

# **College Application Guide for Seniors**



***Vista Murrieta High School***

28251 Clinton Keith Rd,

Murrieta, CA 92563

United States

1(951)894-5750

# SENIOR COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE

## VISTA MURRIETA HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE OF SCHOOL COUNSELING

### COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS

The college admission process is an exciting challenge in which each student has the opportunity to find the school that best suits his /her interests and needs. The process involves looking at what is important to you as an individual and then locating the schools that will meet your needs. There is a college for everyone!

You are not alone in this process. There are many resources available in the

School Counseling office to assist you on your journey.

This booklet is intended to serve as a supplemental GUIDE to the college admission process. Information in this packet includes:

- Student Resources and Responsibilities
- College Fairs
- College Tests
- Special Programs
- Selecting Colleges
- College Visits
- Applications
- Financial Aid Overview
- Scholarships
- Timelines
- Web Resources



Remember to attend  
College Information  
Night and Financial Aid  
Workshops

### COLLEGE APPLICATION INFORMATION:

**Vista Murrieta High School**  
28251 Clinton Keith Road  
Murrieta, CA 92563

[www.vmhs.net](http://www.vmhs.net)

**Phone Number:**  
(951) 894-5750

**Fax Number:**  
(951) 304-1828

Vista Murrieta High School's  
CEEB School Code:  
**053004**

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### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a college bound student, you will be expected to assume an active role in meeting college requirements. **Meet** with your counselor EARLY in your senior year and as often as needed. **Monitor** your

graduation status. **Study** this guide and do your homework. **Attend** college fairs and Financial Aid workshops. **Visit** the colleges you are considering. **Meet** all deadlines. If needed, complete any

additional research, and begin preparing your essays as soon as possible at the start of senior year. **Apply** as a senior; your first choice application should be mailed by Thanksgiving.

## COLLEGE TERMS AND VOCABULARY

- **ACT (American College Test):** A college admission test covering English, social science, natural science, and mathematics
- **AP (Advanced Placement Test):** The AP program is sponsored by the College Board and offers high school students a chance to do college level work in a variety of academic subjects.
- **CEEB (College Entrance Examination Board):** Company which provides college entrance testing, such as SAT I, SAT II, TOEFL, etc
- **Common Application:** More than 400 different colleges use this form. Using this form reduces the time you need to spend composing multiple essays and typing multiple applications.
- **Common Black Application:** Students can apply to 36 historically black colleges or universities by using one application and paying one \$35 fee. This application provides the opportunity to receive acceptance letters from multiple colleges.
- **Cooperative Education:** These programs combine terms of study alternating with terms of work for an outside employer. The job is related to the student's field of study.
- **Deferred Admission:** Under this program, students who have been accepted by a college arrange to postpone their admission for one year.
- **Early Action:** This plan allows a student to apply early without making a commitment to attend the college if accepted. The student may apply to only one college as an "early action" candidate but may apply to other schools at the same time under their regular admissions programs.
- **Early Admission:** This plan allows a student to begin college work after their junior year of high school. This program is usually limited to exceptional students.
- **Early Decision:** This plan involves a commitment between the student and the college. The student applies early and gets an answer from the college usually by December. If admitted, the student must enroll at the college.
- **Fee Waiver:** This is a form available to students having low family income. The fee Waiver form is submitted instead of money when applying for college admission or testing.
- **Financial Need:** The difference between the cost of education and what the family or applicant can reasonably be expected to contribute
- **Grant:** A form of federal, state, or institutional financial aid that does not have to be repaid. They may be awarded based on need or other qualifications such as minority, military or disability status.
- **Legacies:** These are the sons and daughters of alumni. Colleges vary greatly in their treatment of these applicants.
- **Liberal Arts:** A broad representation of courses in the arts and humanities, social sciences, mathematics, and sciences which compose the curriculum of academic education as distinguished from technical or professional education.
- **Private or Independent College:** A college that operates independently and is primarily supported by tuition fees, alumni gifts, endowments, and investments
- **Public or State College:** One supported primarily by state or local governments. They charge a higher tuition fee to out-of-state students.
- **Rolling Admission:** At Colleges that use this plan, the admission committee reviews applications in the order in which they are submitted, and students are promptly notified of the committee's decision. Colleges with rolling admissions may reach their quotas early, so it is to the student's advantage to apply early.
- **Scholarship:** An outright award that does not have to be repaid. It is usually given to a student for academic achievement, outstanding talent, or other special qualifications (including need).
- **Transcript:** This is the official record of your high school course work.
- **Tuition:** Is the charge for educational instruction. The amount varies according to the institution.
- **Undergraduate:** College student who is working towards their bachelor's degree.
- **Waiting List:** Being wait listed means that a student has neither been accepted nor rejected but is asked to wait while the college finds out how many of the students it has accepted and will actually decide to enroll. If you are put on a college wait list that is your first choice to attend, you would be wise to send a deposit to another school while waiting.
- **Work Study:** This is a government-supported financial aid program administered through college financial aid offices. It provides part-time jobs for student who help pay college costs.

## COLLEGE NIGHT, COLLEGE FAIRS, AND FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOPS



College fairs are great exposure.

### College Visits

Virtual college visits will be available this fall. Click [HERE](#) for dates and times

### UC/CSU Application Workshops

Virtual application workshops with counselors will be announced soon.

[CSU Application](#): step by step application process

### FAFSA Workshops

TBA

[General Information](#)

## ADMISSION CRITERIA

DISTINGUISH  
YOURSELF WITH  
GREAT  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE  
ACTIVITIES.

Remember, every college is different. The larger the school, the less time it has to spend with your application (often less than five minutes). Small schools may look past weak grades or test scores if they see something special about you. To decide whether you and a college are a good match, admission officers look at a variety of factors. Admissions counselors consider these factors in roughly the following order of importance:

Grades in all courses (9th — 12th)

Challenging Course Work— AP, Dual Enrollment  
& College Coursework

SAT and ACT scores

Class Rank

Extracurricular activities and volunteer experiences

Essays

Teacher recommendations

Counselor recommendation

Interview (if applicable)



Colleges look for consistency and commitment.

Senior year is **very important**. A good rule of thumb is that: “the more selective the college, the more important the senior year performance can be as a deciding credential.” Highly selective colleges look to the senior year for evidence of determined effort and committed involvement. Many withhold final decisions until mid-year

# Senior College Planning Information

## Where should seniors be in the 4-year college application process?

Students should have narrowed down their list of colleges. If more research is needed, please refer to these resources:

Websites: CCGI; College Board; Review.com (see attached list)

Books: Peterson's, Barron's, etc.

College representative visits to VMHS (listen to announcements & come to school counseling office to sign up)

College Open Houses (check websites)

Recommended # of schools to apply to: **5-8 schools**, including:

1-2 “reach”

3-4 “match”

1-2 “safety” schools.

This is determined by comparing the student's GPA and SAT scores with each college's average scores.

### Average GPA's and college selectivity:

<u>GPA</u>	<u>Selectivity</u>
3.5-4.0	Most Selective
3.0-3.5	Very Selective
2.5-3.0	Mod. Selective
2.0-2.5	Less Selective
Below 2.0	Non-Competitive

### Average SAT Scores and college selectivity:

<u>SAT Score</u>	<u>Selectivity</u>
1500+	Most Selective
1300-1500	Very Selective
1000-1300	Mod. Selective
800-1000	Less Selective
Not required	Non-Competitive

## COMPARING COLLEGE SELECTIVITY



Make sure your credentials match those of the colleges you apply to for admission

**Most Selective:** Small % accepted

**Highly Selective:** Admits 25% or less

**Very Selective:** Admits between 35 to 50%

**Selective:** Admits between 50-75%

**Less Selective:** Admits 85% or more of applicants

### PROS:

COST OF TUITION, FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE, EXPLORING MAJORS, AND SMALLER CLASSES

## COMMUNITY COLLEGE

### *What is Community College?*

Community college is the most common type of two-year college. They offer many types of educational programs leading to associate degrees and certificates. Even though tuition at community colleges is usually low, financial aid is available. More than 40 percent of U.S. undergraduate students attend community colleges.

### *Why should you consider going to one?*

Costs are generally much lower than those at four-year colleges. **On average, students at two-year colleges pay less than \$3,000 a year for tuition and fees.** Many community college graduates decide to transfer and complete their bachelor's degrees. If you want to enter the workforce sooner, you can earn a certificate or degree in a career-oriented field, such as firefighting or engineering technology. Most programs are open admission. This means that you can go to college even if your high school grades aren't strong.

In order to succeed in college, you need a solid foundation in reading, writing and math skills. Unless you build them in high school, you may have to take remedial, or catch-up, courses when you arrive at a community college. They are also called developmental or basic skills courses. These courses don't count toward your degree, so graduating will take you longer and cost you more if you're not prepared.



Plan ahead if you want to transfer. Check out articulation agreements.

## SELECTING COLLEGES: CRITERIA TO CONSIDER

If you are planning to attend a college, this is the time to begin to establish some direction. Before you come to the School Counseling Office for help, you may want to do the following:

Look at a map. Decide in which geographic area you would like to live for four years. Consider the following:

- New York and Hawaii are glorious, but it is very difficult and expensive to get home to visit family several times during the year.
- Climates differ - do you like to ski? surf?, etc.
- California state schools have the benefit of in-state residence tuition.

Consider size. There is a tremendous difference between a school with a population of 5,000 and one with a population of 40,000. Compare it to your high school student body. Visit a small school (Sonoma State, Loyola Marymount University, or Pepperdine), a medium school (Stanford, CSU East Bay, or CSU San Marcos) and a large school (UCLA, CSU Fullerton, or Berkley). Get the feel!!!

Consider your PSAT's, SAT's, ACT's and your grade point average. Take a hard look at your prospects for admission. Your list should include: (1) dearly desired, long-shot hopes; (2) solid, fifty-fifty bets; and (3) comfortable, safe choices. It is important that you apply to at least one college where you feel quite certain of admission.

Cost: Ask your parents how much they can afford to spend. Although many students will qualify for financial aid, many will not. It is okay to choose a couple of schools outside of your means, but at least three colleges should be within your parents' ability to pay.

What extracurricular college activities are important to you?

What religious/ethnic groups are you looking for at your institution?

## THINGS TO INVESTIGATE

- Geographic area: Do I want to commute or live on campus?
- Community surroundings: cultural and religious opportunities; local transportation; and recreational and entertainment opportunities
- Students: attitudes; socio-economic status; and interests
- Academic pressure
- Cooperative education opportunities
- Types of programs available: independent study in your field, seminars for underclassmen, and work-study opportunity or field work
- Library: Is it used? Is it adequate? Is it comfortable?
- Student-faculty relationships: Are faculty members accessible? What is the student/faculty ratio?
- Size of the college
- Student organizations: What is the social climate on campus? Is there Greek life? Do I want to participate in a performing arts ensemble? Would I want to see concerts and performances? What kinds of social activities predominate? Are the student organizations supervised by students or administrators?
- Athletics: Are there intramural sports? Fitness facility? Inter-collegiate sports?



There is not a "perfect" college. You should try to find the best fit for you.

"IDENTIFY YOUR PRIORITIES, AND THEN RESEARCH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A RANGE OF COLLEGES"



The more you know, the more likely you are to find the right fit.



## **“Applying Early” Definitions**

Many students like the idea of applying to colleges early, having the process completed by winter break, and relaxing during the second semester. Applying early might, in fact, be a good idea for some students, but it is not the recommended route for most. Below is an explanation of some of the terms used to describe the various ways of applying early.

### ***Early Admission***

Some colleges and universities accept students before they have finished high school, usually at the end of the student’s junior year. Admission is rare under this plan and is only appropriate for the student who has taken an accelerated high school academic program, has an exemplary high school record, and is mature enough to make the early move to college.

### ***Early Decision***

Several schools offer an admission plan for those students who are certain of their college choice during the first semester of their senior year. Application deadlines for early decision plans are usually in October or November. A student who applies to a school under an early decision plan must sign a contract (as do the student’s parents and college counselor) which states that the student will attend that school if accepted. The student also states that he/she will withdraw any and all other applications submitted to other schools and that he/she will not submit any others.

**Applying to a school early decision is a serious and binding commitment.**

Students applying early are reviewed primarily on the basis of their performance through junior year, so the early decision option is usually advisable only for students with outstanding academic records. Responses for early decision applicants are usually received before winter break of the senior year. A student may apply to only one school as an early decision candidate, so if you decide to do this, you should be sure that it is the school you would like to attend.

### ***Early Action***

This is a decision plan similar to that described above, but the important difference is that your acceptance is not binding. Most early action deadlines are in November and December, and you will usually receive a decision before winter break. You will have until the May 1, Candidate’s Reply Date, however, to decide whether or not you will attend that school. You may still apply to other schools even if accepted under this plan. Decisions under this plan are made primarily on the basis of your performance through junior year. It is usually more difficult to get accepted under an early action plan than it is through the regular admission process.





Vista Murrieta High  
School's CEEB  
School Code is

**053004**

## COLLEGE ENTRANCE TESTS

Most colleges require you to take college entrance tests. These schools use the results to determine whether you have the academic aptitude and educational background necessary for success in college. They also use the test results to place you in the appropriate courses. Since colleges vary in their test requirements, you must check each college catalogue for specific information. The company which provides college entrance testing, such as the SAT I, SAT II, TOEFL, etc. is the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB).

**SAT I (Scholastic Achievement Test (CEEB Test Program))**—This is a three-hour test measuring verbal, mathematical reasoning ability, and writing as it develops over time. Most colleges require either SAT or ACT. Register <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register>. The test is held almost every month at various high schools Murrieta and Temecula. (Fee waivers available for income qualified students).

**SAT Subject Tests (Scholastic Achievement Tests—Subject Area -C.E.E.B. Test Program)**—There are one-hour tests that measure knowledge and ability to apply that knowledge in specific subject areas. Three tests may be taken on one test date. It is recommended that you take the SAT subject tests at the conclusion of the year that you take the corresponding class. You cannot take the SAT and SAT subject tests on the same day. Many highly selective four-year colleges require three SAT subject tests. Register at <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat-subject-tests/register> (Available for Math, Science, English, History, and Languages and fee waivers available for income qualified students).

**ACT—American College Testing Program (A.C.T. Test Program)**— This is four-year college admission test, including four 35-50 minutes tests in the academic areas of English usage, mathematics usage, social science reasoning, and natural sciences reasoning. Most colleges will accept the ACT or the SAT. Register online at <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html> . It is recommended that students take the ACT plus writing. (Fee waivers available for income qualified students).

**AP (Advanced Placement exams- C.E.E.B. Test Program)**—The AP program is sponsored by the College Board and offers high school students a chance to do college-level work in a variety of academic subjects. AP exams, which students may take either at the end of AP courses or on their own, enable students to receive college credit or more advanced course placement. These exams are scored on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being the top mark. Most colleges award credits for scores of 3 or better. Registration is conducted through AP classes. (Fee waivers available for income qualified students). Ask for specific registration information from the School Counseling Office or at <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/register-for-ap-exams> .

**TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)**—The TOEFL is designed for students for whom English is not a native language and whose scores on the SAT would obviously be affected by the language difference. Register online at <https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register> . The test is held at various high schools and local colleges.

## SAT SUBJECT TESTS

Formerly called SAT II, the College Board offers and administers SAT Subject Tests. These tests measure your knowledge or skills in a particular subject and your ability to apply that knowledge. Look into taking the Subject Tests as you complete the courses and/or if the college requires them. There are 20 subject tests.

<u>Subjects:</u>	Chemistry
Literature	Italian
U.S. History	Latin
Mathematics Level IC	Modern Hebrew
Mathematics Level IIC	Chinese
Physics	Japanese
French	Korean
German	
Spanish	
World History	
Biology E/M	

Subject Tests are hour-long, content-based tests that allow you to showcase achievement in specific subject areas where you excel.

## PREPARING FOR THE SAT, ACT AND COLLEGE

### The SAT

Measures reading, math & writing skills  
No science section  
Mandatory writing section  
No penalty for wrong answers  
Easy & hard questions mixed into sections

### VS. The ACT

Measures reading, math, writing and science skills  
Has science section  
Writing section optional  
No penalty for wrong answers  
Questions go from easy to hard in most sections

### Publications:

Sat Preparation Guide & SAT Practice Tests  
The Official SAT Study Guide  
Barron's SAT 2400  
The Real ACT Prep Guide  
Barron's How to Prepare for the ACT  
Princeton Review's ACT

**THE SAT, SAT SUBJECT TESTS AND ACT ARE A GROUP OF TOOLS DESIGNED TO ASSESS YOUR ACADEMIC READINESS FOR COLLEGE**

## SAT AND ACT RESOURCES AND PREP COURSES

**Vista Murrieta HS offers: SAT prep course,** See Mr. Tyler in the West Hall Office

**Khan Academy:**  
[www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)

**Kaplan Review:**  
[www.kaptest.com](http://www.kaptest.com)

**www.Number2.com**

**Princeton Review:**  
[www.Princetonreview.com/SAT-prep-class](http://www.Princetonreview.com/SAT-prep-class)

**Sylvan Learning Center:**  
[www.sylvanlearning-centers.com](http://www.sylvanlearning-centers.com)

**The official ACT online course**



Score Choice gives you the option to choose which scores you send to colleges.

# SAT/ACT TESTING

Due to COVID-19, many colleges are announcing plans to shift their testing policies for the Class of 2021 and beyond. Please visit [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org) for test optional schools.

## **SAT ASSESSMENT: 2020-2021 Test Date Schedule**

### Test Date

October 3

November 7

December 5

March 13

May 8

June 5

## **ACT ASSESSMENT: 2020-2021 Test Date Schedule**

### Test Date

October 10, 17, 24, & 25

December 12

February 6

April 17

June 12

July 17

You can register for these tests at: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) (SAT) [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) (ACT)

**\*Due to COVID-19, testing centers are limited. Check SAT and ACT Websites for further information**

**\*VMHS will not be a testing center for the 2020-2021 school year**

**\*To obtain an SAT fee waiver, please email Mrs. Morris at [mmorris@murrieta.k12.ca.us](mailto:mmorris@murrieta.k12.ca.us)**



Register for the SAT at  
[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

Register for the ACT at  
[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

**THE SAT IS THE MOST WIDELY USED COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST. SAT SUBJECT TESTS CAN COMPLEMENT OR ENHANCE YOUR COLLEGE ADMISSION CREDENTIALS.**

## AM I READY FOR THE SAT OR THE ACT?

### WHY ARE YOU TAKING THIS TEST?

- Are you planning to go directly into a four-year college?

Note: Community Colleges do not require the SAT/ACT. They determine placement based on multiple measures. However, you are encouraged to take the SAT/ACT after you have taken the appropriate courses.

- Does your college require the SAT? ACT?

### ARE YOU PREPARED TO TAKE THE SAT OR ACT TEST?

- Have you taken higher level courses in English and mathematics?  
 Adv., IB, AP English  
 Completed Math I, Math II, and Math III with "C" or better grades
- World languages  
 High level mathematics and science classes (including Biology and Chemistry)
- Have you examined your PSAT results to know what you need to do to be ready for success on the SAT? Score report and MyCollegeQuickstart
- Have you taken SAT or ACT preparatory classes or online practice?  
 SAT/ACT prep class, SAT/ACT on-line, College Board/ACT preparatory materials online, SAT/ACT practice tests, College readiness reading and/or writing, or other school or community based classes
- *Meet with your counselor to determine whether the SAT or the ACT is appropriate for you.*

### IS THIS THE RIGHT TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE THE SAT/ACT?

- Are you as prepared as you can be?
- Are you in the spring semester of your junior year or beyond?
- Are you ready?
- Do you know what to expect? Length of test, Types of questions on test, and Deadlines to register

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, you need to talk to your school counselor about the options and support available to help you.



Vista Murrieta HS's  
 CEEB code:  
**053004**

# VMHS College Application & Transcript Procedures

## Applications:

Obtain applications for CSU schools from CCGI ([californiacolleges.edu](http://californiacolleges.edu))

Create account on [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) via CCGI

Complete CSU and UC applications

Complete The Common Application

Review each school's requirements & deadlines

**Remember deadlines are firm – there is no wiggle room.**

We recommend all applications be submitted by Thanksgiving.

Submit all documentation either electronic or mail (actual application, essay, waivers etc.).

## Transcripts:

Request transcripts through Parchment.com

**You can monitor the progress of your transcripts through Parchment. You can see when the transcripts arrived to your colleges of choice.**

## Recommendations

UC's and CSU's DO NOT require letters of recommendation

Ask teachers and counselors IN PERSON to write you a letter of recommendation

Submit a Brag Sheet to counselors who are writing you a letter of recommendation

\*Brag Sheets can be found in the EAST or WEST hall offices and on the Vista

Murrieta website in the Senior section

Provide your counselor or teacher with your application deadlines.

Allow at least 2 weeks for teachers or counselors to complete letters of recommendation.

## Student Resumes

Include awards, leadership experiences, extracurricular activities, service learning, employment, and educational goals

## Essays (if required)

Start writing now (Don't procrastinate.).

Use good writing style with a well-crafted introduction, supporting examples, and a conclusion; do not "say" but instead "show"

Make sure your essay is neatly typed, no handwritten or sloppiness

Be sure to proof read; use trusted proof readers

## **QUESTIONS TO ASK ON A COLLEGE OPEN HOUSE VISIT**

You have only a short time on campus for the open house visit. Prioritize the questions that are most important for you to have answered.

What percent of students receive financial aid?

What is the average amount of financial aid received?

What is the faculty like? Caring? Friendly? Aloof? Rigid?

Do professors or graduate students teach freshman courses?

What is the typical class size, and how much individual attention will I receive?

Does the college have an active Career Center to help me prepare for a successful transition to the world of work after graduation?

What is the atmosphere on campus? Friendly? Relaxed? Competitive? Pressured?

What tutorial assistance is available to students?

What part do fraternities and sororities play in the social and extra curricular life of the college?

Does the college provide study abroad and internship opportunities?

Does the college support an active visiting speaker's program as well as a diverse mixture of entertainment?

What are the percentages of graduates accepted to graduate, medical, and law schools?

How flexible are dormitory living spaces?

Are there medical and counseling services available on campus?

Are there part time employment opportunities on campus and in the surrounding community?

Is there public transportation to shopping, airports, train stations, and the bus depot?

<b>California Colleges (for 2019-2020)</b>	<b>Average GPA</b>	<b>AVG SAT Score (Critical Reading, &amp; Math)</b>	<b>% Admitted</b>
UCLA*	4.29	1290-1520	14%
SDSU	3.97	1283	34%
Cal State San Marcos	3.4	1100	59%
UC Davis	4.15	1260-1480	39.1%
UC Irvine	4.11	1195-1435	26.6%
Chapman University	3.82	1316	53%
Cal State Sacramento	3.35	1038	59%
San Francisco State	3.26	1055	70%
USD	3.97	1200-1350	49%
UC Riverside	3.9	1300-1400	56.3%
University of San Francisco	3.54	1130-1310	71%
Cal State Dominguez	3.0	No Data	77.2%
Sonoma State University	3.2	980-1170	77%
Pepperdine University	3.59	1220-1420	35.7%
San Jose State	3.45	1035	55%
Cal State Long Beach	3.87	1175	31.9%
USC	3.9	1420-1540	11.4%
UC Berkley	4.2	1290-1520	17%
UC Davis	4.13	1260-1480	42%
Theses colleges are only reporting critical reading & math scores. Writing score is omitted.	Minimum G.P.A for Cal states is 2.0	SAT scores not required for some Cal States if G.P.A is 3.0 or above	VMHS numbers are Larger for Cal state San Marcos due to Alliance

## TIPS FOR VISITING COLLEGE CAMPUSES

- Start looking during junior year and try to visit while school is in session.
- Picking schools to visit: Visit as many as you can; 6 to 8 is a good balance.
- Planning travel
  - Use Fodors.com forums to post questions on college trips.
  - People who have already been through the process have advice on saving time and money, fitting in some fun, and finding out what student life is really like.
- Scope out campus parking in advance (Some campuses are huge.).
- Research the school, check out web sites, and prepare questions to ask.
  - Sample questions can be about class size, school spirit, weekend life, etc.
- Scheduling an interview:
  - Some schools require one, most don't.
  - An interview at a "safety" school could be practice for an interview at a "reach" school.
- Take admissions tour and then take your own tour.
  - Wander off the beaten path.
  - Visit a class/building in your major (Arrange in advance)
  - Sleep over to get a great sense of student life (Most admission offices can and will arrange it.).
  - Talk to current students about their experiences.
- Check out residential buildings. Are they single-sex or coed?
- Read bulletin boards to get a good idea about what's happening on campus.
- Eat in the dining hall. Do the students seem happy or stressed out?
- Investigate safety issues such as off campus crime and surrounding neighborhoods
- Leave proof you've visited (For example: Sign-in at the Admissions' Office).
  - Some colleges use demonstrated interest as a factor in the decision.
- Keep notes on what you want to remember.

### **Check out:**

**[www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)**

**[www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com)**

**[www.collegiatechoice.com](http://www.collegiatechoice.com)**

**[www.college-visits.com](http://www.college-visits.com)**





When you are looking at colleges, don't believe the sticker price.

## COLLEGE STICKER PRICE VS. AFFORDABILITY

Before you cross a college off your wish list because of sticker shock, understand that the real cost of college is the “net price” (list price minus the amount of financial aid), which may make the college tuition look more affordable. For students eligible for significant aid, it is not unusual for the “net price” of attending a private college to be less than a public university. In fact, the typical private school routinely cuts its tuition by 33.5%, according to the College Board. And even the less expensive public universities are offering an average break of 14.7%.

## FINANCIAL AID

### Types of Financial Aid

- 1) *Grants*: State and federal grants do not have to be repaid. They are based on financial need.
- 2) *Scholarships*: These are awarded based on merit or academic achievement. Scholarships do not have to be repaid.
- 3) *Loans*: There are public and private loans. Unlike grants, loans must be repaid with interest.
- 4) *Student employment or work study*: This is an opportunity to work and earn money with a campus related job, while in school to pay for college expenses.

## APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

- 1) Go to <http://pin.ed.gov> to request a PIN that you will need for the next step below.
- 2) To apply for student financial aid from the federal government, including grants, Perkins Loan, Stafford Loan and work-study, you will need to submit the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** at <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>. There is no charge for submitting this form.
- 3) **The FAFSA should be submitted as soon as possible after October 1 of your senior year. To meet the deadline for California schools, you should submit the form no later than March 2.**
- 4) Some private colleges and universities will require one or more supplemental forms to obtain information not included on the FAFSA. They may have their own forms, or they may ask you to complete the College Board's [CSS PROFILE](#) form. (cost may apply)
- 5) If the college of your choice and your parents cannot meet the expenses for your college tuition, you may have to borrow money. Educate yourself about loans and interest rates.
- 6) Check out these sites for additional financial aid resources:



Submit your FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1 of your senior year.

<http://www.student-loans.com/Repay.html>  
<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>  
<http://www.finaid.org>

## SCHOLARSHIPS

*Scholarship money comes from three basic sources:* governments (federal and state), colleges and outside benefactors. Eligibility criteria will correspond to your qualifications, such as corporate/employer, disabilities, field of study/intended major, gender, international students, military participation, minority status, ethnic background, organization/civic affiliation, reli-

gious affiliation, state of residence, and study abroad.

Use web-based search engines such as

**collegeboard.org**  
**fastweb.com** and  
**Scholarshipexperts.com**

When applying for scholarships:

- Apply early.
- Follow directions.
- Be organized.
- Check your work.

- Keep copies of everything.
- Reapply in subsequent years



Searching for private scholarships takes effort.

## NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (NCAA)

If you want to participate in Division I or II athletics as a freshman, you must first register and be certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. If you don't register, you will not be eligible to play or practice during your freshman year. Athletes who want to compete at College level must file a form with the NCAA Clearinghouse. Registration is a one-time fee of \$65.

Division I Requirements : GPA of 2.3 in a core curriculum of 16 academic subjects. 890 SAT score or 74 ACT score.

Division II Requirements: GPA of 2.0 in a core curriculum of 14 academic subjects. 820 SAT score or 68 ACT score.

It is recommended that student athletes register with the NCAA clearinghouse at the start of their junior year in high school. There is no actual registration deadline, but you must be cleared by the Clearinghouse before you can receive a scholarship or compete in your sport at the college level.

For additional information, see your counselor, coach, and/or check out these web sites:

[www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)

<http://www.ncaa.org>

<http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/CB11.pdf>

<http://www.naia.org>

**ATHLETES:  
REMEMBER,  
YOU ARE  
CHOOSING A  
COLLEGE,  
NOT A TEAM**



Please see Mr. Peterson or Mrs. Candaele in West Hall Office for additional NCAA questions.



# College Planning Calendar

## **SENIORS**

### **Summer**

- Improve your reading and vocabulary skills
- Continue searching for scholarships and ways to pay
- Combine vacation plans with campus visits
- Start working on your college application essays
- Create a Common App account through CCGI for non-California schools
- Talk to people in interesting careers
- Decide who you'll ask to write letters of recommendation if your school requires it (UC's and CSU's do not)
- Talk with college friends home for summer

### **September**

- Keep your calendar up-to-date tracking important dates and deadlines for colleges
- Collect information needed to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and review some FAFSA tips.
- Determine how to submit your FAFSA
  - \*Important: Don't submit your FAFSA before October 1; it will be returned, not processed
- Discuss your classes, college plans, and test scores with your high school counselor
- Arrange campus visits—call the colleges to find out when campus visits will be held
- Register to take the SAT/ACT, if necessary
- Continue to search for free money (scholarships & grants) and others ways to pay on CCGI
- Ask your teachers or counselors for letters of recommendation and submit to them your Brag Sheet (located on the school website under the senior section and the east or west hall offices)

### **October**

- Launch your FAFSA from CCGI to ensure you are not on a scam website
- Submit your FAFSA after October 1 as possible. Some student aid programs award funds on a first-come, first-served basis. Waiting too long to submit your FAFSA could be costly
- Fill out and submit required financial aid forms. Follow instructions carefully and make copies
- Attend FAFSA workshops available at VMHS with FAFSA representatives (dates and times to be announced)
- Familiarize yourself with state financial aid deadlines. They tend to differ from federal and institutional deadlines
- Let your parents know that the IRS could save them money through education tax deductions and credits
- Cal State Applications are open from October 1 to November 30. Launch from CCGI
- Attend college application workshops held at VMHS (dates and times to be announced)
- Make sure you request all transcripts through Parchment.com
- Get some pointers on writing admission essays
- View sample essays and essay questions
- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights
- Candidates for early school admission (early decision, early action, early admission, etc.) should complete college applications

- UC Applications are open from November 1 to November 30
- Continue completing your college applications. Early decision (binding contract) deadline is often November 1 or 15
- Determine which financial aid forms the colleges on your list require. When in doubt, contact the financial aid office
- Search for additional sources of financial aid on CCGI
- Sign up for AP exams if you're in any AP classes before the November deadline

**December**

- Complete and submit all school applications ideally by December 1
- Take SAT or ACT, if registered
- Stay organized. Remember to keep copies of applications and correspondence
- Continue to track important dates and deadlines on your calendar
- If you have college-specific questions, do not hesitate to contact the school directly through their admissions office

**January**

- Apply for financial aid if you have not already done so
- Learn about your options for college loans

**February–March**

- College decision and financial award letters start rolling in
- Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR). Carefully examine the results. A mistake could cause you to miss out on college funding
- Stay on top of important financial aid deadlines
- Apply to Murrieta Dollars for Scholars online at [www.murrieta.dollarsforscholars.org](http://www.murrieta.dollarsforscholars.org). Applications open January 15 and close on February 28. Students must have a 3.25 GPA or higher to apply
- Respond quickly to college requests for additional documentation

**April**

- Carefully analyze your acceptance letters
- Make a decision and send your tuition deposit (Most colleges ask for response by May 1)
- Notify the other colleges that you won't be attending
- Carefully follow the directions in your acceptance letter. Along with important deadlines, these letters provide specific instructions on housing, financial aid, orientation, and more
- Continue to mark your calendar with important deadlines
- Attend Murrieta Dollars for Scholars event if you received a scholarship

**May**

- Request final transcripts through Parchment.com
- Respond quickly to requests and return necessary forms—when in doubt contact the financial aid office (FAO)
- Notify your FAO of any additional funding you'll be receiving to pay for college (scholarships and loans, etc.)
- Evaluate student loan lenders and take time to understand student loans
- Learn about borrowing responsibly

**Summer**

- Attend orientation
- Complete any college financial aid info received. If you have questions—ASK
- Finalize your budget
- Send thank you notes to individuals who helped you get in, scholarships you've received.

## WEB RESOURCES FOR CAREERS & COLLEGES

### **Career Information:**

[www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu)

<http://www.jobbankinfo.org>

[www.thehighschoolgraduate.com](http://www.thehighschoolgraduate.com)

[www.mappingyourfuture.org](http://www.mappingyourfuture.org)

### **College Information:**

[www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu)

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

[www.students.gov](http://www.students.gov)

<http://hbcuconnect.com>

[www.christianconnector.com](http://www.christianconnector.com)

[www.hillel.org](http://www.hillel.org)

[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)

[www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com)

[www.collegedata.com](http://www.collegedata.com)

[www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

<http://www.careersandcolleges.com>

[www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)

### **Technology/Apprenticeships:**

[www.techschooldirectory.com](http://www.techschooldirectory.com)



Many college web sites have virtual campus tours.

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## WEB RESOURCES FOR FINANCIAL AID & EMPLOYMENT

### **Scholarship and Financial Aid:**

[www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu)

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

[www.mhec.state.md.us](http://www.mhec.state.md.us)

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

[www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)

[www.simpletuition.com](http://www.simpletuition.com)

[www.collegeanswer.com](http://www.collegeanswer.com)

[www.gocollege.com](http://www.gocollege.com)

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

[www.free-4u.com/minority.htm](http://www.free-4u.com/minority.htm)

[www.minority-scholarship-guide.com](http://www.minority-scholarship-guide.com)

### **Employment Opportunities:**

[www.snagajob.com](http://www.snagajob.com)

<http://citypaper.com>

[www.gotajob.com](http://www.gotajob.com)

[www.jobbankinfo.org](http://www.jobbankinfo.org)

[www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)

[www.myfuture.com](http://www.myfuture.com)

“THE INTERNET  
IS THE MOST  
COMPREHENSIVE  
RESEARCH TOOL  
FOR YOUR  
COLLEGE  
SEARCH.”



## Counselors at VMHS

### Vista Murrieta High School

28251 Clinton Keith Avenue  
Murrieta, CA 92563

Phone: (951) 894-5750

Fax: (951) 304-1828

Vista Murrieta High School's CEEB  
School Code:  
**053004**

**VISIT YOUR SCHOOL  
COUNSELOR EARLY  
AND OFTEN. WE  
ARE HERE TO HELP.**

**Gabriela Arizola:** (Mo-Sa) Ext: 6789

garizola@murrieta.k12.ca.us

**Demetrius Caldwell:** (A-Cr) Ext: 6687

dcaldwell@murrieta.k12.ca.us

**Karen Candaele:** (Ho-Mi) Ext: 6775

kcandaele@murrieta.k12.ca.us

**Claudia Hill:** (SC-Z) Ext: 6685

cghill@murrieta.k12.ca.us

**Aurora Padilla:** (Acad./Int.) Ext: 6776

apadilla-napoles@murrieta.k12.ca.us

**Eric Peterson:** (Special Projects) Ext: 6779

epeterson@murrieta.k12.ca.us

**Diana Ruiz:** (AVID) Ext: 6772

druiz@murrieta.k12.ca.us

**Dione Tyler:** (Cu-Hi) Ext: 6718

dtyler@murrieta.k12.ca.us

## FINAL ADMISSION TIPS

Sell yourself to colleges!  
Brag! Complete a resume to send to colleges with your application materials. Show colleges that you will continue to make a valuable contribution to their campuses, just as you have at your high school.

List your extra-curricular activities, volunteer work (yes, that includes church and synagogue, etc.), awards and honors (Athletes, were you written up in the newspaper?), jobs, summer experiences, and interests. List when and amount of time spent on the above.

It is better to be involved in a select few activities over a long period of time. It

shows colleges that you can make a commitment. You may seem noncommittal if you try out multiple different clubs every year. Stick to a few favorites instead!

Your resume is a way for you to distinguish yourself from the other applicants.

Be productive this summer. Get a job or volunteer. Looking for volunteer opportunities? Visit. Ms. Michelle in the College and Career Center.

Admission Counselors review thousands of applications each year. In making sure you stand out, also make sure you are yourself. Find something you really enjoy and do it long-term,

rather than doing something you do not enjoy because you think it will look good to colleges. Make the details count! It will help your application stand out from the rest.

**Visit CCGI! Gives you the tools to organize all of your career plans and applications online!**

[Californiacolleges.edu](http://Californiacolleges.edu)

You Can:

- Explore Careers & take Interest Assessments
- Search for Colleges
- Build a Career Plan
- Launch all college applications
- Launch FAFSA
- Provides your transcript information and GPA
- Research Scholarships & Paying for College Resources
- CCC Apply
- CSU Apply

