

Parent to Parent Presentation Series on
Preparing for the College Application Process

**“Now is the time to start the
College Application Process:**



What's a parent to do?"

For 11th Grade Parents

Sponsored by QOHS Principal Carole Working

Who we are: Parents Helping Parents

- Camille Szymczak, Ph.D.
 - Seniors at Cornell University and at University of Maryland -Banneker Key Scholar and a QOHS Senior
- Shari Chilbert
 - Graduates of Goucher & Tulane and a QOHS Senior
- Kathryn Brower
 - Senior at University of Maryland-Scholars Program & and a Freshman at Towson in music
- Marty Horan
 - Junior at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) & a QOHS Senior
- Jannette Myers
 - Senior at Indiana in Music and a QOHS Senior

Parents who have been through the process can help!

Why are you here?

To learn what 11th graders need to do to be prepared to apply to college

To familiarize yourself with the vocabulary of the college application process

To learn where to go to get answers to your questions

Junior year is about exploring schools & narrowing choices based on likes / dislikes and “fit”

11th Grade Things to Do

- Mock SAT and/or ACT (determine which is best)
- PSAT (in school)
- Research schools online and create a list
- Talk about type (big/small, city/rural, near/far)
- Take the SAT or ACT and SAT Subject test if needed
- Visit Schools
- Make your list (safety/solid/reach)
- Complete a resume
- Line up recommendations

Communication with your student is crucial

Money First

- Parents must have an honest conversation about what you can afford
- Have an honest conversation with your student about what you can afford

Do not assume that your child will get an athletic scholarship-they are few and require a huge commitment

Most merit money is available through private universities

College Expectations

- Rigorous course work
- Good Grades
- Good recommendations
- SAT or ACT
- 2-3 Extracurricular activities that show leadership

Colleges are looking for what your child can bring to their community

The PSAT

- In school on October 12th
- Shorter (2hrs) and less math than on the SAT
- Potential merit scholarships but very difficult in Maryland
 - Requires >221 out of 240
- Universities send information to students with PSATs in their range to stir up interest - has no bearing on the chances of getting into a school

For top students the PSAT can open doors

AP Courses

- Participation (even if exam grade <3) helps students do better in college
 - Passing grade is a good indication that a student can do college level work
 - Purchase study books now for use all year long
 - Exams given in May
 - Some colleges give credit
 - Some use AP for placement
- | | Scores |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| | 5 Extremely well qualified |
| | 4 Well qualified |
| | 3 Qualified |
| | 2 Possibly qualified |
| | 1 No recommendation |

Choose Colleges that Meet Your Child's Needs

- Get a feel for your child's interests
- List preference priorities (e.g. majors, Big sports, city/rural, big/small etc.)
- Create a list of schools that meets that interest
- Use freshman profile to estimate reach/solid/safety
- Does your child meet the admission requirements
- Do online visits
- Visit the school in person and sign in

There is a college that will “fit” your child

College Rankings

- Top 30-40 schools
 - Entrance to top 30 schools is a roll of the dice
 - Many qualified students but only so many are accepted
 - Students should not take denial personally
- Others
 - There is no real difference between a ranking of say 55 (UMCP) and 60

Rankings are nothing if your child does not “fit”
or the financial burden is too high

Maryland State Schools

- Flagship – University of Maryland College Park (UMCP)
- Honors Colleges
 - University of Maryland-Baltimore County (UMBC)
 - St. Mary's College of Maryland
- Other State Schools
 - University of Salisbury
 - University of Maryland-Baltimore City
 - Towson University
 - Frostburg State University
 - Historically Black Colleges
 - Coppin State, Bowie State, University of Maryland Eastern Shore , Morgan State

Where Did QOHS Students Apply?

- UMCP
- Towson
- MC
- Salisbury University
- UMBC
- Penn State
- James Madison
- VA Tech
- Univ of South Carolina
- Clemson
- Univ of Pittsburg
- WV Univ
- Univ of Delaware
- Frostburg
- **UVA**
- **Georgetown**
- **Cornell Univ**
- American
- **UNC Chapel Hill**
- **Columbia**
- **Univ of Michigan**
- Florida State
- St. Mary's College of Maryland
- **UPenn**

Top 20 schools

- > 30,000 applicants
- Most students have great grades, great scores and great extracurriculars
- Differential Excellence (Harvard term) – what distinguishes the student, makes them pop to the top?

All Top 20 Schools are a crap-shoot

College at no Cost?

- Consider the Military Academies (West Point (Army), Naval, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine)
- Consider ROTC
- Schools with full-tuition scholarships to anyone who attends (free room & board varies)
 - Webb Institute - engineering
 - The Curtis Institute of Music
 - Berea College
 - Others too

Do your due diligence.

Family Connections can be a Valuable Resource

- Available through QOHS
- Get password from QOHS
- Will help with search
- Evaluate your child's chances of acceptance based on other QOHS students who have applied and been accepted or denied

Take advantage of resources provided by MCPS

College Entrance Exams

- SAT - Scholastic Aptitude Test
- ACT - American College Test
 - Either test is accepted by all colleges and universities
 - try both, concentrate on the one that fits your child best
 - SAT is an aptitude test
 - ACT is more like a HS test as it measures what you know in 5 different subjects (Math, English, Science, Social Studies, & Writing)
- SAT Subject tests
- Do not send scores before you see the results (score choice)
 - Many Schools place more weight on the SAT Reading & Math

Practice is crucial for success

2-3 SAT Subject Tests are Required by Some Schools

- SAT Subject tests
 - 1 hour each
 - Can take 3 on same day but not same day as SAT
 - Need to plan out dates for tests since cannot take on same day as SAT

Subjects

- English Literature
- U.S. History
- World History
- Mathematics (Level 1 or Level 2)
- Biology E/M
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Languages

Best to take at the end of an AP course

When to Take the SAT/ACT

- January, March, (June see below), October
- If taking AP exams DO NOT do May
- Make a schedule if your child needs to take 3 SAT subject tests as this is hard to fit in
 - May/June is for SAT Subject tests if required
 - Maximum 3 subject tests per test date
- Cannot take SAT and Subject tests on same day

Planning ahead will decrease the pressure!

Scores

“The value of good test scores is
scholarship money,
the path to good test scores is practice”

Make a List of Possible Schools

- Look through “Best Colleges” books & web sites
- Create a list of 20-30 possible schools
- Separate into safety/solid/reach
- Cull the list to 6-10 by
 - Matching academic programs to interests
 - Visiting schools
 - Talking to students (many schools have student blogs for perspective students to ask questions)
 - Desired student life activities

Music, Art or Architecture

- Music
 - Instrument specific-take a lesson with the prof
 - Auditions after application submitted
- Art / Architecture
 - Requires a portfolio

UMCP Fall 2011 Freshman class

- over 26,150 applications for a class of 3,975.
- strong A-/B+ or better average
- took most challenging courses available (Honors, AP, IB)
- average (weighted) GPA of 4.05
- middle 50%
 - SAT scores range 1250 to 1400/1600 ACT scores 28-32
- **Honors College:** average (weighted) GPA of 4.35
 - middle 50% 1330-1480 SAT, 30-33 ACT
- **College Park Scholars:** average (weighted) GPA of 4.05

Short Answer questions determine program placement
and scholarship awards during priority admissions

QOHS Students & UMCP

- For 2011
- Applied: 153 Accepted: 92
 - Fall : 83 January: 9
- For 2010
- Applied: 120 Accepted: 72
 - Fall : 55 January: 17

- Past Average accepted: 80 to 90 each year
- About half will attend

UMCP January Admission and Freshman Connection

- January Admission
 - Housing not guaranteed but most January admits do get housing in the dorms
 - Off by a semester
 - Can take courses at MC or other college and transfer credits
- Freshman connection
 - Start CORE classes in the Fall
 - Possible to graduate on time
 - No housing
 - Classes 3 – 9 p.m. M-Th & 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Friday

An opportunity if UMCP is a student's first choice

Montgomery College

- Pluses
 - Inexpensive first 2 years
 - Can be a great way for a student to overcome a weak High school transcript
 - Back door into College Park with 3.0 GPA & AA degree
- Minuses
 - Low four-year graduation and transfer rate (only 34.9 percent for full-time Maryland community college students in 2004 cohort)
 - Must remain focused-many distractions
 - No on campus living

Seriously weigh the pluses and minuses

Student Visits to Colleges

- Sign in (some schools keep track and use it in admissions decisions)
- Attend the information session (hints on essay topics to avoid)
- Take a tour and talk to campus students
- Do an overnight
- Eat lunch in the cafeteria
- Sit in on a class
- Ask Questions (What was the best essay you have ever read?)

Spring Break is a good time to see colleges with students in classes

Visiting Colleges

- Questions to ask from Saint Mary's College of Maryland, Head of admissions:
- To Faculty: Why do you teach here? and What are your students like?
- To Students: Why do you go here? and What are your Professors like?

How many applications?

- Guidelines are 2-3 of each type safety, solid, reach
- Application fees range from \$35 - \$85
- What can you afford?... $10 * \$50 = \500 + fees for sending scores (~\$50/school)
- Common Application makes it easier but most schools have a supplement

For most students,
University of Maryland College Park
is not a safety school

Apply Early?

- Early decision – 1st choice only and is binding
- Early action – result early, not binding
- Restricted Early Action – cannot apply early if applying to an early decision school
- Rolling Admissions – decisions made as they are received – better chances early
- **Priority Admission (UMCP)** – scholarship and financial aid doled out (~75% of class determined)

Understand your options.

Financial Aid Facts

- Private schools often have more money available for aid, do not overlook these schools due to sticker shock
- Need blind means that a school will make the acceptance decision independent of whether financial aid is required
- Financial aid packages come with the acceptance to the school
- If a college wants your child, they will meet the difference from your Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) (by grants, scholarships, loans, and combinations) (confirm for 4 years if situation unchanged)
- The most expensive school when all is said and done may be a state school, not a private school
- You can appeal a financial offer, which may or may not help

Vast majority of assistance comes from the school itself,
not outside sources

Financial Aid Facts

- FAFSA and CSS forms are used to determine your EFC
 - Many schools want the CSS estimated before the end of the calendar year
 - FAFSA to be completed after January 1st of senior year, but recommend taking care of it earlier rather than later. Be careful filling out the FAFSA. It is harder than taxes!
- There is work study (which does not reduce your bill, it provides income during the semester)
- Parent and student loans may be subsidized or unsubsidized
- For assets in parents' names 5% is included in the EFC, for assets in the child's name 35% is included in the EFC
 - Plan to move money around, in or out of your name or your child's accounts? Do it by the 31st of December Junior year or it shows up in the application process.

Work study doesn't reduce your bill but provides income during the semester

Merit Scholarship Facts

- Investigate college websites to find grants/scholarships offered through the schools (e.g., Tulane has a community service scholarship)
- More likely to get merit scholarships at “safety” schools
- Students in the top ~5% of applicants in running for merit aid
- Private schools often have more money available for merit scholarships, do not overlook these schools due to sticker shock
- Deadlines for scholarships often are before deadlines for applications

Need blind schools do not generally award merit scholarships

QOHS Profile

- Sent with every transcript
- Colleges use it to evaluate your child's transcript (rigor based on what is available)

2010-2011 ENROLLMENT

Seniors 425
 Juniors 426
 Sophomores 488
 Freshmen 505

POST SECONDARY DATA

Four Year College 65%
 Two Year College 32%
 Military 1%
 Work 2%

ADVANCED PLACEMENT TESTS

Total Candidates 702
 Total Examinations 1426
 Scored 3 or Higher 60%

Class of 2010 - STANDARDIZED TEST DATA

Exam	QOHS	County	National
SAT-Reading	537	545	501
SAT-Math	556	560	516
SAT-Writing	539	547	492
ACT Composite	22.5	22.3	21 (state)

Class of 2010 – GPA DATA

Class of 2010 - Cumulative Average Distribution QOHS			Montgomery County Public Schools	
GPA Range	GPA % of Class	Weighted GPA % of Class	GPA % of Class	Weighted GPA % of Class
≥ 4.51	0	7	0	8
4.01 - 4.50	0	21	0	17
3.51 - 4.00	26	24	24	20
3.01 - 3.50	28	20	26	18
2.51 - 3.00	26	15	24	16
2.01 - 2.50	15	9	15	11
1.51 - 2.00	4	4	7	6

Extracurricular activities

- Inside of school
 - Clubs, sports, SGA, music, art
- Outside of school
 - Scouts, church activities
 - Club sports
 - Music, art
 - Work
- Work towards 2-3 with leadership positions

Quality versus Quantity !

What to Include on the 11th Grade Resume

- **High School Weighted GPA: xxx Unweighted GPA: xxx**
- **AP Courses Taken (Grade):**
- **Work Experience**
- **Extra-curricular activities:**
 - **Awards:**
 - **Honor Societies:**
 - **Sports:**
 - **Music:**
 - **Art:**
 - **Other:**
- **Leadership activities:**
 - **Awards:**
 - **Selected Service Projects**
 - **Community service**

Include all activities beginning with summer before 9th grade
Be honest or it could come back to haunt you!

Sample Resume

Resume
Female Student
15800 Quince Orchard Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20878
301-840-xxxx

High School Weighted GPA: 4.39 Unweighted GPA: 3.73

Relevant Courses Taken (Grade):

Honors Physics (A), Honors Biology (A), Honors & AP Chemistry (A), AP Calculus-BC (A), AP English (B)

Work Experience

- University of Maryland Physics for Girls Camp Counselor Summer 2006,2007
- Private Swim Lessons (Summers 04 & 05)
- Babysitting

Extra-curricular activities:

Awards:

- Honor Roll (every semester)
- United States Swimming Association-Potomac Valley Swimming Scholar Athlete Award (2004-2005,2005-2006)
- Quince Orchard High School Varsity Letter in Swimming – Winter 2004, 2005, 2006
- Quince Orchard High School Athlete Scholar Award – Winter 2004, 2005, 2006
- QOHS Minds in Motion Award – Winter 2004, 2005, 2006

Honor Societies:

- Spanish National Honor Society
- Mu Alpha Theta (Math Honor Society)

Sports:

- USS Swimming, Potomac Valley Chapter, Hydrosonic Tiburones Team (2000-current)
- Quince Orchard High School Varsity Swim Team (2004, 2005, 2006)
- QOHS December 2005 Athlete of Month for Swimming
- Quince Orchard Swim & Tennis Club Otters Swim Team (Summers 95-current)
- MSI Soccer – since 1996 Spring and Fall

Music:

- QOHS Wind Ensemble (flute & piccolo)
- QOHS Marching Band (piccolo) (2004, 2005), Squad Leader (2005), Lettered

Other:

- Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) President 2006-2007
- Student Partners Abroad 2006 (Lived with a family in Spain)

Girl Scout Experience:

Awards:

- Girls Scout Silver Award 9/2004
- Girls Scout Bronze Award 9/2001

Selected Service Projects or Leadership activities

- Ran a weekend camping trip for 2nd grade Brownies March 2007
- Planned & implemented a station on endangered sea turtles for SU-33-10 Spring Encampment (5/05)
- Planned and ran a station at a Girl Scout Career Fair for Cadettes. (5/2005)
- Babysat for Brownie leaders while they held their meetings (2005-2006)
- Tour guide for Riley's Lock House, C&O Canal, National Park Service Craft projects and cards for the sick children at the NIH Children's Center
- Seneca State Park clean-up projects

Community service

- Congressional Aide for NY Congressman Boehlert July 2006
- Collected personal items for the wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Hospital for my Silver Award
- Campaign to keep students from drinking over the Holidays (2005 & 2006)
- Taught swimming to 3-5 year olds (Summers 2000-2005)
- Helped plan and run the campaign "Pennies for Patients" to raise money for sick children

Rules for applying

- Read the directions
- Give them what they ask for!
- Be organized
- Send the right info to the right school
- Know your due dates (UMCP=11/1)
- Don't wait until the last day-internet clogs up and you may miss your deadline

Complete your application 2 days before deadline

Typical Essay Questions

- Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
- Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
- Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
- Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
- A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.
- Topic of your choice.

Remember it is your child's essay but do volunteer to proofread and edit for grammatical errors.

Teacher Recommendations

- Follow the rules for the colleges to which you are applying
- Students should choose teachers with whom they have a rapport
- Ask the teacher(s) if they are willing to write a good recommendation
- All schools require a counselor recommendation so students should get to know their counselor

Write a thank you note after the teacher has completed your recommendation!

Transferring

- Choose carefully but change is possible
- Slightly easier to get in
- Little to no support provided to transfer students
- At many schools housing not guaranteed
- Less financial aid available
- Little merit aid

Remember that the school needs to “fit” your child not
you the parent!

Have Your Child Use the Summer Wisely

- Improve his/her resume
 - Learn something new or get a job
 - Travel
- Write a draft essay
- Improve a portfolio (if needed)
- Visit schools
- Finalize school list
- Go online and start the application process
- Gather papers and begin financial aid apps

The more that is done in the summer the less stress your student will have during first semester Senior year.

MCPS Resources Online

- MCPS College And Career Information
<http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/careercenter/>
- <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/planningguides>
 - Getting Started-A Career and College Planning Guide for 9th Grade students.
 - Getting Ready-A Career and College Planning Guide for 11th grade students
- Prep Talk- A biannual newsletter with advice for parents and students on college preparation.
<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/publishingservices/preptalk/>
- Maryland Higher Education: Preparing for College--Investigate the steps you can take that will help prepare for college.
<http://www.mhec.state.md.us/preparing/index.asp>

Take advantage of the resources available

Other Resources Online

- QOHS Website
 - http://www.qohs.org/depts/career_center/
- Wootton High School
 - <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/SCHOOLS/WOOTTONHS/careercenter/index.html>
- B-CC High School
 - <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/bcchs/counseling/index.html>
- Richard Montgomery High School
 - <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/rmhs/guidance/>

Read and learn by what others do

College Search Resources Online

College Board College Search Site

<http://apps.collegeboard.com/search/index.jsp>

College Net

www.collegenet.com

College View College Search

www.collegeview.com/collegesearch

US News College Search

www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/tools/brief/cosearch_advanced_brief.php

Peterson's College Search

www.petersons.com/ugchannel/code/searches/srchCrit1.asp?sponsor=1

School Guides

www.schoolguides.com

Go College

www.gocollege.com

Any College Search

www.anycollege.com

The answers to your questions are out there

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- PSAT (in school)
- Research schools online
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Start early and help your child through the
process