

Buffalo Grove Jr. Post High School Planning Guide



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POST SECONDARY OPTIONS

MILITARY

- ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)
- Research and Compare Branches:
 - Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy, Coast Guard
- Speak to a recruiter
- Military Scholarship for School

CAREER EMPLOYMENT

- Create/Update Resume
- Applications
- Interviews
- Have appropriate clothes

TRADE SCHOOL/APPRENTICESHIP

A trade school, also known as a technical or vocational school, is an educational institution that exists to teach skills related to a specific job.

TWO YEAR COLLEGE

Certificate: Non-credit continuing education career certificate says that you are serious about acquiring the skills and expertise needed for a new career or advanced standing in your current field.

Associates Degree: An associate degree is an undergraduate academic degree awarded by a community college.

FOUR YEAR UNIVERSITY

Private: Private universities are not operated by governments, although many receive tax breaks, public student loans and grants. There are over 2500 private schools nationwide.

Public: Public universities are predominantly funded by public means through a national or sub-national government.

Bachelor's Degree is usually earned for an undergraduate course of study that normally requires three to five years of study (depending on institution and field of study)

MAKE SURE IT IS THE RIGHT FIT!

Factors to Consider When Choosing a College

Academics

- Average class size? Smallest/Largest?
- How many students in last year's freshman class returned for sophomore year?
- Procedure for student orientation, class placement & scheduling?
- How is a faculty advisor assigned to students?
- Services for students with an undecided major?
- Classes taught by a professor? Grad assistants?
- What free services are offered to the students? (e.g. tutoring, career and personal counseling, study skills workshop, job placement)
- Is there an honors program?

College Characteristics

- Location: city, suburb, rural?
- What's the surrounding community like?
- Public? Private? Religious affiliation?
- Current student enrollment?
- Any special or unique programs?
- Special programs for transfer students?
- Academic calendar: semesters/quarters?
- Campus geographic and cultural diversity?
- Distance from home?
- Campus Size?
- On campus Health Services?

Social Life

- Average age of the student body?
- Male to female ratio?
- What percent of students reside on campus?
- Co-ed dorms or single sex dorms?
- Do most students stay on campus on weekends?
- Roommate selection procedures?
- Campus life rules and regulations?
- Intramurals?
- Clubs?
- Greek Life?

Admission Requirements

- What high school courses are required? Are entrance tests required? Which ones? What scores are acceptable?
- Required GPA?
- Does activities/school involvement matter?
- Is there an essay on the application?
- Basis for accepting students?
- Recommendation letters required?
- Do some majors have special requirements?
- What percent of applicants are accepted?
- Can admission denials be appealed?
- What are the application filing dates?

Student Population

- Where are the majority of students from?
- % of students on campus vs commuters?
- Types of student activities?
- Greek Life?
- Athletic programs?
- Supportive surrounding community?
- Campus visitation program?
- Guaranteed freshman housing?
- Housing available all four years?

SENIOR “TO DO” LIST

- Establish a plan and goals!
- Talk with parents/guardians
- Know the 5-7 schools you will be applying to include safe, realistic and reach schools
- Academic: Compare your GPA & SAT to the schools admission requirements
 - (try Naviance Scattergrams)
- Continue to visit schools - virtually (use campus visit sheet)
- Retake SAT/ACT - or in the fall take at least 2 times (55% chance of increasing score)
- Online Research tools
 - BGHS College and Career Link
 - School specific websites
- Create or update your resume with accomplishments, extra-curricular activities and work experience since the beginning of high school
- Consider who to ask for a letter of recommendation in the fall
- Begin to understand the different types of college applications
 - Common Application, over 600 colleges subscribe to it, available August 1
 - Make a Common App profile
 - School specific application
- Preview Essay prompts
 - Most college applications will be available after August 1
- Know college application deadlines
- Be prepared to apply to college for, look for jobs or enlist in military
- If needed make an appointment with Mr. Genovese
- Volunteerism - make sure you have community service on your resume
- Athletes planning to play a sport in college should register with the NCAA Clearinghouse (www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)
- Consider part-time/full-time work or a summer internship

CAMPUS VISIT CHECKLIST

****Please note for summer/fall of 2021 virtual campus visits may need to replace traditional on campus visits, but families can still gather essential information in order to help with your college choices!***

An important part of your college search is the campus visit! Visiting a prospective college is one of the most helpful resources in selecting the right college. It provides you with an actual “feel” for the campus. In fact, it might be your best resource in learning about the campus and yourself and seeing if it is a right fit.

During your campus visit you can learn about the facilities, academic and social environment, and the overall school climate. These are things that you might not get from the college handbook. If the only time you have is during the summer months, you can still meet students and tour the campus, but keep in mind, there is not as much happening during the summer. Colleges are very happy to have you visit, but be aware that there might be certain guidelines that will apply (depending on each individual college).

Campus Visit Suggestions...

1. Call 2-3 weeks ahead to set up an appointment. Request a campus map. Tuesday-Thursday are the recommended days to sample typical campus life.
2. Request a conference with a professor in your intended field(s) of study.
3. Request a conference with an admissions counselor (Be sure to bring a list of questions that cannot be answered by published materials)
4. Arrange small group or individually guided tour of campus
5. Make arrangements with friends who are currently enrolled to get a different perspective.
6. Have lunch in the student union or residence hall and talk to students.
7. Pick up a student newspaper to get the “pulse” of the campus.
8. Stop and talk to students to achieve different/common opinions about strengths and weaknesses of the campus.
9. Drive off campus and tour the community surrounding the campus. Determine if a positive relationship exists between the college and town.
10. Record your observations.
11. Follow up your visit with a thank you to the college representatives whom you’ve met.
12. Do not judge the college solely on the basis of your impressions of the tour guide.
13. Analyze the whole school.
14. Do not let the weather on the day of your visit influence your impression.
15. Do not make snap judgments.
16. Take some time to think about and reflect on all of your visits.
18. Some colleges allow students to do an overnight visit. If you feel that you need a closer look at the social aspects of college life, contact the college to see if this is an option.
19. HAVE FUN ON THIS JOURNEY!

QUESTIONS TO ASK ON A CAMPUS VISIT

**Please note for summer 2021 these questions can be asked during virtual campus visits, on-line chats, or over the phone to an admissions counselor*

General

How many students at this school?
What is your smallest class size? The largest?
Do graduate students teach undergraduates?
What percentage of tenured faculty members teach freshman courses?
Do faculty maintain office hours? How easy is it to see a professor for help?
What academic support services are available? (Writing, language or learning labs?)
Are certain classes hard to get into? What percentage of students graduate in 4 years? 5 years?
What percent of students go onto graduate school? What percent of students have jobs within 6 months of graduation? Is there a career center and what services does it offer?

Student Life

What percent of your students are housed on campus? Live off campus? At home?
Are your dorms co-ed? By Floor? By Wing? Are bathrooms also co-ed?
How are roommates chosen? Can I room with a friend?
Do students tend to stay on campus during the weekends? What is there to do on campus on weekends?
Is there public transportation in the area? Is it possible to get by without a car?
Are there fraternities/sororities? What percent of students participate in Greek life?
Are your favorite extracurricular activities offered on campus? Is it easy to participate?
Where are the cafeterias located?
How is the cafeteria food?
How many meals a week are included in the meal plans What about eating between meals?
Are special diets available, such as vegetarian, vegan or kosher diets?

Financial Aid

Will applying for financial aid affect the admissions decision? Wait list decisions?
What is the total estimated cost for next year including tuition, room, board, fees, books and travel?
What are the financial aid application procedures and deadlines? What forms must be filed?
How do the financial aid procedures differ with early decision applications?
What scholarships are available?
Are there installment plans or other financing options?

Other Questions

What differentiates your school from similar schools?
What personal qualities do students here tend to have?
What are the key issues on campus?
What steps is the school taking to make the campus safe?
If you could change something about this school, what would you change?

COLLEGE COMPARISON WORKSHEET

COMPARATIVE CRITERIA	CAMPUS 1	CAMPUS 2	CAMPUS 3
COLLEGE NAME:			
LOCATION Location & size of nearest city Transportation required (air, train, bus, car)			
ENVIRONMENT Setting (urban, rural), Co-Ed, Enrollment Religious Affiliation			
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS Deadlines, Tests Required, Average Test Scores, GPA, Required Application Materials			
SELECTIVITY RATING FOR YOU Safety, Good Fit, Reach			
ACADEMICS Majors that interest you Classes taught by professors or TAs Largest & Typical Class Sizes Academic Resources Available Percent of Returning Freshman Graduation Rate			
COLLEGE EXPENSES Tuition, Room & Board, Estimated Total Budget, Application Fee & Deposit			
FINANCIAL AID Deadlines, Required Forms, Percent of Students Receiving Aid, Scholarships Available			
HOUSING Residence Hall Availability, Residence Hall Requirement, Room Types and Sizes, Food Plan, Percent of Students Living On Campus			
ACTIVITIES Clubs, Organizations, Varsity, Club, Intramural Sports, Typical Weekend Activities			
IMPRESSIONS Personal Reaction Rank/Order of Preference			

SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

September - November

- Have a plan by the first day of senior year! Know which schools you are going to apply to or where you are going to work after graduation or which branch of the military you are going to join.
- Meet with college representatives in the fall and continue to visit schools.
- Senior Guidance: application process will be explained
- Apply to your schools (which may include)***
 - ***Online application***
 - ***Teacher recommendation, if needed***
 - ***Counselor recommendation***
 - ***College essay and/or personal statement***
 - ***ACT/SAT scores, send scores to colleges***
 - ***Send Transcripts through Parchment***
- Attend FAFSA completion workshop
- Apply for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA)
- Start the military recruitment process
- Begin the job search
- Applications should be completed by the end of November
- Senior year grades count! Work hard!

January - March

- Apply for scholarships (use Naviance)
 - Institutional
 - Local/Community
 - National
- Scholarship Tip #1 - Most scholarships ask for a similar essay and therefore you do not need to compose an original each and every time.
- Scholarship Tip #2 - Often local/community scholarships have 50 kids or less that apply so your odds are great!
- Narrow down your choice of schools - accepted campus visits
- Compare your financial aid award letters- now you can compare apples to apples
- Senior year grades count! Work hard!

May 1st

Universal Reply Date, you must accept an offer by now. Request 8th semester transcript.

COMMON APP COMPLETION GUIDE

Tips to navigate the Common Application-

Please note there are video tutorials embedded in the application to assist students when filling out and/or if you have a question

1. **Gather materials you will need to complete your application.**

- High School Transcript
- List of activities, work and family responsibilities
- Test scores and dates from your college entrance exams
- Parent/legal guardian information
- Academic honors and achievements

2. **Create an account**

- Choose your registration type.
- If you are applying to college for the first time, you'll select the "First Year Student" button.
- Enter login credentials, make sure you use an email address you check often. This is the email Common App and colleges will use to get in touch with you.
- Complete your registration information.
 - complete personal info
 - **be sure to use legal name that appears on official school documents/standardized tests so that colleges will be able to match documents to the correct person.**
- Select "Create Account" to complete your account.

3. **Add Colleges**

- Use the College Search tab to search and add colleges you want to apply to.
- You can search by college name or use one of the search filters below to find a match
 - State or country
 - Distance from a certain zip code
 - Enrollment term
 - Application deadline
 - Application fees
 - Writing requirements
 - Standardized testing policy
 - Recommendation requirement
- You can add a college by using the add button in the search results list. You can also select a college and add them using the "Add to My Colleges" button from their info screen.
- Once you've added colleges, you can see them on your Dashboard and in your My Colleges tab. Keep in mind you may only add up to 20 colleges. You may adjust your college list at any time.
- While some colleges may charge an application fee, others have no fee to apply. Many will offer fee waivers under certain circumstances, including financial need.

4. **Support System - Recommenders**

- All colleges need official school forms and many colleges also ask for letters of recommendation. Recommenders will submit these kinds of forms on your behalf.

- The only type of recommenders to use in the Common App. are: Teachers and Counselors.
- Every college chooses their own recommendation requirements, details are on each college's "College Information" page.

Inviting and Assigning Recommenders:

- From the "My Colleges" tab select a college and open their "Recommenders and FERPA" section.
- You will need to complete the FERPA Release Authorization.
Invite recommenders using the invite button from each section. You may also use the "Invite Recommenders" button at the top.
- Select the type of invitation you would like to send, you'll need the email address of the person you are requesting a recommendation from.
- After you add a recommender, you can view their info using the "Manage Recommenders" button.
- Note: Recommenders will not receive an email invitation until you assign them to a college. To assign these recommenders, go to their section and select their name from the dropdown and use the assign button.

5. **Understanding Requirements**

- Keep track of each college's unique application requirements.
- You will complete common questions and add your counselor for every college, but each college will determine their unique requirements for the following:
 - Deadlines
 - Application Fees
 - Personal Essay
 - Courses & Grades
 - Test Policy
 - Portfolio
 - Writing Supplements
 - Recommendations
- Here are some places where you can find each college's specific requirements:
 - Explore Colleges
 - My Colleges
 - Requirements Grid
 - Writing Requirements by College

6. **Plan Essays**

- Organize and plan for your writing prompts.
- As you work on your applications, you can find essays or short answer questions in three Sections:
 - Common App Personal Essay
 - College-specific Questions
 - Writing Supplements

7. **Submit Your Application**

- Submission is a three step process:
 - Reviewing your application
 - Paying the application fee (if applicable)
 - Submitting your application

COMMON APP ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma — anything of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ESSAY SEMINAR NOTES

Two Types of Essays

1. **Personal Statement**

Specific to the applicant, not to the school.
Used with Common App/Coalition App.

2. **Supplemental** (additional essay)

Essays written for the specific college in addition to essays from the Common App. Why do you want to attend this college/university?

Personal Statement

This essay is about the student's story, their voice. The opportunity for the student to think about what they want to share. Not a resume or fact sheet. This should express what the student feels is essential to who they are. What part of the student's identity is absent from the rest of the application. This statement should go beyond the what, tell the why and the how.

Personal

The statement should center on the student, even if telling a story about someone else, make sure the essay is about the student and their experiences.

Simple Story

Centers on one theme or topic, has central focus not an overview of the resume. Make sure questions are fully answered.

Big Questions

1. Is it personal?
2. It is compelling?
3. It is interesting?
4. What is the admissions counselor learning about the applicant

General Advice

1. Pick an appropriate topic (ask a trusted adult or friend) If the admissions counselor has one thing to read about the applicant, what does it say about the person applying, what do they want to convey.
2. Be authentic. Don't write what you think the admissions counselors want to read. Write what you're passionate about, that passion will come across in your writing. It's okay to be funny or vulnerable. Use words/language that you would usually use in communicating. Write exactly as you want to be read. Make sure the admissions counselor is learning about you. **PROOFREAD!** Read out loud to yourself! Not all mistakes are caught by spell check.

Essay Prompts

Be specific, hone in on one topic. Be able to talk about one broad theme while sharing several details about yourself. Give concrete examples about lessons learned, impact on life.

Does your essay answer these questions for the admissions counselor?

1. Did the essay answer the prompt question?
2. Did they learn about the student?
3. What did they think of the topic?
4. Will this student do well in college?
5. What does their essay/story say about the student?

The Writing Supplement

The writing supplement is as important or more important than the personal statement. The personal statement is important, it goes to all the schools you're applying to, but the writing supplement is written directly for the specific college. It's a great place to show your personality and fit for the college. Think specifically and consciously about the university you are applying to. Demonstrate that you've done research about the university. Carefully read the prompts/questions, follow the directions. Think of it like you're writing an essay for English class. It's an opportunity to show your personality. Lean in, have fun!

For example, Why do you want to attend the university?

Talk about your fit for the university but also what about the university is there to serve you. Focus on specifics, are you interested in a specific class or an internship on campus? Demonstrate familiarity with the campus, culture and facts.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & RESOURCES:

What are the most common types of college essay prompts?

- [Common Types of Essay Prompts](#)

Essay Examples and Resources

- [Johns Hopkins - Essays That Worked](#)
- [How to Write a College Essay Step-By-Step](#)
- [Common App Essay Prompts With Examples](#)
- [Chicago Area Regional Reps \(CARR\) YouTube Channel](#)
 - Video: [College Essay - Tell Your Story](#)
 - Video: [College Essays Do's and Don'ts](#)
 - Video: [College Essays Feedback and Final Edits](#)

Where to find a college's required essays or short answers:

- Go to the admissions sections of a college's website to find the application(s) that they accept. You should find the writing prompt within the application.
- If next year's application is not available yet and the prompts are not listed on the website, email the college's admission department.

