

**Vail School District  
College Handbook  
2016-2017**



Andrada Polytechnic High School  
Empire High School  
Cienega High School  
Pantano High School  
Vail Academy and High School

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# 1) Dates and Calendars

## **Freshman 1st Semester**

- Register for rigorous courses (see Academic Preparation Pg. 7)
- ECAP and AzCIS class assignments
- Join clubs and organizations that interest you
- Service/Community opportunities
- Fill out Free/Reduced Lunch application
- Create Resume/Portfolio (See Sample Resume)
- Update "Documentation of Accomplishments"
- Check your high school credits to ensure you are taking the necessary courses to meet graduation requirements/post-secondary options.
- Encourage your parents to attend Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Attend a college fair
- Start thinking of financing for college
- Learn how to calculate your grade point average
- Begin considering future careers

## **Freshman 2nd Semester**

- Plan Sophomore Courses (see Academic Preparation Pg. 7)
- ECAP and AzCIS
- Register for AP exams
- Plan Summer Pre-College/Enrichment Opportunities
- Begin researching colleges that fit your interests
- Research FAFSA and when you should apply
- Research scholarships
- Prepare for PSAT
- Parent Review your ECAP
- Visit a College
- Meet with your counselor to review your GPA and progress toward graduation
- Begin researching future careers

## **Sophomore 1st Semester**

- ECAP and AzCIS
- Take PSAT/Pre-ACT assessment
- Research the SAT/ACT
- Join clubs/extracurricular activity
- Research college choices
- Attend Tucson College Fair (October)
- Complete a career assessment on AzCIS or other source
- Update Resume
- Update "Documentation of Accomplishments"
- Meet with your counselor to review your GPA and progress toward graduation

## **Sophomore 2nd Semester**

- Plan Junior Courses (see Academic Preparation Pg. 7)
- ECAP and AzCIS
- Register for AP exams
- Plan Summer Pre-College/Enrichment Opportunities
- Research summer programs/internships
- Research at least two colleges and examine cost of both
- Research financial aid
- Begin a list of target colleges
- Review PSAT results and use as preparation for next testing
- Parent Review you ECAP
- Visit a College

## **Junior 1st Semester**

- ECAP and AzCIS
- Decide what you are looking for in a college or university
- Start a File for each of your top 10 colleges
- Continue college campus visits
- Discuss options for financing college as a family
- Research scholarship opportunities
- Research financial aid
- Research/register for test prep class
- Prepare for the PSAT
- Retake PSAT for National Merit Scholarship
- Plan for when to take ACT or SAT test
- Update "Documentation of Accomplishments"
- Update Resume
- Become a leader in your clubs/organization
- Attend Tucson College Fair (October)
- Identify a career field that you are interested in pursuing for your future
- Plan to focus your Senior Exit Project in that career field

## **Junior 2nd Semester**

- Plan Senior Courses (see Academic Preparation Pg. 7)
- When registering, make sure your credits are sufficient to meet college requirements.
- ECAP and AzCIS
- Attend your school's College/Career Fair
- Reach out to College Admissions Reps of your top 10
- Plan Summer Pre-College/Enrichment Opportunities
- Visit colleges
- Test Prep workshops for ACT/SAT
- Research majors and careers
- ALL Juniors will take ACT at school in April
- Register for AP exams

- Talk to teachers about writing Letters of Recommendation
- Attend Rocky Mountain Association of College Admission Counselors college day at UofA
- Take ACT again and/or SAT for first time
- Begin a scholarship list
- Update your resume
- Update Documentation of Accomplishments
- Parent Review your ECAP
- Meet with your counselor to review your GPA and progress toward graduation

### **Senior 1st Semester**

- Parent Night (July)
- ECAP and AzCIS
- Know your application Deadlines for in-state and out-of-state colleges
- Applications for universities in Arizona are available online in August
- Common App
- Update Resume
- Update Documentation of Accomplishments
- Talk in person with teachers from whom you would like a letter of recommendation
- Apply for scholarships
- Visit Colleges
- Attend college rep visits
- Take ACT or SAT again to improve score
- Attend Tucson College Fair (October)
- Early Decision
- Collect financial information for FAFSA
- FAFSA Night
- Consider taking a community college course
- Submit FAFSA
- Review Student Aid Report from FAFSA
- Tests and Transcripts
- Attend a College Application Presentation
- Prepare for College Application Essays
- Research Loans
- Lead clubs, organizations, sports teams, etc.
- Meet with your counselor to review your GPA and progress toward graduation

### **Senior 2nd Semester**

- Keep working hard as 2nd semester grades can affect scholarship eligibility
- Keep applying for scholarships
- Register for AP exams
- Commit to a college - register, and plan to attend orientation
- Send final transcripts
- Parent Review your ECAP

## 2) Education and Career Action Plan (ECAP)

An ECAP (Education and Career Action Plan) reflects a student's current plan of coursework, career aspirations, and extended learning opportunities in order to develop the student's individual academic and career goals. The goal of an ECAP is to guide students through an exploration and planning process to ensure a seamless transition from high school graduation to their chosen post-secondary pathway. An Education and Career Action Plan (ECAP) allows families to engage with students regarding their individual skills, interests, and goals. During this school year, your student's counselors and teachers will help them explore interests, careers, colleges, scholarships, and more. However, an ECAP is not complete without participation from the family. Talk with your child at home about their strengths and talents, their future aspirations, and what type of postsecondary pathway they might be interested in: career, technical school, two-year college, four-year university, apprenticeships, military or volunteer service, etc.

The Vail School District utilized the Arizona Career Information System (AzCIS) for our ECAPs. Please check in with your student at least once per year to see what progress they have made. Each student has a login and password, and families can also use the "Just Browsing" tab to search and utilize resources. <https://azcis.intocareers.org/materials/portal/home.html>

## 3) Post-High School Explorations

### **Post-secondary Options**

Community college is the most common type of two-year college. These colleges offer many types of educational programs, including those that lead to associate degrees and certificates. Most community colleges have transfer programs with universities, this is to ensure credits are accepted at target universities. Community colleges are often an affordable option with relatively low tuition.

Four-year colleges offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These include universities and liberal arts colleges. Universities often are larger and offer more majors and degree options—bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees—than colleges. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate level studies.

Military options include: Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. The military trains people in a variety of occupations, and many military involve skills that can be useful in civilian jobs.

Career and Trade Schools offer short-term training programs. Students earn a certificate, degree, or diploma that will train individuals for a specific career, trade, or profession. These schools train students for a variety of technical positions, including automotive technician, computer technician, hairstylist, medical assistant, truck driver, and many other fields.

Apprenticeships offer an inexperienced worker a specific trade-training program for a set period of time. Apprenticeships provide a planned training entry-level position on a career pathway.

## Researching Colleges

Research early and research often! The goal is to be accepted to the college(s) of your choice. Beginning as early as 9th grade, researching post-secondary options and college choices is important. The internet is an incredible tool for digging into your target colleges and gearing your choices toward what they are looking for. Utilize websites of colleges that interest you. Click on their admissions section to see what is required for admission. It is important to investigate what classes are required, the average GPA of accepted freshmen, average SAT/ACT scores, etc. Knowing this information will give you a good idea of where you need to be with your grades and test scores. A good rule of thumb is that you should have the averages or better if you really want to get in. A useful website to use for information on particular colleges is <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

Parents and students should discuss the qualities of a college or university that are most important.

- Location: What is the ideal setting?
- Environment: What kind of college is the best fit?
- Admissions Requirements: How competitive is your academic record?
- Academic Climate: What level of competition is the best fit?
- Finances: How will you pay for college?
- Housing and Facilities: What type of physical space is the best fit?
- Activities: What are you looking for in campus life?

Use a variety of types of research to determine the best fit for you and your family. Take advantage of colleges visiting Tucson, schedule campus tours, speak with family/friends about their college experience, visit your school's college center, speak with counselors, etc.

## 4) What Colleges are Looking For

### College Entrance Requirements

Arizona's three state universities all have the same high school course requirements:

4 years of English

4 years of Math

3 years of Science

2 years of Social Studies

2 years of Foreign Language

1 year of Fine Arts or CTE

### Selective Colleges & Universities Course Requirements

There are many specific requirements that selective colleges and universities have. Be sure to check with every college being considered years in advance to make sure you will be fulfilling their requirements. Some examples of selective college requirements:

4 years of Science; 3 years of foreign language; additional courses in music, art, or drama (for Fine Arts/Design Colleges); specific mathematics courses (for Engineering/Mathematics/Computer Science Majors); specific Science courses (Chemistry, Physics); etc.

**\*\*Selective colleges are also looking for well-rounded students with a demonstrated record of leadership, passion and community involvement. It is important to be part of your school and community in clubs and activities that you are passionate about.**

## **Academic Preparation**

### 9th Grade - The most important time

The 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 9<sup>th</sup> grade is arguably the most critical 18 weeks in your child's educational career. The challenge of high school is upon them and how they react to it is usually highly predictive as to how they will do for the next four years and beyond. Hopefully they were well prepared in middle school. If not, they must quickly be developing those critical study habits and skills including:

- a) **Organizational skills:** Students should be organized and be separating their work by each academic class. Students should also be able to keep track of assignments for each class, and what they should do each day for both daily and longer-term assignments.
- b) **Conscientiousness:** Students should be active in keeping up with their classes and assignments and not developing procrastination habits. Students should not be waiting until late at night for daily homework assignments or the last day for big projects. They should actively be trying to get ahead, work hard to not fall behind, and trying to catch-up as quickly as possible if they do fall behind.
- c) **Note-taking skills:** Students should be actively developing their note-taking skills. Taking good notes is key to understanding the material presented to them in classes.
- d) **Exam preparation skills:** The ability to study for exams through understanding class material, using notes, reviewing homework and classwork, being organized, and having a study plan is the key to being an excelling student in both high school and especially in college.
- e) **Research skills:** The ability to do research for assignments and projects is an important skill that develops in high school and later, in college, to a much larger extent.
- f) **Critical thinking skills:** The ability to think critically about problems, school subjects, and life, is an important skill that is continuously developing. Always encourage your child to think about the subjects they are learning, think about their social choices, and think about their future.

What you can do to help your child academically:

- a) Encourage them to attend tutoring, talk to teachers for help, and see their counselor for academic advice.
- b) At home, discuss how they are doing on a daily basis, provide feedback to them and help them with organizing their work and their time.
- c) Be active in checking their grades on PowerSchool. This will show them how much you care about their success in high school.

### Academic Rigor

It is important that students take courses that will challenge them in a variety of ways including to think critically and to go into more depth in different topics. This is especially true for students looking to apply to selective colleges as they will be expected to take Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and Dual Enrollment courses. Additionally, high school students can take extra courses and electives throughout their four years to augment their regular required course load.

Honors Courses - These are courses that students may take instead of a regular required course. They usually offer students extra projects and a more in depth academic rigor. In Vail District High Schools, many 9th and 10th grade courses can be taken for honors, with a more limited amount being offered in the 11th and 12th grade. Generally, honors courses are good preparation for AP courses. Selective colleges expect students to be selecting to take honors courses when possible.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses - These are college-level courses taught in high school. They have college-level academic rigor and expect students to think critically and in depth in the topics they cover. Selective colleges consider how many and which AP courses students have taken as a major part of student's applications. At the end of each AP course, in May, students take the AP exam for that subject. Performing well on an AP exam will allow students to earn college credit. Additionally, student can report high AP scores on their college applications.

Dual Enrollment Courses - These are college courses taken by high school students. They can either be taken on a college campus such as Pima Community College, or they can be taken in high school as a part of a partnership with a college. Some Vail District High Schools have Dual Enrollment Courses on campus. Please see your counselor for details.

### **Pre-college Programs, Internships & Other Opportunities**

Pre-college summer programs allow high school students to get a taste of college life, preview their dream schools, and give a boost to their college applications. It may be tempting to spend the entire summer at the beach or by the pool (and you certainly should do a little of that!), but why not use some of your free time to learn something new and make yourself a more attractive candidate for admission? Pre-college summer programs for high school students are fantastic opportunities for high school students to get some experience, some idea of what they're looking for, both out of college and out of their futures, without having to make any solid decisions right this second. Find a local private college, or a community college, or do some research helping a professor. You may want to volunteer your time working in a local museum giving tours. Find something that you're passionate about, and do that.

If you want to investigate these possibilities, simply type the name of the college or university that interests you into Google Search, along with the phrase "summer programs for high school students." If you want to see what's available close to home, enter the name of a local college or university, along with the phrase "summer programs for high school students." These local searches will often turn up special summer on-campus opportunities, for example in relation to subjects like engineering or leadership development. Many of these programs offer scholarships.

High school students are increasingly finding that the real-world experience of an internship can offer a significant boost to their college and career success. High School internships are the best way to bridge the gap between going to school and landing great job. Internships can help provide valuable work experience by learning the ropes from more experienced professionals. At the end of your internship, you'll have relevant experience to help you decide if starting your career in the field of your internship is the right choice for you. Ask your counselor about detail for taking part in the Vail Internship Program.

## 5) Testing

### **ACT/SAT**

Both are widely accepted by U.S. colleges. Previous versions of these tests differed from each other quite a bit, but now that the New SAT has been put in place they are much more similar. They both test your knowledge of math, English grammar, and reading comprehension. They both take 3-4 hours to complete. It is valuable to look at both tests. You can find free copies of the New SAT and ACT study guides and practice exams online. Spend time looking at each test (including its rules for each section, its format, its problems, etc.) and see which one you like best. You can then begin preparing for the test you think will be the best fit.

#### Similarities and Differences

The SAT is more focused on critical thinking and problem solving skills. SAT has a stronger focus on vocabulary. The ACT tests more grammar and math concepts than the SAT does. The SAT does not include a section for science. Both tests come with optional essays. The ACT essay asks you to come up with your own argument and support it – the New SAT essay asks you to evaluate an argument that someone else has already written for you.

Many students take both the ACT and SAT test to see which format they excel in. Keep in mind that students should plan to take these tests more than once; this is especially important if you'll be relying on a good test score for a competitive admission and/or academic scholarships.

**To register for the ACT, visit:** [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

2016/17 Test Dates – September 10, October 22, December 10, February 11, April 8 and June 10

\*Vail schools offer the ACT without writing every April to all Juniors for free during the school day.

**To register for the SAT, visit:** <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register>

2016/17 Test Dates – October 1, November 5, December 3, January 21, March 11, May 6 and June 3

#### SAT Subject Tests

Many selective colleges and universities require or highly recommend students to take SAT Subjects Tests, especially if you're applying to take specific courses or majors. Selective colleges and universities often require students to take two subject tests and may specify which tests they require. Visit the college or university website to determine their specific requirements. If not given a specific choice, choose a subject from a current course. SAT Subject Tests are available in the following areas: Literature, U.S. History, World History, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and 9 different Languages. To register, see the SAT link above.

#### PSAT Test

The PSAT Test is given by the SAT people as a preparation for the SAT and also to possibly qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. The PSAT is offered during the school day in October at several of our high school sites, please see your counselor for details. Many students chose to take the PSAT in their Sophomore year to gauge what areas they should work on before taking the

ACT and/or SAT; however only test scores from a student's Junior year will count towards consideration for the National Merit Scholarship Competition.

### **Advanced Placement (AP)**

The College Board offers AP courses in an effort to obtain college credits while in high school. The classes are college level studies, and students take the Advanced Placement exams in order to earn college credit in a particular course. AP tests are administered in early May and scored on a point system, 1-5. Students that obtain a 3, 4, or 5 may earn college credit at some colleges. Over 2,600 colleges worldwide grant credit for AP scores. It should be confirmed with colleges of interest to find what the AP credit will transfer as for the school. There is a fee to take AP exams.

### **ASVAB**

The ASVAB is a multiple-aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military. It is administered annually to more than one million military applicants, high school, and post-secondary students. The ASVAB is designed to measure aptitudes in four domains: Verbal, Math, Science and Technical, and Spatial. If you are interested in learning more about the ASVAB test, <http://official-asvab.com> is their site. Please note: The ASVAB is NOT required for students to apply to any college, to do ROTC, or to apply to a Military Academy. The ASVAB is intended for those planning on joining the military directly out of high school.

### **Test Prep**

A good test prep course can help you not only with the material but with test-taking strategies as well. Test prep involves personalized and teacher-led SAT, ACT and PSAT preparation and solutions to help students score at their highest potential on standardized tests. Most high schools in Vail offer onsite test prep at a reasonable cost. Students are able to attend test prep sessions at different schools within the district on a space available basis. See your counselor for details.

## **6) College Applications**

The college admissions process involves multiple steps that begins several years before the senior year. The actual act of applying occurs in the Fall Semester of the senior year.

### **Choosing where to apply**

Thinking about where to apply should begin as early as middle school. Students with specific college goals have a more defined path to achieve the college admissions they hope for. That path can lead students to increased effort, focus, and success. Doing research and visiting colleges is recommended all the way up through the fall of student's senior year.

Junior Year: This is the last "planning" year. Juniors should be meeting with their counselor at least once per semester to review their qualifications for college to determine where best to apply. These qualifications include their cumulative GPA, extracurricular activities, and amount of Honors and AP courses taken and planned to be taken. Juniors should also be going on college visits and attending

college fairs as much as possible. Of utmost importance is deciding when to take the ACT and/or the SAT. It is highly recommended students take one or both of the tests several times. Discuss your specific ACT/SAT test-taking plan with your counselor to decide what the best strategy is for your college admissions needs.

Senior Year: By the senior year, students should be finalizing their college list. If you are applying to out of state schools, it is recommended you choose a maximum of 6-8 schools to apply to. Follow the S-L-R strategy: 2-3 schools from each of the following three categories: Safe to be admitted, Likely to be admitted, and a Reach to be admitted. Any school you apply to should be one you would attend if admitted. Don't waste time and money with applying to colleges you wouldn't attend. Discuss which colleges you will apply to with your counselor as much as needed during the Fall of your senior year. In addition, you also might want to retake your ACT and/or SAT during the Fall of your senior year.

Academic & Extracurricular Preparation - Every year in high school should be done with college admissions in mind. This includes academic preparation (see page 7) and extracurricular activities. High school students are creating a portfolio of academic and extracurricular success, which will show up on their college applications. Certain selective colleges have specific requirements to apply such as taking SAT Subject Tests and/or taking specific coursework. Knowing about these well in advance of senior year is essential.

## **Types of Applications and Deadlines**

Being aware of college application deadlines is the first and most important part of applying to colleges. There are several types of college admissions process to be aware of as well.

Rolling Admissions: The three Arizona public Universities have what is referred to as rolling admissions from September through April. Once your application is complete, you will receive an admissions answer within 2-6 weeks. The sooner you apply, the sooner you will get your admissions answer and your financial aid package, if applicable (see page 14).

Open Admissions: Community Colleges usually have open admissions and all high school graduates are admitted. Be sure to apply early in order to qualify for financial aid (see page 14).

Regular Admissions: Most other colleges have hard application deadlines typically between December and January. Decisions for these schools are generally received in March. Be aware of these deadlines. Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Early Admissions: Many out-of-state colleges offer some form of early admissions option. Deadlines are typically on or around November 1. They are typically broken down into two types:

1. Early Decision: Early Decision is a binding agreement between you and the college. The student makes a commitment to a college where if admitted, he/she will definitely attend. The reason for applying this way would be when you absolutely know what your first choice school is. By applying early, you are demonstrating to them a commitment to attend. It is not necessarily easier to get into a selective college this way, although there is potential to have an easier path to acceptance because the college will know you will attend if accepted.

2. Early Action: Early Action is simply an earlier calendar for applying to a college. This includes an earlier deadline and an earlier answer from the college you apply to. It is not binding. However, similar to early decision, it shows initiative and demonstrated interest in the college you are applying to.

All College Applications are done online, either through the college's own website or through a shared application service such as the Common App (see below). Always start by reading through the instructions on the college's website. If you have questions, contact them! All four year colleges and universities typically require paying an application fee ranging from \$30-\$90.

### **Letters of Recommendation**

Selective colleges require letters of recommendation. Typically this includes one from your counselor and 1-3 from teachers. The more competitive the admission process, the more these letters can make a difference. Students should choose teachers wisely. Choose teachers that know you well and whose classes you excelled in. Let both teachers and counselors know well in advance of deadlines to give them time to write thoughtful recommendations. A minimum of two weeks notice should be followed. More than two weeks is highly recommended for you to give your recommenders time for more thoughtful recommendations. Ask your recommenders if they need additional information about you. Have your resume and activities list available for recommenders if they request it.

### **Essays**

Selective colleges will usually require multiple essays as part of the application. This typically will include a personal statement and then answers to specific prompts. The essay is a chance for the colleges to gain insight to you as an individual. It is the one opportunity to tell your story and make yourself stand out. As with letters of recommendation, the more competitive the admissions process, the more important your essays will be. Students are advised to start these early and get teachers to help proof read them. Be very thoughtful and think about exactly what you are trying to convey to the admissions committee before you decide on what to write.

Here are some helpful brainstorming ideas when it comes to writing your essays:

- What is my greatest accomplishment?
- Do I have a talent or strong trait that I can demonstrate?
- Was there a trip or summer program that taught me something or helped me develop as a person?
- Was there an event or moment in time that touched me personally or helped me grow?
- What am I passionate about and what have I done to pursue my passion?
- Have I been part of any major community service projects?
- Am I involved with my religious organization and/or volunteer organization?
- Did I overcome a hardship?
- Have I stood up for something I believe in such as a social cause?
- What makes me different than someone else with my same GPA and test scores?
- Where have I demonstrated leadership?
- What do I struggle with and how do/did I overcome it?

- Is there something about my academic record that I should explain to colleges such as a bad grade?

Be sure to have your essays 100% correct in terms of grammar and spelling. Have multiple adults (Teachers, Counselors, Parents) proof-read them to check for errors.

## **Transcripts**

Every college will require an official transcript, which is a record of your classes, grades, GPA, and rank. More selective colleges will require that your counselor do a Secondary School Report (SSR) for you. The SSR will in addition to your transcript have more specific data about your senior class, your rank, and your school's profile. Be sure to coordinate with your counselor, who will send transcripts and SSRs to the colleges you apply to.

## **The Common Application**

The Common Application is a method to apply to multiple out-of-state colleges lumped together in one application. It makes applying far easier because you only have to input your information once. The Common App will send out all of your information including your letters of recommendation and transcripts to each college you apply to. The only additional contributions you will have to do for each college are specific essays that they may require.

## **Interviewing**

Some of the most selective colleges will offer students interviews. These interviews are typically done by alumni who will write a report for the student's admissions file. If offered, do take advantage of the interview, because it will be an opportunity to make a positive impression on the alumni and therefore, the admissions committee. Once scheduled, prepare for the interview by going through a list of possible questions you will be asked. Be positive, personable, and polite. Also be prepared with questions about the college you will ask the interviewer, because he/she will give you that opportunity. If possible, ask your counselor to do a mock interview with you so he/she can give you feedback about both your answers and interviewing skills.

## **Demonstrated Interest**

One of the little-known facts about college admissions is that most selective colleges keep track of the actions you have taken to show interest. The more interest you demonstrate, the more likely you will be considered over someone else with a similar application. Here are some things you can do to show demonstrated interest:

- Get on the college's mailing list as early as your sophomore/junior year.
- Visit the college's campus and attend a tour/open house. Be sure to sign up with your name and actively ask questions.
- Email or call the undergraduate admissions office of the college you are interested with a question or two to help you clarify something about the college or the application process.
- In your essays, discuss specifics about the college that got your interest to show the admissions committee that you have done your research and will to attend if admitted.
- One of the newer trends colleges use to determine demonstrated interest is by engaging students on popular social media platforms. More colleges are utilizing social media to

reach out and recruit students. Connecting with colleges through social media can be one of the subtle ways to demonstrate your interest. Colleges are paying attention to whom you “like” or “follow.”

## 7) Paying for College

### Free Application for Federal Student Aid - FAFSA

- The office of Federal Student Aid, a part of the U.S. Department of Education, is the largest provider of student financial aid in the nation. Each year, more than \$150 billion in federal grants, loans, and work-study funds are offered to more than 13 million students paying for college or career school.
- The *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) is the first step toward getting federal financial aid for college or trade school, and is required by all institutions if you are applying for any type of financial aid. Submitting the FAFSA is free and will take about 30 minutes to complete. <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>
- Not only will the federal government determine what financial aid it can offer to the student, many colleges also use the information provided by the FAFSA to determine their contribution.
- Beginning in 2015, the FAFSA will open for students on October 1 of senior year. Students are encouraged to complete the FAFSA as early as possible during their senior year, as some federal student aid programs have limited funds.
- Students and parents are required to create and use an FSA ID, which is a username and password, to access the FAFSA, confirm identity, and electronically sign the document prior to submission.
- After the FAFSA is submitted, students receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) that advises the student of his/her aid status for the year. The Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which represents the amount of money a family is deemed capable of contributing the student's education, is also included.
- The FAFSA must be refiled each year you attend college.

### CSS Profile

- The College Board's CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE® is an online application that collects information used by almost 300 colleges and scholarship programs to award financial aid from sources outside of the federal government. Many selective colleges and universities require students to fill out the CSS Profile. To see the colleges and universities that use the profile, follow the link below:  
<https://profileonline.collegeboard.org/prf/PXRemotePartInstitutionServlet/PXRemotePartInstitutionServlet.srv>
- Deadline for Filing: The application is open beginning October 1st of the student's senior year, and it is recommended that a student file two weeks prior to the college or university's earliest priority filing date. <https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>
- Cost: The initial cost is \$25 to file the first report and \$16 for additional colleges/universities.

## Scholarships

- Students may qualify for Need-based grants or scholarships (Pell, FSEOG, SMART, Academic Competitiveness, Institutional) based on financial need as determined by the FAFSA. These are awarded for one-year only, but students may reapply each year. Private colleges with large endowments are able to provide students with more need-based aid. Colleges tend to give out need-based aid as a percentage of a student's NEED which is defined by **NEED = (Cost of Attendance) – EFC**
- When applying to colleges, it is to your family's financial advantage to apply to colleges that will meet a very high percentage of your family's Need. Here is a list of major universities that promise to meet 90% or more of a student's NEED:

Alleghany College	American University	Amherst College
Babson College	Bard College	Barnard College
Bates College	Beloit College	Boston College
Boston University	Bowdoin College	Brandeis University
Brown University	Bryn Mawr College	Bucknell University
Cal Tech	Carleton College	Carnegie-Mellon
Case Western	Claremont McKenna	Clark University
Colby College	Colgate University	College of the Holy Cross
Colorado College	Columbia University	Connecticut College
Cooper Union	Cornell University	Dartmouth College
Dickinson College	Duke University	Earlham College
Emory University	Franklin & Marshall	George Washington
Georgetown	Gettysburg College	Goucher College
Grinnell College	Hamilton College	Hampshire College
Harvard University	Harvey Mudd College	Haverford College
Johns Hopkins Univ.	Kenyon College	Knox College
Lake Forest College	Lawrence University	Lehigh University
Lewis and Clark	Loyola Marymount	Macalester College
MIT	Middlebury College	Mount Holyoke College
Northwestern Univ.	Oberlin College	Occidental College
Pomona College	Princeton University	Reed College
Rice University	Saint Olaf	San Diego State University
San Francisco State	San Jose State	Santa Clara University
Sarah Lawrence	Scripps College	Skidmore College
Smith College	Stanford University	Swarthmore College
Syracuse University	Trinity College	Tufts University
Tulane University	Union College	University of Chicago
Univ. of Notre Dame	Univ. of Pennsylvania	Univ. of Puget Sound
USC	Vanderbilt University	Vassar University
Villanova University	Washington and Lee	Wellesley College
Wesleyan College	Wheaton College	Whitman College
Whittier College	Willamette University	Williams College
Yale University	**Most Schools in the Cal State and University of California System	

- Students are automatically considered for **merit-based scholarships** when they apply to a college or university. Financial aid teams at the colleges and universities review students' grades, SAT or ACT scores, the number of academic courses the student took in high school, and the rigor of the courses taken (Honors and AP), to determine how much aid will be offered, if any. In order to receive the most merit aid, students should strive for both a high unweighted GPA and high test scores.
- Arizona Earn to Learn is a groundbreaking program that prepares high school students for college with financial education and matching funds. The Earn to Learn program is a collaboration of the Arizona Board of Regents, the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University. Its purpose is to help limited-income Arizonans to save for college. For more information go to [azearntolearn.org](http://azearntolearn.org).

- Students should check in with their counselors on a regular basis about local scholarships. Additionally, students may use the following websites as resources:
  - [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)
  - [www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/collegedepot](http://www.phoenixpubliclibrary.org/collegedepot)
  - [www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org)
  - [www.collegedata.com](http://www.collegedata.com)
  - [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
  - [www.chegg.com/scholarships](http://www.chegg.com/scholarships)
  - [www.meritaid.org](http://www.meritaid.org)
  - [www.findtuition.com](http://www.findtuition.com)
  - [www.freescholarships.com](http://www.freescholarships.com)
  - [www.collegescholarships.com](http://www.collegescholarships.com)
  - [www.metedu.org/rcac/](http://www.metedu.org/rcac/)
  - [www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

## ROTC

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) is a scholarship, leadership, and military career training program on college campuses. Every major University in the country has one or more ROTC programs in one or more of the following: Army, Navy, Air Force. Visit each branch's ROTC website for application requirements and information.

- Scholarship: Students who are admitted into an ROTC program at a University get a Full Scholarship to attend for all four years. This covers tuition, room, food, books, and all fees. In addition to their full scholarship, students receive a monthly stipend.
- Leadership: As part of an ROTC program at a University, students take coursework in leadership, military science, and physical fitness. These courses are in preparation for your future career as an officer in the U.S. Military
- Military Career: ROTC students are making a commitment to become a commissioned officer after completing their studies. They have a service commitment for a set number of years with the branch of the military that they did their ROTC program with.

## 8) Helpful Resources

### Books

- The College Handbook from The College Board
- Teen's Guide to College & Career Planning from Peterson's
- How to Win at College by Cal Newport
- Countdown to College: 21 'To Do' Lists for High School by Valerie Pierce
- The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg
- How to be Remarkable by Colin Wright
- What to Do When for College by Fiske & Hammond
- Colleges That Change Lives by Loren Pope
- Colleges That Create Futures by Princeton Review

- Looking Beyond the Ivy League: Finding the College That's Right For You by Loren Pope
- Hidden Ivies: Thirty Colleges of Excellence by Howard and Matthew Greene
- Prepare, Compete, Win!, The Ultimate College Planning Workbook for Students by Peter Van Buskirk
- Letting Go: A Parents' Guide to Understanding the College Years by Karen Coburn and Madge Treeger

## **Sample Resume**

The high school resume should include: education and training, paid and unpaid work experience, achievements, activities and skills contact information and references. Students should add to their high school resume each year as they progress through high school.

- Education History
  - Use this section to list the educational institutions you attended beginning with the most recent.
- Licenses and Certificates
  - Use this section for any licenses or certificates you have earned. Some occupations require a license, while certificates indicate knowledge and expertise you have acquired.
- Workshops and Training
  - Use this section to document short-term workshops and training programs.
- Standardized Tests
  - Use this section to document results for standardized tests you have taken.
- Paid and Unpaid Work (Volunteer Work/Community Service)
  - Use this section to list all your work experiences. Begin with your most recent employer. You may want to include summer, temporary, and part-time work.
- Achievements, Activities, and Skills
  - Use this section to document significant achievements, recognitions, or memberships
- Contact Information and References
  - Use this section to enter your contact information.

## **Documentation of Accomplishments**

Students should begin documenting their accomplishments starting their freshman year. To help you do that, we suggest that you keep track of your accomplishments under the following categories.

- School-based extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, fine arts, etc.)
- Community based activities (volunteering, church, scouts, etc.)
- Leadership activities (even activities that provided an increased responsibility on you)
- Activities you have done to learn about a career field (camps, shadowing, interviews, research, etc.)
- Activities that you have done to learn more about a specific college (Trips, speakers, research, phone calls, etc.)
- Awards that you have earned (from sports, fine arts, classroom, church, clubs, etc.)

## College and Career Contacts

### **Andrada Polytechnic High School**

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### **Cienega High School**

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### **Empire High School**

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### **Pantano High School**

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### **Vail Academy and High School**

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### **Vail Digital Learning**

John Roberts  
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### **Vail School District Office**

Ethan Hurley  
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