

Based on a Survey of IECA member consultants

# Top Ten Strengths and Experiences Colleges look for in High School Students



- 1.** A rigorous high school curriculum that challenges the student and may include AP or IB classes.
- 2.** Grades that represent strong effort and an upward trend. However, slightly lower grades in a rigorous program are preferred to all As in less challenging coursework.
- 3.** Solid scores on standardized tests (SAT, ACT). These should be consistent with high school performance.
- 4.** Passionate involvement in a few activities, demonstrating leadership and initiative. Depth, not breadth, of experience is most important.
- 5.** Letters of recommendation from teachers and guidance counselor that give evidence of integrity, special skills, positive character traits, and an interest in learning.
- 6.** A well-written essay that provides insight into the student's unique personality, values, and goals. The application essay should be thoughtful and highly personal. It should demonstrate careful and well-constructed writing.
- 7.** Special talents or experiences that will contribute to an interesting and well-rounded student body.
- 8.** Demonstrated leadership in activities. Colleges want people who will arrive prepared and willing to take leadership of student activities and events.
- 9.** Demonstrated intellectual curiosity through reading, school, leisure pursuits, and more.
- 10.** Demonstrated enthusiasm to attend, often exhibited by campus visits and an interview, showing an interest toward attending the college.



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