



David S. Ladd
Music Department Chair

Dear Senior Musician and Parents,

As you prepare for your senior year at New Trier, we would like to share some valuable advice with you from former students who have gone through the college selection process. This information may be particularly helpful to those of you who are considering a future in the fine and performing arts.

When are good times to visit potential colleges? We encourage college visits during the summer between your junior and senior year, fall break, the Institute day in November, and after final exams in January. These are the most convenient times to visit potential colleges without negatively impacting your current commitments at New Trier. Some families also take advantage of spring break for multiple or extended visits. Most universities do not observe the same holiday breaks that we do. Plan now so a college visit doesn't come into conflict with a concert week.

What if my college visits/auditions conflict with New Trier dress rehearsals and concerts? The expectation is students will honor their commitment to their current ensemble(s) including the week prior to concerts. Music schools do not condone their future students failing to meet their current high school commitments, in fact, quite the opposite. They want you to uphold your obligations at New Trier as evidence of your ability to honor the commitments you have made. Schools will understand the challenges that scheduling can present. Don't hesitate to contact a school directly for alternate dates. Your ensemble director can likely help as well.

How many auditions are reasonable to take?

Be selective about how many programs you plan to apply to. You are welcome to take as many auditions as you like, but previous students have found that it is extraordinarily difficult to schedule more than 4 or 5 auditions. Again, it is very important to honor your current commitments at New Trier; make sure you consult the performance schedules for your ensembles and productions.

What should I try to accomplish during a college visit? Make a comprehensive trip the first time – it is very difficult to schedule multiple trips to the same school. Trust your initial reaction to the campus. Take a lesson with your studio teacher. Observe a rehearsal with the ensembles that you might participate in. Talk to current students so you can get a sense of their experience – find the music student lounge, take a seat, and listen. Consider the quality of the facility and its proximity to where you might end up living.

In general, plan as far in advance as possible with campus visits and auditions, and communicate with your ensemble directors. We are here to help you.

We wish you the very best in your college search!

Sincerely,

David S. Ladd