**Reach, Match, Safety: My High School Short List**

**Summary**

In this lesson, students will be introduced to the reach, match, and safety schools framework. Students will learn how this framework can help them manage the high school application process. Students will research high schools and develop their personal short list by using the reach, match, and safety schools framework.

**Grades**

* 7

**Content Modules**

**Objectives**

Students will:

* Apply the concepts of reach, match, and safety schools to help them evaluate high school options.
* Identify high schools of interest based on personal preferences and how well their Student Profiles matches the high schools’ admission criteria and.

**Length**

1 Session

**Additional Resources**

**Related Lessons**

**Related E-Learning**

**Materials and Resources**

**Offline**

* 6to16 Notebook
* Your School District’s High School Directory
* Students’ grade reports
* Students’ test scores
* My High School Short List

**Online:**

* Internet access

**Prep-work**

1)  Obtain students’ grade reports, test scores, and a copy of your school district’s High School Directory.

**Teacher’s Note:***If you are unable to obtain students’ most recent grade reports or test scores, please coordinate with the school counselor to access them to share with the students at the beginning of class.*

**Higher-Level Thinking Skills**

Application, Evaluation, Categorize

**Vocabulary**

Student Profile, Reach, Match, Safety

**Assessment(s)**

1)  **My High School Short List:** Students will research their high schools of interest and categorize them as reach, match, or safety based on how they align with their student profile.

**Do Now (10 minutes)**

1)  Present students with the following scenario: During half-time of a NBA game, your name is called to participate in a “Shoot for Cash” contest.  You have to choose one of the following options:

* If you make the shot from the half-court line you will win $10,000.
* If you make the shot from the free throw line you will win $5,000.
* If you make the shot by taking a lay-up you will win $500.

2)  Instruct students to answer the following question in their **6to16 Notebooks:**

* Which shot would you choose and why?

3)  Ask students to share their answers to the Do Now question with the class.  Encourage students to look past the monetary rewards and evaluate the option that would give them the best results and whether the less sure shots are worth the risk of not getting any prize money.

4)  After students have shared their answers, ask the following questions:

* Which shot do you think is the most difficult to make?
* Which shot do you feel you can make even though it may be challenging?
* Which shot do you believe you can definitely make?

5)  Discuss which shot would be the most rewarding for any given student. Answers will probably include a weighing of student’s shooting abilities.

6)  Write the following words on the board: Safety, Match, and Reach.

7)  Ask students which word best describes the half-court shot, the free throw, and the lay-up. Make sure that students pair the half-court shot with “Reach,” the free throw with “Match”, and the lay-up with “Safety.”

**Class Activity (35 minutes)**

1)  Distribute students’ **grades and test scores**. Give students a few minutes to review these documents.

**Teacher’s Note:** *If you were unable to obtain students’, ask students to reflect on the grades they have earned thus far in middle school and the test scores they have received.*

2)  Inform students that whether or not they’re accepted by a high school will be based on their Student Profile.

3)  Ask the class to give examples of what is included in the Student Profile. Record the students’ responses on the board to use as reference for the remainder of this activity. Supplement the conversation with any of the following information that students do not mention:

* **Grade Point Average (GPA):** Many high schools set a 3.0 GPA as a baseline for selecting incoming freshman.
* **Recommendation Letters:** Letters of recommendation are one of the key components of most high school applications. Teachers, school counselors, and supervisors who can provide insight into the applicants’ strengths, character, and potential should write recommendation letters on their behalf.  Family members and friends should not write letters of recommendation.
* **Student Portfolios:** Portfolios are collections of students’ best work over time. A portfolio can help demonstrate the depth of students’ understanding of a subject area and their accomplishments.
* **Extracurricular Activities:** Extracurricular activities are activities that students are involved in outside of the classroom curriculum. Participation in extracurricular activities show admissions representatives that the student is a well-rounded individual, has leadership potential, and can work with others on a team.
* **Volunteer Work:**  Volunteer experience allows students to learn about possible career options and gain work experience. Students can donate their time at a community organization or non-profit group. High school admissions representatives are searching for students who are willing to spend their time volunteering because this demonstrates interest in helping others and learning through experience.

4)  Distribute the **My High School Short List** handout to students.

5)  Explain that schools determine who they will accept based on whether the student’s profile meets or exceeds their minimum admission requirements.  Read the following definitions for reach, match, and safety schools and have students write them in their **6to16 Notebooks**.

* **Reach Schools:**  Reach Schools are similar to the half-court shot. The school’s average student profile will exceed the student’s profile.  Even though reach schools are the most challenging to get into, students should still apply if they believe they have a chance of being accepted.
* **Match Schools:**  Match Schools are similar to the shot from the free throw line.  The school is a match because the applicant’s Student Profile matches the average profile of most of its students.  Students have a good chance of being accepted to their Match Schools.
* **Safety Schools:**  Safety Schools are schools that generally accept most applicants.  A student’s Safety School is also a school for which the student’s profile exceeds that of the typical student accepted to the school.  Students can be reasonably certain they will be admitted to their Safety Schools.

6)  Explain that students should determine their Reach, Match, and Safety schools based on their individual profiles. A school considered a match school for one student could be a reach school for another student.  Use the halftime contest as a way to explain that some students have a better chance of hitting the harder shots than others. For example, while a free throw may be a safety school for one student, it may be a reach for someone that does not practice regularly or is not a basketball player.

7)  Inform students that they should not apply to schools solely based on the probability that they will be accepted. While schools have criteria they use to evaluate applicants, it is important for students to have their own criteria when choosing schools as well.  Explain to students that finding a match school based on their academic profile is very important, yet there are other factors to consider. Students should also use the following list of criteria when choosing a school:

* Public or Private
* Graduation Rates
* Academic Programs (e.g., Performing Arts, Sciences, College Prep)
* Academic Resources (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, IB Program, Honors classes, access to technology)
* Extra-curricular Activities
* College Acceptance Rates of graduates
* Average ACT or SAT Scores of graduates
* Location

Researching High Schools:

1)  Instruct students to use your **School District’s High School Directory** or the internet to research schools of interest.  Students should categorize each school as Reach, Match, or Safety.  For each school, they should explain their reason for categorizing it as Reach, Match, or Safety. Students should also explain how the school meets their list of criteria.

**Homework**

Distribute the **My Short List** handout to students. Instruct your students to continue researching high schools and complete the **My Short List** handout at home.  Tell them to talk with their parents/family members about the high school’s they are interested in attending.