

the NEW TRIER NEWS



Dropping acceptance rates push demand for private counselors

Families hire private counselors in hopes of getting into prestigious schools

by May Paddor

While “college is a match to be made, not a prize to be won,” this doesn’t mean that students and parents alike won’t do everything in their power to take their best shot at getting into the school of their dreams.

One of the most important aspects of the college process is the application, prompting some families to hire private independent college counselors.

“Depending on the price they charge, a private counselor may be worth it. However, my college counselor at New Trier was helpful for reading over all of my essays and helping me come up with a list of colleges to apply to,” said senior John Crawford.

From west coast college counseling company College Wise to east coast Marks Education, counseling sessions average \$312.50/hour with packaged deals from \$4,500-8,000 at College Wise to



Do private counselors make college a “prize to be won”? | Shoup

up to \$20,000 at Marks Education respectively.

New Trier college counselor Deborah Donley said, “In a place like New Trier, it doesn’t make sense. All we do is college and over half of us have been in admissions. The experience and longevity of the people in this office makes it a waste of money.”

The expectations and pressures of the North Shore can push families towards private counselors. With acceptance rates steadily dropping, families are trying to gain the upper hand.

“As parents raising our kids on the North Shore, we see the pressure our own children feel to be

successful,” said parent and private counselor Stacey Riley Baker.

However, hiring a private counselor doesn’t guarantee you a spot at any college.

James H. Rogers, director of admission at Brown University in Providence told The Chicago Tribune, “Seeing a private counselor isn’t going to give anyone a strategic edge in our selection process. What these parents are seeking is an insurance policy.”

This has led to families contacting counselors earlier than they used to.

“When I first began doing this work 20 years ago, families didn’t initiate meetings with me until the

spring of the junior year and they’d often want to apply to colleges that were going to be out of range,” said Baker.

Now, students are contacting private counselors like Baker as early as seventh grade.

“An initial introductory conversation with the student generally takes place in February of the eighth grade year,” said Baker, “I spend time talking about my philosophy on the college process and the kind of work we’d do together over the four years of high school.”

Independent counselors aren’t always beneficial for the students.

“My concern is that some people with a college counselor rely so much on the independent that we don’t develop a good enough relationship for me to call schools on their behalf. I can’t do those extra things because I don’t know the student as well,” said Donley.

But there are benefits to starting the conversation early.

“I can definitely say though that the students who begin this process early and who do the self-assessment asked of them ultimately choose better fit colleges and are happy once they’re there,” said Baker. “The transfer rate is lower and they report being much more satisfied with their

choices.”

Even with an independent counselor, students still have the ability to engage with counselors provided by the school.

Senior Phoebe Rudnick said, “I used an outside college counselor over the summer to help me write my essays. But I loved my school college counselor so much and definitely felt like I had time to meet with her.”

“We proceed [with students using an independent] like we would normally because we don’t know to what extent the student is using the independent. If the counselors are helpful and good and being positive and doing good things, it doesn’t really matter to us,” said Donley.

For students considering private counseling, there is a fair amount of research required.

“Look at the research on the Higher Educational Consultant Association website. Do your homework and find someone who is a professional and know what you want to get out of it,” said Donley.

Regardless of whether they’re private or school counselors, junior Sophie Beitel said, “Students have a lot of fears about college, so it’s nice to have someone who can answer all your questions and help to guide you through the process.”

Students question safety of new wing amid mass shootings

Many students question precautions and overall safety of new wing design

by Rhea Mech

Following the events at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, students have wondered about the safety procedures at New Trier, especially in the new building.

“The new building is a new learning environment with more open spaces and windows that have many proven benefits for teaching, learning, collaboration, and social interaction,” said Athena Arvanitis, Director of Student Life.

“While these types of spaces are common features in new educational buildings, they do require a slightly different response in case of a lock down.”

While the windows of various sizes and placements in the new building have been a concern to students, Arvanitis said that they are not an Achilles heel, because windows in critical places have shatterproof film on them, as an extra layer of protection.

“Safety comes in layers,” said Arvanitis, who pointed out the hallway doors as a prime example.

“The big doors in the hallways are closed and locked in a lockdown

emergency procedure. This practice came as a recommendation from law enforcement and the Winnetka Fire Department in order to limit access and isolate people from potential danger.”

Despite the safety measures put in place, students have questioned their daily safety due to the lack of knowledge they have about safety precautions in classrooms.

“The old building makes me feel safer because there are more places to hide, and it’s harder to be seen, versus my classes in the new building with lots of windows,” said sophomore Hannah Bender.

“It would be a good idea to get something to put in front of the windows, so people can’t break in, and students inside wouldn’t be harmed by glass or shrapnel,” said Bender, one of many students unaware of shatterproof film installed on some windows in the west wing.

Although the visitor check-in process has been modified, by enforcing the action of taking and holding an ID until the visitor leaves, Arvanitis explained that safety is a school wide effort, which requires students to be aware of their behavior too.

This includes increased awareness of the many doors we enter in the morning, and at other times of the day.

“It’s kind of weird how easily students can come and go, which



Glass classrooms have become a topic of concern regarding safety | Shoup

makes it seem like people that don’t belong can come in easily, too,” said Junior Elena Hollis.

“It’s nice to be able to come in almost any door without a problem, but it can also not be safe,” added Hollis. “I’m not quite sure what the middle ground is though.”

While it may seem easy to enter and exit the building, school visitors will continue to be, as they always have been, checked in as they enter the school, by showing a form of identification and given a visitors’ badge, which follows standard procedure for many schools.

In an email from superintendent Paul Sally to parents, he assured community members that the school is in constant communication with the Winnetka Police Department, and constantly monitors school entrances.

“We are increasing our

monitoring and communication with students to make sure they do not open unauthorized doors for anyone, and do not prop open doors,” wrote Sally.

Not only have the events in Parkland, FL sparked greater conversation about school safety, they have also sped up emergency decision making, and inspired further staff training that is more tailored to lock downs.

“Going forward, I’d like to see more lock down, lock out, and lock in drills to make us feel more prepared,” said Junior Will Bechtel.

Some students aren’t aware of the differences between lock ins, locks outs, and lockdowns, mentioned Bechtel.

If there is a suspected person of danger in the school, the school will go into a lock down, and everyone

will immediately go into a safe space, such as a classroom, office, or closet, and lock doors until further notice.

If there is a potentially dangerous person or event happening in the area, but off campus, the school will go into a lock out, where students will not be allowed to leave the building, and no one will be allowed to enter the building, until the threat is resolved.

Lock-ins, to be renamed as ‘hold in place,’ occur when there is a medical emergency, or a non-life threatening event, inside the building, where students will not be allowed to leave their classroom in order to easily solve the problem without added commotion.

“We take school safety very seriously,” said Arvanitis. “The new building, like the existing campus buildings, has many safety features incorporated, and we train with students and staff about what to do in different types of emergencies. As we get feedback on that training, we have been tweaking our procedure to fit the new building.”

In his email, Sally wrote “We want all students to feel safe every day at New Trier. While best practices in security planning mean that we cannot share detailed information about our security measures publicly, please know that we work every day, in all parts of the school, to provide as safe and secure a school environment as we can.”

**SPECIAL SECTION:
SCHOOL SHOOTINGS &
STUDENT ACTIVISM**

pages 3 - 6

Interview with gubernatorial candidate Daniel Biss on gun control

page 5

Stoneman Douglas High School shooting survivor Julia Cordover shares her story

page 4