

## HOW MANY COLLEGE APPLICATIONS SHOULD A STUDENT SUBMIT?

The number of applications submitted really depends on the student, their interests, and their willingness to research colleges that “fit”. Some students may know what school they want to attend, and if it seems like a “sure thing” and has rolling admission, this is easy. They should submit the application now, get acceptance early and relax the rest of their Senior year.

But for students that are applying to more selective schools, now is the time to narrow that list of 20 to a more manageable 6-8.

What is a selective school? There is no one definition, although most in the field define selective colleges as schools that turn down more students than they accept. The current college application climate has changed drastically from the 1970s or 1980s when most parents applied to college and has changed considerably from the late 1990s when older siblings may have applied to college. More “very qualified” applicants are competing for limited space in small private colleges and at honors colleges within larger public institutions. Some of the more selective colleges are accepting only 10-20% of the applicants. The applicants that are turned down are outstanding students that could do well at these schools, but the pool of applicants just is larger while the number and profile of applicants has risen.

As students narrows their lists to 6-8 schools they need to consider the following:

- Look at the schools’ freshmen profile. These are often found in college viewbooks, on the web, or are available in the Career Center at SEHS. They contain statistics about this past year’s entering class. Look at the grade point averages, class ranks, and test scores of the students the school admitted in the past year. Compare these results to your student profile. From this a student can tell if this college is a “likely” or a “reach” or a “dream”.
- Choose 1-3 “dream” or “reach” schools
- Choose 2-3 “likely” schools (40-65% chance of acceptance)
- Choose 2 “safety” schools. Make sure that if these schools guarantee admission that they are also possible financially. If not, be sure at least one of them is. These safety schools need to be schools where the student will be satisfied to go—this may turn out to be the most viable choice.
- One caution: Do not assume that if a school is highly competitive, applying to 10-20 will increase the odds of acceptance. The same 30,000 students that apply to one or two of these will apply to the others and all together these 20 schools may only be able to accept 6,000 applicants. If students want to apply to a highly selective college they should do so, but be sure to apply to one that is a good fit.
- There are many resources available for parents and students to help narrow the choices—all Juniors and Seniors at South have CIS (Career Information Service) and Naviance Family Connection accounts and passwords. These two online tools are excellent sources to research colleges and school profiles. Naviance, for example, includes historical data on colleges attended by previous South students.

Links to these online resources are provided through South's website and passwords are available through our Career Center.