

**LET ME HELP!**

Preparing for college and life after high school is an exciting process. Included in this packet are answers and guidelines to frequently asked questions. I hope you will use this as a tool to guide you through the college and scholarship application process. **Familiarize yourself with the websites of the schools you are considering so you know where to find the answers to your questions.** College recruiters, admissions office, and financial aid offices are pleased to answer any specific questions you may have. Always avoid waiting until the last minute to apply for admissions or scholarships. **And finally, keep in mind that YOU, the student, must take charge of this process; your parents will be there to help guide you in your college search, but ultimately this is YOUR responsibility!**

**TAKING THE ACT and SAT**

The ACT and SAT tests are college entrance exams that are an integral part of the admissions process. Your score on these tests will help determine the colleges and scholarships for which you will qualify. Some important things to remember:

* It is recommended that students take the ACT and/or SAT two to three times beginning in the junior year.
* The SAT includes a writing component. The ACT has an optional writing section. Many schools require that students submit at least one ACT score that includes the writing portion.
* Colleges must receive test scores directly from ACT or College Board (SAT). When registering for the test, the cost for sending scores to four schools is included in the test fee. If you need to send the score to additional schools or if you decide to send the scores later, there is a fee. Details about this service are available online.
* Colleges and scholarship programs will give a student the benefit of his/her highest test score. Therefor, you may send multiple scores to the college.
* If you would like to see how your ACT score compares to your SAT score, look online at [www.convertyourscore.org](http://www.convertyourscore.org).
* ACT offers Prep courses online and study materials are available online at the respective websites.
* Register for the ACT at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org). Tests are offered in February, April, June, September, October, and December of each year.
* Register for the SAT at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). Tests are offered in January, March, May, June, October, November, and December of each year.
* Many colleges have a priority deadline of December 1 to be considered for scholarships. So, plan to take the test two to three times prior to December 1 of the senior year.
* If you qualify for test accommodations, see Mr. Dunning.

**WHEN SHOULD I APPLY TO COLLEGES?**

We hope that you have already made some college visits and are choosing the colleges to which you will apply. Be sure to call or email at least a week in advance to schedule appointments for college tours and information sessions. Many colleges will also schedule an appointment for you and your family with an admissions counselor.

Most colleges make applications available in late summer/early fall. **You can continue to take the ACT/SAT after you submit your college application. Updated scores will be added to your admissions file as soon as they are electronically transmitted to the college.**

**Applications** - Applying online is preferred by most colleges and required by many. Some schools may offer the option of downloading the application as a PDF file to print and submit by mail. If you need assistance with your application, see Mr. Dunning.

**Fees** – A few colleges process admissions applications for free. However, for most colleges, an application fee of $25-$60 will be required at the time of application. The amount of the fee depends on the school

**Remember**: You must have your official transcript submitted to the college from AGSD. And most colleges require you to have your ACT or SAT scores sent directly from the testing service. We recommend you check with the Admissions Offices of the colleges to which you are applying to verify that they have received ALL of the documentation required for your admission packet to be considered.

**HOW DO I REQUEST A TEACHER/COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION?**

Give your teachers **at least two weeks notice** when you ask them to complete an admissions recommendation form or to write a scholarship recommendation letter. Give the teachers your request in writing and give the specifics on the purpose of the recommendation. This includes your name, what the recommendation is for, and the deadline. Be sure to provide the teacher with a copy of your resume (see the resume information on page 9) so that the recommendation will emphasize your specific qualities and activities. Provide the teacher with a properly addressed envelope, including the correct postage if it must be mailed. You should request a letter of recommendation *in person* so that necessary details can be discussed (such as address, format of the letter, scholarship requirements, etc). It is not appropriate for a parent to make this request for the student – the student should make the request in person.

**Teachers and counselors will write recommendations in the order they are received. ALLOW A MINIMUM OF TWO WEEKS – 10 Working Days – when you request a recommendation from a counselor or teacher.** Always be mindful of deadlines!

**PROVIDE ACCURATE INFORMATION!**

Some applications require you to provide school details, contact information, counselor or teacher recommender information, etc. Some information you may need is included below.

 **Name of High School:** Tok High School

 PO Box 249

 Tok, Alaska 99780

 **Phone:** (907) 883-5161

 **FAX:** (907) 883-5165

 **College and Career**

 **Counselor:** Mr. Dunning

**HOW DO I FIND MY GPA AND CLASS RANK?**

Your GPA and Class Rank are available from your counselor – some college and scholarship applications require you to report these numbers. Rank and GPA are officially updated in January and again at the end of both junior and senior years.

**WRITING ESSAYS**

Applications for scholarships and selective colleges often require the student to submit an essay. As you are writing the essay, remember that those who will be reading the essay will likely be reading essays from hundreds of other applicants. Pay careful attention to answer the prompt clearly and concisely. Include personal information that will make your writing memorable and will make your application “stand out” from others. After you have completed the first draft of your essay, you may want to make an appointment with an English teacher or the Guidance Counselor to read it and make suggestions for improvements. Again watch your deadlines, allowing them a proper amount of time to review your material.

***Tips and Thoughts For Writing Your Essay***

Never underestimate the importance of your essay. The essay is your opportunity to shine and the only part of the application over which you have total control. Following are some suggestions from a Yale admissions counselor:

1. Sit around and THINK for a while. What is the question 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 one about which you’re more excited than the others.
2. Write about something that is interesting to YOU. It will be easier to write and will have a more natural voice.
3. Be personal. It’s your application, your experiences, your thoughts, interests and personality. The selection committee is trying to get to know you through your own words. Even if a topic is an intellectual one, the school is looking for a personal response.
4. Be reflective. Write in some depth. Use some detail or specifics, not just general (avoid superficial, and easy) statements. Flesh out your thoughts. Ask yourself WHY and HOW as you write, not so much WHAT, WHEN, OR WHERE.

**COLLEGE VISIT DAYS**

**MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR COLLEGE VISIT**

**The spring/summer of the junior year is an excellent time to make college visits.** You may choose to combine campus visits with a summer family vacation. If so, plan to revisit any college you are seriously considering when it is in “full swing” to fully experience its “feel”. You may also plan your visit for one of the visitation or preview days many colleges offer in the fall and spring.

Familiarize yourself with the institution’s website so that you are not wasting time asking questions for which you can easily find answers. Usually there is a “prospective students” or “future students” section of the college’s main website that answers many common questions.

Focus on the broad picture, including such factors as – location, size, admissions selectivity, cost, majors available, and campus life. Contact the admissions office to schedule a tour for yourself and your family. At many colleges, you will also be offered the opportunity to meet with an admissions counselor. When you interview, be prepared to ask questions. The following page includes sample questions that may help guide you.

Your parents may or may not be invited to sit in an interview with you. If they are present, understand that **YOU**, not your parents, will be asked the questions and should be the “take charge person”. Your parents will sit quietly in the background. At the end of the meeting, they may want to ask questions about areas not covered between you and the admissions officer.

**Be sure to remember the following:**

* It will be helpful to take a copy of your transcript with you.
* Take a one-page resume with you listing your activities and accomplishments.
* When you return home, be sure to write a thank you note to the admissions counselor who met with you.
* Always be confident, polite and cooperative.

While you are on campus, try to do the following:

* Talk to students.
* Eat in the cafeteria.
* Visit a dorm (usually this is included in the tour)
* Talk to someone in the department you are considering as a major.
* Pick up a copy of the school newspaper.
* Ask if you may attend a class.
* Visit the bookstore and read bulletin boards.
* Many schools will offer to arrange for you to spend a night in a dorm with a student host.

**SAMPLE COLLEGE VISIT QUESTIONS**

**Admissions:**

1. What are the specific admissions requirements – ACT/SAT scores, GPA, etc.? (Plan to take a copy of your transcript with you to the meeting.)
2. When is the application deadline?
3. What forms are necessary to complete the application process?
4. What fees are associated with the application? What fees are required after I am accepted (housing deposit, tuition deposit, etc.)?
5. When can I expect a response as to whether I have been accepted?

**Scholarships:**

1. What academic scholarships are available? What ACT/SAT score and/or GPA is required to qualify?
2. How do I apply for these scholarships – is there a specific paperwork that must be filed, or will I be automatically considered once I have been accepted for admission?
3. What other specific scholarships are available – within my major, foundation scholarships, leadership, Alaska resident, etc?
4. What are the specifics of any scholarships that have been offered? (Example: If full tuition is offered, how many class hours are covered? Is the scholarship renewable? Is there a certain GPA that must be maintained in order to renew the scholarship in future years?)

**Housing:**

1. When do I need to apply for student housing?
2. What is the amount of the housing deposit? What amount is refundable if I choose to attend a different college or choose a different type of housing (apartment, etc.)?
3. Is space limited?
4. What is the cost per year for housing? Does the charge differ from dorm to dorm?
5. Is there a requirement for students to live on campus/in dorms? If so, until which year?
6. What is the probability that I will be placed in the specific housing for which I have applied?
7. What meal plans are available or required? What are the costs of the meal plans?

**Credit for courses taken in high school:**

1. Are there placement tests to determine which math/science/English course level I will enter? When are these tests administered?
2. What AP credits are accepted?
3. How many credits are accepted and for which courses?
4. What score must be earned on the AP test in order to earn college credit?

**Curriculum questions:**

1. What accredited degrees does your college offer in the area of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
2. May I have a list of specific coursework required to earn a degree in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?
3. Is a catalogue available in print form or are the course offerings posted online?
4. How long does it normally take a student to complete this degree?
5. Are any required courses offered on the web or are they all taught in a classroom setting?
6. What is the average class size for the courses I will be taking?
7. What is the percentage of classes taught by Graduate Assistants vs. full Professors?
8. What is the job outlook for this major?
9. Are there opportunities for internships, co-op, etc, in this academic program?
10. How do you assist students in finding employment after college?
11. Can I set up a time to visit a class-in-session?

**Miscellaneous:**

1. What is the parking situation? Is there a map showing available parking?
2. Are freshmen allowed to have cars on campus?
3. Do buses/transit systems run from different parts of the city through campus? If so, what is the cost? Is there a map of the bus route and hours?
4. What types of student support services are available? Tutoring, Counseling, Career advising, etc? Free or cost involved?
5. What is the retention rate of students from freshman to sophomore years?
6. What is the campus policy related to school wide emergency situations?
7. What security measures are taken within the dorms, classrooms, etc?

**THE PURPOSE OF THE SENIOR RECOMMENDATION PACKET**

During the senior year, many students need counselor recommendation letters for scholarships and/or school report forms required by private colleges and highly competitive universities. If an application requires a School Report or Counselor Recommendation, either the College and Career Counselor is available to write recommendation letters and complete required forms. In order to give colleges and scholarship committees a complete, well-balanced picture of you, we have included several forms in this packet. You are responsible for having them returned to Mr. Dunning. ***Letters of recommendation will only be written when a complete packet is on file.*** I will accept the information at any time prior to writing a recommendation letter; however, it is recommended that the forms in this packet be returned to Mr. Dunning by September 15.

1. **RESUME –** Please include a resume listing activities in which you have been involved during high school. There is no particular format required. Include information related to school clubs and activities, volunteer work, paid employment, etc. A sample resume is attached.
2. **v**about your strengths, goals, values and meaningful experiences. (Form attached.)
3. **PARENT INSIGHT –** Your parents often tell us things we do not know about your personal interests, special family situations, and character. They can return the Partner Insight page directly to Mr. Dunning or you can deliver them to Mr. Dunning yourself. (Form attached.)
4. **PEER COMMENTS –** Choose a friend who knows you well and can also be objective about your strengths and weaknesses. The friend should give the Peer Comment form directly to Mr. Dunning (Form attached.)
5. **TWO TEACHER COMMENT PAGES –** Ask two teachers who know you well to complete these comment forms and return them to Mr. Dunning. This sheet is an informal style designed to provide a picture of your academic strengths and work ethic. **DO NOT confuse this form with a college admissions teacher recommendation form or a scholarship recommendation letter.**  (Form attached.)

**PARENT INSIGHT**

**Student Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parent Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**We would appreciate you providing us with observations about your child’s experiences outside of the school environment. Parent comments often reveal a side of the student that is not known.**

**Please type or write legibly and return this completed form to Mr. Dunning.**

1. **List three adjectives that best describe your child and briefly explain why.**

**1)**

**2)**

**3)**

1. **Describe a specific incident from your child’s high school years that has made you very proud of him or her.**

**3. Please feel free to use the back of this paper to discuss any special circumstances that you feel may present a difficulty for your child in the admissions process. Also, we would like to know about any special experiences which would make your child especially interesting to an admissions committee, living in a foreign country, participating in an unusual activity, etc.**

**TEACHER COMMENTS**

**Student Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Input from teachers is very important! Please answer the following questions, keeping in mind that your statements may be quoted or paraphrased in a counselor recommendation. Thank you for making time in your busy schedule to complete this. *Return this form to Mr. Dunning.***

1. **How long have you known this student and in what context?**

**2. What are three adjectives that describe this student?**

1. **Describe a specific incident related to this student that demonstrates his/her special strengths, character or academic potential.**
2. **How would you rate this student in the following areas?**

**Leadership Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**Dependability Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**Reaction to constructive criticism Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**Respect accorded by peers Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**Works well with others Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**Independence Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**Initiative Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**Creativity Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**5. Additional Comments:**

**TEACHER COMMENTS**

**Student Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Works well with others Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**Independence Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**Initiative Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**Creativity Poor Average Good Excellent Not Observed**

**5. Additional Comments:**