



ANJA EDUCATION CONSULTANTS

Inspired High School & Career Planning Selective College Admissions Top of the Line Test Prep & Tutoring

TEN TIPS ON COLLEGE PLANNING FOR PARENTS

1. **Prioritize financial, academic and personal fit** over name brand in selecting colleges.
2. **Cost of attendance can be significantly lowered** through academic, talent, and athletic scholarships as well as skillful financial planning. Some of the most selective universities and some smaller liberal arts schools are the most generous, offering equivalent or at times better financial packages than local public institutions.
3. **Get your teens motivated to apply to college** by focusing on possibilities instead of worries and have the financial talk early, clearly stating what you can afford without the emotional charge.
4. **Reduce stress around college applications** by often expressing to your teens that you believe in them: encourage their dreams and seek out the resources and mentors to guide them (including non-profits). Encourage them to take ownership of the process.
5. **Remember this order of priority for college admissions** (except for arts conservatories which emphasize portfolios and auditions): a challenging curriculum, GPA, test scores (for some schools), essays, letters of recommendation, character (qualities like grit, open-mindedness, compassion), leadership in extracurriculars, community service, creative portfolios, interviews, positive social media presence and engagement with colleges.
6. **At any stage from 9th-12th grades, there are many options to develop and demonstrate talents** that yield scholarships and enhance admissions results—focus on the intersection between personal passion and skill then showcase through personal websites, winning portfolios, and more. For all activities, think “deep, not wide” (one or two leadership positions vs. a slew of clubs, teams and groups). Avoid over scheduling to promote good sleep and mental health.
7. **Do not over-invest time or funds in sports** unless the student has a high chance of being recruited.
8. **For high achieving students, the “hook” gives them the edge:** initiating a project with impact for the local community, national or state recognition in the arts, doing research and co-publishing papers with university professors, etc.
9. **Test scores matter**, especially to large public universities that use a GPA/test score formula for admissions, **but** there are many excellent test optional or test flexible schools to consider.
10. **Timelines, spreadsheets and planners are your friends:** research deadlines to stay organized, ask the school counselor for support, and consider hiring an independent counselor for stress-reducing personalized guidance and accountability. Counselors who help obtain scholarships will be worth their fees many times over.