

College Planning: Frequently Asked Questions

Does HCPSS provide class rank?

As of the 2020-2021 school year, HCPSS no longer calculates class rank.

What things should parents/guardians and students do to be prepared for the college process?

Junior year is an important time to begin the college search process. Below are some things that students and parents should be doing and/or thinking about.

Take the October PSAT/NMSQT: The test should be taken seriously as a qualifier for the National Merit Scholarship Program but also as a practice for the SAT exam. Review PSAT score reports when they become available. Students may gain insight into the types of questions they may need additional practice with.

Research colleges that match student interests and ambitions. Start thinking about financial aid applications and scholarships.

Students should take the SAT/ACT at least once prior in the spring of their Junior year.

Attend workshops on post high school planning offered by Student Services.

Complete extracurricular activities resume and explore college essay topics.

Begin planning for summer internships, enrichment programs and/or employment opportunities.

Do students receive a copy of their counselor and/or teacher recommendation or are they sent directly to the college?

Students should *waive* their right to view the counselor or teacher recommendation. Colleges/universities want to know that letter writers have not been influenced by students/families. Should a counselor or

teacher feel they cannot write a positive letter for the student, they will elect to decline the request.

If there are colleges that are visiting other Howard County High Schools, but not coming to Glenelg, can my child attend these sessions (at the other school)?

Students may only visit representatives that attend Glenelg during the school day. If a university is visiting another Howard County School, but not Glenelg, please let your counselor know and we can contact the college representative to invite them to GHS. A lot of times, if the representative is in the area, they welcome the opportunity to attend another school.

Can a student take 3 years of a language and still be competitive?

It is important to check each college/university's website where students are considering applying in order to identify their admissions requirements. Typically, schools will report that they require a minimum of two years of a foreign language at the high school level. For example, University of Maryland College Park reports that the 2 year language criteria represents the *minimum* requirement for admission. Successful applicants typically present academic credentials which exceed the minimum. However, if there are specific questions, students and parents should call or email the admissions representative and ask what they look for.

If I write an essay, should I also write a personal statement?

The personal statement is an avenue for a candidate to express any information about themselves that may impact the admission decision. For example, students can write to express their level of interest in the school or to describe any adverse circumstances that have impacted the student's academic record. Please see the counselor for specific guidance relating to this question.

How do students determine if they will receive credit from a particular university for an AP test score?

Each college/university has different criteria for AP test scores transferring and counting as credit. If you go to the specific college/university website, there will be information about which scores will count. In addition, be sure

to check if AP or SAT scores will exempt a student from taking a specific course.

Are SAT/AP/ACT test scores included in online applications or are they mailed separately? And does the school submit those scores?

SAT, ACT and AP test results all fall under the responsibility of the student to send. Test results *must* be sent directly from the testing agency to colleges/universities. Students will request test scores through their student accounts with the testing organizations (collegeboard.com to send SAT and AP scores and Act.org to send ACT scores). The Counseling Center will mail student transcripts, counselor recommendations, and the secondary school report only.

Should I still complete the FAFSA application if my parents/guardians make too much money?

Every student should submit a completed FAFSA application regardless of the gross family income. Some colleges and universities will not award Merit based scholarship money without a completed FAFSA. If you like free money, and wish to be considered for free money, you will want to complete the FAFSA application!

Please contact your child's counselor if you have additional questions.