

HACKETT CATHOLIC PREP MISSION STATEMENT

Hackett Catholic Prep is committed to preparing our students for lifelong success by promoting and developing faith, character, and academic achievement in a supportive and challenging Catholic faith-based environment.

VISION FOR OUR GRADUATES

A GRADUATE OF Hackett Catholic Prep...
Is committed to growing in his/her Faith.
Is committed to learning and growing in all areas of life.
Demonstrates family spirit and builds community.
Is committed to Service, Justice and Peace.
Is a person with skills for building the future.

INTRODUCTION

Applying to colleges can be both a rewarding and confusing process. Our goal in the Guidance Department is to provide the resources and information that will allow you to make an appropriate decision. It is our hope that you will take ownership of the college selection process and choose the college that is the 'best fit' for you.

The *Hackett Catholic Prep College Planner* is an essential resource for families during this decision making process. Enclosed you will find valuable information regarding specific HCP application procedures and general college admission information, such as interviewing and essay writing tips. We hope that you will utilize the Planner throughout the year as a reference guide.

Read this green, *HCP College Planner*, thoroughly, before August of your (pre) senior year! If you still need help developing an essay, understanding the application instructions, tweaking your resume or proofing a final draft, please schedule a student appointment with Mrs. Ulbrich as soon as the school year begins.

For students and parents, the decision to attend college is indeed a personal one. The process, from investigating schools to completing college applications and meeting deadlines, will be a significant learning experience. Although the final decision involves your parents, the work involved in the college selection process is the responsibility of **YOU**, the student. The guidance counselor strongly urges students to plan ahead.

The Guidance Department is a valuable resource during this time of exploration. The office is available to provide advice, lend a kind ear, and give encouragement and support. With accurate information, proper research and continued communication, your goals will be met. Good Luck!

Betsy Ulbrich, Guidance Counselor

(269) 381-2646 ext. 136

COLLEGE PLANNER CHECKLIST

JUNIOR YEAR

- Check that your Four-Year Course Plan meets high school graduation, Michigan Merit Curriculum and college entrance requirements. If you are an athlete who wishes to compete in college, be aware of NCAA Clearinghouse guidelines.
- Schedule a college conference with the Guidance Department and parents, as needed.
- Take the PSAT exam in the fall.
- Meet with college representatives at designated College Nights and when they visit Hackett during the school day.
- Take ACT and SAT tests. Take SAT Subject Tests for colleges that require them. Students that require accommodations should be aware of deadlines for required paperwork.
- Ask older friends/family about their first year of college.
- Organize and read college literature/mailings; continue researching online.
- Visit colleges/arrange college interviews as needed. Utilize college websites for virtual tours. Find out if your college choices require letters of recommendation, and how many.
- Update your resume. Print off your service hours from www.x2vol.com.
- Fill out the "Student Information Form for Letters of Recommendation", found at the Guidance & Counseling section on the school's website or in the Guidance Office, and submit this completed form to the recommender when asking them for letters of recommendation in late spring so that they have time to write them over the summer. Include your resume with your request.

SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

- Continue to visit colleges/arrange college interviews.
- Continue to organize and read college literature/mailings; continue research.
- Determine the colleges to which you are applying.
- Begin acquiring and completing college applications.
- Begin writing application essays.
- Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse, if you are hoping to play a sport in college.
- Complete registration for fall ACT/SAT (Achievement Test)/SAT Subject Tests, if necessary.
- Update your resume.

SENIOR YEAR – FALL TO WINTER

August - September

- Narrow college choices.
- Check application deadlines.
- Work on college essays/personal statement.
- Complete recommendation request form(s), include resume, and submit to teachers and counselors.

- Send additional official score reports to colleges that you did not originally list to receive SAT/ACT. Colleges now require that you order your scores to be sent directly by the testing agency. HCP cannot do this for you.
- Retake ACT/SAT, if needed.
- Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse, if you are hoping to play a sport in college.
- Meet with college representatives during the fall.
- Actively search for scholarships, including sports; activity; and academic scholarships. Visit college financial aid/ scholarship websites.
- Submit applications as soon as possible; By October 31st is strongly recommended.

October

- Attend KRESA's Financial Aid Night
- Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on-line, available in October.
- Retake ACT/SAT, if needed.
- Applications for Early Decision/Early Action need to be submitted to the Guidance Department. Due dates are specific to each college.
- Attend the College Fair at Kalamazoo Valley Community College – date and time TBA.
- Continue to meet with college representatives during the fall.
- Begin applying for scholarships.
- Submit early applications.

November

- Take SAT Subject Tests if required/recommended.
- Retake ACT/SAT, if needed.
- Continue to apply for scholarships.
- Check financial aid websites
- Review scholarships offered by the Kalamazoo Foundation. The Remyse Scholarship is due December 1st.

December

- Applications with January 1st and January 15th deadlines due the first week of December.
- Apply for scholarships, as appropriate.
- Take SAT Subject Tests if required/recommended.
- Retake ACT/SAT, if needed.
- Write thank-you notes to individuals who wrote recommendations on your behalf.

January

- Request Guidance Department to submit 7th semester grades, if necessary.
- Apply for scholarships, as appropriate.
- When filing FAFSA electronically, watch for associated fees. Be aware of the .com website, only use .gov. (You file your forms for free at .gov)

SPRING – SUMMER OF SENIOR YEAR

February – April

- Continue strong academic achievement. Schools will not hesitate to put students on probationary acceptance.
- Register for Advanced Placement exam(s).
- Apply for scholarships, as appropriate.
- Continue visits/research of schools to which you have been admitted, if needed.
- Send deposit to college of choice. Due May 1st.
- Notify other colleges if you are declining admission. Due May 1st.
- Notify the Guidance Department of your final college choice.

May

- Notify the Guidance Department of all grant and scholarships you have been offered.
- Give your final transcript requests to the Guidance Department through Parchment.

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

It is the objective of the Guidance Office to provide HCP students with the opportunity to submit college applications that reflect their true personality and potential to succeed in a college environment. The following procedures will help students.

OBTAINING APPLICATIONS

- You are responsible for obtaining all applications. Applications can be found through websites, or by calling the Admissions Offices of each college to which you wish to apply. Most applications are now available online beginning August 1.

COMPLETING APPLICATIONS

- If submitting a hard copy, make a photocopy of the application to use as a worksheet.
- Complete all sections **accurately** and **neatly**. Colleges form their first impression of you from your application. Make sure that the application you submit is the one that portrays you as a desirable candidate.
- It is important that all applications reflect your work. It is readily apparent to an Admissions Officer when the actual applicant has not completed the application. It is essential that you take responsibility for all of the **student** aspects of the college application process.
- If an essay is part of the application it is suggested that you complete a rough draft and review it with someone before you include it in the application. A critical English teacher could be of real assistance.
- Submit your application to Mrs. Ulbrich, in the Guidance Department, **at least 14 school days** prior to admission deadline. Many colleges would like to receive your application by October 31st.
- Be sure to register with Parchment (www.parchment.com) and request that your transcripts be sent to the colleges you are applying to.

SAT and ACT SCORES

- **You** are responsible for sending all official ACT and SAT score reports to the colleges. Up to four colleges or universities can receive your scores with no charge at the time you register for the test. The testing center will charge for any scores sent after the test has been taken. **Colleges require that YOU order your official ACT and/or SAT test score results online, directly from the testing agency, to be sent electronically to your undergraduate college admission office.** You will pay the official score report fee by credit card. Hackett cannot order test scores for you! **Plan to test the ACT or SAT at least twice!!** Most students improve their score results on their second attempt. www.actstudent.org or www.sat.collegeboard.com.
- You are responsible for checking with your counselor and/or consulting the college as to the tests required for admission. A limited number of colleges require SAT Subject Tests in addition to the ACT or SAT. It is your responsibility to contact the college admissions offices to determine which SAT Subject Tests are required.

SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

- In order for the Admissions Offices to review your application, it must be complete. **Once each college application is finished, but before you push “send”, please bring a printed draft of your saved online application, or your original paper application, to the guidance office. Include any additional forms at this time as well.** Our office needs your signature before we begin to complete the required counselor forms and transcript release. Always allow the Guidance Department two full weeks to process your application. Often, the earlier you apply, the better your chances are of being accepted. **We strongly recommend that you apply before October 31st.**
- **Incomplete applications will not be processed.**
- Print supplemental forms or Counselor evaluation reports, which you must bring to the Guidance Department. **Do not press “send” until we instruct you to do so.** This ensures that HCP has the necessary information if a college has questions about your application.

DEADLINES

- You are responsible for meeting all of the appropriate deadlines as designated by the colleges. All applications are due in the Guidance Department **TWO WEEKS** prior to the application deadline to ensure that your counselor has the opportunity to proofread and complete the entire application.
- **No applications and/or transcript requests will be accepted after Monday of the week prior to Christmas Break. This includes application deadlines of January 1st and 15th.**
- Scholarship applications that require HCP transcripts and/or Counselor comments are due in the Guidance Office 10 school days prior to the stated deadline.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- If recommendations are required, you are responsible for approaching teachers and asking if they are willing to write a recommendation for you. **Ask teachers in the summer when they have more time.** Please do not request letters which you do not need.
- When asking a teacher for a recommendation, make the request in person, fill out the “Student Information Form for Letters of Recommendation” with your resume included, and submit it to the recommender at least **FOUR WEEKS** prior to the application deadline. Let them know for which college(s) you need the letter and your application deadline(s)!
- Select teachers who know you well. This may mean asking a teacher who gave you a lower grade but who can best attest to your perseverance and class participation.
- **Submit your written resume** to the teacher who is writing your recommendation.
- **Check your requirements within the application instructions. Is there a required form which your teacher must complete?! In general, recommendations should be written by someone teaching an academic subject: math, science, English, social studies, or foreign language.** Two recommendation letters, at most, is usually sufficient.
- Do not send more recommendations than are required by the college. Too many can actually hurt your chances of acceptance.
- Certain schools require that you utilize their own Teacher Recommendation/Evaluation form. Make sure you fill out this form and give it to the teacher who is writing your recommendation.
- If you are filling out the Common Application, make sure you “invite” your recommenders and Mrs. Ulbrich.
- It is common courtesy to write a thank you note to the teacher who wrote your recommendation.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Why do I need to submit my application to the Guidance Department?** The Guidance Department processes all college applications. By handing in your full and complete application to the Guidance Department, they will be able to review it and check for any errors. Also, this policy lessens the chance of something getting lost in the process. Colleges will receive your application, a certified high school transcript and teacher recommendations (if needed) all at one time.
2. **Why does it take 2 weeks?** Two weeks allows the Guidance Department to gather all of your information and process your application. This time also allows your counselor to complete the counselor section if applicable. This does not mean that it will always take two weeks. However, during the crunch times of mid-November to Christmas break, we are inundated with applications, and having the two-week time period is extremely helpful to ensure prompt delivery of your application(s). It also gives you enough time to make corrections, if necessary.

3. **Can I hand in my essay later? NO!!** Do not hand in your application until it is complete, that includes any essay or personal statement that is required by the college. See your counselor if you are experiencing difficulty with the essay portion of the application.
4. **Can my counselor put my ACT/SAT scores on the application?** Yes, but you must request this. Counselors are only permitted to give your unofficial scores to colleges, at your request. If the college you are applying to want official scores sent, **it is your responsibility to have your scores sent electronically by the testing company to college choices.**
5. **I forgot my envelopes/stamps!** The Guidance Department provides envelopes and pays for the mailing of your paper application(s). You are only responsible for providing teachers with addressed envelopes and stamps **if** their recommendations are not going with the application.
6. **How do I know the application deadlines?** The application should list all deadlines. If you can't find it there, visit the college website, call the college, and/or ask your counselor for assistance.
7. **What about teacher recommendations?** If colleges require teacher recommendations, they will normally have a form enclosed in the application packet or offered as a supplemental form on-line. If they only suggest a teacher recommendation, or if you want to send one even though the college does not require one, you may do so. Remember to give teachers advance notice, preferably four weeks. These recommendations should be submitted with the completed application.

More questions? Ask the Guidance Department!!

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. **Reporting of Disciplinary Action:** Many colleges will ask students to report their disciplinary record. At Hackett, we expect students to answer this question honestly and thoroughly. Please speak with your counselor if you have specific concerns about this issue.
2. **Change in Course Program:** If students change their schedules during their senior year, they are responsible for informing the colleges to which they have applied. Colleges evaluate students' academic programs and need to be kept abreast of changes. Informing the college reflects personal responsibility, honesty, and integrity. It is highly advised that schedule changes do not occur during senior year.
3. **Personal Work:** College applications should be a student's own work. College counselors, teachers, parents, and others should only serve as resources.

4. **Early Decisions:** The Early Decision plan is a BINDING agreement between the student and the college. All students, when applying, must inform the Guidance Department confirming their commitment to this plan. If you are accepted Early Decision, you **must** attend that college and you **must** withdraw your applications to other colleges upon notice of acceptance.
5. **Double Deposits:** Hackett strongly discourages the practice of “double depositing.” A final college choice should be made by May 1. Double depositing prohibits waitlisted students from having the opportunity to attend their first choice college. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the admissions office of the colleges they will **NOT** be attending of their decision to “decline enrollment” by letter or online.

APPLICATION TIPS

The application is a reflection of you! Aside from a college interview, the application is the representation of you before the admission committee. Give the committee reason to vote for your admission! Even a standard form can say much about you if you make the effort.

CHOICES:

- **Regular Application** - available from the college and online.
- **Common Application** – available at www.commonapp.org. Please note that the college may still require you to fill out additional supplemental materials (i.e. secondary school reports, teacher evaluation forms and/or “special” essay questions). Online common applications require online teacher recommendations!
- **Applying on-line** – If you decide to apply through the Internet, remember that you must submit a hard copy of the application to the Guidance Office two weeks prior to the deadline date, and do not press send until you are told to do so!

FORMAT: Applications will vary in length and format, but most essentially include the same ingredients.

- Basic identifying information
- Short answer questions
- Essay(s)
- High school transcript and senior course schedule data.
- Recommendations (if required)
- SAT/ACT score information

APPLICATION TIPS: Obviously, the information that you convey in your application is important, but keep in mind that the presentation of the information also plays a big role. Here are some additional tips:

- Start EARLY. Know the college deadlines and the Hackett deadlines.
- READ the entire application before beginning and follow directions carefully.
- Make a copy of the application to use as a worksheet.
- Fill out the application YOURSELF.
- Be HONEST...don’t exaggerate or make things up. It will catch up with you!

- Be concise. Send only relevant data that will enhance your candidacy. When in doubt, check with the Guidance Department.
- Answer all questions even if you put “not applicable”.
- Sign and date the application in the appropriate space.
- Pay the correct amount of the application fee to the college/university. If you qualify for a fee waiver, please see Mrs. Ulbrich.

BASIC I.D. INFORMATION: This includes your name, social security number, address, etc. This section may also include a question about your intended major. This is especially true with certain state universities. Be sure to state a major offered by the college to which you are applying. For weaker students, a response of liberal arts or undecided may help you get into the college. Once in college, surely after a successful semester, you could declare your major. This is especially true for areas like PreMed, Engineering, etc. where high test scores and GPA’s are required for consideration. Check with your counselor or the college prior to selecting a major on the application.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS: These types of questions differ from the essay. Use concise answers of one or two lines, but use complete sentences. The information that is usually requested includes:

- Career goals/aspirations.
- Employment history: include your position, name of employer, dates of employment and number of hours per week.
- Academic Awards/Accomplishments: Do not be shy about describing an award if it is not recognized outside Hackett or your community. How were you chosen for the award?
- Extracurricular Activities: This can include describing your involvement with service projects. What can you add to a college? This is an important section.
- What have you done at Hackett? Include the activity and position held/honors won. Quality is more important than quantity.
- Attach an additional sheet of paper if necessary. You may also see other short answer questions. For example, “Why do you want to attend the University of Michigan?”

WORDS TO THE WISE:

- **It’s time to clean up your social media sites!** College Admission Departments do and will look you up online, and see if what you’ve posted in the past reflects the type of student they want at their school!
- Keep copies of everything.
- Even if an essay is optional, write one. They would not suggest it if they didn’t think it had importance.
- Don’t send gifts to the admission office!
- Check, check, and check again for typos, spelling errors, and/or blank spaces on your application. Have someone you trust proofread it, such as your counselor or a parent.
- If you have a psychological educational evaluation, some schools have separate applications or additional forms to be completed. The earlier this is done, the better.

ESSAY WRITING

Assume that your essay will be read and **will count!** Essays can make the facts in an application come alive. A good essay will animate the writer as a real and valuable person. It will convey who you are and what you have accomplished. The college will review proper language use, content, and creativity. The essay is often used as a confirmation of the admission decision if your other credentials are unclear. Don't procrastinate. Get feedback from teachers, the Guidance Department, and your parents. Write a rough draft and **proofread!**

HELPFUL HINTS:

- Gather data about yourself. List activities from the past four years, record travel experiences and impressions, list shortcomings and how you dealt with them.
- Your family background and culture are rich topics for your essay. For example, write about being an only child, participating in a family or ethnic celebration.
- Write out the essay and proofread it. Put it away for one week. Look at it again and make changes. Let an English teacher proofread it and revise.
- Make sure you **answer** the question! It may have two parts; answer both!
- The final essay should be typed and include your name on every page.
- Be different! Make your essay stand out from thousands read by the admission officer.

THE FOUR C's:

To write a distinctive essay, you should be...

- **Creative.** Use anecdotes, bits of dialogue, and humor. Grab the reader's attention in the first paragraph.
- **Concise.** Admissions' Counselors have a limited amount of time.
- **Casual.** This is not a formal writing exercise, but don't be chatty.
- **Careful.** Proofread several times.

QUICK ESSAY DO'S AND DON'TS

DO	DON'T
- Write about what you know	- Criticize or whine in your writing
- Write about something that excites you.	- "Borrow" ideas from other peoples' work.
- Concentrate on organization of thoughts.	- Make excuses.
- Focus on complete and concise sentences, spelling, punctuation, and usage.	- Steal or purchase essays from the Internet.
- Use concrete examples and language that are your style.	

SAMPLE ESSAY QUESTIONS

- Write a letter to your new college roommate introducing and describing yourself.
- Identify a person who has had a significant influence on you and describe that influence.
- What is the best advice you have ever received? Why? And did you follow it?
- If you were to describe yourself by a quotation, what would it be?
- What career do you plan to pursue and how did you reach your decision?
- Write a 300-word autobiography.
- Why have you chosen this University and what do you hope to contribute to their campus community?

WRITING A RESUME

For some students, it is helpful to include a resume of activities, honors, and work experience with their application. In lieu of completing the activity section on a college application, some schools will allow you to attach a resume that provides a description of your high school extracurricular activities. However, some colleges **require** you to complete the activity section on their application (carefully read the instructions). Including a resume is only recommended when the application does not provide enough space for your list of activities, or if you feel it is necessary to explain your high school life in a more detailed description than the application affords. Here are some tips to remember when writing a resume.

- Keep things in **reverse chronological order**. In each section, you should list your most recent service hours, jobs, activities, awards, etc. first.
- A resume should be 1-2 pages in length. If you are involved in many activities and have earned many awards and honors, two pages may be necessary.
- **Appearance**. Use blank space, font size, bold and underline features, and indent or tab features to create an outline effect.
- **Proofread**. It is best to type your resume on a word processor and save the document. Proofread your final draft and ask at least two other people to proofread it as well. Look for improper grammar, inconsistency in language or layout, spelling or punctuation errors, poor construction of the content, typo's, etc.

SAMPLE RESUME

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Area Code and phone number

E-mail address

Education (chronological order with years attended and address of school).

- List schools attended (only high school) and the years attended.

Honors:

- List academic honors (Awards Night honors, National Honor Society) that you have earned during high school. Name the honor and affiliated organization.

Awards:

- List any awards from academic contests and activities. Explain the award and the affiliated organization.

Activities and Interests: (reverse chronological order – meaning your most recent first).

- List the organizations in which you are/were an active participant, offices held, and the results of your work. List any hobbies in which you are participating.

Work Experience:

- List any part-time or full-time positions you held throughout your high school years. You should include the dates, amount of time you worked and position you held.

Languages:

- List any language(s) you fluently speak (other than English).

References (Optional):

- List teachers, counselors, and employers who will give you glowing remarks.

INTERVIEWING

WHY: Interviews can help you. In fact, you can control the interview if you are prepared. View the interview as a positive experience. It can actually help rather than hurt most students. It allows the admission reviewer to know you beyond your transcript, and it allows you to know the college better. When possible, interview with an admissions' counselor and always interview on campus, in a public place, or at Hackett.

WHEN:

- It is better to interview earlier than later. You can even interview in the spring of your junior year.
- Interviewing on campus while students are there is best, but not necessary.
- Schedule the interview yourself and limit yourself to two per day.
- Save your first choices for last, allowing for "practice" interviews.

HOW TO PREPARE/WHAT TO DO:

- Know yourself, know the college, and know what to ask and what may be asked.
- It's OK to be nervous, but develop confidence.
- Have directions and traveling time on hand. Arrive on time!
- Look to the Guidance Office, family and friends for help.
- Bring a copy of your unofficial transcript.
- Dress neatly and comfortably.
- Maintain eye contact.

WHO WILL INTERVIEW YOU?

- Usually an admissions staff member, but it may be a student, alum, or professional interviewer.

THE STEPS OF AN INTERVIEW:

- Check in with the receptionist YOURSELF (do not have sibling or parent do so).

- Wait to be called, meet the interviewer with a firm handshake, and introduce your parents.
- The interview lasts about 20-45 minutes.
- Parents are usually brought in at the end of the interview to ask questions.

ANSWERS TO GIVE:

- There are no “right” answers. Be honest and positive.
- THINK before answering, speak slowly, and listen carefully.
- Speak confidently without boasting. Phrase your comments in terms of accomplishments that mean the most to you. Also, be willing to initiate conversation about your achievements if the interviewer fails to do so.
- Place any weaknesses in a positive light.
- Avoid one-word answers.

WHAT TO ASK:

This is a very important part of the interview. It will show the interviewer how much time and preparation you have put into the college selection process.

- Don’t ask what is already stated in the literature, unless you need clarification.
- Ask questions that allow you to bring up your accomplishments/talents, intended major and career, and reasons why you’re interested in this college or university.
- Clear up questions and concerns. Feel free to ask about financial aid and your chance of admission.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

- Thank the interviewer and ask for his/her business card.
- Send a thank you note to the interviewer; this is common courtesy!

Possible Interview Questions

- Describe your high school. What have you liked/disliked about your school?
- What has been your most/least favorite academic subject and why?
- How would your best friend/favorite teacher/parent describe you?
- What are your strengths? What would you like to improve about yourself?
- What majors are you considering at this point?
- What courses are you taking in your senior year and why?
- What other colleges are you considering and why?
- What are you looking for in a college and why?
- How did you become interested in our college/university?
- Tell me about your activities and interests.
- What activity has meant the most to you during high school and why?
- What is a significant contribution you have made to your school/community?
- What can you contribute to our school?
- What questions do you have about our school?

“3 KNOWS”

KNOW what to ask
KNOW yourself – courses, activities and interests
KNOW the college or university

TEST INFORMATION

TYPES OF TESTS

MME – The Michigan Merit Exam is our state assessment administered each year during March to all students enrolled in Grade 11. The MME consists of three major components: the SAT with Essay college readiness assessment, the ACT WorkKeys work skills assessments, and the Michigan Student Test of Educational Performance (M-STEP). These three components provide a measure of student performance based on Michigan’s high school content standards as well as college and career readiness.

PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10 – The PSAT 8/9 is taken as a HCP freshman, and establishes a baseline measurement of college and career readiness as you entered high school. The PSAT 10 is taken in the spring as a HCP sophomore and is the same test as the PSAT/NMSQT taken in the fall as juniors. PSAT10 scores, however, are not be considered for the National Merit Scholarship Program.

PSAT/NMSQT – The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship is a test given in October to all juniors and interested sophomores, if space is available, during the school day. The PSAT measures scholastic aptitude and it serves as preparation for the SAT. It also qualifies students for some merit-based scholarships when taken as a junior. This test is mandatory for all juniors.

ACT – The American College Testing Program consists of English, mathematics, science reasoning, and reading. Each section is between 35-60 minutes in length. Students receive four separate scores plus a composite score. Scores range from 1-36. There is no guessing penalty. A writing assessment is also offered. We strongly recommend that our students take the writing portion. Check with the colleges you are considering or go to www.actstudent.org for a list of institutions that require or recommend the Writing Test. Practice tests and study guides may also be found here, as well as Method Test Prep.

SAT – (As of March 2016) The SAT is typically taken by high school juniors and seniors. The SAT includes an evidence reading test, a multiple choice writing and language test, a math test (with and without calculator), and an optional essay question. A possible score of 1600 is possible, with 800 possible for the math section, and 800 possible for the reading/writing section. (The optional essay will be scored separately.) There is no wrong answer penalty. There are five separately times sections, totaling 3.5 hours in length: one 65 minute reading section, one 35 minute language/writing section, one 55 minute math section with calculator, one 25 minute math section without calculator, and an optional 50 minute essay. For more online sample questions and preparation materials, go to collegeboard.com or Method Test Prep.

SAT Subject Tests – The SAT Subject Tests are specific exams are designed to find out how well you have mastered a specific subject.

It is your responsibility to contact the college admissions office to determine which SAT Subject Tests are required.

AP (Advanced Placement Tests) – These are three-hour high school examinations based upon a college level course. AP exams are given once a year in May. The scores are primarily used for college placement, credit or advanced standing. The most highly selective colleges may also consider AP scores as part of the admission decision. The fee/cost of the test is determined each year by CollegeBoard AP.

TOEFL – The Test of English as a Foreign Language. This is an alternative test for students who have been speaking English for less than 5 years. This test is used to measure English proficiency. Some highly selective colleges may also require students to take the SAT I and submit scores for the mathematics component.

COMPARING THE TWO TESTS: SAT & ACT

		<u>SAT</u>		
TEST	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	NUMBER OF MINUTES	CONTENT	
Math - with calculator	38	55	Students will be tested in four key areas: "Heart of Algebra", in which students will work with formulas, equations, systems of equations, and inequalities; "Problem Solving and Data Analysis", for which students must work with percents, ratios, proportions, units, graphical relationships, and data analysis; "Advanced Math", in which students will rearrange equations and expressions, and work with algebra 2-type quadratic equations; and "Additional Topics", in which students will solve problems in geometry and trigonometry.	
Math - without calculator	20	25		
Reading	52	65	Students will need to support their answers with evidence, analyze graphical or tabular media linked to reading passages, and identify the meaning of words that can take on alternative definitions based on context.	
Writing and Language	44	35	All multiple choice questions will be passage-based.	
Optional - Essay	1 prompt	50	Students will have 50 minutes to respond to a prompt by analyzing evidence based in a provided source passage.	
		<u>ACT</u>		
English	75	45	Measures standard written English and rhetorical skills	
Mathematics	60	60	Measures mathematical skills students have typically acquired in courses taken up to the beginning of Grade 12	
Reading	40	35	Measures reading composition	
Science	40	35	Measures the interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills required in the natural sciences.	
Optional Writing	1 prompt	40	Measures writing skills emphasized in high school English classes and in entry level college composition classes.	

TEST PREPARATION

You should have a strong high school program with emphasis on English, math, science, social studies, and a foreign language. Reading broadly and deeply for school and personal enhancement also prepares you for these tests.

For SAT test preparation, students are strongly encouraged to utilize Khan Academy, found on their *College Board* account. A few minutes every day on Khan Academy, using their vocabulary builder, with lessons & quizzes on the three test subject (and even taking a sample full length exam!) has proven to raise test scores up to 150 points!

WHAT TEST SHOULD I TAKE?

Both! You may find that you score better on one test than the other. You will determine which set of scores to send to colleges. Some highly selective colleges will require that you take the SAT Subject Tests; you will need to check with those colleges to see if it is required. You register online.

FEES

Fees are required for each test. Current fee information is available in the HCP Guidance Department and online.

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS/WEBSITES

SAT (866) 756-7346 OR www.collegeboard.com

ACT (319) 337-1270 OR www.act.org

COLLEGE SELECTION

TYPES OF COLLEGES

The following short descriptions are to help you realize the different types of institutions available in your college selection process.

Large State Schools

A large state school is typically one that enrolls 7,000 or more students, is publicly funded, and offers both undergraduate and graduate work. Often, state school campuses are big. They can span acres or actually be considered a town within themselves (i.e. Michigan State, Western Michigan University, or the University of Michigan). Diversity is one of the factors for which many large state schools are known.

Highly Competitive Schools

Highly competitive colleges are typically those that describe their admissions policies and standards as “most difficult,” “very difficult,” or “highly selective.” The large majority of these schools are private. Some, such as the University of Michigan are public. Many other characteristics may vary from campus to campus; the defining characteristic of these schools is the selectivity of their admission practices.

Small Liberal Arts Schools

Typically, small schools are characterized by their size, somewhere between 500 and 3,000 students. Naturally, because of the smaller number of students (i.e. Kalamazoo College), the campuses of the small liberal arts schools will also be small. There is a range in selectivity in admissions policies, from least difficult to most difficult. In addition, there is a range of locales, from rural areas to suburban and city locations.

CAMPUS VISITS

Most college admissions officials agree that nothing substitutes for a campus visit when it comes to selecting a college. What constitutes a successful campus visit?

During an ideal campus visit, refer to the list below to obtain the most out of the visit:

- Visit one or more classes, especially in your field of endeavor. This is the ideal way to determine if the college's academic program will suit your needs and goals.
- Arrange to meet with a faculty member. Discuss the possibilities in a specific major or your program of interest.
- Meet with the coach or faculty member in an extracurricular area of interest.
- If meeting with a college coach, refer to www.ncaa.org for regulations regarding college bound athletes.
- Eat a meal in the dining hall. Find out about the quality of the food and observe how students interact with each other.
- Spend some time wandering the campus on your own. Read signs, posters, and calendars of events on bulletin boards to obtain a sense of the hot issues on campus and the level of student involvement in activities.
- Make it an overnight visit if possible to assess the integration of academic, social and cultural life.
- Contact students from Hackett or other friends who are on the campus.
- Make an appointment and meet with an admissions counselor. Discuss admission requirements and your potential for admission and success.
- If you are a special needs student, also make an appointment with the Office of Disabilities to assess their program and if they can help with your specific needs.
- You may also want to meet with the financial aid office to discuss financing options.

QUESTIONS TO ASK COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

- What are your strongest majors?
- What are criteria for admission? What is stressed, grades or SAT/ACT scores, level of high school classes?
- Where are the students from who attend the school?
- What is the average class size? How accessible is the faculty?
- When do I have to declare a major? How easy is it to change majors? Is it more difficult to gain admission if I apply as a certain major?
- Does your college have a required core curriculum?
- In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of your college?
- How diverse is the student body? (ethnically, religiously and geographically)
- What support services are available? (tutoring, career counselors)
- How are AP courses treated? What scores are needed for credit?
- How many applications does your college receive? How many students are accepted?
- Who teaches the courses: professors or graduate assistants?
- What type of housing is available? Is it guaranteed? What percentage of the student body lives on campus?
- What types of activities and sports does your college offer?
- Do you offer a foreign study program?
- How safe is the campus?
- Can I have a car on campus? How do students get around town?
- What are your application deadlines? Financial Aid deadlines?

FINANCIAL AID

INFORMATION

Don't assume you cannot afford a school. Many families immediately eliminate the higher priced institutions, claiming that they cannot afford to pay the bill. This is unfortunate, because many students may be foregoing their "perfect match" institution, without investigating the possibilities of financial assistance that many of the "higher price tag" schools offer. It is a fact that many of the higher-priced institutions also provide the most money in grants and scholarships. Make sure you file FAFSA forms to qualify!

Financial aid officers are your friends. Make sure to contact the Financial Assistance Offices after you have narrowed your choice of schools. Financial Aid Officers have a great wealth of knowledge and are happy to help prospective students with the entire process. They understand that families have many questions and concerns; that's their job! Often, they will make suggestions or provide an estimate of the financial aid package that may be offered.

FORMS

As you may have heard from friends and family members, the forms are difficult to fill out, but don't let that stop you. Many schools have the policy that they **will not award academic scholarship money** unless the federal financial aid forms (FAFSA) have been submitted. Even if you know you will not qualify for need-based assistance, the schools don't! Many institutions provide grants or scholarships to students who do not qualify for the need-based awards. **Fill out the forms!**

Several schools require their own supplemental forms. It is up to you to inquire as to whether the schools in which you are interested mandate the completion of another form.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This form is available online beginning in October. The FAFSA is the government's financial aid form, and is utilized by the majority of colleges/universities in the country. Please make sure you provide answers for every question asked on this form. If you don't, the processing will be delayed. The FAFSA is filled out on the internet by logging onto www.fafsa.ed.gov. The government no longer accepts forms via the mail. Parents and students must each establish a FSA ID. **DO NOT SHARE YOUR FSA ID WITH ANYONE!** It's suggested that seniors create their FSA ID as early as the end of October.

The CSS Profile

This form may be required, depending on the institution. This is not a government form. The College Scholarship Service, a division of the College Board, administers this service. The CSS Profile may be accessed at www.collegeboard.com.

HELPFUL INFORMATION

STATEMENT OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

YOUR RIGHTS

Before you apply:

You have the right to receive factual and comprehensive information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial costs, aid opportunities, practices and packaging policies, and housing policies.

When you are offered admission:

You have the right to wait to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until May 1. Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission and/or financial assistance prior to May 1, must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1. They must grant you this extension and your request may not jeopardize your status for admission and/or financial aid. (This right does not apply to candidates admitted under an early decision program.)

If you are placed on deferred admission or wait list:

The letter that notifies you of that placement should provide a history that describes the number of students on deferred admission/wait list, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing. Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of this placement. Colleges are expected to notify you of the resolution status by August 1, at the latest.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Before You Apply:

You have a responsibility to research and understand the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships, and housing. You should also be sure that you understand the policies of each college or university regarding deposits that you may be required to make before you enroll.

As You Apply:

You must complete all material that is required for application, and submit your application on or before the published deadlines. You should be the sole author of your applications. You should seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. **Follow the process recommended by Hackett for filing college applications.** It is your responsibility to arrange, if appropriate, for visits to and/or interviews at colleges of your choice.

After You Receive Your Admission Decisions:

You must notify each college or university who accepts you whether you are accepting or declining its offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision as to the college you wish to attend, but no later than May 1. It is understood that May 1st will be the postmark date. You may confirm your intention to enroll and, if

required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on deferred admission/wait list by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept that offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify a college or university at which you previously indicated you would enroll. **If you are accepted under an early decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications. If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.**

If you think that your rights have been denied, you should contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date.

When you make your final decision, immediately inform the Guidance Department.

SENIOR WARNINGS

Symptoms of senioritis develop shortly after offers of admission begin arriving in the mail. Many students realize that three and a half years of hard work actually did pay off. Soon after this revelation, seniors begin to achieve a level of confidence never before experienced. They feel wonderful and they should. However, too often this euphoria results in apathy towards schoolwork. As a result, grades begin to fall. Students with chronic cases of senioritis often receive final grades of C's, D's and F's in courses with first-semester averages of A's and B's. Changing schedules mid-year, especially to a non-core class, sends up a red flag!

The chronic sufferers of senioritis convince themselves that the college or university from whom they received an offer of admission is not concerned with final grade reports. Students often ignore the fact that their performance must remain consistent throughout the entire senior year. **Remember: your HCP final transcript is sent to the college you plan to attend; end your senior year with consistent results!**

Offers of admission are, in effect, a contract that has been based on performance and curriculum illustrated during the first semester. Any deviation from that alters the basis for the offer of admission. As a result, the members of the Admission Committee doubt the true ability and motivation of the applicant, and may require students to explain, in writing, their decline in academic performance. A dramatic decline can actually result in the withdrawal of an offer of admission. Students can lose the opportunity to attend the college of their choice.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

Recommended College Guides are available in the Guidance Department and our Media Center. We recommend that you visit a local bookstore or your public library for additional information.

WEBSITES

The Internet is an integral part of college admissions. The following is a small sample list of websites that can provide a wealth of information and assistance in your college search. The following is only a partial list.

COLLEGE SEARCH

ACT, Inc.

www.act.org

Information about testing, the college search, and other educational services

Catholic Colleges and Universities

www.catholiccollegesonline.org

The National Catholic College Admission Association

College Board Online

www.collegeboard.com

Self-defined as the “starting point for students, parents, counselors, admission staff, etc.” It is both student and parent friendly. It covers testing (PSAT, SAT, AP), college selection and career information.

Fastweb

www.fastweb.com

Find your dream school, download applications, expert tips on careers, financial aid, and more!

NACAC

www.nacac.com

National Association for College Admission Counseling Home Page

Peterson’s Education Center

www.petersons.com

This site provides a large college database that can be searched geographically, religiously, by size, etc.

CAREER INFORMATION

Career Cruising

Career Cruising (found on Hackett's website under "Guidance and Counseling") is an excellent source for career exploration! HCP students can use the individual accounts created to learn more about possible careers based on their own interests and the school subjects they are taking, or the variety of careers within different industries. They can also be matched up to possible careers based on answers in their "Career Selector", and then learn what schools have majors in that field.

If you've misplaced your log in information, please see the Guidance Department for your user name and password.

Career Net

www.careers.org

Links to thousands of career reference sites, organized geographically/alphabetically and by job family.

COLLEGE APPLICATION

The Common Application

www.commonapp.org

The online version of the Common Application

Apply Technology

www.review.com

The Princeton Review

FINANCIAL AID

Career Cruising

Career Cruising (found on Hackett's website under "Guidance and Counseling") is also an excellent source for financial aid searches! HCP students can use the individual accounts created for them to explore thousands of private financial aid programs across the country, and opportunities specific to HCP and Kalamazoo area student.

If you've misplaced your log in information, please see the Guidance Department for your user name and password.

College Board's Fund Finder

www.collegeboard.org

Similar to FastWeb

Financial Aid

www.finaid.org

The Smart Student® guide to financial aid

FastWeb

www.fastweb.com

A database of more than 180,000 scholarships, grants, fellowships, and loans representing billions of dollars in private sector funding for college students living in the United States.

Michigan Student Aid

www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid

MISCELLANEOUS SITES**National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)**

www.ncaa.org

Provides an online version of the NCAA Guide for the College Bound Athlete

Learning Disabilities Association

www.ldanatl.org

PARENT INFORMATION

APPLICATION CHECKLIST & PARENT SUPPORT

It is important for your son/daughter to take ownership of the college selection process; this ensures that he/she will select the college that best suits them. However, at times this may be difficult. The Guidance Department at Hackett is committed to helping you with the entire college selection process. Please call Mrs. Ulbrich with any questions or concerns that you may encounter. We hope that this section will address some of your immediate questions and/or concerns.

1. Student obtains paper or electronically based college application.
2. Student completes application and asks teachers if they are willing to write recommendations (if required).
3. Student turns in completed application including: essay(s), payment (if required), and teacher recommendations into the Hackett Guidance Department for processing of transcript. This is done at least **2 weeks** prior to college deadline.
4. Counselors complete their section of the application and either mail or e-mail all materials to the Admissions Office of the respective college.
5. The college application requires an **official score**: the student needs to contact ACT or SAT. Their scores can be ordered by logging onto www.act.org or www.collegeboard.com. Fee payment is by credit card by student request only. .
6. If necessary, **student** requests 7th semester transcript through www.parchment.com to be sent to colleges. (January)
7. After receiving decisions from Admissions Offices and Financial Aid offers, student makes final decision and confirms intent to enroll by submitting a deposit to college of choice. The student should also withdraw from the other colleges which they had been accepted to, by May 1st. Notify the Guidance Department of your final college decision.

Much has been written about the role of the parent(s) in the college admissions process. Parents should be a source of support and encouragement for their son/daughter during this time. However, there is a delicate balance between being supportive and being over-involved.

Parents Should:

- Help your son/daughter understand the reasons why he/she is going to college.
- Listen to your son/daughter; this is of utmost importance in the college selection process. While this is “easier said than done,” a parent who can do this will help to facilitate a better college selection process for their son/daughter.
- Respect your son’s/daughter’s individuality and ability to make his/her own decisions.
- Be a source of support and encouragement for your son/daughter during this time. The student who plays a major role in the decisions that affect his/her life is more invested in the success of those decisions.
- Be active participants in the process by being supportive and help your son/daughter disseminate the information to make good choices.

- Be proud, loving, and encouraging through all the stress and uncertainty of the search.
- Be open to all kinds of college options.
- Avoid conversations about college that can set a son/daughter up for disappointment. This is especially true when discussing “reach” schools.
- Let the son/daughter bring up conversations about college. This can help to alleviate arguments and promote discussions.
- If you have certain parameters (such as distance, cost, etc.) discuss these frankly with your son/daughter.

GLOSSARY/TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

ADMISSION TERMS

Candidates Reply Date: May 1st is the earliest date that a college can require an accepted student to commit to that college.

Deferred Admission or Wait List: A student’s offer of admission is put on hold. If insufficient numbers of regularly admitted candidates are evident by May 1, the college may take a student off deferred admission/wait list. The college should make deferred admission/wait list offers by August 1.

Early Decision: Students apply early, are notified of acceptance or rejection well in advance of the usual notification date, and agree to accept an offer of admission. This is a **binding** agreement.

Early Action: The same as Early Decision, except that applicants are not obligated to accept an offer of admission.

Open Admission: Virtually all applicants are accepted without regard to standardized test scores, GPA, or class rank.

Regular Decision: Students must apply by a standard deadline date in order to be considered for admission. Students have until May 1 to make a decision.

Rolling Admission: An institution reviews applications as they are received and offers decisions soon after they are made by the admission office. Students do not need to accept a college’s offer of admission until May 1.

TYPES OF COLLEGES

Four-Year College: Awards baccalaureate degrees.

Two-Year College: Awards associate degrees.

Upper-Level Institution: Awards baccalaureate degrees, but entering students must have at least two years of previous college level credit.

University: Offers four years of undergraduate work plus graduate degrees in more than two academic or professional fields.

OTHER TERMS

Accelerated degree program: Students may earn a bachelor degree in three academic years.

Calendar: Most colleges indicate one of the following: 4-4-1, 4-1-4, or similar arrangement; semesters, trimesters, quarters, etc.

Consortium: Includes several colleges and universities in a particular geographical area. Students can utilize several different resources from the participating colleges.

Cooperative (co-op) education program: Formal arrangement with off-campus employers allowing students to combine work and study in order to gain degree related experience.

Core: A program requiring the distribution of student's degree credits between several subject areas, usually in arts and sciences.

Endowment: The dollar value of donations to the institution.

Honors Program: Unusually challenging academic program for superior students.

Internships: College arranged work experience for which a student earns academic credit.

Study Abroad: Students may enroll for credit in a foreign study program sponsored by the college.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial Aid Package: The amount of scholarship, grant, loan and work-study money an individual school will offer a student.

FAFSA/Free Application for Federal Student Aid: The Government form utilized by many colleges and universities to determine the amount of financial aid a family is eligible to receive.

CSS Profile: This form is used in conjunction with the FAFSA by some institutions to calculate a family's financial aid package.

EFC/Expected Family Contributions: The amount of money each family is expected to pay towards a student's education for one year. This amount is calculated by submitting financial aid forms.

Need: This is determined by subtracting the EFC from a school's total cost. This is the amount of aid a student is eligible to receive at a particular institution.

PLUS Loans: Loans for parents with flexible repayment and low interest.

SAR/Student Aid Report: When a family submits the FAFSA they will receive several pages of information; this is the SAR. The Expected Family Contribution is listed on the SAR.

Merit-based Grant: A scholarship awarded to a student based upon a special attribute or talent.

Need-based Grant: A monetary award based upon the financial need of a family. These grants typically do not need to be paid back.

Subsidized Loan: A loan in which the interest is paid by the government while a student is attending college.

Unsubsidized Loan: The interest either accrues or is paid while a student is enrolled in college for this type of loan.

Work-study: This is a government sponsored financial aid program in which a student works on campus. Students earn at least the federal minimum wage.

NOTES

