

MCNEAL SAMS COLLEGE CONSULTING

NEWS AND NOTES

SUMMER CHECKLIST



- REQUEST:** Be sure to request a copy of your unofficial transcript with your grades. Share that copy with your college consultant, too.
- REFLECT:** We encourage you to take some time to reflect on the school year you just completed. What did you accomplish? What did you learn about yourself? What are your strengths? What are your challenges? Create a folder to keep projects, art work, or assignments of which you are particularly proud. Share your thoughts and works with your college consultant.
- RELAX.** You just ended a challenging year. Make sure you plan to relax and refresh a little this summer!

A LITTLE ADVICE AS BOTH THE WEATHER AND YOUR JOURNEY HEAT UP...

If you have children who plan to go to college, you've experienced that moment when a conversation somehow ends up on some tricky topics: test scores, GPA's, college lists, visits to campus. "How many advanced courses is Janie taking next year? Robbie can't decide whether to take four AP's or five..." "Have you scheduled your campus tours yet? Better hurry, they fill up fast..." Sadie has a 4.5 GPA but she got an A- freshman year and now we're worried she won't be valedictorian..." And on and on—until your stomach is in a knot and you want to boycott the entire process and you might just move your family off the grid where no one asks about ACT scores.

When cocktail chatter turns college admissions, don't panic. Yes, there are some competitive souls out there. But for the most part, people bring up the topic because it's so stressful. Will it all work out? What if your child is still deciding on a major? And who in heaven's name set those outrageous tuition prices? When adults get together, the tension is so electric that if you lit a match, the room might explode.

Sometimes we talk (or perhaps over-share) on these subjects because we hope to diffuse our own anxiety. If the choices we are helping our children to make match someone else's, perhaps we've got it right after all. But most of the time, such thinking-out-loud does little more than up the ante.

If you want to lessen your applicaton-related stress, we've got a few suggestions.

- Your children are watching! Treat the topic with sensitivity and courtesy. The decisions that make sense for your high school senior may not be the best for someone else's, and that's just fine.
- If someone reels off their daughter's college list and clearly wants you to reciprocate, change the subject. The Cardinals! The humidity! That irritating slowdown on Highway 40 right before Big Bend, or your local equivalent! There are dozens of safe options.
- Breathe. It *will* work out. With more than 2800 four-year colleges in the US alone, there is a place for everyone. Celebrate having higher education as an option in the first place, because it's a blessing. And remember that it's not so much what we have, as it is what we do with what we have.

Life is tough enough already. Be good to each other.

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TALK AROUND TOWN

As [this blog post](#) from [ArborBridge](#) suggests, reading is one of the most effective tools for becoming a more successful test taker and a more successful student.

To help you get started, here's some interesting lists that offer suggestions. There are all genres, and

[12 Best Books for College Students to Read in 2023](#)

[Top 10 Books Every College Student Should Read](#)

[101 Great Books Recommended for the College Bound](#)

KINDNESS CORNER - BE HAPPY: TEND TO YOUR RELATIONSHIPS THIS SUMMER

[The Harvard Study on Adult Development](#) found the number one factor leading to happiness is having healthy social relationships. According to Dr. Robert Waldinger, director of the study, "The surprising finding is that our relationships and how happy we are in our relationships has a powerful influence on our health. Taking care of your body is important, but tending to your relationships is a form of self-care too."

So, while working, volunteering, traveling, and catching up on your sleep this summer, don't forget to nurture your relationships too. Spend time with your family, hang out with your friends. Find some happiness.



FOCUS FEATURE: KEEPING TRACK OF ALL YOU DO

Most college applications afford you few opportunities to reflect who you are and what you will contribute to the college community. One of the key elements of an application that give you the chance to say "this is me" is the activity listing.

An activity listing is your opportunity to show what matters to you, what you have learned about yourself, and how you have contributed to your school, home, and wider community by detailing how you spend your time beyond the classroom. Athletics, service, the arts, student government, work, hobbies, the possible ways you spend your time are endless. By the time you are working on your actual application, it can be difficult to remember everything you have participated in during high school and the recognition you have received for that work.

We encourage you to begin to make a list now. We have even created a form to help you make this list. So, on some rainy day this summer take a moment to fill in this [Activity and Awards Listing Worksheet](#).

Just download the sheet, complete it, and share it with your college consultant. Eventually, your consultant will help you transform the listing into an important component of your college application. For now, let's just keep track of everything in one place.