



WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR in High School Students

Ranking the Top 12

This list is based on IECA member feedback.

Just as every college is different, so too are the criteria and priorities in each college's admission process. In fact, one of the great advantages of working with an independent educational consultant is their personal knowledge of these differences, helping students to navigate the process.

1

The most **RIGOROUS CURRICULUM** available that challenges the student (AP, IB, dual enrollment or other advanced classes).

2

A **HIGH GRADE POINT AVERAGE** in major core subjects. However, academic rigor outweighs a high grade point average.

3

Engagement in **MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES** that align with a student's interests, whether in or out of school. It's more impactful to have a few activities with consistent involvement than many with only occasional participation.

4

An effectively written **ESSAY** that provides insight into the student's unique personality, qualities, and values.

5

Demonstrated **LEADERSHIP** inside or outside of school.

6

HIGH SCORES on standardized tests (ACT, SAT) that reflect academic performance.

7

DEMOGRAPHIC and personal characteristics that contribute to a diverse and interesting student body.

8

Strong counselor/teacher **RECOMMENDATIONS** that provide further insight into the student.

9

SPECIAL TALENTS that could contribute to campus life.

10

A strong **INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY** demonstrated through participation in available research opportunities, independent projects, and extracurricular pursuits.

11

CHARACTER AND VALUES that reflect those of a contributing community member.

12

DEMONSTRATED INTEREST and enthusiasm in attending the college or university of choice (through campus visits, communication with the school, interaction on social media, etc.).



INDEPENDENT
EDUCATIONAL
CONSULTANTS
ASSOCIATION

3251 Blenheim Boulevard • Suite 510
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
703-591-4850
info@IECAonline.com

For more advice, go to
www.IECAonline.com
to find an IECA member

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