Selecting a College

Theme and Level

Theme: Evaluate Options
Level: Looking Deeper

At a Glance

Students use CIS School Sort to create a list of postsecondary school options and CIS US Colleges & Universities to research those options. Students develop and use a decision-making grid for selecting postsecondary schools.
Time: 75 minutes.

Essential Questions

- What's important to me in a postsecondary institution?

Preparation

- Reserve computer lab with overhead projector enabled
- Establish CIS portfolios before this lesson
- Familiarize yourself with School Sort and US Colleges & Universities
- Print *School Decision Making Grid Worksheet,* one per student

Steps

1. Show PowerPoint (PPT) Slide 1. Explain that the goal of this lesson is for students to learn to identify factors of importance in postsecondary schools.
2. Ask students to share their concerns and thoughts about selecting a postsecondary school.
3. Show PPT Slide 2. Volunteer exemplary issues that do not surface in the student discussion.
4. Ask students to draft a list of issues that they might want to consider as they look at school options.
5. Ask students to log into CIS using their portfolio usernames and passwords. Direct them to the Education tab, and ask them to select School Sort.
6. Show PPT Slide 3. Explain to students that this navigation bar will be on the left of each page, and that they can follow it in order, or select criteria in order of what is most important to them. Explain that these selection criteria provide important factors to consider.
7. Show PPT Slide 4. Demonstrate how School Sort works, and how to answer the questions.
8. Ask students to use School Sort either during the class period or on their own to create a list of schools that may interest them.
9. Remind students to save results in their portfolios using the Save button.
10. Ask students to reflect upon the various school selection factors that they reviewed in this lesson, then ask them to create a list of their most important criteria for evaluating and selecting schools. (These lists might include some of the same criteria used in School Sort, but students should be encouraged to think about some of the other issues that are important to them, such as those discussed earlier in the lesson. Refer to the list of issues developed above.) Suggest that they review their final list with their parents.
11. Show PPT Slide 5, which is the sample *School Decision Making Grid Worksheet*. Distribute the worksheets to students.
12. Tell students that they are to create their own decision-making grids using these worksheets or spreadsheet software. Explain how they will place their own criteria in the left column of the grid and up to six schools that they are considering in the rows across the top. Ask them to create their own rating scale range for evaluating each school against their criteria. Show the method used on the sample (Slide 5) as one idea.
13. Ask students to select a minimum of four schools from their School Sort list as the basis for additional research and comparison.
14. Instruct students to research these schools using US Colleges & Universities and the internet to locate information related to their individual rating criteria.

15. After students complete this assignment, provide time to share what they learned about the schools they compared. Use Slide 6 to prompt discussion:
    - How did the rating process change how they felt about these schools?
    - What did they learn about what factors are important to them?
    - How might the outcome have changed if they had assigned some factors more weight than others?
    - Did this prompt them to consider other criteria?
16. Encourage students to explore additional schools that meet their personal criteria.
17. Remind students to reevaluate their criteria as they gather and review school application information, attend college fairs, talk to college representatives, and visit campuses.
18. Suggest that, over the next year or so, their expectations and needs will become clearer, and they will become better able to decide where to apply and where to attend school.
19. Ask students to share and discuss their completed worksheets and postsecondary school options with parents then return the signed worksheet to class.

Variations and Accommodations

- Ask students to create a bulletin board display of their research and rating results to share with others in the school.
- Students could work together in small groups to create the rating method.
- Students with visual disabilities could produce the table orally.
- Work one-on-one with any student needing special assistance.

Assessment

Use the *Selecting a College Scoring Guide* to evaluate student work.

Portfolio

Students enter their reflections about this activity in the **What did you learn about how you set goals and make decisions from the career work you completed?** text box in the Evaluate Options section of Career Plan.

Materials

Computer lab with overhead projector and CIS access
Selecting a College (PPTX)
School Decision Making Grid Worksheet (PDF)
School Decision Making Grid Worksheet (DOCX)
Selecting a College Scoring Guide (PDF)
Selecting a College Scoring Guide (DOCX)

Goals and Standards

Common Core State Standards

- English and Language Arts Career Anchor: Reading Informational Text
- English and Language Arts Career Anchor: Speaking & Listening
- English and Language Arts Career Anchor: Language

National Career Development Guidelines

- GOAL CM2 Use a process of decision-making as one component of career development.
- GOAL CM3 Use accurate, current and unbiased career information during career planning and management.

American School Counselor Association

- Career Development, Personal/Social Development

Bloom's Taxonomy: Analyzing, Applying, Understanding

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success

Mindset Standards

- Understanding that Postsecondary Education and Life-Long Learning are Necessary for Long-Term Career Success
- Positive Attitude Toward Work and Learning

Behavior Standards: Learning Strategies

- Demonstrate Critical-Thinking Skills to Make Informed Decisions
- Apply Self-Motivation and Self-Direction to Learning
- Apply Media and Technology Skills
- Identify long- and short-term Academic, Career and Social/Emotional Goals
- Gather Evidence and Consider Multiple Perspectives to Make Informed Decisions

Behavior Standards: Self-Management Skills

- Demonstrate Ability to Assume Responsibility
- Demonstrate Ability to Work Independently
- Demonstrate Perseverance to Achieve Long- and Short-Term Goals
- Demonstrate Ability to Manage Transitions and Ability to Adapt to Changing Situations and Responsibilities

Behavior Standards: Social Skills

- Use Effective Oral and Written Communication Skills and Listening Skills
- Create Positive and Supportive Relationships with Other Students
- Demonstrate Social Maturity and Behaviors Appropriate to the Situation and Environment

Credits and Citations

- Adapted from an activity used in the South Eugene High School Career Center, Eugene, OR.