TIPS FOR COMPLETING COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

The application is your single opportunity to influence the admissions process. Approach each aspect of the application as an opportunity. Devote time and thought to each of the various portions. As you think about the application circulating among an admissions committee, consider the following:

- Be aware that along with your application, colleges review:
    1. Your academic transcript for grades 9-11 as well as a list of your senior course load. Special attention is given to you grades, your grade pattern, your overall grade point average, the courses you have taken, your class rank and your attendance record.
    2. ACT/SAT is ranked very highly in both your college admission decision and your scholarship package. Check your colleges' requirements.
    3. Colleges consider extracurricular activities, recommendations, the applicant's personal essay, personal interview, alumni connections, and personal strengths.
    4. Remember that your senior year is a better indication of you study habits, motivation and commitment than your freshman year. Colleges will keep this in consideration.
- Read every word of the directions before you even print your name. If at all possible, type the application. You can usually do this on-line.
- Make a copy of applications and use them as a worksheet.
- If you use an on-line application:
    1. Always print out a copy of your application prior to sending it on-line.
    2. Give a copy to your counselor with the forms she needs to complete.
    3. Avoid filing on-line the week before the application deadline. This is the most risky time to file because of volume and likelihood of system failure.
    4. When applying on-line with a credit card, payments can take over a week to reach the school.
    5. Always call or e-mail the college within 14 days to verify receipt of your on-line application.
- Demonstrate your best work, something of which you are proud.
- Essays should be error-free, thoughtful, logical and organized. Use comfortable vocabulary. Be yourself. The essay should say something the rest of the application doesn't say. Elaborate on a talent, an interest or a personal accomplishment. Stay within the length limit for the essay. Admissions officers have limited time, and lots of essays to review.
- Do not write what you think the admissions office wants to hear. The committee reading your application wants to know you—what you think and do. No matter how ordinary you may feel, your application represents a different individual from all others.
- Use specific examples when describing your interests and achievements. Explain your involvement—why things you chose to discuss are important to you. It is better to emphasize the degree of involvement in a few activities than a long list of superficial interests.
- Why are you going to college? To learn? To learn what? Why? A college should be convinced that you truly want an education. Avoid simplistic answers and reasons. If you want to be an engineer, for example, cite some experience from your own life or a deed and though that led you to this present choice.

- If humor is a part of your style, feel free to use it…within reason.
- Typing or printing in blue or black INK is acceptable. In some cases you will be required to write an essay in your own handwriting. Neatness and legibility are obviously essential.
- **Proofread**. Spelling errors are unacceptable.
- Photocopies (clear ones) are perfectly acceptable, but sign each one individually. Your name should be on each page submitted.
- **Proofread again!!** Have your parents proofread. Have your grandparents proofread. Have your English teacher proofread. Have Ms. Franz proofread. (Get the point?)