Opening the Doors of Tomorrow

COLLEGE COUNSELING
Reaching High
Standing Out
Students thrive on the academic rigor of Parker’s discussion-based courses, learn to be solid community members and develop an enormous capacity for the love of learning. As our students progress throughout their years at Parker, they are challenged and inspired to think critically, write effectively, analyze thoroughly, present convincingly, listen thoughtfully and strive to achieve excellence in all they do. This is the best preparation for exceptional work after high school.

Our students are highly sought after and successful in the college admissions process, enrolling each year in colleges and universities of their choice, including many of the most selective schools in the country.

During junior year, we begin the college search and application process, collaborating with parents, advisors, teachers, gradeheads and college representatives to engage students in a detailed, developmentally appropriate program that continues through senior year and graduation. We use every opportunity to help students discover their strengths and talents as they work to identify schools that “fit” them. The college selection process is a learning experience and we help them take advantage of every teachable moment that emerges.

The Parker experience—an environment where students take an active role in their education and become contributing members of an engaged intellectual community—uniquely prepares them for the independence of college. In a recent independent survey, Parker Alumni reported:
It’s More Than Getting into a Great College
It’s About Getting into the RIGHT College

Our College Counseling Program is strategically focused on helping our students find colleges that uniquely suit their strengths and passions. Program services include:

- Relevant informational meetings throughout their Junior and Senior year
- Small group workshops for students on choosing a college and successful college application strategies
- Opportunities to meet with more than 100 college and university representatives
- An in-depth, Parker-specific “college counseling notebook” for juniors and their parents to serve as a reference guide throughout the college selection process
- Customized instruction, advice and counsel for students and families throughout all stages of the process, including search, application and selection
- A primary, full-time college counselor to serve as a contact (in addition to advisors) throughout the process for students' individual questions, beginning with an individual family meeting
- A College Counseling staff who visits campuses, attends national meetings and develops and maintains relationships with hundreds of colleges and universities
- Mock admissions panel made up of deans and admissions representatives from colleges and universities, to engage seniors and their parents in a hands-on understanding of the process
- Annual alumni college panel for juniors and seniors
- Advice and assistance to seniors in developing and editing essays, extra-curricular charts and supplemental materials for admission and scholarship applications
- Assistance with reviewing offers of admission, scholarships and financial aid packages, as well as other financial needs that occur throughout the college selection process
- Guidance and information regarding testing and preparation for standardized tests
- Information on fee waivers and subsidized test prep options for students on financial aid
- Informational luncheon for students of color highlighting special collegiate programs, information on college fly-out programs for underrepresented populations, and other opportunities (open to grades 9–12)
OF PARKER GRADUATES ENROLL IN DISTINCTIVE INSTITUTIONS AROUND THE GLOBE. IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, THE LIST INCLUDED:

American University, DC
Amherst College, MA
Babson College, MA
Bard College, NY
Barnard College, NY
Bates College, ME
Beloit College, WI
Bennington College, VT
Berklee College of Music, MA
Boston College, MA
Boston University, MA
Bowdoin College, ME
Brown University, RI
Bucknell University, PA
Butler University, IN
Carleton College, MN
Centre College, KY
College of Charleston, SC
Claremont McKenna College, CA
Colgate University, NY
Colorado College, CO
Columbia College Chicago, IL
Columbia University, NY
Connecticut College, CT
Cornell University, NY
Dartmouth College, NH
Davidson College, NC
Denison University, OH
DePauw University, IN
DePauw University, IN
Duke University, NC
Durham University, England
Earlham College, IN
Emerson College, MA
Emory University, GA
Florida A&M University, FL
The George Washington University, DC
Georgetown University, DC
Grinnell College, IA
Hamilton College, NY
Hampshire College, MA
Harvard University, MA
Haverford College, PA
Hobart and William Smith Colleges, NY
College of the Holy Cross, MA
Indiana University Bloomington, IN
Johnson & Wales University North Miami, FL
Kenyon College, OH
Knox College, IL
Lafayette College, PA
Lake Forest College, IL
Lawrence University, WI
Lehigh University, PA
Lewis & Clark College, OR
Loyola University Chicago, IL
Luther College, IA
Manhattanville College, NY
Marquette University, WI
McNally Smith College of Music, MN
Miami University, Oxford, OH
Middlebury College, VT
Milwaukee School of Engineering, WI
Monmouth College, IL
Montana State University, Bozeman, MT
New York University, NY
Northeastern University, MA
Northwestern University, IL
Oberlin College, OH
Oberlin Conservatory of Music, OH
Oglethorpe University, GA
Ohio Wesleyan University, OH
The Ohio State University, OH
Pitzer College, CA
Pomona College, CA
Princeton University, NJ
Purdue University, IN
Quest University, Canada
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NY
Rochester Institute of Technology, NY
Rollins College, FL
Santa Clara University, CA
Seattle University, WA
Skidmore College, NY
Smith College, MA
Southern Methodist University, TX
St. Lawrence University, NY
St. Olaf College, MN
Stanford University, CA
Stevenson University, MD
Swarthmore College, PA
Syracuse University, NY
The New School - Parsons, NY
Trinity College, CT
Tufts University, MA
Tulane University, LA
Union College, NY
The University of Arizona, AZ
University of British Columbia, Canada
University of Chicago, IL
University of Colorado Boulder, CO
University of Denver, CO
The University of Edinburgh, Scotland
University of Illinois at Chicago, IL
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, IL
University of Miami, FL
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, MN
University of Missouri Columbia, MO
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC
University of Notre Dame, IN
University of Oregon, OR
University of Pennsylvania, PA
University of Puget Sound, WA
University of Redlands, CA
University of Rochester, NY
University of Southern California, CA
University of Wisconsin - Madison, WI
University of Vermont, VT
University of Virginia, VA
Vanderbilt University, TN
Vassar College, NY
Wake Forest University, NC
Washington University in St. Louis, MO
Wesleyan University, CT
Wheaton College, IL
Wheaton College, MA
Whittier College, CA
Williams College, MA
Yale University, CT

More online at: fwparker.org/CollegeMatriculation
FAQs

Q: Who prepares Parker students for the college selection process?
A: Our College Counseling Office consists of five highly knowledgeable professionals: the director of college counseling, an associate director (who is also director of college testing), a college counselor, a college counseling coordinator and the college counseling administrative coordinator. We work individually and as a team to sponsor activities and provide information on colleges and the college selection process. We also visit college campuses and attend meetings to establish and maintain relationships with college and university representatives throughout the country. Students are exceptionally well prepared for the college process and beyond.

Q: When do you begin working with students?
A: Although we communicate important information for students and parents to know during sophomore year (practice tests, upcoming college fairs) most of our efforts begin during junior year, with students in small and large groups, and more individually during senior year. We work through advisors, teachers and gradeheads prior to junior year and continue to collaborate with them through our students’ graduation. Our team takes pride in the effort we make to ensure that students and their families look forward to the College Counseling process.

Q: Does Parker rank its students?
A: Consistent with our institutional philosophy, Francis W. Parker School refrains from awarding prizes or distinctions and does not rank students. Courses are not weighted.

Q: If Parker doesn't rank its students, isn't that a problem for colleges in the application process?
A: Quite the contrary. Parker is one of the increasing number of high schools that elects not to rank their students, recognizing that ranking can lead to artificial, simplistic and often inaccurate characterizations of students, while ignoring the many subtleties that contribute to a student’s true potential. Parker’s approach preserves a collaborative spirit that encourages students to challenge themselves to do their personal best. Like many high schools, we work closely with college representatives to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of Parker, our process and our students.

Q: Why don't you publish your average test scores?
A: Although our average test scores tend to be high, we do not publish them because we believe test scores are not the best measure of any student’s or school’s value. Publishing test scores also leads to generalizations that can be limiting and inaccurate.
Q: Why doesn't Parker offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses?
A: AP courses were originally designed to standardize teaching, provide a structured and specific curriculum, stratify students within a course (regular, honors, AP) and lead to a culminating exam presumed to be equivalent to a college placement exam. Since all Parker students are destined for four-year colleges, our curriculum relies on a deeply talented faculty who teach all courses at the highest level. There is nothing mysterious about AP exams; anyone can prepare for and take them without having taken a class. Parker students who choose to take them prepare individually with a faculty advisor and score among the highest in the country. However, fewer colleges each year “give credit” for passing or excelling on AP tests.

Q: How does Parker’s “independent curriculum” benefit the college process?
A: Providing choice and flexibility and developing the capacity for independent inquiry are central to a Parker education. A variety of electives across the Upper School curriculum help students meaningfully explore areas of personal interest, make connections across disciplines and discover new methods of inquiry. As a result of this independence, students emerge as engaged critical thinkers, gifted writers, articulate speakers and confident presenters who have a demonstrated ability to take responsibility for their educational experience—all highly desirable qualities in the college selection process.

Q: What does the College Counseling Office not do?
A: We don't judge or underestimate students. We don't tell students where they should or should not go to college. We don't let students become overwhelmed by the college search, application and selection process in a way that steals their high school years from them. We don't let students forget to be good community members. And, in doing so, our college matriculation record and the success of our students in college has helped us achieve a national reputation for excellence.

95% OF ALUMNI SURVEYED AGREED THAT PARKER PROVIDED THEM WITH THE ABILITY TO ACCESS, STRUCTURE, EVALUATE AND USE INFORMATION RATHER THAN ONLY LEARN FACTS
This is the Education of the Future.

More information
fwparker.org/collegecounseling