WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR



Just as every college is different, so too are the criteria and institutional priorities in each college's admission process. In fact, one of the great advantages of working with an independent educational consultant is their personal knowledge of these differences while helping students to navigate the process.

Ranking the Top 12

1. A rigorous high school curriculum that challenges the student and may include AP or IB classes.
2. High grade point average in major subjects. However, slightly lower grades in a rigorous program are preferred to all A's in less challenging coursework.
3. High scores on standardized tests (ACT, SAT). These should be consistent with high school performance.
4. Passionate involvement in a few activities that are meaningful, inside or outside school.
5. A well-written essay that emphasizes insight into the student's unique personality.
6. Leadership inside or outside of school. Depth, rather than breadth, of leadership is valued.
7. Demographic and personal characteristics that contribute to a diverse and interesting student body.
8. Strong counselor/teacher recommendations that provide personalized references.
9. Special talents that could contribute to campus life.
10. Intellectual curiosity exhibited through reading, research, and extracurricular pursuits.
11. Student's character and values are seen as conducive to being a good community member.
12. Demonstrated interest and enthusiasm in attending (through campus visits, etc.).

This ranked list is based on a nationwide survey of 2020 IECA member independent educational consultants.

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