

Getting In

5 tips for winning the college admissions game

“Now that the admissions net extends across the globe,” says Carol Gill, president of the eponymous educational counseling service she founded 25 years ago in Dobbs Ferry, “the college process has become increasingly competitive and applications have risen dramatically.” So with local high school seniors filling out their college apps and juniors starting to kick their searches into high gear, we asked Gill for her best tips for successfully navigating the process.

■ **Pursue fewer extracurriculars.**

“‘An inch wide and a mile deep’ is the latest mantra in college admissions,” Gill says. In today’s competitive environment, quality of involvement trumps quantity.

■ **Don’t underestimate the importance of academics.**

“Solid grades in the most challenging courses,” Gill says, are still of primary importance. Next in importance are test scores and teacher recommendations, followed by the application itself. “Meaningful application essays can mean the difference between an acceptance or rejection.”

■ **Do your homework.**

Gill advises attending local college fairs, meeting with visiting college reps, and seeing as many campuses as possible. “Info sessions and tours are important,” she says, “but you can also learn valuable information off the tour—in the cafeteria, student center, and even on bulletin boards.”

■ **Set geographic boundaries.**

“There are hundreds of excellent options within driving distance of Westchester.” Boston, she notes, is home to more than 200,000 college students.

■ **Consider the financial big picture.**

State universities, especially in New York, are great bargains, Gill says, and colleges in the South tend to be less expensive than those in the North. “There is the real possibility of merit awards for eligible students.” Check with your high school guidance office to obtain a list of schools offering them.

For more information: (914) 693-8200; collegesplus.com.

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