

Parent Communications

May 2, 2013

Dr. Worthington introduced Career-Technical Education Director Karen Pitts and Lead Guidance Counselor Janet Spiceland. Mrs. Pitts gave a power point presentation which examined future employment trends according to local and national sources. She also spoke about the career-technical educational opportunities available through CMCSS as well as other local technical programs. She commented that there are many paths graduating students may take including military, which provides excellent training in a variety of fields; technical schools such as Tennessee Technology Center in Dickson; apprenticeship programs and on-the-job-training; and programs at Nashville State Community College and Austin Peay State University here in Clarksville. Many programs have two and four year options available. Mrs. Pitts stated that it is important to be sure a technical program or school is accredited.

Mrs. Spiceland gave a power point presentation on “What Colleges Look for in Student Applicants”. She noted that each college makes their own criteria. She stated that grades and test scores are only part of the picture. Some of the guiding principles common to most colleges include:

- Challenging high school curriculum. Did the student take advantage of higher level classes that were offered such as advanced placement, honors, or IB level, or even dual enrollment programs?
- Strong grades in an upward trend. Some students start strong and slack off the last year. Colleges look for continued upward progress.
- Solid scores on standardized tests such as ACT and/or SAT which are commonly used for admissions. It was noted that 8th grade students take the Explore test which is an ACT predictor. 10th grade students have the PLAN which is a pre-ACT test. Spring of 11th grade is when most students take the ACT. An ACT Prep course is available in all high schools as of last year. Mrs. Spiceland noted that ACT can provide scores and actually show where a student went wrong and what to study before testing again. The ACT can be taken multiple times.
- Quality involvement in activities. Colleges are looking for well-rounded activities outside the classroom with full participation.
- A record of community service, particularly helping others in unpaid situations. Key Club International (Kiwanis) and Jr. Civitan are good examples
- Well-written essay – if the college requires it.
- Recommendations from adults who know the student well, if required.
- Other special attributes or awards. Start keeping a list early on in your student’s career.

Dr. Worthington discussed the budget with the group. CMCSS is presenting a balanced budget to the County Commission. He noted that CMCSS had been awarded a \$785,000 grant based on high-reliability in leadership. CMCSS was one of eight grants awarded in the state.

Post-Secondary Opportunities

In the past, Choices were
limited to:

- * Job

- * Military

- * 4 year College or
University

Today's Options include:

- * Job – limited
- * Military
- * Technical Schools and TN Technology Centers
- * 2 and 4 year Colleges and Universities

Apprenticeship Programs

- International association of Heat & Frost Insulators & Allied Workers – Madison , TN
- Phone 615-868-9411

- International Association of Bridge, Structural and Reinforcing Ornamental Iron Workers – Nashville, TN
- Phone – 615-226-5705

- Nashville Electrical JATC – Nashville. TN
- Phone 615-242-9950

Technical Schools

Be sure to check for accredited programs

- * Nashville Auto Diesel
- * Miller-Motte
- * Daymar
- * Cosmetology Schools – Austin's and Queen City
- * North Central Institute
- * DeVry
- * ITT
- * Arts Institute
- * Lincoln College of Technology
- * Anthem Career College
- * Remington College

TTC Dickson - Clarksville

- * Technology Foundations
- * Automotive Technology
- * Business Systems Technology
- * Computer Information Technology
- * HVAC/R
- * Industrial Maintenance/Electricity
- * Machine Tool Technology
- * Mechatronics
- * Practical Nursing
- * Welding/Pipefitting Technology – New 2013

TTC Contact

- * Lisa Sullivan
- * 3789 Guthrie Hwy.
- * Clarksville, TN 37040
- * P: (931)572-1694
- * F: (931)572-1696
- * E: Lisa.Sullivan@ttcdickson.edu

NSCC

- * Business Management
- * Computer Technology
- * Information Security
- * Logistics
- * Supply Chain
- * Transportation

NSCC Contact

*Steve Conklin

*1760 Wilma Rudolph Blvd.
Clarksville, TN 37040

*931-551-7004

APSU

- * Radiography Program
- * Nuclear Medicine Program
- * Computer Science Concentration
- * Information Systems Concentration
- * Nursing
- * Pre-Vet

APSU Contact Info

*Austin Peay State University

601 College Street

Clarksville, TN 37044

1-877-861-APSU

(931) 221-7011

gov@apsu.edu

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR IN STUDENT APPLICANTS

An Overview for parents and students

What is important.....?

Grades

Activities

Essays

Test Scores
Community Service

Curriculum


Recommendations

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Where do I start?

- * There is no shortage of information and advice on college.
- * The problem is not finding information; the problem is taking time to understand the process and then using that information for your situation.
- * By far, the most difficult part is making the final decision.

- * GRADES and TEST SCORES are the first things most students/parents consider.
- * Those are important, but they are only part of the picture.
- * In order to prepare for college acceptance, it helps to consider all things that colleges are looking for.

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- * There are an overwhelming number of sources of information about what colleges are looking for, but they all agree on a few basic guiding principles.
 - * We will address those in detail with this presentation.
 - * It's also important to understand that some colleges are more competitive with their application process, therefore, understanding the expectations of each college to which you plan to apply is essential.

So, what do colleges look for in student applicants?

A Challenging High School Curriculum

- * **The time to think about the courses your child will take is when he/she enters high school – not when he/she begins the senior year.**
- * **“Challenging” means taking courses that are at the advanced, honors, AP/IB level, or dual enrollment . Rigorous curriculum better prepares a student for success at the college level.**
- * **Colleges look for transcripts that include a rigorous curriculum.**

So, what do colleges look for in student applicants?

Strong Grades in an Upward Trend

- * Colleges want to admit students who will be successful. While grades are not the only thing colleges look at, they are still very important.
- * Colleges usually have a minimum acceptable GPA for admissions, but that doesn't assure that a student will be admitted just because they meet the minimum cut off. Be sure to check for minimum acceptable grades as well as the average for entering freshmen.
- * It's desirable to have good grades all through high school, but if there is a variation in grades, it's better that they show an upward trend, getting better in 11th and 12th grades instead of going down.
- * The same is true for rigorous courses. Students who don't take a challenging curriculum in their senior year are less appealing to colleges.

So, what do colleges look for in student applicants?

Solid Scores on Standardized Tests

- * The most common tests used for undergraduate admissions are the ACT and SAT.
- * In Tennessee, ACT is administered to all students in the spring of their 11th grade year. Leading up to that test, 8th graders are given the EXPLORE test and 10th graders are given the PLAN test. These tests serve as “predictors” of college readiness at those levels to help guide student progress.

Solid Scores on Standardized Tests - continued

- * ACT sets “benchmarks” at each testing level so students/parents/teachers/counselors can determine the progress a student is making toward college/career readiness. Students/parents are given a score report after each of these tests so they can determine the level of college readiness.
- * SAT may also be taken as a college entrance exam.
- * Students may take ACT or SAT multiple times if desired to try to increase their test scores.

Solid Scores on Standardized Tests - continued

- * Always note not only the minimum ACT/SAT score a college will accept, but also note the average score of the most recent freshman classes.**
- * For example, your child may make a 28 on the ACT and have no trouble getting into a college..... but do you want him/her attending a college where the average freshman ACT score is 20....or do you want him to attend a college where he is surrounded by classmates who are achieving at a higher level?**

So, what do colleges look for in student applicants?

Quality Involvement in Activities

- * You have probably heard that colleges are looking for well-rounded students. That means that they are looking for students who are involved in school and community activities outside of the classroom. Quality Involvement means the student is taking an active role and is fully participating and not just putting his name on a list so it “looks good.”
- * Outside activities should be encouraged from a young age so that they become “part” of the student and not just started at the last minute so they can put it on their resume.

So, what do colleges look for in student applicants?

A Record of Community Service

- * Being well-rounded also means not just being a taker, but also a giver.
- * Volunteer opportunities are always available locally. For those students who don't seek out volunteer opportunities on their own, organizations such as Junior Civitan and Key Club are high school service organizations that promote volunteer work and offer many opportunities for service projects.
- * It's good to keep a record of the community service activities and document those throughout each year of high school.

So, what do colleges look for in student applicants?

A Well-Written Essay

- * While not all colleges require a college admissions essay, many do have that requirement, especially those that have a very competitive admissions process.
- * If you are applying to a college that requires an essay, it's important to take the time to do a good job.
- * Colleges look for essays that set a student apart from his/her peers so your essay needs not only to be flawlessly written, but it also needs to be unique.
- * Many books are available that give hints, tips, and samples of good college application essay writing.

So, what do colleges look for in student applicants?

Positive Recommendations from School Personnel

- * Most colleges as well as scholarship applications require a recommendation from two or more individuals who know you well.
- * Your record and reputation at school are important indicators of your future. Sometimes they require a recommendation from your counselor or your principal, but other times they may leave it up to you to choose who you ask to write your recommendations.
- * Regardless of who is writing the recommendation, you will need to allow adequate time for that person to write a quality recommendation. Minimum of two weeks is reasonable. Remember, they may be asked by many students to write recommendations so you need to allow time for them to devote to you

Positive Recommendations from School Personnel - continued

- * Other suggestions include providing the person a resume of your activities to help them have a full “picture” of you.
- * Also, you should offer an addressed, stamped envelope for them to send the recommendation to the college.
- * Finally, ask politely if you may check with them later to assure that the recommendation has been sent so you can be sure the college has all the information they need.
- * Always follow up.

So, what do colleges look for in student applicants?

Additional Recommendations from Adults Who Know You Well

- * **All the same applies to asking for a recommendation from an adult outside of your school.**
- * **Provide them any additional information about yourself that they may need ,and allow adequate time for them to write a quality recommendation.**
- * **Always offer an addressed, stamped envelope for them to send the recommendation.**

So, what do colleges look for in student applicants?

Other Special Attributes or Awards

- * This is a catch all category to include other relevant special things about you that aren't covered in the other areas.
- * Colleges are always interested in unique individuals. Don't hesitate to include special experiences you have had, your special talents, or awards that you earned that will set you apart from other applicants.

Helpful Sources of Information

- * <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search> - this is an easy to use website where you choose the criteria you want in a college and rank that criteria by importance (doesn't matter, want, must have) and the system will search from a database of almost 4,000 colleges/universities to find ones that meet your criteria. The options are almost endless
- * www.collegefortn.org - College advice, college admission applications, pay for college, financial aid, scholarships, apply online for admission, etc
- * www.tn.gov/collegepays - Welcome to www.tn.gov/collegepays, your source for information about financing your college education in the state of Tennessee. This includes information about the HOPE Scholarship.
- * www.fastweb.com - widely used site for free college information