

What Colleges Look For in High School Students

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

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

1 A rigorous high school curriculum that challenges the student and may include AP or IB classes.

2 High grade point average in major subjects. However, slightly lower grades in a rigorous program are preferred to all A's in less challenging coursework.

3 High scores on standardized tests (ACT, SAT). These should be consistent with high school performance.

4 A well-written essay that emphasizes insight into the student's unique personality.

5 Passionate involvement in a few activities that are meaningful, inside or outside of school.

6 Strong counselor/teacher recommendations that provide personalized references.

7 Ability to pay. As state budgets tighten and the costs at colleges rise, some admission offices are increasingly favoring those students who can contribute to the school's bottom line.



(continued on reverse)

(continued from side 1)

8 Leadership inside or outside of school. Depth, rather than breadth, of leadership is valued.

10 Intellectual curiosity exhibited through reading, research, and extracurricular pursuits.



12 Student's character and values are seen as conducive to being a good community member.

13 Demonstrated interest and enthusiasm in attending (through campus visits, etc.)

9 Demographic and personal characteristics that contribute to a diverse and interesting student body.

11 Special talents that could contribute to campus life.



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