# CHERRY CREEK HIGH SCHOOL POSTGRADUATE AND COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE

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# APPENDICES

**A** Four-Year Post Graduate & College Planning Timeline

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# Welcome to Post Graduate College and Career Counseling!

Planning for life after high school is one of the most exciting and meaningful journeys a student and family will undertake. Whether your student is considering a four-year college, community college, military service, trade school, apprenticeship, workforce entry, or another pathway, thoughtful planning and informed decision-making are essential to a successful transition.

This guide has been created to serve as a comprehensive resource throughout that journey. Inside, you will find information on the college search and application process, financial aid and scholarships, college visits, standardized testing, letters of recommendation, admissions options, and important timelines. You will also discover resources designed to help students explore a wide range of postsecondary opportunities and make decisions that align with their goals, interests, and aspirations.

At Cherry Creek High School, we believe the postsecondary planning process is about much more than gaining admission to a college. It is an opportunity for students to develop self-awareness, responsibility, independence, and decision-making skills that will serve them well throughout their lives. As students navigate this important transition, our goal is to provide guidance, resources, and support while empowering them to take ownership of their future.

Parents and guardians play a vital role in this process as well. We encourage you to serve as a source of support, encouragement, and perspective while allowing your student to take the lead whenever possible. Learning to advocate for themselves, meet deadlines, communicate effectively, and make informed choices are critical life skills that will help prepare them for success beyond high school.

The Cherry Creek High School Counseling Department and Post Grad Center are committed to partnering with students and families every step of the way. We are honored to be part of this important chapter and look forward to helping your student explore possibilities, pursue their goals, and confidently take the next step toward their future.

For additional resources, event information, and updates, please visit CCHS Post Grad Center. If you have questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the CCHS Counseling Department or Post Grad Center team.

**We look forward to partnering with you on this exciting journey and helping your student create a future filled with purpose, opportunity, and success.**

# About the Post Graduate Center

The Post Grad Center, located on the first floor of the Information Center (IC) and connected to the Counseling Department, serves as Cherry Creek High School's hub for postsecondary planning and career exploration. Our team of 13 counselors and two dedicated Post Grad Specialists works collaboratively to support students and families as they prepare for life after high school.

## Our Mission

The mission of the Post Grad Center is to empower students to make informed, confident decisions about their future. We provide comprehensive guidance and resources related to postsecondary education, career exploration, financial aid, scholarships, and workforce opportunities. Through strong partnerships with colleges, universities, employers, military representatives, and community organizations, we help students identify and pursue pathways that align with their goals, interests, and aspirations.

## How the Post Grad Center Supports Students

The Post Grad Center offers a wide range of services and resources, including:

- **College & University Exploration** – Meet with admissions representatives from colleges and universities across the United States and around the world.
- **College Application Support** – Receive guidance throughout the application process, including application planning, essays, recommendations, and deadlines.
- **Financial Aid & Scholarship Assistance** – Learn about FAFSA, CSS Profile, scholarships, grants, loans, and strategies for making college affordable.
- **Career Exploration & Planning** – Explore careers, majors, occupations, and workforce opportunities that align with your strengths and interests.
- **Standardized Testing Resources** – Access information about the SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and other testing opportunities.
- **Military Pathways** – Connect with military representatives and learn about service academies, ROTC programs, enlistment options, and educational benefits.
- **Summer Enrichment Opportunities** – Discover academic programs, internships, leadership experiences, research opportunities, and summer programs that support personal and professional growth.
- **Postsecondary Planning Events** – Participate in college fairs, financial aid nights, workshops, admissions presentations, and career-focused programs throughout the year.

## Partnering for Student Success

At Cherry Creek High School, we believe every student deserves a plan for their future. Whether a student is pursuing a four-year college, community college, trade school, military service, apprenticeship, workforce entry, or another pathway, the Post Grad Center is committed to providing the guidance, resources, and support needed to help them achieve their goals.

For additional resources, upcoming events, and planning tools, visit CCHS Post Grad Center.

**We look forward to partnering with students and families as they prepare for a successful and meaningful future beyond Cherry Creek High School.**

# The Counseling Team

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lisa Wiese | A – Bok | Olivia Causer | New - Rie |
| Deana Tucker | Bol – Dan | McCall Pace | Rif - Sn |
| Erin McClure | Dao – Garc | Christine Snow | So - T |
| Braedan Lanham | Gard – Huh | Toni Cole | U - Z |
| Tyler Fischels | Hui – Lak | Kacey Morgan | GT Students A-K |
| Shelly Johnson | Lal – Mat | Stephanie Worrell | GT Students L-Z |
| Craig Wittgrove | Mau – Nev | Renee Beck | GT Counselor |

# Postsecondary Pathways: Exploring Your Options After High School

There is no single "right" path after high school. The best postsecondary plan is the one that aligns with a student's interests, strengths, goals, and aspirations. While research consistently shows that additional education and training often lead to increased career opportunities and higher lifetime earnings, students have many pathways available to achieve success.

The following options represent some of the most common routes students pursue after graduation.

## Four-Year Colleges & Universities

Four-year colleges and universities provide students with a broad educational experience while allowing them to specialize in an academic field through a major and, in some cases, a minor. Students typically earn a bachelor's degree and may choose to continue their education through graduate or professional programs, including master's, doctoral, medical, law, or other advanced degrees.

These institutions offer opportunities for academic exploration, research, leadership development, internships, study abroad experiences, and campus involvement. Four-year colleges may be public or private and vary widely in size, cost, selectivity, and campus culture.

**Examples:**

- University of Colorado Boulder
- Colorado State University
- University of Denver
- Colorado College
- Metropolitan State University of Denver

## Community and Junior Colleges

Community and junior colleges provide accessible, affordable educational opportunities for students seeking career training, workforce credentials, or a pathway to a four-year degree. Students can earn certificates, industry-recognized credentials, or associate degrees while completing coursework that often transfers seamlessly to four-year institutions.

Many students choose to begin their education at a community college to save money, explore academic interests, improve academic preparation, or remain close to home before transferring to a university.

**Benefits include:**

- Lower tuition costs
- Smaller class sizes
- Flexible scheduling
- Career-focused programs
- Transfer opportunities to four-year colleges and universities

**Examples:**

- Arapahoe Community College
- Community College of Denver
- Northeastern Junior College

## Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Career and technical schools prepare students for high-demand careers through specialized, hands-on training. Programs focus on developing practical skills and industry certifications that can lead directly to employment.

Fields of study may include:

- Healthcare
- Automotive technology
- Construction trades
- Information technology
- Culinary arts
- Cosmetology
- Welding
- Advanced manufacturing

Students often complete programs in less time than a traditional college degree while gaining skills that employers actively seek.

**Examples:**

- Cherry Creek Innovation Campus (CCIC)
- Pickens Technical College
- Emily Griffith Technical College

## Apprenticeships and Skilled Trades

Apprenticeships provide an opportunity to **earn while you learn**. Participants receive paid, on-the-job training while simultaneously completing classroom instruction. Apprentices work alongside experienced professionals and develop skills in a specific trade or industry.

Programs typically range from one to six years, depending on the occupation. Upon completion, apprentices earn industry-recognized credentials and often move directly into well-paying careers.

Common apprenticeship fields include:

- Electrician
- Carpenter
- Plumber
- HVAC Technician
- Sheet Metal Worker
- Machinist
- Welder
- Construction Trades
- Culinary Arts

For students who enjoy hands-on learning and want to enter the workforce with little or no student debt, apprenticeships can be an excellent pathway.

For more information, visit:
CareerWise Colorado

## Military Opportunities

Military service offers opportunities for career training, leadership development, educational benefits, and service to the nation. The United States Armed Forces provide training in hundreds of career fields, including healthcare, engineering, aviation, cybersecurity, logistics, intelligence, and communications.

Students interested in military careers can explore opportunities through:

- Active Duty Service
- Reserve Components
- National Guard
- ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps)
- Service Academies

Military members may also qualify for educational benefits, including tuition assistance and the GI Bill, which can help fund future college or career training.

The Cherry Creek School District periodically offers the **ASVAB Career Exploration Program**, which helps students assess interests, strengths, and potential career paths. Students interested in taking the ASVAB should contact their counselor for upcoming testing dates.

**Military Branches:**

- United States Army
- United States Navy
- United States Air Force
- United States Marine Corps
- United States Coast Guard
- United States Merchant Marine
- United States Space Force

## Gap Year Programs

A Gap Year is a structured experience between high school and college or career training that allows students to gain valuable life experience, develop independence, and explore personal interests before continuing their education.

Gap Year opportunities may include:

- International travel
- Community service
- Cultural immersion
- Outdoor leadership programs
- Language study
- Professional internships
- Volunteer experiences
- Faith-based service programs

Students who participate in well-planned Gap Year experiences often report increased maturity, stronger self-confidence, and greater clarity regarding their future educational and career goals.

Many colleges and universities support Gap Year experiences and allow admitted students to defer enrollment for one year.

**Additional Resources:**

- Gap Year Association
- American Gap Association

## Finding the Right Path

Success after high school is not defined by a single destination. Whether a student chooses a four-year university, community college, technical program, apprenticeship, military service, workforce entry, or Gap Year experience, the key is selecting a pathway that aligns with their interests, strengths, values, and long-term goals.

The Cherry Creek High School Counseling Department and Post Grad Center are committed to helping every student explore their options, develop a personalized plan, and confidently take the next step toward a successful future.

# Thoughts on College Admission

The college admission process can sometimes feel overwhelming, but with thoughtful planning, organization, and an open mind, it can also be one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences of your high school years. As you begin exploring your options, remember that your goal is not simply to gain admission to college—it is to find a college that is the right fit for you academically, socially, personally, and financially.

The "best" college is not necessarily the one with the lowest acceptance rate, the highest ranking, or the most recognizable name. The best college is the one where you will be challenged, supported, engaged, and positioned to achieve your goals.

## Keys to a Successful College Search

### Take Ownership of the Process

Your postsecondary journey belongs to you. Approach the college search with curiosity and enthusiasm rather than viewing it as another assignment. The time and effort you invest in researching colleges, attending events, visiting campuses, and exploring your interests will help you make a more informed and confident decision.

### Keep an Open Mind

One of the greatest mistakes students make is limiting their search to a small group of familiar schools. Thousands of colleges and universities offer outstanding opportunities. Be willing to explore institutions you may not have previously considered—you might discover a school that is an even better fit than your original choices.

### Look Beyond Rankings

College rankings and social media discussions often create unnecessary pressure and misconceptions. Rankings rarely account for the factors that matter most to an individual student, such as academic programs, campus culture, affordability, support services, and overall fit. Focus on finding the environment where you will thrive rather than chasing prestige.

### Remember That You Are More Than a Number

Your GPA, class rank, and test scores are only part of your story. Colleges review applications holistically and consider your coursework, activities, leadership experiences, personal qualities,

essays, and contributions to your school and community. Your value and potential cannot be measured by a single statistic.

### There Is No Such Thing as a Perfect College

Many students become fixated on one "dream school," but the reality is that there are numerous colleges where you can be successful and happy. Rather than searching for one perfect institution, focus on building a list of colleges that offer opportunities you would genuinely enjoy. A successful college search should result in multiple great options.

### Keep Rejections in Perspective

College admission decisions are often influenced by factors beyond a student's control. A denial does not diminish your accomplishments or potential. If one door closes, others will open. Students who create balanced college lists typically have several excellent options from which to choose.

## Smart Application Strategies

### Build a Balanced College List

Include a thoughtful mix of colleges that vary in selectivity. A balanced list typically includes:

- **Likely Schools:** Colleges where admission is highly probable.
- **Target Schools:** Colleges where your academic profile aligns well with admitted students.
- **Reach Schools:** Colleges where admission is more competitive or uncertain.

This approach maximizes your opportunities and helps ensure positive options during the spring of senior year.

### Consider Applying Early

Submitting an Early Action application to a college you would be excited to attend can provide an early admission decision and reduce stress during senior year. Receiving an acceptance early often boosts confidence and allows students to approach the remainder of the application process with greater peace of mind.

### Understand Early Action and Early Decision

Early Action and Early Decision programs can offer advantages, but they are not the right choice for every student.

- **Early Action (EA)** is typically non-binding, allowing students to apply early and receive an earlier decision while maintaining the freedom to consider other colleges.

- **Early Decision (ED)** is a binding agreement and should only be pursued when a student is certain that the institution is their first-choice college.

Discuss these options carefully with your counselor and family before making a decision.

**Visit Colleges Whenever Possible**

Campus visits remain one of the most valuable parts of the college search process. Visiting allows you to experience the campus environment, meet current students, explore academic facilities, and determine whether a college feels like a place where you can see yourself thriving. Demonstrated interest may also be considered in the admission process at some institutions.

**Student-Athletes: Start Early**

If you hope to compete in college athletics, begin communicating with coaches and researching programs as early as possible. Keep an open mind about opportunities at all levels, including NCAA Division I, Division II, Division III, NAIA, and junior colleges. Focus on finding a strong academic and personal fit—not just an athletic opportunity.

**Visual and Performing Arts Students: Create Multiple Pathways**

Students pursuing visual arts, music, theater, dance, or other creative fields should develop a balanced list that includes both specialized conservatories or arts schools and colleges or universities with strong arts programs. This strategy increases options while ensuring access to quality artistic and academic opportunities.

**Enjoy the Journey**

While college admissions can feel stressful at times, remember that senior year is also a time to celebrate your accomplishments, friendships, and growth. Stay focused on your goals, trust the process, and know that there are many pathways to a successful future.

# Thoughts on the College Search and Selection Process

Finding the right college is one of the most important decisions you will make during high school. While the process can feel overwhelming at times, approaching it thoughtfully and intentionally can help you identify colleges that align with your goals, interests, values, and aspirations.

Remember that the college search is a highly personal journey. What may be the perfect fit for one student may not be the best choice for another. Avoid comparing your college list, admission results, or plans with those of your friends and classmates. Instead, focus on finding the colleges where you can thrive academically, socially, personally, and financially.

The following questions and steps are designed to help guide your college search and encourage meaningful reflection throughout the process.

## Start with Self-Reflection

Before researching colleges, take time to think about your goals and what you hope to gain from your postsecondary experience.

Consider the following questions:

- Why do you want to attend college?
- What are your long-term personal, academic, and career goals?
- What experiences do you hope to have during college?
- What type of work or career interests you after graduation?
- What values, interests, and strengths are most important to you?

## Career and Academic Exploration

While it is perfectly acceptable to be undecided, it can be helpful to begin exploring possible career interests.

Ask yourself:

- Have you identified any potential career fields that interest you?
- What college majors might support those career goals?
- Do the colleges you are considering offer strong programs in your areas of interest?
- Are there opportunities for internships, research, study abroad, or hands-on learning within those programs?

Remember, many students change their majors during college. The goal is not to have all the answers today, but to begin exploring possibilities.

## Assess Your Academic Profile

An honest assessment of your academic preparation will help you build a balanced and realistic college list.

Consider:

- What are your academic strengths?
- Which subjects challenge you the most?
- How do your grades, course rigor, and test scores compare to the typical admitted student profile at colleges you are considering?
- Which colleges are likely, target, and reach schools based on your academic credentials?

Finding colleges that match your academic profile can increase both your admission opportunities and your likelihood of success once enrolled.

## Identify What Matters Most to You

Before focusing on specific college names, think about the characteristics of the college experience you want.

Important factors may include:

- Academic programs and majors
- Cost and affordability
- Financial aid opportunities
- Campus size
- Class sizes
- Geographic location
- Distance from home
- Campus culture and student life
- Diversity and inclusion
- Athletics and extracurricular activities
- Internship and career opportunities
- Housing and residential life

Tools such as Naviance SuperMatch, college search websites, and discussions with your counselor can help you clarify your priorities.

## Research and Explore Colleges

Once you have identified your priorities, begin gathering information about colleges that match your interests and goals.

Ways to learn more include:

- Exploring college websites
- Attending college fairs
- Meeting with college admissions representatives at Cherry Creek High School
- Participating in virtual information sessions
- Speaking with current students and alumni
- Following colleges on social media
- Reviewing academic programs and campus resources
- Visiting campuses whenever possible

The more information you gather, the easier it becomes to determine whether a college is a good fit.

## Understand the Financial Commitment

College is a significant investment, making financial planning an essential part of the search process.

As you evaluate colleges, consider:

- Tuition and fees
- Housing and meal costs
- Books and supplies
- Transportation expenses
- Personal expenses
- Scholarship opportunities
- Financial aid availability

Questions to ask yourself:

- What financial resources are available to my family?
- Will I need financial aid?
- What scholarship opportunities exist at each college?
- Have I reviewed the college's Net Price Calculator?

Understanding costs early in the process can help you build a college list that is both exciting and financially realistic.

## Learn the Admission Process

Every college has its own admission requirements, deadlines, and procedures. Staying organized and informed is critical.

Be sure to research:

- Application deadlines
- Application platforms (Common App, Coalition App, institutional applications, etc.)
- Required essays and supplemental materials
- Letters of recommendation
- Standardized testing policies
- Portfolio, audition, or interview requirements (if applicable)
- Scholarship and financial aid deadlines

Missing a deadline can significantly impact your opportunities, so create a system to track important dates.

## Reevaluate and Refine Your List

As you learn more about yourself and the colleges you are considering, your preferences may change—and that is perfectly normal.

Throughout the process:

- Revisit your priorities regularly.
- Compare colleges based on fit rather than prestige.
- Discuss your options with family members, teachers, counselors, and trusted mentors.
- Stay open-minded to new possibilities.

The goal is not to find the "perfect" college, but rather several colleges where you can be successful and happy.

## Partner with Your Counselor

You do not have to navigate this process alone. Your counselor is an important resource and partner throughout your college search.

Your counselor can assist with:

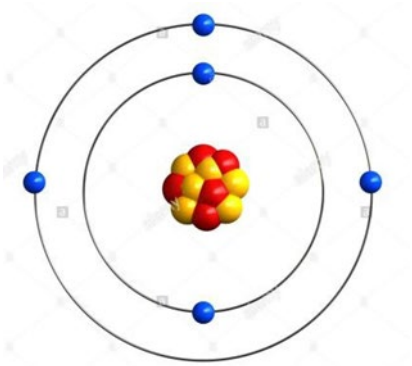
- College selection and fit
- Application planning
- Admission strategies
- Financial aid resources
- Letters of recommendation
- Transcript requests
- Scholarship opportunities
- Postsecondary planning questions

The most successful college searches occur when students take ownership of the process while utilizing the support and expertise available to them.

## Final Thought

The college search is not about finding the most prestigious institution—it is about finding the place that is the best fit for you. Take time to reflect, explore, ask questions, and remain open to possibilities. By approaching the process thoughtfully and proactively, you will be well-positioned to make a confident and informed decision about your future.

# "Finding Your Best-Fit Colleges: The Five First-Choice College Model."



Cherry Creek High School encourages students to approach the college search process using the **Five First-Choice College Model**, an advising philosophy developed by college counselor Barbara Conner of the Foxcroft School. This student-centered approach helps students create a thoughtful, balanced college list while reducing unnecessary stress and promoting positive admission outcomes.

Rather than focusing on prestige, rankings, or highly selective institutions, this model encourages students to identify a core group of colleges where they are likely to thrive academically, socially, personally, and financially.

## What Are Your Five First-Choice Colleges?

Your Five First-Choice Colleges should represent institutions that you would be genuinely excited to attend and that meet the following criteria:

## Academic Fit

Select colleges where your academic credentials align well with those of recently admitted students.

Consider:

- Does my GPA, coursework, and testing profile fall within the typical range of admitted students?
- Do I have a reasonable likelihood of admission?
- Does the college offer strong programs in my areas of academic interest?

Students are encouraged to utilize Naviance scattergrams and admission data to better understand historical admission trends for Cherry Creek High School students.

## Personal and Social Fit

College is about much more than academics. Consider the environment where you will feel most comfortable, supported, and engaged.

Ask yourself:

- What type of campus community am I seeking?
- Do I prefer a large university, a small liberal arts college, or something in between?
- What extracurricular activities, traditions, and opportunities are important to me?
- Can I envision myself being happy and successful there for four years?

## Financial Fit

A college education is a significant investment. Families should have open and honest conversations early in the process about affordability and financial expectations.

Consider:

- Is this college financially realistic for my family?
- Have I researched scholarship opportunities and financial aid options?
- Have I used the college's Net Price Calculator?
- Does the value of the educational experience justify the projected cost?

The goal is to identify colleges that provide both opportunity and affordability.

## Enthusiastic Fit

Perhaps the most important question is simple:

**Would I be excited to attend this college if I were admitted?**

Every college on your Five First-Choice list should be a school where you can envision yourself thriving and achieving your goals. If you would be disappointed to attend a college, it probably should not be on your list.

## Why This Model Works

The college admission process has become increasingly complex and competitive. Too often, students focus on rankings, prestige, or a small number of highly selective institutions while overlooking colleges that may be a better fit.

The Five First-Choice College Model encourages students to:

- Focus on fit rather than prestige.
- Develop a balanced and realistic college list.
- Reduce anxiety surrounding admission decisions.
- Increase the likelihood of having multiple attractive admission offers.
- Make decisions based on personal goals and priorities rather than external pressure.

Students who follow this approach often experience greater confidence throughout the application process because they know they are applying to colleges where they can be successful and happy.

## Important Considerations

### Reach Schools Still Have a Place

Students are welcome to apply to highly selective colleges, including Ivy League institutions and other schools with very low admission rates. If a particular college excites you, it may certainly be included as a reach school.

However, colleges with admission rates below approximately 30 percent should not make up the majority of your application strategy and generally should not be considered part of your Five First-Choice Colleges.

### Balance Is Essential

A healthy college list typically includes:

- Likely Schools
- Target Schools
- Reach Schools

Your Five First-Choice Colleges should primarily consist of colleges where admission is realistic and where you would be excited to enroll.

### Multiple Great Options Are the Goal

The objective is not to find one "perfect" college. The goal is to identify several colleges that would provide an outstanding educational experience and help you achieve your future goals.

When students create a thoughtful and balanced list, admission season becomes less about hoping for one specific outcome and more about choosing among multiple excellent opportunities.

### Final Thought

The most successful college search is not about finding the most prestigious institution—it is about finding the colleges that are the best fit for you. By focusing on academic fit, personal fit, financial fit, and genuine excitement, you can build a college list that leads to meaningful opportunities, successful outcomes, and a rewarding college experience.

# How Colleges Evaluate Applications

One of the most common questions students ask is, *"What are colleges looking for?"* The answer is both simple and complex. Most colleges seek students who will contribute to their campus community, succeed academically, and take advantage of the opportunities available to them. While admission decisions are based on a variety of factors, there is no single formula that guarantees acceptance.

College admission is often described as a **holistic review process**, meaning admissions officers consider multiple aspects of a student's application rather than relying on any one factor. Understanding these components can help you focus your efforts and present the strongest possible application.

## Academic Performance

### High School Transcript

Your high school transcript is often the single most important component of your application. Colleges carefully review:

- Grades earned throughout high school
- Academic trends over time
- Overall academic performance
- Course rigor and progression

An upward trend in grades can demonstrate resilience, maturity, and growth, while consistent academic performance reflects strong preparation for college-level work.

### Course Rigor

Admissions officers want to see that students have challenged themselves appropriately within the context of their high school.

They may consider:

- Honors courses

- Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- Dual enrollment opportunities
- Advanced or specialized coursework

Colleges are often more interested in how students performed in challenging courses than in earning perfect grades in less rigorous classes.

## Standardized Testing

Many colleges and universities have adopted test-optional or test-flexible admission policies. However, some institutions still consider SAT or ACT scores as part of the admission process.

Students should research the testing policies of each college on their list and determine whether submitting scores will strengthen their application.

When available, strong test scores can provide additional evidence of academic preparedness, but they are typically considered alongside many other factors.

## Extracurricular Involvement

Colleges value students who pursue their interests with commitment, purpose, and enthusiasm.

Admissions officers often look for:

- Sustained involvement over time
- Leadership experiences
- Meaningful contributions
- Initiative and impact
- Passion and authenticity

Depth is generally more important than quantity. A student who demonstrates significant involvement in a few activities often stands out more than someone who participates superficially in many.

## Essays and Personal Statements

The essay provides an opportunity for students to move beyond grades and activities and share their story.

Strong essays often:

- Reveal character and personality
- Demonstrate self-reflection and growth
- Highlight meaningful experiences
- Showcase authentic voice and perspective

The goal is not to impress admissions officers with extraordinary accomplishments, but rather to help them understand who you are and what matters to you.

## Letters of Recommendation

### Counselor Recommendation

Counselor recommendations provide context about a student's academic program, personal qualities, contributions to the school community, and overall readiness for college.

### Teacher Recommendations

Teacher recommendations offer insight into a student's:

- Intellectual curiosity
- Classroom engagement
- Work ethic
- Character
- Ability to contribute to a college community

The strongest recommendations come from educators who know the student well and can provide specific examples.

## Personal Qualities and Character

Colleges are building communities, not simply admitting students based on statistics.

Admissions officers may evaluate qualities such as:

- Leadership
- Integrity
- Resilience
- Initiative
- Collaboration
- Empathy
- Motivation
- Intellectual curiosity

Evidence of these qualities can appear throughout an application, including essays, recommendations, activities, and interviews.

## Special Talents and Achievements

Students with exceptional accomplishments or talents may receive additional consideration.

Examples include:

- Athletics
- Visual arts
- Performing arts
- Research
- Entrepreneurship
- Community leadership
- National or international recognition

Colleges value students who bring unique perspectives, talents, and experiences to campus.

## Demonstrated Interest

Some colleges consider a student's level of engagement when making admission decisions.

Demonstrated interest may include:

- Visiting campus
- Attending information sessions
- Participating in virtual events
- Communicating with admissions representatives
- Opening emails and engaging with college communications
- Submitting thoughtful supplemental essays

Students should always communicate directly with colleges whenever possible, as this demonstrates initiative and ownership of the process.

*Note: Not all colleges track demonstrated interest, so be sure to research individual institutional policies.*

## Interviews

Although interviews are not required by most colleges, they can provide students with an opportunity to:

- Share their interests and goals
- Demonstrate enthusiasm for the institution
- Learn more about the college
- Add a personal dimension to their application

When offered, interviews can be a valuable part of the admission process.

## Institutional Priorities

In addition to evaluating individual applicants, colleges are also building a diverse and dynamic incoming class. As a result, institutional priorities may influence admission decisions.

These considerations can include:

- Geographic diversity
- Academic interests and intended majors
- First-generation college students
- Athletic recruitment
- Artistic talent
- Campus leadership needs
- Diversity of experiences and perspectives

Because colleges are shaping an entire class, admission decisions are not always a direct reflection of an individual student's qualifications.

## Legacy and Family Connections

Some colleges may consider alumni or family connections as one factor in the admission process. However, the significance of legacy status varies widely among institutions, and many colleges have reduced or eliminated its role in recent years.

## Understanding the Bigger Picture

College admission is not about finding a perfect student—it is about finding students who are a good fit for a particular institution. Every college evaluates applicants differently, and admission decisions are influenced by numerous factors beyond grades and test scores.

Rather than trying to "game" the process, focus on what matters most:

- Challenge yourself academically.
- Get involved in activities you genuinely enjoy.
- Build meaningful relationships with teachers and mentors.
- Pursue your interests with passion and purpose.
- Present an authentic and thoughtful application.

The strongest applications tell a compelling story about who a student is, what they value, and how they will contribute to a college community.

# Questions to Consider as You Begin Exploring Colleges

With more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States—and thousands more around the world—students today have an incredible number of opportunities to pursue their educational goals. Cherry Creek High School graduates attend institutions of every size and type, from large public universities and small liberal arts colleges to technical schools, military academies, and international universities.

While the sheer number of options can feel overwhelming, remember that you are not searching for the "best" college. You are searching for the college that is the **best fit for you**.

As you begin your college search, approach the process with curiosity, flexibility, and an open mind. The more time you spend exploring your options, the more likely you are to discover colleges that align with your academic interests, personal values, career goals, and financial circumstances.

The following questions are designed to help you identify the factors that matter most to you. As you research colleges, visit campuses, attend college fairs, and meet with admissions representatives, use these questions to guide your thinking and refine your college list.

## Academic Fit

### What do I want to study?

- Does the college offer my intended major or area of interest?
- How strong is the program academically?
- Are there opportunities for research, internships, study abroad, or experiential learning?
- Can I easily change majors or pursue multiple areas of interest?

### How challenging do I want my academic experience to be?

- Will I be appropriately challenged and supported?
- What are the average class sizes?
- Are classes taught primarily by professors or teaching assistants?
- What academic support services are available?

### What type of learning environment suits me best?

- Do I prefer discussion-based classes or large lectures?
- Would I thrive at a small liberal arts college or a large research university?
- How accessible are faculty members outside the classroom?

## Personal and Social Fit

**What type of campus community am I seeking?**

- Do I prefer a large, medium, or small student population?
- What is the campus culture like?
- Are students collaborative, competitive, laid-back, or highly involved?
- Can I see myself feeling comfortable and connected there?

**How important are extracurricular opportunities?**

- What clubs, organizations, and leadership opportunities are available?
- Are there opportunities to participate in student government, service projects, or campus traditions?
- What recreational, intramural, club, or varsity sports are offered?

**What does student life look like?**

- Is the campus active on weekends?
- What social activities are available?
- Are Greek organizations present, and if so, how significant is their role in campus life?
- What resources support student well-being and mental health?

## Location and Campus Environment

**Where do I want to live and learn?**

- Do I prefer an urban, suburban, or rural setting?
- How far from home would I like to be?
- Is access to transportation important?
- What type of climate would I enjoy?

**What does the campus feel like?**

- Does the campus environment energize me?
- Can I picture myself living there for four years?
- Are the facilities modern, welcoming, and well-maintained?

Remember that a campus visit often reveals things that brochures and websites cannot.

## Financial Fit

**Can my family realistically afford this college?**

- What is the total cost of attendance, including tuition, housing, meals, books, transportation, and personal expenses?
- What scholarship opportunities are available?
- Does the college offer strong need-based financial aid?
- Have I used the college's Net Price Calculator?

**What will my financial future look like?**

- How much student loan debt do graduates typically incur?
- What is the average starting salary of graduates in my intended field?
- Does the value of the educational experience justify the investment?

A great college fit must also be a financially sustainable one.

## Admission Considerations

**Is this college a realistic option for me?**

- What are the academic credentials of recently admitted students?
- Does my academic profile align with the college's admission standards?
- Is the college likely, target, or reach for me?

**What are the application requirements?**

- Does the college require essays, recommendations, interviews, portfolios, or auditions?
- Is the institution test-optional?
- What are the application and financial aid deadlines?

## Career and Future Outcomes

**How well does the college prepare students for life after graduation?**

- What percentage of students graduate within four to six years?
- What are the first-year retention rates?
- How strong are the internship and career placement opportunities?
- Which employers actively recruit graduates?
- What percentage of students pursue graduate or professional school?

**What support systems are available?**

- Does the college provide career counseling and job placement assistance?
- Are alumni networks active and supportive?
- Are mentorship opportunities available?

## Special Opportunities

**What experiences make this college unique?**

- Honors programs
- Undergraduate research
- Study abroad programs
- Learning communities
- Internship partnerships
- Leadership programs
- Service-learning opportunities
- Specialized academic tracks

Often, these distinctive opportunities become some of the most meaningful parts of a student's college experience.

### Final Reflection

As you explore colleges, remember that fit is more important than prestige. A college's ranking, reputation, or selectivity does not determine your future success. What matters most is finding a place where you will be challenged academically, supported personally, engaged socially, and able to achieve your goals.

Ask questions. Visit campuses. Keep an open mind. Most importantly, trust your instincts.

The right college is not necessarily the most famous college—it is the place where you can grow, thrive, and create your own path to success.

# Planning College Visits

A college visit should do more than give you a tour—it should help you answer one important question:

### "Can I see myself thriving here?"

Websites, rankings, brochures, and social media can tell you a lot about a college, but nothing replaces being on campus. A visit gives you the chance to experience the campus culture, interact with students and faculty, explore the spaces where you will live and learn, and determine whether the college feels like a place where you could be happy and successful.

### Before You Visit

**1. Do Your Homework**

- Explore the college's website before you arrive. Research your academic interests, housing options, student organizations, athletics, campus traditions, and support services.
- Identify **3–5 things you specifically want to learn or experience** while you are there.
- Prepare questions that go beyond what you can find online.

**2. Register Early**

- Sign up for an official admission tour or information session through the college's admissions website.
- If available, consider requesting:
  - An overnight stay with a current student
  - A meeting with a professor or academic department
  - A conversation with a coach
  - A visit to a specific program, residence hall, or student organization
- Whenever possible, visit **while students are on campus**. A quiet summer campus can look very different from a busy Tuesday in October.

## While You're There

**3. Look Beyond the Tour**

The official tour is only the beginning. Give yourself time to explore the campus independently.

Visit the places that will become part of your everyday life:

- Residence halls
- Dining facilities
- Library and academic buildings
- Student union
- Recreation center
- Classrooms and labs
- Athletic facilities
- Spaces where students gather and socialize

**Pay attention to the details.** Is the campus easy to navigate? Do students seem engaged? Is the atmosphere collaborative, competitive, relaxed, energetic, or something else?

**4. Talk to Current Students**

Students are often your best source of information because they have nothing to sell you.

Ask questions such as:

- *What do you wish you knew before coming here?*

- *What is the best thing about being a student here?*
- *What is the biggest drawback?*
- *How accessible are professors outside of class?*
- *What do students do on weekends?*
- *Is it easy to make friends?*
- *What happens when students are struggling academically or personally?*
- *How would you describe the culture here?*

Listen for what students **actually say**, not just what the admissions staff tells you.

**5. Experience the Community**

If possible, eat in the dining hall, sit in the student union, attend a class, watch a practice or game, visit a club meeting, or spend the night on campus.

Try to imagine an ordinary Wednesday—not move-in day, game day, or admitted-student weekend.

## "Could I be happy here on a random Wednesday?"

The answer to that question can tell you a lot.

## After the Visit

**6. Capture Your First Impressions**

Before you leave—or as soon as you get back—write down your honest reactions.

Consider rating each college on:

- Academic fit
- Campus culture
- Location
- Size
- Housing & dining
- Activities & social life
- Cost/value
- Overall feeling

Most importantly, answer:

What did I love? What concerned me? What surprised me? Can I picture myself here?

Take photos, but don't rely on pictures alone. Record how the campus made you feel.

## Make Your Visits Count

### 7. Visit Your Top Choices—But Don't Feel Pressure to Visit Every College

You do not need to visit every school on your list. Prioritize colleges where you have a serious interest, particularly those you are considering applying to or attending.

If you cannot visit in person, don't panic. Take a virtual tour, attend an online information session, connect with current students or alumni, and speak with your counselor about other ways to evaluate the college.

### 8. Thank the People Who Helped You

If a professor, coach, admissions representative, student, or other member of the college community takes time to meet with you, send a brief thank-you afterward. It is courteous, professional, and a great way to continue the relationship.

## Remember: You Are Visiting Them—and They Are Visiting You.

# Guidelines for Visiting with College Reps at Creek

College representatives visit Cherry Creek High School throughout the year to meet with students, share information about their colleges, and answer questions about the admission process. These meetings are a great opportunity to learn more about a college without having to travel to campus.

## Who Can Attend?

**Juniors and seniors** may attend college representative visits during the school day, provided they follow the steps below.

**Freshmen and sophomores** are encouraged to explore colleges through college fairs, presentations, and other events available throughout the Denver metro area.

## Before the College Visit

### 1. Register in Naviance

- Juniors and seniors must register for college representative visits through Naviance.
- Check Naviance regularly for the most up-to-date schedule of visiting colleges.
- Space may be limited, so register early.

**2. Get Permission From Your Teacher**

- **You must speak with your teacher and receive permission before missing class.**
- Do not assume that registering for a college visit automatically gives you permission to leave class.
- Be responsible for any classwork, assignments, or assessments you miss.

## On the Day of the Visit

**3. Sign In at the Post Grad Center**

- Report to the Post Grad Center at the beginning of the college representative visit.
- Sign in and attend the entire meeting with the college admissions representative.
- After the meeting, sign out at the Post Grad Center before returning to class.

**4. Make the Most of the Opportunity**
Come prepared with questions! This is your chance to have a conversation with someone who works directly with the college admission process.

Consider asking:

- What makes your college different from other schools?
- What types of students tend to thrive at your college?
- What are the most popular majors and programs?
- What is the campus culture like?
- How does your college support students academically?
- What should I know about the admission process?
- What advice would you give a prospective applicant?

## How Your Attendance Is Recorded

- Your teacher will initially record the absence as **"U" (Unexcused)** in PowerSchool.
- Once you sign in and out at the Post Grad Center and attend the college representative visit, the absence will be updated to **"C" (Counseling Excused)** 24-48 hours after attending.
- If you do not complete the sign-in/sign-out process or do not attend the scheduled college visit, the absence may remain unexcused.

## What About Freshmen and Sophomores?

While freshmen and sophomores do not typically attend college representative visits during class, they can begin exploring colleges now by:

- Attending college fairs throughout the Denver metro area
- Participating in college planning events at Creek

- Exploring college websites and virtual tours
- Talking with their counselor or the Post Grad Center
- Reviewing the College Planning Schedule for upcoming opportunities

Visit the Post Grad Center website at www.cchspostgrad.com for the college visit schedule, college planning resources, and upcoming events.

### Be Prepared. Be Professional. Be Curious.

A college representative visit is more than a chance to get out of class. It is an opportunity to build a relationship, ask questions, and determine whether a college might be a good fit for you.

# The College Application

Applying to college can feel overwhelming—but the process becomes much more manageable when you break it into steps, stay organized, and understand exactly what each college requires.

## The Golden Rule: Every College Is Different

There is **no one-size-fits-all college application**. Requirements vary from college to college, so never assume that because one school requires something, every school does.

**You are responsible for knowing what each college requires and for meeting every deadline.**

Before meeting with your counselor, review each college's admission website and application checklist carefully.

## What Goes Into a College Application?

Depending on the college, your application may include some or all of the following:

### 1. Personal & Educational Information

- Biographical and contact information
- Family information
- High school and educational history
- Academic information, including courses and grades

### 2. Activities & Experiences

- Extracurricular activities
- Leadership
- Community service and volunteering

- Employment
- Internships, research, summer programs, or other meaningful experiences

Focus on the experiences that have been meaningful to you—not simply trying to fill every available space.

### 3. Honors & Awards

- Academic, athletic, artistic, community, or other significant recognition
- School, district, state, national, or other awards

### 4. Essays & Short Answers

- Personal statement or main college essay
- College-specific supplemental essays
- Short-answer questions

Your essays should sound like you**.** Use them to provide insight into your experiences, values, interests, and perspectives that may not be evident elsewhere in your application.

### 5. Application Fee

- Some colleges charge an application fee.
- Others are free or may offer fee waivers to eligible students.

### 6. Test Scores

- Some colleges require or consider ACT and/or SAT scores, while others are test-optional or test-free.
- If you choose or are required to submit scores, you are responsible for sending official scores directly from the testing agency when required.

### 7. Additional Materials

Certain programs or colleges may require:

- Auditions
- Portfolios
- Interviews
- Writing samples
- Additional forms or program-specific applications

This is particularly common for some art, music, theater, architecture, and other specialized programs.

### 8. Disciplinary Information

- Some colleges ask applicants questions about disciplinary history.
- **Cherry Creek High School does not submit disciplinary information as part of the standard application process.**
- If an application asks you directly about disciplinary history, you are responsible for answering accurately.

### 9. Application Certification & Electronic Signature

You may be required to certify that the information you submitted is accurate and complete by electronically signing the application.

## Supporting Documents

In addition to your application, a college may require documents from your high school, counselor, teachers, or testing agencies.

These may include:

### Official Transcript

- Your transcript is typically sent directly to colleges through the application platform or the process designated by the college.
- Follow Cherry Creek's procedures for requesting and sending transcripts.

### Counselor Forms & School Reports

Some colleges require a counselor recommendation, school report, or other form completed by your counselor.

Give your counselor plenty of time to complete these documents—do not wait until the application deadline.

### Teacher Recommendations

- Some colleges require or recommend teacher letters of recommendation.
- Follow each college's specific instructions regarding who should submit the letter and how it should be submitted.
- Ask teachers well in advance of your deadline.

### Midyear Grades

Some colleges require a midyear report or updated transcript after first-semester grades are posted.

### Test Scores

When required, official ACT/SAT scores must generally be sent directly from the testing agency.

## Your Responsibility: Know Your Requirements

For **every college on your list**, create a checklist that includes:

☐ Application platform
☐ Application deadline
☐ Application fee or fee waiver
☐ Essay requirements
☐ Supplemental essays
☐ Test-score policy
☐ Transcript requirements/Self-reported Transcript and Academic Record System (STARS)
☐ Counselor forms
☐ Teacher recommendations
☐ Portfolio/audition/interview requirements
☐ Scholarship deadlines
☐ Financial aid requirements
☐ Any college- or major-specific requirements

### Never rely on memory. Never assume. Check.

College admission requirements can change, and requirements may differ depending on your major, application plan, residency, or other circumstances.

When in doubt, contact the college's admission office directly.

## Understanding the Common Application

The Common Application (Common App) is an online application platform that allows students to apply to many participating colleges and universities using one primary application.

Common App — www.commonapp.org

Keep in mind:

- Not every college accepts the Common App.

- Some colleges use their own application.
- Some colleges accept multiple application platforms.
- A college may require additional supplemental questions or essays even when you apply through the Common App.
- A college may require your grades and transcript reported through the Self-reported Transcript and Academic Record System (STARS).
- If a college gives you a choice of application platforms, follow Cherry Creek's Naviance procedures and indicate which application you plan to use.
- Your application platform does **not** determine your admission decision; choose the platform that best fits the college's requirements and your circumstances.

# The Bottom Line

### Own Your Application.

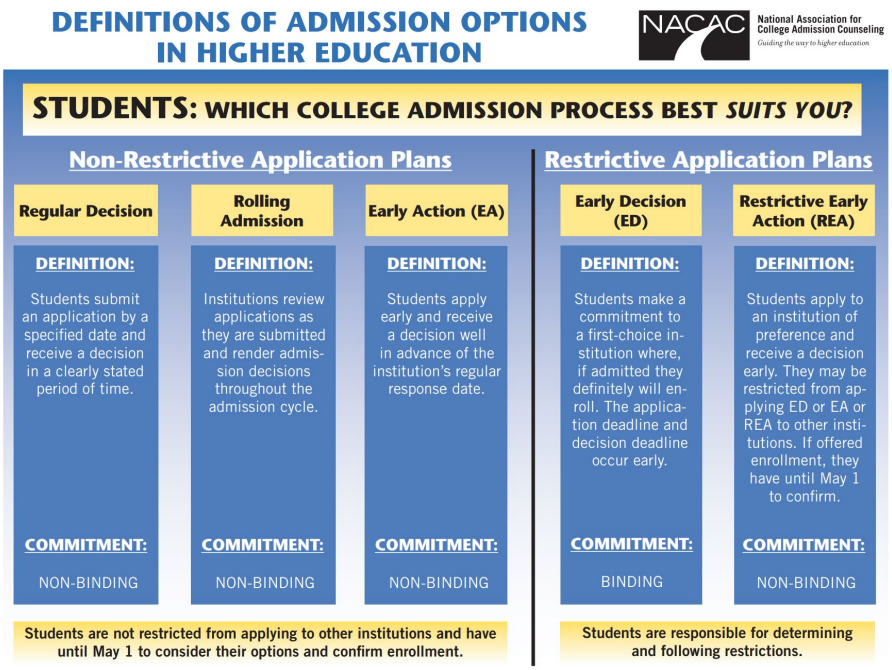
Your counselor, teachers, parents, and the Post Grad Center are here to support and guide you—but you are responsible for your applications.

Before you hit **"Submit,"** make sure you have:

✓ Answered every required question
✓ Proofread your application
✓ Completed all required essays and supplements
✓ Requested all supporting documents
✓ Met the college's deadline
✓ Saved a copy of your submitted application

Stay organized. Ask questions. Start early. Own the process.

# Definitions of Admission Options




Understanding the different college admissions options is key to creating a successful application strategy. Below are definitions of common admissions plans:

## Early Decision (ED)

- **Binding Agreement**: This plan involves a commitment between the student and the college. If accepted, the student is ethically required to attend the college and withdraw or refrain from submitting applications to other schools.
- **Application Review**: Applications are reviewed earlier than regular decision applications, with decisions typically released by December and no later than January 15.
- **Outcomes**: Colleges may accept, defer, or deny Early Decision applicants.
    - If deferred, the student is no longer bound to the institution and can apply elsewhere.
- **Limitations**: Students can apply to only one college under an Early Decision plan.

## Restrictive Early Action (Single Choice EA)

- **Non-Binding Agreement**: Similar to Early Action, this plan does not require a commitment to attend if accepted.
- **Restrictions**: Students agree not to submit any other Early Action applications.
- **Availability**: Offered by a limited number of selective colleges.

### Early Action (EA)

- **Non-Binding Agreement**: Students are not required to commit to attending the college if accepted.
- **Application Review**: Applications are reviewed earlier than regular decision, with decisions usually released in January.
- **History**: This plan was first introduced by Ivy League colleges in 1976-77.

### Regular Admission

- **Deadline**: Most colleges have a specific deadline for application submissions, typically starting around January 1.
- **Decisions**: Colleges notify applicants of their admission status by a set date, usually before April 1.
- **Student Response**: Accepted students are generally required to respond by May 1.

### Rolling Admissions

- **Flexible Timeline**: Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis as soon as all required materials (e.g., application form, fees, transcript, evaluations, test scores) are received.
- **Notification**: Decisions are typically sent out four to six weeks after the application is complete.
- **Timing Consideration**: Avoid applying too early if you believe your fall test scores or seventh-semester grades will strengthen your application.

By understanding these options, students can make informed decisions about which admissions plan aligns best with their goals and timeline.

# Definitions of Admission Decisions

After you submit your college applications, you will begin receiving admission decisions. Understanding what each decision means—and what you need to do next—is an important part of the process.

## Accepted — Congratulations!

**Accepted** means the college has offered you admission.

Your next steps may include:

- Reviewing your admission and financial aid offers
- Comparing your college options
- Meeting any remaining admission requirements
- Watching for important housing, orientation, and enrollment deadlines

- Making your final college decision by the college's stated deadline

**Remember:** Being admitted is exciting, but admission is only one part of the decision. Consider academic fit, cost, location, campus culture, programs, and overall fit before choosing where to enroll.

## Denied — Keep Moving Forward

**Denied** means the college has decided not to offer you admission for that entering class.

A denial can be disappointing, but it does not define your ability, potential, or future success**.** College admission is highly competitive, and decisions are based on many factors.

Focus on the colleges where you have been admitted and the opportunities ahead of you.

## Deferred — "Not Yet"

A **deferred decision** most commonly occurs when a student applies through Early Action or Early Decision.

Instead of making a final decision during the early round, the college moves the application into the Regular Decision applicant pool for additional consideration.

A deferral is not a denial and not an acceptance**.**

If you are deferred:

- Read the college's instructions carefully.
- Determine whether the college accepts additional information.
- Continue focusing on your other applications and deadlines.
- Keep your grades strong.
- Wait for the college's Regular Decision notification.

**Do not stop your college search because you have been deferred.**

## Waitlisted — "Maybe, Depending on Space"

A **waitlist** decision means the college has not offered you admission at this time, but may offer admission later if additional space becomes available.

Colleges typically use waitlists because they cannot predict exactly how many admitted students will ultimately enroll.

If you are waitlisted:

1. **Decide whether you want to remain on the waitlist.**
    - Follow the college's instructions and formally accept the waitlist offer if required.
2. **Read the college's directions carefully.**
    - Some colleges welcome additional information; others specifically ask students not to send anything beyond what they request.
3. **Continue with your other options.**
    - Do not assume you will be admitted from the waitlist.
4. **Meet all deadlines.**
    - If you have been admitted elsewhere, make sure you meet that college's enrollment deadline while you wait.

**Important:** If you are eventually admitted from a waitlist, you may have a very short window to make your final decision.

## Deferred Enrollment — Taking a Gap Year

Deferred enrollment is different from a deferred admission decision.

If a college has already admitted you, it may allow you to postpone your enrollment—often for one year—to pursue another opportunity.

Examples might include:

- Travel
- Employment
- Service
- Personal or educational experiences
- A structured gap-year program

Policies vary significantly by college. **Never assume a college allows deferred enrollment.** Contact the admission office and follow its specific process before making plans.

# Your Admission Decision Is Not the End of the Process

Regardless of the decision you receive, read the entire notification carefully.

Colleges may include important information about:

- Enrollment deadlines
- Housing
- Orientation
- Financial aid

- Scholarships
- Placement exams
- Required forms
- Conditions of admission
- Next steps

### Save every admission decision and financial aid document.

Create a folder—digital or physical—for each college so you can easily find important information when it is time to make your final decision.

# Understanding Your Transcript

Your transcript is the official academic record of your high school coursework and grades. It is one of the most important documents in the college admission process.

## What Does Your Transcript Include?

Your Cherry Creek High School transcript includes your academic coursework and grades according to school and district policies.

Information regarding failing grades, dropped courses, repeated courses, and other academic policies can be found in the Bear Facts handbook.

## Official vs. Unofficial Transcripts

### Official Transcript

- Sent directly from Cherry Creek High School to a college, university, scholarship program, or other authorized organization.
- Must remain in an official format to be considered official.
- Follow Cherry Creek's procedures for requesting and sending official transcripts.

### Unofficial Transcript

- Provided to students and families for personal review and planning.
- Useful when completing applications, meeting with your counselor, or checking your academic progress.
- An unofficial transcript should not be submitted when an institution specifically requires an official transcript.

## Review Your Transcript

Your transcript is your record—review it carefully.

Check that:

- Your name and personal information are correct.
- Courses and grades appear accurately.
- You understand your current GPA and academic standing.
- You are on track to meet graduation requirements.
- Your senior-year courses accurately reflect your plans.

If you believe something is incorrect, **contact your counselor as soon as possible.**

# One Final Reminder for Seniors

### Senior year still matters!

An admission decision is not necessarily the end of the admission process. Colleges may require a **final transcript**, and admission can be contingent upon successfully completing your senior year and meeting the conditions outlined in your admission offer.

**Stay focused. Finish strong. Meet your deadlines.**

Your college journey doesn't end when you receive an admission decision—it continues until you enroll and begin the next chapter.

# 2026-2027 Post Grad Center Transcript Request Due Dates

| IF | Your College or Scholarship deadline is this date... | THEN | Your Blue Transcript Request Form is DUE IN POST GRAD on or before this date |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Oct. 15 | | Oct. 1 |
| | Nov. 1 | | Oct. 8 |
| | Nov. 15 | | Oct. 28 |
| | Dec. 1 | | Nov. 9 |
| | Dec. 15 | | Dec. 1 |
| | Jan. 1 | | Dec. 7 |
| | Jan. 15 | | Dec. 11 |
| | Feb. 1 | | Jan. 19 |
| | Feb. 15 | | Feb. 1 |
| | March 1 | | Feb. 17 |
| | March 15 | | March 1 |
| | April 1 | | March 23 |
| | April 15 | | April 5 |

*After a deadline, your blue transcript form will be processed in the order in which it is received.
*Note: These deadlines are subject to change.

# College Admission Testing

Standardized testing can be one part of the college admission process, but testing policies vary widely from college to college. Some colleges require ACT or SAT scores, some are test-optional, and some do not consider scores at all.

### The Most Important Rule: Know Each College's Policy

Before deciding whether to submit test scores, check the admission requirements for every college on your list. Policies can change, and requirements may vary by college, program, or applicant.

If a college requires official scores, students are responsible for having scores sent directly from the testing agency**.** Cherry Creek High School does not send ACT or SAT scores on behalf of students.

**Official Testing Resources**

- ACT — www.act.org
- College Board — www.collegeboard.org

## SAT

The SAT is a standardized college admission test measuring skills in Reading and Writing and Math.

- **Score range:** 400–1600.
- Cherry Creek juniors take the SAT as part of Colorado's state testing program.
- Students may choose to take additional SAT administrations during the summer or fall of senior year if they want another opportunity to improve their scores.
- Before registering for additional tests, research the testing policies of the colleges on your list.

SAT Information & Registration — College Board

## ACT

The ACT is another standardized college admission test. The current ACT includes English, Math, and Reading, with Science available as an optional section.

- **Composite score range:** 1–36.
- Students may take the ACT in the spring of junior year or during the summer/fall of senior year.
- If you choose to take the ACT, consider preparing for it and taking it early enough to allow time for a retake if appropriate.
- Check each college's current testing policy to determine whether ACT scores are required, optional, or not considered.

ACT Information & Registration — ACT

## SAT or ACT: Which Should I Take?

There is no universal "better" test. Colleges that require or consider standardized testing generally accept either the SAT or ACT.

Consider taking a practice version of each test to determine which format better matches your strengths, preferences, and testing style.

### A Smart Testing Strategy

**1. Research first.**
Look at the testing policies for the colleges you are considering.

**2. Choose your test.**
If you plan to submit scores, determine whether the SAT or ACT is the better fit for you.

**3. Prepare intentionally.**
Use free or paid preparation resources, practice tests, and other appropriate tools.

**4. Test early enough to have options.**
If you want to retest, leave enough time before your college application deadlines.

**5. Decide whether to submit your scores.**
If a college is test-optional, compare your score with the college's published student profile and consider whether submitting it strengthens your application.

## Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

AP exams are course-based exams administered by the College Board in May.

- AP exams are scored on a 1–5 scale.
- Colleges and universities establish their own policies for AP credit, placement, and recognition.

- Many colleges award credit or placement for strong AP scores, but policies vary significantly.
- AP scores are generally not the same thing as SAT/ACT admission scores and should not be viewed as a replacement for an admission test when a college requires one.

Before enrolling, check the AP credit policies at colleges you are considering.

AP Students — College Board

# PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT/NMSQT is part of the SAT Suite of assessments and can help students become familiar with the SAT format and identify areas for future preparation.

### Why Take the PSAT/NMSQT?

- Provides practice for the SAT.
- Gives students information about their academic strengths and areas for growth.
- Junior-year PSAT/NMSQT scores are used to determine eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Program, subject to the program's other requirements.
- PSAT scores are not sent to colleges as college admission test scores.

**Important:** The PSAT 8/9 and PSAT 10 do **not** qualify students for the National Merit Scholarship Program; the qualifying assessment is the PSAT/NMSQT, typically taken during junior year.

# Cherry Creek Standardized Testing Timeline

### Freshman Year

#### PSAT 8/9

- Offered during College Readiness Day in October
- Registration is automatic for freshmen
- Provides an early introduction to the SAT Suite of assessments

### Sophomore Year

#### PSAT 10

- Offered during College Readiness Day in October
- Registration is automatic for sophomores
- Provides additional practice and academic feedback

### Junior Year

**PSAT 11 / Practice SAT**

- Offered during College Readiness Day in October
- Registration is automatic

**PSAT/NMSQT**

- Optional
- Requires student registration and an additional fee
- May qualify students for National Merit recognition and scholarships

**State SAT**

- Administered to all juniors through Colorado's state testing program
- Provided at no cost to students

**ACT**

- Students who are considering the ACT may choose to take a national ACT administration during the spring or summer of junior year.

### Senior Year

Students who plan to submit test scores may consider:

- Additional SAT administrations
- Additional ACT administrations
- Preparing for and completing testing early enough to meet college application deadlines

Do not wait until the last minute to determine whether you need a test score.

## Test Scores: Who Sends What?

### ACT & SAT Scores

Students control the submission of their ACT and SAT scores.

- Cherry Creek High School does not send ACT or SAT scores to colleges.
- When a college requires official scores, students must request them directly from the appropriate testing agency.
- Some colleges allow students to self-report scores during the application process and request official scores only if admitted or enrolling.
- Always follow the individual college's instructions.

### Score Choice & Superscoring

Testing policies differ from college to college. Some institutions consider a student's highest scores across multiple test dates (**superscoring**), while others use different methods.

Never assume that every college handles multiple scores the same way. Check each college's policy.

## Testing Accommodations

Students who need testing accommodations should begin the process **well in advance** of their desired test date.

- Students with qualifying disabilities should speak with their counselor, case manager, or other appropriate school staff about the accommodation process.
- ACT and College Board have their own procedures and deadlines for requesting accommodations.
- Accommodations approved at Cherry Creek High School do not automatically transfer to the ACT or College Board.
- Students and families are responsible for completing the testing agency's required process.

**Start early.** Accommodation requests can take time to process, and students should not wait until registration deadlines are approaching.

## A Note About Testing

### Testing is one piece of the application—not your entire application.

Your transcript, course selection, grades, activities, essays, recommendations, and personal experiences all contribute to your college application.

If a college is test-optional, don't feel pressured to take the SAT or ACT simply because other students are doing so. Instead, make an informed decision based on your colleges, your goals, and your individual testing profile.

### Your Testing Checklist

☐ Research testing policies for every college on your list
☐ Decide whether the SAT, ACT, both, or neither makes sense for you
☐ Register early enough to meet application deadlines
☐ Prepare appropriately
☐ Request accommodations early, if applicable
☐ Send official scores when required
☐ Check each college's policy before deciding which scores to submit

When in doubt, check the college's admission website or contact the admission office directly.

# Letters of Recommendation

A strong letter of recommendation can add something your transcript and application cannot: a trusted adult's perspective on who you are as a student and as a person**.**

Not every college requires letters of recommendation. Some require them, some make them optional, and some do not accept them at all. Always check the admission requirements for each college before asking someone to write a letter.

When recommendations are required or recommended, choose people who know you well and can provide specific, meaningful insight into your strengths, character, growth, and contributions.

**Confidentiality & Your Right to Access**

Letters of recommendation are generally submitted directly to colleges, universities, scholarship programs, or other organizations and are intended to remain confidential.

When completing an application, you may be asked whether you want to waive your right to access a recommendation.

**What Does "Waive Your Right" Mean?**

By waiving your right to access, you are agreeing that you will not request to see the recommendation letter.

CCHS strongly encourages students to waive their right to access recommendation letters when given the option. Confidential recommendations are generally viewed as more candid and can help reassure colleges that the recommender's comments are their honest assessment.

**You should never ask to read a confidential recommendation letter before it is submitted.**

**Who Should You Ask?**

## Teacher Recommendations

If a college requires or recommends teacher letters, choose teachers who:

- Know you well—not simply a teacher who gave you a good grade
- Have taught you in **junior or senior year**, when possible
- Can speak specifically about your academic abilities, curiosity, work ethic, character, or growth

- Teach a subject relevant to the college or program when the college specifies a subject area
- Can provide examples that demonstrate who you are beyond your grades

**The best recommender is not necessarily the teacher who gave you the highest grade. It is the teacher who can tell your story.**

# Counselor Recommendations

A counselor recommendation provides a broader perspective on your:

- Academic journey
- Personal growth
- Contributions to the school community
- Goals and interests
- Circumstances or experiences that may have influenced your high school experience

At Cherry Creek High School, your assigned counselor will write a recommendation when the college requires one or when a counselor recommendation is appropriate and beneficial to your application.

**Other Recommenders**

Some colleges allow or encourage additional recommendations from individuals such as:

- Coaches
- Employers
- Internship supervisors
- Research mentors
- Community leaders

However, only submit additional recommendations when the college permits or encourages them. More letters do not necessarily make an application stronger.

**When Should You Ask?**

**Ask Early—Much Earlier Than You Think.**

Teachers and counselors write many letters during the fall, so waiting until a few days before your deadline can put unnecessary pressure on your recommender.

**Recommended timeline:**

**Spring of Junior Year**

- Research the recommendation requirements for colleges you are considering.
- Identify teachers who know you well.
- Consider asking one or two teachers before summer if you know you will need recommendations.

**Summer Before Senior Year**

- Finalize your list of potential recommenders.
- Prepare your résumé, activities list, and other information that will help your recommenders get to know you beyond the classroom.

**Early Senior Year**

- Make your formal requests **at least 3–4 weeks before your earliest deadline**.
- Provide additional time for Early Action, Early Decision, or scholarship deadlines.

**The Earlier the Better**

Your recommender is doing you a favor. Give them enough time to write a thoughtful, personalized letter rather than asking at the last minute.

# How to Request a Teacher Recommendation

**Step 1: Ask in Person**

Whenever possible, ask the teacher **face-to-face**.

You might say:

“I really enjoyed having you for ___, and I feel you know me well as a student. Would you be willing to write me a strong letter of recommendation for college?”

Give the teacher an opportunity to decline. A teacher who does not feel they know you well enough to write a strong letter may actually be helping you by saying no.

**Step 2: Provide Helpful Information**

Once the teacher agrees:

- Complete the CCHS/Naviance teacher recommendation form.
- Provide your résumé or activities list, if requested.
- Share information about your college interests and intended major, when appropriate.
- Provide a list of your application deadlines.
- Follow the submission instructions provided by Cherry Creek and the college.

**Do not make your recommender hunt for information.** The more useful context you provide, the more specific and personal the letter can be.

**Step 3: Monitor the Status**

Keep track of your recommendation requests and deadlines in Naviance and/or your application platform.

Remember: **requesting a letter is your responsibility. Following up professionally is also your responsibility.**

# How to Request a Counselor Recommendation

If a college requires a counselor recommendation:

**1. Complete Your Senior Conference Questionnaire**

Provide your counselor with thoughtful information about:

- Your goals and interests
- Academic experiences
- Activities and leadership
- Personal accomplishments
- Challenges or circumstances that have shaped your experience
- Anything else you want your counselor to understand about you

**2. Meet With Your Counselor**

Use your senior conference to discuss your college plans, application requirements, and recommendation needs.

Your counselor cannot write a meaningful, personalized recommendation without knowing your story.

**3. Follow the CCHS Process**

Complete all required Naviance forms and follow the Post Grad Center's procedures for requesting counselor documents.

**Do not wait until your application deadline to ask your counselor for a recommendation.**

# Be a Great Recommender Requester

**Help Your Recommenders Help You**

☐ Confirm the college requires or accepts a recommendation
☐ Ask in person whenever possible
☐ Ask early—at least 3–4 weeks before your deadline
☐ Provide your résumé/activities information
☐ Share your college list and deadlines
☐ Complete all required Naviance forms
☐ Clearly communicate submission instructions
☐ Monitor your application portals
☐ Send a genuine thank-you after the letter is submitted

**And Remember…**

A recommendation letter is not something you are entitled to—it is a gift of someone's time and professional support.

Treat the process accordingly.

**Ask respectfully. Prepare thoroughly. Communicate clearly. Say thank you.**

Letters of recommendation are an important part of the college application process, offering insight into your character, academic achievements, and potential. Here's everything you need to know about requesting and managing recommendations:

# Confidentiality

- Letters of recommendation written by teachers or counselors are confidential and are sent directly to the colleges, universities, or scholarship organizations to which you are applying.
- **Counselor Letters**:
    - The Cherry Creek High School (CCHS) counselor assigned to your family will write a recommendation only if it is required by the college or deemed beneficial to support your application.
- **Teacher Letters**:
    - Letters written by teachers are private and not reviewed by the Post Grad Center or counselors. These letters are considered confidential communications between the teacher and the college admissions office.

# Waiving Your Right to Access

- On evaluation forms and counselor forms, students may choose to **waive their right to access** the letters.
- While optional, it is strongly encouraged to waive your access rights, as admission offices often give greater weight to letters written under conditions of confidentiality.

# General Guidelines for Letters of Recommendation

### Who Should You Ask?

- Colleges typically request letters from:
  - **Academic Teachers**: Preferably someone who has taught you for at least a semester during **junior or senior year**. Some colleges may request a teacher from a specific subject area.
  - **Counselors**: Provides a broader perspective on your academic career and personal growth.
- Avoid asking a coach, club sponsor, or other non-academic individuals unless their letter will supplement—but not replace—a teacher's letter.

### When Should You Ask?

- Provide at least **three weeks' notice** before the recommendation is due. Earlier is always better, as this gives writers more time to craft a thoughtful letter.
- For teacher recommendations:
  - Ideally, ask in **late spring of junior year**, before summer break, especially if you know a college you're applying to requires a letter.

# Requesting Letters of Recommendation

### For Teachers

1. **Initiate the Request**:
   - Speak to your teacher in person to ask if they are willing to write you a recommendation.
   - Once confirmed, complete the **teacher recommendation form** in **Naviance**.
     - Save the form as a PDF and email it.
2. **Follow Up**:
   - Thank your teachers for taking the time to support you with a letter!

### For Counselors

1. Complete the **Senior Conference Questionnaire** in **Naviance**.
2. Schedule a meeting with your counselor to discuss your application needs and ensure they have all necessary information to write a strong letter.

## Additional Tips

- Only request letters after confirming that your colleges require them. Check college websites for their specific requirements.

- Express gratitude to your recommenders by writing thank-you notes—it's a thoughtful gesture that acknowledges their time and effort on your behalf.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure your letters of recommendation are prepared thoughtfully and on time, enhancing your college application.

# Campus/Alumni Interview

A college interview can be an opportunity to put a face and personality to your application—but not every college offers interviews, and interviews vary greatly in importance.

Some colleges offer interviews as part of the admission process, some make them optional, some use alumni volunteers, and others do not offer interviews at all. An interview may be evaluative, informational, or simply an opportunity to learn more about the college.

Before preparing for an interview, check the college's admission website to understand whether an interview is available, required, recommended, or optional.

### Remember: An Interview Is a Conversation—Not an Interrogation

The goal is not to deliver perfect answers or impress the interviewer with everything you have accomplished. Instead, use the conversation to help the college get to know you beyond your transcript—and learn whether the college is a good fit for you.

## College Interview Tips

### 1. Be Prepared

Research the college before your interview.

Be familiar with:

- Academic programs that interest you
- Activities, organizations, athletics, or opportunities you may want to explore
- Campus culture and traditions
- Something specific that attracts you to the college

Avoid answers that could apply to any college.

Instead of saying, *"I like your school because it has a great campus,"* be prepared to explain why this particular college appeals to you.

### 2. Know Your Own Story

You do not need to memorize your résumé, but you should be comfortable talking about:

- Your academic interests
- Activities and leadership
- Experiences that have shaped you
- Accomplishments you are proud of
- Challenges or moments of growth
- What you hope to explore in college

Be prepared to explain **why** something matters to you, not simply what you did.

### 3. Arrive Early—or Log In Early

For an in-person interview, arrive approximately 5–10 minutes early.

For a virtual interview:

- Test your technology beforehand.
- Find a quiet, well-lit location.
- Check your camera and microphone.
- Make sure your background is appropriate.
- Join the meeting a few minutes early.

### 4. Dress Appropriately

You do not need to wear a suit or formal business attire unless specifically requested.

Choose clothing that is:

- Clean and neat
- Comfortable
- Appropriate for a professional conversation
- Consistent with how you want to present yourself

When in doubt, err slightly on the side of being more polished.

### 5. Answer Questions Thoughtfully

Avoid one-word answers.

Give the interviewer enough detail to understand your perspective, and use specific examples whenever possible.

If you do not know an answer, it is perfectly acceptable to say so. Take a moment to think rather than feeling pressure to give a perfect response.

Most importantly, **be yourself.** The goal is to help the interviewer understand who you are—not who you think they want you to be.

### 6. Ask Good Questions

Nearly every interview will give you an opportunity to ask questions.

Take advantage of it.

Avoid questions that can easily be answered on the college website. Instead, ask questions that invite the interviewer to share their experience.

For example:

- *What surprised you most about this college?*
- *What type of student tends to thrive here?*
- *How would you describe the campus culture?*
- *What do students typically do on weekends?*
- *How accessible are professors outside of class?*
- *What is something you wish you had known before attending?*
- *What is one thing you think makes this college distinctive?*

Your questions can be just as revealing as your answers.

### 7. Put Your Phone Away

Silence your phone and keep it out of sight during the interview.

Give the interviewer your full attention.

### 8. Be Yourself

You do not need to sound like a college admissions counselor, memorize impressive vocabulary, or have your entire future figured out.

Be confident, curious, genuine, and conversational.

Colleges are not looking for a perfect person. They are trying to understand you.

### 9. Send a Thank You

After the interview, send a brief thank-you message within a day or two.

Mention something specific from your conversation rather than sending a generic message.

A thoughtful thank-you is courteous and gives you one final opportunity to reinforce your appreciation and interest.

# Questions You May Be Asked

You may be asked questions such as:

- Why are you interested in our college?
- What are you hoping to study or explore?
- What do you enjoy most about learning?
- What class has challenged you the most?
- What activity or experience has been most meaningful to you?
- Tell me about something you are proud of.
- How have you contributed to your school or community?
- How have you changed or grown during high school?
- What are your strengths?
- What is something you are working to improve?
- Tell me about a challenge you have faced and what you learned from it.
- What do you do when you are not in school?
- What are you looking for in a college?
- What would you contribute to our campus community?
- What questions do you have for me?

### Don't Memorize Your Answers

Prepare stories and ideas, not scripts.

The strongest interviews feel like genuine conversations—not rehearsed speeches.

# Frequently Asked Questions About the College Application

## Should I Waive My Right to See My Recommendations on the Common App?

When completing an application, you may be asked whether you want to waive your right to access letters of recommendation.

Cherry Creek generally recommends that students waive their right to access recommendation letters.

Why?

- Confidential recommendations are generally considered more credible because the recommender can write candidly.
- Waiving your right can reassure colleges that the recommendation represents the recommender's honest assessment.
- It allows the recommender to submit the letter with the expectation that it will remain confidential.

**Important:** Waiving your right does not mean you lose control of your application. It simply means you agree not to request access to the recommendation letter.

The best approach is to choose recommenders you trust and give them the information they need to write a strong, authentic letter.

# How Many Colleges Should I Apply To?

There is no magic number.

The goal is not to apply to as many colleges as possible. The goal is to create a thoughtful list of colleges where you would genuinely be happy to enroll and where you have a reasonable range of admission possibilities.

For many students, 5–8 well-researched colleges can be a reasonable starting point, but the appropriate number varies based on your circumstances, interests, finances, and admission profile.

## Build a Balanced List

### Likely / Foundation

- Colleges where your academic profile is comfortably within the typical admitted-student range
- You should feel confident that you would be happy attending

### Target

- Colleges where your academic profile is generally within the college's typical range
- Admission is possible, but not guaranteed

### Reach

- Colleges where your academic profile is below the typical range or where admission is highly selective

- At highly selective colleges, admission should be considered a reach for virtually every applicant.

### Most Important: Every School Should Be a Good Fit

Do not add a college simply because it is prestigious, because someone else is applying, or because you think you "should" apply.

Ask:

**Would I actually be happy going here?**

And don't forget to consider **cost and financial fit** when building your list.

## Is It Too Late to Take or Retake the ACT or SAT Senior Year?

**Maybe—but don't wait to find out.**

Whether a senior-year test date makes sense depends on:

- The college's testing policy
- Your application deadline
- Scholarship deadlines
- Score-release timelines
- Whether you have a realistic opportunity to improve your score

Check the testing dates and each college's admission requirements before registering.

If you plan to submit scores, test early enough to have your scores available when you need them.

## Should I Create a Professional Email Address?

**Absolutely.**

Create a personal email address that you can use throughout the college application, scholarship, and enrollment process.

Choose something simple and professional, such as a variation of your name.

Avoid:

- Nicknames that may seem unprofessional
- Inappropriate language

- Excessive numbers or symbols
- An email address you may outgrow

### Do not rely on your Cherry Creek school email for college communications.

Your school account may not remain active after graduation. Use a personal email account that you will check regularly and maintain access to throughout the college process.

**Tip:** Use the same email address consistently across your college applications, testing accounts, scholarship applications, and other postsecondary communications.

## What About Social Media?

Your online presence is part of your overall digital footprint. While you should not assume that every college admissions officer is searching your social media, anything publicly available online can potentially be seen by colleges, employers, scholarship organizations, coaches, or others.

### Use good judgment.

Before you begin applying:

- Review your public profiles.
- Remove content you would not want a college or employer to see.
- Review your privacy settings.
- Make sure your usernames, profile photos, and public posts represent you appropriately.
- Think before posting, commenting, or sharing.

### Ask Yourself:

“Would I be comfortable with a college admissions officer, future employer, teacher, or family member seeing this?”

If the answer is no, **don't post it—or take it down.**

Your digital footprint can last much longer than you think.

## The Bottom Line

Be prepared. Be genuine. Be curious.

A college interview is not about giving the “perfect” answer. It is an opportunity to have a meaningful conversation, share your story, and learn more about a college.

And remember: the college is evaluating you, but you are also evaluating the college.

Ask questions. Pay attention. Trust your instincts.

The goal is not simply to be admitted.

***The goal is to find a college where you can thrive.***

# Post Grad Center Responsibilities

The Post Grad Center is here to help students and families navigate the transition from high school to college, career, military service, technical training, gap-year programs, and other postsecondary pathways.

Our goal is to provide information, resources, guidance, and support while helping students take ownership of their own postsecondary planning.

## What the Post Grad Center Does

The Post Grad Center:

- **Meets with students and families** to discuss college options, career pathways, applications, financial aid, scholarships, and other post-high-school opportunities.
- **Publishes college representative visit schedules** through Naviance and coordinates opportunities for students to meet with admission representatives at Creek.
- **Hosts college and postsecondary events**, including college fairs, parent information nights, financial aid presentations, and other educational programs.
- **Provides testing information**, including SAT and ACT registration information and important testing resources through the CCHS Post Grad website.
- **Provides counselor recommendations** when a college or other program requires one and the request follows CCHS procedures.
- **Supports the college essay process** during first semester through collaboration with master English teachers and other appropriate school resources.
- **Processes official school documents**, including transcripts, school profiles, and counselor forms/recommendations, when requested and when required by the institution.
- **Provides resources and guidance** to help students understand admission requirements, application procedures, financial aid, scholarships, and postsecondary options.

### Transcript Requests

Students requesting official transcripts and other school documents must follow the current CCHS Post Grad Center transcript request process, including submitting the blue transcript request form when required.

**Plan ahead:** Transcript and supporting-document requests should be submitted at least three weeks before your application deadline whenever possible.

# What the Post Grad Center Does NOT Do

### We are your guides—not your application managers.

The Post Grad Center does **not**:

- Track individual college application deadlines for students
- Track individual scholarship deadlines
- Complete or submit your college application for you
- Determine which colleges you should apply to
- Guarantee that a college will receive an application or supporting document
- Monitor every college application portal on your behalf
- Make your final college decision for you

Ultimately, you are responsible for knowing what each college requires and meeting every deadline.

# Student & Family Responsibilities

The college and postsecondary planning process works best when students take ownership and use their counselors and the Post Grad Center as resources.

### You Are Responsible For:

#### Researching Your Options

- Research colleges, programs, careers, and other postsecondary pathways.
- Visit campuses when possible.
- Attend college representative visits and college fairs.
- Compare academic, social, geographic, and financial fit.

#### Understanding Requirements

- Check each college's official admission website for application requirements and deadlines.
- Determine whether you need essays, recommendations, test scores, portfolios, auditions, interviews, or other materials.
- Keep track of your own application, scholarship, and financial aid deadlines.

#### Managing Testing

- Register for the SAT and/or ACT when appropriate.
- Understand each college's testing policy.
- Request official test scores when required.

**Requesting Supporting Documents**

- Submit transcript requests using the CCHS process.
- Request counselor and teacher recommendations well in advance.
- Give recommenders the information they need to write a thoughtful letter.
- Confirm that required documents have been submitted.

**Completing Applications**

- Complete your own applications accurately and honestly.
- Proofread carefully before submitting.
- Write your own essays and responses. Parents, counselors, and others can provide feedback, but your application should reflect your authentic voice and experiences.

**Monitoring Your Applications**

- Check your email and college application portals regularly.
- Watch for requests for additional information.
- Confirm that colleges have received required materials.
- Follow up directly with the college when something is missing or unclear.

**Making Your Final Decision**

- Compare admission offers, financial aid, academic programs, and overall fit.
- Meet all enrollment, housing, financial aid, and orientation deadlines.
- Notify your chosen college of your enrollment decision by the deadline specified by the institution.
- Notify other colleges of your decision when required.
- Pay any required enrollment deposit by the appropriate deadline.

**Finishing Strong**

- Maintain strong grades and attendance throughout senior year.
- Continue challenging yourself academically when appropriate.
- Complete all graduation requirements.
- Remember that an admission offer can be conditional on successfully completing your senior year and meeting the college's stated requirements.

# The Post Grad Partnership

### Your counselor + the Post Grad Center + your family = your support team.

We are here to answer questions, provide resources, explain the process, and help you make informed decisions.

But the most successful students own their process.

**Know your requirements. Know your deadlines. Ask questions. Stay organized.**

We will help you navigate the journey.
You are responsible for driving it.

# For Students with Special Needs

Students with disabilities can be successful in college, but the transition from high school to college involves important changes in rights, responsibilities, and available support.

### The Most Important Difference: You Become Your Own Advocate

In high school, your school is responsible for identifying students who may need services and implementing an IEP or 504 Plan.

In college, the process is different. IDEA and the IEP requirements do not apply to colleges. Postsecondary institutions are generally subject to disability protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Colleges must provide appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to qualified students with disabilities, but students are responsible for identifying themselves, requesting accommodations, and following the college's procedures.

### Start Planning Early

If you have an IEP or 504 Plan, begin researching college disability services before you apply or enroll.

Do not wait until you arrive on campus to learn how accommodations work.

## What Changes in College?

### High School

Your school generally:

- Identifies educational needs
- Evaluates students for special education eligibility
- Develops and implements an IEP or 504 Plan
- Provides services and accommodations

- Monitors your progress

### College

You generally:

- Identify yourself to the appropriate disability/accessibility office
- Request accommodations
- Provide required documentation
- Follow the college's procedures and deadlines
- Communicate with professors and disability services
- Advocate for what you need

A college may ask for documentation that establishes a disability and supports the need for an accommodation. An IEP or 504 Plan can provide useful information about accommodations that have worked for you, but it may not be sufficient documentation by itself. Requirements vary by institution.

## Finding the Right Level of Support

Not all colleges provide the same level of support beyond legally required accommodations.

When researching colleges, determine which type of support best matches your needs:

### 1. Basic Disability Services

Most colleges provide an accessibility/disability services office that coordinates legally required accommodations.

Examples may include:

- Extended testing time
- Testing in a reduced-distraction environment
- Note-taking assistance
- Assistive technology
- Accessible course materials
- Priority registration in some circumstances

Services are individualized and vary by college.

### 2. Coordinated or Enhanced Support

Some colleges offer additional programs designed to help students develop skills such as:

- Time management

- Organization
- Study strategies
- Executive functioning
- Academic planning
- Transition to college

These programs may be free or may involve additional fees.

### 3. Comprehensive or Structured Programs

Some colleges offer highly structured programs specifically designed for students with learning differences, ADHD, autism, or other disabilities.

These programs may provide more intensive support, such as:

- Regular meetings with learning specialists
- Individualized academic coaching
- Executive-function support
- Specialized tutoring
- Structured study programs
- Additional transition support

These programs frequently involve additional costs, so investigate exactly what is included and what it costs.

### The Key Question

Don't simply ask:

**“Does this college have disability services?”**

Almost every college will have some form of disability/accessibility office.

Instead ask:

“What specific support will I receive here, and will it be enough for me to be successful?”

## Questions to Ask Disability/Accessibility Services

When visiting or contacting a college, consider asking:

### Accommodations

- What accommodations are available for students with my disability?
- What documentation is required?

- Will my current evaluation, IEP, or 504 Plan be sufficient?
- Do I need a new evaluation?
- How often must documentation be updated?

### Process

- How do I request accommodations?
- When should I submit my documentation?
- How long does the approval process typically take?
- Do I need to request accommodations each semester?
- Who communicates accommodations to my professors?

### Academic Support

- Is academic coaching available?
- Are tutoring or study-skills services available?
- Are there resources for executive functioning and time management?
- Is there support for organization and planning?
- Are there specialized programs for students with learning differences or ADHD?

### Cost

- Which services are included at no additional cost?
- Are there additional fees for specialized programs or coaching?
- Are there scholarships or financial assistance for additional support?

### Campus Life

- What accommodations are available in residence halls?
- How are dining, transportation, and other accessibility needs handled?
- Who should I contact if an accommodation is not working?

### Student Responsibility

- What do successful students with disabilities typically do to advocate for themselves?
- What support is available if I am having difficulty advocating for myself?

## Before You Leave for College

### Build Your Self-Advocacy Skills

Start practicing now.

You should be able to explain:

- What are my strengths?
- What challenges do I experience?
- What accommodations help me succeed?
- What strategies have worked for me in the past?
- What do I need to ask for when I am struggling?

Your parents, teachers, counselors, and case managers can help you develop these skills—but you should increasingly take the lead in communicating your needs.

### Keep Your Documentation

Create a personal file containing relevant records, such as:

- Current evaluations
- IEPs
- 504 Plans
- Accommodation history
- Other documentation related to your disability

Keep copies for yourself. Do not assume your college will automatically receive your high school records or accommodations.

## Resources for Students with Disabilities

### K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Differences

A comprehensive college guide for students with learning differences, including information about support programs and services at colleges and universities.

K&W Guide — The Princeton Review

### National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)

Resources for students, families, and educators addressing learning disabilities, advocacy, and transition to adulthood. NCLD currently provides resources specifically for young adults.

National Center for Learning Disabilities

### CHADD

The national organization supporting individuals affected by ADHD. CHADD provides resources specifically addressing college preparation, self-advocacy, and succeeding in college with ADHD.

CHADD — National Resource on ADHD

### AHEAD

The Association on Higher Education and Disability is a professional organization focused on disability access and inclusion in higher education. Its site includes resources related to disability services in college.

AHEAD — Association on Higher Education and Disability

### U.S. Department of Education — Students with Disabilities

For the most authoritative information about disability rights and responsibilities in postsecondary education, review the U.S. Department of Education's resources on Section 504 and the ADA.

U.S. Department of Education — Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education

# For Undocumented Students

Undocumented students—including students with and without DACA—can pursue postsecondary education, but admission, tuition, financial aid, and scholarship policies vary by state and institution.

Start researching early and speak with a counselor or trusted college representative about your individual circumstances.

### Questions to Research

- Does the college admit undocumented students?
- Does the college offer institutional financial aid to undocumented students?
- Is the student eligible for in-state tuition?
- Are there institutional or private scholarships available?
- What financial aid application does the college require?
- Does the college have a dedicated resource center or staff member for undocumented students?
- What documentation is required to apply for admission and financial aid?

### Important Financial Aid Note

Undocumented students, including DACA recipients, are not eligible for federal student aid under current federal rules. However, students may be eligible for state aid, institutional aid, and private scholarships depending on their circumstances.

Because policies can change, always verify current requirements directly with the college and the appropriate state or federal agency.

## Resources for Undocumented Students

### BestColleges — College Guide for DACA & Undocumented Students

BestColleges maintains a current guide covering college selection, applications, financial aid, scholarships, and resources for undocumented and DACA students. Its current guide was updated in June 2025.

BestColleges — College Guide for DACA & Undocumented Students

### Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition (CIRC)

CIRC is a statewide Colorado organization providing education, advocacy, and resources related to immigrant rights. Its website includes current information and community resources.

Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition

### Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (RMIAN)

RMIAN provides free immigration legal and social services to immigrant children and adults in immigration detention and maintains resources for immigrant youth and families in Colorado.

Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network

### National Immigration Law Center (NILC)

NILC provides information and advocacy related to the rights of low-income immigrants, including education and access issues.

National Immigration Law Center

# Athletics: The NCAA & The NAIA

Playing a sport in college can be an exciting part of the college experience, but the recruiting and eligibility process begins long before you sign a letter of intent or arrive on campus.

If you are interested in competing in college athletics, start early. Work with your high school coach, club/travel coach, counselor, and college coaches to understand your options, eligibility requirements, recruiting timelines, and academic responsibilities.

### Most Important: The Student-Athlete Owns the Process

Cherry Creek coaches and counselors are here to support you, but **you are responsible for driving your recruiting process**.

That means:

- Researching colleges with athletic programs that fit your academic and athletic goals
- Identifying coaches and programs that interest you
- Introducing yourself to college coaches
- Responding to coaches promptly and professionally
- Completing recruiting questionnaires
- Registering with the appropriate eligibility center
- Monitoring your academic progress and eligibility requirements
- Meeting application, testing, financial aid, and athletic deadlines
- Following up when necessary

Do not wait for a college coach to find you. Be proactive.

# Understanding College Athletic Levels

There are several levels of collegiate athletics. The experience, recruiting process, scholarship opportunities, and academic expectations vary by institution and sport.

### NCAA Division I

- Generally the highest level of collegiate athletic competition
- Often includes large universities and highly competitive athletic programs
- Athletic scholarships may be available, depending on the sport and institution
- Student-athletes should expect significant time commitments for training, competition, travel, and team activities

### NCAA Division II

- Highly competitive collegiate athletics
- Often includes a mix of public and private institutions
- Athletic scholarships may be available, depending on the institution and sport
- Programs can offer a balance between athletics and academics

### NCAA Division III

- Competitive collegiate athletics with a strong emphasis on the overall college experience
- NCAA Division III schools do not offer athletic scholarships
- Student-athletes may qualify for academic, merit, need-based, or other forms of financial aid
- Many students appreciate the opportunity to compete while maintaining greater flexibility with academics and campus involvement

### NAIA

- The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) includes colleges and universities across the United States
- Athletic programs range from highly competitive to more developmental
- Athletic scholarships may be available, depending on the institution and sport
- NAIA has its own eligibility and recruiting rules

### NJCAA & Other Opportunities

Don't overlook community colleges and junior colleges. Many offer opportunities to compete while completing college coursework and potentially transferring to a four-year institution.

There are also collegiate opportunities through other athletic associations and organizations.

The “right” level is the one that provides the best combination of athletic opportunity, academic fit, financial fit, and overall college experience for you.

## NCAA Initial Eligibility

If you plan to compete in NCAA Division I or Division II athletics, you will need to meet NCAA academic eligibility requirements and register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

The Eligibility Center reviews your academic record and determines whether you meet NCAA initial eligibility requirements.

### Important: NCAA Courses Matter

Not every high school course automatically counts as an NCAA-approved core course.

Your NCAA eligibility is based on specific NCAA-approved core-course requirements, as well as grades and other eligibility standards.

Do not assume that meeting Cherry Creek's graduation requirements automatically means you meet NCAA eligibility requirements.

Review the current list of Cherry Creek NCAA-approved courses and monitor your progress throughout high school.

## When Should I Register?

Student-athletes should begin learning about NCAA requirements early in high school.

A good general timeline is:

### Freshman & Sophomore Years

- Begin researching NCAA eligibility requirements.
- Make sure your courses are NCAA-approved when appropriate.
- Focus on strong academic performance.
- Begin researching colleges and athletic programs.

### Junior Year

- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center if you are pursuing Division I or II athletics.
- Continue monitoring your core-course progress and grades.
- Begin communicating more actively with college coaches.
- Take the SAT or ACT if required or useful for the colleges you are considering.

### Senior Year

- Continue meeting NCAA academic requirements.
- Complete the amateurism and other required Eligibility Center steps.
- Make sure your final transcript is submitted as required.
- Continue communicating with coaches and completing college applications and financial aid requirements.

### Do Not Wait Until Senior Year to Think About Eligibility.

Course selection during freshman, sophomore, and junior year can affect your ability to meet NCAA requirements.

## How to Get Recruited

There is no single path to being recruited, and recruiting practices vary by sport and division.

### Take the Initiative

Create an athletic résumé that includes:

- Position/event
- Height/weight, when relevant
- Graduation year
- Athletic accomplishments
- Team/club experience
- Academic information
- Relevant statistics
- Awards and honors
- Contact information

Depending on your sport, you may also include:

- Highlight video
- Full-game footage
- Athletic profile or recruiting profile
- Competition schedule
- Coach contact information

### Contact College Coaches

When you identify a program that interests you:

1. Research the school and athletic program.
2. Find the appropriate coach's contact information.
3. Send a brief, professional introduction.
4. Include relevant athletic and academic information.
5. Provide a schedule or upcoming competition information when appropriate.
6. Follow up professionally if you do not receive a response.

Your email address, social media presence, voicemail, and communication with coaches all contribute to your professional image.

## Questions to Ask a College Coach

Don't focus only on whether the coach wants you on the team. You are choosing a college, not just a team.

Ask about:

### Athletics

- What is the team's practice and competition schedule?
- What is the typical time commitment?
- What position/role do you see me playing?
- How large is the roster?
- How does the coaching staff communicate with athletes?
- What is the team's culture like?

### Academics

- How do student-athletes balance athletics and academics?
- What academic support is available?
- Are there restrictions on majors or class schedules because of athletics?
- What happens if I am struggling academically?

### Financial

- What athletic scholarship opportunities are available?
- Is the scholarship renewable?
- What academic or need-based aid might also be available?
- What happens to athletic aid if my athletic circumstances change?

### College Fit

- What do athletes do when they are not practicing or competing?
- What is campus life like?
- How would you describe the relationship between athletes and the broader campus community?

## NCAA Eligibility Center

Register and obtain current eligibility information directly from the official NCAA Eligibility Center:

NCAA Eligibility Center — eligibilitycenter.org

**Official NCAA Eligibility Center:**
eligibilitycenter.org

**NCAA Eligibility Center phone:** 1-877-262-1492

### Important

Use the official NCAA website for current eligibility requirements, approved-course information, recruiting rules, and registration procedures. Requirements can change, and students should not rely on outdated third-party websites or information from previous graduating classes.

## NAIA Eligibility

Students interested in competing at an NAIA institution should review the current eligibility requirements directly through the NAIA.

NAIA — PlayNAIA.org

NAIA student-athletes should work with their prospective college and the NAIA eligibility system to understand current academic and eligibility requirements.

## Student-Athlete Checklist

### Start Early

☐ Research colleges and athletic programs
☐ Talk with your high school and club coaches
☐ Review NCAA-approved courses
☐ Monitor your grades and academic progress
☐ Research recruiting rules for your sport and division
☐ Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center when appropriate
☐ Create an athletic résumé/profile
☐ Contact coaches at schools that interest you
☐ Visit campuses and athletic facilities
☐ Complete college applications
☐ Complete FAFSA and other financial aid requirements
☐ Understand athletic scholarship and financial aid offers
☐ Meet all college, NCAA/NAIA, and financial aid deadlines

### Remember

Your athletic ability may open the door—but your academics, communication, character, and preparation help determine what opportunities are available to you.

You are not simply looking for a team.

You are looking for a college where you can compete, learn, grow, and thrive.

# How am I Going to Pay for This?

Paying for college can feel overwhelming, but a wide range of financial aid options exist to help cover costs. Most aid is need-based, determined by official forms like the **FAFSA** and the **CSS Profile**.

Your best resource throughout this process is the financial aid office at each college you consider—reach out to them early with any questions.

## Key Financial Aid Tools & Forms

| Form / Tool | What It Is | Key Details & Next Steps |
|---|---|---|
| **FAFSA** | The foundation for all federal, state, and most institutional financial aid (grants, loans, work-study). | • **When:** Opens in October using tax data from two years prior (Prior-Prior Year). |

| Form / Tool | What It Is | Key Details & Next Steps |
|---|---|---|
| *(Free Application for Federal Student Aid)* | | • **Where:** Apply at studentaid.gov.<br>• **Support:** Cherry Creek hosts a **Financial Aid Night** every October. You can also call (800) 4FED-AID. |
| **CSS Profile** | A supplemental form used primarily by selective private colleges to collect deeper financial details. | • **Where:** Complete at CollegeBoard.org.<br>• **Note:** Requires a filing fee. Check if your specific colleges require it before submitting. |
| **College-Specific Forms** | Supplemental forms required by individual schools to determine campus-specific aid. | • Check each prospective college's financial aid page.<br>• Forms are often included in your application packet or sent upon admission. |

# Types of Financial Aid

Financial aid generally falls into two categories: **Gift Aid** (free money) and **Self-Help Aid** (borrowed or earned money).

- **Grants:** Need-based money provided by the federal government, state, or college. *Does not require repayment.*
- **Scholarships:** Merit- or need-based awards given for academic achievement, talent, or community involvement. *Does not require repayment.*
- **Work-Study:** Part-time employment on or near campus funded by federal or college programs to help cover living expenses.
- **Loans:** Borrowed money from the federal government or private lenders that must be repaid with interest (typically starting after graduation). Federal loans offer lower rates and flexible repayment options.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I send my FAFSA information to colleges?

List up to 20 schools directly on your FAFSA. If you are applying to more than 20, submit the initial list, wait for processing, and then replace those schools with additional ones.

### What is the Student Aid Index (SAI)?

After submitting the FAFSA, you will receive a FAFSA Submission Summary. This document includes your **SAI**—an index number colleges use to calculate how much financial aid you are eligible to receive.

### How can I estimate my costs before applying?

Use the **Net Price Calculator** located on every college's website. Input your family's basic financial data to receive an estimate of out-of-pocket costs based on historical financial aid packages.

### Are in-state public schools always the cheapest option?

Not necessarily. Private colleges often have large endowments and offer substantial institutional aid that significantly lowers their higher sticker price. Similarly, out-of-state public universities may offer generous merit scholarships to non-resident students.

### Can I negotiate for more financial aid?

Yes. If your family's financial circumstances have changed (e.g., job loss, medical expenses) or you receive a higher offer from a peer institution, submit a formal financial aid appeal directly through the school's financial aid office.

## Final Tips for Success

- **Start Early:** Track priority deadlines closely—missing a deadline can cost you thousands in institutional aid.
- **Build Relationships:** Reach out directly to financial aid counselors at your target schools; they are there to help you navigate appeals and unique circumstances.
- **Keep Organized:** Create a simple spreadsheet to track required documents, login credentials, and submission dates.

# 20 Questions to Ask Colleges About Financial Aid

Don't wait until acceptance letters arrive to ask hard questions about cost. Take this list with you to college fairs, campus visits, or financial aid meetings, organized by where you are in the planning process:

## Understanding Total Costs

1. **Full Cost Breakdown:** What is the average total Cost of Attendance (COA)—including tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, board, transportation, and personal expenses? Do costs vary by major or program?
2. **Housing & Food:** What are the actual price ranges for different housing options and meal plans?
3. **Annual Increases:** How much do tuition and housing costs increase each year on average? *(Ask for a 3- to 5-year history).*
4. **Upfront Cash Needs:** How much out-of-pocket cash will my student need during the first week for books and supplies? Can these be charged to a student account?

## Admissions & Aid Eligibility

5. **Need-Blind vs. Need-Aware:** Does financial need influence admission decisions?

6. **Early Applications:** How does applying via Early Decision (ED) or Early Action (EA) affect my financial aid eligibility?

7. **Merit Aid:** Are merit-based scholarships available for students who don't qualify for need-based aid?

8. **Required Forms:** What forms are required beyond the FAFSA (e.g., CSS Profile or internal campus forms)?

9. **Deadlines & Timing:** What is your official financial aid priority deadline, and when are aid notifications sent out?

## Evaluating the Aid Package

10. **Percent Need Met:** What percentage of demonstrated financial need does the college typically meet?

11. **Comprehensive Coverage:** Does the aid package cover non-tuition costs like books, travel, and personal expenses?

12. **Award Explanations:** Will the financial aid office walk me through how my calculated need and award amounts were determined?

13. **Debt Load:** What is the average federal and private student loan debt for your graduating seniors?

**Payment Options & Changes Over Time**

14. **Year-over-Year Stability:** How does the aid package change in years 2 through 4? How are changes in family finances or sibling college enrollment handled?

15. **Scholarship Renewal:** What academic GPA or credit-hour conditions are required to renew scholarships each year?

16. **Work-Study Mechanics:** How are work-study jobs assigned, how many hours per week do students work, and are earnings paid directly to the student or applied to the bill?

17. **Billing Cycles:** When are tuition bills issued each semester, and do you offer interest-free monthly payment plans?

18. **Out-of-Pocket Financing:** What payment options or institutional payment plans exist to help bridge remaining balances?

19. **Appeals Process:** If our family's financial situation changes or the aid package is insufficient, under what conditions can we appeal, and how does that process work?

20. **Outside Scholarships:** If my student wins outside scholarships, does the college reduce gift aid (scholarships/grants) or reduce self-help aid (loans/work-study)?

## Financial Aid Terminology Cheat Sheet

| Term | What It Means |
|---|---|
| **FAFSA** | *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*. The federal form used to determine eligibility for federal grants, loans, and work-study. |
| **SAI (Student Aid Index)** | An index number calculated by the FAFSA that colleges use to determine how much financial aid you are eligible to receive. *(Replaced the old EFC/Expected Family Contribution).* |
| **Cost of Attendance (COA)** | The estimated total cost to attend a college for one academic year, including tuition, fees, housing, food, books, supplies, and personal expenses. |
| **Award Letter** | An official notification from a college detailing the full financial aid package offered (grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study). |

| Term | What It Means |
|---|---|
| **Grant** | Need-based financial aid that **does not** need to be repaid. |
| **Merit-Based Aid** | Financial aid awarded for academic, athletic, artistic, or other achievements, regardless of financial need. Does not require repayment. |
| **Subsidized Loan** | A federal student loan where the government pays the interest while the student is enrolled in school at least half-time. |
| **Unsubsidized Loan** | A federal student loan where the borrower is responsible for paying all interest, which begins accruing immediately upon disbursement. |
| **Federal Work-Study** | A federal program providing part-time campus jobs for students with financial need to help cover day-to-day living expenses. |
| **Net Price Calculator** | An online tool required on every college website that estimates your actual out-of-pocket cost after financial aid. |
| **Room & Board** | The cost of campus housing and food/meal plans. |

### Pro-Tips for Success

- **Start Early:** Research institutional deadlines early in senior year—missing a priority deadline can cost you access to limited campus-based grants.
- **Keep a Master Spreadsheet:** Track required forms, submission dates, login credentials, and aid offers for every school on your list.
- **Direct Communication:** Establish a point of contact at each financial aid office. Human connections make navigating special circumstances or appeals much smoother.

# The Scholarship Search

Finding scholarships requires a layered approach: start local before expanding to national databases.

**1. Three-Tier Search Strategy**

- **Tier 1: Institutional Aid (Your Best Bet)**
  - **Start with your target colleges:** Most scholarship money comes directly from colleges through merit-based and need-based institutional awards. Check each school's financial aid/scholarship portal early.
- **Tier 2: Local & High School Support**

  - **Naviance (Post Grad Center):** Log into Naviance to view localized scholarships sent directly to our high school counseling office. Local awards have smaller applicant pools and higher winning odds.
- **Tier 3: National Search Databases**
  - Use trusted online databases to match your specific profile, background, interests, and major with national awards.

**2. Trusted Scholarship & Aid Portals**

| Resource | Best For | Key Feature |
|---|---|---|
| **FastWeb** | Targeted profile matching | Creates a customized profile to match you with thousands of vetted national awards. |
| **Scholarships.com** | Filtered search & directory | Large searchable database allowing you to filter awards by grade level, state, major, and demographic. |
| **Federal Student Aid** | Official aid info & FAFSA | The ultimate source for federal grants, work-study programs, and federal student loans. |
| **FinAid** | Financial aid education | In-depth guides on loan types, financial aid calculators, and advice on navigating aid packages. |

# The Transition to College and College Glossary

The move from high school to college brings unmatched freedom alongside real challenges. Focus early preparation on four core pillars:

**Time Management:** Build a weekly calendar that includes block time for studying, classes, meals, exercise, and social activities. Unlike high school, most of your learning occurs independently outside the classroom.

**Roommate Relationships:** Establish clear ground rules early regarding quiet hours, visitors, sharing items, and cleaning. Address minor conflicts directly before they build up.

**Academic Ownership:** Professors won't remind you of upcoming deadlines. Review each syllabus during "Week 1" to map out exam dates and paper deadlines across the entire term.

**Campus Support Network:** Locate the campus health center, academic tutoring center, and counseling services during your first two weeks.

# Glossary of College Terms

Understanding common college terms can help demystify the application process and the academic journey ahead. Here's a handy glossary:

| Term | Category | What It Means |
|---|---|---|
| **ACT / SAT** | Testing | Standardized entrance exams evaluated alongside high school GPA. The ACT covers English, Math, Reading, and Science; the SAT covers Reading/Writing and Math. |
| **AP Tests** | Testing | Advanced Placement exams administered each spring. Scoring a 3 or higher can earn college credit or allow placement into advanced college courses. |
| **Application Deadline** | Admissions | The strict final date by which all application materials (transcript, test scores, letters of recommendation) must be submitted. |
| **Early Action (EA)** | Admissions | **Non-binding** early application option (usually due November). You receive an early decision but can wait until May 1 to make a final choice. |
| **Early Decision (ED)** | Admissions | **Binding** application agreement. If accepted, you must attend the college and withdraw all other pending applications. |
| **Priority Deadline** | Admissions | An early submission window that gives you top consideration for competitive programs, merit scholarships, or preferred housing. |
| **Rolling Admission** | Admissions | Schools evaluate applications continuously as they arrive rather than waiting for a single deadline. Applying early gives a distinct advantage. |
| **Deferred Admission** | Admissions | Either: (1) An early application moved to the regular decision pool for re-evaluation, or (2) An approval allowing an accepted student to delay enrollment for a Gap Year. |
| **Need-Blind Admission** | Admissions | Admissions policy where a college evaluates your application without looking at your family's ability to pay for tuition. |

| Term | Category | What It Means |
|---|---|---|
| **Safety School** | Admissions | A prospective college where your academic credentials exceed the average range of admitted students, making admission highly likely. |
| **Associate's Degree** | Degree | A 2-year undergraduate degree awarded by community or junior colleges, often designed for seamless transfer into a 4-year institution. |
| **Bachelor's Degree** | Degree | A 4-year undergraduate degree program (e.g., Bachelor of Arts [BA], Bachelor of Science [BS], Bachelor of Fine Arts [BFA]). |
| **Common Application** | Platform | An online application system accepted by 1,000+ colleges globally, allowing students to fill out one main form for multiple schools. |
| **Consortium** | Campus Life | A formal partnership among neighboring colleges allowing students to cross-register for classes and share libraries or campus facilities. |
| **Gap Year** | Transition | An intentional year taken between high school graduation and college enrollment for personal growth, travel, service, or work. |

# College Links/Resources

By familiarizing yourself with these terms and concepts, you'll be better prepared to navigate college life and make informed decisions about your education.

**General College Search & Planning**

- **BigFuture by College Board:** Robust database to search and filter colleges by major, size, location, and cost.
- **College Navigator (NCES):** Detailed federal database providing verified statistical data on retention, graduation rates, and true costs.
- **Colleges That Change Lives:** Dedicated resource highlighting student-centered liberal arts colleges focused on transformative undergraduate experiences.
- **Peterson's College Search:** Tools for exploring colleges, scholarship matches, and test preparation.
- **UCAS:** Official portal for exploring and applying to universities in the United Kingdom.

**Diverse Student Population Resources**

- **The Hundred-Seven (HBCU List):** Comprehensive directory and guides for Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- **HACU (Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities):** Resources and scholarship support for Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).
- **I'm First:** Stories, encouragement, and college planning support tailored specifically for first-generation college students.
- **American Indian College Fund:** Higher education support, scholarships, and resources for Native American students.

**Testing & Accommodation**

- **FairTest:** Directory of colleges offering test-optional or test-blind admissions policies.
- **College Board (SAT/AP):** Official account hub for managing SAT registration, AP scores, and sending score reports.
- **ACT.org:** Official portal for registering for the ACT and managing score reports.
- **AHEAD & NCLD:** Resources supporting students with disabilities and learning differences through the transition to college-level accommodations.

**Financial Aid & Colorado-Specific Support**

- **FAFSA:** Official site to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- **College Opportunity Fund (COF):** State stipend providing tuition discounts for eligible Colorado undergraduate students attending participating in-state public or private colleges.
- **FastWeb & Scholarships.com:** Primary databases for national scholarship matching.

**Student Athletes & Career Exploration**

- **NCAA Eligibility Center:** Essential registration hub for high school athletes planning to play Division I or Division II sports.
- **MyFuture.edu:** Career exploration tool linking interests to potential fields, required education paths, and military opportunities.

# APPENDIX A

## 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 are 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 Post Grad Planning Schedule to learn about important fall events such as *Naviance Night, Standardized Testing Unpacked, Financial Aid & Scholarship Night, the Denver National College Fair, Creek to College,* and others.
- Success in college is a combination of being able to handle academic demands and living independently.

### SPRING

- Complete all Creek 201 tasks surrounding career exploration.
- Take the State PSAT 10 (practice SAT) given to all sophomores in April.
- Check out the Post Grad website's Post Grad Planning Schedule to learn about important spring events such as *Evening with the Deans of College Admissions, CCSD HIS/HBCU/NASNTI Fair, RMACAC College Fair, Creek 201 Sophomore Parent Night,* and others.
- Thinking about playing sports in college? Check out the NCAA Eligibility Center website for requirements.
- Look into summer jobs, enrichment and volunteer 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** |
| **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.*

### College & Career Ready Demonstration Requirement for Graduation in Cherry Creek and All Other Colorado Schools

Board Policy IKF
In addition to required coursework, all students must demonstrate career or college readiness in Reading/Writing/Communicating (R/W/C) and mathematics through at least one menu option below.

| | English | Math |
|---|---|---|
| Accuplacer NextGen | 241 on Reading or 236 on writing | 255 on AR or 230 on QAS |
| Accuplacer Classic | 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 or higher | 2 or higher |
| ASVAB | 31st Percentile | 31st Percentile |
| Concurrent Enrollment | Passing grade | Passing grade |
| IB | 4 or higher | 4 or higher |
| SAT (for 2024-2026 only) | 470 | 480 |
| District Capstone | Secondary Literacy Assessment | Common Assessment Portfolio |
| Industry Certificate | Individualized | Individualized |
| Performance Based Assessment (PBA) | State-wide scoring criteria | State-wide scoring criteria |

# APPENDIX A

## 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 educational experience.
- 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**

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

| | |
|---|---|
| **English/Language Arts** | **4.0 units** |
| **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.*

### 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 Post Grad Planning Presentation** (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***

# APPENDIX A

## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE: JUNIORS *continued*

### 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 **RMACAC College Fair** in March.
- 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*** (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.

### College & Career Ready Demonstration Requirement for Graduation in Cherry Creek and All Other Colorado Schools

Board Policy IKF
In addition to required coursework, all students must demonstrate career or college readiness in Reading/Writing/Communicating (R/W/C) and mathematics through at least one menu option below.

| | English | Math |
|---|---|---|
| Accuplacer Next Gen | 241 on Reading<br>or 236 on writing | 255 on AR<br>or 230 on QAS |
| Accuplacer Classic | 62 Reading Comp. or<br>70 Sentence Skills | 61 on Elementary Algebra |
| ACT | 18 | 19 |
| ACT WorkKeys | Bronze or higher | Bronze or higher |
| Advanced Placement | 2 or higher | 2 or higher |
| ASVAB | 31st Percentile | 31st Percentile |
| Concurrent Enrollment | Passing grade | Passing grade |
| IB | 4 or higher | 4 or higher |
| SAT (for 2024-2026 only) | 470 | 480 |
| District Capstone | Secondary Literacy Assessment | Common Assessment Portfolio |
| Industry Certificate | Individualized | Individualized |
| Performance Based Assessment (PBA) | State-wide scoring criteria | State-wide scoring criteria |

# APPENDIX A

## 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*.

**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 |
| 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.*

### 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 the 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.
- 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.

### 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 in Naviance. Give them time!
- 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 Net Price Calculator Center at ***collegecost.ed.gov*** for additional financial aid information on the top 3 colleges where you plan to apply.

***Continues***

# APPENDIX A

## College Planning Timeline: Seniors *continued*

### 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.
- Attend National College Fair and Workshops happening in November. See the Post Grad Website at www.*CCHSPostgrad.com*
- ***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

- Submit the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** (fafsa.ed.gov) online beginning as early as **December 1.**
- 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.

### 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.

**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.

| 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 | 31st Percentile | 31st 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 |

# APPENDIX B

## Senior College Application Checklist

**Use this checklist to make sure you are fully prepared for your Senior Conference.** Completing these steps in advance will help you make the most of your meeting with your counselor and ensure you are ready to begin the application process.

### Application Process

- **Determine the application platform for each college.**
  - Visit each college's admissions website to confirm how you should apply.
  - **Common App:** www.commonapp.org
  - **Coalition Application:** www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org
  - **College-Specific Application:** Apply directly through the college's website.
- **Know which colleges require self-reported academic information.**
  - Use the **unofficial transcript** emailed to you in late August when completing applications that require self-reported coursework or grades.
- **Review standardized testing requirements.**
  - Check each college's admissions website for its current ACT/SAT policy.
  - You can also use www.fairtest.org as a resource for test-optional information.
  - If a college requires or recommends official scores, arrange to have them sent:
    - **SAT:** www.collegeboard.org
    - **ACT:** www.actstudent.org
- **Use the correct Cherry Creek High School code: 060-515**
- **Record every application deadline.**
  - Note Early Action, Early Decision, Regular Decision, Rolling Admission, and scholarship deadlines.
  - **Do not assume deadlines are the same from college to college.**

### Common Application

If you are applying through the Common App:

- **Create your Common App account:** www.commonapp.org
- **Complete your Education section.**
  - Enter your high school information accurately.
  - Add at least one college to your **"My Colleges"** list.
- **Complete the FERPA Release Authorization.**
  - Go to **"My Colleges"** and select a college.
  - Locate the **FERPA Release Authorization**.
  - Read the information carefully.
  - Select **"I waive my right to review..."** *(recommended)*.

- Sign electronically.

## Connect Common App and Naviance

If you are using the Common App, make sure your accounts are properly connected.

- Log in to **Naviance** and go to **"Colleges I'm Applying To."**
- Enter the **same email address and date of birth** you used for your Common App account.
- Click **"Match."**
- Confirm that your Common App and Naviance accounts are successfully connected.

## Teacher & Counselor Recommendations

- **Determine which colleges require teacher recommendations.**
  - Carefully review each college's requirements.
  - In most cases, **one teacher recommendation is sufficient**; some colleges may require two.
- **Determine whether you need a counselor recommendation.**
  - This will be discussed during your Senior Conference.
  - Not every college requires or accepts a counselor recommendation.
- **Confirm your teacher recommendation plan.**
  - Make sure you have asked your teacher(s) well in advance.
  - Check Naviance after **October 1** to confirm that recommendations have been submitted.
  - Contact the Post Grad Center if you have questions about your recommendations.
- **Thank your teacher(s).**
  - A handwritten note, email, or other sincere thank-you is always appreciated.

## College Essays & Supplemental Materials

- **Review essay requirements for every college on your list.**
  - Identify the Common App personal essay requirement.
  - Check for **college-specific supplemental essays**.
  - Determine whether the college requires additional materials, portfolios, auditions, or other submissions.
- **Create a plan for completing your essays.**
  - Do not wait until the application deadline.
  - Give yourself time to write, revise, proofread, and seek feedback.
- **Use the Post Grad Center for support.**
  - Take advantage of college essay assistance available during **5th and 8th periods**.

## College Visits at Cherry Creek

College representatives visit Cherry Creek throughout the school year.

- Log in to **Naviance**.

- Select the **"Colleges"** tab.
- Select **"College Visits."**
- Review upcoming visits and register for those you would like to attend.
- **Talk with your teacher before leaving class.**
    - Obtain permission before attending a college visit.
    - Be responsible for any missed work.

## Complete Your Senior Conference Requirements

Your Senior Conference is an important step in the college application process.

- **Request your Senior Conference.**
    - Request your appointment with your counselor through **OnceHub** at www.cchspostgrad.com.
    - A scheduled Senior Conference is **required before submitting transcript requests**.
- **Complete the Senior Conference Questionnaire in Naviance.**
    - Provide thoughtful and detailed responses.
    - Your answers help your counselor better understand your goals, interests, accomplishments, and plans.
- **Complete the Parent Questionnaire, if required.**
    - Parents/guardians should complete this questionnaire **only if a counselor letter of recommendation is needed**.
- **Update your college list in Naviance.**
    - Review your **"Colleges I'm Thinking About"** list.
    - Remove colleges you are no longer considering.
    - Add colleges you are seriously considering.
    - Make sure your list accurately reflects your current plans.

## Transcript Requests

After your Senior Conference:

- **Complete a Blue Transcript Request Form for each college.**
- **Submit your completed form(s) to the Post Grad Center.**
- **Pay the $5.00 transcript processing fee for each request.**
- **Pay attention to Post Grad deadlines.**
    - Transcript requests must be submitted with enough time for processing before your college's application deadline.
    - ***Do not wait until the application deadline to request your transcript.***

## Before You Attend Your Senior Conference

Make sure you can answer **"yes"** to these questions:

- I have a preliminary list of colleges I am considering.
- I know how I will apply to each college.
- I have reviewed each college's admission requirements.

- I have reviewed testing requirements and policies.
- I know my important application deadlines.
- I have started or completed my Common App, if applicable.
- I have completed the FERPA Release Authorization, if applicable.
- I have connected Common App and Naviance, if applicable.
- I have identified my teacher recommendation requirements.
- I have considered whether I need a counselor recommendation.
- I have reviewed essay and supplemental requirements.
- I have completed my Senior Conference Questionnaire in Naviance.
- My **"Colleges I'm Thinking About"** list in Naviance is current.
- My parents/guardians have completed the Parent Questionnaire, if required.

Come prepared. Ask questions. Make a plan. Take ownership of your next step.

Your senior year is your journey—use your Senior Conference to make sure you know where you're going and how you're going to get there.

# APPENDIX C

# Campus Visit Clusters

Explore these suggestions to help you plan college trips. While not exhaustive, this list covers a wide range of schools. Safe travels!

**New York City Area**

- **Large:** New York University
- **Medium:** Columbia University, Fordham University, The New School/Eugene Lang College, Princeton University (NJ)
- **Small:** Barnard College (women's college), Sarah Lawrence College

**Connecticut**

- **Large:** University of Connecticut
- **Medium:** Fairfield University, Yale University
- **Small:** Connecticut College, Trinity College, Wesleyan University

**Rhode Island & Southeastern Massachusetts**

- **Large:** University of Rhode Island
- **Medium:** Brown University (RI), Providence College (RI)
- **Small:** Bryant University (RI), Rhode Island School of Design, Stonehill College (MA), Wheaton College (MA)

**Boston Area**

- **Large:** Boston University, Northeastern University
- **Medium:** Boston College, Brandeis University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Tufts University
- **Small:** Babson College, Emerson College, Wellesley College (women's college)

**Northern New England**

- **Large:** University of Maine, University of New Hampshire, University of Vermont
- **Medium:** Dartmouth College (NH)
- **Small:** Bates College (ME), Bowdoin College (ME), Colby College (ME), Middlebury College (VT)

**Upstate New York**

- **Large:** Binghamton University-SUNY, Cornell University, Rochester Institute of Technology, Syracuse University
- **Medium:** Ithaca College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, University of Rochester
- **Small:** Alfred University, Bard College, Colgate University, Hamilton College, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Skidmore College, St. Lawrence University, Union College, Vassar College

**Central & Western Massachusetts**

- **Large:** University of Massachusetts-Amherst
- **Small:** Amherst College, Clark University, Hampshire College, College of the Holy Cross, Mount Holyoke College (women's college), Smith College (women's college), Williams College, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

**Central Pennsylvania**

- **Large:** Pennsylvania State University
- **Medium:** Bucknell University
- **Small:** Dickinson College, Gettysburg College

**Western Pennsylvania & Ohio**

- **Large:** Miami University (OH), Ohio State University
- **Medium:** Case Western Reserve University (OH), Carnegie Mellon University (PA)
- **Small:** Allegheny College (PA), College of Wooster (OH), Denison University (OH), Kenyon College (OH), Oberlin College (OH), Ohio Wesleyan, Washington and Jefferson College (PA)

**Philadelphia & Surrounding Area**

- **Large:** Drexel University, University of Pennsylvania, Temple University
- **Medium:** Lehigh University, Villanova University
- **Small:** Bryn Mawr College (women's college), Franklin & Marshall College, Haverford College, Lafayette College, Swarthmore College

**Washington, D.C. & Baltimore Area**

- **Large:** George Washington University (DC), University of Delaware, University of Maryland-College Park
- **Medium:** American University (DC), Georgetown University (DC), Howard University (HBCU-DC), Johns Hopkins University (MD), Loyola University Maryland
- **Small:** Goucher College (MD), St. John's College (MD)

**Southeast**

- **Large:** George Mason University (VA), James Madison University (VA), University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, University of Virginia
- **Medium:** Duke University (NC), Elon University (NC), Emory University (GA), University of Richmond (VA), Vanderbilt University (TN), Wake Forest University (NC), College of William and Mary (VA)
- **Small:** Davidson College (NC), Guilford College (NC), Morehouse College (HBCU-GA), Roanoke College (VA), Spelman College (HBCU-GA), Washington and Lee University (VA)

**South**

- **Large:** University of Texas-Austin
- **Medium:** Rice University (TX), Tulane University (LA)
- **Small:** Trinity University (TX)

**Midwest**

- **Large:** DePaul University (IL), Indiana University-Bloomington, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, University of Minnesota-Minneapolis, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- **Medium:** Northwestern University (IL), University of Chicago (IL), Washington University in St. Louis (MO)
- **Small:** Beloit College (WI), Carleton College (MN), Earlham College (IN), Grinnell College (IA), Kalamazoo College (MI), Lake Forest College (IL), Macalester College (MN), St. Olaf College (MN)

**Colorado**

- **Large:** Colorado State University, University of Colorado-Boulder, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs
- **Medium:** University of Denver

- **Small:** Colorado College

**Florida**

- **Large:** Florida State University, University of Florida
- **Medium:** University of Miami
- **Small:** Eckerd College, Rollins College

**Northern California**

- **Large:** UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz
- **Medium:** Stanford University, UC Merced, Santa Clara University, University of San Francisco
- **Small:** Mills College

**Southern California**

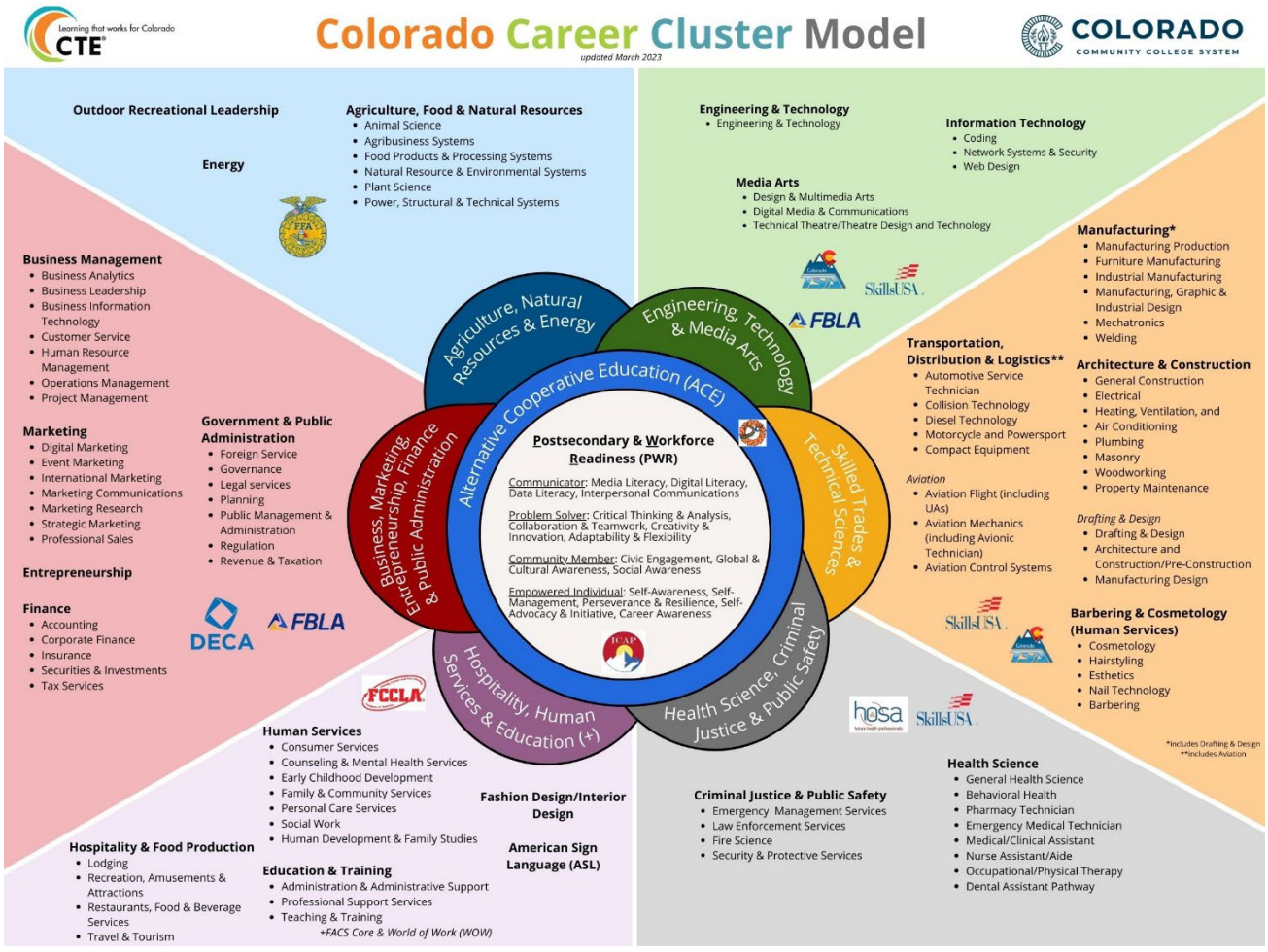
- **Large:** UCLA, UC Riverside, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, University of Southern California
- **Medium:** Loyola Marymount University, University of San Diego
- **Small:** California Institute of the Arts, Claremont McKenna College, Harvey Mudd College, Occidental College, Pepperdine University, Pitzer College, Pomona College, Scripps College, University of Redlands, Whittier College

**Pacific Northwest**

- **Large:** University of Oregon, University of Washington
- **Medium:** Evergreen State College (WA)
- **Small:** Lewis & Clark College (OR), Reed College (OR), University of Puget Sound (WA), Whitman College (WA)

# APPENDIX D
# Colorado Career Cluster Map

Considering what career path to take and the education level required? Think Career Clusters!

The CCHS Post Grad website features the Colorado Department of Education Career Cluster Model, an innovative visual grouping of careers and sectors of industry based on the knowledge and skills needed to enter and excel in each career. These can help students develop an academic plan for high school and identify opportunities post-graduation, including the types of training required, from industry certifications and apprenticeships through college/university degree and beyond.

Take a look at the Cluster Model below, then visit the CCHS Post Grad website for more Career Exploration and Opportunities resources.