Planning for College:
Strategies for 11th and 12th graders

Montgomery County Public Schools
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Finding the right fit: Planning comes first

How well do you know yourself:

Who am I? People, places, things that matter

Where Am I Going? What do I want to accomplish? : Goals, priorities

How will I get there? Readiness: College, vocational, work-majors
Learn to “tell your story”

Colleges and Employers will make decisions based on the sum of the student; factors in your control and some that are not

Courses you select, rigor, grades

Testing

Athletics, Activities, Service, Work

Learn to talk about all of it- on paper and in person
The best college is a good fit

Look for a program to match your interests and needs (majors, internships)

One that provides a style of instruction that matches the way you learn (class size, faculty availability)

One that provides a level of academic rigor that matches your aptitude and preparation (challenging but not stressful, offers room to grow, time for fun)
Fit isn’t just about numbers

Look for a college that offers a community and campus culture that feels like home (shares your values, distance from home, size, location, setting)

One that VALUES YOU for what you do well
Tips for a successful search

Use websites and books as guides; use rankings with great care

Visit, visit, visit

Use the people around you as resources

Examine outcomes and affordability

Own the process
Resources


Finding Your College Fit [https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-find-your-college-fit]

College Data: College Match [http://www.collegedata.com/cs/search/college/college_search_tmpl.jhtml]

Unigo: College Match [https://www.unigo.com/college-match]

College Confidential SuperMatch [http://www.collegeconfidential.com/college_search/]

Big Future: Finding your college fit [https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-find-your-college-fit]

Questions for the panel (Course Selection)

How does course selection impact college planning?

How many Honors and AP Classes are enough?

Talk about balance. Are the number of AP’s going to get a student into a most selective college without the testing to match?

Is it better to take more rigorous courses and risk the grade or take an easier schedule?
Questions for the panel (Testing)

What does it mean to be Test Optional? How does a college that is Test Optional evaluate its applicants? How many test optional schools are there? (Fairtest.org)

What questions can a student ask to know the importance of testing in the admissions process at a particular college?

How can a student prove the ability to do college level work? Talk about summer programs, Dual Enrollment, enrichment.
Questions for the panel (Other factors)

How do activities, service and athletics weigh in admissions decisions? Can they be deal breakers? Can they take a student to a higher level? Can they outweigh GPA, grades, rigor, testing?

Can you talk about the importance of hearing the student’s voice in their application, essay, interview? (Tell your story)

Can you explain Institutional Need and how it may drive admissions decisions?
Advice from the panel

...on visiting college campuses- what to look for, what to see

...on using ED/EA as a strategy

...for the student who hasn’t gotten involved in high school- how can they show their true potential

...on Gap year or PG year- when are they a good idea?