



## DECODING COLLEGE: ANATOMY OF AN APPLICATION

Every college application is an opportunity for your KIPPster to tell their story to admissions officers. That story includes who they are, what they are passionate about, and what they plan to do once they enroll in college. While many applications are different, there are common elements to every application that you can help your KIPPster prepare for.

	What It Is	How You Can Help
<b>The Application Form</b>	Most college applications begin with an online form (usually available on the college’s website). Students will need to fill in information about themselves, their family, their academic record, any honors and awards, extracurricular and volunteer activities, employment, internships, and summer activities.	Make sure your KIPPster has the information they’ll need at the <b>start of senior year</b> , including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Permanent address</li> <li>- Citizenship and residency information</li> <li>- Educational information for family members (Who went to college? When?)</li> <li>- High school address(es) and enrollment history</li> </ul>
<b>Application Fees</b>	Colleges ask every student to pay a non-refundable fee to apply - usually between \$35-\$50. Many colleges offer to waive this fee for students who cannot afford it. Check the application and/or website for more information about fee waivers, or visit:  <a href="https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-application-fee-waivers">https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-application-fee-waivers</a>	At the <b>start of senior year</b> , talk to your KIPPster to better understand where they will apply, whether they will request fee waivers, and how much you can anticipate in fees.  Encourage them to reach out to their KTC counselor to request waivers, if needed.  Note that <b>fees are typically due at the time that the application is submitted.</b>
<b>High School Transcript</b>	A transcript is an official list of classes that your student has taken and the grades they received. Your KIPPster’s college counselor will help to ensure that the school sends official copies of your student’s high school transcript directly to colleges.	In <b>September</b> , ask your student if they have requested copies of their official transcript to be sent to the colleges they are applying to. Encourage them to request transcripts as early as possible to ensure they can submit their applications on time.  Have your student request a personal copy of their transcript, and review it together to check for errors.
<b>Test Scores</b>	Many (but not all) colleges require scores from tests like the SAT or ACT. These tests are standardized (the same for every student) and designed to test how ready your student is for college-level work. The SAT has three major	Starting in <b>junior year</b> , ask your KIPPster when they are taking the ACT. Check in with them to learn more about their scores (typically reported 4-8 weeks after the test date) and how they plan to continue to



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	<p>sections: math, reading and writing. The ACT has four major sections: English, math, reading, and science.</p> <p>Students often take standardized tests in the spring of junior year and the fall of senior year. They should take them early to ensure their scores are reported in time.</p>	<p>improve them. (Students can take the ACT up to 12 times. It is typically offered three times a semester.)</p> <p>In <b>September of senior year</b>, ask your KIPPster if they have requested that their scores be sent to each college on their wish list.</p>
<b>Letters of Recommendation</b>	<p>Letters of recommendation are an opportunity for other adults – like teachers, coaches, or advisors – to write a letter supporting your KIPPster. Not all colleges require them, but strong letters of recommendation can help your KIPPster stand out from the crowd.</p>	<p>Students should start asking teachers and other adults for letters of recommendation in junior year but definitely by <b>August</b> and <b>September</b>. Help your KIPPster create a list of potential writers and then brainstorm some key points that the writers might include. (For example, noting significant achievements or specific interests.)</p> <p>Remind your student to check in with letter writers in <b>October</b> to ensure they know the deadline and plan to submit.</p>
<b>Personal Statements</b>	<p>Often, colleges will require students to write one or more essays to better explain their story or their interests. Each application is different, so students should start planning personal statements early.</p>	<p>Ask your student to share how many of their applications require a personal statement and what types of statements they plan to write.</p> <p>In <b>October</b>, offer to proofread statements for your student.</p>
<b>Interviews</b>	<p>Some colleges require students to participate in an interview at the college or with someone who attended that college. These interviews typically fall in to two categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Evaluative:</b> Designed to evaluate if your student is a good fit for the college. The interviewer will take notes that are combined with your student’s application.</li><li>- <b>Informational:</b> Designed to share information about the college with your student. These interviews are more informal.</li></ul>	<p>Before each interview, ask your student a few questions so they can prepare how they might respond.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What excites you about this school?</li><li>- What are your long-term goals?</li><li>- What do you hope to study in college? Why?</li><li>- Tell me about a class that changed your perspective in high school.</li><li>- Tell me about an obstacle you’ve overcome.</li></ul>