

## Parental Involvement in the College Admissions Process

The most important tip to remember: Preserve your relationship with your child. The college application process will pass, and your relationship with your child will continue. Be a positive support and help in ways that feel helpful to your student.

### Organization

- Set up a record keeping system to log extra-curricular activities, community service hours and awards/honors
- Keep a journal of funny and interesting stories your student shares with you throughout high school. These will be a huge help when your student starts brainstorming college essay possibilities
- Buy an accordion folder and file the promotional mail your student gets from colleges
- Help your student create a log of all college related usernames and passwords
- If your child is disorganized, help him/her find organizational systems that work. Intervene and check frequently in 9th grade and then gradually diminish your help so that the student is self-managing by the end of 11th grade

### Academics and Standardized Testing

- Encourage your student to take the most rigorous coursework that your high school offers and that he/she can handle
- Loosely plan a four-year academic schedule and use that to inform a testing schedule. Tests should be taken as close as possible to the time that your student finishes the course-work covered in those tests.
- Find test prep strategies and resources that fit your budget

### College Visits

- Encourage your student to attend college nights or rep visits, and go along when appropriate
- Start visiting colleges early (as soon as 7th grade) when you are in a college town on a family vacation
- Help your student make a list of non-school days during each academic year and provide transit for local college visits on those days
- Set aside time and money for a spring break junior year college trip if possible
- Teach your student to get a business card from admissions reps and how to handwrite (and address) a thank you note

### Finances

- Run your financial numbers early (finaid.org)! Be clear with your student about what you can afford to contribute to his/her college education
- Help your student register on scholarship search engines as early as 9th grade. Build a spreadsheet of appropriate scholarships and sort by due date
- Don't wait, estimate! Fill out the CSS profile (if needed) and the FAFSA in January

### Athletics and Auditions

- If your student wants to play sports in college or be admitted to a selective performing arts program, set up a spreadsheet for coach contacts/audition requirements
- Get video for a highlight reel starting in 9th grade

### Reminders

- Don't jeopardize your last full year together by nagging/micro-managing
- Don't get caught up in the name brand/prestige game when it comes to college selection. Encourage your child to apply to great fit schools where he/she can be successful
- Don't fill out any applications or write any essays for your student!

**Jodi Walder-Biesanz** and **Emily Standish** are independent college counselors in Portland, Oregon, offering comprehensive college counseling for students of all backgrounds and achievement levels. We help high school students identify, apply and gain admission and financial aid at right fit colleges. One hour, free consults are offered to students and parents. To arrange an appointment email [jodi.walder@comcast.net](mailto:jodi.walder@comcast.net) or call 503.720.7114.