation. In crafting a resume, students should be sure to include the following: cumulative GPA, standardized test scores, rigorous coursework (including past, present, and future Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment courses), memberships in honors societies, volunteer work, extracurricular activities, and any other club or activity that is noteworthy. In listing additional involvements, students should also list honors, leadership positions, and awards associated with each entry.

While students need to think about their future as early as their freshman year, the college admissions process becomes quite involved during one's senior year. During a student's senior year, he or she should begin filling out applications online, paying special attention to individual directions and deadlines. They also need to fill out a "Transcript Request Form" to have high school grades from PACS

sent to the select colleges of their choice. Again, it is important to consider the specific guidelines for each college. During their senior year, students need to ensure they get any necessary counselor or teacher evaluations and letters of recommendation as well. Finally, students will need to pay any application/registration fees.

Though preparing for college is an exciting time, it can also be an overwhelming process. Each student should prayerfully consider his or her options. Although many factors are involved, it is important to remember that the Lord knows His plans for each of us. Hopefully, with practical information and prayerful guidance, finding the right school will be a little easier.