Senior Planning Guide and Handbook 2019-2020

This packet includes helpful tips to assist SENIORS in having a more successful year!

Highlights:

⇒ College selection and applications ⇒ Campus Visits
⇒ College Admission Exams ⇒ Vocational and Technical Programs
⇒ 2 year/4 year colleges ⇒ Resume tips
⇒ Michigan Schools ⇒ Interview tips
⇒ Curriculum Requirements ⇒ Essay Tips
⇒ Best fit college ⇒ Letters of Recommendations
⇒ Scholarships
PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR YEAR
Walled Lake Western High School Code 233689

The Walled Lake Western Senior Guide is designed to give you some basic information as you prepare to apply to college. This booklet will not provide the answers to all of your questions, nor will it address the needs of all students. For answers to individual questions, or for personalized advice, talk to your counselor.

For seniors, the college application process falls into three stages:

- **Applying** – occurs during first semester. The application process involves registering on www.parchment.com, visiting colleges, making decisions, taking tests, filling out applications and meeting deadlines.
- **Waiting** – Once college admission counselors receive application(s) they monitor progress to assess if students are continuing to challenge themselves with their curriculum and academic performance. First semester grades, final grades and your transcript are sent to the school you plan to attend. **Colleges can and will revoke acceptances for a substandard senior year.**
- **Deciding** – This is a time of discussion, revisiting schools, and comparing financial aid packages. Most schools want to be notified of your decision by May 1.

The following is a suggested plan for the senior year:

1. Attend a Senior Seminar to gather information about applying to college.
2. Attend a financial aid workshop (presented during Senior Seminars): Apply October 1st!
3. Register on www.parchment.com so you can have your transcript sent to colleges after you apply.
4. Visit colleges.
5. Meet with college representatives when they visit Walled Lake Western and surrounding areas.
6. Make sure you have taken all required college admissions tests.
7. Finalize your college application list.
8. BY OCTOBER 31st: Fill out college applications online and save a copy for your records.
9. Request letters of recommendation for the more selective schools such as U of M and Ivy Leagues. Provide a resume or fill out the “Bragg” sheet found on the Counseling Secretary’s counter and send it to the teacher/counselor you are asking to write your recommendation.
10. Schedule interviews or auditions, if necessary.
11. Notify colleges when you have made a decision.
WLW COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

✓ All college applications require a high school transcript and some colleges have one or more sections for your counselor to complete.

✓ When requesting your first transcript, you will be required to fill out the *College Application/Transcript Router Form*.

✓ Additional applications require the *College Application/Router Form* attached to each. Go online to [www.parchment.com](http://www.parchment.com) and request that your transcript be sent to those college(s) where you applied. Then submit your *Router Form* to the Counseling Secretary.
  o **Students must submit Application/Router Form at least 7-10 working days before the due date**

Please note that we are unable to process applications during the summer. Applications for college are processed when counselors return in September.

➢ **STUDENT ATHLETES:** complete NCAA Clearinghouse process if you plan to play your sport(s) in college. Visit Western’s school website ([www.wlcsd.org/western](http://www.wlcsd.org/western)) and click Counseling tab and scroll down to NCAA tab to see the procedure to complete the NCAA registration process; or see your counselor and/or coach if you have questions.

➢ Check in the counseling office for military service enlistment personnel contact information, if you are interested in pursuing that postsecondary option.

All 18-year-old citizens should register to vote. All male citizens are required to register for the draft.

TIMELINE FOR SENIOR YEAR

**JUNE/JULY/AUGUST**

Review your resume and activities. Use summer to add to and update your EDP in Career Cruising.

All students considering participation in NCAA athletics should register for the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse online at [www.NCAAClearinghouse.net](http://www.NCAAClearinghouse.net).

Review your career plans and decide which type of college is right for you.

Contact the admissions office of each college you are interested in to obtain information on admissions, scholarships and financial aid. Set up a file to keep track of all your application information and deadlines. Register on [www.parchment.com](http://www.parchment.com).
SEPTEMBER
Register to take or re-take the ACT/SAT as necessary. Make sure your scores are sent directly to colleges to which you have, or have intentions, of submitting applications.

Compare the colleges on your list. Have you weighed the pros and cons carefully? Which colleges will meet your needs?

Set up tours and interviews at your choices of colleges. Visit classrooms and speak to students and faculty members. Don’t forget to set up an appointment with the school’s financial aid office to find out about scholarships and grant opportunities.

Sign up in the Counseling Office to meet with college representatives. The sign up book is located on coffee table in the counseling office. Remember to sign up and submit your applications in advance for ON-SITE Admissions right here at Western with top Michigan universities. Pick up a copy of the list of colleges and dates in the Counseling Office.

Ask appropriate teachers for letters of recommendation for your application. If recommendation letters are to be sent separately from applications, please supply a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Write thank you letters or notes to these teachers.

Attend Senior Seminar with your counselor.

Start working on college admission applications, especially the essay. Make rough drafts and have them reviewed. Your English teachers are great resources for help with essays.

If you are applying for early decision, most are due November 1. Make sure all application materials are given to the Counseling Office for processing at least two weeks before the deadlines. You must request transcripts from the Counseling Office. Prepare applications for back-up schools.

OCTOBER

FAFSA should be submitted October 1st - THIS IS NEW AND DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS YEARS. Make sure to use your 2019 tax return information to complete the FAFSA now.

Start collecting financial records to complete financial aid forms. Make sure the following documents are at hand: tax returns, W-2 forms, bank statements, records of benefits from Social Security Administration and other agencies. This information may be requested for colleges to prove eligibility for financial aid.

Complete and submit your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid www.fafsa.ed.gov) as soon after October 1st as possible. Double check your colleges for additional financial aid forms or information that must be submitted. Do not complete FAFSA before October 1. If you do so, it will not count for your freshman year of college.

Search for scholarships. Western Counseling Website has a list of scholarships, including Walled Lake School District Legacy Scholarships with deadlines and criteria for consideration. Check the counseling website for updates.

Take any ACT or SAT tests for which you have registered.
Do not be late! Keep track of all deadlines for applications, recommendations, transcripts, etc.

Attend any regional college fairs in the area. College fairs will be hosted at:

Schoolcraft College
Tuesday, October 1st, 2019
6:00-8:00pm
VisTa Tech Center, 18600 Haggerty Rd., Livonia
www.schoolcraft.edu/collegenight

Pick up a flyer in the Counseling Office with other dates and locations for colleges hosting college fairs.
Continue sending out all school applications. Neatness, spelling, and grammar count! If you are not doing your application online (bad idea), be sure applications are completely filled out in pen, and always keep a copy for your files. Some schools waive fees for online applications.

Sign up in the Counseling Office for On-Site College Admissions Visits that will be held this month and get your applications in at least five (5) days before the date.

**NOVEMBER**

ASVAB: Tentatively scheduled for November, 2019. Contact Mrs. Kurowski in the counseling office for more information.

Obtain financial aid information from each college’s financial aid office. Note the required documents and deadlines for filing.

Complete and submit all post-secondary school applications. Keep copies, for your file, of anything you send. Keep your grades up! Colleges may ask for your seventh semester transcript.

**DECEMBER**

Finalize and submit applications for admission. Some colleges have application deadlines in January. Apply only to schools of interest but include one or two “safety schools” and one “reach school.” As a rule, the sooner you apply, the better your chances for admission.


Check on your application status. Colleges do occasionally make mistakes.

**JANUARY**

Follow up to make sure colleges have received all of your application information, including recommendations, test scores, transcripts, and mid-year report.

Look for decisions from any school to which you applied for early admission.

Mid-year transcripts will be sent to all colleges requested through Parchment last fall.

Complete and submit your application for Legacy Scholarship Funds, Walled Lakes School District wide scholarships. These are local scholarships for Walled Lake students. Applications are available in the Counseling Office or at the website: [http://www.wlcsd.org/western.cfm](http://www.wlcsd.org/western.cfm). Application deadline is in early January.

**FEBRUARY**

February is the last application deadline for some colleges—check all dates.

Be sure to request that your seventh semester transcript (available in late January) be sent to the colleges you applied to. You can do this by going back into your account on [www.parchment.com](http://www.parchment.com) and placing your order.

Monitor applications to make sure all materials are sent and received on time.

Fill out and submit financial aid forms required by the colleges where applications have been sent.

Attend College Goal Sunday at a university located near you to get free, expert help with filing out the FAFSA. Continue to look for scholarships.

**MARCH**

Colleges start sending admission, rejection, and wait list letters.
You should receive your SAR (Student Aid Report) from FAFSA, noting your eligibility for financial aid.

Athletes should ensure their online NCAA eligibility status is completed.

**APRIL**
Watch your e/snail mail for college acceptance letters and begin to make choices based on where you have been accepted. Be sure to compare financial aid awards you receive.

Visit colleges again to be sure of your decision and schedule an appointment with a financial aid officer if you have questions or need additional information about any awards.

Send an acceptance letter and deposit to the college of choice and write polite letters of refusal to the others.

Watch for important dates and deadlines regarding rooming requests and financial aid at your chosen college.

**MAY**
Take AP (Advanced Placement) examinations.

If you’re planning to attend Oakland Community College (OCC) during the Summer and/or Fall (37% of our student do), complete the registration application and sign up to attend the OCC field trip to complete admission testing and finalize admission process. Sign up in the Counseling Office.

Keep your grades up. Study for finals. Remember, colleges will ask for your final semester grades and may rescind offers of admission depending on your performance.

Find out when your college is hosting its orientation session and plan to attend. It is a great way to meet students and faculty as well as get to know the campus.

Complete form and hand in to Kathy Burt, Counseling Office, alerting the Counseling Office about any scholarships you have been awarded for inclusion in the graduation program. If you don’t tell us, we may miss impressive information to acknowledge your achievement in this area.

Request that your transcript with the 8th semester (final) grades be sent to your college of choice via www.parchement.com.

**JUNE**
Notify your college about any outside grants or scholarships you have been awarded.

Finalize summer school or summer job plans.

**Graduate! Congratulations and best of luck!**
SELECTING A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY TO ATTEND—BEGIN THE PROCESS…

As you begin to decide what is most important to you, look over these options.

**Location – region/state**
- How close to home do you want to stay?
- Is this school easy to get to (airports, train, buses)?
- How well do you adapt to new situations and weather?
- Would you be lonely if you moved far away from family and friends?
- Is there an area of the country where you always wanted to go to school?

**Setting – urban, suburban, rural**
- Are you looking for the excitement of a big city?
- Would you like to live on a picturesque campus with easy access to the activities of a big city?
- Would you prefer a school on a wooded campus with many opportunities for outdoor activities?

**Size**
- Have you always thought you would attend a big football school?
- Do you like the idea of a small school where it is easy to get to know everyone including the professors?
- Do you learn better in a small class environment or a larger classroom?
- Will a small school offer you the variety of courses and majors you need?
- Are you looking for a college about the size of your high school?

**Type of School**
- Would you prefer a liberal arts college or a major university?
- Would you be interested in a more specialized school such as an art school or a technological university?
- Have you considered a single sex school?
- Would you be interested in a historically black college or a religiously affiliated school?

**Majors**
- Are you looking for a school with a particular major?
- Do you need a school that offers pre-professional programs such as pre-medicine, pre-law, pre-veterinarian?
- Would you like the option to self-design a major?

**Academic Reputation**
- Are you looking for a school that has a reputation for being academically challenging?
- Do you think you will need a school that offers strong academic support?
- Is the college known for the strength of the department that you are interested in?
- Is the admission process highly competitive, competitive or non-competitive?
- Are you realistic in your chances of getting in?

**Cost**
- Have you and your family discussed how much you can afford to spend on college?
- Are you thinking of going to a community college the first two years to save money?
- Will you be living at home?
- Would you be willing to take a job on campus to help pay for expenses?
- Should you explore colleges that because of your strong academic or athletic record would offer you a scholarship?

**Housing**
- Do you want a college where housing is guaranteed all four years?
- Do you want a college where freshmen are required to live on campus?
- Are you interested in a specialized dorm (i.e. single sex, substance free, quiet)?
- Are there apartment facilities located conveniently to the college?

**Athletics**
- Do you intend to play a sport in college?
- Are you competitive for Division I sports?
- If playing for a Division I team meant sitting on the bench all season, would you rather play at a Division II school where you could play every game?
- Are you looking for an intramural or club team where you could play a sport just for fun?
Campus Facilities
- Are you looking for a school where most students live on campus or will you be commuting?
- As a freshman, will you want to have a car on campus?
- How important is the quality of the food?
- Will you require something special such as vegetarian or kosher meals?

Special Programs
- Do you need a school with services or programs for the learning disabled?
- Are you interested in ROTC?
- Have you thought you would like to study abroad?
- Do you plan to continue your ESL studies in college?
- Are you looking for an honors program?

Campus Life
- Do you plan to join a fraternity or sorority?
- Do you participate in activities in high school that you would like to continue in college?
- Does the school offer opportunities for community service?

Once you have weighed these options, you should begin to gather information and research colleges using the sources listed below:

- College search programs on the Internet.
- Research each school’s website and take virtual tours.
- Speak with counselors, teachers, alumni, and friends.
- Meet with admission or college representatives as they visit our school and area.
- Keep a notebook of positive and negative impressions.
- Visit your top choices before making final decisions.

From this research you should have at least 5 to 25 colleges that match your interests and needs. We recommend that you apply to three colleges. As you narrow your choices, your selections should fall into three categories.

- **Dream Schools** - Schools that are a reach for you either academically or financially.
- **Probable Schools** - Schools that will meet all your needs and will likely accept you.
- **Safety Schools** - Schools that will make you happy and will be sure to accept you.

**APPLICATIONS**
Applying to college is like putting eighteen years of achievement into a single, online application. It can be quite an overwhelming process. Whether you will be filling out one application or several more, there are some basic instructions and guidelines you should keep in mind.

**Get Your Applications**
Virtually every college and university has a website which usually states the preferred way of applying to that school. Many schools give students various options in obtaining and filling out applications. Some of the options include:

- Applying electronically (most preferred method by colleges);
- Applying via Common Application (typically for Ivy League and academically rigorous schools; [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org);
- Downloading the application (rarely used).

It is still possible, although very uncommon, to call or email a school and ask to have a paper application sent to your home. The counseling office has two computers specifically for student use if you need access to a one with internet capabilities.

**Before You Begin**
- Register online at [www.parchment.com](http://www.parchment.com) (You must request all of your transcripts through Parchment.)
- **Before you complete your application, READ AND THEN RE-READ all directions.**
• Check over your application for errors. Spelling, capitalization, and grammar reflect your academic image.

• Read the application thoroughly to see what other materials are requested. Will you need any teacher recommendation? Is an essay required? How long will it take for you to gather all the information necessary and when is it due?

SELECTING A MAJOR
The selection of a major is one of the most perplexing tasks faced by college applicants. Many institutions offer 50 to 200 programs of study. Although most applications have a section for students to write in their intended major, if you aren’t sure, it is perfectly acceptable to write in “undecided.” On the other hand, if you think you might want to major in anthropology, and you enter that response, your admittance will not be based upon that selection. Admissions committees are aware that students change their intended majors several times. Approximately 55 to 60 percent of college students will switch their majors at least once. College administrators hope you will take the time to explore different avenues as you take different classes and see what interests you.

By applying to a specialized school within a school or a specialized program, like a school for nursing, music, business, or engineering, admission is contingent upon following the required semester classes offered in that particular college or program. Failure to comply with the guidelines or requirements of that program may result in loss of credits.

ACT, SAT
W. L. Western High School code for all testing programs: 233-689

Most admissions decisions will be delayed until the college receives your ACT results and has the opportunity to review your scores. If you have taken the test, but have not yet had your scores sent to the specific colleges, contact the testing organization and let them know where you want your scores sent.

If you plan on taking the test for the first time or are taking it again, let the colleges or universities you have applied to know when you will be taking the test. When you take the test, make sure you list the appropriate colleges with the testing agency.

ACT (2019-2020)

To register or for more information, visit www.act.org

2019-20 ACT Test Dates & Registration Deadlines

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<th>Registration Deadline</th>
<th>Late Registration Deadline</th>
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## SAT I

### 2019-2020** SAT Test Dates (U.S.)

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Please check the following website for locations, dates and times.  [http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-us-dates](http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-us-dates)

## SAT II

SAT II’s are a battery of 14 tests covering 13 subjects. Most selective colleges require students to take one or more of these tests in addition to the ACT or SAT I. Colleges that require the SAT II usually suggest that you take three of the tests. Most students will take math, writing, and a science, history or a language subject test. For more specific information, check with the colleges or universities which you are applying to or visit [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

## AP OR ADVANCE PLACEMENT EXAMS

Advanced Placement exams are higher-level subject tests. Nearly all colleges and universities award credit for a score of 5, most give credit for a score of 4, and some give credit for a score of 3. Depending on a school’s policy, credits may replace the need to take a subject’s introductory course (i.e. college freshman English composition) or credits may be applied as elective credits. Either way, they can save time and money.

**Cost:** Approximately $95.00 per test  
**Test Dates:** May 5-15  
**Length of Test:** Approximately 3 Hours Each
Community College (about 37% of our students opt for this choice).

Community colleges are public two-year institutions that provide excellent opportunities for students. Community colleges have an open door admissions policy (admissions open to individuals with a high school diploma, GED, over 18 years old or past their high school graduation date) and provide access to higher education for millions of Americans. While many community college students attend full time, a large number of students enroll on a part-time basis in order to fulfill employment or family obligations.

Features of a community college education:
- Costs significantly less (particularly for state residents) than state or private four-year colleges. No expenses for room and board and transportation costs are usually lower.
- Provides a nurturing, supportive environment for students who need additional assistance before transitioning to a four-year college.
- Offers specialized courses of study where a student can earn a certificate in an intensive training program like fashion design, automotive technology, food service technology, or paralegal studies.
- Schedules coursework with attention given to the varying needs of both part-time and full-time students. Online courses provide an additional option.
- Provides a multitude of programs and majors leading towards an Associate in Arts or Sciences (A.A. or A.S.) or an Associated in Arts and Sciences (A.A.S)

College Transfer Programs
- Liberal arts and pre-professional training in various areas including fields such as dentistry, education or law. These programs are designed to provide transfer credit to four-year institutions after two years of study.

Vocational-Technical Programs
- These programs encompass various occupations in fields of business, public services and technology. Generally, these programs culminate in a two-year Associates of Arts Degree.

For more information about finding a community college in a specific area and/or the programs available go to:

www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/cc/search.html or www.collegeprofiles.com

Steps To Take When Considering a Two Year College

- Visit the campus and take a tour. Talk to current students about classes, programs, professors and overall satisfaction with the school.
- Research programs in advance and find out which programs are the strongest.
- Ask about the student transfer rate.
- Inquire about requirements for transferring to a four-year college. Find out what courses will transfer; how far in advance will a student need to apply for transfer; why a credit might be approved by one four-year school and not by another; how many transfer students apply and how many are accepted; is a foreign language required to transfer?
- Inquire about what placement tests are required for admission and when and where they are offered.
- Visit the financial aid office on campus and research available scholarship opportunities.
- Talk with admission representatives, counselors and career center personnel. Ask questions about specific departments or majors. Inquire about internships and job placement services for current students and alumni.
- Find out deadlines for applying.
- Inquire about tuition and fees.
- Read the school catalog before registering for classes.
- **Register for classes early.** The sooner a student registers, the more likely the student will get the classes with the days, times and professors of their choice.
- Keep focused and motivated.
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CORE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

The President’s council of the State Universities of Michigan has established the following core curriculum requirements. Successful completion of the following core courses will be the consideration for regular admissions into any of the 15 public colleges/universities in Michigan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English (Language Arts)</th>
<th>4 years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4 years (including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and one additional math course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>3 years (1 year of World History strongly recommended)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Language</td>
<td>2 years (or replaced with a Personal Curriculum)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The President’s Council also strongly recommends the following courses:

| Foreign Language        | 3 years of the same language |
| Fine or Performing Arts | 2 years |
| Computer Literacy       | 1 year |

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR

College admissions officers will use some, if not all, of the information listed below in their admissions process. However, individual colleges differ in how they evaluate this information. For example, one college may place a great deal of emphasis on test scores, while another college may not. Colleges look to admit well-rounded students who will be academically successful at their institution. Remember that colleges have other priorities that impact student admission such as the diversity of their student body, the geographical mix, legacy standing, athletics and talent, as well as summer experiences and internships.

1. Grades in All Subjects – Cumulative GPA
2. Grades in College Prep Courses – Academic GPA
3. Admission Test Scores
4. Difficulty of Courses
5. Class Rank
6. Academic Trend
7. Essay/Writing Sample
8. Counselor Recommendations
9. Teacher Recommendations
10. Interview
11. Work/Extracurricular Activities

No single factor will determine acceptance or rejection. Some colleges may look only at grades and test scores. Most, however, are interested in more than just the academic record. They want to know about accomplishments, interests and future goals.

THE CAMPUS VISIT

It is important to visit the schools you are considering applying to in order to get a feel for the campus before you make a commitment, especially if you are considering applying early decision. The number of school visits that you make depends on your time and finances, but you should check out a large and a small school, or go to one urban and one small-town campus.

Knowing the importance of these visits, seniors are given two exempt absences from school if proper procedures are taken.
Before you visit a college campus, consider some of the pointers listed below to get the most out of your campus visits.

- **Do some preparation.** Before your visit, decide what you want to learn about the school and put together a list of questions. Use the same list for every school so that you can make comparisons.

- **Visit while classes are in session.** Sit in on classes, look around. Does this look like the kind of place where you will be comfortable and fit in? Read the campus newspaper and bulletin boards for announcements, concerts and activities. Stay overnight in a residence hall, if possible.

- **Schedule your visit at least two weeks in advance.** Call the admissions office to arrange your visit and inquire about campus tours.

- **Schedule interviews with faculty and admissions staff.** Meet with professors who teach in your area of interest. You should also try to meet with admissions representatives to verify admission requirements and discuss costs and financial aid.

- **Take the campus tour.** If the school offers an escorted tour, take advantage of it. You will get access to more of the campus. Watch how students spend their time and interact with each other and with you.

- **Ask lots of questions.** This is your chance to discover things you will learn no other way. Ask students what they like best and least about the school, what they would change, and what the campus is like on weekends.

- **Trust your instincts and take notes.** Brochures and videos can be misleading. See the campus through your own eyes. Pay attention to your first impressions. Is this where you want to live and go to school for four years? Make notes to jog your memory when decision time comes.

**MEETING WITH COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES AND INTERVIEWERS**

Whether you meet with college representatives at an interview, on-site admission, our school, college fairs or information sessions, you are given the opportunity to make a favorable and lasting impression. Introduce yourself, look the representative in the eye as you offer a firm handshake. Quite often these representatives are the ones who will read your applications and decide your future. Being able to associate your file with a smiling, self-assured individual can’t hurt.

Few schools require on-campus interviews. Some don’t offer them at all. Some have elaborate networks of alumni or students who interview applicants in your hometown. If you are applying to a school that does require an interview and you plan on visiting the campus, call the admissions office in advance and let them know when you are planning to visit. They may schedule your interview at that time.

Regardless of whom you are meeting or where, the guidelines remain the same.

- Do your homework; learn as much about the school as you can prior to your meeting.
- Be prepared to answer basic questions like, “Why do you want to come to Princeton?” or “Tell me about yourself.”
- Be prepared to ask questions.
- Practice your interviewing skills.
- Look the part.
- Save your first choice school interview for last.
- Send a thank-you note afterwards.

**TYPES OF ADMISSIONS**

**Regular Admission or Regular Decision**

Students complete the application prior to the regular admission deadline and are notified within a time frame specified by the college, usually the first week of April.

**Rolling Admission or Rolling Decision**

Colleges will review applications as they are received and applicants are notified of decisions when the review is completed, usually four to six weeks.

**Early Decision**

If a student is absolutely certain that he wants to attend a certain college, there may be some benefits to applying “early decision.” Deadlines for early decision applications are usually in November with notification in December. Students may only apply to one school through the early decision process. This is a legally binding commitment to attend this college if accepted. The advantage is that more schools are committing a significant percentage of their spots to Early Decision applicants. The disadvantage is what appears to be an ideal choice in October could be less ideal in April or August. If not accepted early decision, students are either denied or reconsidered for admission in the spring.
Early Action or Early Notification
Early action is similar to early decision except that students, if accepted, are not required to accept admission or withdraw other applications. This acceptance is not binding and students do not have to make decisions until May.

On-Site Admission
Several colleges and universities now offer On-Site Admissions Programs. Students fill out applications as if they were going through standard procedures. Instead of being processed through the mail, these applications are either brought to the campus on the day of the on-site admission or brought to the admissions representative at our school. You will need to have an official copy of your high school transcript, so make sure you inform the Career Center at least a week in advance. Students meet with admissions representatives who will then review applications and transcripts while interviewing the students. Decisions are usually made on the spot.

Open Admission
Colleges grant acceptance to all high school graduates without regard to additional qualifications such as test scores or specific high school grades.

WRITING THE ESSAY
It may only be 500 words or less, but the admissions essay portion of the college application can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection. Without the essay, admissions officers would have to choose arbitrarily between two or even two hundred applications with identical profiles. The personal essay shows the admissions committee how you are different from everyone else. It provides information about you that test scores, grades, and extracurricular pursuits can’t.

- Allow plenty of time to develop your essay.
- Pursue perfection – check spelling and grammar.
- If using one essay for multiple schools, keep the school’s name straight.
- Use good taste in composing your essay.
- Be creative and try to captivate your audience.
- Be original and be yourself.
- Use detail and concrete examples and experiences.
- Give you draft to others to read.
- Revise and rewrite until you are satisfied.
- Try to show interest and knowledge in answering the “Why I want to attend this school” essay.
- Captivate your audience by making it engaging and memorable.
- Don’t repeat what has already been said in your application.
- Don’t thesaurusize.
- Don’t use generalities and cliché’s.
- Don’t recycle essays. Make sure you answer the specific question.
- Don’t turn in something because your parents say, “Turn it in early” Make sure you are satisfied with the content of your essay even if it takes another week.
- Don’t write a scholarly essay. Admissions committees want to learn about you.
- Don’t be too general.

There are books available in the Career Center to help you with writing you essay, or check online.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION
Some schools may ask for a letter of recommendation from your counselor and possibly one or two letters from teachers. If you want to add additional recommendations, be sure that each letter adds something new to your admissions file. The best recommendations come from people who have worked closely with you.

- Pick your recommenders wisely. Do not assume all letters will be complementary. Make a formal request. Schedule an appointment to discuss the recommendation fully. Ask the teacher or counselor if he is able and willing to write a glowing letter on your behalf. Teachers will be honest. If there is any hesitation, find someone else.
- Email the letter writer a copy of your prepared resume highlighting or describing how you have spent your high school years including your background, extracurricular activities, sports, jobs, and other responsibilities. The more information you provide, the more detailed the letter of recommendation can be.
- Provide ample time for the letter to be written. Give at least three weeks advance notice.
- It is your responsibility to make sure the evaluation is sent on time. Check on the progress with the letter writer. If the due date is approaching, friendly written reminders are helpful. If the letter has been uploaded electronically to the college, make sure it has been received.
• If there is a specific form required, make sure you provide all instructions and the form to the teacher with your personal information. Be sure to email the form or link directly to the person writing the recommendation. If there is no special form, you should provide information as to the purpose of the recommendation (scholarship or admissions to a specific school). Don’t forget to inform the letter writer how you want the recommendation sent (uploaded, mailed,…).

• Make sure you ask the appropriate teachers. If the application asks for teachers from 10th or 11th grade academics, don’t ask your 9th grade ceramics teacher.

• Promptly follow up with a personal “Thank You” note.

• When you get accepted, let the teacher know and thank her or him again.

You may want to use the Student “Brag Sheet” for Letters of Recommendation that you completed for your counselor to give or email to teachers as well. Include the name of the college or university and a due date for the teacher as well.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION
• Pay specific attention to application deadlines. Allow time for the Counseling Office to process your Parchment transcript request(s).
• If you have included additional pages, make sure your name and student identification number appear on all pages.
• Make sure all spaces are filled in. Use N/A if the question does not apply.
• Proof read again.
• Tell the truth.
• Sign the application electronically by agreement or in written form if requested by the college.
• Make, or save on your computer, copies of everything you send.
• Keep track of what, when and where you are sending your materials.
• Bring completed application to the Counseling Office (if you don’t fill it out online) with the application fee (if you don’t pay it online) made payable to the college or university. This is a rare occurrence.
• If you apply on line or electronically, save a copy of everything you send.

THE WAITING GAME
You’ve narrowed your choices, finished the essays, and sent out the last of the applications. Many seniors foolishly think the hard work is over and the remainder of senior year can be spent sitting back, relaxing and waiting for the snail/email. Unfortunately, your work is far from over. While admissions representatives are busy making decisions that will affect the next four years of your life, there are still many things left for seniors to do.

• If you haven’t had any response from the schools you have applied to, check your account status on Parchment or with the university. If you still can’t determine if everything has been received then email or call the admissions offices to check on the status of your application. Make sure all pieces of information have been received. If you have won awards or done something noteworthy, let admissions offices know.
• Begin filling out financial aid applications. FAFSA forms are available online or in the Career Center in December. Do not submit your FAFSA until October 2019 (but before March 1, 2020). Begin your scholarship search.
• Remember that virtually all colleges require high schools to update student files with mid-year grade reports and final transcripts are sent immediately after graduation. If there is a dramatic change in grades, admissions personnel may decide to withdraw your acceptance or take you off a school’s wait list.

AND THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE
Once your application has been reviewed by a college or university admissions representative, a number of possible responses can be expected.

Congratulations or Acceptance
The thick (or sometime very thin) envelope and/or e-mail finally arrives. You are thrilled to have been accepted to your dream school. Fill out all forms and send in your deposit. If you received additional acceptance letters, you should decline other offers of admission so these colleges can extend offers to students who may be on their Wait List.

If you have been accepted by two or more of your top choices, if possible, visit the schools again before making your final choice. The perspective of a student who has been accepted is going to be different from the student who is just beginning the application process.

Wait List
Any selective college will have more applicants than spaces available in the freshman class. These colleges will admit more students than they are able to enroll. They know inevitably some students who are accepted will choose to attend other institutions. If a college
underestimates the number of students who will decline its offer of admission, spaces become available, and the college looks to the wait list of candidates in order to fill the vacancies.

Some colleges rank the students on the wait list. If a space becomes available, some admissions committees have predetermined the first person to fill the vacancy. Other colleges admit students based on their continued enthusiasm. If there are 50 students on the wait list and four vacancies arise, the committee might accept four applicants who have communicated that the college remains their first choice.

If you find yourself on a wait list, write a follow up letter. Write about your interest in the college and describe your accomplishments since you submitted your application. Most experts advise wait-listed students to play it safe and accept an offer from their second-choice school. If you end up with an offer from your first choice, you can always withdraw from choice two, although you will probably lose your deposit.

**VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS**
Most careers require specialized skills. A high school diploma is no longer sufficient, yet a college degree is not required. Among those fastest growing careers are those requiring two years of training or less after high school.

There are many ways to obtain the skills for these careers. Schools that specialize in career training are vocational and technical school, as well as community colleges. Generally, these schools all require a high school diploma.

How do you choose a vocational or technical school?

Write or visit three or more schools offering training in your chosen career. Be sure to get a catalogue to use in comparing the schools. Important comparisons to make are:

- State Licensing
- Courses
- Hands-on Training
- Accreditation
- Facilities and Equipment
- Cost
- Placement Assistance
- Apprenticeship Programs

The best way to check out a school is to visit it yourself.

Excellent resource for OAKLAND COUNTY APPRENTICESHIP information:

[https://www.oakgov.com/advantageoakland/workforce/Pages/Apprenticeships.aspx](https://www.oakgov.com/advantageoakland/workforce/Pages/Apprenticeships.aspx)
SCHOLARSHIPS
Legacy Scholarship Funds, Inc.  
(Formerly known as Central Scholarship Funds, Inc.)
Deadline for Applications is in Early January, 2020

You can access Legacy scholarships at: http://www.wlcasd.org/webpages/scholarships/

Scholarships are awarded to students based on their academic record, leadership ability, talents, racial or ethnic heritage, written essays, declared major, or need for financial assistance. Some sources of scholarship aid are your parents’ employers, labor unions, civic and religious organizations, professional associations, and other private groups. Since many scholarships are awarded by colleges, students should check the financial aid department of schools they are interested in attending for a separate listing of their scholarships. This office also administers various federal aid programs as well as any institutional funds that the school might have set aside for this purpose. Most of these scholarships can be found on each school’s website.

There are many scholarship websites that offer students the ability to search for scholarships that are tailor-made to fit their specific characteristics. Walled Lake School’s Career Cruising web-based career exploration and planning program is an excellent resource for research scholarships. In addition, Fastweb (www.fastweb.com) is one of the best known and most widely respected scholarship sites.

Walled Lake Western’s Counseling Office receives and publishes information on a variety of scholarships. A list of available scholarships is posted on the counseling website and updated every few weeks. Keep your counselor informed of your particular interest area or needs when searching for scholarship possibilities.

Remember the following points:
- Start early.
- Plan ahead if letters of recommendation or transcripts are required.
- Make sure you meet all eligibility requirements.
- Follow directions—provide only what is required.
- Neatness and spelling do count.
- Watch all deadlines.
- Be willing to compete.
- Be persistent and thorough.
- Go to the Counseling Office for updated lists every few weeks.
- Check scholarship and college websites.
- Apply for local scholarships, e.g., Walled Lake Schools Legacy Scholarships.
- Ensure that the writing/content reflect the caliber of student you are. Check for errors which will reflect poorly on you as a student.

FINANCING A COLLEGE EDUCATION

Financial aid is money that is given, earned, or lent to help students pay for their education. Financial aid often makes it possible for students to attend colleges they would have otherwise thought too expensive. Students and their parents should therefore never assume that they cannot afford a particular college or university.

There are basically four categories of financial aid:
1. Grants – money that is given to a student, usually because of financial need.
2. Scholarships – money that is awarded because of exceptional academic achievement, an outstanding talent or skill, and/or financial need.
3. Work-Study – money a student earns by working at a campus job, usually 10-15 hours a week.
4. Loans – borrowed money that must be repaid.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID

Eligibility for need-based financial aid programs is based on the cost of attending the college of your choice minus the amount that you and your family can reasonably afford.

- COLLEGE COSTS include tuition, fees, books, travel and estimated living expenses at the college of your choice.
- EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION is determined from the income, assets and other information that you and/or your family report on the confidential financial aid application. A nationally accepted needs analysis formula is used to assess the reasonable amount that you and/or your family will be able to pay. Financial setbacks, debts, and the number of family dependents are taken into account and increase your aid eligibility.
The amount of contribution expected from you and your family generally remains the same whether you go to an independent college, private college, or a public college. So the higher the cost of the college you choose, the higher your financial aid eligibility will be while your expected family contribution will remain basically the same.

Except for merit-based scholarships, financial aid is generally awarded on the basis of need. Financial need is the difference between the cost of the college and the amount a family can afford to pay. For example, if a college costs $15,000 per year and you can afford to pay $8,000, you have a financial need of $7,000. The greater the difference, the greater the need, the more you are eligible to receive.

COMPLETING THE NECESSARY FORMS

To receive need-based financial aid, you must complete and submit the necessary forms. If you are eligible for aid, the college’s financial aid office will put together a financial aid package for you.

The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is the federal form that should be filled out as soon as possible. The FAFSA will ask for information on your income, assets, family size, etc. This information is applied to a formula, and the amount you should be able to afford (your Estimated Family Contribution or EFC) is thereby determined. You can fill this form out online at: [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

About four to six weeks after you submit your FAFSA, you will receive your Student Aid Report (SAR). Your SAR will tell you the amount your family can afford to contribute to your college education.

Respond promptly to all requests for additional information and keep track of all deadlines in order to speed up the processing of your request for aid. Keep in touch with the people in college financial aid offices. They are the experts and the ones who will eventually package your financial awards. Don’t be afraid to ask questions.

Educate yourself on loans. If the college of your choice can’t provide you with enough gift aid and work aid to meet your full need, or your family can’t come up with the total expected contribution, you may be forced to borrow. Take the time to educate yourself about loans. Learn about interest rates and repayment schedules and other terms and conditions related to loans before you sign on the dotted line. Remember government sponsored loans usually have the lowest interest rates and most flexible repayment arrangement.

**FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIP WEB SITES**

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*Denotes ACT/SAT information
Please read instructions below before selecting the link to Parchment

The link provides you with the ability to request transcripts through Secure Transcript. Transcripts requested online are sent securely to the colleges, universities, or scholarship funds that you select. You may track your request online, and you will also receive an email notification when we approve your transcript request, and again when your transcript is mailed (or delivered electronically, based on the delivery preference of the destination that you selected).

I Already Have An Account With Docufide, Will My Username And Password Work On Parchment?

Yes, your Username will work but you will be asked to create a new password consisting of at least 6 characters and include at least 1 letter and 1 number.

How Do I Register For A Parchment Account?

If a student under 18 doesn’t have an email account unique to them (one can be set up through www.gmail.com, www.hotmail.com or mail.yahoo.com), a parent may set up a family account by selecting the button “Parent or Guardian.” Complete the registration form with parent information. Then, enter the required identifying information for your student. If you have additional minor children, you can add them once your Parchment account has been created by signing in, selecting “Preferences” (located in the upper right hand corner by your name—click on the arrow down to select), select “Parent Profile” and then “Add another child to your Parchment account.” You will then need to add the required identifying information for your additional child.

1) Click on “Sign up”
   ▶ High School Transcript

2) Register Your Account
   ▶ Enter your email address and confirm
   ▶ Select and answer two security questions
   ▶ Select whether you are a “Student” or “Parent”

3) Save and Continue

4) Your Information:
   ▶ Must provide last name, first name, gender, date of birth, current grade level, and year entering college
   ▶ Enter a name other than your real name under “User Name” as this name will be visible to ALL Parchment users

5) My Opt-In Preferences:
   ▶ Must answer “Yes” or “No” to the College Discover and Parchment Newsletter Options

6) Click on “I Agree to the Parchment Terms of Use and Student Agreement”

7) Click on “Save and Continue”

8) An email will be sent that contains a link to activate your Parchment account. If you do not see an email from Parchment.com, please check your spam folder for email from registration@parchment.com, as their emails are occasionally misidentified

9) Follow directions on the email to enter your new Parchment account
**How Do I Request a Transcript?**

Select the tab “My Transcripts”

1) Search for your school:
   - Enter Walled Lake Western (school name), Walled Lake (city) and MI (state) and click on **SEARCH**

2) Click on “Walled Lake Western High School” under Matching School

3) Click **Save and Continue**

4) Select “Currently Enrolled” or “Not Currently Enrolled”

5) Enter:
   - Years of attendance
   - First, Middle, and Last Name. SKIP student ID and SS#

6) FERPA Privacy Rights:
   - Select **Waive** or **Do Not Waive** rights to see any Secondary School Report and other Recommendation
   - Allow a variety of schools and scholarship organizations to access transcripts

7) **SAVE and CONTINUE**

8) Skip Parchment Registration Code

9) Sign your name with the cursor

10) Click on “I certify under penalty of law that I am the individual identified below and I am authorized to take this action”

11) Type name that is registered

12) Choose to keep clicked or unclick “I also authorize a copy of my transcript to be stored in my Parchment account where I will be able to view and manage this document, and can use it for various optional services”

13) **SAVE and CONTINUE** (To send a transcript, click on “Go to Step #1 below”)

**Sending Your Transcript to a College**

Select the tab “My Transcripts” and click on the “Deliver Latest Transcript” tab to send your transcript to any destination worldwide.

1) Enter State and name of college (if you need a transcript for scholarship purposes select “Show Other Institutions”)

2) Select the school

3) **Save and Continue** or **Save and Add Another** (if requesting more than one transcript at a time)

4) Double check that the delivery method is correct, and whether you want the current transcript or next grading period

5) **Save and Continue**

6) If prompted, enter credit card information (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, Diners Club, JTB) and submit.

**What is the difference between requesting my transcript into my Parchment account and delivering it to a college or other destination?**

The unofficial transcript posted to your Parchment account is yours to manage. You can store multiple versions of your transcript, view, print and share your transcript. When you need an official transcript delivered to a college or other destination, use the “My Transcripts” tab to initiate the order process.
NOTES: