_____

Let's face it, as you set out on the college application process, there are many thoughts running through your mind.

- Where do we begin?

- Are we already behind?

- Is she going to get into a good school?

- Is his GPA high enough for his dream school?

- How do we narrow three thousand colleges down to ten?

In reality, there is one thing that you're afraid of:

The biggest fear is that your son or daughter either won't get into the school they have their heart set on, won't get into what they consider a "good" school, or won't get into any school at all!

Let's make sure that doesn't happen

_____

Timeline (or, are we already behind??)

Not to get all Zen on you, but you can only be where you are. If your son or daughter is in their Sophomore year, and you're starting to think about the process, great. If they're entering their Junior year, and you want to get the process going, that's good too.

Ideally, getting started early is preferable, but even if they are entering their Senior year, that can be worked with. Is it the ideal situation? No, but we have worked with countless students who get started late and do just fine! It can be done.

Application deadlines run the gamut. From Early Decision dates in November, to regular decision deadlines that can run into March and April. No matter when you are getting started, the dates can be worked with.

How Many Colleges?

At the beginning of the process, don't worry about how many schools are on the list. If, after an initial run-through, there are 25 schools on the list then so be it. Obviously that number will decrease by at least half, but initially just get some schools down.

That being said, here are some helpful things to keep in mind as you get the list started that will help streamline the process.

Geography: Have them think about where they want to be for the next four years of their life. For many students, it's easier to rule out certain areas right away. Every region of the country has a great selection of schools, so even if a student only wants to consider one area, that's fine, and actually makes the process a bit easier. Would you prefer to be on the East coast, West coast, the South? In the suburbs or the city? Snow or sun?

Field of Study: First off, they absolutely don't need to know exactly what they want to study when applying to college. Having a general idea can be helpful though, even if it's just knowing that they tend to be drawn to the Sciences more, or the Humanities, or Business.

If they do have a solid idea as to the area of study, then this will be an important factor in what colleges you consider.

What do they like to do for fun? Yes, college is about learning and growing, but it is also about having fun! Think about what they enjoy doing away from academics, and make sure the colleges you are considering offer those opportunities.

If they love to ski, then maybe southern schools are not a great fit. If part of their idea of fun is going to Saturday football games in a stadium, then smaller schools are not going to offer that. If joining a sorority or fraternity is important to you, then make sure your colleges have a strong greek life component.

Campus Size: We usually break schools up into 3 categories.

• Small schools are under 5,000 undergraduate students.
• Medium schools are 5,000 - 12,000.
• Large schools are over 12,000.

College size is somewhat related to the number of majors that are offered, as a large university will have more faculty and facilites than a smaller one. If the idea of a sprawling campus, large classes, and not needing to know everyone is appealing, then great. If they want to be in a more intimate atmosphere, that impacts your decision as well.

How do they learn best? This question is connected to the size of a school. If they are someone who is not bothered by large, lecture hall classes, then a large university might be a good fit. If they learn best in smaller classrooms, then looking at average class sizes for different colleges will be an important factor for you to consider.

What are safe and reach schools?

In our multi-stage process, we start with looking at a students GPA and test scores, and then look at overall acceptance rates at colleges.

Generally speaking, we break schools into 4 broad categories:
- Acceptance rate of 65% and above are <u>less competitive</u>.
- Acceptance rates in the 40% to 65% range are <u>competitive</u>.
- Rates in the 20% to 40% range are <u>highly competitive</u>.
- Rates under 20% are <u>incredibly selective</u>.

At Evolve, we classify schools on our lists in three ways; **Safer, Good Fit, and Reach schools**. We use a number of factors and processes to come up with what that means for an individual student, and there isn't time to get into all of that here. Here are two examples for clarity.

Luke has done well in high school, is a solid student (3.0 - 3.3), and has SAT scores that are similar. For him:
- A Reach school would be in the Highly Competitive category.
- A Good Fit school would fall into the Competitive category.
- A Safer schools would be in the Less Competitive.

Marissa is a student with a high GPA (3.5+), and SAT scores that are similar. For her:
- Reach schools will be Incredibly Selective

- Good Fit schools will be Highly competitive
- Safer schools will be Competitive.

When forming a list, and especially when finalizing it, we like to see a few safer schools, a few reach schools, and the rest schools that are good fits. Having a well rounded list just makes good common sense.

_____

The goal is to increase the chances that your son or daughter gets into a college they can be proud of, and that is a great fit for them. A solid, well thought out, and well balanced College List is the first step toward making that a reality.

Should you have any questions, or need any support with this process, we are here to help. We have worked with hundreds of students, from across the country, with great results. Name a college, and chances are it has been on one of our lists!

All our best to you on this journey, and we hope your family gets the results you are looking for.