

ROLE OF THE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

A guidance counselor can be your advocate, providing advice and support throughout high school and the college application process.

Your counselor can help you (to name just a few):

- organize your class schedule
- research and choose colleges
- obtain fee waivers for exams and college applications
- write letters of recommendation for your college applications.
- navigate financial aid forms
- serve as your guide in knowing what else is out there. You don't always know what you're missing, and your counselor can help alert you to opportunities which you may not have found on your own.

Remember that you are still ultimately responsible for keeping yourself informed.

Your counselor may be overwhelmed with the large number of students that he or she needs to work with. It may be difficult for your counselor to get to know you, your goals, and your needs, and help you figure out what would be best for you. You can help your counselor get to know you, for instance by being proactive and scheduling appointments or just by checking in.

Additionally, since counselors can be very busy, it can be difficult for them to keep up on all of the opportunities that might be relevant to you. You should always do your own research rather than relying upon others to bring opportunities to you. Often, counselors learn from their students, and any information you send their way can be used to help others.

Recognize the demands your counselor has on his or her time, and consider how well he or she knows you. These things influence how effective your counselor can be as your advocate.

Counselor to student ratio. Nationally, the average ratio of high school counselors to their students is 1:500. This means one counselor must assist in organizing class schedules, and choosing and applying to college, for five hundred students. The [American School Counseling Association](#) and the [American Counseling Association](#) both recommend a minimum counselor to student ratio of 1:250, with the ideal goal of 1:100. Your counselor may be overwhelmed by having to juggle hundreds or even thousands of students, making it difficult to know the personalities, goals, and needs of each student.

*** Southeast High School's counselor to student ratio is approximately 1:400 ***

