

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL

COLLEGE HANDBOOK

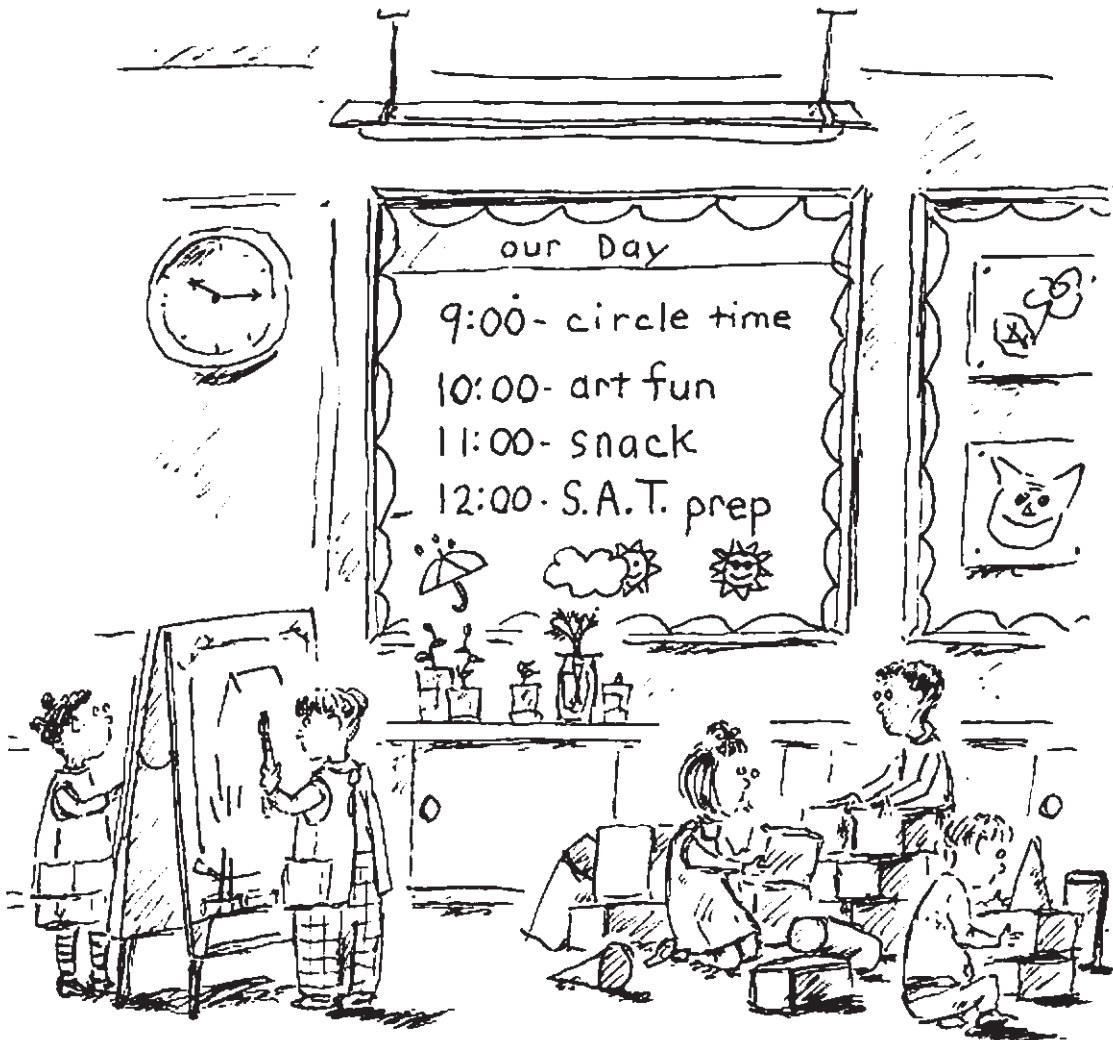
THIS HANDBOOK BELONGS TO

NAME _____

HOUSE _____

VOICEMAIL _____

E-MAIL _____



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B. Smaller

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College Office Mission

Throughout the college admissions process, the chief concern of the college advisers is giving each student – and his or her family – tools to help find the right match: that institution best suited to offer academic and personal challenge appropriate to that student’s abilities and interests following graduation from St. Paul’s School. The College Office provides support at this pivotal point in our students’ lives when they are asserting their independence, defining their dreams for the future, and preparing for the transition to college.

There are many institutions throughout the country where our students can thrive and succeed, and we believe that a good education is as varied as the temperaments and interests of our students. Our goal is to give students (and their families) the guidance they need to help them sift through the often dizzying amounts of information so that they can make informed choices at each stage of the journey. We aim to demystify this potentially intimidating experience and to teach students, first, where they have opportunities to control the process, and second, how to exert this control. While we believe that students need to play the lead role in the process, we encourage parents to work closely with us in preparing and supporting their children as they navigate this exciting and defining step in the passage to adulthood.

In his book *The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness*, Ned Hallowell writes about the importance of enabling students to take ownership of the college process, and he addresses the ways we define success:

What determines success and happiness in life, of course, is not the quality of the college to which a person goes but the quality of the person who goes to the college. . . . If you focus on helping your child develop into a good person who does her best to develop her talents and interests as well as her concern for people, then “success,” however you define it, will follow in proper proportion.”

As college advisers, we have the opportunity to help each student embark on this journey with feelings of confidence, success, and self-worth, and we invite parents to share in this important mentoring with us. We will work hard to educate each student about the ever-shifting college admissions landscape, to share in their aspirations and to help them uncover appropriate choices across the spectrum of selectivity, and to best represent their various individual strengths and qualities at each college to which they apply. We are here to provide the resources to support our students in this process and to offer guidance at each step of the way.

College Office Partnership Agreement

responsibilities of the student, the parents, and the college adviser

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Bring your best effort to the classroom and your extracurricular commitments.

Participate fully in the life of the school – set a tone that younger students can admire.

Abide carefully by the School's expectations. Recognize the consequences of disciplinary action, and understand that most schools will require you (and the College Office) to report the circumstances of any major disciplinary infraction.

Research schools and visit during the spring and summer whenever possible. Take tours, attend information sessions, ask questions of current students. At St. Paul's, make a point to meet the visiting representatives whose schools interest you.

When making your final college list, consider choices that reflect your interests across a range of selectivity. We strongly recommend that you limit yourself to 8-10 schools. Try not to prioritize the schools until you know where you have been accepted.

Meet all deadlines and fill out applications with care – begin early. Remember the smaller deadlines for materials required by the College Office – a draft of your essay, a copy of your secondary school report form, and your final college list.

Register for the appropriate SAT Reasoning tests, SAT Subject tests, and/or the ACT. Make sure that all colleges that you are applying to receive official score reports.

Read and understand the College Handbook.

Communicate openly and frequently with your college counselor and your parents.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Register unconditional positive support for your children. Remind them of their strengths and their talents, independent of any college admissions decisions, grades, or standardized tests.

Help your Fifth Former visit as many colleges as possible in order to gain a broad perspective

of how many fine choices are available to them. Listen carefully to the impressions your child has gathered and help him or her to take notes.

Keep an open mind, and encourage your child to keep an open mind as he or she researches colleges and universities. Help them avoid getting fixated on one or two schools too early in the process, especially those that may be out of their range.

Take the opportunity to complete the parent questionnaire. It helps bring your voice, thoughts, and wishes into the process.

Be familiar with the policies and recommendations in the College Handbook – also available on our website.

Communicate with the College Office. We are here for you, too!

COLLEGE ADVISER RESPONSIBILITIES

Work hard to get to know our students – to understand and appreciate their goals, talents, and interests.

Work with our students to construct an appropriate list of college choices that is both broad and deep. Developing an intelligent and balanced list is an essential task.

Be effective advocates for our students, presenting their transcripts and official school recommendations to the colleges so that they have the strongest chance of being given favorable consideration.

Treat the college admissions process as an opportunity for growth and self-knowledge and to ensure that students come away from it with a better understanding of themselves. The college admissions process has been described as an “independent study in decision-making” and we are here to provide the guidance and resources so that our students can make good decisions.

Listen to, learn from, and communicate with parents. Personalize the process to each individual student and family.

College Planning Calendar

This is a general guide to help you understand how the next 18 months will look during your college selection process.

FIFTH FORM YEAR: Winter Term

january

- Familiarize yourself with the College Handbook
- Review PSAT results and look to see where you need to improve
- Complete and return Winter Term Questionnaire
- Take the SAT
- College Advisers will be assigned in early January

february

- Begin a college search using online or printed resources
- Meet with assigned college adviser for preliminary interview, and to start developing a college list if you plan to visit some colleges during Spring Break
- Arrange visits to colleges for Spring Break, if possible and convenient

march

- Visit various types of schools over spring break if possible
- Prepare for May SAT Tests

FIFTH FORM YEAR: Spring Term

april

- Meet again with college adviser, and your teachers, to discuss standardized testing plans and courses for Sixth Form year
- Research colleges
- Attend the College Fair

may

- Take appropriate SAT Tests and AP Examinations
- Continue meeting with adviser
- Finalize your preliminary college list
- Register with NCAA Clearinghouse if you might play Division I or Division II athletics

june

- Take appropriate SAT Subject Tests
- Plan summer college visits – tours, information sessions, and interviews; remember appointments do fill early. Try to visit with professors and/or coaches if appropriate and possible
- Make at least one teacher recommendation request in person and submit that information to the College Office.

FIFTH FORM YEAR: Summer

july and august

- Visit and tour colleges, interview when possible (prepare for interview by researching the college and anticipating possible questions), and request applications
- Complete a draft of the Common Application and the Sixth Form Questionnaire
- If necessary, do some SAT prep work – either online, through a class, or on your own
- Continue to refine your college list
- Register for SATs in October and November

SIXTH FORM YEAR: Fall Term

september

- Hand in your common application and fall questionnaire to the College Office
- Meet with adviser to narrow college list and to discuss any early application plans
- Continue to gather application materials
- Confirm two teacher recommenders and enter them in the Naviance system
- Attend college mini-fair(s)
- Register for SATs

october

- Retake SAT or SAT Subject Tests; if this is your last test date, have scores sent to four colleges on your list. Your registration fee includes the cost of sending your scores to four colleges
- Financial aid applicants file a CSS PROFILE® registration form (see Financial Aid chapter)
- Early applicants inform adviser of plans and complete transcript request(s) in Naviance
- Continue to meet regularly with college adviser
- Work on college essays and applications
- Visit a college or two the day after Family Weekend if possible

november

- Hand in updated college list to College Office
- Take the SAT or SAT Subject Tests. If this is your last test date, have scores sent to colleges; your registration fee includes the cost of sending your scores to four colleges
- Early applications due (check deadlines)
- Continue to meet with adviser and work on applications (even if you have applied early somewhere)
- Visit a college or two over Thanksgiving Vacation, if possible

SIXTH FORM YEAR: Winter Term

december

- Continue to work on applications (even if you have applied early somewhere)
- Submit your final college list to the College Office
- Take the SAT or SAT Subject Tests, if necessary
- Wait for decision letters if you applied early (usually sent by December 15)
- Notify the College Office and teachers writing recommendations of admissions decisions and future plans

january to march

- Keep working – grades still matter
- Financial aid applicants file the FAFSA (as soon as possible after January 1)
- Continue meeting with college advisers, if necessary

SIXTH FORM YEAR: Spring Term

march to april

- Receive decision letters
- In writing, notify College Office of all decisions
- Meet with adviser immediately if you plan to stay on one or more wait lists
- Notify all colleges of your decision
- Mail a deposit to ONE college, by May 1, even if you are remaining on a wait list

may

- Fill out final college forms and return them to the College Office

june

- Graduate



Liliana Hoversten '09

Criteria for Selecting Colleges

RESEARCHING YOURSELF

Perhaps the single most important aspect in beginning the college process is to know yourself.

First, before you do anything else, you must take a good look at yourself and ask, “Just who am I, anyway?” The key to a successful college application is the ability to project a clear, distinct voice. Your most difficult task throughout the year, then, will be to find that voice inside of you and project it outward in your applications and during your interviews. There is no “right” voice, no magic combination of personality traits that will guarantee admission. Avoid falling into the trap of manufacturing the “perfect” voice – the one you think your friend has, for example. Simply be yourself. The rest will fall into place. The following is a series of activities that will help you in the often-difficult task of getting to the bottom of who “you” truly are.

self-evaluation

The self-evaluation is for *your* eyes only . . . but feel free to bring it to a meeting with your college adviser to discuss its contents. These are some of the questions you may be asked during interviews and on essay questions, so it is worthwhile to spend considerable time and thought on them.

Throughout your work with your college adviser in the months ahead, you will be immersed in talk about maintaining rigor and depth in your course of study, about your overall achievement, and about the level and significance of your community contributions. It is generally true that the way to be a compelling candidate for college is to be an active and involved contributor – in a variety of areas – in the St. Paul’s School community.

But what about you? Never mind what the colleges want. What do you want?

The many questions that follow are intended to help keep your focus on college where it belongs – on you as an individual. You may feel embarrassed or self-conscious as you consider these questions, but no one will see your answers but you. This is your private worksheet. You might

want to revisit all or some of these questions from time to time to test your original responses and to develop a better sense of your evolving priorities. An honest and thoughtful effort at self-evaluation can:

- help you find the colleges that are right for you
- prepare you for statements you will be asked to make about yourself in application essays and interviews
- help you present yourself effectively to the colleges of your choice
- help you to take an honest, realistic look at yourself in the college process

your personality and relationships with others

1. How would someone who knows you well describe you? Your best qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings? How have you grown or changed during your high school years?
2. Which relationships are most important to you and why?
3. Describe the students at St. Paul’s. Which ones do you feel you are close to?
4. Are you influenced by others who are important to you? How important to you are approval, rewards, and recognition? How do you respond to pressure, competition, or challenge? How do you react to failure, disappointment, or criticism?

the world around you

5. How would you describe your family and home? How have they influenced your way of thinking? How have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited by them?
6. What do your parents and others expect of you? How have their expectations influenced the goals and standards you set for yourself? To what pressures have you felt it necessary to conform?
7. What is the most controversial issue you have encountered in recent years? Why does the issue concern you? What is your reaction to the controversy? What is your opinion about the issue?

8. Have you ever encountered people who think and act differently from you? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?
9. What concerns you the most about the world around you? Assuming obligation and opportunity to change the world, where would you start?

your education

10. What are your academic interests? Which courses have you enjoyed most? Which courses have been most difficult for you? Why?
11. What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own? Consider interests pursued beyond class assignments: topics chosen for research papers, lab reports, independent projects; independent reading; school activities; job or volunteer work. What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?
12. How do you learn best? What methods of teaching and style of teacher engage your interest the most?
13. How well has St. Paul's prepared you for college? In what areas do you feel most confident? Least confident? Have you been challenged by your courses?
14. Have you worked up to your potential? Are your academic record and/or your SAT scores accurate measures of your ability and potential? What are the best measures of your potential for college work?
15. Are there any outside circumstances (in your recent experience or background) that have interfered with your academic performance?

your activities and interests

16. What activities do you most enjoy outside the daily routine of classes and other responsibilities? Which activities have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made different choices?
17. How would others describe your role in the School? In your home community? What would you consider your most significant contribution?
18. After a long hard day what would you most enjoy doing? What is fun or relaxing for you?

your goals and values

19. What aspects of your high school years have been most meaningful to you? If you could live this period over again, would you do anything differently?
20. How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
21. What kind of person do you want to become? Of your unique gifts and strengths which would you like to develop? What would you most like to change about yourself?
22. Is there anything you have ever secretly wanted to do or be? Is there a profession you admire or would like to learn more about?

RESEARCHING COLLEGES

There are over 3,500 accredited four-year colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Generally, they can be broken down into three categories: highly selective, selective, and less selective.

The best advice we can offer you is to make every effort to begin your college search with an open mind. Your objective ought to be to find the colleges that are best suited to your interests and needs. It's time to do some soul searching and, more importantly, some in-depth research about your options. What's important to you? Do you want to become a small fish in a huge pond? Or would you like to pursue one-on-one relationships with faculty members, like you have at St. Paul's? Are the departments you will explore as an undergraduate strong, weak, or non-existent at the colleges you are considering?

As you begin to think about where you're going to spend the next four years of your life, it's important for you to remember that you are interviewing the colleges just as much as they are interviewing you. The research phase is challenging and time-consuming, but rewarding. Remember how you felt when you visited St. Paul's? What made you decide to come here? Did you have a gut feeling that this was the school for you? If you did, hopefully your instincts are alive and well as you begin to research and create your own college list.

research tips

There are three phases of research that you ought to consider:

1. learn everything there is to know about the college before you visit
2. ask the right questions and gain information during your visit
3. follow up on information or instincts after your visit

Of these, the first phase is simultaneously the most important and the most difficult. It is crucial for you to do your homework before you visit a school so that when you get there, you can apply the information and ask pertinent questions. By reading up on the school before you visit, you'll be well aware of the number of students enrolled, the male/female ratio, average SAT scores of admitted candidates, study abroad programs, etc. It is important to be well informed.

WHAT IS NAVIANCE?

Naviance is a web-based college advising program that allows us to track student progress in this process. It can also be a valuable information resource for students and parents and a channel of communication between the College Office and families.

Each student has his or her own page, and the parent password gives parents access to this information. Here's what you can find once you have logged in:

- **PROFILE:** Please verify that your contact information is correct
- **CHECKLIST:** Shows what steps a student has completed and what lies ahead
- **PROSPECTIVE COLLEGE LIST:** This is where you will build your college list with the help of your college adviser
- **CURRENT TEST SCORES**
- **INBOX:** Copies of College Office communications
- **COLLEGE SEARCH:** Online search engine
- **MAPS:** Showing where SPS students have been accepted and matriculated in the last four years

- **PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE:** Parents, please remember to save any changes you make to this and click "save and I am finished" when you are done. Please complete the questionnaire no later than June 1. This helps to bring your perspective and voice in to the process
- **SIXTH FORM QUESTIONNAIRE:** Students, please complete this thoughtfully and accurately with updated academic honors and leadership positions
- **TEACHER RECOMMENDATION REQUESTS:** Once students have spoken with their teachers in person, they should enter these names in Naviance on the "my colleges" page and send teachers a short note reminding them of their earliest deadline
- **TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS:** Be sure to submit a transcript request for each college on your final list

If you forget the link for Naviance or lose your password, please contact Cathy Green at cgreen@sps.edu.

RESOURCES

There is a myriad of resources available to you that range from highly subjective opinions about the schools you are considering, to more objective descriptions about a school's programs and philosophies. Just like any research project, it's a good idea to surround yourself with a variety of sources from both ends of the spectrum so that you may ultimately form your own opinion about a college and make an informed decision about whether it's right for you. As you begin to research colleges, you will be surprised at how much information people around you willingly offer.

college advisers

You will be assigned an adviser in January, but please feel free to consult with any one of us anytime, keeping in mind the busy nature of our schedules, particularly at certain times of the year. We are here to help guide you in your research, formulate an appropriate list, and be your advocates during the process. In order to do this most effectively, we need you to work with us in meeting deadlines and keeping us informed. The more we know about you, the

more we can help you in this process. Once you are assigned an adviser, make sure to schedule regular meetings and provide us with the information we request in a timely fashion.

college office

The office area, located on the 3rd floor of the Schoolhouse, provides valuable information. When you have a free period or time between classes, come up and browse through our viewbook, catalogue, and guidebook collection. We make every effort to update our files and keep current copies of catalogues and viewbooks.

world wide web

You have the option of visiting college campuses through virtual tours and Web sites. These are frequently more current than the college viewbooks and are a great way to access addresses, names, department listings, student organizations, and alumni networks. Most colleges have an online inquiry form which you can fill out to receive more specific information about the school.

book stores/guidebooks

Keep in mind that of the many guidebooks that deck the shelves of your local book store, a few are plainly terrible, most are adequate, and some are credible sources that we have relied upon for many years. Rather than using guidebooks as your primary source of information, think of them as resources to guide you in your opinions and help you pose appropriate questions of admissions officers, your adviser, and yourself.

spring college fair

This is an ideal time to investigate schools you may be considering but don't know too much about. Use this opportunity to speak with admissions officers from schools that might be difficult for you to visit. It's also a good idea to meet representatives from those schools to which you know you'd like to apply.

fall college mini-fairs

Sixth and Fifth Formers should attend these fall sessions with selected college admissions officers. Held in September and October, these fairs provide an opportunity for Sixth Formers to further establish contact with the schools on their list, and for Fifth Formers to begin to sample various types of schools. This is a good time to check in with colleges that you may have visited over the summer or speak one-on-one with a representative from a college in which you are interested but were unable to visit. Express your interest to these admissions officers and use this time to build your information base and expand your network.

COLLEGE VISITS AND INTERVIEWS

Once you have completed some preliminary research on colleges, you ought to have a good idea of which ones merit further investigation – i.e., a visit. Visiting college campuses is crucial for two reasons:

1. You are able to gain a feel for the campus, students, academic departments, and areas that interest you specifically, rather than those that interest the editor of the viewbook.
2. You can demonstrate your interest in the school, and simultaneously apply the homework you have done prior to your visit.

When visiting a school, your goal ought to be to balance the impressions you have gained from your preliminary research with your own personal instincts. In other words, don't believe everything you read or hear, but use the information to guide you toward asking the right questions in the limited time that you have on any given campus. Be tactful, but ask good questions of the right people at each school you visit. Depending on your interests, you might set up a meeting with someone in a particular academic department, an athletic coach, or a student leader. Whoever it is, make the most of your visit and let people know that you are interested.

a word about interviews

In many cases, a visit to a college campus will allow you the benefit of an interview. If a school offers interviews, or features them as something that is “optional” or “not required,” strongly consider scheduling one. Regardless of the relative importance of an interview in the overall application process, one-on-one contact with as many representatives from the college or university of your choice is important. And don’t stop with just your first choice. Arrange on-campus interviews at as many schools as you possibly can. Not only are interviews a great way for you to articulate your interests, they also provide you with more insight into the college admissions process and the unique features of the various schools you are considering. Who knows? You may even be surprised at the answers you come up with.

A final thought: are you painfully shy? Do you get tongue-tied when you are nervous? Has public speaking always been a sore spot with you? Speak with your adviser before scheduling interviews if you think they might put you at a disadvantage.

when to plan your college visits

The best way to gain a gut feeling about a school is to visit it when the students are in session. Unfortunately, since you are also enrolled as a student, this is not always possible. Do your best to visit when you can see the students, sit in on a lecture, meet faculty members from the departments in which you are interested, etc. While you should certainly call the schools on your list to determine their school calendar and if/when they offer interviews, here are several blocks of time during which you and your family could consider visiting schools:

Spring: Spring Vacation, Spring Recess
(Fifth Form)

Summer: mid-to-late August, since most schools begin fall sessions then

Fall: during your college weekend; the day after Family Weekend; Thanksgiving Vacation

Winter: the first few days of Christmas Vacation

maximizing your college visits

While it is possible to have a successful college weekend with very little prior planning, the best way to make the most of your visit is to plan ahead. If you’re going to visit schools with your parent(s), make sure you sit down with mom and/or dad to plan a calendar of visits. Your parents most likely want to help you in this process in every way that they can. Ask them for advice about calling schools, or ask them to help you set up appointments. Of course, it’s best if you do most of the legwork yourself, because you will appreciate the effort that went into your visit and learn more in the long run.

Here are a few thoughts to get you going on planning your visit and setting up meetings with the appropriate people:

- a. Plan to spend at least half a day at the school.
- b. Call the admissions office to arrange an interview if they offer interviews on campus.
- c. Incorporate one of the school’s general information sessions into your day.
- d. Niche interviews: If you have a particular area of interest and expertise, you might want to contact the appropriate department, coach, or professor to see if they might be available when you visit. Please note that such contact should ideally be made well in advance of your visit, and not all representatives may be available to see you.
- e. Contact any friends/acquaintances/SPS alumni you know at the school and try to meet them for coffee or lunch (if you can’t stay with them). These are frequently the best sources for the inside scoop . . . but remember to maintain your objectivity and form your own opinion.

etiquette during and after your visit

When you visit a school, remember that you are representing both yourself and St. Paul's. In other words, act naturally but remember that what you do or say may ultimately impact your standing in the admissions office. You will never understand the complexities of each school's network, so assume that everyone you meet is in some way connected to the admissions process and treat them with due respect. This means dressing appropriately for your visit and conducting yourself in a positive manner: from your initial handshake, to your undivided attention, to your parting thanks and gracious good-bye. Remember, you have requested to spend time with their staff, so make the most of the opportunity.

after your visit

It is always a good idea to send a thank you note to the person with whom you interviewed. While this note may wind up in your admissions file, at some point along the way, the best reason for doing so reverts to basic rules of courtesy. Especially with the ease of e-mail, a brief note is an effortless way to show your appreciation for someone having spent time with you.

every piece of communication counts

Whenever you contact the admissions offices at the schools to which you are applying, assume that your phone call, e-mail, letter, or fax is recorded and added to your file. Make it concise, polished, and something that accurately conveys your character and persona.

When you contact an admissions office, make sure that it is to provide them with something meaningful that builds your case as an applicant: an academic, athletic, or cultural award that you win, a new position that you earn, outstanding inside grades, an article that you wrote/published, etc. Do not send them fluff. Rather, furnish them with appropriate updates.

If you have questions about potentially meaningful addenda to your application, consult your college adviser.

enough is enough

Remember to keep your correspondence with a college at an appropriate level. Use your judgment or ask your adviser to help you determine what "appropriate" might be, in your case. Do not barrage an admissions office with daily letters, phone calls, or e-mails or your name will be uttered with dread. Do make sure that your correspondence is meaningful, memorable, and well presented.

getting organized

After each visit, you ought to consider recording your impressions in either a journal or on a checklist. Write down the names of all the people you meet and anecdotes that will help you remember who they are and what they do. What sort of feeling did you get from the school? How was the music department? Was the campus appealing to you? Could you imagine yourself there for four years? Keep in mind that your visit gives you a one-snapshot impression; don't overreact to a poor tour. For your convenience, on the next page we have constructed a sample checklist that might be helpful in evaluating your college visits. If this particular checklist isn't your style, create your own. The important thing is for you to keep a comprehensive record of the things that you see and people you meet from one school to the next.

Along these same lines, keep copies of your correspondence with every school you are considering. The best way to do this is to start a file on each school as you begin your preliminary research and add to it as the process evolves. You never know when you might need to reference a postcard that you sent to a director of admissions. Keep track of everything that you send.

SPS Applications, 2008-10

colleges with five or more applications

Over the past three years, St. Paul's students have applied to 245 different colleges and universities. This list of the 107 schools to which at least five SPS students have applied may be helpful as a guide to selectivity. Please remember that at state universities the acceptance rate for out of state candidates tends to be significantly lower.

MOST SELECTIVE (ACCEPTANCE RATES OF LESS THAN 20%)

Amherst College	Duke University	Stanford University
Bowdoin College	Georgetown University	Swarthmore College
Brown University	Harvard University	University of Pennsylvania
Claremont McKenna College	MIT	Washington and Lee University
Columbia University	Middlebury College	Williams College
Cornell University	Pomona College	Yale University
Dartmouth College	Princeton University	

HIGHLY SELECTIVE (ACCEPTANCE RATES OF 20-35%)

Barnard College	Hamilton College	The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Bates College	Harvey Mudd College	Tufts University
Boston College	Haverford College	Tulane University
Brandeis University	Johns Hopkins University	University of California at Berkeley
Bucknell University	Kenyon College	University of California at Los Angeles
Carleton College	Lehigh University	University of Chicago
Carnegie Mellon University	New York University	University of Notre Dame
Colby College	Northwestern University	University of Richmond
Colgate University	Oberlin College	University of Southern California
College of the Holy Cross	Pitzer College	University of Virginia
College of William and Mary	Reed College	Vanderbilt University
Colorado College	Rice University	Vassar College
Connecticut College	Skidmore College	Washington University in St. Louis
Davidson College	St. Lawrence University	Wesleyan University
Emory University		

VERY SELECTIVE (ACCEPTANCE RATES OF 35%-50%)

Babson College	Northeastern University	Union College
Bryn Mawr College	Occidental College	University of California at San Diego
Clemson University	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	University of Miami
Dickinson College	Rochester Institute of Technology	University of Michigan
Fordham University	Sarah Lawrence College	University of Rochester
Franklin and Marshall College	Smith College	University of St. Andrews (Scotland)
Gettysburg College	Southern Methodist University	Villanova University
Grinnell College	The George Washington University	Wake Forest University
Lafayette College	The University of Texas, Austin	Wellesley College
Macalester College	Trinity College	Whitman College
McGill University		

SELECTIVE (ACCEPTANCE RATES OF MORE THAN 50%)

American University	Syracuse University	University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Boston University	University of California at Santa Barbara	University of New Hampshire
Georgia Institute of Technology	University of Colorado at Boulder	University of Vermont
Lewis & Clark College	University of Illinois at Urbana –Champaign	
Santa Clara University		
Sewanee: The University of the South		

VISIT AND INTERVIEW WORKSHEET

College Visited _____

Date of Visit _____

Interviewer _____

Title _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Admissions Officer _____

Title _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

MY IMPRESSIONS

Campus _____

Surrounding Area _____

Students _____

Dormitories _____

Extracurricular Activities _____

Library _____

Other _____

QUESTIONS TO ASK INTERVIEWER

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

QUESTIONS TO ASK MYSELF

1. Would I fit in and feel comfortable here?
2. Does this school meet my interests?
3. What is my general impression?

The Application

The application is the best opportunity for you to speak directly to the admissions office and is second in importance only to the transcript. Good essays are written and rewritten; yet the writer's voice, values, and identity remain clear and distinct in the final draft. By and large, the application (particularly the essay) is what admissions readers remember about a candidate. In your search for colleges that meet your needs, it is important to consider the full range of factors the colleges will use in evaluating your application.

ACADEMIC CRITERIA

proven academic performance

Your transcript, which records grades and courses for all years in high school, is the single most important piece of the puzzle. It reflects academic ability, interest, and achievement over time (i.e. Rigor + Depth + Performance).

Note: Institutions consider at least the final three years of high school and are looking for students who have taken challenging and broad programs of study. It is important that you have taken the most demanding courses appropriate for you.

standardized testing

Your SAT scores are recognized by many colleges as a reliable predictor of success during your first year of college. SAT Subject Test scores are also used as important predictors of performance. Most selective institutions require the SAT (or the ACT) and two or three different SAT Subject Tests, but it is important that you research and find out specific requirements for each institution. Please note that individual colleges have different policies pertaining to the college board score choice option and you should consult each school's website to determine their requirements.

teacher recommendations

Most colleges require two teacher recommendations to help them more closely evaluate your potential as a college student with anecdotal evidence from someone who has taught you.

st. paul's school support

Your college adviser will write a summary of your SPS experience highlighting your academic and non-academic achievements and contributions to the School. We take information from adviser letters, teacher comments, the parent questionnaire, our conversations with you, your responses to our questionnaires, coaches, and other faculty to produce a document that serves as a highlight reel of your capabilities and achievements while at St. Paul's. We do not rank, nor do we compare students in this document – rather, we emphasize the best about each individual student's career.

NON-ACADEMIC CRITERIA

Your Activities and Interests: What activities have you been involved with at St. Paul's? What involvement have you had with the community, both here and at home? Which activity is most important to you?

evidence of leadership

You don't have to be a Sixth Form officer or a team captain to be a leader. Think of any instance when you have initiated an activity or project, when you have been a strong voice in your House, or when you have set an example for others.

outside recommendations

If a person outside of the School community knows you well and can relate valuable information an extra letter may be helpful. Letters from an alumnus/a or a friend of a friend who does not know you well are not likely to add much to your application. If the person is actively involved in the school and knows you well, it could prove to be helpful.

special talents

Colleges want a well-rounded student body, so they are usually looking for students with specific talents to add to the freshman class. Let them know if you have something different or special to contribute. Having good grades and being a good person is expected of everyone.

THE PERSONAL APPLICATION

ethics

When you sign your name to the application, you are stating that all of the information you provided therein is true, and that the application and essays were written by you. Please take your signature, your honor, and your word seriously in this process.

helpful tips

- How many? Eight to ten applications with two or three in the “stretch” or “reach” category; two or three in the “mid-range” or “possible”; and two or three in the “safer” or “probable” category. Obviously, the final alignment will very much depend on the individual, but we strongly recommend you apply to no more than ten schools. By doing your homework early, making some choices, and focusing your efforts on a smaller selection of schools, you will be better prepared to do a thoughtful job on each application.
- Be absolutely certain you have read the colleges’ admissions requirements (e.g. 4 years of English, 3 years of mathematics, 3 of science, etc.)
- Colleges take great pains to detail clearly their specific procedures for completing and filing each part of the application. Different colleges have different application requirements. It is a step-by-step process to be completed with the greatest of care and thought.
- Read all instructions carefully.
- Have an objective adult review your application. They may pick up on something you missed.
- Never try to do an application in a hurry, late at night, or at the last minute.
- Be sure to build in sufficient time for online applications as servers get very busy near deadline time.
- Photocopy all parts of the application before mailing.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PLANS

(All plans described here are specified in the colleges’ admissions materials.)

regular decision

Most colleges have a particular deadline for the receipt (or submission) of applications; most range from December 15 onward. In this type

of admission plan, the college informs applicants about decisions any time before early April and the student is asked to respond to an acceptance notification no later than May 1.

rolling admissions

Candidates’ credentials are reviewed in the order in which they are submitted, and candidates are notified of decisions generally within six to eight weeks. As colleges with rolling admissions may send out their acceptances early in the academic year, it is to the student’s best advantage to apply as soon as possible. This is particularly true of many state universities that use this plan. Although a college with this policy accepts its applicants early, the students do not have to notify the college of their decision until May 1.

early decision I (ed-I)

Some colleges have an early decision plan, involving a contractual arrangement between the student and the college. Students generally apply by early November and the admissions committee will review the student’s application earlier than those applying by the regular deadline; generally the committee will inform the student of its decision by December 15. In turn, the student, if admitted, is committed to attending that college and must withdraw applications to other colleges. A student may submit only one Early Decision I application.

early decision II (ed-II)

Some colleges offer an early decision plan with an application deadline that is later than ED-I, usually in December, January or February. The same rules apply as those for Early Decision I. These plans are designed to give you more time to make a thoughtful college choice decision. As with ED-I, you will be notified of the decision approximately four to six weeks later.

Advantages of Early Decision: a wonderful way to go if you are absolutely certain you want to attend that particular college, since the college application process will be concluded for you if you are admitted. If you are a recruited athlete, applying ED helps to cement your commitment to a coach.

Disadvantages of Early Decision: the commitment you must make so early in the process; you need to be a strong candidate since the Early Decision pool is still a predominantly high-powered one; financial aid awards are, at this point, only estimates, so, if the size or nature of your financial aid award is of great significance, you may not want to close out all other options by being accepted “ED.”

When a student is deferred in the early admission process, it actually feels like rejection and can be devastating to your ego at a time of year when you need to be at the top of your game for filing applications to other colleges. Also, when you are deferred early admission, your application goes into the regular applicant pool and may not be as impressive as those submitted by students who had almost two months longer to polish their applications. There is also the possibility that you will be denied early.

early action

This plan is similar to Early Decision, but without its obligatory commitment. Early Action is available at a limited number of colleges.

Advantages of Early Action: again, a wonderful way to go if you have managed to narrow your focus by the fall of your Sixth Form year.

Disadvantages of Early Action: you need to be a very strong applicant to be considered competitive in this early pool, and in some cases your best work may still be ahead.

Single-Choice Early Action: you do not commit to the school but, similar to Early Decision, you can only apply early to one school.

Please note that some colleges will have other restrictions associated with their early action plans. Please consult their websites carefully to ensure you are abiding by their policies.

THOUGHTS ON EARLY APPLICATIONS

We continue to be embroiled in the early application controversy in this country, and everyone seems to have good arguments both in support of and against early. Here are a few observations and a little advice. In the end, the decision is yours, but always be sure to talk the issue through with your college adviser and parents before proceeding.

Beginning in the fall of 2003, a number of prominent schools adopted a “single-choice Early Action” program.

- If you are a strong applicant in every way and you are certain that the institution you are applying to is your first choice, applying early may be the way to go. Although there is evidence that colleges are taking more students early, remember: they are continuing to take only the most academically qualified candidates in the pool.
- In the absence of outstanding academic qualifications, an early application, coupled with a special consideration (as defined earlier), may improve your chances of admission in some cases.
- An early application in and of itself does not constitute a “special consideration!” By simply applying early, you do not gain an appreciable advantage. You must first meet the general standards of the college to which you are applying. If you do not, ED or EA will do virtually nothing to improve your chances for admission.
- You do not need to apply early in order to prove to a college that it is your first choice. There are other ways of conveying that message. A handwritten note explaining that you simply are not ready to apply early shows an admissions staff that you are thoughtful enough to know what is best for you.
- If you do not feel ready to apply early for whatever reason, you should not. Always consult with your college adviser if you feel pressured, one way or another, about this issue.

COMMON APPLICATION

The Common Application can be used at nearly 400 colleges and universities that evaluate students using a holistic selection process. Many of these institutions use the form exclusively. All give equal consideration to the Common Application and the college’s own form. However, if you use the Common Application, you must be aware of any supplementary forms they may ask you to complete. Whichever form you choose to use, do not “mix-and-match” forms.

We strongly encourage everyone to use the common application when available and to submit your applications electronically. If you will not be submitting electronically speak with your college adviser and note this on your final college list.

COMMON APPLICATION TIPS

- Use the same name on everything.
- Put your name and either your address or your social security number on everything you submit.
- Keep a copy of every application you submit.
- Answer all questions.
- Use a reliable and appropriately named email account – preferably your SPS account.
- Make sure that if you put down a special field of study or college division, it actually exists at the college to which you are sending the application.
- If you are planning to put down engineering, any of the sciences, pre-med, pre-law, or pre-business as a field of study, discuss this with your college adviser.
- If you are planning to apply for financial aid, make sure to check that box.
- Optional information is just that, but if you are going to fill out that section, make sure you fill it out completely.
- The School's CEEB/ACT code is 300-110.
- The School address is 325 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH 03301.
- The School, college office, or college adviser number is (603) 229-4881.
- The School, college office, or college adviser fax number is (603) 229-4879.
- List your best SAT and/or ACT tests and the dates taken.
- Fill out the family section completely and thoroughly – do not leave a blank space because you do not know the answer. Go find the answer.
- Make sure you list all awards or distinctions that you have received, beginning in the Third Form (or 9th grade if you attended another school). If you earned First or Second Testimonials or special prizes and awards (including Dickey awards), make sure to include them.
- Do not sell yourself short with activities, but do not go overboard. You can add an extra activity sheet to provide more detail if you would like to, but be careful about sending too much additional information.
- List activities according to importance to you and years involved.
- Do not abbreviate your activities. Use your extra activities sheet to explain things like

community service or Robotics, but under no circumstances should you list Foosball or video gaming as an extracurricular activity.

- There are only 30 weeks in the school year – 10 weeks each term. Do not overstate your hours or time commitment.
- Do not write essays about the same thing that you write your extracurricular paragraph about. Doing this wastes the little space you have to tell as much about yourself as possible.
- Always fill out the top part of the teacher recommendation form and the SPS secondary school report form, listing your classes for each term.
- The Common Application Web site (www.commonapp.org) has lots of information, tips and helpful responses to frequently asked questions.

SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAYS

The essay is your one direct and personal link to the admissions committee. Even your interview is indirect since it is transmitted to the committee via the interviewer's report. The essay is, therefore, perhaps the most vital part of the application. Think about your writing before you actually do it. Most good essays are composed in the mind long before they are set to paper. Some colleges will give you a topic; others leave that to you.

Supplemental essays are as important as the long essays. They are a test of your ability to express yourself well in a short space. More importantly, they are used to determine both how well you know the school, and how suitable you are as a candidate. Please take time with them.

Unless instructions call for handwritten essays, you can cut and paste a computer-generated copy neatly in the space provided, or attach an extra sheet (with your name and social security number at the top of each attachment). Sloppy papers with spelling and grammatical errors, or poorly written statements will move the application rather quickly to the "reject" pile. Length? "In the space provided," means just that and you should do your best to adhere to word limits.

It is your opportunity to give the reader a better sense of you, your values, or your perspective. The best essays are the ones an admissions officer would describe as reflective, thoughtful,

and well-written. Again, have an objective adult review what you have written. A fresh set of eyes is better than those that have looked at the same page over and over again.

WRITING YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION ESSAY: SOME THOUGHTS AND TIPS

From Margit Dahl, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Yale University.

to begin

1. Remember that this is the part of the application that you have total control over. (That's good.)
2. Don't write your essay at the last minute. This is an important part of the application. Leave yourself enough time to be able to think about it for awhile, talk about it with others if you want, write it, leave it for a few days, and come back to it.
3. Take seriously any specific instructions the admissions office includes. If they ask you for a one-page essay, don't send three pages. And don't fit into one page by shrinking it into tiny type on your word processor. People have to be able to read it. You do not want to annoy the admissions office.
4. If you have questions relating to any application, don't be afraid to call the admissions office. They're used to getting calls like yours.

focusing your thoughts and choosing a topic

1. Read all of the essay questions asked by all of the colleges you are applying to. If you can write one essay which is appropriate for three colleges, all the better. Two schools may have open-ended topics, one may be more focused, and if you gear your essay towards the more focused topic, you may be able to/want to use it for all three schools. Then...
2. Sit around and THINK for awhile. What is this college asking? Make sure your essay answers it, but tell your own story. If the question gives you some latitude, mull over various ideas until you hit upon one that "feels" right, or about which you're more excited than others.

3. An interesting topic does not automatically mean an interesting essay. Similarly, an ordinary topic does not automatically mean an ordinary essay.
4. Write about something that is important to YOU (not to your brother, mother, counselor, or any of the other people who are giving you advice). It will be easier to write and will have a more natural voice.
5. Don't try to second-guess the admissions office. Not "what do they want to hear?" or "what would they like?" but "what do I want to tell them? What do I want them to know about me before they make a decision? What should I talk about that will give them a feeling for what makes me tick?" Remember, you're in the driver's seat for this one.

writing

1. Don't try to cover too much. All-encompassing essays will be too long or, if shorter, superficial. Think about the things you have read and enjoyed: writing is usually interesting because of its detail, not generalities.
2. Be personal. It's your application, your experiences, your thoughts, interests, and personality. The admissions committee is trying to get to know you through your own words. Even if the topic is an intellectual one, the school is looking for a personal response.
3. Convey your feelings. If you're excited about something, convey that. If you feel strongly about something (positive or negative), express that. Dry essays devoid of feeling do not tend to be very interesting.
4. Don't try to be something you aren't. If the humor feels self-conscious, forget it. Don't force a "creative" essay. Write in a voice which feels natural to you.
5. Be reflective. Write in some depth. Use some detail or specifics, not just general (and superficial and easy) statements. Flesh out your thoughts. Ask yourself WHY and HOW a lot as you write, not so much WHAT, WHEN, or WHERE.
6. What you say as well as how you say it are both important. A great idea poorly expressed will not seem so great.

after writing

1. PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD.
Neatness and accurate spelling and punctuation count!
2. Do not ask other people to revise your essay.
Honesty also counts. It's YOUR essay. Someone else can read it and react to it, but they shouldn't be taking a red pencil to it.

and finally

Once you've sent your application in, stop worrying about it. If you did your best, that's all you can ask of yourself.

more from the stanford admissions office:

"Many applicants believe that in order to stand out in the admissions process, something remarkable must have happened to them (either positive or negative) so they have something distinctive to write about in their essays. This is simply not true. It is not what you have experienced that counts, but what you make of an experience. Think about what matters to you, think about the experiences you have had and how these experiences have influenced you, and go from there."

"One question we are frequently asked by prospective applicants and their parents relates to getting help with the application process: 'How much help is too much?' While there are few hard and fast rules, we believe a clear line is crossed when a piece of the application ceases to be exclusively the student's in both thought and word. That is not to say that it is wrong to solicit feedback, just that there is a difference between 'feedback' and 'coaching.'"

and from a former harvard admissions officer:

- It's/its; their/there/they're
- Trite phrases or words – myriad, plethora, broaden your horizons, etc.
- Using larger words that don't fit. As Strunk and White advise, "Do not be tempted by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten cent handy, ready, and able."
- Relying too much on spell check, resulting in typos slipping through

- Treating online applications like email, failing to take care in crafting responses
- Top ten topics that can kill an essay
 1. Profanity
 2. Drugs/alcohol
 3. Describing inappropriate behavior
 4. Boyfriend/girlfriend relationship issues
 5. Shock value/gimmicks
 6. Sympathy
 7. Travel/community service ("Those poor people") You can write effective essays on this topic, just be careful of your tone and language.
 8. Inappropriate humor
 9. Writing about depression or other mental health issues
 10. Writing about your parents' divorce

Additional advice: Recruited athletes should avoid writing about the "big game."

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Unless they specify which order to state your activities, you should rank them by importance to you. Also, do not "pad" your list with those activities that are either dormant or insignificant. This same rule applies to your estimation of the hours involved; inflated numbers are easy to spot. College admissions officers are trained professionals, and they know what constitutes substantive involvement.

ATHLETICS

Suffice it to say, you are a "recruited" athlete in the process once a coach has contacted you or your coach here at the School. We are fortunate that our coaches have years of experience in helping direct students to college programs that best match their abilities. Our coaches speak with their college counterparts to gain information about program needs and your potential as a recruited athlete. The most important advice for the prospective college athlete is to keep your college adviser in the communication loop at all times.

ncaa (national collegiate athletic association)

By the spring of Fifth Form year, it is important for you to be aware of your responsibilities in this process, before you depart for the summer.

NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse: The NCAA Clearinghouse was established for athletic eligibility and certification purposes. If you hope to be recruited by a Division I or Division II school and take an expense-paid visit to their campus (whether it be a meal, an arranged overnight accommodation, and/or travel expenses), you must register and be certified for initial eligibility by the Clearinghouse prior to your visit. These visits generally take place in the Sixth Form year. Please remember this applies to expense-paid visits – you may visit any campus at any time at your own expense for academic purposes.

Registering with the Clearinghouse: You need to register and complete your Student Release Form (SRF) online: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

You will need to have a credit card to pay your registration fee. Once you are registered, our office will be prompted to send your transcripts and test scores to the Clearinghouse – usually by the end of June.

Reporting Test Scores: The Clearinghouse also requires SAT scores. St. Paul's does not list test scores on transcripts; however, photocopies of score reports are acceptable if they are sent directly from us. We will, therefore, send a copy of your scores with your transcript. We have your scores only if you wrote the St. Paul's code number (300110) on your test registration forms – be sure we have them. In the Sixth Form year you will need to send your official score report directly to the NCAA Clearinghouse through College Board. The "School Code" for the NCAA is 9999.

IMPORTANT: a reminder that the College Office is staffed in a limited capacity during the summer – we are giving you this advance notice so that you can take care of this prior to leaving School. Should you have any questions about the certification process, you may also contact the Clearing-house directly at:

NCAA Clearinghouse
2255 North Dubuque Road
PO Box 4043
Iowa City, IA 52243-4043

Telephone: 877-262-1492
(8 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays CT)
877-861-3003 (24-hour attendant) *

Fax: 319-337-1556

Web: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

** You must be registered and have your Personal Identification Number (PIN) to access the Clearinghouse's 24-hour voice response system (above). You may also check the status of your file by visiting their Web site. On their home page, select Prospective Student-Athletes, then on the following page select Registered Student Login. Again, you must know your social security number and your PIN to do this.*

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The following procedures and suggestions are intended as guidelines for anyone who has done a significant amount of visual artwork, music, dance, and/or theatre while at St. Paul's School. Plan well ahead. We strongly recommend that you create a portfolio of your best work as part of your college application, regardless of whether you intend to pursue art in college. What you show them, if chosen and presented carefully, can only be to your advantage.

Please note that the common application online now includes an optional arts supplement. Any submission of artistic work should follow the guidelines laid out in this supplement. Consult your college adviser for more information.

SAMPLE ATHLETIC RESUME

- John Doe:** 25 Blossom Lane
Marshfield, MA 00000
(978) 555-0000
- St. Paul's School
325 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 230-0000
jdoe@sps.edu
- Academics:** St. Paul's School Class of 2010
Second Testimonials (Honor Roll) 2008, 2009
SAT: 2050 (650 critical reading, 710 math,
690 writing)
- Soccer Experience:** St. Paul's School
Varsity Soccer, 2008-present
- Starting midfielder 2007
 - Honorable Mention all-ISL, 2008
 - Captain-elect, 2009
- JV Soccer, 2006*
- Elected team captain
- Assabett Valley Aces, 2001-present
- Member of state champion U16 team, 2007
- Other Athletics:** Member of St. Paul's varsity basketball and tennis teams.
Elected co-captain in tennis for 2009.
- References:** John Pele, Soccer Coach, St. Paul's School:
603-229-0000
- Franz Beckenbauer, Soccer Coach, Assabett Aces:
978-555-0000
- W. Tobias Brewster, College Adviser:
603-229-4882

**SAMPLE LETTER/E-MAIL TO A COACH OR
SPECIAL INTEREST PERSON**

Dear Coach Smith,

My name is John Doe and I am an eleventh grader at St. Paul's School who is very interested in your soccer program. I've been a varsity player here at St. Paul's for the past two years, and started in the midfield this year. I was honorable mention All-ISL this year, and was elected to serve as co-captain of the team next year.

I have also maintained a strong average in the classroom. While St. Paul's does not rank its students, I have earned Second Testimonials (honor roll) during each of my three years at the school. I scored a 2050 on the new SAT in May (650 critical reading, 710 math, and 690 writing) and am scheduled to take SAT Subject Tests in June. I would be happy to provide you with a copy of my transcript if you would like.

I am very eager to continue my soccer career at the collegiate level, and will be working hard this summer to prepare for my senior season. I will be attending the Massachusetts Select Camp from July 2-6, and will be playing with my club team, the Assabett Valley Aces, throughout the summer. I hope that someone from your staff will be able to see me play.

I would appreciate any information about BigState University and your soccer program that you could send me. You can also contact my coach, Joe Pele, at (603) 555-8888 or jpele@sps.edu. I look forward to hearing back from you soon!

Sincerely,

John Doe
jdoe@sps.edu
325 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301

SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORTS

transcripts and school letters of recommendation

In your application materials for each college, you will usually find forms to give to the College Office called the Secondary School Report (SSR) and the Mid-Year School Report. With the exception of the Pomona form (which is required), we do not need you to bring us copies of these forms as we will use the online Common Application secondary school report form and midyear form which we access through Naviance. We do need everyone to bring us one completed SPS secondary school report, which you will receive in September, as we also submit this form to all colleges.

You will need to follow these three steps in order for us to process your materials:

- Sign the FERPA (Go to “My Colleges” page)
- Add teacher recommendation requests (Scroll down in “My Colleges” page)
- Request transcripts once you have a final list

Those of you who are applying early, will need to notify your college adviser and turn in the worksheet for ED/EA/Rolling or Priority applications before October 1.

Once we have this information and once your teacher recommendations are complete, the College Office will send a school letter of recommendation, your transcript, a school profile, and two teacher recommendations to the schools on your list. (Any additional recommendations should be submitted through the mail and will not be processed through Naviance.)

You will also need to submit your final college list in writing to the College Office by early December.

teacher recommendations

General Process – Some colleges do not require any recommendations (however, they will accept them); others may require one, two, or three. Some colleges will request teacher recommendations from specified academic disciplines, for example English, mathematics, or science. Others may seek a peer recommendation. In each case, consider carefully whom you will ask to write on your behalf. A good question to ask your teacher is: “Do you know my work and me well enough to make a positive evaluation?”

When you have decided whom you will be asking, talk to the teacher(s) as far in advance of the deadlines as possible – preferably at the end of your Fifth Form. If you are planning to ask a Sixth Form teacher to write for you, please notify him or her at least two weeks before your earliest deadline. Humanities teachers, particularly, will be overburdened with writing so it will be best to approach them in the spring of your Fifth Form. Please complete the teacher recommendation worksheet which provides them with your reflections about your work in their class.

to waive or not to waive

The College Office has a statement by the National Association of College Admission Counseling, a group that represents the school counselors, college admissions, and financial aid officers, that you ought to read since it states your rights and responsibilities.

On waiving your rights: you should consider waiving your rights because doing so suggests to the reader that the recommendation has been written objectively.

When you waive your rights, you are stating that if you attend the institution you will not attempt to view the full contents of your college application – specifically, recommendations from teachers and your college adviser.

When you do not waive your rights, you may, upon attending that institution, have access to the full contents of your college application, including recommendations. You do not have access to applications to colleges to which you are not attending, however.

a little etiquette goes a long way

Just as you make every effort to maintain your own unique aura of grace and respect among your contacts at the colleges, you should also be aware of the effort your teachers and advisers at St. Paul's make on your behalf, and treat them accordingly. Because we live and learn together in the close community of St. Paul's, it is sometimes easy to overlook just how much your teachers are doing for you and numerous other students. Keep in mind that you are not the only responsibility of your recommender. Be thoughtful of other deadlines and responsibilities that s/he faces daily and act accordingly.

Be sure to write a thank you note to each teacher who wrote a recommendation on your behalf, and communicate your admissions decisions to both the college office and your teachers.

other helpful tips

- Academic recommendations should be written by teachers who have taught you recently (preferably no earlier than Fifth Form), and who know you well. If there is someone in the community with whom you are very close, ask them to write a separate, personal recommendation on their own letterhead.
- Try to balance your academic profile by having a recommendation from two different core academic disciplines.
- If you have struggled in a particular discipline over the years, but have worked hard to improve and impressed a teacher or two along the way, you might think about asking that teacher to write an additional recommendation to address your experience. The more information an admissions committee has when presented with a mediocre or poor grade performance, the better.



"My first choice college should have lots of closet space."

FINAL LIST OF COLLEGES

Sixth Formers: You must submit a completed copy of this form to the College Office on or before November 12. If you make any changes to this list after November 12, you need to notify your college adviser, your parents, and Mrs. Green in writing to let us know what schools you are adding and/or what schools you no longer intend to apply to. You also need to update your list on Naviance.

Remember that your list should reflect an appropriate balance, and we recommend that you have 2-3 reach schools, 2-3 possible schools, and 2-3 likely schools. You should not plan to apply to more than 10 colleges without your adviser's expressed permission.

We will send copies of this form to your parents on or before December 1. If you have not submitted your list, or if your list is not appropriately balanced, we will communicate this concern to your parents. Your parent signature is not required when you submit this form. We will ask them to sign this once you have completed the form and the College Office has had a chance to review it. Please let us know if you have any questions. (We would prefer you to type this form rather than handwriting. Thank you.)

Student Name _____ College Adviser _____ Date _____

List of Colleges, Application Deadlines, Application Plan, and SSR:

Plan = Early Action, Early Decision, Regular, Rolling

SSR = Have you submitted an SPS secondary school report form? (Yes or no)

COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY	DEADLINE	PLAN	SSR

**If you plan to apply to more than 10 schools, please speak with your college adviser.*

College Adviser signature _____

I have shared my concerns in an attached letter.

I have reviewed this list, and I am aware of any concerns that my son or daughter's college adviser has communicated. *(Please include any notes to the College Office on the back of this form or in an attached letter.)*

WORKSHEET FOR TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Student Name _____

Teacher/Class _____

Instructions: Please give a completed copy of this form to the teachers who have agreed to write on your behalf before May 27. (Use the back of this form if necessary.)

I believe that my best piece of work (paper, lab, oral presentation, etc.) that I did for your class was

My favorite memory of your class was _____

My proudest moment in your class was _____

The particular moment or experience that stretched me the most in class was _____

I believe I grew in your class because _____

Early recommendations will be due to the College Office on October 20. Regular recommendations will be due to the College Office on December 20. Students will inform faculty members of early plans as soon as possible but no later than October 1.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

For many families, a key piece of the college admissions process may center on financial aid. In the next few pages, we identify some of the important steps of applying for aid, explain how colleges factor financial aid into admissions and award packages, and describe how the typical financial aid package might be developed. These policies will vary from school to school, and we urge you to read the materials provided by each college and encourage you to contact their offices if you have questions. In fact, any college financial aid office is an invaluable resource. Feel free not only to call them with questions, but also to make appointments to speak with them in person.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

need-blind

A process where the admission decision is separate (blind) from the financial aid process. The admissions application is evaluated, a decision is made, and those accepted are then sent to the financial aid office for review.

need-aware

A process where the admission decision can be sensitive to the financial need of the applicant. A growing number of schools with limited resources have become much more honest in admitting that they must look at their budget carefully when accepting a freshman class. In most cases, this will affect a handful of applicants, and students are generally placed on a wait list.

gapping

A process of admitting a student while providing a financial package that does not fully meet (gaps) your calculated need.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The College Office frequently receives literature on scholarships. We also maintain and post a scholarship database on the bulletin board outside the College Office. This database is updated as we receive information from colleges and other sources. Speak with us if you would like to browse through our scholarship files. If you would like to be nominated for a scholarship, see your college adviser.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Each school will have specific requirements for financial aid, so it is vital that you read the information from each application. In most cases, this may include a form as part of the application process, or a request to fill out one of several forms:

fafsa (free application for federal student aid)

All students applying for any federal financial aid must file a FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 of the application year. Analysis of the data on this form will determine eligibility for Federal Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), Federal Work Study, Federal Perkins Loans, Stafford Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized), and other federal and state programs. Many states, while often requiring their own forms, will also require the FAFSA to award state grants to students. Since federal aid is a key component of most awards, it is critical that this is filed in a timely manner. You can file the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. There is no cost to process the FAFSA.

css (college scholarship service) profile

Separate from the FAFSA, some colleges may require the CSS PROFILE to help determine a student's eligibility for the institution's own funds. The CSS PROFILE is available exclusively online at www.collegeboard.com, and is typically due by the same date as the student's application.

In addition to the CSS® PROFILE, families may be asked to submit one or both of the following (if applicable):

noncustodial parent (ncp) application

Students applying to colleges that require the NCP will be given information about the process after they have registered for the PROFILE and will be asked to pass the instructions along to their noncustodial parent.

institutional forms

Some schools may require additional information on their institutional form, as well as copies of tax returns, to verify information.

should i apply for financial aid?

If you and your family cannot afford to pay for four years of college without assistance from outside resources, then by all means you should apply for financial aid. There is a debate in many circles as to where college admissions is heading in an effort to assist students in their ability to afford college. Stories have appeared in the media that accuse colleges of playing games with aid, often raising the question of how much applying for aid will affect a student's chances for admission. In order to be clear about a school's policies, and help you make intelligent decisions about where to apply, ask any or all of the following questions when visiting schools:

- “Does the college practice a need-blind admission policy?”
- “What percentage of students are receiving financial aid?”
- “What percentage of students had their full need met?”
- “What percentage of the funds was need-based?”
- “What percentage of the funds (if any) was merit based?”
- “Do the same financial aid procedures and policies apply for the entire four years?”
- “If my family has more than one student in college, will that be taken into consideration when calculating my family contribution? What about another student in boarding school?”

- “If the cost of college goes up, will my aid go up accordingly?”
- “Can the school's financial aid be used to cover the costs of study abroad programs?”
- “How are outside scholarships handled? Are they credited against the loan component of my aid, the grant component, or the family contribution?”
- “Do I need a certain grade-point average to keep my institutional grant?”
- “Are emergency funds available for short-term loans?”
- “Are there any tuition payment plans that will allow me and my parents to spread out our payments?”
- “What is the policy with regard to non-custodial parents and stepparents? Are they expected to contribute if financially able?”
- “What is the typical financial aid package?”
- “How much indebtedness can I expect after four years?”
- “How many hours a week will I have to work to fulfill the work-study portion of my aid package?”

should i apply early if i need financial aid?

By applying early, you limit your opportunities to compare financial aid packages between schools. Since most of the schools our students are attending traditionally try to meet full need, our experience has been that the package in the early round has been no different than those awarded in the spring. The Ivy League schools and many similarly selective schools have gone on record to say that no differences exist in the manner in which early and regular aid is awarded. Think carefully and consult with your parents and college adviser.

the financial aid package

Financial aid packages come in all shapes and forms. Many schools fail to give you the bottom line of what you will pay when all costs are calculated. Take the time to go back and see what the basic costs of the school are, add up what the various components of the aid package come out to, and see if it will work for you and your family. Once you have sorted through the various packages, you will be ready to make that determination.

(EFC) Expected Family Contribution: is determined after income and assets are reviewed. Allowances are made for the number of family members, the number of children in college, necessary expenses, etc. Typically, you are asked to contribute a portion of your personal savings and other assets. You are also expected to contribute a certain amount based on what you could realistically earn during the summer, whether or not you actually choose to work. Should you receive merit-based awards from organizations outside of the college, these are considered as part of your available resources and may be applied against the self-help portion of your aid package. Consideration is also given to special financial circumstances (illness, older parents approaching retirement, or special educational needs). Be certain that colleges are aware of any unusual circumstances that may exist in your family.

Please note: Colleges may handle different situations differently, in which parents are separated, divorced, and/or remarried. For example, some colleges take into consideration the income and assets of the stepparent with whom the student lives. Others do not. Federal fund eligibility (determined by the FAFSA) is based on “household” income only – which can include a step-parent and exclude a biological parent. Always ask and/or read the fine print.

usual college breakdown for awards

Self-Help: This may include an opportunity to work on campus through a Federal work-study program, Federal (Perkins or Stafford) loans, and/or school loans.

Grants: if the college meets 100% of your need, the remaining amount can be filled with grants, which do not need to be paid back. These are a combination of Federal grants, or grants from the actual funds of the college.

Merit Awards: may also be a part of an award in the form of a scholarship that goes beyond the actual need of a student. It may even be awarded to a student not applying for financial aid in the hope of attracting top scholars to that school.

We have seen discrepancies between financial aid packages. Do not be afraid to discuss these with both our office and the college financial aid office before making a final decision.

international students

International students applying for aid at American colleges are not eligible for Federal aid, and as a result, find themselves in a much more competitive group for aid from the college’s institutional resources. However, there are schools that have funded, financial aid specifically for international students. We will do our best to identify these resources.



Standardized Testing

Standardized testing is an important factor in admissions decisions at most highly selective colleges and universities. A few institutions have downplayed the importance of scores, and some have eliminated test requirements entirely, but these institutions are in the minority. At most colleges standardized testing still matters.

We have found that students who plan carefully and familiarize themselves with the test format through use of practice materials are able to attain scores that accurately reflect their school performance. We want you to understand the testing requirements and, just as importantly, to keep testing in perspective.

(PSAT/NMSQT) PRELIMINARY SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST AND NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST

This test is scored on a 240-point scale, and is administered in October of the Fourth and Fifth Form years. However, only the scores from the Fifth Form are used for National Merit selections. In the fall of the Sixth Form year, students who have become semi-finalists will be notified and asked to submit an application; other students will be recognized as “commended scholars.” In the spring of the Sixth Form year, finalists will be notified if they have been awarded a National Merit Scholarship.

The PSAT helps familiarize you with the standardized testing format. When you receive a copy of your PSAT scores, you will also receive the test questions, a copy of your answers, and an answer key. The results you receive are a worthwhile tool in assessing areas of weakness as you look forward to taking the SAT. Generally speaking, PSAT results will give you a rough projection of what your SAT Reasoning Test scores will be.

SAT REASONING TEST

This test is scored on a 2400-point scale, and is administered from October through June of each year on nationally determined test dates.

All students should take the SAT at least once in their Fifth Form year. Most students will repeat the SAT once during the spring of the Fifth Form year and/or in the fall of the Sixth Form year. The total number of times a student takes the test depends on his/her level of satisfaction with the scores. Most colleges focus on a student's best verbal score and best math score, even if they are achieved on different testing days.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS

These one-hour tests in individual academic subject areas are scored on a 2400-point scale, and students may take up to three tests per administration. Subject tests are administered on the same dates as the reasoning test, but students may not take both on the same date.

In addition to the SAT, nearly all students will need to have taken two SAT Subject Tests by the time they apply to college. (Please note that with the new SAT, with writing, only a handful of schools are still requiring three, however three strong scores can only help your case.) SAT Subject Tests measure achievement in a particular academic discipline. Not all colleges require these tests, but many of the colleges St. Paul's students applied to either require or recommend them. Decisions about which Subject Tests to take are often the most complicated decisions for students to make since the tests are largely curriculum-driven and, thus, different for each student. Further confusion arises because there are 22 different tests to choose from, and some of the tests are best taken early in one's high school career, long before most students are thinking about college plans. For example, a strong chemistry student should take the Chemistry Subject Test at the end of the course, which often falls at the end of Fourth Form year. Our best advice: ask your teacher what s/he thinks of your ability to score well on a given Subject Test.

guidelines for sat subject tests

Following are our general recommendations for taking SAT Subject Tests. It is absolutely critical that you discuss your plans with your teachers. They know best what your academic strengths and weaknesses are.

What to Take: Most colleges require two subject test, though a handful require three. Be sure you check the specific requirements of each college you are considering.

When to Take: Preferably at the end of the academic course (i.e. May and/or June; except for Languages with Listening, which are only given in November).

Literature: anytime is fine, but Fifth Form spring is ideal.

Math Level 1: after Algebra 2 and Geometry, sometimes Precalculus (if you are a marginal 'H' or 'HP' student).

Math Level 2: after Precalculus (if you are a strong 'H' or 'HH' student), Precalculus Honors, and Calculus.

Sciences: immediately following the course (check with your teacher).

Languages: usually after the third year of study.

Languages with Listening: if you are fluent in the language, after a year abroad or summer travel in the native country, if you are at an advanced level of study, with the advice of your teacher.

History: Speak with your Humanities teacher.

Note: The best resources for specific information on the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests are the SAT Program publications: Registration Bulletin, Taking the SAT Reasoning Test, and Taking the SAT Subject Tests, located outside the College Office.

HANDLING YOUR SAT SCORES

Please refer to Page 2 (inside cover) of the SAT Registration Bulletin for detailed instructions, addresses, telephone, and fax numbers for the following.

sending score reports

You can have your scores sent to colleges several ways: include college codes on your Test Registration Form; use the Correction Form or use the

Additional Report Request Form; online service (credit card required); or by telephone (again, credit card required).

score choice option

Score Choice is a new SAT option that allows students to submit their best set of scores from one test date. Please note that some schools will not accept score choice and will still require students to submit a record of all testing.

AP – ADVANCED PLACEMENT

These tests are scored on a 1-5 scale and administered in May of each year according to a nationally determined test schedule.

The Advanced Placement Examinations (AP) are optional in the college admissions process. The designated purpose of AP exams is to provide opportunities for students to gain college credit or advanced placement in college courses. Teachers will discuss with their classes whether taking the AP exam in their subjects is appropriate and guide individuals who seek advice in making a decision. Classroom teachers also handle registrations for these exams prior to spring vacation. Although APs were not designed as admissions tools, they are often used to document a student's strength in a particular subject. When a student scores a '4' or a '5' on an AP exam, the college adviser highlights it in his/her recommendation for that student. Once you select which college you will attend, you should send official AP scores to the college for credit and/or advanced placement.

ACT – AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING PROGRAM

This test is scored on a 36-point scale and administered from September through June each year according to a nationally determined test schedule

The ACT is an alternative test to the SAT and is accepted at nearly every college in the country. Occasionally students find that they outperform their SAT score when taking the ACT. A growing number of St. Paul's students take the test each year. It covers English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. St. Paul's is a test center for the test in October and April. Speak with your college adviser if you are interested.

TOEFL – TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

This test is administered at more than 300 test centers around the world. Starting September 24, 2005, the TOEFL was delivered via the Internet. Internet-based testing (IBT) allows ETS to capture speech and score responses in a standardized and fair manner. You can register online and obtain more information at their Web site: www.ets.org/toefl.

The TOEFL is taken by students whose native language is not English, and is often helpful as a supplement to the SAT verbal score.

TEST PREPARATION

printed guide books

For additional practice materials, we recommend *10 Real SAT's: The College Board's Official Guide to the SAT*. This guide contains ten complete versions of the SAT Reasoning Test for practice, and is comprehensive, helpful, and easy to read. For study guides to SAT Subject Tests, we recommend *The Official Guide to the SAT Subject Tests*, also published by the College Board. Virtually anything published by The College Board is a good bet.

There are several other guidebooks and computer software programs available today, but we hesitate to recommend one over the other since they change in content so quickly. Some are better than others, but the effectiveness of any resource depends largely upon your learning style and level of self-discipline.

We recommend taking any test preparation classes during the summer months when you have more time to take full advantage of its content.

free online service

As of the summer of 2010, all St. Paul's students will be enrolled in the College Board Online SAT Prep course. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this service.

NON-STANDARDIZED TESTING

Most tests that colleges require for admission can be administered in a modified format. These modifications to the test administration process are only available to students with documented disabilities. That is, the student must have a documented learning disability or physically handicapping condition to begin the eligibility process. Such modifications can include extended time, large print test materials, as well as administration by audiocassettes or the use of Braille.

There is a rigorous eligibility process for students with disabilities who wish to take these tests with modifications. Eligibility is determined by a process established by the test publisher and coordinated through St. Paul's School's Student Support Services. The specific test publisher ultimately makes the eligibility decision and the decision is based upon certain specific types of documentation. If you have any questions concerning test modifications or eligibility qualifications, please contact the staff at Clark House. They will be happy to answer any questions you may have about non-standardized test administration.



"If he was really intelligent, he wouldn't limit his applications to East Coast schools."

SAT/ACT TESTING RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that Fifth Formers begin testing in January with the SAT Reasoning Test and consider taking it a second time in May. Most students should take 2 or 3 SAT Subject Tests in June. (See guidelines below).

Those who would prefer the ACT should plan on taking the test in April of their Fifth Form year or October of their Sixth Form year. If you have a question about which test might be better for you, speak with your college adviser.

Sixth Formers should plan to continue their testing (if necessary) in October and November. Colleges will accept November scores for Early Action and Early Decision and January scores are accepted for Regular Decision applications.

You should register online for multiple test dates and test types at the same time. Due to limited seating capacity, registering 4-5 months in advance is not too early. SPS is a state test center open to the public. We are not a test center for SPS students only. Registering far in advance will help assure you a seat at SPS.

Test preparation booklets are available in the College Office.



SAT ONLINE REGISTRATION GUIDELINES

The following information gives guidelines for the SAT online registration form found at the College Board website www.collegeboard.com (“register now” tab).

You may register for multiple test dates at the same time, but you will need to fill out a separate registration online for each test date.

Register as far in advance as possible. 4-5 months in advance is not too early! St. Paul’s is a state test center open to the public. We are not a test center for SPS students only, therefore, we fill up quickly.

- **CREATE A USER NAME AND PASSWORD:** This will allow you to log in and complete the registration process. You will also be able to access practice tests, testing schedules and information, test scores, college information etc.
- **NAME:** Use your full legal name, and spell it the same way each and every time you register. Be consistent. This will prevent creating multiple records of test scores for you.
- **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:** Write your exact SS number (if you have one). If you don’t know it, leave it blank. Do not guess. Again, be consistent. If you have not used it in the past, do not use it now.
- **HIGH SCHOOL CODE:** 300110 for St. Paul’s
- **CURRENT GRADE LEVEL:** 12th grade for Sixth Formers, 11th grade for Fifth Formers, etc.
- **STUDENT SEARCH SERVICE:** Do you wish colleges to search for a person like you? Do you want mail in the P.O.? Underformers should probably indicate “no.”
- **TEST CENTER CODES: First Choice: St. Paul’s #30-125**

If St. Paul’s is not a test center that day, as your 2nd choice check the Concord High School test center code #30-115 (within walking distance), or the Bow High School test center code #30-108. Only as a last resort and if necessary, please use the Manchester Central High School test center code # 30-190 (particularly for June testing where

seating is in high demand), or a test center code in your hometown if you are taking the test when you are on a break from St. Paul’s.

- **SCORE REPORTS TO COLLEGES – IMPORTANT:** The first 4 score reports are free. In the fall of your Sixth Form year, you are responsible for submitting official score reports to all the schools to which you apply. If you expect to compete as a Division I or II intercollegiate athlete, you should also send official scores to the NCAA Clearinghouse (college code for NCAA is 9999).
- **STUDENT DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE:** Not necessary. Answer these questions only after consulting with the College Office. Underformers: this is optional and we suggest you do not fill it out.
- **E-MAIL ADDRESS:** Please use your St. Paul’s e-mail address. This will allow you to receive information and confirmations of your test registration here at St. Paul’s.
- **YOUR MAILING ADDRESS:** Where information and scores will be sent; your name in care of St. Paul’s School, 325 Pleasant St., Concord, NH 03301 or your home address. It is important that you use the same exact address each time you register.
- **FEE WAIVERS:** Students with fee waivers can now register online with a unique number printed on the bottom of each fee waiver card. A fee waiver identification number can only be used once. A new fee waiver card/number must be used for every new test registration. Eligible students can receive up to four fee waivers during their academic career: two fee waivers for the SAT Reasoning tests, and two fee waivers for SAT Subject Tests. These can only be used in the 5th and 6th form years. Students who use these test fee waivers may also be eligible for fee waivers for their college applications. Please come to the College Office to pick up a fee waiver card.
- **SSD ACCOMMODATIONS:** (Services for Students with Disabilities) students who are requesting testing accommodations can now also register online. Students will need to have a copy of their eligibility letter that includes their SSD eligibility code.

College Office Policies

REPORTING AND SENDING STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

You are responsible for sending standardized test scores to colleges. Test scores are not included on the St. Paul's School transcript. We will not fax or send test scores to colleges or coaches without your permission.

COLLEGE VISITS

You are allowed one official "college weekend," so use it wisely. You must secure two signatures for a college visit – first your adviser's, then your college adviser's – not the other way around. Any additional visits to colleges will fall under the regular weekend rules: long, short, special, etc. Good times to visit during the school year are the Monday after Family Weekend, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Break.

DISCIPLINARY REPORTING POLICY

It is our expectation that students will respond truthfully to any questions on college applications regarding their disciplinary records. Students who are required to do so will write statements outlining circumstances of their infractions and will review these statements with their college advisers prior to submitting them to colleges. The same holds true if a disciplinary infraction occurs after the submission of an application.

Most colleges also expect the School to provide written explanations of major disciplinary infractions, and the College Office will report the facts of all major disciplinary violations and academic dishonesty violations in a brief report, separate from the School's letter of recommendation.

While disciplinary matters are a concern to colleges, our experience is that they understand

that young people make mistakes. Admissions committees are typically more concerned with the manner in which students respond to disciplinary actions than the actual event leading to the sanctions. A mature, graceful, and honest response to a discipline infraction can illustrate a student's growth and development as a young adult.

HEALTH LEAVE REPORTING POLICY

Because of the confidential nature of personal or health-related absences, St. Paul's leaves responses to such questions to the discretion of students and their families.

We strongly encourage students who have taken an extended leave (more than three weeks) to submit a written explanation to the colleges explaining the absence. This leave will also be reflected in the number of credits on the student's transcript. Students should review these statements with their college adviser prior to submitting them to colleges.

Commonly Asked Questions

do i have to do community service to be more attractive to colleges?

Not if you are doing it simply to look good to colleges. It is far better to pursue one of your true passions. It is always nice, however, to give back to society simply for the sake of doing a good thing.

do i have to take four years of english to be competitive? of math? language? science?

If you do not meet the minimum requirements/recommendations published by each college, then, yes, you are putting yourself at a competitive disadvantage at that institution. Usually, this means, four years of English, at least three of math and science, and work completed through the third level of a language. We understand your desire to focus on your strengths by doubling or tripling up in one or two academic disciplines, but colleges are looking for broadly educated high school students, not students who have majored in one area already. Stay broad while also pursuing your interests, and always be well versed with what colleges are recommending that you study.

will colleges care if i drop a course after december or once i have been admitted early?

Yes. Consistency and commitment are qualities that every college admires and expects from students who are supposed to be among the best in the nation.

is it better to specify a major or program of study on the application or to simply write undecided?

If you declare Biology (or any science), Engineering, or Business, you should have the standardized testing and grades in those disciplines to back it up. These majors attract some of the strongest students in the country, so you will have stiff competition right away. If you are certain that those are the areas of interest or specialization for you, speak with your adviser before pigeonholing yourself. If not, declaring 'Undecided' or writing down more than one academic interest is fine. College admissions personnel understand that nearly every college student changes his or her mind about a major at least once – that is why many colleges do not require official declaration of a major generally until the junior year.

isn't big better, even though small is more personal?

Better for whom? It all depends on you and your needs. Access to faculty has more to do with the nature of the place than size. If no one cares, then 500 students are too many. If most care about you, or are friendly, then a mega-university (20,000+ students) is not too large. Large institutions naturally offer more courses and more activities, but may also offer the opportunity to take courses with 500 other students, too. Look closely at what small institutions have to offer these days – you might be surprised.

after sps, don't i need to branch out and try a big place?

Maybe. Take a look around the colleges you visit. Most that you will consider are well over three times the size of St. Paul's, and a college of 1,500 will have about 400 new students every year. Moreover, with any size college there are nearly endless opportunities which you ought to explore: to volunteer in town, on the campus; to meet new people, to go elsewhere for a semester or a year; to broaden your horizons.

isn't the college admissions game like the lottery: if i apply to ten or more i'm bound to get into one?

If all ten colleges are similar in their degree of competitiveness, you may receive ten letters saying 'sorry.' Writing applications is a difficult and time-consuming task. Write them as an individual endeavor, not a mass process. If you apply correctly to six colleges that are reasonable for you, you will probably be successful with at least half; applying to ten doesn't necessarily mean you will gain admission to five. It is your care and prior work, and the listening to advice that will help you gain the success you want.

then, my grades are the only thing the colleges care about?

Of course, colleges look closely at your courses and your record, and the courses you intend to take in all three of the Sixth Form terms. They also consider your school activities, the type of service you perform, the sports you play – in short, how you have spent your time over your high school years.

if i was disciplined in the third form, do i have to report it to colleges?

Yes. If a college asks the question about your disciplinary record, you are expected to answer honestly. If you have ever been placed on disciplinary probation or appeared before the Academic Discipline Committee, you have been "on probation." Understand that the question applies to your entire high school career – Third Form through graduation.



After the Decisions

GETTING IN

Step One: Celebrate! (but be sensitive to others)

Step Two: Call home.

Step Three: Notify the College Office in writing.

Step Four: Accept the offer, if you wish to attend; deny the offer if you do not.

NOTE: The deadline for accepting an offer of admission is May 1 (generally a postmark date). You may accept at only one school. However, you should respond to all acceptances – good manners still count. Most colleges want a deposit – usually several hundred dollars – with your acceptance. Read the fine print.

Financial aid information may come with your acceptance letters. Sometimes those letters are sent separately – allow a few days before becoming too anxious. However, if it gets to be mid-April and you still have not received a financial aid package, be sure to let us know.

You may want to revisit a college. Talk with your college adviser. Try to miss as little school as possible.

Do not make quick selections if you are fortunate enough to have several college choices. Talk with your parents and adviser.

Remember that disciplinary infractions or academic performances that are a departure from your record could put you on probation at a college freshman year or, worse, could cause the college to revoke your acceptance.

GETTING WAITLISTED

To remain on one or more waitlists, you should:

Step One: Send the response card back immediately. Colleges are always interested to know how interested you are in them. If they are going to go to the wait list to admit more students – they will go for the ones they believe will attend.

Step Two: Write a personal letter to the college admissions office emphasizing how much you hope to attend, why you think their school is the best place for you, and highlighting any new accomplishments (including better grades) that they may not know about.

Step Three: Notify the College Office in writing of your plans, and schedule a meeting to discuss strategies with your college adviser as soon as possible. Your college adviser will continue to

play a vital role in communicating with that college on your behalf.

Step Four: Think about anyone else – faculty, family, friend, or peer – who might write an additional letter of support.

Offers of admission from the waiting list usually occur after May 1 and can go on into the summer months, so be sure to accept one college's offer by the May 1 deadline to secure a space somewhere. If you are admitted from a waiting list later and decide to attend, you need to advise the college whose offer you had initially accepted, and forfeit your deposit there.

GETTING DENIED

It's never easy to face rejection, but this, too, is a part of the college application process. Don't take it personally if you have been denied, rather focus on those schools to which you have been accepted and consider these options. Students with balanced lists typically receive a combination of acceptances and denials, and remember that your ultimate success in this process will be determined by what you make of your college experience and not by the news you receive in your Sixth Form spring.

GAP YEAR

Increasingly, students are taking time off after high school. They may travel, work, or become involved in organized programs. Regardless of what you choose to do, a year off is a terrific opportunity to recharge your batteries and/or try something you never again might have the opportunity to do.

Many colleges now ask on the application if a student plans to defer a year. Be honest. It will not affect your chances of admission. In fact, colleges support the notion of a year off because students subsequently enter their freshman year with life experience, better perspective, and, perhaps most importantly, a refreshed hunger and excitement for learning.

The College Office has material that might help you get started in coordinating your gap year. If you do decide to take a year off, you still need to respond to offers of admission. Be sure to determine – before May 1 – the procedure for requesting 'deferred admission' from the college you have decided to attend.

Guidebook Recommendations

our admittedly biased guide to the marketplace

There are so many college guides on the market today – many claiming the definitive, ‘inside’ perspective – that one wonders if college campuses are not simply crawling with the people who do research for these publications. And which ones to buy? It can be a confusing choice in your local bookstore.

Over the years, we have had opportunities to examine and consult a number of guides to colleges. A few are plainly terrible, most are adequate, and others we continue to find most helpful to students. These are described below.

By the way, you are free to use any of the resources on the shelves outside the College Advising Office, as long as you read them there. Please do not take any of these publications from the third floor of the Schoolhouse.

available outside the college advising office

- *College Admissions Data Sourcebook*, Wintergreen Orchard House
- *The College Handbook*, The College Board
- *The Book of Majors*, The College Board
- *Scholarship Handbook*, The College Board
- *College Costs & Financial Aid Handbook*, The College Board
- *International Student Handbook*, The College Board
- *Paying for College*, The Princeton Review
- *The Best 361 Colleges*, The Princeton Review
- *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*, Edward B. Fiske, Sourcebooks, Inc.
- *Rugg’s Recommendations on the Colleges*, Frederick Rugg, Rugg’s Recommendations

worth looking for in a bookstore

- *Looking Beyond the Ivy League: Finding the College That’s Right For You*, Loren Pope, Penguin Books, 1995
- *Colleges That Change Lives*, Loren Pope, Penguin Books, 2000
- *Winning the Heart of the College Admissions Dean*, Joyce Slayton Mitchell, Ten Speed Press, 2005
- *The Insider’s Guide to Colleges*, Yale Daily News staff, St. Martin’s Griffin
- *The Gatekeepers*, Jacques Steinberg, Viking, 2002

Summer Check List for Fifth Formers

In addition to participating in summer activities, reading some good books, and relaxing, here are our suggestions for what you should get done this summer. The more you do in June, July, and August, the better off you will be when you return to St. Paul's in September.

- Visit and continue to research schools. Interview when possible. Narrow your list to 8-10 schools with 2-3 in each of the following categories: Reach, Possible, and Likely. Update your prospective college list on Naviance when you make changes.
- Complete the Common Application, found at www.commonapp.org, and write a complete response to one of the 500-word Common Application essay topics.
- When available, download and review application supplements to those colleges you are most interested in and draft responses to essay questions.
- Register for all appropriate fall test dates. These might include the SAT Reasoning Test and/or the SAT Subject Tests for October and November and/or the ACT in October.
- Spend some time preparing for the SAT or ACT if you plan to take either one in the fall. You can do this independently by devouring some good books, reading *The New York Times* each day, and familiarizing yourself with the test format through use of practice materials and practice tests. Remember that in July 2010 all SPS students will be enrolled in the College Board online course.
- Research all merit and need-based financial aid programs and deadlines.

college office during the summer

The College Office is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8 a.m. to noon during July and most of August, and is staffed by Cathy Green, our College Office Coordinator. Advisers will respond to e-mails when they can, but they will be unavailable through most of July and August. Please direct questions to Cathy Green or the Director of College Advising, Tim Pratt. The College Office phone number is 603-229-4881.

Ten Tips for Applying to College

- 1. SELF-ASSESSMENT:** Figure out what you want from a college education. What are you interested in studying? What environments would you prefer? Big school, small school, urban, rural? What activities do you enjoy most outside of the classroom?
- 2. EVALUATION AND RESEARCH:** Once you know what you are looking for, spend some time researching different schools. There are many guidebooks and online resources to help you make sense of your different options. Ask your college adviser for help. Visit schools when possible.
- 3. COLLEGE LIST:** Develop a balanced list, and limit yourself to 8-10 schools with 2-3 in each category: Reach, Possible, and Likely. Compare your testing to the school's average testing and selectivity. Apply to your dream schools, but also make sure to apply to schools where you and your college adviser feel your chances are strong.
- 4. MEET ALL DEADLINES:** Be sure to read carefully all communications from the College Office!
- 5. STANDARDIZED TESTING:** Make sure you meet all standardized testing requirements. Register for the SAT or ACT online. When you apply, you need to request to have an official score report sent to each school from the College Board.
- 6. RECOMMENDATIONS:** Ask two core academic teachers who know you well if they would be willing to write on your behalf. Make sure to clearly communicate your deadlines and enter your requests in Naviance only after you have spoken with your teacher in person. Leave your teachers plenty of time to meet your deadlines. Your college adviser will also write a school recommendation on your behalf.
- 7. APPLICATION:** Give yourself enough time to write a thoughtful, well-written application that successfully conveys a sense of who you are and what you have done. Get some feedback on your essays from adults or peers, but remember, this should be your own work. Be aware of deadlines for admission/financial aid applications and get your materials in on time.
- 8. CLICK SUBMIT:** Submit your materials and be confident that you have done the best you can. Most colleges will alert you if they are missing materials and some give you the opportunity to check this online. Make sure to follow-up appropriately to make sure that the schools you applied to have all the materials they need.
- 9. DECISIONS:** Celebrate when you get in, but be sensitive to your peers. While you may be disappointed with certain decisions, remember that this is not a judgment on you as a person. It is never easy to face rejection, but unfortunately, it is part of the college process. Avoid dwelling on the bad news. Focus on the opportunities ahead of you. Take the time to research the schools where you have been admitted – open up the guidebooks again, get in touch with current students, and revisit when possible.
- 10. CLOSURE:** Make your final decision, send in your deposit to one school only, and inform all schools where you were accepted of your decision. Finish your Sixth Form year in good standing.

Congratulations!!!



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