

KIPP: Match Matters

STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

FOUR KEYS TO FINDING *your* MATCH

Choosing the college that will be best for you is one of the biggest decisions you'll make in the next four years; which college you choose has a huge impact on how successful your college experience is!

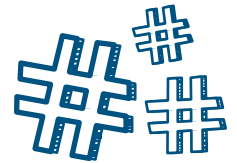
We've learned a bit from the experience of KIPPsters who have climbed the mountain before you, and we want to share those lessons with you.

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

GPA, ACT, SAT ... those scores are important when you're applying to college because your numbers affect which schools you can get into. Check how yours stack up against the averages of the colleges you're interested in and work to get your numbers into that range.

Your GPA is shaped by your grades from all four years of high school, so don't wait until senior year to start focusing on your grades. Keeping your GPA up all four years will give you more choices when it comes to applying to college.

Don't let the SAT and ACT intimidate you. There are prep classes, practice tests, and free online resources you can use to ensure you're ready to get your best score when test time comes. Work with your college counselor to maximize your use of available test prep support resources.



BUILD A SMART WISH LIST

The question "So where do you want to go to college?" may be one that folks have been asking you since you came to KIPP, but your answer now should be much more scientific. Your wish list should include at least 3 schools you know you can get into (likely/safety schools), at least 3 schools you probably can get into (target schools), and at least 3 schools that you might get into (reach schools). It is important to look at a college's graduation rate, too. That can tell you how supportive a school is in helping students to graduate — and what percentage of your class will be there from freshman year all the way to graduation day.

Work with your college counselor to identify likely, target, and reach schools to put on your wish list, and then narrow it down to the ones that will be the best fit for you.



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PREPARE FOR THE COST OF COLLEGE

Sure, college is expensive, but it is worth it — a college degree opens the door to more jobs, and jobs that pay more. So don't be scared off by the sticker price. There are ways to make college affordable — scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study all can make the cost of college reasonable. When a college wants you on their campus, even some of the most expensive schools will offer packages that make it affordable. Talk to your college counselor to understand which colleges offer great financial aid packages, and which packages make the most sense for you.

And like a lot of things in life, financial aid is given out on a first-come, first-served basis. Get your applications in early to make sure that you get the aid and scholarships you're eligible for.



GET AN EARLY START

Applying to college requires a lot of work, planning — and time. Get an early start on it and figure out the application requirements and deadlines for each college on your wish list. With a detailed plan and timetable, you can develop a strong application to each college and submit before the deadline — or even apply Early Decision or Early Action.

