



SELECTING A DESTINATION

Which college is right for your student? How can you make the selection process easier?


CRUISING THRU THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Six tips can help you avoid potential roadblocks and steer your student toward acceptance.



ALTERNATE ROUTES

Looking for alternate routes on the congested highway to college credit? We'll give you the inside track on independent study.

This brochure is just a starting point—we've gathered information and resources to help you prepare your student for the college years on our online resource page: www.hslda.org/highschool/collegeprep/links. The  indicates related links on the resource page.



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NEED HELP WITH HIGH SCHOOL?

In 2004, inspired by the increasing number of questions from parents wondering if they could homeschool their children through high school, HSLDA hired high school coordinators Becky Cooke and Diane Kummer. Becky and Diane graduated their own children from high school at home, and they bring a wealth of experience and friendly advice to share with families who are navigating these challenging, yet exciting years. We're excited to see how this service to our members has extended to the homeschool movement as a whole, through the Homeschooling Thru High School website and publications.



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High school services available to HSLDA members.
To join HSLDA, visit hslda.org or call 540-338-5600.



Do your student's post-high school plans include college? If so, you may have many questions regarding academic preparation during the high school years, as well as selecting a college, deciding which college entrance tests your teen should take, and navigating the college application process.

In this brochure, you'll find answers for:

SETTING OUT



Before your student can arrive at his ideal college destination, it's important to map out the route through high school.


ROAD TESTS

College entrance tests are essential. Find out what you need to know to make it a smooth ride.



HSLDA

SETTING OUT

The strength of your student's high school program depends on the number of credits accumulated during high school and the number of advanced courses—such as Advanced Placement (AP) or dual enrollment—taken. Three typical college prep programs are outlined below. 


- ◆ **Average College Prep Program:** Usually a minimum of 24 credits.
- ◆ **Strong College Prep Program:** Approximately 26–28 credits, with higher-level math and additional history/social science, foreign language, and science courses. Dual enrollment and AP courses are recommended.
- ◆ **Rigorous College Prep Program:** 28 or more credits with AP and dual enrollment courses highly recommended.



For all college prep programs, the senior year of high school should consist of a full course load complete with advanced-level courses.

Showing that your student has taken classes from outside sources and has been evaluated by other teachers is helpful in the college admissions process. Carefully assess your teen's maturity and academic abilities before signing him up for outside classes.

Benefits of taking an outside class are numerous, including interaction in a group setting, exposure to different teacher expectations, college credit earned while in high school, and development of time management skills. Taking a few courses from someone other than a parent may also provide a source for letters of recommendation, which are often required for college applications.

ROAD TESTS


College entrance test scores are essential for admission to most colleges. Your student may choose to first take the PSAT. Either SAT or ACT tests are required by most colleges. 

- ◆ **Time Line**
 - ♥ PSAT: Take in 10th grade for practice, then in 11th to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship.
 - ♥ SAT/ACT: Tests may be taken after completion of Algebra I and Geometry. Have your student repeat the test, since scores generally improve the second time around.
- ◆ **Registration**
 - ♥ PSAT: In early summer, contact a local public or private school for information about registering for the October PSAT.
 - ♥ SAT: Register online with the College Board. 
 - ♥ ACT: Register online. 
- ◆ **Preparation**
 - ♥ Test preparation is a must. Use books, computer software, online tutorials, group classes, or private tutors.

SELECTING A DESTINATION

Research college options online. Consider your child's proposed major, the college size, location, state or private, religious affiliation (if any), cost, campus ministries, and proximity to a good church.

Visit the college(s) your student is considering. You'll both gain an invaluable overall view of the campus and student life. Include a class visit and schedule an appointment with the admissions counselor.


Check out the cafeteria food and meal plan options. Research campus ministries and fellowship opportunities. And visit local churches, noting transportation options and the friendliness of church members to students. 

SELECTING A DESTINATION *(continued)*

Arrange an overnight dorm visit for your student. He'll be able to witness the dynamics of living in the dorm with a roommate and experience typical student schedules.

CRUISING THRU THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Once your student has identified his top college picks, it's time to start the application process.

- ◆ **Application**—Online applications are preferred. Pay attention to admission and financial aid deadlines! Double-check that all requested information—including the application fee—has been submitted and received.
- ◆ **Transcript**—Prepare a concise, one-page sheet listing all the courses taken during high school. If applicable, also request previous schools and/or community colleges to send transcripts. 
- ◆ **Letters of Recommendation**—Usually two are required. Select people who know your student well or who are familiar with his or her academic abilities. Follow the college's procedure for submission of these letters.
- ◆ **Guidance Counselor**—This section of the application can be filled out by the parent or, if applicable, a person leading the umbrella program or oversight group associated with your homeschool.
- ◆ **Essays**—Must be written entirely by your student.
- ◆ **On-Campus Interview**—May be required of homeschooled applicants. If not, it is often helpful for acquiring needed or additional information. Consider practicing mock interviews with your student beforehand.

ALTERNATE ROUTES

Independent study—earning college credit off campus—can offer significant savings in time and money. Although certain majors require on-campus residency, general education requirements can be met through independent study. Always verify with the college where your student plans to earn his degree that your independent study plans satisfy their policies for acquiring and transferring credits.

Here are some independent study options to consider:

- ◆ **Dual Enrollment**—Courses taken through a community college while living at home are a way for your student to satisfy freshman and sophomore general education requirements at a fraction of the cost of typical college tuition.
- ◆ **Distance Learning (DL)**—University courses can be taken in the comfort of your own home. Although DL credits generally cost the same as on-site enrollment, you can save room and board and other fees associated with on-campus living.
- ◆ **Credit by Examination**
 - ♥ AP tests are given in May at public/private high schools for a particular course of study. Colleges require students to earn a certain minimum score in order to receive college credit.
 - ♥ College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) are tests given at colleges for particular subjects. The score necessary to earn credit may differ by college. Some colleges will not accept these credits; others limit the number of these credits they accept.
- ◆ **Portfolio Assessment**—Find out if your child's college will grant credit for knowledge gleaned from life experience. Proof is required in written form and must be documented with samples of work or experience. Usually, such credits are granted only for experience in the student's major and must match courses the college offers.



For online resource list, go to www.hslida.org/highschool/collegeprep/links.