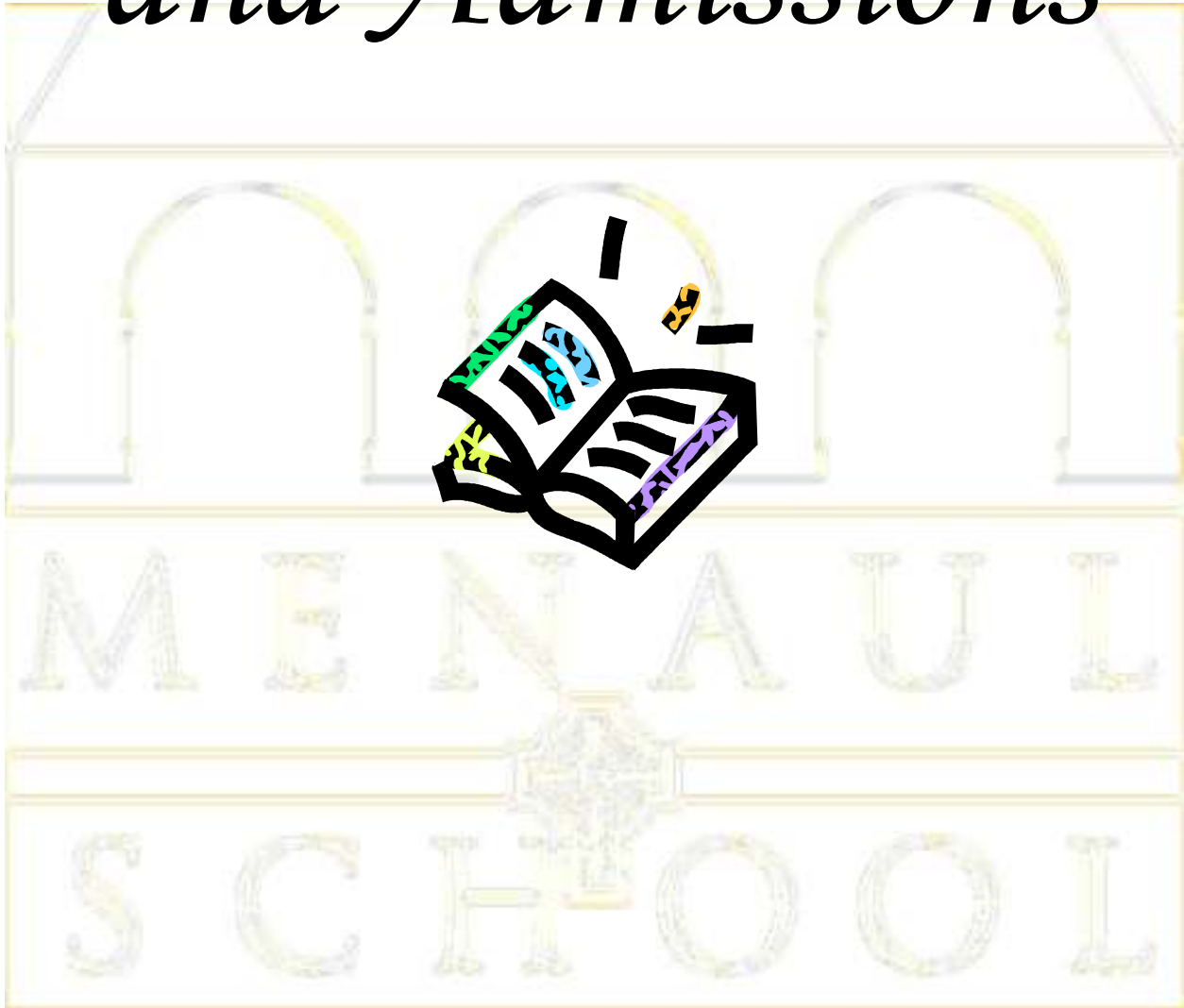
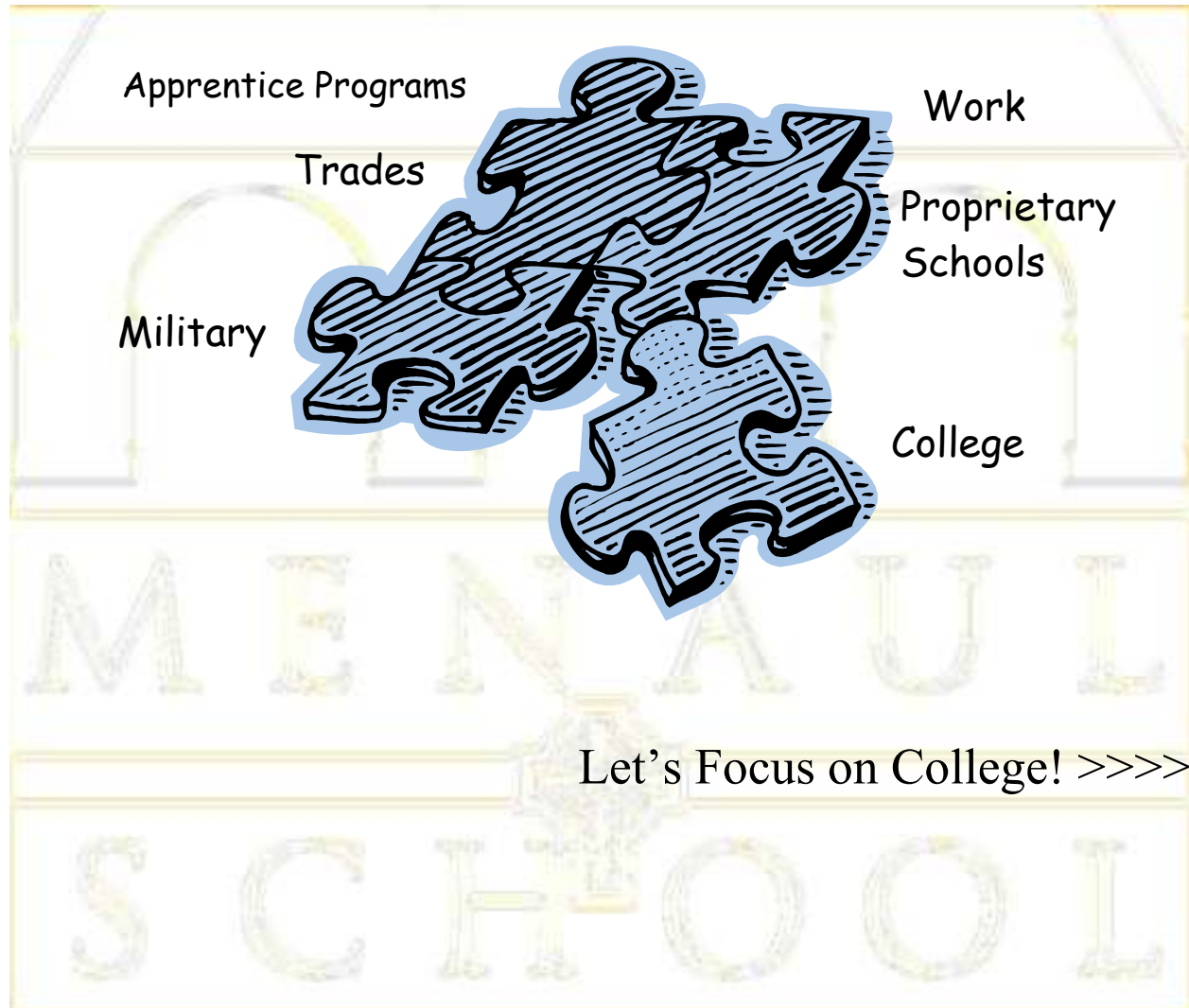


College Search and Admissions



This document is a result of Maria Cordova Andrews and Debbie Garbers hard work. It is for the use of the students and parents of Menaul School. Anyone else who would like to use the information contained in this document please contact Ms. Cordova Andrews at Menaul School. Thank you.

What are your options after high school?



College Search and Admissions Checklists

Junior Year Checklist

- Keep meeting with your college/career counselor at least once a year
- Continue to take and plan challenging courses
- Keep your grades up
- Join an academic club
- Register for ACT Assessment[®]. You should be academically ready to take it by Spring. If not, take it early in your senior year.
- Read key information about the ACT test at <http://www.act.org/path/student/college/tests.html>
- Talk with your parents and high school counselor about colleges that interest you
- Prepare a list of questions to ask on campus visits (see suggestions on the following pages)
- Continue to visit colleges and talk with college students
- List, compare, and visit colleges
- Compare college costs (use the College Cost Comparison Worksheet in this section)
- Start or update an academic resume (see the last section in this notebook)
- Consider putting together a portfolio that highlights your special skills & talents (see the last section in this notebook)
- Fill out the college comparison worksheet (in this section)
- Check into applying to colleges online
- Investigate scholarship opportunities (see the second section in this notebook)
- Volunteer for activities and clubs related to career interests
- Use your Junior Internship to investigate a profession that interests you

Senior Year Checklist

August

- ❑ Register for the ACT Assessment[®] (if you didn't take it as a junior, or if you aren't satisfied with your score)
- ❑ Review ACT test results & retest if necessary

- ❑ Start the financial aid application process (see the second section in this notebook)
- ❑ See your school counselor for help finding financial aid and scholarships

August – December

- ❑ Visit with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements
- ❑ Consider taking courses at a local university or community college
- ❑ Keep working hard all year; second semester grades can affect scholarship eligibility
- ❑ Ask for personal references from teachers, school counselors, or employers **early in the year or at least two weeks before application deadlines**. Follow your school's procedure for requesting recommendations.
- ❑ Visit with admissions counselors who come to your high school
- ❑ Attend a college fair
- ❑ Begin your college essay(s) (see last section in this notebook)
- ❑ Apply for admission at the colleges you've chosen
- ❑ Avoid common college application mistakes (see “Tips for Preparing Applications that are Tops” at the end of this section)
- ❑ Find out if you qualify for scholarships at each college you have applied to

January – May

- ❑ If you need it, get help completing the FAFSA
- ❑ Ask your guidance office in January to send first semester transcripts to schools where you applied. In May, they will need to send final transcripts to the college you will attend.
- ❑ Visit colleges that have invited you to enroll
- ❑ Decide which college to attend, and notify the school of your decision
- ❑ Keep track of and observe deadlines for sending in all required fees and paperwork (see the second section in this notebook)
- ❑ Notify schools you will not attend of your decision
- ❑ Continue to look for scholarship opportunities
- ❑ Keep track of important financial aid and scholarship deadlines (see the second section in this notebook)
- ❑ Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR) – it should arrive four weeks after the FAFSA is filed
- ❑ Compare financial aid packages from different schools
- ❑ Sign and send in a promissory note if you are borrowing money
- ❑ Notify your college about any outside scholarships you receive

Choosing a College

Although sometimes college may seem a long way off, it is never too early to start thinking about your college choice. The college you choose will have a tremendous impact on your life, not only while you are a student, but long after you graduate. In addition to the benefits of the education you receive, your college's alumni will be a part of *your* reputation and a network of personal and professional contacts which will support you.

While your college choice is not irrevocable, making the best choice requires much time, energy and effort. The checklist below is provided to help you plan your college search:

1

THINK about your priorities and write them down.

TALK to your counselor, teachers, parents, friends, and alumni of various colleges. You may even approach people you don't know, but who have information on schools that might meet your needs.

2

READ everything you can get your hands on! Start with general college guides. Also use videotapes if they are available locally. Then write to the colleges that interest you and ask for general information, along with information on your special interests (see letter in this section).

3

LIST the colleges which interest you the most. The schools you list should vary in terms of selectivity and should include at least one "back-up" school where you know you will be accepted (your college counselor may be especially helpful here).

4

VISIT the colleges on your list. Spend as much time as you can on campus and talk to students, faculty and admissions officers. Even stay overnight if you have time and know someone there or if the college's admissions office provides the service. Ask candid questions about what it is like to be a student at the college.

5

APPLY to several colleges in your senior year. Check the admissions and financial aid application deadlines to be sure you meet them—it is your responsibility to be sure all of the application parts arrive on time. If you have a clear first choice, you may want to consider an early decision or early notification option. If not, apply to a range of colleges—again, include at least one college where you are sure to be admitted.

6

RE-EVALUATE your college selection criteria while you wait to receive your decisions.

7

DECIDE which college you will attend. Ask others for last-minute advice or visit again if you like. But remember—it is your decision!

8

College Cost Comparison Worksheet

Budget item	<i>(1st school)</i>	<i>(2nd school)</i>	<i>(3rd school)</i>	<i>(4th school)</i>
Tuition and Fees	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Books and Supplies	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Room and Board	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Transportation	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Miscellaneous	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total Cost	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

Financial Aid	<i>(1st school)</i>	<i>(2nd school)</i>	<i>(3rd school)</i>	<i>(4th school)</i>
Scholarships	- \$ _____	- \$ _____	- \$ _____	- \$ _____
Grants	- \$ _____	- \$ _____	- \$ _____	- \$ _____
Tuition Waivers	- \$ _____	- \$ _____	- \$ _____	- \$ _____
Work Study Offers	- \$ _____	- \$ _____	- \$ _____	- \$ _____

Net Cost Without Debt	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Loan Offers	- \$ _____	- \$ _____	- \$ _____	- \$ _____
Net Cost With Debt	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

Identifying Important Factors in Choosing a College

In choosing a college, the first things you'll probably consider will be the **type of academic program** and the **availability of the major—or majors—you are most interested in.**

Here are some other things to think about as you compare colleges. How you rank these other factors will depend largely on your personal preferences and needs.

LOCATION

- distance from home

ENVIRONMENT

- type of school (2-year or 4-year)
- school setting (urban, rural)
- location & size of nearest city
- co-ed, male, female
- religious affiliation

SIZE

- enrollment
- physical size of campus

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- deadline(s)
- tests required
- average test scores, GPA, rank
- special requirements

ACADEMICS

- majors offered
- special requirements
- accreditation—recognized by regional or national accrediting bodies as meeting its objectives
- student-faculty ratio
- typical class size

COLLEGE EXPENSES

- tuition, room & board
- estimated total budget
- application fee, deposits

FINANCIAL AID

- deadline(s)
- required forms
- % of student population receiving aid
- scholarships
- part-time employment opportunities

HOUSING

- residence hall requirements
- availability
- types and sizes
- food plans

FACILITIES

- academic
- recreational
- other

ACTIVITIES

- clubs, organizations
- sororities/fraternities
- athletics, intramurals
- other

CAMPUS VISITS

- when to visit
- special opportunities

College Information Sample Letter

Your Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Office of Admissions
Name of College
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a student at _____ High School and will graduate
In (month) , 20 .

Please send me an application for admission and information about your college - a
general information bulletin, college costs, and program descriptions. I am
considering _____ as my major field of study.

My parents and I also want to investigate all possible sources of financial aid.
Please send us an application form, instructions about application procedures
(how and when to apply), and any other information that might be helpful.

I am interested in visiting your campus, taking a campus tour, and meeting with
an admissions counselor. I would also like to meet with an advisor in the
 (major) department, if possible. Please advise me of a time on
 (month/date) that would be convenient.

Thank You,

Sincerely,

(Your Signature)

Name

How to Get the Most Out of Your Campus Visit

Now that you have sent away for information and received all kinds of materials which describe the colleges, do you find yourself confused? Do you wonder if they are just showing you the “good side of those beautiful, ivy-covered buildings? Does that professor, the one who looks so expressive as he explains a theory, really know what he is talking about? And why are those student’s smiling? Are they really happy with the college or are they just posing for the picture? The best way to find answers to these questions is to visit the campus.

Before the Visit

1. Plan the visit in advance. At some point you should try to visit the campus when school is in session. You can get a better idea of what a college is like if you visit when students and faculty are there. You may want to plan to schedule your visit around a special event such as a lecture, a concert, a game. But regardless of when you visit, you should try to:

- talk to an admissions counselor
- take a tour of campus
- attend classes
- meet with a professor in an academic area that interests you
- eat a meal in the dining hall
- talk to a coach or a hall advisor
- stay overnight in a campus living unit if you have time and it’s possible

- You should spend as much time as you can at the college, at least half a day.
2. Contact the school at least one to two weeks in advance. (The most selective colleges may require far more lead time for an interview with an admissions officer.) The colleges admissions office can arrange for you to talk to an admissions counselor and take a campus tour. Many admissions offices also are willing to set up housing, classes or other appointments you have planned. Some make overnight arrangements with their students.
 3. Read the college’s catalogues and brochures.
 4. Prepare a list of questions (see next page). This may sound like a lot of work, but remember – you are visiting to find out as much as you can about the school. You may want to ask general questions as well as questions which are specific to the school.
 5. If possible, bring your high school transcripts and know your PSAT, SAT or ACT scores. There may be things you wish to bring with you, such as a portfolio or an instrument for an audition.
 6. Bring your parents. Parents often have questions of their own and may want to visit with you. Remember, they care about you and have an interest in what you do.

Questions to Ask on a Campus Visit

Write Your Additional Questions Here:

1. What activities and services are available to help students get settled (academically and socially) during their first year?
2. How big are the classes?
3. (Ask students) How easy is it to meet with faculty?
4. (Ask students) Are you able to register for the classes you want?
5. What is the total cost of attending the college?
6. What types of financial aid does the college offer and how do I apply?
7. Are all freshmen assigned to an academic advisor?
8. Where do most freshmen live?
9. Can I take a tour?
10. What activities are available for students?
11. Who teaches the courses for first-year students?
12. How successful are the college's graduates in finding jobs?
13. What services (such as transportation and shopping) are available locally?
14. What is there to do on weekends? Do most students stay or leave campus on weekends?

Register for and take the College Admissions Test

Many colleges require or recommend that students submit test results as part of the admission application process. The ACT Assessment[®] is one of two national testing programs.

The ACT Assessment includes tests in four subject areas—English, mathematics, reading, and science. The tests measure students' current levels of educational development in these subjects.

Most colleges and universities in the United States accept ACT test scores as part of their application process.

Registration Tips

- ❑ Plan ahead and allow time to register for the exam.
- ❑ The earlier you take the test, the more chances you will have to retake it if your first scores aren't as high as you would like them to be.
- ❑ Registration deadlines are typically four weeks before the exam date. There are six national test dates each year at test centers throughout the United States.
- ❑ International testing is available.
- ❑ Registration packets are available at most high school guidance offices and college admissions offices.
- ❑ Online registration is available.

Test Preparation

Taking a solid academic program in high school is the best test-preparation strategy. Becoming familiar with the test will also help. Try reviewing ACT test-taking strategies and working through sample questions. If you plan to use a calculator during the mathematics section, know ACT's calculator guidelines, and don't forget to bring your calculator on the test day.

Preparing for the Test Day

- ✓ Be confident in your ability to do well
- ✓ Be prepared to work hard
- ✓ Know what to expect on the test day
- ✓ Prepare well in advance
- ✓ Get plenty of rest the night before the test
- ✓ Arrive promptly at 8:00 a.m.
- ✓ Dress for temperature variations at the test site
- ✓ Take these items to the test center: photo identification, your test center admission ticket or mailgram, three sharpened soft-lead (No. 2) pencils with erasers, wrist watch (no calculator or alarm functions allowed)

General Test-Taking Strategies

- ✓ Pace yourself
- ✓ Read the directions for each test carefully
- ✓ Read each question carefully
- ✓ Answer the easy questions first
- ✓ Use logic for more difficult questions
- ✓ Review your work
- ✓ Answer every question...no penalty for guessing

Get into the ACT: Information Sheet to Help You Prepare

ACT English Test

75 Items, 45 Minutes

Tips:

- Pace yourself
- Be aware of the writing style used in the passages
- Examine the underlined portions of the passage
- Be aware of questions with no underlined portions
- Note the differences in the answer choices
- Determine the best answer
- Reread the sentence using your selected answer

Content covered:

- Punctuation (13%)
- Grammar and Usage (16%)
- Sentence Structure (24%)
- Strategy (16%)
- Organization (15%)
- Style (16%)

ACT Reading Test

40 Items, 35 Minutes

Tips:

- Pace yourself
- Read the passage carefully
- Refer to the passage when answering the questions

Types of reading selections:

- Social Studies (25%)
- Natural Sciences (25%)
- Prose Fiction (25%)
- Humanities (25%)

ACT Mathematics Test

60 Items, 60 Minutes

Tips:

- Pace yourself
- Solve the problem
- Locate your solution among the answer choices
- Make sure you answer the question
- Make sure your answer is reasonable
- Check your work

Content covered:

- Pre-Algebra & Elementary Algebra (40%)
- Intermediate Algebra & Coordinate Geometry (30%)
- Plane Geometry (23%)
- Trigonometry (7%)

ACT Science Reasoning Test

40 Items, 35 Minutes

Tips:

- Pace yourself
- Read the passage carefully
- Note different viewpoints in passages

Content drawn from:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Physical Sciences

Scientific information presented in three formats:

- Data representation (38%)
- Research summaries (45%)
- Conflicting viewpoints (17%)

Preparing for College Academics in High School

Your not thinking about college yet, are you? Most of your friends aren't either. However, if you think you are college bound someday, academic planning NOW is imperative. Your high school years are the foundation for success in college. Unfortunately, some foundations contain structural weaknesses that become apparent your senior year and eliminate potential college choices. This guide outlines important academic planning issues that will not only ensure a dynamic high school career, but good preparation for college as well.

In this section:

- ❑ Plan your high school courses wisely
- ❑ Make the most of high school
- ❑ The GPA myth
- ❑ Strengthen your academic skills
- ❑ Senior year—no time to slump
- ❑ Useful Websites

Plan Your High School Course Selections

Colleges care about which courses you're taking in high school.

The courses you take in high school show colleges what kind of goals you set for yourself. Are you signing up for advanced classes, honors sections, or accelerated sequences? Are you choosing *electives* that really stretch your mind and help you develop new abilities? Or are you doing just enough to get by?

Colleges will be more impressed by respectable grades in challenging courses than by outstanding grades in easy ones.

Do your high school course selections match what most colleges expect you to know? For example, many colleges require two to four years of foreign language study. Successful completion of the courses in the chart below are commonly expected of prospective students. Of course, each college and university may have different high school course requirements. Be sure to check with the colleges you're interested in to see what they recommend or require.

High School Courses Recommended for College

English	Four or more years (grammar, composition, literature, etc.)
Mathematics	Three or more years (Algebra I and higher—does not include general math, business math, or consumer math)
Natural Sciences	Three or more years (earth science, biology, chemistry, physics, etc.)
Social Sciences	Three or more years (history, economics, geography, civics, psychology, etc.)
Additional Courses	Some colleges and universities require other classes as prerequisites for admission, such as two or more years of the same foreign language or courses in the visual arts, music, theater, drama, dance, computer science, etc.

**Specific high school course requirements vary from institution to institution. Be sure to check with the schools you're interested in to see what they recommend or require.*

Make the Most of High School

- ❑ Take classes recommended for college preparation.
- ❑ Talk to your counselor.
- ❑ Use testing information. Examine your scores and take extra courses or get tutoring assistance for weaker academic areas.
- ❑ Establish goals for each school year. Talk to your counselor about what you should be doing in light of your college and career plans.
- ❑ Explore careers through research and experiences. Use a career counseling program and job shadow or do internships in careers you are interested in pursuing.
- ❑ Surf the Internet for information on education and career planning.
- ❑ Take a college entrance exam during your junior year.
- ❑ Never stop learning. Education is a lifelong pursuit.

The GPA Myth

"It doesn't matter which classes I take in high school, as long as my grade point average is high."

If you're playing the GPA game and taking a light schedule that isn't challenging, it will catch up with you at the college level very quickly. One of the things admissions officers pay attention to, besides GPA, is course selection throughout high school and especially senior year. They like to see students have momentum going into the freshman year. If you sit back your senior year, it's hard to recapture that momentum. Course selection can also affect admissions test scores. If you just go for a good GPA, you'll be less prepared for college and will score lower on entrance exams.

Strengthen Your Academic Skills

If you think your skills aren't quite up to speed for college, don't give up. Take time to prepare yourself. There are many ways to get a college degree. You just have to take the path that's right for you.

ACT offers these tips:

- ❑ Take a summer or night school class.
- ❑ Use test score information to see where you need work. Score information from the ACT, for example, can tell you what subjects you need help with and what you can do to raise your skills to the next level. Remember, a low score doesn't necessarily mean you're bad in a subject. It just means you haven't learned the subject yet.
- ❑ Work with a tutor to learn what you don't know yet.
- ❑ Check out study aids—books, videotapes, audiotapes and computer programs—at your public library or a local bookstore.
- ❑ Ask your counselor or a teacher about ways you can build your academic skills.

Senior Year—No Time to Slump

Once you have a college offer in hand, you may get the urge to coast through the rest of the school year. Maybe you already have decided to slack off. It's your senior year and you deserve it, right?

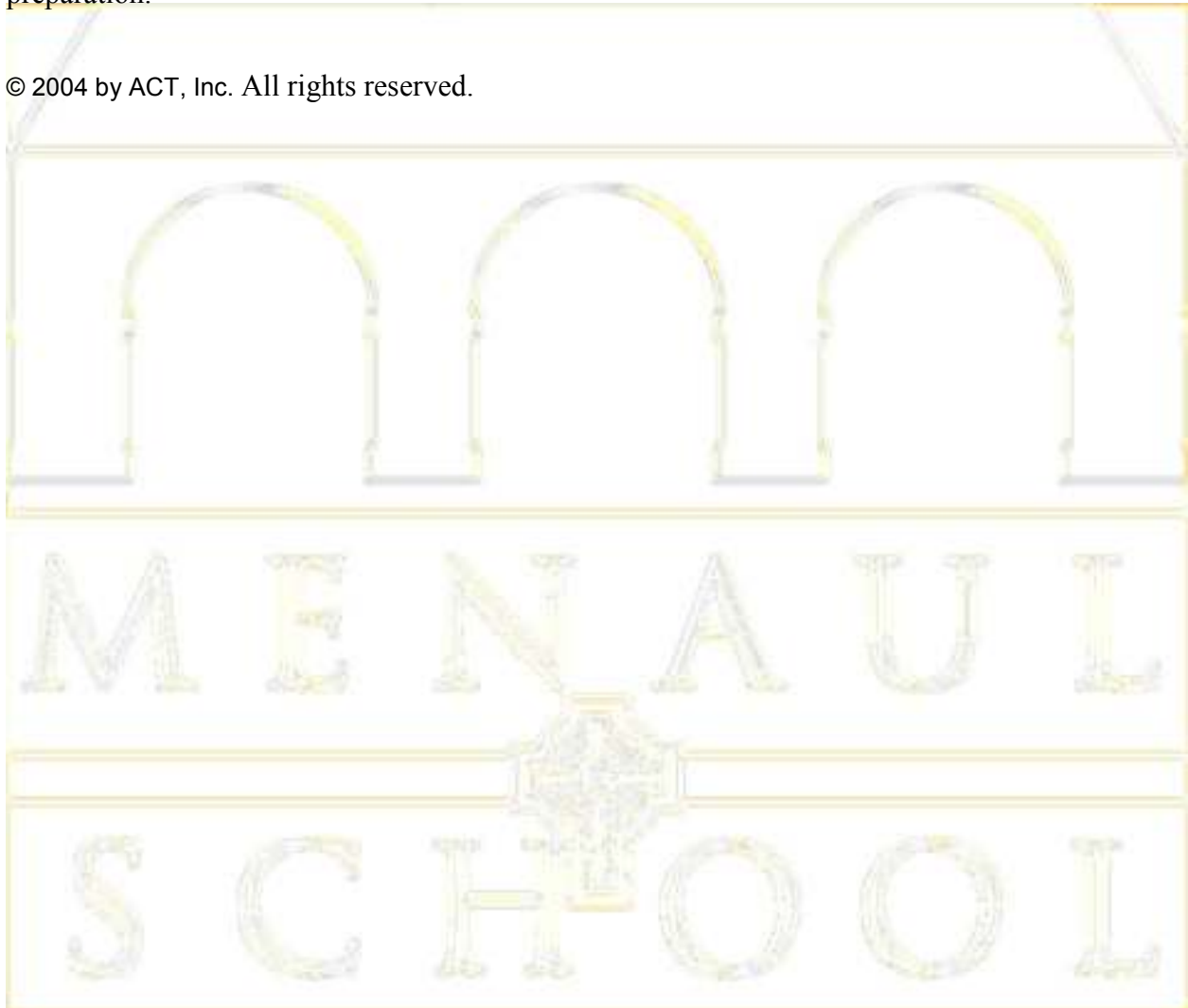
Before you give in to senior slump, you should know that the college may be watching you.

Colleges, especially selective universities, have been known to withdraw offers of admission to students who drop college prep classes or begin earning uncharacteristically low grades. If you haven't slumped too far, colleges might send you a warning letter and

add certain stipulations to your admission, such as requiring a 2.0 grade point average during the first year of college.

Taking an extended breather during your senior year can make your freshman year in college difficult. So have fun your senior year, but don't give up on your college preparation.

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The Admissions Decision-Making Process

The student's high school record usually is the most important academic consideration. Several things are often reviewed.

Admissions committees often consider a variety of other factors which include the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Program of study: the type of courses taken, the number of courses taken each semester, the level of courses (regular, accelerated, AP). | • SAT/ACT/ACH results |
| 2. Trends over the years: the number of courses per year, the grade pattern: an upward trend in grades will be noticed; unfortunately, so will a downward trend. | • Special pre-college or college-level study |
| 3. Necessary coursework for particular programs of interest (e.g., if you plan to pursue nursing, have you taken biology and chemistry?). | • Admissions application essay(s): content, style and structure |
| 4. Senior schedule: Take challenging academic classes during your senior year.. Colleges may interpret a weak senior schedule as a lack of interest or motivation. | • Unusual achievements, academic and otherwise |
| 5. Availability of courses at the high school– some schools are large enough to offer many advanced classes; smaller schools offer few special courses. | • Special talents/leadership experience or potential |
| 6. Academic strength of the high school. | • Activities and responsibilities outside the classroom – at the school or in the community |
| 7. A rank in class or grade point average. | • Admissions interview report |
| 8. Extenuating circumstances that may have affected grades (e.g.: extended illness, a change in schools, personal problems). | • Counselor or teacher recommendation |
| | • Other recommendations |
| | • Past success of students from the same school |
| | • Other applicants from the same school |
| | • Early decision or regular decision: Student's degree of expressed interest |
| | • Family ties to the college |
| | • Timing: has the application deadline been met? |
| | • Overall appearance of the complete application |

Research indicates that most schools place more emphasis on the transcript than on any other admissions criterion. Lets take a look at the high school transcript.

1. Classes

As a general rule, a good college prep schedule consists of at least the following:

- English, 4 years
- Math, 3 years
- Foreign Languages, 2 years
- Science, 3 years (2 lab sciences)
- Social Studies, 3 years

2. Trends

Because students develop study skills and mature at different rates, many transcripts reflect grade trends. A grade trend is an improvement or decline in the types and rigor of the courses taken or on the grades received over time. Admissions Committees like upward trends. This means that the junior year and the first semester of the senior year are particularly influential in establishing your chance of admission.

3. Senior Schedule

Your senior year is the last time you will be in a formal classroom situation prior to college. Use this time wisely! Admissions Committees view the senior schedule and grades as evidence of perseverance and intellectual interest – a necessity for college work. Don't take your senior year off academically!

4. Honors and Advanced Placement Classes

Take risks...within reason, of course. Most colleges prefer to see honors and advanced classes, even if sometimes they come at the expense of slightly lower grades. Risk-taking suggests intellectual curiosity. In addition, Advanced Placement tests may be used for college credit or college placement.

5. Classes/Rank Grade Point Average (GPA)

Class rank does offer admissions committees a standard to compare one member of the class to another, although the calculation of this figure is not necessarily consistent among different schools.

The grade point average differs from the class rank in that the former does not address the student's standing relative to his/her classmates, nor does it reflect differing grading scales or the inflation of the average due to non-academic courses.

6. The High School Profile

Admissions offices usually have extensive high school files that are used to establish the background of each applicant and his or her high school. For example, the percentage of students going on to college is a good indicator of the level of competition a student has faced in the classroom. The bottom line is...have you taken advantage of the opportunities available to you?

7. Classes for College Credit

There are as many different policies for college credit as there are colleges. Any advanced education is commendable, but credit transfer may not be automatic. For your benefit, contact the colleges to which you are applying when the time comes.

8. Non-Academic Electives

Skill-related electives are the spice of any high school curriculum and add breadth. However, like any good spice, they should not overwhelm the main course, particularly at the expense of good college prep classes.

A Word About Test Scores

While test scores may or may not be the deciding factor, they are the only common denominator shared by students nationally. Solid high school course work should be

sufficient preparation for either the SAT or the ACT. Relax and do your personal best. Retaking the tests is common, so if you don't do particularly well the first time, try again.

Following are three sample transcripts that illustrate these points.

Sample High School Record A

Secondary School Record			
Bob Smith			
SAT 460v 590m ACT 24 GPA 2.935			
	Subjects	1 st	2 nd
1	9 English 9	B	B
	Algebra I	C	D
	Social Studies	B	B
	General Science	C	B
	Industrial Art	B	C
2	10 English 10	B	B
	Geometry	C	C
	Home Economics	B	B
	Health	C	B
	Draw/Paint	A	B
	Work	P	P
3	11 English 11	B	B
	French I	A	B
	Economics	B	B
	Biology	B	A
	Algebra II	B	B
	App Comp	A	B
3	12 English 12 AP	B	
	French II	A	
	Chemistry	A	
	American Government	B	
	Trigonometry	B	
	Comp Prog	B	

1. Bob took a minimal number of academic courses during his 9th and 10th grade years. If he wants to go on to college, as opposed to technical or vocational school, he may need to concentrate on academic classes during his 11th and 12 grades.

2. Not having studied a language during his first two years, Bob is just beginning to fulfill this requirement during his junior year.

3. Bob's improving grades and more challenging courses (upward trends) illustrate his increased interest in his schoolwork and his academic future. His English grades improved enough during his junior year to qualify him for Advanced Placement (AP) level work in his senior year.

Bob was lucky that he changed his direction when he did. By doing so, he has proven that he is a capable student. However, by not proving this sooner, he may have damaged his chances of being accepted at a very selective school.

Read on for more samples>>>

Sample High School Record B

	Secondary School Record			1
	Karen Martinez			
	% going on to college 65%		Rank 35/528	
2	SAT 530v	650m	ACT 23	GPA 3.549
	Subjects	1 st	2 nd	
9	English 9	A	B	
	Geometry	A	A	
	Spanish I	B	A	
	Western Civ	A	A	
	Biology	A	A	
	Physical Education	B	A	
	SW Crafts	B	B	
10	English 10 (Honors)	C	A	
	Algebra II	B	A	
	Chemistry	B	A	
	U.S. History	5	B	
	Spanish II	C	A	
	Physical Education	B	B	
	Jewelry	B	A	
3	English 11 (Honors)	C	A	
	Math Analysis	A	A	
	Physics	A	A	
	American Government	A	B	
	Spanish III	A	A	
	App Comp	A	A	
	Draw/Paint	B	A	
4	English 12 AP	B		
	Calculus	A		
	Forensics	A		
	Spanish IV	A		
	Psychology	A		
	Health/Well	A		

1. Rank is not “weighted” when advanced courses are taken. This means that had Karen not taken advanced courses, her rank might be higher. Many admissions committees will take this into consideration to be sure that the student will not be penalized for taking a challenging schedule.

2. Taking both the SAT and the ACT is a good idea if the schools in which you are interested will accept either. Some student’s will perform better on one test then they will on the other. Karen’s score on the SAT is much more consistent with her grades in school than her ACT score.

3. Take advantage of science and math courses offered at your school. The opportunity to take a second year of biology would coincide with an interest in any science or health related field.

4. Honors and advanced placement (AP) courses make Karen’s schedule increasingly difficult each year. If a student earns competitive scores on the AP examinations, they may earn college credit.

5. Karen’s grades during the first semester of her sophomore year are considerably lower than the remainder of her record. In this case, there may be extenuating circumstances which may have contributed to her struggle. Problems such as an illness or a death in the family should be brought to the attention of the admissions committee if it appears that they have affected classroom performance.

Read on for more samples>>>

Sample High School Record C

	Secondary School Record		
	Jonathan Tyler	2	
	% going on to college 90%	Rank 25/45	
1	SAT 670v 750m ACT 32 GPA 2.130		
	Subjects	1 st	2 nd
9	English 9	C	C
	Math 9	C	D
	Social Studies	B	B
	Physical Education	B	B
	Band	C	C
10	English 10	D	C
	Geometry	D	D
	Biology	D	C
	U.S. History	C	C
	Spanish I	C	B
	Physical Education	P	P
11	English 11	C	C
	Trigonometry	C	C
	Chemistry	C	C
	American Government	B	B
	Spanish II	B	B
	Physical Education	P	P
12	English 12	B	
	Pre-Calculus	C	
	Physics	C	
	Spanish IV	C	
	Psychology	C	
	Health/Well	B	

1. Jonathan's standardized test scores suggest he has a very high ability, certainly greater than the grades he received may suggest. Jonathan has been very involved in his high school and community activities. Perhaps he has sacrificed good grades in order to maintain his other interests.

2. The high percentage of students from Jonathan's high school who are going on to four year colleges, suggests that the environment at his school is competitive. This is information that many admissions committees will consider during the application process. This may work to Jonathan's advantage.

3. Despite all of the factors in Jonathan's favor, most college admissions committees will struggle with an obvious gap between his ability and his performance. Those schools whose application pools consist of many high ability applicants would be more likely to accept those who have higher achievements, not Jonathan.

The Vocabulary of College Admission

This is a brief guide to the vocabulary of college admission.

Decision Dictionary:

Early Action* is used primarily in highly selective colleges. Under Early Action, you follow an accelerated application process and apply by November 1. You will be notified of a decision by mid-December, but, if you are accepted, you do not have to let the institution know your decision until May 1.

Early Decision* is an admission plan offered to well-qualified applicants who are definitely committed to their choice of college. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance or refusal by Dec. 1.

Acceptance under Early Decision requires you to withdraw applications at other colleges.

IMPORTANT! – Because there are various and specific requirements for the Early Action and Early Decision plans, it is important that you read the literature of those colleges carefully and ask questions of your high school counselor and/or the college admission representatives if you do not understand.

Open Admission is the admission policy of accepting students without regard to the criteria of rank, grade point average, and test scores.

Regular Admission is the application process that requires application materials to be submitted no later than the specified deadline date printed in the college catalogue or on the application form. Admission responses are usually received from March 15 to April 15.

Rolling Admissions is the admission plan in which a completed application is acted on as soon as it is received. Students are admitted on a continuing basis.

Test Talk:

ACT refers to the American College Testing Program that is an organization that administers an aptitude examination known as the American College Test. It is a 3-hour exam that consists of a battery of four tests: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science Reasoning. There are five national test dates for the ACT; the ACT is scored in a range from 9 (minimum) to 36 (maximum).

SAT I is the Scholastic Assessment Test which is administered by the College Entrance Examination Board. Recent changes to the SAT added longer reading passages, the use of calculators, and, in one mathematics section the requirements to solve problems without the benefit of multiple-choice answers. It is a 3-hour exam that consists of sections that alternate from verbal to math. The SAT is scored on a range of 200 (minimum) to 800 (maximum). There are six national test dates.

SAT II are one-hour tests also administered by the College Entrance Examination Board to measure the level of achievement in specific academic subjects. You must determine by reading the catalogues of the colleges to which you want to apply whether taking the SAT II is an admission requirement.

Additional Abbreviations:

CEEB Number is the individual code that has been assigned to your high school. Check with your counselor to find out what it is.

FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Applications are usually available from your high school guidance office by mid-November.

FAF is the Financial Aid Form that is required by some colleges as supplemental information to the FAFSA.

Tips for Preparing Applications that are Tops!

Transcripts, letters of recommendation, application forms.... Submitting applications for college or other positions can be overwhelming. What follows are some tips that can help students submit better applications.

Deadlines are serious business

When colleges, companies, or other institutions set deadlines for receipt of applications, they do so according to a detailed schedule. If applications are received long after the deadline, and applicants call in requesting waivers and extensions, it causes the organization to disrupt carefully planned calendars as well as to interpret that the applicant might not be trusted with completing assignments on time. Therefore, organize your work, plan ahead, and make sure your applications are in by the deadlines.

Applications must be neat and legible

Application reviewers read hundreds of submissions for each position and can get understandably tired. Give them no reason to get impatient with your application because it is illegible. Therefore, TYPE all the information. Use the spell checker on the computer and/or ask a teacher or advisor to comment on your writing style. It is always best to ask someone else to read through your material because you can lose sight of mistakes, inconsistencies, or poor constructions. Remember that reviewers are “meeting” you for through your written material. You want to make the best impression from the start.

Complete applications in full

Read application requirements very carefully and follow the directions. Make

sure that you are filling out a current application and for the correct program. Check off every item as you include it in your package.

About references

Show your references information about the positions you are applying for so that they can write about how your qualifications match the organization’s requirements. Specific examples help reviewers the most. For example, if a reference describes an applicant as a “leader,” it would help reviewers to learn about specific cases in which a leadership attitude was displayed.

Also, make sure your references write your complete first and last name in their letters: a letter that reads “I have known Patricia for three years: makes the reviewers’ work very difficult when ten Patricia’s have applied. If references are sending out letters separately, check with them if they have indeed done so, so that your file is complete.

Ask for recommendations from individuals who know you in different roles: if you only submit recommendations from teachers, reviewers will only learn about you as a student, and will not know about you in your role as, for example, a community volunteer.

Make your application stand out

Understand that the reviewers’ universe is much larger than yours. This means that selection committees will compare your application with that of hundreds of others from all over the country. As brilliant and popular a student you may be in your school, you need to make your specific qualifications stand out from a very large pool. Do so by detailing specific accomplishments that match the organization’s requirements.

Make sure you show clear evidence of how you would benefit from the program if selected and what contributions you would make. Ask that your references include such information in their letters, and point out such qualifications in the materials you submit.

Stay in control

Write your full name on every single page you submit. Applications are handled by many people, and individual pages may become separated. Writing your name on every page will avoid confusion. Keep a copy of everything you send: it is your record of what you mailed while at the same time copies of past applications may help improve on future ones.

An essay is an essay

Often reviewers are interested in your writing style and ask that you write as essay or several. If so, write an essay, not a two sentence answer or a list of items. Show interest in your application by providing the information requested.

In conclusion...

With so many applicants for a few positions, competition is very hard. But, while following these recommendations cannot guarantee your selection, your chances will be much greater. Do not be discouraged; understand that with so many worthy applicants, judges need to draw a very fine line between those who are selected and those who are not. If you are not selected for the position you applied for, keep trying, review your application, and think about what you can improve next time. Your chances of success increase with every application you submit.

Websites for Further Research on College Search and Admissions

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

This website provides helpful information about the ACT test, test schedules, practice exercises, see, understand, and send your score, and general college information for both parents and students.

<http://collegeapps.about.com/>

This website provides a wide-range of information and web links about applying for college, college life, financial aid and scholarships, and much more.

<http://www.collegeboard.com>

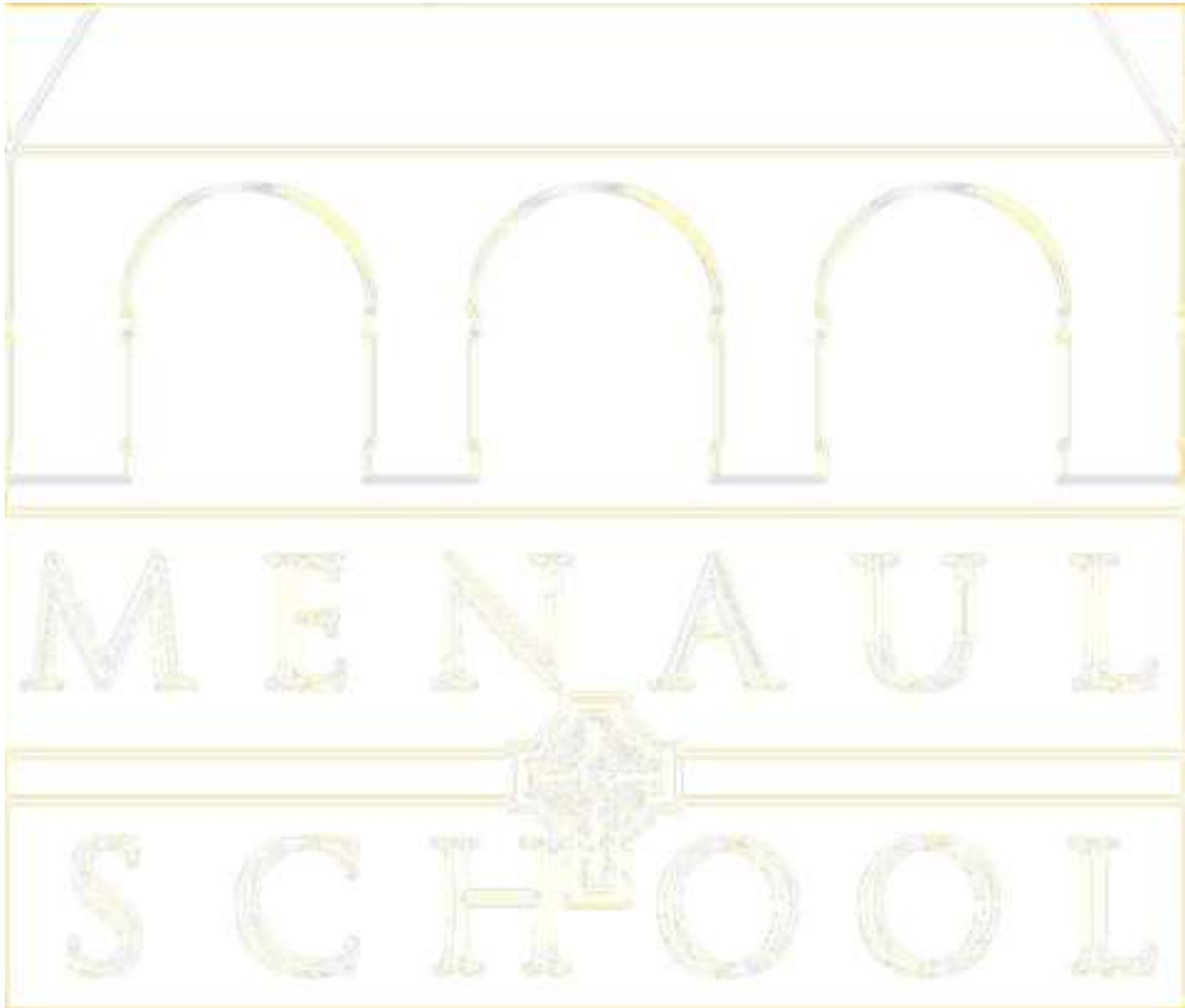
SAT information from the College Board that administers the test, loan information for parents, and more. If you are planning on taking the SAT, you should visit this website.

<http://www.collegezone.com/index.htm>

More information about finding and paying for college, including a college planning center for parents.

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/eduhome.htm>

U.S. News and World Report's education website. Here you will find their latest college ranking and information about the college admissions process. You will have to pay for detailed information about the rankings, but it does provide a basic look at where they have ranked schools based on various categories or types



This document is a result of Maria Cordova Andrews and Debbie Garbers hard work. It is for the use of the students and parents of Menaul School. Anyone else who would like to use the information contained in this document please contact Ms. Cordova Andrews at Menaul School. Thank you.