

Top 25 Tips from Post-High School Counseling for Parents

1. "College is a match to be made not a prize to be won."
2. Resist the temptation to use the community rumor mill as your primary source of information regarding the college application process. Bring your questions to your post-high school counselor. Myths and rumors are what cause the most anxiety.
3. Families should have open, honest discussions regarding selection criteria, financial/geographic limitations, and overall expectations before starting the process. It is too late to address these issues in the spring of senior year.
4. Parents should not be doing the applications. Students who complete the applications themselves are empowered and more accountable.
5. Do not push your student to take the ACT too early. The ACT is designed to be taken in the spring of junior year to measure academic progress after completing almost three years of high school.
6. Students should not bite off more than they can chew academically when registering for senior year classes. Know your student's strengths and limitations.
7. Keep an open mind. Often there is not one perfect school for your son or daughter. Fixating on one school too early may close the door on considering other great colleges.
8. Test scores comprise only one piece of a student's profile but often produce the most stress. A student's accumulated body of work reflected in the transcript provides more information about work ethic and academic progress than test scores.
9. Think twice before paying for anything related to the college application process. Information on summer service trips, financial aid, help with essays, etc. is available at New Trier.
10. Allow your son or daughter to enjoy the process. Although you may have had an incredible time at "x" university, everyone is different.
11. Do not overload your student's schedule to the point where it adversely affects their academic performance. Colleges like to see students challenging themselves within reason. Signing up for fourteen clubs and activities will not erase poor academic grades.
12. Visit a variety of colleges. Seeing all of the Ivy League schools is great but looking at large state schools and smaller liberal arts schools will provide an opportunity for contrast and comparison.
13. When in doubt, ask! Rumors can spiral out of control. For the latest, feel free to contact the PHSC department.
14. Parents can have a negative effect on admission through aggressive phone calls, for instance. Students at New Trier have been rejected because the colleges were not able to deal with the parents.

15. The admission process has changed. It is very different from when parents went through it.
16. Don't compare siblings; what one sibling did or did not do has nothing to do with the other sibling.
17. Don't tweak the essay. Essays are a way for colleges to know your student.
18. Your worth or your student's worth as a person is not connected to the name of the college he or she will attend.
19. As a parent, please don't interfere in the interview. Keep your mouth closed or don't attend.
20. Reduce the tension; let your student have the week to study. Build in a one-to-two hour block of time on the weekend to discuss the college process. They need a break; hold your questions until your "college hour."
21. Pay more attention to career counseling. Three out of four college freshmen change majors once or more.
22. Social-emotional and dependence issues and not academic ability are the number one reason New Trier students are not successful in college. What are you doing to make your students independent and not dependent?
23. The most competitive college to which your student is admitted may not be the best fit.
24. There will be ups and downs at any college. How are you helping prepare your child to deal with these?
25. This can be a great experience, help make it a great experience.