



8th Grade Students and Parents:

What You Should Know About the High School Application Process – 2020-2021

This guide will give you and your student the latest information about the high school search process, the tests and documentation required, and the steps involved in applying to High School.

Topics to be covered:

- I. Updated High School Information
- II. Private High School Update:
 - Shadowing/Academic Records
 - Catholic/Independent Schools
 - Teacher Recommendation Forms
 - Testing
- III. Public School Update
- IV. What do parents do? What does Holy Trinity do?
- V. Points to Consider
- VI. Frequently Asked Questions

Welcome to 8th Grade! This will undoubtedly be a different year for everyone, due to the pandemic. Schools are having to change their admissions process and we will adjust accordingly. We have made every effort to provide you with the latest information available and will inform you via email when we receive updated or new information. This is an exciting year for your student, and we will do our best to make it as normal as possible. Hopefully, you have had a chance to do preliminary research based on our previous meetings and have narrowed down the list of possible high schools. You are now ready to start the High School Application Process!

It will soon be time to submit the teacher recommendation forms and academic record requests to Holy Trinity, register for the high school placement tests, and submit applications. **Please make sure you pay attention to the due dates for both applications and requests for letters of recommendation and records.** Late applications may be accepted by high schools and late requests for letters of recommendation and records will be completed by Holy Trinity, but your student may be at a disadvantage due to late submittals.

Most high schools mail their letters of acceptance in late winter/early spring. Along with admittance to their school, your student may be offered academic or music/arts scholarships. You will then make the final decision as to which high school will be your home for the next four years.

Now, on to some important topics:

I. Updated High School Information:

The **High School At-a-Glance** spreadsheet reflects the information we have for this year's Open House and application due dates. The **At-a-Glance** can be found on the school's website, under the **Parent** tab. Click on the hyperlink to connect to each high school to learn more about their programs and to access forms. Please note that the information listed is current as of printing. High schools can change dates at their discretion, so please consult their websites for updates. **Note that the At-a-Glance is slightly different this year. It is broken down into three separate sections:** Private High Schools with December deadlines, Private High Schools with January deadlines, and Public School Special Programs. Please pay special attention to the recommendation form deadlines for each.

II. Private High School Information:

I. Shadowing:

Shadow days are encouraged and are excused absences from Holy Trinity. However, many schools are not allowing in person shadows this year. You will need to contact admissions offices of the high schools you are considering and ask if they will have in person or virtual shadow days.

2. Academic Records:

Academic records summarize your child's academic standing. High schools review a student's academic records when considering admission. High schools typically require the following:

- Your child's Middle School transcript (Grades 5, 6, and 7)
- Your child's 8th grade First Trimester report card
- Your child's latest standardized test scores
- Two or three Teacher Recommendation forms

Some schools also require:

- An essay written by the applicant
- Personal interview/Parent interview
- Music auditions if your student will play an instrument in high school

3. Catholic High Schools:

To Submit Teacher Recommendation Forms for Catholic High Schools:

- Download the required copies of the **Teacher Recommendation Forms**, along with the **Records Release Form**, from the high school's admissions site.
- Complete the personal information section of the form (name, date of birth, address).
Please make sure to sign the forms where necessary.
- Place forms in an envelope, addressed to the attention of Elisabeth Albaugh, in the Head of School's office at the Daisy Lane Campus.
- The recommendation forms will then be distributed to the appropriate teachers, who will in turn complete the recommendation forms. Upon completion, all recommendation forms and academic records will be delivered to the high schools.
- I will be happy to meet with any parent who wishes to have assistance in completing these forms. Please either call or email me to set up an appointment. My email: ealbaugh@htrinity.org
Phone number: 301-464-3215, x209.

Testing Information for Catholic High Schools:

- Your child must take the High School Placement Test administered by the Archdiocese of Washington or Archdiocese of Baltimore. The test is currently scheduled for **December 5 and 12, 2020**.
- Your child may take the HSPT at any Catholic high school in the archdiocese.
- **In the Archdiocese of Washington, all students must pre-register to take the test.** For more information, including testing sites, please go to <https://adwcatholicschools.org/>
The registration site is not open at this time. Please check the site for any updates.
- Test scores will be sent to three Catholic high schools identified on your child's High School Placement Test registration form. Test scores are released to high schools in January.

4. Independent and Other Religious High Schools:

Teacher Recommendation Forms for Independent and Other Religious High Schools:

Many independent schools are now requiring **online** recommendation forms. As parents complete the application online, they are asked to enter the names and email addresses of teachers required to complete the recommendations. High schools typically require the current English and Math teacher, and usually the Principal or Division Head to complete recommendation. To be sure these forms are received, completed, and submitted by the high schools' deadlines, parents **must** do the following:

- Make sure you enter the correct names and email address of teachers and administrators.
- Alert Elisabeth Albaugh that you have applied to the high school: ealbaugh@htrinity.org
- I will reply and confirm receipt of your email and will inform the teacher to be on the lookout for the recommendation form. **If you do not receive a reply from me, I have NOT received your email.**
- Follow up with the high school prior to the due date to ensure recommendation forms have been received.
- **Remember that it is your responsibility to enter the correct names and email addresses in your application. We cannot complete recommendation forms we do not receive, and we will not be able to expedite those forms.**

Testing Information for Independent and Other Religious High Schools:

Many independent and other religious high schools require either the SSAT or the ISEE test. Please refer to the high school's admissions page regarding testing requirements. Both SSAT and ISEE are offering on-line testing as an option this year. You can register for placement tests by following the links found on the high school's admissions site. For more information, go to: <https://www.erblearn.org/services/isee-overview> or www.ssat.org

Forms may be submitted earlier, but the deadline to submit Teacher Recommendation Forms for all high schools with December application deadlines is Friday, October 23, 2020.

The deadline to submit Teacher Recommendation Forms for all high schools with January application deadlines is Monday, November 30, 2020.

Teacher Recommendation forms received after the deadline will be completed, but we cannot guarantee delivery before the due date for the high school you have chosen.

III. Public School Options:

There are several Specialty Programs offered by Prince George's County Schools that require an application and testing for admissions. They are:

- **Prince George's County Science and Technology Program:**

The Science and Technology program is a challenging four-year curriculum that provides college-level classes in science, math, and technology. The program is offered at three centers in the county: Eleanor Roosevelt, Oxon Hill, and Charles Flowers high schools. Students accepted to the Science and Technology program will attend the school that serves their legal residence.

- **Prince George's County Academy of Health Sciences Program:**

The Health Sciences program is a program geared towards students interested in a career in the health sciences. Students accepted to the Health Science program will attend high school at Prince George's Community College.

- **Aerospace Engineering & Aviation Technology:**

The Aerospace Engineering program, offered at DuVal High School, is a rigorous program that provides specialized college preparatory courses to students preparing for a career in aviation or aerospace.

To gain admission to any of these three programs, the public school system normally requires that you apply **online** and take the PSAT 8/9 as part of the application process. **This year we have been informed that the school system will NOT administer the PSAT 8/9 due to the pandemic.** At this time, I am waiting for further information from the Testing Office as to how to proceed. Once I have additional information about this program, I will let you know. Until then, you will find general information about each program in the At-a-Glance spreadsheet.

Bowie High School SUMMIT Scholars Signature Program

- The Bowie SUMMIT Program is a four-year course of study in which students follow a rigorous curriculum combining accelerated Honors level and Advanced Placement course work. This program is only open to families who live within the Bowie High School boundary. This program also requires an application and the PSAT 8/9 test a part of their admissions process. As more information becomes available about this program, I will let you know.

IV. What do parents need to do? What does Holy Trinity do?

What Parents Need to Do:

- Attend Open Houses at the high schools you wish to learn more about.
- Inquire about shadow days for the high schools of interest.
- Submit Teacher Recommendation forms and Transcript Release forms by the deadlines to Elisabeth Albaugh in the Head of School's office.
- Register for appropriate placement testing – Catholic HSPT, ISEE or SSAT.
- Submit applications to high schools of choice by high school's due date.

What Holy Trinity Will Do:

- Meet with parents over the phone or virtually to assist with the completion of application documents as needed.
- Submit completed recommendation forms and academic records to all high schools by their due date.

V. Points to Consider

Prioritize your criteria. When looking at a high school, consider what is important to you: academics, location, school culture, single sex vs. coed, class size, religion, etc. Think about this as you look at schools and ask questions that pertain to your criteria.

Is the school a good fit for my child? Acknowledge your child's strengths and weaknesses.

Your child must be involved in this process – research/ask questions

Cost. What is included with tuition and what is extra?

Scheduling. Block schedule vs. traditional. What suits your child best?

Draw up a pros and cons list. This will help you focus on what is most important to you.

Do your own research! Do not let someone else's opinion influence your decision.

I am often asked: What is the best or most rigorous school? Keep in mind there is no one school that is superior to every other school. You are looking for a school that is the best fit for your child.

VI. The Fine Print/FAQ's

Why does Holy Trinity have deadlines for high school documents?

We have deadlines for documents due to the large volume of recommendation forms submitted. This ensures that teachers have time to write thorough and thoughtful recommendations.

What about scholarships and financial aid?

Check each school's website. There are many kinds of aid offered: merit, band, and fine arts scholarships, as well as financial aid. Do not hesitate to contact the high schools and ask them about the many opportunities available for students.

Does Holy Trinity offer any review courses for the students?

Yes, we will offer math and English review courses to prepare 8th graders for the high school tests. Information will be sent out soon.

Are any fees imposed by Holy Trinity for the transcript process?

It is our policy to process **two** sets of transcripts/teacher recommendation forms at no cost. **Each additional set of transcripts/teacher recommendation forms is assessed a fee of \$30.00.** For example, if you are submitting recommendation forms and transcript release forms for four high schools, please submit a check for \$60.00 with the paperwork. Checks should be made payable to **Holy Trinity School**. The appropriate fees must accompany the recommendation forms.

How will Holy Trinity communicate with parents during this process?

Throughout this process, I will communicate with parents via email. **Please make sure that your email addresses are up to date in the Parent Portal.**

Who should I contact if I have any further questions?

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Elisabeth Albaugh directly at (301) 464-3215, Extension 209 or via email at ealbaugh@htrinity.org. If I can assist in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me.