

**Glenwood Springs High School**  
A Workbook for College Bound Students and their Parents



Some Information Prepared by: The Post Graduate Center  
Cherry Creek High School and Durango High School

Adapted for Glenwood Springs High School by the Counseling Office

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### ***Freshman Year***

- Begin your GSHS plan by knowing high school requirements, and learning what various institutions require. This plan leads you through your high school years and includes your Four Year Plan, Sophomore and Junior Conference Forms, and Senior Interview information.
- It is strongly recommended that you take the most rigorous academic schedule possible.
- Get involved!
- An important part of your college application may be how you spend your time outside of the classroom. Quality not quantity.
- What you gain from high school will be proportionate to what you give it.
- READ!

### ***Sophomore Year***

- Take the most rigorous academic schedule possible.
- Examine your interests, aptitudes, and activities, and continue to assess your strengths and weaknesses.
- Explore careers that may match your interests and abilities.
- Read material sent with your scores and consult with your counselor to determine how you might improve. This can be excellent preparation for taking the ACT.
- Attend a College Information Session.
- Explore summer opportunities (courses on college campuses, work experiences, volunteer opportunities, travel, etc.).
- READ!

### ***Junior Year***

In the fall, attend college workshops and college fairs, get on mailing lists, and visit with college representatives who visit GSHS.

#### **October**

- Continue taking the most rigorous academic schedule possible.
- Take the PSAT in October. This is strongly encouraged for all college-bound juniors and is necessary for anyone to be considered for the National Merit Scholarship. Sign up in the counseling office.
- Plan college visits throughout your junior year.

#### **January**

- Receive results of your PSAT. Read material sent with your scores and consult with your counselor to determine how you might improve. This can be excellent preparation for taking the SAT I.

#### **February**

- Attend college-planning workshop, which provides topics ranging from financial aid and scholarships, to the admission process at highly selective colleges and universities.
- Discuss post graduation plans and begin the formal college planning process.
- Review your transcript and credits. Consider what colleges would be a solid match, given your academic abilities.

- Discuss what entrance examinations are required for colleges you are considering and register for the SAT & ACT.
- Start developing a list of colleges that interest you.
- Review application deadlines and procedures.
- Take the ACT.

### **March**

- Pre-register for your senior classes.
- Plan college visits over spring break.

### **April**

- Take the SAT exam required by the state and provided free of charge.

### **May**

- Take AP exams if enrolled in AP classes.
- Take SAT Subject Tests if required by colleges of interest.
- Contact appropriate persons for ROTC scholarships and Academy appointments.
- Build a list of 5-10 colleges that match your interests.
- Plan for possible summer college visits.
- Complete and return the NCAA Clearinghouse Eligibility Form if you plan to participate in a Division I or II sport in college.
- If interested, start researching military academies application process.
- Complete the Senior Profile Recommendation Form and the Activities/Extracurricular Resume and approach two academic teachers about writing letters of recommendation for you.

### **June - August**

- Visit college campuses.
- Retake the ACT or SAT if you want to improve your scores.
- Attend college summer academic programs
- Take SAT Subject Tests if required by colleges of interest.
- Start working on your college essay.
- Work, travel, volunteer, or participate in other educational experiences.
- READ!

## *Senior Year*

### **September**

- Take the most rigorous academic schedule possible.
- Meet with your counselor to:
  - verify graduation credits and college entrance requirements.
  - review college choices and application process.
- Complete the Senior Profile Recommendation Form.
- Make a resume- usually asked for in applications for scholarships.
- Approach 2-3 academic teachers about writing letters of recommendation for you. Do it in written form and attach your resume to the request letter. Give at least 2 weeks for letters to be completed. The resume is an added plus for activities, awards, etc. and other information for the letter writer.
- Consider retaking the SAT, ACT, and/or SAT Subject Tests, if necessary.
- Meet with college representatives who visit GSHS
- Attend a college fair

- Obtain admission and financial aid information and applications. The Counseling Office has many applications to Colorado colleges.
- If interested, check on military academy and ROTC deadlines.
- Note Early Decision and Early Action deadlines.
- Attend college information night presentation given by counselors.

### **October**

- Attend Colorado Western Slope College Fair @Aspen High School
- Meet with college representatives who visit GSHS.
- Check application dates for colleges of interest.
- Complete Early Decision applications.
- Read the green sheet that will continually update scholarships in Naviance.

### **November**

- Complete applications with January deadlines.
- Keep checking the green sheet for scholarships and dates of upcoming events.

### **December**

- Complete applications.
- Keep looking for scholarships.

REMINDER: Applications turned in after mid-December will not be processed until after January 1st.

### **January - February**

- Attend the GSHS Financial Aid Workshop where you can pick up the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and learn how to complete it.
- Continue completing college applications.
- Submit additional credentials to colleges (mid- year grade reports, new test scores, etc.) if requested.
- Keep checking the green sheet.
- Attend the Local Scholarship Meeting offered at GSHS

### **March - April**

- Make final campus visits if needed.
- Keep grades up- it matters!

### **May**

- Notify colleges of your final decision by May 1<sup>st</sup> or the Candidate Reply Date.
- Send tuition and housing deposits to college of your choice.
- Notify other colleges where you applied that you won't be attending.
- Take AP exams if enrolled in AP classes.
- Request your final transcript and verification of graduation be sent to the college you plan to attend. This is done as part of your final senior checkout process.
- Write thank you notes to all the people who have given you scholarships or assisted you with this process.
- **GRADUATE!**

## College Admission Trends

To be a savvy college consumer, you should examine the trends affecting college admissions at the start of the 21st century. First and foremost, colleges are receiving more applications (and more strong applications) than ever before. As a direct result, many colleges have become much more selective, to the point of denying admission to many academically solid students.

Why has this trend developed?

- \* You are part of a “baby boom” where the student population is expected to grow by 10% in the next decade.
- \* More students than ever are pursuing higher education, as our society has shown that a college degree does provide greater benefits in terms of careers and lifestyles.
- \* More students with similar academic backgrounds and test scores are applying to the same top institutions, creating a lower chance of being admitted to these colleges and universities. The college application process has also become easier, thanks to the Internet and your “techno-savvy” generation.
- \* Second- and third-tier institutions are overwhelmed with excellent applications, making their admission criteria more selective than in recent years. As well, state universities are raising their admission standards, which have happened recently in Colorado at Colorado State University and University of Northern Colorado.
- \* Another trend that has been created by the media is that of “name recognition.” Students and parents often limit their searches to colleges that are familiar or that they know are selective.

Combine all these factors with a relatively healthy economy, and you have a college admission process very different from that of your parents—one that is much more competitive, and requires more forethought on your part.

**WITH OVER 3,600 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITIES TO CHOOSE FROM, KNOW THAT THERE IS NO ONE RIGHT COLLEGE FOR YOU. AN OPEN MIND IS YOUR BEST ASSET.**

## What Are Colleges Looking For?

Each year, the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) surveys colleges and universities to determine the top factors influencing admission decisions. According to the 2008 Admission Trends Survey, the following factors, in order of importance, were:

1. Grades in College Prep Courses
2. Admission Test Scores
3. Grades in All Subjects
4. Class Rank
5. Essay/Writing Sample
6. Counselor Recommendation
7. Teacher Recommendation
8. Interview
9. Community Service
10. Work/Extracurricular Activities

With these factors in mind, here are ways you can prepare yourself for the college application process.

### ***Academics:***

- ❖ Choose a rigorous course load. This means you should seek out courses that challenge you. Colleges would rather see you get a lower grade in a more challenging course than go for the easy ‘A’. But remember the best scenario is good grades in challenging classes!
- ❖ Make sure your courses are appropriate and in logical progression. Meet with your counselor to ensure you are on the right track.
- ❖ Get to know your counselor and teachers on a more individual basis. These are the people who will be writing your recommendations!
- ❖ Keep your best work. Colleges may offer you a chance to submit supplementary material that demonstrates your achievements.
- ❖ Establish good study habits. Grades in the academic core areas (English, math, science, social studies, and foreign language) are the best predictors of success in college.
- ❖ Read! Studies have shown that one of the best preparations for the college admission tests (SAT and ACT) is to read as much as possible.

### ***Extracurricular:***

- ❖ Find activities, both in and out of school, that you enjoy and that provide an outlet for your non-academic side.
- ❖ Avoid being a “joiner.” Colleges admire students who put time into one or two activities rather than students who put little time into many activities.

### ***Personal:***

- ❖ Start early
- ❖ Be yourself.
- ❖ Ask the tough questions: Who am I? What do I want to do and be? Where do I want to be? How am I going to get there?

## GETTING STARTED: Know Thyself

Just when you've started to get comfortable in high school, when you're finally an upperclassman, you have to make one of your biggest decisions yet: You have to choose that one school out of over 3,600 colleges and universities in the country as THE SCHOOL FOR YOU. So the first person you should probably have a sit-down, heart-to-heart conversation with is not your parent, your school counselor, or your best friend...it's you. You don't have to know what you're going to major in, or what you want to be when you grow up to start the college process, but you should have a general idea about who you are as an individual. Without a sense of yourself and your needs, how can you possibly pick a college that's right for you?

Activity #1: Time For Some Soul-Searching There are obviously no right or wrong answers to the following questions, but your answers may give you some surprising insight into that age-old question: Who am I?

1. GOALS: Think about where you are now, and where you want to be in the future.
  - What kind of person are you at this point in your life?
  - What kind of person would you like to become?
2. EDUCATION: This is the whole reason you're going to college, right?
  - What is your learning style?
  - What courses do you enjoy most and least in high school?
  - What do you choose to learn on your own?
  - Would you prefer to learn by listening? Or learn by discussing?
  - What books have had an impact on you?
3. ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS: Fortunately, college is not just academics.
  - If you went home tonight and your homework was miraculously done for the rest of the week, how would you spend your free time?
  - What activities have you wanted to try but haven't yet?
4. THE WORLD AROUND YOU: Your environment says a great deal about you as a person.
  - How are you most like and unlike each of your parents?
  - When and where do you feel your best?
  - What current local/national/global issues are important to you?
5. YOUR PERSONALITY: Think about how you view yourself, and how you think others view you.
  - Are you influenced by others? Or do you influence others?
  - What do you expect from yourself? How often do you meet these expectations?

Now analyze your answers. Are you?

- Introverted or extroverted?
- A doer or a thinker?
- Logical or impulsive?
- Independent or group-oriented?
- Patient or impatient?
- Ready for college? Or scared to death?

As you begin to define who you are as a student and a person, you will hopefully start to recognize certain colleges as fitting your personality. And you may find that many schools could be a possible fit.

### **Activity: Completing an Online College Search**

Now that you have compiled a set of criteria to help you in creating your college list, it's time to utilize the Internet as a resource. At the end of this Planning Guide is a complete list of the many different web sites we utilize in the Counseling Center, and we encourage you to try several different sites as you research colleges.

At [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), the College search link can help you match your interests and abilities to appropriate schools. You can save up to five searches, add colleges to a personal watch list, and update your preferences at any time. We recommend that you register with [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) so that you can save your searches and other information under your user name.

Open [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

Click on the "Students" header

Click on "College Search Engines"

Complete the "College Matchmaker Survey"

Complete a questionnaire that will help match schools with your preferences.

We recommend that you print out the first few pages of results to get an idea what schools match your criteria.

At this same website, you can also:

Click on "College QuickFinder" to look up information on a specific college.

Type in the name of the school to find out specific facts about that school and find out where you can receive more information.

Check out the "More to Explore" section to view other schools that might be similar.

### Activity: Your Preliminary College List

Now that you have completed an online college search, examine the top 15 schools, which most match your interests. List them below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

## WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE? Research, Research, Research

The next step in examining schools on your list involves research. This is the time to gather information about individual schools and see how they will meet your needs.

### Online Research

The Internet is a powerful tool in your college search and application process, and often one of the best places to start. The 2001 Admission Trends Survey conducted by the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) shows that 100% of the respondents (colleges) have a website, and 91% provide an online application.

We encourage you to do your own web research, and visit the websites of the individual colleges you are considering. Some of the things you can do on a college's' website include:

- take a virtual campus tour
- read the student newspaper to discover what is happening on campus
- e-mail professors in departments in which you are interested
- ask questions of admission staff
- ask for applications and view books to be mailed to your home

Many of the online college search sites have links to the colleges' websites. Most colleges list their admission requirements, test requirements, degrees and majors offered, housing information, cost and financial aid information, etc. Most schools also provide statistics about the average or middle 50% SAT and/or ACT scores of the freshman class, and average or middle 50% high school grade point averages. This information is very important because it helps you rate your chances of admission.

### Objective Guidebooks

In addition to college websites, similar information can be found in a number of different resources available in the Counseling Office. Some good reference books are:

- *The College Board's College Handbook*
- *Peterson's Guide to Colleges*

These resources provide objective and statistical information.

### Subjective Guidebooks

Other resources provide opinions about colleges. You may want to check out:

- *US News and World Report Best Colleges*
- *331 Best Colleges*
- *The Gourman Report*
- *Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges*
- *The Insider's Guide to the Colleges*
- *The Fiske Guide to Getting into the Right College*

Some of these books offer student perspectives and opinions; others rank different programs and fields of study at schools. It is important for you as the consumer to look beyond the rankings and ask how they arrive at them.

### **People as Resources**

- Your counselor is an excellent resource for learning about schools. Our counselors have helped many students through the process, and often hear back from former GSHS students who are in college. They can tell you how you might like a place and fit in with the kinds of students who attend those schools. Counselors at GSHS are often invited to visit college campuses and are happy to share information and their impressions with students.
- Recent graduates of GSHS are another good resource.
- Current seniors who are going through the college admission process and visiting colleges are also a great resource as you try to gather your own information about schools of interest.
- Teachers, parents and college alumni are additional resources to investigate. Remember that everyone will have an opinion. The most useful opinions to you will be from people who know you well and know what you might like in a school.

### **Choosing Your “Foundation” School: Your Most Important Task**

Many students are tempted to start their college list with their “dream school”, the school they would love to attend, but that might be a long shot in terms of admission. We often hear students say, “Well, I’m applying to State U, but I don’t really want to go there.”

We recommend a different approach: your first priority should be finding one or two schools that you are sure you can get into -your foundation schools- and that you would be very happy to attend. For some students, this is the hardest school to find: for others, it’s the easiest. But starting your college list with your “foundation” school allows you to approach the college selection process with “insurance”: the knowledge that you have at least one school where you would be happy.

To find your “foundation” school, look for schools that meet your basic criteria, and where you easily fit the academic profile of students who attend that school. It should also be a school that will challenge you academically with majors that interest you. Remember, selectivity does not equal quality: in other words, just because it may be easier to get into a certain college does not mean that the education you’ll receive there won’t be strong. Again, there are over 3,600 colleges and universities in this country. Regardless of how selective they are, most can offer a valuable education to their students.

**Sample National Colleges and Universities  
Minimum Recommended High School Program of Study and National Test Score  
Guidelines**

**Most Selective**

(ACT 27-36 SAT 1230-1600)  
Colorado College

Recommended High School Minimum  
Program of Study for Most Selective Colleges

Colorado School of Mines  
Grinnell College  
Harvard University

4 years Language Arts  
4 years Mathematics\*  
3-4 years Social Studies\*

Harvey Mudd College  
M.I.T.  
Northwestern University  
Pomona College  
UCLA  
Stanford University  
United States Air Force Academy  
University of California at Berkeley  
University of Michigan

4 years Science\*  
3-4 years Foreign Language\*  
Plus additional credits required for graduation,  
including appropriate elective choices  
\*1-2 years of Advanced Placement in these core  
areas is strongly suggested

**Highly Selective**

(ACT 24-27 SAT 1020-1190)

Brigham Young University  
Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo  
Colorado State University  
Creighton University  
Denver University  
Gonzaga University  
Lewis and Clark College  
Pepperdine University  
Regis University (Denver)  
Ripon College  
University of Colorado, Boulder  
University of the Pacific  
University of Puget Sound  
University of San Diego  
University of Southern California  
University of Utah  
University of Washington

Recommended High School Minimum  
Program of Study for Highly Selective Colleges

4 years Language Arts\*  
4 years Mathematics\*  
3-4 years Social Studies\*  
2.5-3.0 years Science\*  
3-4 years Foreign Language\*  
Plus additional credits required for graduation,  
including appropriate elective choices  
\*Advanced Placement in at least one of these  
areas is strongly encouraged

**Selective**

(ACT 20-23 SAT 930-1050)

## Colleges

University of Colorado- Denver  
University of CO - Colorado Springs  
Kansas State University  
University of Nevada - Las Vegas  
University of Northern Colorado  
Oregon State University  
Utah State University  
Seattle Pacific University

## Recommended High School Minimum

## Program of Study for Selective

4 years Language Arts  
4 years Mathematics  
3 years Social Studies  
2-3 years Science  
2 years Foreign Language  
plus additional credits required for  
graduation,  
including appropriate elective choices

**Less Selective**

(ACT 18-21 SAT 850-990)

## Colleges

Adams State College  
California Maritime Academy  
Boise State University  
Fort Lewis College  
LaSierra University  
Metro State College  
University of Alaska-Fairbanks  
University of Southern Colorado  
Community College  
Junior College  
Vocational School  
Technical School  
Military Induction

## Recommended High School Minimum

## Program of Study for less Selective

4 years Language Arts  
3 years Mathematics  
2-3 years Social Studies  
2 years Science  
plus additional credits required for graduation,  
including appropriate elective choices  
Note: Community College, Junior College,  
Vocational/technical School and Military  
Induction require that all graduation  
requirements are met  
\* Some branches of the military will accept  
GED's if scores are high enough

Now is an excellent time to start comparing your colleges. Use the worksheet below to do just that. Make copies if you have more than three colleges to compare.

COLLEGE NAME			
LOCATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Distance from home</li> <li>● Ease in traveling to/from Glenwood</li> </ul>			
TYPE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public or Private</li> <li>● Religious affiliation if any</li> </ul>			
UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT			
ENVIRONMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School Setting (Urban?) Suburban ( Rural?)</li> <li>● Coed? Male? Female?</li> <li>● Location &amp; Size of Nearest City</li> </ul>			
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Deadline</li> <li>● Tests required</li> <li>● Average Test Scores, GPA, Rank</li> <li>● Notification</li> </ul>			
ACADEMICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Your Major Offered</li> <li>● Special Requirements</li> <li>● Accreditation</li> <li>● Student/Faculty Ratio</li> <li>● Average Class Size</li> </ul>			
COLLEGE EXPENSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tuition, Room, and Board</li> <li>● Estimated Total Budget</li> </ul>			
FINANCIAL AID <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Percentage Receiving Aid</li> <li>● Scholarships Available</li> <li>● Required Forms</li> </ul>			
HOUSING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Residence Hall Requirement</li> <li>● Guaranteed Housing?</li> <li>● Food Plan</li> </ul>			
FACILITIES			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Academic</li> <li>● Recreational</li> <li>● Other</li> </ul>			
<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Easy to Get Involved?</li> <li>● Available Clubs/Organizations</li> <li>● Greek Life</li> <li>● Athletics, Intramural Sports</li> <li>● Other</li> </ul>			
<p>OTHER CRITERIA YOU MIGHT HAVE:</p>			

**Activity: Meet & Greet: Visiting with College Representatives  
At College Fairs and in the Counseling Office.**

There are many opportunities for students to talk with representatives from colleges of interest. Most colleges have admissions staff who is “assigned” to a particular high school, state, or region, and it is usually these admissions personnel who attend college fairs and visit Glenwood Springs High School. These representatives are also often the admissions staff who read and evaluate applications from our school, so we highly encourage you to get to know them and make your interest known.

September/ October:

Colorado Council of Higher Education Fair (in a RFSD High School)

Western Slope College Fair (Aspen)

**College Representative Visits to GSHS**

Every year, especially in the fall, many college representatives visit our Counseling Office to meet with interested students. The daily announcements and the green sheet list the visiting schools weekly, sign up in the counseling office. Be sure that you receive permission ahead of time from your teacher if any of the college visits conflict with your scheduled class time. These visits are a great way for you to learn about a college from the admissions representative.

Visits provide opportunities for:

- Receiving an application, view book, or other material
- Asking questions about admission, financial aid, academic programs, housing, etc.
- Finding out about interviews or receptions in the Denver area
- Meeting the admission counselor who may be reading your application
- Filling out an interest card so you will get on the mailing list

Try to learn what you can about a college before you meet with the representative, so that you can make good use of the limited time you may have. Some questions you may want to ask:

- What is the campus like on weekends for students from out-of-state?
- What research opportunities are available in my area of interest?
- What other programs are available to students (study abroad, honors programs, internships, etc)?
- Housing and transportation questions - requirements and availability of on-campus housing, parking costs and availability, off-campus housing opportunities, etc.
- Questions about your particular field(s) of interest and study.
- What percentages of students live on campus?

## Up Close and Personal: The Campus Visit

There is no substitute for seeing a college campus first-hand. Sure, view books and websites can give you a lot of information and glossy photos, but meeting professors and students, seeing classrooms and residence halls, and eating the food – that’s what gives you a true feeling of a college.

### WHEN TO GO

A campus visit is informative any time, but it’s best to see the school while it’s in session and students are in classes. If you can only visit during the summer, on a weekend, or when the school is on a break, that’s okay-just be prepared to visualize what the school looks like with students and professors in the class-rooms and residence halls.

### BEFORE YOU GO

Plan ahead! We recommend giving an admission office at least two weeks advance notice of your visit. Also, read up on the college and think about possible questions you’d like to ask.

You may want to do any of the following while you’re visiting a college:

- Tour the campus, including residence halls
- Schedule an interview with an admission officer, if it is offered, or attend an information session
- Sit in on a class
- Meet with a professor in your interest area
- Meet with a coach if you’re interested in participating in a sport
- Eat lunch or dinner in one of the cafeterias
- Spend the night in one of the residence halls with a current student host
- Attend a special event, like a lecture, play, or concert, if available
- Talk informally with current students to get their impressions

### WHILE YOU’RE THERE

- Talk to as many students as you can and don’t be bashful about asking questions.
- Prepare for your interview and take along your list of questions.
- Be on time!
- Take time to explore the campus on your own and absorb the atmosphere.
- Pick up a student newspaper to find out what the issues are on campus.

### QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

When you talk with your tour guide or other students, ask:

- What other colleges did you apply to?
- Why did you decide to attend this college?
- How many hours a week do you study? Is that typical here?
- Approximately how many students were in your freshman classes?
- Approximately how many students are in your current classes?
- Do many students go home on weekends?
- Are faculty members accessible outside of class?

- Is there easy access to computers? Where are they located?
- How easy is it to get the classes you want?
- What three things would you change about this college?
- What three things would you not change about this college?
- Where do students go to socialize?
- What is the surrounding town or city like?

In an interview or information session, you could ask:

- Does the college have academic programs that fit my interests?
- Will I have access to special equipment (such as an electron microscope) as a first-year student?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the college's advising system?
- How many students will there be in courses I'm likely to take my first year? Are those courses taught by professors or graduate students?
- Will there be any new programs or facilities in the next two years?
- What are the college's recent graduates doing now?

#### AFTER THE VISIT

Whether you're visiting just one campus, or doing a marathon trip across the country, write down your impressions right after you see a college!

Ask yourself:

- Were the people you met friendly?
- Did they answer your questions fully and candidly?
- Did the college offer programs in your areas of interest?
- What do you think of the quality of instruction and the academic atmosphere?
- Were the students the kind of people you'd like to get to know?
- Did you like the social atmosphere?
- Would you be happy with this college as your "home" for four years?

#### WHAT IF YOU CAN'T VISIT A CAMPUS?

Sometimes a campus visit just isn't feasible. Don't worry! There are ways to get a feel for a specific college's atmosphere without setting a foot on campus.

Try these ideas:

- Read as much as you can about that school. Read the school's view book and catalog, and read reviews of the college in *The Fiske Guide* or *The Insider's Guide*.
- Visit the college's website. You'll be amazed at the depth of information available there.
- Ask questions of the admission officer at that college who works with applicants from GSHS, either when they visit GSHS, at a college fair, or by phone or e-mail.
- If a GSHS graduate attends a college you're interested in, you may be able to contact him or her.
- Ask the college if they have current students who are willing to speak with prospective students via phone or e-mail.

## Learning Your Way Around the College Entrance Exams

While there seems to be a great deal of emphasis on college entrance exams, they are only one of the many factors colleges look at in making their final decisions. Some of these tests are used in the admission process as indications of academic potential; some are used for educational placement; others are designed as preliminary opportunities to develop good test-taking skills. Many students choose to retake some of these tests to enhance their scores. Be sure to find out which exams are required by the colleges you are considering. The following descriptions may be helpful in understanding more about college admission testing.

**PLAN:** The PLAN is a comprehensive assessment service designed to help tenth graders make academic and college plans, as well as practice for the ACT. The PLAN consists of (1) a battery of four tests of educational development, (2) an interest inventory, (3) a study skills assessment, and (4) a questionnaire about students' educational and career plans, background, and special educational needs.

**PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT):** The PSAT measures verbal, quantitative (math), and writing ability, and offers practice for the SAT. It is administered to interested juniors in October. If you wish to be considered for the National Merit Scholarship and recognition as a National Merit Semi-finalist a finalist, you must take the PSAT during your junior year. Students can register in the Counseling office.

**ACT:** The ACT is more achievement-oriented than the SAT, measuring acquired skills and knowledge in English, math, reading, and science reasoning. It is currently administered free of charge to all juniors at Glenwood Springs High School in April, and is administered nationally on several other dates as well. Like the SAT, it is required of applicants by many colleges and sponsors of scholarship programs. Most colleges accept either the SAT or the ACT. We recommend that you take this test in the spring of your junior year and retake it, if necessary, in the summer or fall of your senior year.

**SAT:** The SAT measures verbal and quantitative (math) reasoning ability. It is administered periodically at test centers throughout the United States and is required by many colleges and sponsors of scholarship programs. We recommend that you take the SAT in the spring of your junior year and retake it, if necessary, in the fall of your senior year.

**SAT II:** The SAT II's are subject tests, which measure your knowledge and skills in a particular subject and your ability to apply that knowledge. Subject tests fall into five general areas: English, history and social studies, mathematics, science, and foreign languages. Some colleges, such as the University of California system, require particular subject tests. We recommend that you check individual college requirements for SAT II's and plan appropriate times to take these tests. For example, if you are studying for an AP Biology test, it may be advantageous for you to take the SAT II in Biology around the same time.

Advanced Placement (AP): A college may permit a new student to skip or even receive credit for a class in which they pass the AP test. Many colleges grant advanced placement and/or credit for a score of 3 or better. These tests are graded from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): Some colleges require the TOEFL of students whose first or native language is not English. This test, either alone or in combination with the ACT and/or SAT, will give colleges information needed to make admission decisions.

### **TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL TESTING**

Registration Forms are available in the Counseling Office. You can also register for the SAT online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) and the ACT online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

Test preparation information is available through two main resources: SAT, SAT II, and ACT guidebooks which give sample tests and test prep software for the PSAT, ACT, and SAT for use on a personal computer.

Test scores are returned approximately four weeks after a test date. You will receive your SAT, SAT II, and ACT scores in the mail. Also, students can receive their SAT scores via the phone for \$13 two weeks after taking the tests.

Many colleges require a report of your scores directly from the testing agency. You may send your scores for free to four schools when you register for the SAT and ACT. Additional score reports cost up to \$6.50 for each school.

If you are applying Early Decision or Early Action to any college, we recommend that you have your test scores directly reported to the college.

Most colleges will take your highest SAT Verbal and Math score, and your highest ACT Composite (average) score.

### **The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and You**

If you are interested in playing college athletics at the Division I or II level, you must complete the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse Form, available online or in the Counseling Office. The NCAA will evaluate your academic credits and grades, ensuring that you are academically eligible to participate in college athletics.

Students must have a minimum grade point average of a 2.0 and earn a sum of scores of at least 68 on the ACT or a combined score of at least 820 on the SAT from a national test administration. The NCAA Clearinghouse Form includes an Academic Eligibility Worksheet that will give you a general idea of your standing.

To determine what GSHS courses are approved for NCAA eligibility, check in the Counseling Office.

The Counseling Center recommends a guidebook, [So You Want to be a College Athlete: A Guide to the NCAA Process](#), and [The Winning Edge: The Student-Athlete's Guide to College Sports](#).

The NCAA web site, [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org), offers a list of colleges and universities that offer specific sports by division.

- ✓ Click on "Sports" on the right
- ✓ Click on the specific season your sport will be played
- ✓ Click on the sport you wish to play
- ✓ Click on the division and it will list all schools by institutions

Please feel free to contact your counselor if you have any specific questions about the NCAA.

### **THE APPLICATION PROCESS: Understanding Your Options**

College applications usually consist of a biographical/informational form to be completed by the student and parent, academic information (including coursework, grades and transcript), activities and other involvement, teacher and counselor recommendations, essays and personal statements, and an application fee.

Most colleges have their own applications, which are generally available by mail or from the colleges' website. Students may often print out the application and send it in by mail, or complete the application and apply online. Online applications are convenient and easy to complete, and some colleges are using them exclusively. If you apply online, be aware of other support documents and information, which you must send in separately. Often your application is incomplete and will not be considered until the admission office receives all your documents. This may include official test scores, high school transcripts, and letters of recommendation

Over 200 colleges, mostly private, participate in the Common Application, which is a generic application a student completes one time and photocopies for the colleges that accept it. These applications are available through their website, [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org), or are available in the Counseling Office. Be sure to check carefully for supplemental essays/materials required by the individual schools.

#### **Deadlines**

*Application deadlines are critical in college admissions.* Missing a deadline often means you have lost your chance to apply at all. Remember that the Counseling Office has its own deadlines you must meet as well, generally 2 weeks before your college's deadline. Since we must gather, complete and mail many supporting documents for each

application, and many GSHS students are applying to schools at the same time, we insist on at least 2 weeks and sometimes 3 weeks in advance of your deadline. The Counseling Office is closed when school is not in session, so extra time must be factored in around holidays and breaks.

### **Early Decision, Early Action, and Regular Decision Applications**

The use of multiple admission plans by colleges and universities often results in confusion and concern among students, parents, and high school counselors. In an effort to help reduce this confusion, the National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) has developed the following definitions of admission decision options as of September 2001.

Early Decision is the application process in which students make a commitment to a first choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. Students must withdraw all other applications as soon as they have been admitted. Should a student who applies for financial aid not be offered an award that makes attendance possible, the student may decline the offer of admission and be released from the Early decision commitment. Talk this option over carefully with your parents and counselor if you are planning to consider an early decision application. Many early decision applications are due as early as November.

Early Action is the application process in which students make an application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Students who are admitted under Early Action are not obligated to accept the institutions offer of admissions. Check the early action requirement of the schools you are applying to. Some schools allow you to apply to as many early action schools as you want. Others do not let you apply to any other early action schools if you apply to them.

Regular Decision is the application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time, but not later than April 15.

Rolling Admission is the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are completed and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admission cycle.

Wait List is an admission decision option utilized by institutions to protect against shortfalls in enrollment. Wait lists are sometimes made necessary because of the uncertainty of the admission process, as students submit applications for admission to multiple institutions and may receive several offers of admission. By placing a student on the wait list, an institution does not initially offer or deny admission, but extends to a candidate the possibility of admission in the future before the institution's admission cycle is concluded.

*Applying as early as possible often increases your chances of admission and eligibility for particular programs.*

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Early Application Programs**

The advantage to colleges with early application options is that they often get a strong pool of early applicants who are either committing to attend or indicating a very strong interest in attending their school. In fact, some colleges are taking fairly large percentages of their freshman classes through their early programs. Students who apply under an early option sometimes have a better chance of admission as part of a smaller early applicant pool. Being accepted early can also alleviate the stress of the college application process much earlier in the school year.

Disadvantages to students include completing campus visits, research, and applications early in the school year, and being ready to commit to one school through Early Decision. Early decision is not for students who are unsure about how they will finance college (you will not be able to apply to other colleges and then compare financial aid packages), or who are still not sure that this one college is the best fit for him/her, or who had a weak junior year and may need a strong senior year to help their application.

### **Application Planning Guide**

This section of the College Planning Guide is designed as a handy and easy reference to help in filling out your college and scholarship applications.

Listed below are some tips to keep in mind when completing your applications. Remember that it is extremely important to leave a favorable impression with the admissions office by sending them a well-prepared application.

**Be aware of deadlines.** In general, the more selective the college, the earlier the deadline. Make sure you meet the deadline.

**Neatness is important.**

**Spelling counts.** Spelling errors leave a very bad impression.

**Be thorough and complete.** Rather than leave a question blank, indicate “not applicable.”

**Honesty is a virtue.** Don’t pretend to be something you are not.

**Colleges want to see your effort, not someone else’s.** Prepare the application yourself. Colleges may become suspicious with a “too perfect” application or essay.

**Be proud of your accomplishments and let them know about them.** This is not the time to downplay aspects of your life. Present yourself and your activities openly and honestly. Don't minimize or exaggerate.

**Supplementary material should be submitted only if it is relevant or adds to your application.** Don't get carried away.

**Let your uniqueness shine through.**

**Your essay or personal statement is the key avenue to let the college see your individuality, maturity, and experiences.** Make the most of this opportunity.

**Double-check everything before you turn it in to the Counseling Office for processing, and save a copy of everything.** Also, save a copy of the letters of recommendation you receive from teachers!

### **Telling Your Story: Essays and Personal Statements**

Students and parents often find the essay to be one of the most frightening parts of the college application. In order to ease your mind, most colleges do not expect you to create an exhaustive novel in your college essay. They simply want to know you better and discover your unique qualities. Yes, you do have unique qualities!

- ❑ When writing a personal statement, a short and original essay is desirable.
- ❑ If a choice of topics is given, choose a topic, make a list of ideas to be covered in the essay, develop an outline, and write a first draft.
- ❑ Be certain the personal statement is broken into paragraphs. One long paragraph does not look good in a personal essay.
- ❑ Vary the structure and length of your sentences to provide interest.
- ❑ Use intelligent sentences and common sense.
- ❑ Use your own style, but write in a direct, conversational manner.
- ❑ Make certain you have a smooth transition from one idea or another and from one paragraph to another.

It is often helpful to attend college essay writing sessions. Take advantage of the opportunities your English class offers to work on essays, and ask your English teacher, counselor, and parents to help you. Finally, edit your work.

### **Your Reputation Precedes You: Recommendations and Evaluations**

Some colleges either require or encourage that your application includes two to three school-related recommendations. Two evaluations by academic teachers (often one closely related to your intended field of study), and an evaluation by your counselor will cover all of the necessary requirements. Occasionally you may want to also include a special recommendation from a coach, activity sponsor, or non-academic teacher who can provide an exceptional view of a particular area of interest or strength. If you are applying to public institutions in Colorado, and meet the admission index,

recommendations are generally not necessary. Talk with your counselor if you are uncertain.

No evaluations will be written about you without your expressed request, and you will be given the option of waiving or not waiving your right to read the teacher evaluations. You may also need to have them sign an individual college's special form at a later date. In order to have a greater level of rapport and understanding, you should take some time to sit down with a teacher and your counselor before you ask them to do an evaluation/recommendation. They will appreciate the opportunity to update their knowledge of your interests, activities, and educational goals. In asking teachers to write recommendations, you should ask those for whom you have accomplished positive outcomes and who also know you on a more personal level.

Recommendations can give the college admissions office a more complete view of you in such areas as academic potential, personal character, leadership, motivation, self-discipline, and interpersonal skills. If you don't feel comfortable asking a teacher for an evaluation, it may be best not to do so; but maybe now is the time to begin to develop a stronger bond with at least one of your teachers. You will be amazed at the overall benefits this type of relationship can bring.

Teachers and counselors who write many letters of recommendation appreciate all of the advance notice you can provide. Be sure to thank those people who are taking the time to write your letters for you.

### **Signed, Sealed, And Delivered: Submitting Your Completed Application**

When you have assembled and completed all of the parts of the application, have the application fee, essay(s), and letters of recommendation on file (if required), you are ready to submit your application to the College or University. Check with the Guidance Office too because there may be some forms that you are submitting which we will complete, such as the Secondary School Report and Transcripts.

If/when you need a transcript sent to the college or for a scholarship you will need to request it from the Counseling Office. This is a list in the Guidance Office and the student needs to sign up and state the place the transcript needs to be sent. Many colleges ask for you to submit official test scores, and you may need to contact ACT or The College Board directly to have your scores sent to the college. The first page of the transcript includes academic coursework completed during high school. The second page of the transcript includes all test scores that are part of a student's record when the transcript is printed.

### **Secondary School Report**

This part of the application will be filled out and signed by your counselor after you have turned in your application to the Counseling Office. The Counseling Office will complete college and scholarship applications by processing the following information:

- Any required school documentation of grade point average and class rank, as well as other appropriate school information
- A copy of your most recent official transcript with courses in progress

- A copy of all college test scores which have been sent to GSHS
- An informational profile of Glenwood Springs High School

### **FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION: Show Me The Money!**

One of the major hurdles in the college application process is financial aid. With the cost of funding a college education high and getting higher, many families are understandably concerned about how to finance that expense for their children. However, do not eliminate a college strictly on cost alone until you have applied for assistance and been told how much financial aid you will be receiving.

The futures room has extensive information about all forms of financial aid. The financial aid office of the college you are interested in can also provide you with valuable information, and you should contact them about your special needs and concerns.

#### **Need-Based Financial Aid**

Most students rely on federal programs for funding, and that aid is based on evidence of financial need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

So, how do you get started? In order to receive financial aid, you must apply each year you are in college. If you don't think you qualify, try anyway. You may have more options than you think. You will be ahead of the game if you collect your income tax information throughout the year so it can be compiled and ready right after January 1.

#### **Step 1**

Pick up a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from the Counseling Office. You can also complete the FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) (this is your fastest alternative). The FAFSA will determine how much money you and your family must contribute each year for your education. Some schools require you to fill out their own application. Check with each school you are considering finding out what they require.

#### **Step 2**

Check out as many sources as you can find for scholarships. Your counselor and the futures office are excellent resources, as is the Internet. NOTE: These financial aid resources are free; do NOT pay for this information.

#### **Step 3**

Complete and submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 of the year you plan to attend school.

#### **Step 4**

Your FAFSA will be evaluated using a standard formula that takes into account you and your family's income, assets, and other special circumstances. This need analysis will determine the amount you and your family will be expected to contribute for your education, which is called your Estimated Family Contribution (EFC). Your NEED is the difference between the cost of your education and your family's contribution.

Say your Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) is \$5,000. At a college with a total cost of \$8,000, you'd be eligible for up to \$3,000 in financial aid. At a college with a total cost of \$25,000, you'd be eligible for up to \$20,000 in aid. In other words, you'd be contributing the same amount at both colleges.

#### STEP 5

You will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) that lists all the information you provided on the application. Be sure all information is correct; send corrections back to the processor.

#### STEP 6

Your school's financial aid office will receive the results of the FAFSA analysis. If you qualify for aid you will receive an award package detailing the types and amounts of financial aid for which you are eligible.

#### STEP 7

When you receive your financial aid packages, consider your options carefully. When you have made your decision, reply to that school by their deadline. Don't hesitate to call your school's financial aid office if you have questions.

Need-based aid packages may include a combination of three types of financial aid:

Loans: These may be federal, state, or institutional, and interest rates are usually low. Repayment may not start until after graduation depending on whether it is a student loan or a parent loan.

Grants: These are usually gifts or aid in the form of tuition and/or fee reduction.

Work Study: The College will provide the student with a job on campus to earn money to help defray costs. These jobs usually pay better than minimum wage, have limitations on working hours, and require that the student apply and be accepted for a particular work-study placement.

The package may meet all or part of the need as computed by the FAFSA and/or CSS Profile. While most colleges will try to meet a high percentage of your need, the packages from different schools may vary. You will want to consider all your options carefully.

Most of the federal money that is available for higher education assistance is disseminated directly by the college.

Several pointers:

- If you are curious about your level of possible need, you can utilize a need estimator at [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org).
- Apply early. Most aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Keep a copy of every form you complete.

- If there is no way your taxes can be filed right after January 1, you are allowed to send an estimate as long as you can verify those figures, if asked, at a later date.
- Families who cannot qualify for financial aid based on the FAFSA can usually get loans.
- Putting savings in your student's name can affect need. If that is the case in your family; ask your college what happens after the money is spent.

### **Non-Need or Merit-Based Financial Aid**

Scholarships, grants, and financial aid that are non-need based are divided into two major categories: Talent-based Scholarships and Private Scholarship Programs.

Talent - Based Scholarships: These scholarships are usually given by the college as an inducement or reward for demonstrated or proven talents. The most common ones are academic, athletic, and artistic/musical scholarships. You typically have to continue to participate in these areas during college or maintain a certain GPA to keep the scholarship.

Inquiries regarding talent scholarships may go through the respective departments at the college of your choice or the admission office itself. The college's financial aid office can be of help in contacting the appropriate individuals. You will want to receive written confirmation of scholarship awards prior to making a final choice of colleges.

### Private Scholarship Programs

A large number of communities, religious, professional, and ethnic groups sponsor scholarship programs. Some may have special qualification requirements, restrictions on fields of study or particular institutions, and/or requirements that the student or parents be members of a certain group. You should check the eligibility requirements and stipulations carefully.

Most of these scholarships have their own forms and are available from the group offering the scholarship or, in some cases, from the Counseling Office. Deadlines vary a great deal and most are announced and have deadlines early in the calendar year.

*The Boettcher Scholarship* awards Colorado students who meet the following criteria with a full-ride scholarship to any of Colorado's colleges or universities.

Students must:

- ✓ Be seriously interested in attending college in Colorado
- ✓ Rank in the top 5% of the senior class
- ✓ Have a strong community service and leadership record
- ✓ Score 1200 or higher on the SAT; 27 or higher on the ACT

## **Other Ways to Reduce Your College Cost**

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC): ROTC is offered through all four military branches (Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy). Students who are interested in a career in the military after college will take required military science courses, in addition to their regular college courses, and will benefit from scholarships offered by ROTC. Information on all four military branch ROTC programs is available in the Counseling Office.

## **THE FINAL CHAPTER: Making Your Decision**

Senior year tends to fly by pretty quickly, and as the snow starts to melt and the trees start to bud, your acceptance letters will come in the mail. Hopefully, you have several colleges to which you have been accepted. Congratulations!

Here are some final tips to help you make a decision you're happy with:

- ✓ If you haven't visited your college choices yet or need to take a second (or third) look, now is the time to go.
- ✓ Talk again with your parents, and current students and/or recent graduates at the colleges you are considering.
- ✓ Talk with your counselor and teachers and ask what they think of the fit.
- ✓ Discuss financial aid packages to determine affordability.
- ✓ Go back and look at your values and criteria lists to remind you why you applied to these schools in the first place.
- ✓ Then trust your good judgment and make a decision!

May 1st is the Candidate Reply Date. Do not assume that this date is flexible! If you do not commit to a college by that date, you may lose the chance to do so. Typically, committing to a college requires a tuition deposit of \$100 to \$300. You should also complete each form the college sends you, including financial aid forms and documents.

### Navigating the Wait List

If you have been wait listed at a college, you should protect your own interests by ensuring that you have committed to a college by May 1st as the other college may not let you know if you are off the wait list until after that date. If the wait-listed college is truly your first choice, you may want to send a letter to the admission director stating your interest. You may also want to include any new information, such as recent grades, impressive schoolwork, or new recommendations.

### It Ain't Over 'Til It's Over

Now that you've made a decision, don't give in to senioritis! Colleges have been known to withdraw their offers of admission upon receipt of substandard final grades, so don't let up.

But you can take time to congratulate yourself. You were accepted to college, made it through one of the biggest decision-making processes of your life, and are now ready to move on to one of the most fun and exciting phases of your life.

Remember to thank those who supported you throughout the process: parents, teachers, counselor, and friends. And remember to enjoy your last few weeks of high school!

**Colorado Commission on Higher Education  
Index for Public Colleges and Universities in  
Colorado for first time freshmen**

<b>College Name</b>	<b>Index Required</b>
Adams State College*	80
Colorado School of Mines	110
Colorado State University	101
Fort Lewis College	86
Mesa State College*	80
Metropolitan State College	76
University of Colorado- Boulder	103
University of Colorado- Colo Springs	92
University of Northern Colorado	94
University of Southern Colorado	80
Western State College	80

\* Applies to students admitted to four-year programs only.

### **Useful Internet Sites**

Naviance- online tool to help you make a 4 year plan, search for colleges and apply.  
<https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=glenwood>

#### **College Search**

An excellent and complete resource listing and linking to all 2 and 4 year schools in Colorado- including financial and scholarship information.

<http://www.CollegeInColorado.com>

Princeton review is a college search tool with updated information.

<http://princetonreview.com>

Hobsons College Review- careers, college searches, and virtual tours.

<http://www.collegeview.com>

Peterson's college quest- find a college or compare colleges. Essay information.

<http://www.petersons.com>

### **Financial Aid and Scholarship Information**

Free application for federal student aid- complete guidelines and information.

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

Financial Aid information page- the most useful comprehensive info on the web

<http://www.finaid.org>

Free scholarship search when students set up a profile.

<http://www.fastweb.com>

Excellent scholarship resource for all students.

<http://www.wiredscholar.com>

### **Testing Information**

ACT Testing registration and information.

<http://www.act.org>

SAT Testing registration and information.

<http://www.collegeboard.com>

### **Other Information**

NCAA information and clearing house registration

<http://www.ncaa.org>

Western Undergraduate Exchange Program- allow students to enroll with in-state tuition

<http://www.wiche.edu>