



CHERRY CREEK HIGH SCHOOL POSTGRADUATE AND COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE

www.cchspostgrad.com

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Welcome to Post Graduate College and Career Counseling!

Planning ahead for life after high school can be exciting. This guide will help you navigate the many opportunities and responsibilities that lie ahead. It contains information that will dispel some of the myths associated with college admission and will provide an outline for planning your student's personal college search. It will also share information about other non-college options. It contains explanations of responsibilities, the importance of keeping up with deadlines, the application process, planning college visits, and more. It serves to assist students in helping navigate a successful journey to the best college fit or post-high school plan.

Parents should encourage your student to take ownership of this process. This is often the first “rite of passage” faced by students and the maturity gained will certainly help in the transition to independence in college or directly in the real world. The ultimate decisions about which schools a student will apply to and attend, or the plan for life after high school, will always rest with the student and family. Our goal is to assure that you have all the information necessary to make an informed decision. Please feel free to contact any of us on the CCHS counseling team when you have questions or concerns. Visit our website at <https://www.cchspostgrad.com/> for events, resources, and updates. We look forward to working with you.

About the Post Graduate Center

The Post Graduate Center (www.cchspostgrad.com) is located on the first floor in the Information Center (IC) building and is attached to the Counseling Department. We have 13 counselors and two Post Grad Specialists who work with our students to support their post graduate plans.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Post Graduate Center provides students with the knowledge and resources needed so that each individual student feels that he or she is empowered to make an appropriate choice for his or her post graduate plans. The Post Graduate Center provides opportunities and education to all students, parents, and families concerning post graduate options, college searches, admissions, financial aid, and possible scholarship opportunities. The Post Graduate Center works closely with colleges to provide accurate information and fosters relationships with a broad variety of colleges to be able to meet the needs of the individual student.

The Post Grad Center is a great resource for:

- Visits from admission representatives of colleges/universities in the United States, Canada, and abroad.
- Admissions application support.
- ACT/SAT and College Board test preparation information.
- Financial aid and scholarship information.
- Career and occupation information.
- Summer enrichment program information.
- U.S. Military opportunity information.

Counseling Team

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Lisa Wiese | A – Bo | Chris Win | Nop - Ree |
| Deana Tucker | Bp – Dat | McCall Pace | Ref - Sn |
| Erin McClure | Dau – Garn | Susan Swisher | So - Truo |
| Christine Snow | Garó – Hue | Toni Cole | Trup - Z |
| Tyler Fischels | Huf – Lan | Kacey Morgan | GT Students A-K |
| Shelly Johnson | Lanc – May | Stephanie Worrell | GT Students L-Z |
| Craig Wittgrove | Maz – Noo | Renee Beck | GT Counselor |

Postsecondary Options

Statistics have shown that the more education a student receives, the greater his or her lifetime earning potential.

Four-Year Colleges & Universities

Four-year colleges and universities provide students with a broad range of classes and educational experiences, along with in-depth courses specific to their major or minor. These institutions generally offer Bachelor's degrees and prepare students for a career. A degree from a four-year college may also allow students the opportunity to do advanced studies, earn a Master's or Doctoral degree. Four-year colleges may be public or private and are generally more expensive than community colleges and technical schools. Examples: [University of Colorado-Boulder](#), [Colorado State](#), [University of Denver](#), [Colorado College](#), [Metro](#), etc.

Community / Junior Colleges

Students with a high school diploma or the equivalent can go to a community or junior college. These institutions can help students further their education, prepare for a four-year college, or focus on a particular trade for a specific job. Students can earn a certificate in a specific area of study, or earn an Associate's degree after completing a two-year program. Students may also complete required general education courses at community/junior colleges, and transfer those credits to a four-year college in order to save money and time. Examples: [Arapahoe Community College](#), [Community College of Denver](#), [Northeastern Junior College](#), etc.

Vocational / Technical Schools

These schools prepare students for a specific trade, job or career. Examples: [Pickens Technical College](#), [Emily Griffith Technical College](#), etc.

Military

Every year, the Armed Services hire more than 340,000 people for military careers in 142 different occupations. If students enlist directly after high school, they complete training preparing them to carry out fundamental military operations. The military also offer tuition support and ROTC programs for students wanting to attend college and then serve in the military. Examples: [Army](#), [Navy](#), [Air Force](#), [Marines](#), [Merchant Marines and Coast Guard](#).

Gap Year Programs

Some students choose to delay further education for a year to pursue "gap year" programs in travel, service, training, or religious opportunities.

Apprenticeships

Some individuals choose on-the-job and technical training programs in different trades. This could take from one to six years to master the practical and theoretical aspects of work required in a skilled trade. Many apprenticeships are paid.

Trade

An apprentice is an employed worker in training. Apprenticeship involves on-the-job training and technical instruction in many different trades. The goal of training is to master the practical and theoretical aspects of the work required in a skilled trade, and to graduate to journeyman status. Depending on the trade, an apprenticeship lasts from one to six years. A Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship is issued when the apprentice completes the training. Apprentices train in every major industry. Some occupations that require an apprenticeship include carpenter, cook, machinist, steel metalworker, drywall finisher, and electrician. For more information, please contact:

Denise Miller, Ed.D. State Coordinator for Apprenticeships and Experiential Learning
denise.miller@state.co.us 303-318-8822 www.careerwisecolorado.org

Military

The United States Military Services provide challenges and career training opportunities for high school graduates. Military recruiters can provide more information about the benefits and requirements involved in a military career. The **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (A.S.V.A.B.)** Career Exploration Program is a comprehensive career-planning program that includes a multiple-aptitude test battery and interest inventory in addition to various career-planning tools. The Cherry Creek School District offers the test at various times throughout the year. Please check with your counselor for more specific information. In addition to full-time military service, opportunities exist in reserve units, the National Guard, University Reserve Officer Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) programs, and military academies. A variety of educational benefit programs can help finance a college education for members of the military.

Gap Year Programs

What is a “Gap Year”?

Students in the U.K., Australia, and Canada commonly take time off between high school and college to gain real-life experiences through travel, language immersion, community and conservation service programs, outdoor adventure, and professional internships. Now, U.S. students are catching on to the awesome advantages of a Gap Year.

COST: Scholarships are sometimes available to students wishing to participate in these programs. Students must work with the program coordinator for details and specifics.

Websites:

<https://www.gapyearassociation.org/>
www.americangap.org/about



COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE: FRESHMEN

www.cchspostgrad.com

FALL

- Learn your username and password for *PowerSchool*, *Creekmail* and *Naviance Student*.
- Get familiar with Grade Point Average (GPA), what it means, and how it's calculated. (See Bear Facts p. 5.)
- Check out CCHS graduation requirements (see below).
- Plan ahead for college! Learn about **Colorado Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR)** (see below).
- Parents and Students - Learn about *Naviance Student*!
- Carefully consider and complete your *CCHS Four Year Academic Plan* on *Naviance* (State of Colorado freshman MyCAP requirements).
- Learn how to study. Ask for help. Find out when your teachers have off periods and where their offices are located.
- Find out who your counselor is and where their office is located.
- Balance school work with activities. Explore and learn new skills.
- Attend *College 101 Freshman Family Night* in November, intended for students and families who are new to the college planning process.
- Check out the many clubs and athletic teams at Creek. Look at Activities on the CCHS website.

SPRING

- Start asking questions about college: Should I go? Why or why not? Talk to your parents/guardians about how you will pay for college.
- Thinking about playing sports in college? Learn about the NCAA eligibility requirements. (See Bear Facts p. 62.)
- Look into summer jobs, volunteering and/or other enrichment opportunities.

Course Requirements for Graduation in Cherry Creek

Board Policy IKF

A minimum of 22 units of credit shall be necessary for high school graduation.

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|--|
| English/Language Arts..... | 4.0 units | *Within the 3.0 required credits of Social Studies, 1.0 credit must be a full year of U.S. History and .5 semester of Civics/Government. |
| Mathematics..... | 3.0 units | |
| Science..... | 3.0 units | |
| Social Studies*..... | 3.0 units | |
| Physical Education..... | 1.5 units | |
| Health..... | 0.5 units | |
| Fine/Practical Arts..... | 1.5 units | |
| Elective Offerings..... | 5.5 units | |

Colorado Higher Education Admissions Requirements (HEAR)*

Total 17.0 credits

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|--|
| English..... | 4.0 credits | *Minimum requirements for consideration to most four-year colleges and universities in Colorado. |
| Social Studies..... | 3.0 credits | |
| Math..... | 4.0 credits | |
| Science..... | 3.0 credits | |
| World Language**..... | 1.0 credits | |
| Academic Electives..... | 2.0 credits | |

**Many colleges require two-three years of World Language.

College & Career Ready Benchmarks for Graduation in Cherry Creek and all Other Colorado Schools

Board Policy IKF

In addition to required coursework, all students must demonstrate competency in Math and English through one area below.

| Competency Menu | English | Math |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Next Generation Accuplacer | 241 on Reading or 236 on writing | 255 on AR or 230 on QAS |
| Classic Accuplacer | 62 Reading Comp. or 70 Sentence Skills | 61 on Elementary Algebra |
| ACT | 18 | 19 |
| ACT WorkKeys | Bronze or higher | Bronze or higher |
| Advanced Placement | 2 | 2 |
| ASVAB | 31 st Percentile | 31 st Percentile |
| Concurrent Enrollment | Passing Grade | Passing Grade |
| IB | 4 | 4 |
| SAT | 470 | 500 |
| District Capstone | Secondary Literacy Assessment | Portfolio of Skills Exams |
| Industry Certificate | District Determined | District Determined |
| Performance Based Assessment (PBA) | State Determined | State Determined |



COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE: SOPHOMORES

www.cchspostgrad.com

FALL

- Be aware of graduation and college entrance requirements. Check out CCHS Graduation Requirements, College and Career Readiness Standards and Colorado Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR). See below.
- Strive to earn grades of B or better. Improve study skills, ask teachers and/or your counselor for help.
- Participate in different activities to help you discover your interests. Quality and depth is more important than quantity.
- Develop independent living skills; manage varying homework demands; set academic goals and follow through to reach them; structure your free time productively.
- Prepare for and take seriously the opportunities for standardized testing, such as the practice PSAT 10 on College Readiness Day.
- Check out the Post Grad website's College Planning Calendar to learn about important fall events such as the *National College Fair*, *Financial Aid & Scholarship Workshop* and *Creek to College*.
- Success in college is a combination of being able to handle academic demands and live independently.

SPRING

- Complete all Creek 201 tasks.
- Take the State PSAT 10 (practice SAT) given to all sophomores in April.
- Check out the Post Grad website's College Planning Calendar to learn about important spring events such as *Evening with the College Deans*, *Post Grad Sophomore Family Night* and *RMACAC College Fair*.
- Thinking about playing sports in college? Check out the [NCAA Eligibility Center website](http://www.ncaa.org) for requirements.
- Look into summer jobs, enrichment and volunteer opportunities.

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| Mathematics..... | 3.0 units | |
| Science..... | 3.0 units | |
| Social Studies* | 3.0 units | |
| Physical Education..... | 1.5 units | |
| Health..... | 0.5 units | |
| Fine/Practical Arts..... | 1.5 units | |
| Elective Offerings..... | 5.5 units | |

**Within the 3.0 required credits of Social Studies, 1.0 credit must be a full year of U.S. History and .5 semester of Civics/Government.*

Colorado Higher Education Admissions Requirements (HEAR)*

Total 17.0 credits

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| English..... | 4.0 credits |
| Social Studies..... | 3.0 credits |
| Math..... | 4.0 credits |
| Science..... | 3.0 credits |
| World Language**..... | 1.0 credits |
| Academic Electives..... | 2.0 credits |

**Many colleges require two-three years of World Language.

**Minimum requirements for consideration to most four-year colleges and universities in Colorado.*

College & Career Ready Benchmarks for Graduation in Cherry Creek and all Other Colorado Schools

Board Policy IKF

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| Classic Accuplacer | 62 Reading Comp. or 70 Sentence Skills | 61 on Elementary Algebra |
| ACT | 18 | 19 |
| ACT WorkKeys | Bronze or higher | Bronze or higher |
| Advanced Placement | 2 | 2 |
| ASVAB | 31* Percentile | 31* Percentile |
| Concurrent Enrollment | Passing Grade | Passing Grade |
| IB | 4 | 4 |
| SAT | 470 | 500 |
| District Capstone | Secondary Literacy Assessment | Portfolio of Skills Exams |
| Industry Certificate | District Determined | District Determined |
| Performance Based Assessment (PBA) | State Determined | State Determined |



COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE: JUNIORS

www.cchspostgrad.com

FALL

- Review your class schedule. Are you on track to graduate? Will the classes you are taking help you reach your goals after high school? See below for CCHS Graduation Requirements.
- Keep in mind the required College and Career Readiness Benchmarks and Colorado Higher Education Admission Requirements (HEAR). See reverse side of this page.
- If you haven't already, get serious about school! Colleges will consider your cumulative GPA but will also look for improvement.
- Consider community service or other outside-of-school activities part of your education.
- Check the [CCHS website for clubs and activities](#).
- Talk as a family about paying for college. Ask parents about geographic or financial concerns that may affect your college search. Attend our *Financial Aid and Scholarship Workshop* in October.
- Visit with college reps who come to Creek. Check Naviance and the bulletin board outside the Post Grad Center for scheduled visits and sign up online to attend.
- Attend the *Greater Denver College Fair* and *National College Fair and Workshop*.
- Attend Out-of-State and In-State College Nights.
- Register for the PSAT/NMSQT - This is a practice test for the SAT; a high score can qualify students for National Merit Scholarship consideration.



Course Requirements for Graduation in Cherry Creek

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| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
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| Mathematics | 3.0 units |
| Science | 3.0 units |
| Social Studies* | 3.0 units |
| Physical Education | 1.5 units |
| Health | 0.5 units |
| Fine/Practical Arts | 1.5 units |
| Elective Offerings | 5.5 units |

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WINTER/SPRING

- Schedule your Junior Conference! Parents are invited. Prior to your conference, you must complete the *Junior Conference Questionnaire (About Me—Surveys from Your School)* and update your Academic Planning (*Courses* link) in Naviance Student.
- Students attend Creek 301 Junior Assembly (required) and parents attend *College 301 Junior Parent Night*.
- Attend CREEK TO COLLEGE: A *College Planning Workshop for Parents and Students*.
- Start a list of colleges you may be interested in based on majors, location, size and tuition using college search tools in Naviance. Visit colleges.
- Research schools and take note of application/financial aid requirements and deadlines.
- Register for appropriate senior classes. Colleges want to see the most demanding schedule that you can successfully manage.

CONTINUES ON OTHER SIDE



COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE: JUNIORS *continued from other side*

WINTER/SPRING

- Start researching scholarships. Some deadlines are in early fall of your senior year.
- Attend *College Counseling Lunchtime Junior Workshops*, 5th period. Dates are listed on CCHSPostgrad.com.
- Register for the ACT and/or SAT. Note: All juniors will be given the State SAT during school hours in April.
- Visit the **Denver Spring College Fair** in April.
- Playing sports in college? Check NCAA eligibility requirements. Order transcripts to be sent to NCAA at the end of your junior year for initial eligibility clearance.
- Begin brainstorming ideas for your college and scholarship essays.
- Register for the [College Opportunity Fund](http://CollegeOpportunityFund) (COF).
- If you will be applying to any service academies, schedule and have your *senior* conference before end of school year. Gather info regarding nomination process.

Colorado Higher Education Admissions Requirements (HEAR)*

Total 17.0 credits

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| English | 4.0 credits |
| Social Studies | 3.0 credits |
| Math | 4.0 credits |
| Science | 3.0 credits |
| World Language** | 1.0 credits |
| Academic Electives | 2.0 credits |

*Minimum requirements for consideration to most four-year colleges and universities in Colorado.

**Many colleges require two-three years of World Language.

College & Career Ready Benchmarks for Graduation in Cherry Creek and all Other Colorado Schools

Board Policy IKF
In addition to required coursework, all students must demonstrate competency in Math and English through one area below.

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| ACT | 18 | 19 |
| ACT WorkKeys | Bronze or higher | Bronze or higher |
| Advanced Placement | 2 | 2 |
| ASVAB | 31* Percentile | 31* Percentile |
| Concurrent Enrollment | Passing Grade | Passing Grade |
| IB | 4 | 4 |
| SAT | 470 | 500 |
| District Capstone | Secondary Literacy Assessment | Portfolio of Skills Exams |
| Industry Certificate | District Determined | District Determined |
| Performance Based Assessment (PBA) | State Determined | State Determined |



COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE: SENIORS

www.cchspostgrad.com

AUGUST

- Confirm that you have all the credits you need to graduate! See [CCSD Graduation Requirements](#) below.
- Resolve to keep your grades up. Colleges look at cumulative GPA *and* improvement. Many colleges require or will ask you to send your 7th semester (1st semester senior year) grades.
- Schedule your senior conference (required). Complete your *Senior Questionnaire* in Naviance and ask a parent/guardian to complete the *Parent Questionnaire*.
- Learn the Cherry Creek High School CEEB code: 060-515; it is required for college applications.
- Students attend *Creek 401 Senior Assembly* (required). Parents attend *Creek 401 Senior Parent Night*.
- Check college testing requirements. If needed, register to retake the ACT or SAT.
- Get in the habit of checking your Creek Mail, Naviance and Monday College E-mail Blasts. This is how Post Grad communicates with students about important scholarships, college visits and senior announcements!
- Check Naviance for upcoming college visits—these are ongoing through the school year.
- Have a family talk about financing college. Check out [Managing College Costs](#) and [College Net Price Calculator](#).
- Print out the *CCHS College Planning Schedule*.

SEPTEMBER

- Narrow down your list of schools to your 5 first choice schools.
- Decide if you will be applying to any schools under an *Early Action* (non-binding) or *Early Decision* (binding) plan. Check deadlines and application requirements!
- Research scholarships, their application requirements and deadlines—see scholarship wall, Naviance and post grad website.
- Check college financial aid and scholarship websites. Do they require FAFSA forms and/or CSS Profile? Is there a “Priority Deadline” for in-house scholarship consideration.
- Work on application essay(s). Essay help is available at the Writing Center in Post Grad.
- Attend 5th Period *College Counseling Workshops* in the Post Grad Center offered September - December.
- Attend National College Fair and Workshops happening in September. See the Post Grad Website at www.CCHSPostgrad.com
- Submit requests for transcripts and letters of recommendation to the Post Grad Center at least 15 working days prior to the college’s application deadline. Deadlines are posted online and in the Post Grad Center.
- Check individual college websites, the *Common Application* or Coalition Application, to confirm application requirements: transcripts, essays, letter(s) of recommendation, counselor/teacher forms, deadlines, and standardized testing requirements.
- Finalize your list of schools to which you will apply.

Course Requirements for Graduation in Cherry Creek

Board Policy IKF

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| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
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| Mathematics | 3.0 units |
| Science | 3.0 units |
| Social Studies* | 3.0 units |
| Physical Education | 1.5 units |
| Health | 0.5 units |
| Fine/Practical Arts | 1.5 units |
| Elective Offerings | 5.5 units |

*Within the 3.0 required credits of Social Studies, 1.0 credit must be a full year of U.S. History and .5 semester of Civics/ Government.

OCTOBER

- Check to see if your teacher letter(s) of recommendation has been submitted with Post Grad. Teachers have until October 1 to upload their letters. Give them time!
- Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (fafsa.ed.gov) online beginning as early as October 1.
- Finalize college and scholarship essay(s) for *Early Action* (non-binding) and *Early Decision* (binding) deadlines. Essay help is available at the Writing Center in Post Grad. Stop by to check times.
- Visit college campuses when possible.
- If you haven’t already done so, register for the *College Opportunity Fund* (COF). <https://cof.college-assist.org>
- Contact ACT or College Board to officially send test scores to the colleges where you apply. Link your state and national accounts.
- Visit www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov. (provides an early estimate of your eligibility for federal student aid).
- Visit Net Price Calculator Center at collegecost.ed.gov for additional financial aid information on the top 3 colleges where you plan to apply.

CONTINUES ON OTHER SIDE



COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE: SENIORS *continued from other side*

NOVEMBER

- Finalize college applications and college/scholarship essays for December application deadlines. The Cherry Creek High School CEEB code is 060-515.
- Complete in-state college applications. (CU Boulder and CSU Fort Collins *Early Action* deadlines are 11/15 and 12/01). All other public in-state colleges offer rolling admissions where applications are reviewed and applicants notified of their admission decision within weeks of their submitted application.
- Early Action* and *Early Decision* applicants - begin checking your email and "applied student" portals regularly for updates from college admissions departments regarding your application status.
- Write thank you notes to teachers who have written your letters of recommendation.

DECEMBER

- Finalize applications and college/scholarship essay(s) for January application deadlines.
- If you were admitted to a college under an ED - *Early Decision* (binding) plan, notify all other colleges you applied to and withdraw those applications.

JANUARY

- Complete a final check of your classes and credits for graduation. See your counselor with any questions.
- Request your 7th semester transcript(s) ("midyears") to be submitted to your colleges that require/request them. Midyear transcripts will be sent out the 3rd week of January.
- Complete applications with February and March deadlines.

FEBRUARY

- Check your college application accounts often and always open emails from schools you have applied to! This may be the ONLY way you know if your application is complete.
- Begin reporting scholarship awards to the Post Grad Center.
- Register for the *College Opportunity Fund (COF)*. This is money to reduce the cost of attending college in Colorado. All students are eligible! <https://cof.college-assist.org>.

Colorado Higher Education Admissions Requirements (HEAR)*

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Total 17.0 credits | |
| English | 4.0 credits |
| Social Studies | 3.0 credits |
| Math | 4.0 credits |
| Science | 3.0 credits |
| World Language** | 1.0 credits |
| Academic Electives | 2.0 credits |

*Minimum requirements for consideration to most four-year colleges and universities in Colorado.

**Many colleges require two-three years of World Language.

MARCH

- Keep your grades up. Colleges can and have rescinded offers of admission for a significant drop in grades or attendance.
- Visit colleges over spring break.

APRIL

- Expect to hear from colleges regarding admissions decisions by early April.
- If a college offers you a place on their "waitlist" you can accept or deny this offer. Be sure you accept AND make a deposit at a college that has accepted you, if you plan to attend.
- Evaluate financial aid packages from schools that have admitted you.
- Senior Day - Report scholarships, write your plans on the PG windows, pin the map, start senior check-out, complete three required graduation surveys.

MAY

- May 1 is the National Candidate Reply Date. You MUST let colleges know if you are attending by this date or your spot will be given away.
- Take AP exams and arrange with College Board to have your score(s) sent to the college you are attending.

College & Career Ready Benchmarks for Graduation in Cherry Creek and all Other Colorado Schools

Board Policy IKF

In addition to required coursework, all students must demonstrate competency in Math and English through one area below.

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|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
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| Accuplacer | or 236 on writing | or 230 on QAS |
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| ASVAB | 31 st Percentile | 31 st Percentile |
| Concurrent Enrollment | Passing Grade | Passing Grade |
| IB | 4 | 4 |
| SAT | 470 | 500 |
| District Capstone | Secondary Literacy Assessment | Portfolio of Skills Exams |
| Industry Certificate | District Determined | District Determined |
| Performance Based Assessment (PBA) | State Determined | State Determined |

Thoughts on College Admission

The keys to staying on top of your college search process are to invest time and energy in the game, be organized, and anticipate issues and deadlines. Also, keep in mind that you are searching for and choosing a school that is right for you—not one that is right for your best friend or your great uncle or one that a magazine says is this year’s “best.” Best fit for you is the key – academic, social, financial, etc. Find schools where you will be motivated, comfortable and appropriately challenged. Your goal should be to identify a short list of schools at which you would be happy and successful. Our goal is to empower and advise you to make educated decisions toward that end.

The following tips and strategy points will help you stay on top of your college search and application process and keep your senior year in perspective.

Think about attending the “Creek to College” Application Boot Camp at the end of May/beginning of June. The Boot Camp will give rising seniors a wonderful head start on the process.

Application Tips:

- *Prioritize your college search—make it important!*

Roll up your sleeves and take ownership of this process. The more you invest in your search now, the better the fit will be with your college. The longer you wait to get started, the more options will pass you by. This should be an adventure...not a chore.

- *Avoid the trap of familiarity and explore the wonderful palette of schools out there.*

Be open to suggestions and willing to investigate. Do not settle for the same schools to which everybody else is applying.

- *Avoid the college admission rat race.*

Be leery of rankings and the year’s “hot school” list. Do not confuse admit rates with quality. Online chats and blogs can be useful when used properly but they can also be a source of misinformation and subsequent anxiety. Explore what works for you by defining your own needs and interests. Find the best match and fit for you. College selection is most rewarding when you find the correct fit.

- *Keep it all in perspective.*

You are not an SAT or ACT number. GPA and rankings are not measures of your self-worth. Many colleges have moved to test optional, which allows you to decide if you want to send test scores to the colleges or not. Please check www.fairtest.org for the most accurate information. Do not lose your senior year to stress and worry associated with your college search and application process.

- *Avoid the myth of the one perfect school.*

Many people are surprised to find out that what they thought was the perfect school for them was far from it. Or they are left searching when that school does not admit them. Think in terms of five first-choice schools, all of which you would be happy and successful attending. Your attitude will determine how much you enjoy your experience and how much you get out of it.

- *Being denied by a college is not the end of the world.*

If you receive a letter of rejection, pick up and move on. If you have followed a sound strategy, you will have other great options from which to choose.

Application Strategies:

- *Apply to a few schools with a wide range of selectivity.*

Avoid the high-risk trap of applying only to competitive schools with selective admission. The goal should be for you to have some options in the spring of your senior year.

- *Most students should submit at least one early action application.*

Applying to your likely school early (October or November) will allow you to start the process off with some good news and will give you assurance that you will have a place to go next year. You might be surprised by how much anxiety is relieved when you receive your first acceptance letter.

- *Explore Early Action (non-binding) and Early Decision (binding) options, but be aware that these options may not be the best for you.*

Discuss your options and strategies with your CCHS counselor.

- *Visit the colleges that are high on your list.*

Offices of admission may keep track of student visits as well as communications such as phone calls and e-mails. This helps them differentiate between an application from a sincerely interested student and a last-minute application completed online as an afterthought.

- *Recruited athletes should submit an application early to a school(s) where they would consider walking on if a scholarship is not forthcoming or where they would be happy to attend as a student without participating in varsity sports.*

Many athletes who wait around until the end for a coach to call are left empty-handed. Be sure to explore options at the Division II, III and NAIA levels as well.

- *Prospective visual/performing art students should follow the same advice and apply to a school(s) to which they know they can be admitted in addition to their more competitive options.*

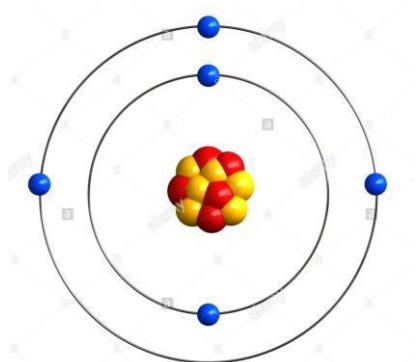
Consider applying to a comprehensive university with a strong art department as well as art schools.

The College Search and Selection

The steps listed below can be used as a checklist as you initiate your college search. They pose very broad questions that will start you down the path of your individual search. Please remember that your search will be unique to you and you should not compare your thoughts, plans and decisions with your peers who have their own unique search criteria. Your counselor will help you with several of these steps. Most of the work, however, must be done by the student. Students in particular should take ownership of this process.

- *Consider why you are thinking about going to college.* What do you really want to accomplish in college? What factors are influencing you? Family? Friends? What do you want out of the experience?
- *Consider the kind of work you would like to do after college.* Have you formulated any career goals? Which college majors are related to those goals? Is the kind of college education you are thinking about relevant to these goals? Which colleges are outstanding in preparing you for your career choice?
- *Assess how well-prepared you are for college coursework.* What are your academic strengths and weaknesses? How well have you done in school? How do your abilities compare to those of other college-bound students in your class, your state, and the nation? How well are you likely to do at the colleges you are considering?
- *Determine which college characteristics are most important to you.* Cost? Size? Program? Campus atmosphere and kind of students? Try to set your priorities before you think about choosing a specific college. The following section will help you. Naviance Super Match is another great option to help you get started.
- *Collect information about the colleges you are considering.* Check online and in the Post Grad Center for reference materials. Visit campuses, if possible, and talk to enrolled students. Attend meetings with college representatives as they visit Cherry Creek throughout the year. Attend all college fairs in the area.
- *Determine college costs and the ways you will meet them.* Add up the costs of tuition fees, room and board, transportation, supplies and books, and personal expenses at each college. What are your financial resources? Will you need financial assistance? If so, check the aid application procedures and deadlines required by the colleges of your choice.
- *Know admission procedures and timelines.* Check application deadlines, procedures, and fees. Which tests are required for admission? Determine whether you meet the admission requirements at your college choices.
- *Keep rethinking your plans and weighing your options and your resources.* Talk to your parents, teachers and friends. Your feelings and thoughts about college might change dramatically between now and the time you apply next fall.
- *Work closely with your counselor throughout this process.*

Five First-Choice College Model



Cherry Creek High School has adopted the “Five First-Choice College Model” that was pioneered by Barbara Conner of the Foxcroft School, an innovative system for creating your short list of schools to apply to by targeting five schools on your list, to reduce stress and improve your college admission outcome.

Your Five First-Choice Colleges should:

- **Have a typical admitted pool that aligns with your current academic profile**
 - *Naviance scattergrams are a great way to review academic information from prior Creek students who applied within the last three years.*
- **Match your academic/social/cultural setting goals**
 - *It is important to consider what things are important to you from an academic experience, what you are looking for in your social activities and cultural opportunities.*
- **Be a school that you’ve looked at from a financial perspective**
 - *College is an expensive investment and it is important that families have early conversations about what the family can or is willing to afford. Applying to colleges that are affordable for a family is the biggest decision-maker outside of being admitted.*
- **Be a school you’re excited about attending!**
 - *Doing your research is key to finding colleges that you want to attend. There is more than ONE college that is a good fit for every student.*

It is important in today’s college admission landscape that students do thorough research in finding the three to five colleges that meet the above criteria. *Your five first-choice colleges does not include the Ivy Leagues or any college that accepts less than 30% of applicants.* Consider the Five First-Choice as your nucleus or your “core colleges” that you know will help you reach your goals in an exciting way. You can apply to colleges outside of the core, which includes colleges unlikely to admit you; however, we hope this way of thinking fosters a healthy and realistic mindset and level of expectations. If the college does admit you, you will be excited to add it to your options.

How Colleges Evaluate Applications

The process of reading and evaluating applications is complex and difficult to grasp. It frequently has been described as more of an art than a science. Those looking for simple equations or tangible checklists leading to success in the process will usually be frustrated. The following list identifies many of the criteria that colleges will use to evaluate your application.

- *Proven Academic Achievement*: As demonstrated on the school transcript, by course selection and grades. Trends in grade performance are important.
- *Course Load*: Depth, quality and number of courses. Honors, advanced, and AP courses indicate a high level of academic challenge. A strong or light course load suggests a lot about the applicant.
- *SAT or ACT Scores*: Optional for most colleges – please check www.fairtest.org for the most up-to-date information.
- *A Student's Activities and Interests*: Includes use of time, ideas, social concern, non-scholastic potential. Two or three well-developed and meaningful interests in which a student demonstrates commitment are preferable to a scattering or partially-pursued clubs and activities. Colleges want to know how you are going to make their campus a more interesting place!
- *Personal Interviews*: Are generally helpful. A few colleges require an interview. Most do not.
- *Counselor Recommendation*: Written by your counselor if required.
- *Teacher Evaluations*: Letters “fill in the gaps” and add color to your application. They should be specifically informative and should be written carefully by people who know you best.
- *Application*: Colleges consider carefully the time and thought you put into your applications, especially the college essay. Be proactive, use your resources, and do not dash these off hastily at the last minute.
- *Individual Flavor and Unusual Achievements*: Admission committees seek uniqueness in your admission credentials...a different or uncommon consideration that may set you apart from the other candidates and may produce a favorable decision for you.
- *Goal Orientation*: As demonstrated by your motivation for a particular course of study or long-term commitment through activities.
- *School Attended*: Cherry Creek is well-known and highly-regarded.
- *Daughters and Sons of Alumni*: Receive attention at some colleges. At best, such candidates can expect to be given a “closer look.”
- *Correspondence*: Initiated by you, not by your parents. Shows maturity and demonstrated interest.

- *Visits*: A visit to a school shows genuine interest. Be sure to contact the Office of Admission 2-3 weeks before you arrive—they will take notice of your visit(s).
- *Special Talents*: Any qualities the school may need – athletes, musicians, etc.
- *Geography*: Coastal colleges look for geographic diversity in their student population and may be interested in a Colorado applicant.

Questions to Consider As You Begin Visiting Colleges

There are more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States today and many wonderful schools in other countries as well. Cherry Creek students attend colleges throughout the nation and occasionally cross borders into other countries to earn their degree. While we do not expect you to explore every option available, we strongly encourage you to invest in the search process and explore the many exciting and wonderful options before you. Please keep in mind that you will determine your own success and happiness wherever you decide to attend college.

You should reflect on many issues as you begin in earnest to define your college search. The following questions will help you think through some of the important factors. Some of these issues will be more important to you than others. Take time to write down your thoughts. Do not be surprised if your thinking changes over the course of your college search. Once you have started to define your own search, use any of the useful tools available today to find colleges that match your interests. Your CCHS counselor will be one of your most valuable resources in this part of the process. The following items are not prioritized.

- *Size*: Large, medium or small enrollment? Will it make a difference to you? Be leery of stereotypes associated with school size – both small and large schools offer many advantages.
- *Area of Study*: Is your major choice available there? Is the college outstanding in particular areas? Will you be able to get all the courses you will need? Can you combine majors?
- *Admission Selectivity*: How competitive is admission? What is the school's admit rate? Is the school likely to admit you? What are the median SAT or ACT scores? What GPA is required?
- *Expenses*: What will it cost? Tuition, room, board, fees, books? What additional travel costs will be involved? Is it within the range that you have discussed with your family?
- *Financial Resources*: Is the school generous with financial assistance? Will you likely qualify for scholarships? How much money is available from your family? What financial assistance – scholarship, loans, and jobs – are available?

- *Location and Climate:* What areas of the United States are attractive to you? Do you want a large city or a college town? In state or out of state? Primarily warm or cold climates or distinct seasonal changes?
- *Co-ed or Single-Sex:* Are you interested in a women's/men's college? What are the advantages? Would it make a significant difference to you?
- *Accreditation:* Is the school fully-accredited by a regional accrediting agency and/or approved by appropriate professional associations?
- *Tests Required:* Is the SAT or ACT required? What are the median scores? Is it optional?
- *Deadlines:* When must applications, testing, etc. be complete?
- *Application Options:* When are admission decisions made and announced? Does the college have Early Action? Early Decision? Rolling Admission? (Explanations of these terms are included in the Glossary.)
- *Prestige and Recognition:* What is the college's local and national reputation? Who are the distinguished alumni? For what fields is it particularly noted?
- *Special Programs:* What honors programs, courses, area studies, student exchanges, study abroad, and internship programs are available?
- *Rigor:* How difficult will a particular college be? Is it easy to get into but hard to get out of? Would you be "in over your head?" Will you be appropriately challenged?
- *Calendar:* Does it make a difference if the college follows a two-semester, trimester or quarter system? Does it have an interim semester or another system unlike any other college?
- *Student Life:* What does one do at the college on the weekend? Are there fraternities or sororities? Are they important? What are the social regulations? What social opportunities are available on campus or nearby? Is the campus overwhelmingly conservative or liberal?
- *Retention Rate:* Is there a high freshman retention rate? Why? Do the majority who enter also graduate? Does the school offer an orientation or transition program for freshmen?
- *Proportion of Students Going to Graduate or Professional School:* Who goes to graduate or professional school? Where? What is their acceptance rate for graduates?
- *Religious Affiliation:* Is the college associated with a particular religious group? Are there religious requirements? Are churches of your faith available on or near the campus?
- *Faculty and Method of Instruction:* Who teaches...professors or graduate students? Are audio-visual presentations utilized heavily? Is independent study available? What percentage of faculty has a doctorate degree? What is the faculty relationship with the students? Are there special programs for those having learning problems? If so, who qualifies?

- *Technology*: Is the campus up to date with current technology? Are the dorms wired? Wireless? Are laptops required? How many computer labs are on campus? What are their hours?
- *Character or Tone*: What is the “psychological environment” of the place? Are the students serious, indifferent, or carefree? Are courses rigorous? Are students friendly? Is the campus deserted on the weekends? Is the environment competitive? Do students spend out-of-class time studying or carousing? What gives the college its distinctive flavor?
- *Cultural Opportunities*: What speakers, concerts, films, plays, etc. are available? Are museums, theaters and concert halls available in the area? Is the place culturally isolated or rich? Must the campus produce all cultural opportunities?
- *Career Counseling and Post-Graduate Job Placement*: What services does the college offer in this area? Who hires the graduates? Where do the graduates go to live?
- *Athletics*: If you are interested in playing interscholastic sports, does this college’s program fit your talent level? What kind of intramural program is available? Are there “big time” college sports on campus? Does that matter to you?
- *Housing*: Is it available to all students? Is it co-ed? What are the off-campus housing alternatives? Is it required to live on campus for a certain number of years?

Planning College Visits & College Rep Visits to Cherry Creek

Visiting prospective colleges can be a big help in your decision-making. A visit provides a first-hand impression for you and your family about people, programs and facilities. The exchange of information and the impressions gained on both sides should be meaningful.

- Register in advance through the admissions website of the college. Check the website or call. Consider requesting overnight accommodations in a dormitory, meetings with professors and coaches, or information regarding any other activity you might like to experience. Try to visit at a time when students are on campus.
- Learn everything you can about the college from its website before you visit.
- Allow enough time to get a feel for the campus. If possible, arrange to spend the night in a freshman residence hall. Visit the library, the student union, the labs, the gyms, the residence halls – the buildings where you would live, attend classes, eat and sleep. Talk to professors and especially to students and visit the student “hangouts.” Ask about the “unwritten rules.” Find out how accessible the teachers are. Try to find out “what makes the place tick.”
- Take pictures while on campus and create a file for each college.

- Make notes of your reactions and impressions of that particular college as soon as you leave campus. You will find these helpful later, especially if you are going on to visit other colleges on the same trip.
- Visit colleges in which you are really interested.
- It is highly recommended that you visit a college BEFORE you apply. If you can't visit, talk with your counselor about other options, information and ideas.
- Thank everyone you met with during your visit by writing hand-written notes of appreciation.

Guidelines for Visiting with College Representatives at Cherry Creek

IMPORTANT: BEFORE a college visit can be counted as an excused absence, a student must talk to his or her teacher prior to missing class. The teacher will mark a “U” for unexcused in Powerschool and it will be changed to a “C” for counseling once you sign in and out and meet with the college admission officer in the Post Grad Center.

- Seniors and juniors need to register for a college visit in [Naviance](#).
- Seniors and juniors are allowed to miss classes for college representative visits on the Cherry Creek campus.
- Sophomores and freshmen are encouraged to attend college fairs throughout the Denver metro area (check the college planning schedule and www.cchspostgrad.com.)

The College Application

Important things to remember:

- The following list includes everything that could be required; however, you might not be asked to submit everything on this list to every college.
- You, the student, are responsible for checking the college's individual website for requirements/checklists prior to meeting with your counselor. You also need to follow the school's policy for submitting applications, including all supporting documents.

What may be included in the college application?

- Personal and educational data
- Honors and awards
- Extracurricular, personal, and volunteer activities
- Employment, internships, research and summer activities
- Essays, both short answer and longer personal essays
- Disciplinary information (we do not submit this information)
- Application fee
- Electronic signatures (where you type your name)
- Audition/portfolio (if applicable for certain majors)

What supporting documents might be needed to complete the application?

- Official transcript
- ACT/SAT scores*
- Counselor forms
- Teacher forms
- Midyear report/transcript
- Letters of recommendation (ONLY if required by the college/university)

* It is the student's responsibility to have their test scores sent to the colleges to which they are applying.

**When in doubt, contact the college/university admissions office to confirm application requirements.*

What is the Common Application?

The Common Application is a not-for-profit organization that serves students as well as colleges and universities by providing an online admission application that students may submit to more than 900 colleges. This allows a student to complete one application for numerous colleges along with individual school supplements.

Some colleges accept the Common App and/or their own application, while other colleges exclusively use the Common App. For those colleges that offer a choice, you must indicate in Naviance which application you are using. For more information and a list of participating schools, visit www.commonapp.org.

Senior College Application Checklist

*Please review this checklist **before** you meet for your Senior Conference.*

Application Process

- ☐ Apply to Common App colleges on www.commonapp.org
- ☐ Apply to Coalition App exclusive colleges on www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org
- ☐ Apply to non-Common App colleges directly on the college's website
- ☐ For self-reporting colleges, use the unofficial transcript that Post Grad sends home in late August
- ☐ For self-reporting colleges, access your SAT/ACT account to get your score report
- ☐ Review which colleges require official ACT/SAT test scores and send **ASAP**
 - www.collegeboard.org
 - www.actstudent.org
- ☐ Cherry Creek High School Code for all college applications : 060-515
- ☐ Check application deadlines for each college; submit your application on time

Common Application

- ☐ If applying Common App, create an account on www.commonapp.org
- ☐ Complete the **Education** section
- ☐ Add at least one college to the “My Colleges” section
- ☐ Complete the **Common App FERPA release** under “My Colleges”
 - ☐ Under “My Colleges,” click on any college on your list
 - ☐ Click the **FERPA Release Authorization link**
 - ☐ Read the **FERPA Release Authorization** and check the box to continue
 - ☐ Check the first authorization box, then **we strongly encourage you** to select “I waive my right to review...” (see counselors with questions)
 - ☐ Check the final box, type your name and date, click “Save”

Linking Common App and Naviance

- ☐ In Naviance, go to “Colleges I’m Applying To”
- ☐ Enter your Common App email and birthdate and click “**Match**”

Teacher/Counselor Letters of Recommendation

- ☐ Do your research: Do you need to send a letter of rec? One is usually enough – two at most.
- ☐ Is a counselor letter of rec required? If so, you will have a senior interview during the Senior Conference with your counselor.
- ☐ Verify that your teacher letter of rec has been uploaded in Naviance after Oct. 1 – check in the Post Grad Center.

College Essay and Supplements

- ☐ Research essay requirements for each college and take advantage of college essay help in the Writing Center in Post Grad Center during 5th and 8th periods first semester.
- ☐ Research supplemental essay requirements and whether a portfolio is required. If so, please make sure you spend solid time on it.

Signing Up For College Rep Visits

- ☐ Sign up for college rep visits on Naviance by clicking on the “College” tab
- ☐ Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on list of colleges and register
- ☐ Check with your teacher prior to attending the college visit
- ☐ Sign in on the attendance sheet in the Post Grad Center

Final Steps

- ☐ Turn in [Blue Transcript Request Form](#) (\$5.00 for each form) for each college to the Post Grad Center
- ☐ Be aware of meeting the internal Post Grad deadlines for submitting transcript request forms
- ☐ Complete the Senior Conference Questionnaire on Naviance
- ☐ Ask your parents to complete the parent questionnaire on Naviance (only if you need a counselor letter of rec)
- ☐ Review and update colleges in “Colleges I am Thinking About” list
- ☐ Schedule your Senior Conference with your counselor by using the OnceHub scheduler. Find the QR code or link on www.cchspostgrad.com

Definitions of Admission Options

NACAC
National Association for
College Admission Counseling

DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU?

| Regular Decision | Rolling Admission | Early Action (EA) | Early Decision (ED) | Restrictive Early Action (REA) |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| DEFINITION: Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time. | DEFINITION: Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle. | DEFINITION: Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. | DEFINITION: Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll and withdraw all other applications. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early. | DEFINITION: Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm. |
| COMMITMENT: NON-BINDING | COMMITMENT: NON-BINDING | COMMITMENT: NON-BINDING | COMMITMENT: BINDING | COMMITMENT: NON-BINDING |
| Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment. | | | Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions. | |

For a copy of this flyer, please visit www.nacacnet.org

EARLY DECISION—This plan involves a binding commitment between the student and the college. The admission committee will review the student's application earlier than those of students applying regular decision, and the committee will inform the student of its decision before January 15 (usually during December). In turn, the student, if accepted, is ethically committed to attending the college and to canceling (or not submitting) applications to any other colleges. Obviously, a student can submit an Early Decision application to only one college. Colleges act on an Early Decision application in one of three ways: accept, defer, or deny. If an Early Decision student is deferred, he/she is no longer ethically committed to the particular institution.

RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION-SINGLE CHOICE—A recently-developed plan and offered by only a few select colleges, Early Action-Single Choice applicants enter a non-binding agreement similar to Early Action but agree not to file any other Early Action applications.

EARLY ACTION—Initiated in 1976-77 by the Ivy League colleges. This plan involves a non-binding commitment between the student and the college. The admission committee

will review the student's application earlier than those of students applying under regular decision and will inform the student of its decision usually during December.

REGULAR ADMISSION—Most colleges have a particular deadline for the receipt of applications, which may be from January 1 on. In this type of admission plan, the college informs applicants about admissions on a specific date, anytime before April 15, and the student is asked to respond to an acceptance notification by May 1.

ROLLING ADMISSIONS (EARLY NOTIFICATION)—Applications are considered as soon as all required materials (application form, fees, transcript, evaluations, test scores) are received by the college. It is important not to apply too early if you feel that your fall test scores and/or your 7th semester grades will place you in a better position for acceptance. Students are notified as soon as the decisions are made, usually from four to six weeks after completion of the application.

Definitions of Admission Decisions

ACCEPTED OR DENIED

DEFERRED DECISION—Candidates not accepted during Early Action or Early Decision Admission may be reconsidered along with the Regular Decision applicants.

WAIT LIST—The college admission committee has favorably considered your application but is over-subscribed. Your application will be reconsidered, likely in late spring or early summer, depending on space available. It is the student's responsibility to inform the college that he/she would like to remain on the waitlist. There is often a specific process for remaining on a waitlist.

DEFERRED ADMISSION—This plan permits a student, once accepted, to postpone matriculation for one year in order to pursue other plans.

Transcripts

A transcript is an **official and legal document**, which is a record of a student's academic performance at Cherry Creek High School. All courses taken at Cherry Creek are included on the transcript, as are all semester and year-end grades. See the "Bear Facts" for policies related to failing grades, dropped courses, repeated courses, etc. While we can release unofficial copies of transcripts to students and families, official transcripts must be submitted directly from Cherry Creek to the colleges/universities/programs. Students will receive a copy of their transcript before class registration each year. Official transcripts include the principal's signature and the official school seal.

2023-2024 Post Grad Center Transcript Request & Scholarship Deadlines

2023-2024 Transcript Request Deadlines

| Transcript request forms due in Post Grad. | | If college/scholarship deadline is... |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| September 26 | | October 15 |
| October 3 | | November 1 |
| October 25 | | November 15 |
| November 7 | | December 1 |
| November 28 | | December 15 |
| December 5 | | January 1 |
| December 5 | | January 15 |
| January 11 | | February 1 |
| February 1 | | February 15 |
| February 15 | | March 1 |
| March 1 | | March 15 |
| March 13 | | April 1 |
| April 3 | | April 15 |

*After a deadline, your application will be processed in the order in which it is received.

*Note: These deadlines are subject to change.

College Admission Testing

Most colleges require an official test score report as part of the application's supporting documents. You will need to request them from www.actstudent.org (for the ACT) and/or www.collegeboard.org (SAT, PSAT, AP, SAT Subject Tests). All colleges within the U.S. will accept either the ACT or the SAT.

ACT

The ACT is usually taken during the second semester of junior year, although it can also be taken in the fall of senior year.

SAT

The SAT scoring ranges from 400-1600. All Cherry Creek juniors are given an SAT in their

spring semester. Students may also take an additional SAT test during the first semester of their senior year.

Advanced Placement (AP)

These exams are administered in May and are designed to test a student's knowledge in specific subject areas. Many universities grant college credit to students who score a 4 or 5 out of 5. AP exams are taken during the spring after a student has completed an AP course. AP scores are not used in admission decisions. Colleges are limited in the number of credits they may give to a student from AP exams. Also, AP scores are not accepted by all colleges – students should check with their school(s) of choice before taking the exams.

PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) is a practice test used to assist students in preparing for the SAT. This PSAT is an optional exam administered during College Readiness Day in October for a fee. Although colleges do not see a student's PSAT/NMSQT score, a junior who does well on this exam, who meets other academic performance criteria, and elects to be considered for NM may qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Cherry Creek Standardized Testing Policy

Cherry Creek observes the following policies in regard to testing.

RECOMMENDED:

- *Practice PSAT 9* - October of the freshman year during College Readiness Day. This is a practice for the SAT. Cherry Creek registers all freshmen students for this test.
- *Practice PSAT 10* - October of the sophomore year during College Readiness Day. This is a practice for the SAT. Cherry Creek registers all sophomore students for this test.
- *Practice SAT 11* - October of the junior year during College Readiness Day. This is a practice for the SAT. Cherry Creek registers all junior students for this test.
- *PSAT/NMSQT* –Open to sophomore or junior years during College Readiness Day. Students and families CHOOSE to register for this exam, which has an additional fee. This is a practice SAT. Only scores from the junior year are used in the National Merit Scholarship search.
- *SAT*– April of the junior year. This is given during the State SAT day to all juniors at no cost. Cherry Creek registers all junior students for this test. Students may consider retaking the exam following junior year in August, October or November of senior year.
- *ACT* –District ACT is given in February/March of junior year. Students may consider retaking the exam in fall of senior year.
- Students have "Selective Choice" when submitting their ACT/SAT scores. ACT/SAT scores are your private information and for this reason, Cherry Creek does not submit test

scores to the colleges. Students must contact the appropriate testing agency to have their scores sent to colleges.

Students who have a psychoeducational evaluation that qualifies them for test accommodations should contact their CCHS counselor or case manager to request/confirm accommodations. Both College Board and ACT require students to complete an application to request test accommodations. The College Board request can be made at any point during a student's high school career. ACT will not consider a request for accommodations until the student has registered and paid to take a test, which is usually done during second semester of the junior year. All requests for accommodations must include a parent signature giving permission to release confidential information to the testing services.

Students may register online for both the ACT and SAT. Please refer to the websites below for current test dates and registration information:

SAT: www.collegeboard.com To register, send your score reports, receive your score over the phone, or change your test center/test date, call: Customer Service: Toll Free: 1-866-756-7346. Hours: Monday –Friday 7:00 a.m. –8:00 p.m. CST.

ACT: www.actstudent.org To register, send your score reports, receive your score over the phone, or change your test center/test date, call: Customer Service: 1-319-337-1270. Hours: Monday –Friday 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. CST.

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation in support of the student written/composed by the teacher or counselor are confidential and are released only to offices of admission or scholarship organizations to which the student is applying. The CCHS counselor assigned to the family will author the counselor letter of recommendation only if required by the college or if the counselor and student decide it is needed to support the student in the application process.

Letters of recommendation written by teachers are not reviewed by the Post Grad Center or the counselor. These letters are considered confidential communication between the teacher and the college admission office. The process of requesting a teacher letter of recommendation is highly encouraged in late spring of junior year, but before summer break. On evaluation forms and counselor forms, students have the option to waive their right of access. While this is a choice, we encourage students to waive their right of access. Admission offices will weigh more seriously what writers say if the student has waived his/her rights.

Many college applications request one or more recommendations from teachers, counselors, or other adults who know you well. If the college that you are applying to requires letters of recommendation, please use the guidelines below. Please do not request letters of recommendation until you know they are needed – check college websites first.

Who should I ask?

Colleges and universities often request letters of recommendation from an academic teacher (sometimes in a specific discipline) and/or your counselor. It is best to ask a teacher you have had for at least a full semester, if possible, and who taught you during junior or senior year. Colleges want current perspectives from someone who knows you well. Do not use a coach/club sponsor who cannot speak to your academic achievements and potential in place of an academic teacher.

When should I ask?

Make sure you give your recommendation writers at least three weeks' notice before they are due and sent on your behalf; however, the earlier you ask, the better. Many teachers like to have the summer to write recommendations, so if you know you will be applying to a school requiring letters of recommendation, you may want to ask teachers before the end of your junior year.

Teacher Recommendations

- First, talk to your recommender(s) face-to-face; then complete the teacher recommendation form(s) in Naviance and either print it out and hand it to the teacher or save it as a pdf and email it to the teacher.
- Thank your teachers for taking the time to write you a letter of recommendation!

Counselor Recommendations

- Counselors require students to complete the Senior Conference Questionnaire in Naviance,

under the “About Me” tab. This is available starting in February of junior year.

- Thank your counselor for taking the time to write you a letter of recommendation!

Helpful Tips

- Don't be shy. Teachers and counselors are happy to help you, as long as you respect their time.
- Provide teachers and counselors with deadlines for each recommendation that you are requesting, especially noting the earliest deadline.
- On the application form, waive your right to view recommendation letters. This gives more credibility to the recommendation in the eyes of the college.
- Follow up with your recommendation writers a week or so prior to the deadline to ensure recommendations have been submitted or to see if they need additional information from you.
- Write thank you notes to your recommendation writers and later, tell them where you've decided to go to college.

Campus/Alumni Interview

The importance of a campus or alumni interview varies from college to college. In general, highly competitive schools are more likely to offer a campus/alumni interview. Check with the college admission office to determine whether an interview is required.

The interview is an opportunity for you and the college to get to know each other better. Take the interview seriously, but don't overrate its importance. Some important college interview tips:

- Be on time for your appointment (which means 5-10 minutes early)
- Even if you're told to dress casual, wear attire that you would consider to be nice.
- Be well-prepared. Research the college prior to your interview, and be prepared to ask questions.
- Answer questions to the best of your ability – it's okay to admit you don't know something
- Be ready to talk about yourself.
- Know your test scores and latest grades.
- Avoid one-word responses.
- Be relaxed. Interviews are meant to be informative for both parties.
- Turn off cellphones! Not just on vibrate/silent –turn it off or leave it in the car.
- After the interview, send a 'Thank You' note to the interviewer.

Sample Interview Questions

Below are some of the basic college admission interview questions. You can expect to be asked several questions from the list below, so take some time to prepare thorough and thoughtful answers.

- Why do you want to go to this college?
- What do you expect to gain from college?
- How do you make a difference in your community?
- What was your most challenging course in high school? Why?
- What would you change about your high school if you had the chance?
- What do you enjoy about school?
- How have you changed or grown through high school?
- What are your strengths? Which weaknesses would you like to improve?
- How do you respond to academic competition and pressure?
- What was the biggest obstacle you have faced so far in your life? How did you manage it?
- What three adjectives would your best friend use to describe you? Why?
- What do you plan to study in college? Why?
- What makes you unique?
- Why are you a good match for this college?
- Where do you see yourself in 20 years?

Frequently Asked Questions

On the Common App, there is a section about a student's right to view recommendations. Should I waive my rights?

You have two choices: Yes, I waive my rights -OR- No, I do not waive my rights. The Cherry Creek Counseling Department strongly recommends that you choose "Yes, I waive my rights." There are multiple reasons why a student should waive their rights.

- If you choose not to waive your rights, colleges could view this as a 'red flag' that you do not trust your recommender.
- If you choose not to waive your rights, the only way you would ever be able to see the recommendation is if you apply, are accepted, you attend the university, and they actually still have the recommendation on file. Most schools will purge all recommendations after students have been admitted. So even if you choose to not waive your rights, the chances you have to see your recommendation are slim-to-none.

How many applications are enough? What kind of schools should I be applying to?

Ideally, 3-6 applications, although this will vary from student to student. As for types of schools:

- Reach: Your credentials may meet or are below the published admission standards. Note: All highly-selective schools should be considered a reach for every student.
- Five First-choice Schools:
 - Academic: Your credentials definitely meet or exceed the published admission standards.
 - Financial: In addition to being an academic safety, this school meets your financial situation.

Is it too late for me to take / retake the ACT or SAT my senior year?

This depends on the application deadline. Check with each individual school or ask your counselor to provide some guidance.

Should I create a professional email address?

Do not use an e-mail address that uses questionable words/language. Do not use your cherrycreekschools.org email as it will be purged after you graduate and this email is the main way colleges will communicate with you once you are admitted. You may want to create a new email address for college application and scholarship purposes.

What about social media? Is it okay for an admission counselor to see my page?

College admission officials make a point of understanding social media that high school students are using. It is crucial that students maintain a professional public image on social media. The National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC) revealed that 25% of US colleges were searching for applicants on Facebook and/or search engines. In addition to maintaining a professional social media presence, also make sure that you understand the privacy settings within all social media that you use.

The Post Grad Center Responsibilities

- Meet with and counsel students and parents. May help compile initial prospective college lists or other post high school options as a starting point for consideration during junior conference.
- Publicize schedule of college admission representatives visiting Cherry Creek on Naviance under the “Colleges” tab home page.
- Educate students and parents through special events like Freshman/Sophomore /Junior/Senior Parent Nights, Evening with Deans of College Admission, Financial Aid Night, College Fair, Coffee Talk, and other special programs ([check here](#)).
- Advertise SAT/ACT test registration deadlines on www.cchspostgrad.com.
- Write official school counselor letter of recommendation **if** required by the college.
- Provide college essay help during first semester with master English teachers.
- Submit official transcript, school profile, letter(s) of recommendation to colleges as requested by the student with the blue transcript request form and \$5.00 per form. Also, you may submit a request for an updated 7th semester transcript with fall grades in January to be sent to any schools that either require it or if you think it would be helpful. This is a separate form and \$5.00 per form. Official transcripts must be submitted or mailed by the Post Grad Center.
- Provide ongoing advice and support to students and parents.

Note: The Post Grad Center does not keep track of application and/or scholarship deadlines for students.

Responsibilities of Students and Families

- Do preliminary research on colleges, read college catalogues and view books, visit with college representatives, talk with your counselor, utilize information on Naviance and attend special events.
- Register for all required testing – ACT, SAT. All Cherry Creek students are required to take the state SAT in April of their junior year.
- Arrange for college visits and possible interviews.
- Decide to which colleges you want to apply. Some students will apply to four or five schools covering a range of selectivity. Some students will apply to more schools and some will apply to fewer.
- Submit all completed blue transcript request forms to the Post Grad Specialists approximately three weeks before the college deadline.

- Ask teachers to write letter of recommendation during the spring of junior year. If the teacher agrees to write the letter, the teacher will upload the letter and the Common App teacher rec form in Naviance by October 1 of the senior year.
- Have your college application essay proofread by someone, but remember that this is your application. You need to ethically and responsibly write your personal statement and/or essays yourself.
- Notify testing services to send your official scores to colleges to which you are applying, if required.
- Search for and complete scholarship and financial aid forms.
- Schedule and prepare for music or drama auditions and/or all required art portfolios, etc.
- Register with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) if the student is a prospective athlete.
- Once you have decided where you are going to college, notify each of the other colleges to which you have been accepted of your decision to attend elsewhere.
- Make certain your acceptance deposit is sent to your final college of choice by the May 1 deadline. If a separate housing deposit is required, be sure to meet that deadline.
- Maintain a strong course load and strong grades throughout the senior year.

Students with Special Needs

The process of researching and selecting an appropriate college is a complex one for any student and their family. For the student with special needs, the process takes on even higher levels of complexity. But there is good news! More and more colleges are providing services and developing support programs for students with special needs. The goal of this section is to provide insight to students and their families as to the additional steps they must follow to ensure that they find a college that will meet the needs of their student.

Self-Advocacy

The best gift we can give our students is to teach them the skills to advocate for themselves. Once a student leaves high school, the jurisdiction of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) ends –this is where the school identifies students and provides them with appropriate services. In college, the responsibility shifts to the student to obtain services and accommodations in their classes.

Earlier Planning

For students on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, early college planning is key, particularly for students needing specific support programs or services. While most of the college planning buzz occurs for students in their junior and senior years, students with IEPs/504s can begin their college research earlier.

Understanding Independence

Choosing a college, particularly for students with disabilities, requires making judgments

about one's personal level of independence. How far from home will they be comfortable while adjusting to the increased personal and academic demands of college?

Levels of Support

- **Highly Structured Programs:** These college programs provide comprehensive services for students with learning disabilities. They are more likely to have separate admissions processes and charge additional fees over and above the general tuition costs. The number of students accepted is limited to ensure ideal staff/student ratios.
- **Coordinated Services:** These services are provided to students who voluntarily identify themselves as in need of academic help and/or accommodations to be successful in college. Students may submit a special application and the Director of Support Services may be involved in the admission decision. Traditionally, the onus for receiving these types of services is on the student to advocate for themselves. There are usually no additional fees for these services.
- **Basic Services:** Most colleges will provide basic services that comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Sometimes these services are directed by persons knowledgeable about learning disabilities, so it is valuable to determine this when researching your colleges. The degree of effectiveness of basic services varies from college to college; it is up to the student to seek out these services.

Resources for Students with Special Needs

As with all students, it is crucial for students with special needs to visit college campuses, to better understand the available services and resources on the college campus. When scheduling a campus visit, you should make arrangements to meet with Disability Support Services (this name varies by campus). Doing so establishes the student's ability to self-advocate. It will also allow you the opportunity to ask faculty about what supports and resources are available to students.

Questions to Ask Colleges Regarding Special Needs Accommodations

- What are the procedures and timelines for applying for and receiving eligible services?
- What accommodations are available on campus and how are they accessed?
- Are there additional costs for services?
- Are students with similar needs being served at this school? If so, how many?
- Are tutorial services available? If so, who administers them –peers or professionals?
- Are policies in place to protect the confidentiality of student records?
- Is there someone who will help my student obtain the necessary services and accommodations?
- Is there a professional available who is knowledgeable about learning disabilities who will be available to help my student?
- Are there organized support groups for students with similar needs?

- Are there courses available to help students with time management, study skills, organization, test taking, etc.?

Outside Resources to Consider

- [K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with LD/ADHD \(13th Edition\)](#)
- [Learning Disabilities Association of America](#)
- [Association on Higher Education and Disability \(AHEAD\)](#)
- [National Center for Learning Disabilities](#)
- [CHADD: The National Resource on ADHD](#)

Undocumented Students

Undocumented students face numerous hurdles when seeking postsecondary options (college, careers and the military). We hope that the resources below will help inform, educate, and assist undocumented students at Cherry Creek.

General Resources for Undocumented Students

- [FastWeb.com: 8 Things All Undocumented Students Should Know About Applying to College](#)
- [BestColleges.com: College Guide for Undocumented Students](#)
- [National Immigration Law Center: Education Information](#)
- [National Immigration Law Center: Basic Facts](#)
- [National Immigration Law Center: Financial Aid & Scholarships](#)
- [Federal Student Aid: Financial Aid & Undocumented Students](#)

Colorado Specific Resources for Undocumented Students

- [Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition](#)
- [Rocky Mountain Immigration Advocacy Network](#)

Athletics: The NCAA & The NAIA

Prospective athletes should work closely with their coaches to explore all opportunities for participation in collegiate athletics. Students should communicate their interests to their coaches and counselors early in the process and actively work to promote themselves to the colleges in which they are interested. While coaches at Cherry Creek are eager and willing to assist you in your search, the primary responsibility for contacting college coaches and following up lies with the student-athlete.

NOTE: The 16 core credits necessary for NCAA Initial Eligibility approval MUST be taken within the first eight semesters of high school. Look over the list of [Cherry Creek Approved NCAA Courses](#).

Levels of Participation

- *DIVISION I* –Typically larger schools with highly competitive sports; scholarships available.
- *DIVISION II* –Traditionally medium size schools with more regional orientation; scholarships maybe available.
- *DIVISION III* –Smaller schools; no athletic scholarships awarded.
- *NAIA* –Smaller schools, athletic scholarships may be available.

NCAA Initial Eligibility

During the Sophomore or Junior year, it is recommended that prospective athletes register with the NCAA Initial Eligibility Center in order to determine initial eligibility. The NCAA will evaluate transcripts and test scores to determine if each recruited athlete meets minimum eligibility requirements (listed on the next page). Register online at www.ncaaeligibilitycenter.net. Phone: 1-877-262-1491.



DIVISION I ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

College-bound student-athletes enrolling at an NCAA Division I school need to meet the following academic requirements to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship in their first year of full-time enrollment.

Core-Course Requirement

Complete 16 core courses in the following areas:



FULL QUALIFIER

- Complete 16 core courses.
 - Ten of the 16 core courses must be completed before the seventh semester (senior year) of high school.
 - Seven of the 10 core courses must be in English, math or natural/physical science.
- Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.300.
- Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching the core-course GPA on the Division I sliding scale (see back page).
- Graduate high school.

Full Qualifier

College-bound student-athletes may practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during their first year of full-time enrollment at an NCAA Division I school.

Academic Redshirt

College-bound student-athletes may receive an athletics scholarship during their first year of full-time enrollment and may practice during their first regular academic term, but may NOT compete during their first year of enrollment.

Nonqualifier

College-bound student-athletes will not be able to practice, compete or receive an athletics scholarship during their first year of full-time enrollment at an NCAA Division I school.

International Students

Please review the [international initial-eligibility flyer](#) for information and academic requirements specific to international student-athletes.

Click [here](#) for Division II academic requirements.

ACADEMIC REDSHIRT

- Complete 16 core courses.
- Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.000.
- Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching the core-course GPA on the Division I sliding scale (see back page).
- Graduate high school.





DIVISION II ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

CORE-COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Complete 16 core courses in the following areas:

| | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|---|
| ENGLISH | MATH (Algebra I or higher) | NATURAL/ PHYSICAL SCIENCE (Including one year of lab, if offered) | ADDITIONAL (English, math or natural/physical science) | SOCIAL SCIENCE | ADDITIONAL COURSES (Any area listed to the left, foreign language or comparative religion/philosophy) |
| 3 years | 2 years | 2 years | 3 years | 2 years | 4 years |

FULL QUALIFIER

College-bound student-athletes enrolling at an NCAA Division II school need to meet these academic requirements to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship in their first year of full-time enrollment.

- Complete 16 core courses in the appropriate areas.
- Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.200.
- Earn an SAT combined score or ACT sum score matching the core-course GPA on the Division II full qualifier sliding scale.
- Submit proof of graduation to the Eligibility Center.

PARTIAL QUALIFIER

College-bound student-athletes enrolling at an NCAA member school Aug. 1, 2021, or later, that do not meet Division II full qualifier standards will be deemed a partial qualifier. All Division II partial qualifiers may receive an athletics scholarship and practice during their first year of full-time enrollment at a Division II school, but may NOT compete.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Please review the [international initial-eligibility flyer](#) for information and academic requirements specific to international student-athletes.

For information on Division I, view the [Division I academic requirements flyer](#).



WHAT IS A CORE COURSE?

NCAA schools require college-bound student-athletes to build a foundation of high school courses (core courses) to prepare them for the academic expectations in college.

For a high school class to be an NCAA-approved core course, it *must* meet these conditions:

1. Be a four-year college preparatory course in one of these subject areas:
 - English.
 - Math (Algebra I or higher).
 - Natural/physical science.
 - Social science.
 - Foreign language.
 - Comparative religion or philosophy.
2. Be taught at or above your high school's regular academic level.
3. Receive credit toward high school graduation and appear on an official transcript with course title, grade and credit awarded.

Approved classes are added to your school's list of NCAA-approved core courses. Make sure you are taking courses on the approved list; ask your counselor if you need help.

What is Not a Core Course

Not all high school classes are NCAA-approved core courses. Some examples of courses that are not NCAA-approved core courses include:

- Courses in non-core areas, such as driver education, typing, art, music, physical education or welding.
- Courses that prepare students for the world of work or life, or for a two-year college or technical school, such as personal finance, consumer education or tech prep.
- Courses taught below grade level, at a slower pace or with less rigor or depth, such as basic, essential, fundamental or foundational courses.
- Credit-by-exam courses.

Core-Course Credits

You can earn credit for a core course only once. If you take a course that repeats the content of another core course, you earn credit for only one of these courses and the higher grade counts toward your core-course GPA. For more information on core-course credits, visit ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/core-courses.

Courses Taken Before High School

If you take a high school class such as Algebra I or Spanish I in eighth grade, the class may count toward your 16 core courses if it appears on your high school's list of NCAA-approved core courses and is shown on your high school transcript with grade and credit.

Courses Taken After High School

For information about courses taken after high school, see page 20 for Division I or page 23 for Division II.

College Courses, Dual-Enrollment Courses and Dual-Credit Courses

College courses may be used to satisfy NCAA core-course requirements if the courses are awarded a grade and credit by the high school for any student and meet all other requirements for core courses. College courses must be placed on the student's high school transcript with clarification of college completion.

REMEMBER

Find your high school's list of NCAA-approved core courses at eligibilitycenter.org/courselist.



NONTRADITIONAL AND ONLINE COURSES

Nontraditional courses are taught online or through distance learning, hybrid/blended, independent study, individualized instruction, correspondence or similar means.

Generally, for a nontraditional course to count as an NCAA-approved core course, it must meet *all* of the following requirements:

- The course must meet all requirements for an NCAA-approved core course.
- All students in the course must have regular instructor-led interaction for the purpose of instruction, evaluation and assistance for the duration of the course. This may include, for example, exchanging emails between the student and teacher, online chats, phone calls, feedback on assignments and the opportunity for the teacher to engage the student in individual or group instruction.
- The course must have a defined time period for completion. For example, it should be clear how long students are required to be enrolled and working in the course and how long a school would permit a student to work on a single nontraditional course.
- Student work (e.g., exams, papers, assignments) must be available for evaluation and validation.
- The course should be clearly identified as nontraditional on the student's official high school transcript.



A nontraditional course may not be approved for any of the following reasons:

- Does not have teacher-based instruction.
- Does not require regular and ongoing instructor-led interaction between the student and teacher.
- Does not require students to complete the entire course.
- Does not prepare students for four-year college class work.
- Does not have official student grade records.
- Does not meet NCAA core-course requirements.

When viewing the school/program's course list, you will find information about any nontraditional programs or courses in the "Additional Information" box as seen below.

REMEMBER



Log in to your NCAA Eligibility Center account frequently to update your school information if you take courses from additional academic programs.

To find out if a nontraditional program or course is approved, go to eligibilitycenter.org/courselist to search the school/program and view the respective additional information boxes.

Additional Information

Coursework from this school/program meets NCAA nontraditional core-course legislation.

How am I Going to Pay for This?

Paying for college can be as stressful as applying. Financial aid for college education is available from a variety of sources. Awards are principally based upon need as determined by filing the FAFSA and CSS PROFILE. The person best qualified to give information and answer questions is the financial aid officer of the college to which you are applying. We strongly suggest that you establish a working relationship with the financial aid office at the college(s) in which you are most interested. Financial aid usually comes in a variety of forms and may include:

[Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#)

Beginning in October, high school seniors and their families will be allowed to file the FAFSA using Prior-Prior Year (PPY) tax data. (For example, a high school senior planning to enroll in college in fall would use tax information from prior/prior tax year on his/her FAFSA application.) The application can be located on the [FAFSA website](#). Cherry Creek hosts a Financial Aid Night in October. Families that have additional questions can contact the Student Aid Hotline at the U.S. Department of Education at (800) 4FED-AID.

Types of Financial Aid

- Grants are typically based on financial need and do not need to be repaid.
- Scholarships may be awarded based on academics, special achievements, or involvement in school or community activities. Financial need is sometimes a factor. Scholarships are known as gift aid and do not need to be repaid.
- Loans are a significant part of most aid packages. The loan must be repaid, though most often not until after graduation. Interest rates are usually lower than other types of loans. The repayment period varies from two to three years up to thirty years.
- Work Study refers to part-time employment on campus. Funding is provided through the Federal Work Study Program or institutional funds.

[College Board's College Scholarship Service \(CSS PROFILE\)](#)

Since there is a cost for this service, students should check directly with their prospective college(s) to be sure the CSS PROFILE is required. Used mainly by selective, private institutions, the CSS PROFILE utilizes institutional methodology which differs somewhat from the calculation performed by the federal government. The CSS PROFILE collects more specific data than the FAFSA and sends it to colleges. Families can complete this form early in the student's senior year, and should do so at www.collegeboard.org.

College-Specific Financial Aid Forms

Some schools ask students to complete an individual financial aid document from their own financial aid office. Such forms are typically mailed to accepted students or may be included in the application packet.

NOTE: Make sure you work with your college's Financial Aid/Scholarship Office to pursue an optimum financial aid package.

Financial Aid Clarifications

There is a lot of information (and misinformation) regarding financial aid. The following information is being provided to assist with any confusion.

How will I get financial aid information (FAFSA) to my colleges?

When completing the FAFSA, you can list up to 10 schools that you are applying to, along with a housing plan for each. If you're applying to more than 10 schools, you can add the additional schools later (after your initial applications have been accepted by the colleges). Information from the FAFSA will be sent to the 10 colleges you list, so that each can determine how much aid to award your family. If a university has multiple campuses, each campus should be listed separately. You can find the college/university's code using the [FAFSA Federal School Code Search](#).

How do I find out how much my Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) is?

FAFSA will send you a report, called a Student Aid Report (SAR), by email. The SAR list the information you reported on your FAFSA. On this report will be your EFC number.

Is there a way I can find an estimate of how much I might need to pay for college?

Yes! The federal government requires all colleges to have a Net Price Calculator on their website. The calculator is meant to provide a reliable estimate of how much it will cost to attend a particular college, based on a family's financial circumstances. Instead of looking at college prices at the last minute after you've been accepted to a school, you can start comparison shopping early during your college search. A comprehensive list of college Net Price Calculators can be found [here](#).

In-state public schools are the most affordable option, right?

Do not be fooled by the "in-state schools are less expensive" syndrome. This is not always true. Private schools charge the same amount for tuition for both in-state and out-of-state students. Private colleges' scholarships, however, can even the playing field when it comes to cost. Also, merit-based scholarships for out-of-state public institutions may make those schools less expensive than in-state schools as well.

Can I ask a school for more money?

When appealing or mediating a financial aid award, it is best for the family to deal directly with the college. Parents/students should contact the college if there has been a change in family circumstances since the student's financial aid application was submitted, or if there is information that was not reported on the original application. Families may want to provide information that was not asked for on the financial aid forms, or explain why the EFC is not reasonable. Students and parents should understand the college's appeal process policies before contacting the financial aid office for such requests.

Financial Aid & Scholarship Websites

Begin your scholarship search at the colleges in which you are most interested. The Post Grad Center maintains the scholarship list on Naviance that includes information for all scholarship programs for which we receive mailing information. The internet is the best place to search for online applications, scholarships, and general information. Please check out the following sites:

www.fastweb.com (Best known and most reputable scholarship database)

www.gocollege.com (Free scholarship search, plus college search)

www.finaid.org (Very comprehensive financial aid site)

www.studentaid.ed.gov (Federal Student Aid)

www.fafsa.ed.gov (FAFSA on the Web and Federal Codes)

www.moneycentral.msn.com/family/home.asp (Paying for College)

20 Questions to Ask a College About Financial Aid

1. What's the average total cost of attendance (tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, travel, and other personal expenses)? Do any of these costs vary by program?
2. What are the ranges of costs for the different housing options and meal plans?
3. By how much should I expect my costs to increase each year? (A three- to five-year history of cost increases should be available.)
4. Does financial need have an impact on admission decisions?
5. How is financial aid affected if I apply via an Early Decision or Early Action program?
6. Does the school offer scholarships or other types of aid that aren't based on financial need?
7. What forms are required to apply for financial aid?
8. What is the priority deadline to apply for financial aid?
9. When will I be notified about financial aid award decisions?
10. Will the financial aid offer take into account the full cost of attending, including books and supplies, transportation and personal expenses?
11. What percentage of need does this college attempt to meet on average?
12. Will the financial aid office provide me with an explanation of how my financial need and award package were determined?
13. What financing options are available to help us pay our share of the costs?
14. What is the average amount of student loan debt incurred by graduates?

15. If the financial aid package isn't enough, can I appeal? Under what conditions, if any, will the aid office reconsider the offer?
16. How will the aid package change from year to year? What will happen if my enrollment status or my family's financial situation changes?
17. What are the academic requirements or other conditions for the renewal of financial aid, including scholarships?
18. When can I expect to receive bills from the college? Is there an option to spread the yearly payment over equal monthly installments?
19. How much money will I need during the first week of school for books, supplies and other initial expenses? Can these expenses be charged to my account?
20. Regarding student employment, including the Federal Work-Study Program: How are jobs assigned? How many hours per week are students expected or allowed to work? How often and in what manner are they paid?

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The Transition to College

It is always a big relief once the college admissions process is over and you have found a new home for the next four years. There are many parts of this new freedom that can sound exhilarating, but it is also a time to start thinking about how you manage the new challenges that you will have in your life. How you will manage your new-found extra time while balancing academics and your outside interests and activities? How will you deal with your first issue with a roommate? Consider reviewing books and websites that are helpful in providing practical advice.

Glossary of College Terms

- *ACT -American College Test:* The test is composed of four 35-50 minute sections in English usage, mathematics, reading and natural science reasoning. It tests both reasoning ability and knowledge of specific subject matter. Use of calculators is allowed on the mathematics portion of the exam.
- *Application Deadline:* The date by which applications, including transcripts and SAT/ACT scores, as well as letters of recommendation and supplemental portfolios, are due at a college. Deadlines vary by college – it is a student’s responsibility to research each school’s application policy and procedures to confirm deadlines.
- *AP Tests:* Advanced Placement Tests are given at the end of AP coursework each spring. High scores can earn advanced standing in colleges, with or without college credit.
- *Associate’s Degree:* Typically, a two-year degree that is completed at a community/junior college. When a student transfers to a four-year institution, an associate’s degree typically will fulfill the general education requirements.
- *Bachelor’s Degree:* Typically, a four-year degree that results in a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Fine Arts.
- *Common Application:* A single application which is accepted by more than 900 institutions. After completing the general Common Application, students may need to complete a school-specific supplemental document. Once all required documents are completed, a student will submit the application individually to each school.
- *Consortium:* Several colleges and universities within close proximity that allow students the opportunity to use the libraries or take classes at all member institutions. Consortium members often present joint lecture programs or unusual courses.
- *Deferred Admission:* Deferred admission is a plan which permits a student, once accepted, to postpone matriculation for one year, in order to pursue other plans.
- *Deferred Decision:* The college or university determines that more information is needed to make a final decision about a candidate’s application. Often the decision is delayed until additional grades and/or new test scores are received.
- *Early Action:* A plan that invites early applications, but does not require the student to attend if accepted. The application deadline is usually in early November through December.
- *Early Decision:* A plan, offered by a select number of colleges, that invites early applications, and requires the student to attend if accepted. The application deadline is usually in early

November. If accepted through Early Decision, the student must withdraw all other applications immediately.

- *Gap Year*: A one-year program that a student completes before beginning their college education. Gap years take on many looks, from service-based to self-exploration. Students should check with colleges about deferring admission to complete a gap year before applying.
- *Grade Point Average (GPA)*: The cumulative average of all your grades. The GPA is calculated at the end of each semester.
- *Master's Degree*: A 2+ year degree program that would occur after a student earns their Bachelor's degree.
- *Need-Blind*: The philosophical position that a college accepts a student on the basis of his or her meeting specific requirements, without regard to the student's ability to pay. The understanding is that the school's Financial Aid Office will assemble an appropriate package for the student.
- *Priority Deadline*: Rolling admission colleges that have priority deadlines inform students earlier if they have been admitted, and may give priority for housing or financial aid.
- *Reach School*: A school where the student's GPA and ACT/SAT scores are at or below the average accepted scores. All highly-selective & Ivy schools are reach schools for all students.
- *Regular Decision*: The last deadline a student may apply to a college. Students generally apply anytime between January 1 and early March, with notification responses received by April 1.
- *Rolling Admission*: After receiving an application, a college will notify the applicant as soon as the application has been processed (usually 4-6 weeks) and the file is complete. It is to the student's advantage to apply as early as possible.
- *Restrictive Early Action*: A plan that invites early applications, but does not require the student to attend if accepted; however, students may not apply Early Decision/Early Action to any other school. The application deadline is usually in early November through December.
- *Safety/Foundation School*: A school where the student's GPA and ACT/SAT are at or above the average accepted scores. Also, a school that is financially reasonable for the student/family.
- *Target School*: A school where the student's GPA and ACT/SAT are at the average accepted scores.
- *Transcript*: The student's academic record that is sent by the high school to the colleges requiring the transcript for admission purposes. This includes courses taken, final grades, cumulative GPA, and work in progress (senior courses).

- *Waitlist*: A list maintained by selective schools containing names of students predicted to succeed at the institution but not accepted until those initially accepted notify the school if they will attend. If space remains, the school contacts waitlisted students generally between May 1 and August 1.

Financial Aid Terminology

- *Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)*: Your family's wages, salaries, interest, dividends, etc., minus certain deductions from income as reported on a federal income tax return.
- *Award Amount*: Amount of aid a school expects to pay a student based on the student's current grant and loan eligibility, enrollment, Expected Family Contribution (EFC), and the school's cost of attendance.
- *Award Letter*: An offer from a college that states the type and amount of financial aid the school is willing to provide if you accept admission and register to take classes at the school.
- *Award Year*: School year for which financial aid is used to fund a student's education. Generally, this is the 12-month period that goes from July 1 – June 30.
- *Cost of Attendance*: The total amount it will cost you to go to a school – usually stated as a yearly figure. Includes tuition and fees, room and board, and allowances for books, supplies, transportation, loan fees and dependent care.
- *Dependency Status*: The determination of a FAFSA applicant as dependent or independent.
- *Direct Loan*: A federal student loan, made through the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, for which eligible students and parents borrow directly from the U.S. Dept. of Education at participating schools.
- *Direct PLUS Loan*: A loan made by the U.S. Dept. of Education to graduate or professional students and parents of dependent undergraduate students for which the borrower is fully responsible for paying the interest, regardless of loan status.
- *Disbursement*: Payment of federal student aid funds to the student by the school. Students generally receive their federal student funds in two or more disbursements.
- *Emancipated Minor*: An individual (under the age of 18) who has legally been determined to be an adult by a court in his/her state of legal residence.
- *Expected Family Contribution (EFC)*: The number that is used to determine your eligibility for federal student financial aid. This number results from the financial information you provide in your FAFSA application.

- *FAFSA*: Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- *Federal Pell Grant*: A federal grant for undergraduate students with financial need.
- *Federal Perkins Loan*: A federal student loan, made by the recipient's school, for undergraduate and graduate students who demonstrate financial need.
- *Federal School Code*: An identifier that the U.S. Dept. of Education assigns to each college/school that participates in the federal student aid programs. In order to send your FAFSA information to a school, you must list the school's Federal School Code on your application.
- *Federal Student Aid*: Financial aid from the federal government to help you pay for education expenses at an eligible college. Grants, loans and work-study are types of federal student aid. You must complete the FAFSA to apply for this aid.
- *Federal Student Loan*: A loan funded by the federal government to help pay for your education. A federal student loan is borrowed money you must repay with interest.
- *Federal Work-Study*: A federal student aid program that provides part-time employment while you are enrolled in school to help pay your education expenses.
- *Financial Need*: The difference between the cost of attendance (COA) at a school and your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). While COA varies from school to school, your EFC does not change based on the school you attend.
- *Grant*: Financial aid, often based on financial need, that does not need to be repaid (unless, for example, you withdraw from school and owe a refund).
- *Homeless*: An individual is considered homeless if he/she lacks fixed, regular and adequate housing.
- *Independent Student*: A student who is one of the following: at least 24 years old; married; a graduate or professional student; a veteran; a member of the armed forces; an orphan; a ward of the court; someone with legal dependents other than a spouse; an emancipated minor; someone who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- *Interest*: A loan expense charged for the use of borrowed money. Interest is paid by a borrower to a lender. The expense is calculated as a percentage of the unpaid principal loan amount.
- *Legal Guardianship*: A relationship created by court order through which the court appoints an individual other than a minor's parent to take care of the minor.
- *Merit-Based Aid*: Based on a student's skill or ability. For example: a merit-based scholarship might be awarded based on a student's grades and test scores.

- *Need-based Aid*: Based on a student's financial need. For example: a need-based grant might be awarded based on a student's low income.
- *Net Price*: An estimate of the actual cost that a student and family needs to/must pay in a given year to cover education expenses for the student to attend a particular school.
- *Net Price Calculator*: A tool that allows a current and prospective students, families, and other consumers to estimate the net price of attending a particular school.
- *PLUS Loan*: A loan available to graduate students and parents of dependent undergraduate students for which the borrower is fully responsible for paying the interest, regardless of the loan status.
- *Private Loan*: A non-federal loan made by a lender such as a bank, credit union, state agency, or school.
- *Room & Board*: An allowance for the cost of housing and food while attending college.
- *Scholarship*: Money awarded to students based on academic or other achievements needed to help pay for education expenses.
- *Student Aid Report (SAR)*: A summary of the information you submitted on your FAFSA. You receive this report via email a few days after your FAFSA has been processed, or by mail within 7-10 days if you did not provide an e-mail address. If there are no corrections or additional information needed, the SAR will contain your EFC.
- *Subsidized Loan*: A loan based on financial need for which the federal government pays the interest that accrues while the borrower is in school, grace period, or deferment status.
- *Unsubsidized Loan*: A loan for which the borrower is fully responsible for paying the interest, regardless of the loan status. Interest on unsubsidized loans accrues from the date of disbursement and continues throughout the life of the loan.

College Links/Resources

College Search

- www.collegedata.com
- www.campusexplorer.com
- www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator
- www.ctcl.org
- www.imfirst.org
- www.thehundred-seven.org/hbculist.html
- <https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/hispanic-serving-institutions-hsis/>
- www.ucas.com
- www.mappingyourfuture.org
- www.peterson.com

Testing

- www.fairtest.org
- www.collegeboard.com
- www.act.org
- www.toefl.org

Financial Aid and Scholarships

- www.fasfa.ed.gov
- <https://cof.college-assist.org/>
- www.nasfaa.org
- www.finaid.org
- www.salliemae.com
- www.uncf.org
- www.fastweb.com
- www.goingmerry.com
- www.scholarships.com
- www.unigo.com
- www.hsf.net

Students with Special Needs

- www.acb.org
- www.ahead.org
- www.chadd.org
- www.fcsn.org
- www.ldonline.org
- www.add.org

- www.nclد.org
- www.npnd.org

Multi-Cultural

- www.blackexcel.org
- www.uncf.org
- www.black-collegian.com
- www.hacu.net
- www.hsf.net
- www.naACP.org
- www.collegefund.org

Athletes

- www.ncaa.org

Career Search

- www.myroad.com
- www.myfuture.com
- www.mappingyourfuture.org
- www.careerweb.com

Applying to College

- www.commonapp.org
- <https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply-now.html>
- www.applytexas.org

