Try to get a sense of what criteria is most important to your student, but do not limit yourself to those criteria. Your child may think he/she wants a big school until they see how spread out it is or want a small school, but realize it is not much larger than their high school. Look at a variety of types, sizes and locations of schools before narrowing down the choices too early in the search process.

We have amazing resources at DHS, from our two outstanding college counselors to your students’ school counselor to a vast array of programs for students and parents during the junior and senior years. We highly encourage Juniors to attend a Junior Group held in the Spring. Registration is required.

Make sure that the “Colleges Considering” list in MAIA stays updated with any new schools that your child is interested in.

Attend college fairs in the area, especially the College of Lake County Fair on March 14, Niles West Fair on March 19, Glenbrook North Fair on April 11 and the National Fair at McCormick Place each fall.

Use DHS resources: A student and parent meeting with one of the college counselors, student meetings with the college representatives who visit DHS and use of other resources like MAIA (College Search and Compare Me are fantastic features).

Students can pre-register for most fairs with StriveScan, saving time at the fair by not having to fill out information cards. Students should introduce themselves to the admissions representative. Occasionally send that person an email with a question or two as a way to stay in touch. This admissions representative is likely to be the one making the admissions decision.

The college or university’s tour guide absolutely makes a difference so if you have a choice, choose the perkiest, happiest, most gregarious one to tour with. That student will set the tone for the whole school. You can also (quietly) change groups if you are assigned to a tour guide who might not be so perky.
Choosing a school for a particular major is certainly an important consideration, but we know many students change their majors once on campus so it is important for the schools to have a wide range of majors available or several majors that the student would consider pursuing. More colleges are offering "Undecided Programs" in order to help the student decide what majors to pursue.

Ask your student to create an organizational system for themselves that identifies important dates and deadlines and allows for all of the materials to be maintained in one location.

Pick up a copy of the Fiske Guide, The Insider's Guide and a book entitled Colleges That Change Lives. The importance of thorough campus visits cannot be stressed enough. There is so much to see and to assess. Most importantly, do not rush from school to school if you can avoid it. Take your time on each campus.

- Schedule your visit in advance
- Visit each school's website for more information on registration.
- Ask to sit in on a class.
- Go see the Rec center.
- Talk to students & college officials.
- Grab a school newspaper. Check the food and dorm life. This will also help your student with their travel experience. How do they feel about the food? Check out the dining hall. The school offers activities that meet their interest(s)? See the Rec center, etc.
- Have a meal and visit dorms.
- Go where the tour did not take you.
- Meet with DHS alumni. Take them out for a meal or coffee - they will tell you what the admissions office won't.

"What I Wish I Knew" 

Frank Bruni. 

There is an application organizer on the CCRC webpage of the DHS website.
**“What I Wish I Knew” College Advice**

**Attend the college’s reception program in our area.** Students should get to know the admissions representative from each college as they will be the one reading your child’s application and possibly making a recommendation for admission. And this tip helps with schools who “take attendance”. They will be able to gauge your child’s interest in the school once they start attending their hosted events in the Chicago area.

**Find summer programs at the schools your child is interested in.** Some schools offer summer programs for high school students. It is a great way to see if your child likes the campus and the facilities.

**The CCRC publishes newsletters for second semester juniors monthly, first semester seniors weekly and second semester seniors bi-monthly.**

**Try to contain your college conversations to one weekend day a week.**

**College Conversations**

**Summer Programs**

This is how all important information about the college process is communicated to your family. You will receive an email with the link, but they are also available on the CCRC website on the Junior and Senior pages. Read them to stay updated.

**CCRC Newsletters**

It gets overwhelming and irritating for all of you to constantly have the college conversation day in and day out over the dinner table. It just gets to be too much. It is a lengthy process and more of a marathon that requires some pacing.

**Applying**

Have your child choose to apply to at least one school on rolling admissions so you all do not have to wait until late March for one admissions decision. But make sure it is a school your child is really interested in. It doesn’t help to apply to a school just to get an admissions decision with no intention of attending.

**Reception Programs**

In fact, they would expect to see your child at their reception and events if the colleges are far from Chicago.

**DHS Grads**

Talk to DHS grads at various campuses, especially students who are not paid by the admissions office. If there is an opportunity for a social visit, please have your child take advantage of this opportunity. It really makes a difference and could certainly factor into the decision-making process. Smaller colleges will absolutely facilitate this opportunity. For larger schools, you will most likely need to find a DHS alum willing to host your child for a night.

**What I Wish I Knew**

In fact, they would expect to see your child at their reception and events if the colleges are far from Chicago.
Be mindful of four year costs of the school including transportation costs for four years upfront and the inevitable tuition increases. There is probably nothing harder than having your child fall in love with a school that you cannot afford. You won’t always know the financial aid package until the spring so you can hope for the best, but you just won’t know. Use the net price calculator on each college’s website to get a sense of costs.

Consider choosing a school where your student can be the “big fish” in a small pond; where they are possibly more likely to get merit aid or earlier research opportunities.

The concept of fit is extremely important. There is no “one” right place - this is not like trying to find a needle in a haystack.

Can your child see themselves succeeding and fitting in on that campus? Does the school offer them everything or most of the things they were looking for?

There is no “one” right place - this is not like trying to find a needle in a haystack.

It takes A’s to get into a “good” college
A public university will cost me less than a private one
My SAT/ACT scores will make or break my admissions chances
The more selective a school is, the better it is
The higher the college’s ranking in the US news and World Report, the better it is

If I don’t get into a Name Brand college, I will have no future

Enjoy and embrace the experience. It is a wonderful opportunity to spend time with your child, getting to know what they are dreaming of for themselves. You will learn so much about your child through this search process. Have fun.