

Early Decision · Waitlist · Acceptance ·
Recommendation · NCAA · Profile
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Torrington
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A Torrington High School Guidance Department Publication

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Dear Students and Parents,

This booklet is designed as a service to provide you with important information regarding the college process. The information contained here is critical if you are planning on attending a post-secondary institution of learning, whether it be a Community College, a technical program, a four year college, or a specialized school.

Included with the resources contained in the Torrington High School College Planning Guide are Torrington High School's application procedures, which we ask that you pay special attention to. We also offer a suggested timeline for juniors and seniors planning on furthering their education. This guide provides tips on navigating the college search in addition to sample questions that you may be asked and that you may ask during an admissions interview or while visiting a college campus. We hope that you take full advantage of the information and resources provided in this guide.

Please feel free to contact the Torrington High School Guidance Department if you have any questions or need any assistance. As always, this is an informative guide with general "must know" information for all students. Please do not hesitate to discuss your individual educational or vocational plans with your School Counselor.

Sincerely,

The THS School Counseling Department

What Types of Colleges Are There?

College

An institution that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level in a two-year or four-year program. Colleges grant undergraduate and some graduate degrees in a variety of fields. Pre-professional or professional training may be available but not stressed.

University

An academic institution which grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and which supports at least two degrees from professional schools that are not exclusively technological (such as medicine, journalism or agriculture). It is composed of a number of "schools" or "colleges," each encompassing a general field of study.

Community College

State supported two-year colleges offering programs as described below. These colleges commonly do not provide housing on campus.

Terminal Course: Academic program is complete in itself. Student who completes it may apply to a four-year college for further study without completing additional course requirements

Transfer Course: Academic program designed to lead into a four-year course at another college or university.

Engineering or Technical College

Independent professional schools that offer four-year degree programs in engineering or the physical sciences. These colleges are often referred to as Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes. Often, strong degree programs are also offered in other areas, including business or fine art.

Technical School/College

Public or private institutions that provide terminal occupation degrees intended to prepare students for immediate employment in fields related to engineering or to the physical sciences. These schools may also offer a one-year certificate programs in certain vocational areas.

Nursing School

There are three kinds of nursing schools:

Nursing schools associated with hospitals – Students receive a RN (Registered Nurse) degree upon completion of their training

Four-year College Nursing Program – Students receive both a Bachelors of Science degree along with a RN degree and have the opportunity of entering the field of nursing administration.

Two-year College Nursing Program – Students receive both an Associates degree and a RN degree.

Military Academy

Federal military academies prepare officers for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. West Point, Annapolis and the Air Force Academy require recommendation and appointment by members of Congress. The Coast Guard Academy uses a competitive application process. Private and state supported military institutes, however, operate on a college application basis. They all offer degree programs in engineering, technology and other majors with concentrations in various aspects of military science.

College Planning Timeline

Junior Year

Although college is two years away for juniors, there is still plenty to do! Your junior year is a busy time...

❖ Fall

- ❑ Attend college fairs and meet with college representatives who visit Torrington High School
- ❑ Request information and brochures from those colleges that interest you the most
- ❑ Take the PSAT in preparation for the SAT and for eligibility in the National Merit Scholarship Program
- ❑ Read! Read! Read! Expand your knowledge

❖ January to March

- ❑ Narrow your list of choice colleges and make plans to visit those colleges over April break or your summer vacation
- ❑ Make note of college spring open houses of which you are interested
- ❑ Select rigorous course program for senior year with your School Counselor
- ❑ Attend Junior Parents College Night at Torrington High School
- ❑ Begin looking at college entrance requirements
- ❑ Keep all information in a file

❖ April to June

- ❑ Take the SAT or ACT
- ❑ If SAT Subject Tests are required at the colleges that you are interested in, now would be a good time to take them as well
- ❑ Visit colleges during April break
- ❑ Review college guides
- ❑ Prepare preliminary list of colleges (10+ colleges)
- ❑ Attend Spring college fairs
- ❑ Take AP Tests in May
- ❑ Look for a summer job
- ❑ Meet with your School Counselor to get a head start on college decision in the Fall

❖ Summer

- ❑ Visit college campuses
- ❑ Narrow serious college choices (less than 10)
- ❑ Plan for final test dates for SAT, ACT or SAT Subject Tests if needed
- ❑ Begin working on College Essays
- ❑ If planning on participating in college athletics, register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Have your School Counselor send a six semester transcript directly to the Eligibility Center
- ❑ Get ready for senior year!

Senior Year

Your senior year is a time of filling out applications, filing for financial aid, and many other “to do’s” that you probably haven’t thought about yet. Remember to take it one step at a time and stay organized. !

❖ August to November

- ❑ Meet with College representatives who visit THS
- ❑ Attend college fall open houses
- ❑ Finalize your college list (5 or 6 schools) with deadlines noted!
- ❑ Register for and/or take the October, November, or December SAT or ACT
- ❑ Register for and/or take the October, November, or December SAT Subject Tests if needed
- ❑ Request applications or apply on-line
- ❑ Meet with your School Counselor to review THS application procedures and to discuss college options
- ❑ Request recommendations (at least 2 or 3) from teachers, activity leaders, coaches, clergy, etc...
- ❑ Early Decision and Early Action deadlines typically fall in November and December – pay attention to deadlines!

❖ By Thanksgiving

- ❑ Begin completing applications and admissions essays
- ❑ Request transcripts from the Guidance office
- ❑ Follow up on letters of recommendations
- ❑ Submit applications for Early Decision or Early Action, if applying

❖ December

- ❑ Take December SAT, ACT or SAT Subject Tests if needed
- ❑ Submit all school forms and transcript requests by December break
- ❑ Refine your admissions essay
- ❑ Obtain FAFSA and Profile pin numbers so you can apply on-line
- ❑ Obtain any other financial aid forms from colleges
- ❑ Search for scholarships in Guidance or on-line

❖ January to March

- ❑ Submit all applications and materials to colleges on your list
- ❑ Complete the FAFSA on-line as well as the Profile and other supplementary financial aid college forms
- ❑ Search for scholarships in Guidance or on-line
- ❑ Have mid-year reports mailed to colleges after first semester
- ❑ Obtain on-line or watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR)

❖ April to June

- ❑ Await notification of college acceptances
- ❑ Take AP exams in May
- ❑ Visit colleges that offer admissions
- ❑ Compare financial aid awards
- ❑ Accept offer of admission by May 1
- ❑ Arrange to send final transcript to your chosen college and any other information they have requested (student loan forms, etc...)

The College Search

Thinking about how to begin the college search is daunting and it requires organization and critical thinking from the start. After all, there are over 4000 colleges in the United States to critique and discover. However, if you've reflected on what you are truly seeking after in a college, you will be able to narrow down your choices in no time. We recommend that you start with a long list of ten to fifteen colleges that you may be interested in. By the time you actually apply to your college choices, you will have narrowed your list even more to around five or six. But how do you find out about colleges? The following information will guide you on your college search and help you find those colleges that can give you the education you are looking for.

❖ *College Search Engine*

There are many college search engines on-line that you can use to begin your college search. After entering all of the criteria that is most important to you in a college (size, location, majors, etc...) the search engine will display only those schools with the criteria that you specified. Then, research those schools that meet your specific criteria through their website and through other college publications available in the Torrington High School College and Career Center.

❖ *College Fairs*

College fairs provide an excellent opportunity to speak to many college representatives in a short period of time (usually two to three hours). College fairs are hosted by local high schools and colleges each Fall. See your School Counselor for a complete list of college fairs in the Torrington area. Be sure to do your homework ahead of time so that you can make the best use of your time while at the fair. Acquire a list of the colleges that will be in attendance and highlight those schools in which you are interested and would like to learn more about.

❖ *College Representatives*

Each Fall, college admission representatives from New England and beyond visit THS to speak to our students in small groups. Announcements of these visits are given each week and are posted on the Guidance bulletin boards outside of the Guidance Office. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the college representatives that will be visiting and to obtain a pass form their School Counselor or from the Guidance Secretary to attend. Be sure to check with the teacher of your class for any work that you may miss while attending the college representative visit or whether tests or work are scheduled that cannot be missed. Class requirements take precedence over college representative visits.

❖ *The College and Career Center*

Visit the College and Career Center for up-to-date directories, as well as college and career catalogues. There are also computer programs available to help you navigate the college search. These resources provide tools through which you can review necessary admissions requirements, programs, majors, etc...

❖ *The College Visit*

Plan to visit every school that you are planning to apply to. You may visit a college without an appointment, but it is recommended that you notify admissions in order to take full advantage of your college visit. Fall Open Houses are organized by the admissions office of most colleges for prospective students and their families to see all that a college has to offer. Typically, there is an information session and a campus tour and it is recommended that you attend both to get the best picture of the college. If the school that you are applying to requires an interview, you may be able to arrange that on the same day. Refer to the section "Making the Most of Your College Visit" for more information.

❖ *Career Cruising*

Career Cruising is a web-based guidance system that includes college search and exploration tools, as well as a database containing information about careers and colleges. *Career Cruising* assists students in thinking about their career goals, selecting a major, and searching for post-secondary schools. All students have an account and can access the program from anywhere!

Factors to Consider When Choosing a College

A great place to begin is by considering your career path. If you know what career you want to pursue, begin by researching majors that will lead you to that career. If you are unsure about your career interests, you can take a career interest inventory in the Torrington High School College and Career Center that will suggest some possible careers that match your interests. If you are still undecided, consider the following factors that are also very important in the college search:

- **Admissions Requirements** – This includes strength of academic record, SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests, and/or ACT scores, GPA and class rank. A general rule of thumb is to apply to schools that fall into the following categories:
 - ✓ “Reach” Schools – A school is a “reach” school if:
 - It’s admissions requirements are slightly above your academic profile and/or...
 - Financial Aid is a must.
 - ✓ “Target” School – A school is a “target” school if:
 - You meet most of it’s admissions criteria and/or...
 - Financial Aid package is adequate.
 - ✓ “Most Likely to Admit” School – A school is a “Most Likely to Admit” school if:
 - You clearly meet all of it’s admissions criteria and/or...
 - It is affordable
- **Location** – How far from home do you want to be?
- **Cost** – Tuition and Room & Board is a big factor for a family to consider. Costs can range from \$2,000 to over \$40,000 per year. Consider different and affordable options, but never rule out a school based solely on cost you have applied for and received financial aid.
- **Majors** – This refers to a major of study and is also a way to ensure that a college offers courses in an area that you are interested in.
- **Size and Setting** – Do you want a large school or a smaller school? Would you rather be in a big city or a small town? One way to determine your preference is to visit schools of different size and setting to determine which “feels” right.
- **Activities** – Consider what clubs, organization, musical group, athletics, etc... are offered.
- **Diversity** – Spend some time people watching while on a college visit. Is there racial, ethnic and gender diversity?
- **Religious Affiliation** – Many colleges are religiously affiliated. Would you prefer to attend a college that identifies with your own religious viewpoints?
- **Career Services** – Ask for data on graduate employment and resources to assist students.

Taking into consideration all of these factors will take some time and much reflection, but the effort will pay off in selecting a school that is a good match for you. !

Making the Most of Your College Visit

Visiting a college is the single most important thing you can do before deciding to apply or attend a specific college. The value is in providing a first-hand impression for you and your family: about it's people, programs, and facilities for living and learning. Most colleges will encourage prospective students to visit, so it is important to truly make the most of the experience.

You can learn a great deal about an institution by being on the campus and speaking about your plans with admissions officers. Your presence on the campus – your readiness to talk about yourself and your college plans and to seek out information – is an important indication of your interest in that particular school and can play an important role in your acceptance.

Before you Visit:

- *Call Admissions.* Be sure to schedule a college visit through the Admissions Office. By doing this, you may be able to tailor a college visit that is unique to your interests. For example, sit in on a class in your prospective major, meet the coach of your sport or visit on the day of the String Orchestra's recital.
- *Know why you are interested in that particular college.* Re-read college catalogues (or go on-line) to review the college's admission requirements, tuition and scholarship information, and programs of study.
- *Know yourself.* Look back over your high school record (bring a copy of your transcript with you) so you can answer general questions about your academic performance in high school. Also review your scores on standardized tests, such as the PSAT, SAT or ACT.

While on your Visit:

- *Allow yourself enough time.* A two hour visit should give you ample time for an extensive tour of the campus and to meet with admissions officers.
- *Keep Notes.* Jot down your impressions of the school, students and facilities.
- *Be Prompt.* Remember, the admissions staff are the ones who make decisions about you does and does not attend their school. Promptness makes a good impression.
- *Get Forms.* Pick up an application form, scholarship forms and a campus map.
- *Meet with a Financial Aid Officer.* Don't hesitate to meet directly with a financial aid officer to discuss your family's unique financial situation. Gather information regarding scholarships, loans and work opportunities. Be sure to make these appointments in advance as well.
- *Be Real.* Don't be afraid to be yourself while visiting and meeting with Admissions counselors. Feel free to ask for an estimate of your chances for admissions – but don't expect any firm commitment at this time.

Campus Tour 'MUST SEE' List:

- The College Library
- Academic Facilities (especially for your prospective major)
- Living Quarters (Freshmen housing)
- Dining Hall
- Athletic Facilities and Fields
- Career Office

Note to Parents

Should you accompany your student on their college visit? This is up to you. Parents are often interested in seeing their sons' and daughters' perspective colleges, especially since usually most of the financial burden will be on you! Colleges welcome parents – however when they interview a prospective student, they would like to have some alone time with the candidate and then invite the parent in for a further word if they wish. Remember to let your son or daughter lead the way. Have them call the admissions office to schedule a visit, let them pick out which buildings to highlight on their tour. It is their future and we want to show them how to make it their own.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN EVALUATING A COLLEGE

1. What are the admissions requirements? Have I met them?
2. What percent of students who apply are accepted?
3. What is the present cost for tuition, room and board, fees, and books?
4. What is their financial aid policy?
5. What percentage of freshmen receive financial aid?
6. What is the average class size for freshmen?
7. What is the student/teacher ratio?
8. Does it have my potential majors?
9. What are their housing arrangements? Is it guaranteed?
10. What happens on the weekends? What percentage of students stay on campus over the weekend?
11. Approximately how much does the average student study during the week?
12. Campus safety? Check www.ope.ed.gov/security for statistics.
13. What percentage of entering students stay for four years?
14. What career/advising services are available and when do they begin?
15. What makes their institution different from others?
16. What percentage graduate within 4 or 5 years?
17. What is the job placement rate for graduates?

The Interview

Another important aspect of the college visit is the admissions interview. Colleges *may* require an interview of their applicants, or you may request an interview if you feel as though there are circumstances about your high school career or personal situations that you would like to bring to light in person. The following pages contain several interview questions that you may be asked and also that you may consider asking while in an interview or on a college tour. Remember to be respectful, be prepared, and most importantly *be yourself*. **Send a thank you note!**

SOME QUESTIONS A STUDENT MAY ASK DURING A COLLEGE INTERVIEW

1. Can I choose the dormitory I prefer? Are the dorms co-ed or single sex? If co-ed, are they by floor or by rooms? Can I select my roommate for freshman year?
2. What is the average class size for freshmen? What is the largest class size and how many classes can I expect to have that large?
3. Is the library open every day? Is it open 24 hrs/day during exam week?
4. Does the cafeteria serve meals seven days a week? What kind of meal plans are there?
5. Do most students remain on campus on the weekends?
6. How do I get to participate in _____?
7. What facilities are available for transportation home?
8. What are the career and job placement services?
9. Does your school have a placement service? How many people in my program are placed yearly?
10. What percentage of people applying to graduate school are admitted?
11. Are there ample opportunities on campus to earn money?
12. What kind of academic support is available?
13. What is the availability of computers for student use on campus?

SOME QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED DURING A COLLEGE INTERVIEW

1. Did you enjoy your four years in high school?
2. Do you feel you have done the best scholastic work of which you are capable?
3. What courses did you like best? Least? Why?
4. Which of your high school years or subjects were the most difficult?
5. In what school activities have you participated? Which did you enjoy the most?
6. Do you think your extracurricular activities were worth the time you devoted to them? Why?
7. How did you spend your vacations while in school?
8. How have you been involved in your community?
9. What will you bring to our school?
10. What interests you about our institution?
11. In what major are you most interested? Why?
12. Do you have plans for graduate work?
13. Tell me about yourself.
14. What are your own special abilities?
15. What is your major strength? Weakness?
16. What types of books have you read?
17. How do you use your spare time? What do you do on weekends?
18. What's the most significant activity in which you've participated?
19. What's the most significant activity in which you've participated?
20. What's the most significant activity in which you've participated?
21. What jobs have you held? How were they obtained and why did you leave?

What Do Colleges Look For?

The one thing that you can be sure of in the college admission process is that no two colleges are the same. Each school has their own unique perspective on how to choose an incoming freshmen class. Some will primarily look at test scores and a student's GPA, while others will place more emphasis on extracurricular activities and finding that "diamond in the rough" applicant. However, colleges will usually place the most emphasis on these four main components of a student's profile: Course load/ academic rigor, college admissions testing, activities, and the essay.

Course Load/Academic Rigor

Course load refers to the type and level of classes a student took in high school. It is important that a student always takes courses that are challenging for them. This does not mean that a schedule need be jam packed with Advanced Placement courses, but rather that you are consistently challenging yourself and not settling for the easy grade. Colleges will review your courses for those that made you think and work hard. The strength of your academic record is primarily reflected in your GPA (Grade Point Average), which is an average of all of the grades you have received in all classes throughout high school. The strength of your academic record is also reflected through class rank, which is where your GPA stands compared to other students in your graduating class. Even if your grades, (and therefore your GPA), are not perfect, colleges will consider your application more favorably if you took more rigorous rather than "easy," classes. One's high school academic record is the BEST predictor of how one will do academically at the college level – it is usually the most important component of a student's application.

College Admissions Testing

Most four-year schools require their applicants to take the SAT or ACT. Colleges will often provide average scores from the SAT and ACT for either their entire student body or for their last incoming freshmen class. As part of your college search, be sure to note this average range – this will give you an indication as to what specific colleges are looking for in terms of test scores. Some colleges rely heavily on college admission testing and may even have a minimum score required of their applicants. Others may simply consider test scores but may not give much weight to them. A list of the colleges that do not require admissions tests is available on www.fairtest.org.

Activities

Besides your transcript, extracurricular activities(school and community) say the most about what kind of dedication and interests you might bring to a college campus. Activities include any type of extracurricular commitments, including sports, clubs, drama, music, church involvement, or volunteer work. College admission representatives will often say that the quality of extracurricular activities is much more important than the quantity. They look for applicants who have sought to be involved in something that they care about and have devoted significant time to. Colleges are not necessarily looking for applicants who may have stretched themselves too far in order to be involved in 10 different activities for the sake of having something to write about on college applications. Though activities can improve your chances of being admitted and for scholarships, it must be said that they is no substitute for a strong academic record.

College Essay

The College essay is the only aspect of the college application where a student can truly express themselves in any way that they choose. College admissions representatives state that the essay “gives a window into the life and mind of the applicant.” One can demonstrate their creativity, their writing style, and more about the person and student they are. Normally, the essay will request to know about some meaningful experience or your life goals. Other times, the essay will request nothing and will leave the thinking completely up to you. Either way, it is an important glimpse into the changes, maturity and special circumstances that have made you who you are today. If one’s academic record is not as strong as it could be, the essay is a great place to explain those circumstances that may have affected one’s academics and the changes one has made to be successful in school and beyond. Remember to edit your essays for typos and correct grammar usage. Have your parents or an English teacher read it over and give suggestions. Be sure, however, to not edit out your own unique voice and perspective – for that is the most important component of the college essay.

Other Criteria

While the above four components normally tell the college a lot about who an applicant is both academically and personally, there are several other factors that colleges consider throughout the admission process. Most notably are an applicant’s recommendations and the personal interview.

Recommendations

Colleges may require academic recommendations from teachers and counselors. Some may require non-academic recommendations from vocal teachers, clergy, coaches, employers, etc.. Recommendations give colleges a source of information about an applicant, outside of the student themselves. Teacher recommendations touch upon an applicant’s classroom work ethic, ability to work with others, quality of work and assignments and interpersonal relationships with classmates. Counselor recommendations speak to a student’s overall academic and personal experience, with note to any special circumstances that may have affected a student’s transcript or academic progress (i.e. a death in the family, moving to a new school, learning difficulties, etc...). Recommendations are an integral piece of acquiring the holistic view of an applicant.

Personal Interview

Some colleges may *require* a personal interview while others may grant interviews at the request of the applicant. Colleges that do not require an interview may request one after reviewing an applicant’s application in order to get a better feel for who a student is. Often times, the student themselves may request an interview if they feel as though their application does not speak strongly as to their potential and ability. The personal interview is a time when the applicant can “cover new ground” and where the interviewer can ask questions that are not already on the application. Included in this guide is a list of possible interview questions as well as questions to bring to an interview, or to ask on the college visit.

College Admissions Tests

SAT

The SAT is a reasoning test consisting of three parts – Critical Reasoning, Math and Writing. All components are mandatory. Each section is worth 200-800 points, combined for a score between 600-2400. Torrington student's scores are compared with other college bound students nationally. It is recommended that all college-bound Torrington students take the SAT (and/or the ACT) twice, once during the spring (May or June) of their junior year, and again during the fall (October) of their senior year. **The SAT is undergoing changes and will be redesigned in the spring of 2016.**

ACT

The ACT measures knowledge bases that are acquired in the educational process: math, science reasoning, reading, English and writing. While the first four components are mandatory, the writing component is optional. Each section is worth 36 points, however the writing section is worth 12. It is recommended that Torrington High School students take the ACT (and/or the SAT) in the spring of their junior year and in the fall of their senior year. Most colleges will accept either ACT test scores or SAT test scores for admissions purposes. **Some colleges will even accept the ACT in lieu of SAT Subject Tests.**

SAT Subject Tests

SAT Subject Tests are required by some colleges in order to demonstrate an applicant's proficiency in specific subjects. Unlike the SAT, these tests are one hour in length and measure knowledge and application of knowledge. The SAT Subject Tests are often taken at the end of the junior year and possibly up until the mid-point of the senior year. These tests are administered in a variety of academic subjects, including writing, literature, history, math, science and several foreign languages. Students need to check the admissions criteria of colleges to which they are applying to see if SAT Subject Tests are required.

Only after you know exactly which colleges you will be applying to will you know precisely which SAT Subject Tests you will need to take, if any at all. Some colleges may require one, two or even three Subject Test scores. Normally, a college will require Subject Tests in two or three *different* areas. In order to avoid any last minute trouble regarding Subject tests, especially if you do not know what colleges you are going to apply to, you can surmise which tests will be necessary based on what *kind* of colleges you may apply to. For example, an engineering college will most likely require either one test in Physics or Chemistry and a second test in Level 3 Math or Level 2 Math. If you will be applying to a Liberal Arts college, they may specify a Foreign Language Subject Test (of your choice) as a requirement. Most colleges are willing to be flexible in their Subject Test requirements as long as you contact them ahead of time and explain any circumstances that are beyond your control.

Fee Waivers are available for students who are on free or reduced lunch. See your counselor!

Note: The SAT and the SAT Subject Tests may not be taken together on the same date, so please plan accordingly. Therefore, you might take the SAT in October or November and take the Subject Tests in November, December or January.

How to register for College Admissions Tests

SAT and ACT information is available in the Guidance Office, or you may access registration information on-line at www.collegeboard.org (SAT) or www.actstudent.org (ACT).

The Student Descriptive Questionnaire

When registering for the SAT, you will be prompted to complete the Student Descriptive Questionnaire (SDQ) which the College Board hopes you will fill out wholly or in part. If you complete the form, the information you provide will be sent to the colleges to which you have requested to have your test scores sent. The SDQ includes questions regarding personal characteristics, extracurricular activities, socio-economic status and your academic record as report by you among other questions. Colleges will vary widely as to the degree to which they consider the information provided by the SDQ. See you School Counselor if you need assistance in deciding whether or not to complete the SDQ.

Note: One item on the SDQ authorizes the College Board to send your name, address and other personal information to colleges using the Student Search Service. You may, as a result of completing the questionnaire, receive mail from colleges – LOTS OF MAIL! Be aware that colleges are sending you information based on the information and authorization you provided on the SDQ.

CEEB CODE NUMBER

Be sure to register for the SAT or ACT with Torrington High School's CEEB (College Entrance Examination Board) code:

070795

Resources on the Web

College Sites

www.collegeboard.org - One stop shopping for college planning. You can register for the SAT, search for colleges, and scholarships that meet your criteria.

www.careercruising.com – Web-based career and college exploration program. All students have an account! Career matchmaker (interest inventory) and information on careers, colleges and technical training programs.

www.petersons.com - Test preparation, college and scholarship searches, as well as advice on college visits. There are sections on specialized schools such as nursing, culinary arts and visual and performing arts.

www.ctmentor.org - Information and applications for college search, tours, comparisons, costs, etc.

www.imfirst.org – Website for first generation college going students.

www.knowhow2go.org - Information and timelines for high school students and parents, including college success stories, questions and answers and planning tools.

www.mappingyourfuture.org – Online career exploration.

www.allaboutcollege.com – Links to thousands of colleges and universities around the world.

www.campustours.com – Virtual campus tours that provide students with their first glimpse of a college.

www.bls.gov/oco/ - Source for career information designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives.

www.ctdol.state.ct.us - Connecticut Department of Labor. Search the online local job bank plus news and information on events, agency divisions, workshops and local job fairs.

www.usnews.com – In addition to ranking colleges, this site has a detailed school directory, interactive tools, a step-by-step admissions guide, articles and more!

www.fairtest.org – Maintains a list of colleges that are test optional.

College Admissions Test Sites

www.collegeboard.org - Information regarding the PSAT, SAT and AP Exams as well as on-line SAT registration.

www.actstudent.org - Information regarding the ACT and on-line ACT registration

www.acculacer.org – Information and practice for the Accuplacer Test (used by Community Colleges and some state colleges).

Financial Aid Sites

www.fafsa.ed.gov - The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is required of all applicants for college financial aid. This site answers frequently asked questions, allows users to file the FAFSA online, or check the status of a previously submitted FAFSA.

profileonline.collegeboard.com - This site provides information on completing the CSS Profile.

www.studentaid.ed.gov - Good and accurate that's always up to date.

www.fastweb.com - Largest online database for scholarships. Also provides excellent information on all aspects of the college process.

www.questbridge.com – For low income, high achieving students

www.salliemae.com – Provide funds for educational loans, primarily federally guaranteed student loans originated under the Federal Family Education Loan Program.

www.ct4adream.org – College information and resources for students who are undocumented.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS CHECKLIST

Name of College									
College Address									
Application	On-Line			On-Line			On-Line		
	Paper			Paper			Paper		
Application Deadline									
Required Tests	Registration Deadline		Test Date	Registration Deadline		Test Date	Registration Deadline		Test Date
SAT									
ACT									
SAT Subj. Tests									
Interview Required	Requested		Date	Requested		Date	Requested		Date
Recommendations Requested	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name	Name
Recommendations Complete									
Transcript Request Form Filed									
Application Complete									
Financial Aid Deadline									
Financial Aid Forms	FAFSA	CSS	Other	FAFSA	CSS	Other	FAFSA	CSS	Other

STUDENT BRAG SHEET

Please note: **THIS FORM IS FOR COUNSELOR USE ONLY**

Name of Student: _____

The following information is needed by your counselor to write an effective recommendation for schools and colleges. Before you write, take a moment to review the questions and make an honest self-assessment. Be truthful and concise. **This form must be returned to your counselor at least 10 school days prior to requesting a recommendation letter.** Use additional pages if necessary.

1. List 6 adjectives which describe you and (briefly) why?
2. Do you think your transcript accurately reflects your academic abilities and accomplishments?
3. Are there any circumstances in your life that might have had a negative effect on your grades?
4. What would you change about your high school career?
5. What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?
6. What extracurricular activity has been most important to you? Why?
7. What job experience has been particularly meaningful? Why?
8. Have you formulated a career choice or college major at this time? If so, what is it?
9. If you were to put a quotation about you in the yearbook, what would it say?
10. What is the best advice you have ever received?

**PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION**
Please note: THIS FORM IS FOR COUNSELOR USE ONLY

Name of Student: _____

11. What do you consider the outstanding accomplishments of your senior student during the past three or four years? Why did you select these as most important?

12. In what areas has your senior student shown most development and growth during the past three or four years?

13. If you had to describe your son/daughter in five adjectives, what would they be? Why would you choose these adjectives? Please be specific.

14. Are there any unusual circumstances, which have affected your senior's educational experiences or personal experiences?

Parent Signature _____

Gentle Reminders from College Admissions Counselors

1. Always fill out the grid for classes or activities on your college applications. DO NOT simply write "Please see Attached." Admissions counselors suggest filling out the grid and attaching a resume that explains the activities or that goes more in depth (Two pages at most!)
2. The essay is important!! It is what sets applicants apart. Over-editing is obvious. The immaturity that comes across is sometimes the most endearing quality of the essay – don't over-edit it out!
3. Legacy and development is not as influential as it once was. When a school's admissions rate is 9%-12%, it is unlikely that legacy will play a major role in an applicant's admission. If admissions counselors are on the fence about a student, legacy might push them over the edge
4. All admissions counselors say that they have received anonymous tips about their applicants and that they do investigate those tips. Students are encouraged to be honest about disciplinary action and to discuss the incident(s) and what they have learned from it with an admissions counselor. Be honest, because getting caught in a lie is not going to reflect well!
5. Students should obtain a proper email address, twitter and Facebook accounts. Admissions counselors suggest that students create an email account (for free through hotmail, yahoo or gmail) JUST for correspondence with colleges. Counselors also suggest setting online profiles to 'private' on twitter or Facebook. Admission counselors do check!!

Glossary of Terms

There are many terms used to describe college admissions procedures, policies, programs and financial aid. The definitions that follow will give you a general idea of some of the most commonly used terms. It is recommended that you read college catalogues and investigate colleges online to get a better and more up-to-date idea of what colleges are expecting from their applicants, as well as their application procedures.

ACT

A four hour exam designed to measure five knowledge bases: math, science reasoning, reading, English and writing. While the first four components are mandatory, the writing component is optional. Each section is worth 36 points, however the writing section is worth 12. A student receives a composite score out of 36, which is an average of the four mandatory components. The writing component is not averaged into the composite score, but rather is combined with the English section to create a completely different score out of 36. It is recommended that students take either the ACT and/or the SAT in the spring of their junior year and in the fall of their senior year. All colleges will accept either ACT test scores or SAT test scores for admissions purposes. Some colleges will even accept the ACT in lieu of SAT Subject Tests. Fee waivers are available for students on free or reduced lunch and other special circumstances. See your counselor.

Advanced Placement Program

A service of the College Entrance Exam Board that provides high schools course descriptions in college subjects and Advanced Placement (AP) Exams in those subjects. High schools administer the AP Exams to qualified students during the Spring semester. Several colleges and universities offer Advanced Placement credit or college credit to students who have obtained a certain score on the AP Exams (usually a score of 3 or higher out of 5).

Associates Degree

A degree given to a student who has completed a college program typically of at least two years, but not more than four years, of study. Associates degree programs are commonly found at junior colleges or community colleges.

Bachelors Degree

A degree that typically requires four years of undergraduate study.

Calendar

The system by which an institution divides its year into shorter periods of instruction and awarding credit. The three most common calendars are described below:

Semester – A period of about 17 or 18 weeks making up half of the academic year.

Trimester – A period of about 15 weeks making up a third of the academic year. Normally, a student makes academic progress by attending two of the trimesters each year, however student may have the opportunity to accelerate their program by attending classes during all three trimesters in one or more years.

Quarter – A period of about 11 weeks, four of which comprise an academic year.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA)

Participating colleges will not require applicants offered admission as a freshman to notify it of their decision to attend (or to accept an offer of financial aid) before May 1. The purpose of this agreement is to give applicants time to hear from all colleges applied to before having to make a commitment to any one of them.

Class Rank

A student's position in their graduating class determined by their GPA (Grade Point Average). Class Rank is reported as a specific number (79 out of 339). Colleges use this information as an important part of their admissions criteria.

Common Application

An undergraduate college application that is accepted at many member colleges and universities. The Common Application streamlines the college application process by applying "common" information, as well as transcripts and recommendations, for several colleges at one time. Some colleges may require a Common Application supplement in addition to the Common Application itself, so be sure to make note of all required admissions forms for the colleges to which you are applying.

CSS Financial Aid Profile

A supplementary form to the FAFSA, required by some private colleges to gain additional information before awarding financial aid.

Early Decision (ED)

Early Decision plans are offered for applicants who are sure of the college they want to attend and who are likely to be admitted to that college. Students who apply Early Decision to a college will be notified of admission earlier than the usual notification schedule – usually December or January of his/her senior year. If not accepted, a student is sometimes reconsidered for admission during the regular admissions period, but not always. A student may not apply to more than one

college through the Early Decision plan. Early Decision is a binding agreement between an applicant and the college and if accepted must withdraw any other applications to other schools. Applicants are considered for admission based on their junior year test scores (or senior year October test scores), class rank, grades and involvement in extracurricular activities.

Early Action (EA)

Early Action may follow the same application/notification time schedule as Early Decision, but usually allows a student until May 1st to accept or decline the offer of admission. Early Action is also typically non-binding, meaning that if a student is admitted through the Early Action plan, they are not required to withdraw applications submitted to other colleges and may choose to decline the offer of admission. If your junior year credentials are not truly superior, you must be careful about applying under a plan that could harm your chance for admission.

Note: Under Early Decision/Early Action programs, it is possible for an application to be denied admission outright and not automatically deferred for later consideration. There are several variations of Early Decision and Early Action plans at different colleges. Read the literature of each college carefully and ask questions if you do not understand the program entirely.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

A financial information collection document of the U.S. Department of Education used by parents of dependent students to supply information about their income, assets, expenses, and liabilities. There are sections for both student and parent information. The agency uses this information in determining how much money a family is expected to contribute to a student's college expenses before need-based financial aid may be provided. This document is filed in January in order to be eligible for the next school year. A FAFSA must be filed to be eligible for financial aid from nearly all colleges. Some colleges also require a CSS Profile and/or their own financial aid supplemental application before aid will be awarded.

The Profile

See CSS/Financial Aid Profile

Rolling Admissions

The practice of a college to consider a student's application as soon as all required credentials such as school record, and test scores have been received and to notify him/her of it's decision without delay. Colleges that follow this process will make and announce their admissions decisions continually over several months, contrast to the practice of other colleges to accumulate their applications until later in the year and announce their decisions at the same time.

SAT

The SAT is a four hour exam designed to measure Math, Critical Reading and Writing. Each section is worth 200-800 points, combined for a score between 600-2400. Torrington student's scores are compared with other college bound students nationally. It is recommended that all college-bound Torrington students take the ACT and/or the SAT twice, once during the spring (May or June) of their junior year, and again during the fall (October) of their senior year. Junior SAT scores are an important tool that counselors use to advise students regarding their preliminary college choices. In addition, they are a vital part of the student's credentials in most college's admissions process. **The SAT is undergoing changes and will be redesigned in the spring of 2016.**

SAT Subject Tests

The SAT Subject Tests are often taken at the end of the junior year and possibly up until the mid-point of the senior year. These tests are administered in a variety of academic subjects. Many colleges which require the SAT Subject Tests use the scores for placement in various levels of freshmen courses and some for the admission decision process. Students need to check the admissions criteria of colleges to which they are applying to see if SAT Subject Tests are required.

Transcript

The record of a student's high school courses from their freshmen to senior year. All courses taken and the grade and credit received are listed. GPA (Grade Point Average) and Class Rank(starting in senior year) are also listed on the transcript.

Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities in the College Admissions Process

You have the right:

- ❖ To receive factual and comprehensive information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial costs, aid opportunities, practices and packaging policies, and housing policies. Prior to applying for early admission, you have the right to complete information from the college about its practices and policies.
- ❖ To be free from high pressure sales tactics.
- ❖ To defer responding to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until you have heard from all colleges and universities to which you have applied or until May 1 (whichever is earlier). This does not apply to Early Decision.
- ❖ Should you be denied these rights:
 - Immediately request the college/university to extend the reply date.
 - Notify your counselor and ask him/her to notify the President of the State or Regional Association of College Admissions Counselors.
 - For additional assistance, contact:

National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC)
1050 North Highland St. Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22201
(703) 836-2222
Fax (703) 243-9375
www.nacacnet.org

You have the responsibility:

- ❖ To research and understand and comply with the policies (deadlines, restrictions, etc...) and procedures regarding admissions and financial aid of colleges and universities of your choice.
- ❖ To complete and submit required material to colleges and universities
- ❖ To meet all application deadlines
- ❖ To follow college application procedures for you high school
- ❖ To notify colleges and universities which have offered you admission of your acceptance or rejection of those offers as soon as you have heard from all to which you have applied or by May 1, whichever is earlier.