

## College Information for GSW Seniors

1. Be sure to visit the campus of any college you are seriously considering. If you are going to choose a place to live and learn for the next four years you need to make an informed decision.

National College Fair will be at McCormick Place on **Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>**.

JJC College Fair will be held on **Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>**

Discover JJC will be held on **Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>**

2. Apply to college by October 25<sup>th</sup> for your best opportunity for acceptance. Many Illinois state schools have a priority filing period of November 1<sup>st</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>.

3. Apply to at least 3 schools. As a recommendation, at least one of the applications should be made to an Illinois state school. State schools are less expensive than private schools. Also, in state tuition is usually much cheaper and grant/award money from FAFSA is often better in state. After being accepted to the colleges which you apply, you can evaluate your most acceptable/affordable option.

4. It is recommended that you apply online. A NEAT application is important.

5. Give the Guidance Office at least 3 days notice for application review and transcript requests. **Bring addressed, stamped envelopes to mail applications**. An official transcript is required for college applications, so if it is to be included with your application, it must be mailed from the Guidance Office. Colleges prefer all mailed materials to be sent in one envelope. This would include documents you need to send and teacher recommendations. After graduation transcript request forms are available on our website and a \$2 fee is charged.

6. Students should proofread their applications and have a parent or other trusted adult proofread the application before bringing it to the Guidance Office. If an essay is required, ask someone with grammatical knowledge to proofread it. Grammatical errors and typos can mean the difference between acceptance and rejection.

7. When choosing people to write recommendation letters for you - **CHOOSE WISELY!** Ask a teacher who knows you well, someone who can speak of specific strengths. Provide that person with a list of your accomplishments, activities, and community service. Give your recommendation letter writers AT LEAST a week to provide you with a letter. Ask for letters of recommendation now and give your letter writer more time to prepare. Don't wait!

8. Scholarship information will be made available through the Scholarship Bulletin. This document will be available in the Guidance Office. An announcement will be made each time it is updated. To request a scholarship application, circle the scholarship name on the Scholarship Bulletin. Also include your name and turn your information in to the Guidance Office. The application will then be copied and sent to you.

Financial Aid Presentations will be available -

GSW - Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm Financial Aid Presentation (hosted by JJC but relevant for all)

JJC Fair Events Center - Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 & 7 pm (Spanish 6:30)

JJC FAFSA Workshops - TBD - watch the JJC website. Once dates are set flyers will be available in the guidance office.

Wilmington High School will host an ISAC FAFSA Completion Night - Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup> from 5 - 7 pm.

The Scholarship Bulletin is also available on the GSW website under the Parents & Community tab.

Top recommendations for funding college - 1. FAFSA, 2. Apply for all scholarships available through the college or university you plan to attend, 3. Scholarship Bulletin, 4. Personal contacts - parents' place of work, clubs, organizations, etc., and 5. Other search engines or websites, but be cautious!

9. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) cannot be filed until **OCTOBER 1<sup>st</sup>** and should be filled out as close to that date as possible. Colleges use this form to determine financial aid packages (grants, work study, student loans, etc). Please visit their website at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to fill out the FAFSA and obtain more information. Plan to attend the GSW Financial Aid Night. There will be very important information given at this event.

10. Some colleges will accept your SAT scores as submitted on your transcripts. Other schools will request that you send your score directly from SAT. This involves a fee if you did not designate the school when you registered for the SAT test. Score reports can be sent through your College Board account. There is a \$12 fee to send scores after the SAT so take advantage of the 4 free score reports before you test.

11. Students planning to take the ACT can register at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

12. If you receive free or reduced lunch you can ask Ms. Kilmer for a letter to waive fees associated with college applications or retaking the SAT or ACT.

13. Watch the daily announcements. Information on updated Scholarship Bulletins, College Fairs, College Field Trips, Financial Aid Night, and other great resources will be posted in the announcements as the information becomes available.

14. Send thank you notes to people who write recommendation letters or act as a reference for you. Also send a thank you note to any organization that offers you a scholarship. A little appreciation will go a long way. You never know when you may need another favor.