



Chandler High School

Getting the most out of high school
“The BIG Five”



1. Academics / G.P.A.

- Are you taking the most rigorous courses for your abilities? ****Be sure to read the article “Factors in Admission Decisions”**
- Are you utilizing at-school tutoring?
- Do you talk with your teachers face-to-face about questions, confusion about course material, etc.?
- Do you attend SWIB (“Study with IB”) sessions?
- Do you collaborate with your peers on homework, studying, etc.?
- For competitive admission and scholarships - is your class rank (weighted GPA) in the top 5% of your class?
- Part of the “Common App” (more than 700 universities use this application) asks your counselor: “Does your school offer the IB Program”, and “Is this student an IB Diploma Candidate?”
- This is also a question on applications such as ASU-Barrett Honors College.
- Sign up early for an account at www.collegedata.com

2. Standardized Test Scores

- Are you taking the PSAT in 9th and 10th grade as practice for 11th grade?
- Are you signing up for free practice test sessions?
- Do you use the resources available on sites like College Board to link you with study resources?
- After receiving PSAT results, are you logging into your College Board account and using the study materials through Khan Academy?
- Are you educating yourself on the differences between the SAT and the ACT?
- What minimum scores do your dream schools require?

Know your targets...

- Quest Bridge
- FLINN Scholarship
- National Merit
- Gates Scholarship



3. Personal Essay

- On most college and scholarship applications you have an opportunity to write one or more essays. How are you growing as a learner, as a community member, as a global citizen throughout high school?
- Are you highlighting what makes you unique and not just retelling facts from #1 and #2 above?
- Do you use this opportunity to write about what you are passionate about, what motivates you to work hard on (...), what your goals are for the future, how that school will be a better place with you there?
- Keep track of your successes, challenges, failures, obstacles throughout high school - and what happens on the other end.

4. Recommendations

- Are you working to build rapport with your teachers AND your counselor?
- Can these recommenders write about how you contribute to a positive classroom / school environment?
- Are you developing a “Brag Sheet” throughout all 4 years of HS?
- Are you informing your recommenders about **specific** criteria for each application you are submitting?

5. Service and Leadership

- Are you logging service activities starting in 9th grade?
- Are you trying a variety of activities in 9th / 10th grade and then moving to more consistent service in 11th/12th?
- By 11th grade, if we ask the organization: “If (...) were not here, would you miss him/her?” - would they be able to say **YES!** ??
- You can be a leader everyday in any environment - in the classroom, around campus, in a club. You don't just have to be a ‘president’ or a ‘captain’ to be a leader!