

Deerfield Parent Network

“Network Notes”

College Planning: “What We Wish We Knew...”

Wednesday, April 23, 2014

7:00-8:30pm

Deerfield Public Library

Panelists: DHS parents, Alan Berkowitz, Andrea Brown, Joanne Burgess, Glynis Hirsch, and CCRC counselor, Beth Gilfillan.

Parent panelists addressed their experiences on what they learned during their students’ college planning process. Their children attend/attended/will soon attend a diverse group of schools such as, American University, Denison University, Illinois State University, Indiana University, Knox College, Lawrence University, University of Wisconsin, Vanderbilt and Yale.

CCRC counselor, Beth Gilfillan, spoke about resources available in the CCRC to both students and parents. She encouraged students to make use of the resources and workshops sponsored by the CCRC and to attend college visits at the high school. Most are held in the fall. Two handouts were distributed, *Campus Visits* and *CCRC Resources for Seniors* which can be found on the CCRC website.

The following is a summary of the advice given by the panelists:

Start the process early

Begin without any preconceived ideas. Don’t focus on only one school. Gather information on a variety of schools. Two recommended guide books are the *Fiske Guide to Colleges* and *Colleges that Change Lives*. Use Scattergrams on Naviance to gauge if a particular school is within your student’s reach. Scattergrams are valuable and accurate. There are also an abundance of resources at the CCRC available to both students and parents. Campus visits to small, medium and large schools are recommended to narrow down the field. Take notes during each school visit in order to keep schools straight and to remember what stood out about a particular school, both positive and negative. Along with a campus walking tour and attending formal presentations, encourage students to sit in on a class and to reach out to a DHS student that attends the school you are visiting for a student’s perspective. The CCRC has an updated list of DHS alums. When going through the process, it is important that students find the right feel and community for them, take everything in, follow their gut and form their own opinion.

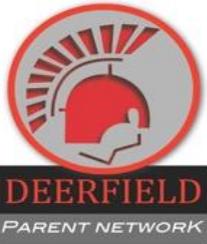
Find and apply for scholarships

Have a conversation with your child about financial resources and give them a knowledge base. Don’t rule out a school because of perceived cost. There is FAFSA, need base aide, and many available scholarships. The biggest source for scholarships comes from the college itself. Most merit based scholarships come with the offer of admission. There are talent and athletic scholarships and also the National Merit Scholarship. This year Deerfield awarded 27 specific scholarships to students. Other outside scholarships can be explored on Naviance.

The hidden costs of college

Parents spoke about the hidden costs of college such as travel costs, Greek life, tuition increases, travel abroad, laundry, tutors, and drinking fines. They also mentioned there are many job opportunities on a college campus for students.





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DHS reputation

DHS maintains a strong reputation with colleges. Students leave DHS very well prepared. Over 250 colleges visit DHS, most in the fall. Students are encouraged to attend these visits. If a student cannot attend a college visit at DHS, it is recommended that they reach out to the college rep with any questions.

Use of paid college consultants and ACT/SAT tutors

12% of DHS students use a paid college consultant. These consultants help with meeting deadlines, essays, completing applications and relieving stress. Over 50% of DHS students use an ACT/SAT tutor. DHS resources are readily available to students and should be taken advantage of. The CCRC has ACT and SAT practice tests and sample subject tests.

Location of school

Factor travel time and cost into your student’s decision. If far away, students might not come home as often, but flights can be expensive and might need to be arranged well in advance. Schedules can change at the last minute and this could prove to be costly. Make sure when looking at schools that the student knows the convenience or not of getting to a bus, train or airport from their campus.

Common Application vs. Individual School Application

Make sure your student knows which type of application is expected from each school. Don’t assume the Common App covers all schools. It is recommended to use the Common App when applying to two or more schools that take the Common App.

Sending standardized test scores

It’s a personal decision whether or not to send test scores directly to schools or wait until the student has all their test results. Beth shared that no school will count low scores against a student. Colleges like demonstrated interest. Certain schools allow students to super score vs. send in a composite. Every school is different. Research each school about its testing requirements or ask an admissions officer at a campus visit. Concerning sending subject tests, each school is different. If a school recommends or says it is optional to send subject tests, they should be sent. Depending on the school, students can either choose which subject tests they would like to take and send, or certain schools will specify which tests to take. More schools are now test optional. These particular schools will let a student know whether or not to send test scores. Colleges continue to weigh a student’s GPA over test scores.

June ACT?

Beth shared that a lot of students opt to take the June ACT at the end of junior year. It’s a good time to take the test because students have had a whole year of learning. Less take the September test senior year. Test results from the recent Prairie State Exam will most likely not be in before the May 9th deadline for the June ACT.

