Zeeland High Schools

College Planning Guide

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THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE INCLUDED IN THIS GUIDE:

COUNSELING OFFICE INFORMATION

Zeeland East High School
3333 96th Ave.
Zeeland, MI 49464
616-748-3137

Zeeland West High School
3390 100th Ave.
Zeeland, MI 49464
616-748-3115

Counseling Website: https://www.zps.org/schools/grades-6-12/zeeland-hs/counseling/
"Follow" us on Facebook by searching for Zeeland High School Counseling Office.

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POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

	What It Is	Cost	What You Get
Four-Year (or more) College	A college or university with a variety of 4-year programs in which you can earn a bachelor's degree. Many schools have a general education requirement in addition to a major course of study. **Public:** subsidized by the state, thus tuition is generally lower than private (ex. GVSU, MSU, WMU) **Private:** funded through endowments, tuition payments, and donations; tends to be more costly (ex. Hope, Calvin, Hillsdale)	Tuition ranges based on your school of choice with many types of financial aid available. Tuition for out of state students is typically higher.	A bachelor's degree. Universities also offer graduate programs (master's degree, doctorate, professional degree). Broader curriculum encourages and accommodates a variety of interests.
Two-Year College	Community and junior colleges that offer two-year degrees or prepare you to transfer to a four-year college. (ex. GRCC, MCC) Often serves part-time students and frequently offers specialized job training.	Quite a bit less than a four-year college. May vary depending on whether you live "in-district" or "out-of-district."	An associate's degree or a special career certificate in an area such as graphic productions, dental assisting, or child care.
Technical & Vocational School	Specialized education leading directly to employment. Programs vary from several months to two or more years.	Ranges from inexpensive for short-term programs to a bit more costly for multi-year residential schools. Equipment may also come at a cost.	Career-related education, technical skills, and hand-on training – employability skills.
Apprenticeships	You are hired as a trainee to learn a craft or trade from a craftsperson or experienced supervisor.	There may be union dues to pay and your own equipment to buy. Some apprenticeships might require you to take classes.	Real-world training and experience, as well as entry into particular trades, such as plumbing or electrical work.
Volunteering / Internships / Interim Activities (all generally intended to last a year or less)	A wide variety of activities are possible including volunteering for a positive cause or group (domestically or internationally), checking out a career field, learning a new skill/receiving unconventional training, and/or exploring another culture.	Little or no money comes in: you may actually have to spend money for transportation, lodging, and other living expenses.	The feeling that comes from knowing that what you're doing is meaningful, the opportunity to check out a career field before officially entering into it, and/or the chance to do something or learn something that you may not have another chance to do.
An Entry-Level Job	Every company has entry-level positions, so the type of work will vary based on the place of employment. Entry-level jobs often require minimal amounts of experience and/or education.	Pay may be limited depending on the position and type of work, although pay really varies with individual situations. The time it takes to advance within a company also varies.	Time to decide what you really want to do with your life. Some entry-level jobs can be a stepping stone within a company.
The U.S. Armed Forces	Enlistment in the U.S. Armed forces: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard.	At least a two-year commitment.	Money, career training and experience, an opportunity to travel, money toward your education.

CAMPUS VISITS

Visiting colleges is a great way to get a feel for what college is like. And when the time comes, it can help you decide if a specific college is right for you. Exploring campuses is well worth your while.

It is highly recommended that students begin visiting colleges in the junior year.

Arrange a Visit

All colleges have **admission offices** that can help you plan your visit. And you can plan **your own informal visit** to a college campus. Take these important first steps:

- Contact the college admission office through the college's website or by email or phone to get details and make a reservation.
- Schedule time to be on your own. Walk around the public areas of the college and don't be shy about asking students questions.

What to Expect

Campus visits can range from a quick hour to an overnight stay, from a casual guided tour to a formal presentation. Be sure to ask how long the whole visit will take so you can be prepared.

Most campus visits will include the following:

- **An information session.** An admission representative talks to you or your group about the college before the campus tour.
- **A campus tour.** These are usually led by current students. You'll see the main parts of the campus and have a chance to ask questions.

At many colleges, you can also arrange to do the following:

- Attend a class.
- Meet with a professor.
- Meet with an admission officer.
- Meet with a financial aid officer.
- Attend a club meeting or a sports practice session.
- Eat in the dining hall.
- Spend the night in a dorm.

Get Ready

Before your visit, you should get prepared:

- Explore the college's official website and review any materials the college has sent you. This will help you come up with questions specific to that college.
- Make a list of questions to ask both staff and students. You can use the Campus Visit Checklist as a starting point.
- Get a map of the college campus and check where the admission office is. This will help ensure that you're on time for your visit.

If you are going to be absent from high school to attend a visit, be sure to inform the attendance office of your absence. A college visit is an excused absence.

**Information taken from www.collegeboard.com.*

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

Below are some commonly addressed topics concerning college entrance exams. As a result of the COVID pandemic some colleges have changed their policy to "test-optional." This means that applicants are not required to supply standardized test scores and applications for admission will be evaluated without it, if a student desires. This policy varies, depending on the institution. Keep in mind that school policies for scholarship eligibility may be different than admission eligibility.

1. **Should I take the ACT or the SAT for college admission?**
   All colleges accept both the ACT and SAT. The State of Michigan uses the SAT as part of the Michigan Merit Exam (state battery of tests required of all students in the spring of the junior year).

2. **How are the ACT and SAT different?**

   a. The SAT is made up of two sections - Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Math. The test is administered digitally and is 2 hours 15 minutes in length. Composite scores range from 400-1600. Scores are based on the number of questions correct, so when in doubt, be sure to guess, as you will not be penalized. Students taking the SAT as part of the state-required MME will also participate in a 50 minute essay. This is not part of the national test cycle.

   b. The ACT has three multiple-choice tests: English, math, and reading. The test is administered via paper/pencil OR digitally and is 2 hours 5 minutes in length. Each test is scored on a scale of 1-36 and a student's composite (overall) score is an average of the 3 tests. There is no penalty for guessing. There are optional Writing and Science tests (40 minutes each). Students taking the optional Writing and/or Science tests will receive separate scores. Students need to check with individual colleges to determine if either of these optional tests are required.

3. **Why do some colleges require entrance tests?**
   Because each state has different education standards and requirements for graduation, college entrance exams allow colleges to "level the playing field" somewhat and use something in addition to GPA and class rank to compare students as they make admissions decisions. Test scores are also used as a basis for some scholarships.

4. **How do students register for these tests?**
   Students can register for the SAT at http://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register and the ACT at http://www.actstudent.org. Test dates and registration deadlines are found on the website. The deadline to register is typically 3-4 weeks prior to the test. Payment is made via credit card at the time of registration. **NOTE**: All students take the SAT in April as part of the MME. Students will not register online for this test but will register at school. There is no fee associated with this one test.

   Zeeland East High School Code is 233845. Zeeland West is 233846.

5. **Can I take the ACT or SAT more than once?**
   Yes. Colleges will use the highest score for admission and scholarship purposes. Most colleges will take the highest composite score while some colleges will mix and match the highest subscores from multiple tests.

6. **How do I send my scores to colleges?**
   Both the ACT and SAT allow students to send scores up to a limited number of schools for no extra cost. Upon registering, students will have the opportunity to list colleges they would like these scores sent to.. Many juniors do not fully know where they plan to attend college so they sometimes skip this option. However, please keep in mind that the SAT and ACT both charge a fee for sending scores after the test administration.

7. **What if I don't have the money to pay for these tests?**
   Students who have completed the form and qualify for school educational benefits (ex. summer food support, school fee support), who receive public assistance, or whose family income falls within certain guidelines can obtain fee waivers through their counselor.

8. **How do I prepare for these tests?**
   Provided below are details for free, comprehensive SAT and ACT prep. Each test's website also has practice material available to students.
   - The College Board provides multiple resources for students to prepare for the SAT. These are available to students for FREE at https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice.
   - Michigan e-Library provides online SAT and ACT Prep Courses and Practice tests free of charge. Please go to https://www.learningexpresshub.com/ and select "College Admissions Test Preparation." ****Please note:** This website also gives you access to practice tests for other exams, such as the PSAT and some AP tests.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

The Advanced Placement (AP) Program, administered by The College Board and taught at local high schools, allows students to participate in a college level course and possibly earn college credit while still in high school. Secondary schools and colleges cooperate in this program to give students the opportunity to show mastery in college-level courses by taking the AP exam in May of each school year.
Zeeland High Schools currently offer 18 AP courses. Listed below are the courses offered:

- AP English Language and Composition
- AP English Literature and Composition
- AP Statistics
- AP Calculus
- AP Biology
- AP Environmental Science
- AP Chemistry
- AP Physics 1
- AP Psychology
- AP Government
- AP World History
- AP US History
- AP Macroeconomics
- AP Microeconomics
- AP Art
- AP Music Theory
- AP Spanish Language
- AP Spanish Literature

College level reading, materials, tests, and assignments are used in these courses. However, instead of taking a one semester college class in just one semester, the course moves at a bit slower pace and is stretched over two semesters.

Besides developing content knowledge, students will be expected to improve their general academic skills during the course: reading, writing, study skills, note taking, and self-direction. AP courses require significantly more homework and study time than other courses. The courses prepare students to take the AP exams in May. Currently, each exam costs $100. Most colleges and universities will issue college credit for a strong score on an AP exam. In addition, students who successfully complete an AP course will be granted a bonus point for the course GPA. For example, a B in an AP class is worth a 4.0 instead of the traditional 3.0.

Some reasons to consider taking an AP class include:

1. Prepare for the rigors of college
   a. Get a head start on college level work.
   b. Improve writing skills and problem solving techniques
   c. Develop the study habits necessary for college success
2. Demonstrate college readiness in the college application process
   a. Show willingness to be pushed to the limit academically
   b. Emphasize commitment to academic excellence
3. Expand knowledge base
   a. Study a variety of subjects in great depth and detail
   b. Learn to use a variety of resources to access information

It is recommended that students consult with their teachers and counselors about their readiness to take an AP level course if they do not have at least a B average overall.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

Dual enrollment enables high school students to enroll in college classes while still in high school. ZPS will cover a portion of the tuition costs at the college. Classes chosen for dual enrollment must meet certain eligibility requirements and must be related to a student's post-secondary goals. More information about dual enrollment can be found at https://www.zps.org/schools/grades-6-12/zeeland-hs/counseling/dual-enrollment-and-advanced-placement/ or by talking to a high school counselor.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

1. **Application**
   - **a.** Biographical information (b-day, address, etc.)
   - **b.** Short answer and essay, if required – This is your chance to personalize your application. This demonstrates your writing ability, so be sure to use principles of good writing and proofread carefully.

2. **Academic Record**
   - **a.** Courses taken – Colleges consider the level of courses you've taken. Success in college-prep courses suggests you'll do well in college.
   - **b.** Grades – Good grades show you are willing to work hard and have an interest in a variety of subjects.
   - **c.** Class rank

3. **Extra-Curricular Involvement** – Most colleges look for students with a variety of interests (ex. performing arts, athletics, work experience). Please keep in mind that in-depth experience in a few things is worth more than being involved in many activities on a superficial level!

4. **Standardized Test Scores** – Many colleges require them, although some put less emphasis on them than others. College websites often list the average test scores (ACT, SAT) of students at a college. Keep in mind, though, that this is generally the average, not the minimum.

5. **School Recommendation** – Most colleges require an official recommendation or statement prepared by the high school. Most of the time this is done by your counselor.

6. **Teacher or Personal Recommendations** - These tell the readers of your application about your classroom or outside of school performance in terms that may not be represented by grades. It is important that these people know you well enough to provide valuable insights about you.

Colleges do not choose students by the numbers only—they don't simply take the students with the highest grades and test scores. Colleges use many other factors to add depth to the numbers, and to compare applicants with each other to build a class that fits the college's mission. Students who meet or exceed the threshold for admission are, at selective colleges, evaluated based on all of the attributes they bring to campus, including special talents, academic interests, and personal characteristics. Here is a breakdown of what colleges take into account:

PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2023

	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
High school grades in college prep courses	185	76.8	15.1	4.9	3.2
Total high school grades (all courses)	185	74.1	18.9	5.4	1.6
Strength of high school curriculum	185	63.8	22.7	10.3	3.2
Positive character attributes	184	28.3	37.5	18.5	15.8
Essay or writing sample	185	18.9	37.3	26.5	17.3
Student's interest in attending	185	15.7	27.6	25.4	31.4
Counselor recommendation	185	11.9	40.0	27.6	20.5
Teacher recommendation	185	10.8	40.5	28.1	20.5
Extracurricular activities	185	6.5	44.3	30.8	18.4
High school class rank	183	5.5	22.4	43.2	29.0
Admission test scores (ACT, SAT)	185	4.9	25.4	38.9	30.8
Portfolio	185	4.9	10.8	24.3	60.0
Interview	185	4.3	8.6	32.4	54.6
Work	185	2.2	30.8	40.0	27.0
State graduation exam scores	185	1.6	6.5	18.4	73.5
Subject test scores (AP, IB)	185	1.1	22.2	25.9	50.8

Source: NACAC, State of College Admission 2023

COLLEGES IN MICHIGAN: GPA & SAT/ACT AVERAGES

*Open Admissions					
	Ave. GPA	2.8-3.3	3.3-3.5	3.5-3.9	3.9-4.0+
	Ave. ACT	18-23	21-25	23-29	29-33
	Avg. SAT	940-1130	1060-1230	1130-1340	1350-1540

***Open Admissions**

Community Colleges
No minimum GPA or SAT/ACT requirements.

- Alpena CC
- Baker College
- Bay College
- Delta College
- Glen Oaks CC
- Gogebic CC
- Grand Rapids CC
- Henry Ford CC
- Jackson CC
- Kalamazoo Valley CC
- Kellogg CC
- Kirtland CC
- Lake Michigan College
- Lansing CC
- Macomb CC
- Mid-Michigan CC
- Monroe County CC
- Mott CC
- Muskegon CC
- North Central Michigan College
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Oakland CC
- Schoolcraft College
- Southwestern Michigan College
- St. Clair County CC
- Washtenaw CC
- Wayne County CC

2.8-3.3 / 18-23 / 940-1130

- College for Creative Studies
- Concordia University Ann Arbor
- Davenport University
- Eastern Michigan University
- Ferris State University
- Finlandia University (Founded in 1896 as Suomi College)
- Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University
- Lake Superior State University
- Madonna University
- Marygrove College
- Northern Michigan University
- Northwood University
- Oakland University
- Rochester College
- Olivet College (1844)
- Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU)
- Siena Heights University
- Spring Arbor University
- Michigan Flint
- Wayne State University

3.3-3.5 / 21-25 / 1060-1230

- Adrian College (1859)
- Andrews University (Seek. Affirm. Change.)
- Aquinas College
- CMU Central Michigan University
- Cornerstone University
- Grand Valley State University
- Lawrence Tech
- Western Michigan University
- University of Detroit Mercy

3.5-3.9 / 23-29 / 1130-1340

- Albion College
- Alma College (Only one Alma.)
- Calvin College
- Hope College
- Kettering University
- Michigan State University
- Michigan Tech
- Michigan Dearborn

3.9-4.0+ / 29-33 / 1350-1540

- Hillsdale College
- Kalamazoo College
- Michigan

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

The steps below provide an overview for how to apply to college.

1. Because most colleges require application fees, it is wise to narrow your choices to a list of colleges in the following categories and then apply to 2-5 colleges, which include at least one safety school:
    a. "Safety School" – a school for which you are completely qualified and will definitely be admitted.
    b. "Realistic Choice" – a school for which you meet the qualifications for admission and will most likely (though maybe not definitely) be accepted.
    c. "Fantasy School" – a school that you would really like to attend but is a long shot due to having a lower GPA, test score, or class rank than is required.
2. Complete the application. This may include writing essays and/or obtaining letters of recommendation. Make sure everything you prepare is accurate with proper grammar and spelling. Remember that your application gives colleges an impression of who you are. To increase your chance of admission, **submit your application by the end of October in your senior year.**
3. If there is a recommendation form that needs to be completed, be sure to alert the person completing it and **give him/her at least a week's notice before the deadline**.
4. Request transcripts to be sent directly to the colleges applied to (see next page for instructions). A transcript is a record of a student's high school grades, attendance, and cumulative GPA.
5. **If required for admission, make sure your SAT and/or ACT scores were sent directly to the college(s) from the College Board or ACT, Inc.** This is done by entering the college codes on the SAT/ACT registration form. You can send your scores to up to 4 colleges free of charge. Otherwise, if you need to have them sent after taking the test, there is a fee associated with each request.
6. Please allow at least 6-8 weeks for the college to reply. Remember that the ZEHS and ZWHS counseling offices cannot control the speed with which the college processes your application.

THE COMMON APPLICATION

The Common Application is an online college application used by over 1000 colleges and universities. The Common Application makes it possible for a student to fill out one application and have it sent to any college or university that uses the Common Application. The opportunity to fill out one application to apply to several colleges may help some students. Numerous schools in Michigan use this application process. There is also a school report that must be completed by each student's high school counselor and a student's transcript gets uploaded directly to the Common App platform, rather than needing to use Parchment or other transcript service.

The best thing to do is go to each university's website and research their application process. If a student wants to apply to 5 schools, he/she may find that 3 of them use the Common Application. This will help save time.

The Common Application is nothing to be overwhelmed by, but it will take time and effort. As with any application, plan on completing it no later than the end of October. Since the application typically requires at least one recommendation, a student should request these recommendations from teachers a few weeks in advance of that.

For more information on the Common Application, contact your high school guidance counselor or visit the Common Application website at http://www.commonapp.org

Types of College Admissions Policies

There are two main categories of admissions options: **non-restrictive** and **restrictive**. **Non-restrictive** application plans do not inhibit students from applying to other institutions. You typically have until May 1 to consider your options and confirm enrollment. There are three application plans that are considered non-restrictive. **Restrictive** application plans limit your ability to consider offers of admission to multiple schools.

DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

NACAC National Association for College Admission Counseling *Guiding the way to higher education*

STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST *SUITS YOU?*

Non-Restrictive Application Plans			Restrictive Application Plans	
Regular Decision	**Rolling Admission**	**Early Action (EA)**	**Early Decision (ED)**	**Restrictive Early Action (REA)**
DEFINITION: Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.	**DEFINITION:** Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.	**DEFINITION:** Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.	**DEFINITION:** Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.	**DEFINITION:** Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.
COMMITMENT: NON-BINDING	**COMMITMENT:** NON-BINDING	**COMMITMENT:** NON-BINDING	**COMMITMENT:** BINDING	**COMMITMENT:** NON-BINDING
Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.			**Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.**	

What is the difference between Early *Decision* and Early *Action*? Students often confuse these two terms. Both plans allow students to learn their admissions decision early, but there are some key differences that are important to understand. Students who apply under an Early *Decision* plan are making a *binding commitment* to attend that college if they are admitted. If they're admitted, they must withdraw their applications from other colleges, and they can't apply to additional colleges. Students who apply under an Early *Action* plan, on the other hand, are not making a binding commitment to attend that college. They are free to keep their applications at other colleges active, and they generally have until May 1st to make their final decision about which college they'll attend.

<u>Other College Admission Terms</u>

- **Open Admission** – Colleges offer admission to all students who apply as long as they have a high school diploma or have passed the high school proficiency test (GED) or are at least 18 years old. Open admission usually means no subject, grade point average, or entrance exam requirement; however, many of these schools do require you to take an entrance exam at the time of registration. An example of an open admission college is the community college.
- **Wait List** - This is an admission decision where the college does not initially offer or deny admission, but extends the applicant the possibility of admission in the future (ex. if space becomes available, or upon submission and review of 7th semester grades).

High School Transcripts and Parchment

A high school transcript is a record of a student's academic accomplishments in high school. It lists each high school class taken (including high school courses taken in 8th grade, if applicable), when they were taken, and the grade received in each class. It also lists cumulative grade point average (GPA) as well as attendance history. As part of the college application process, students must submit a transcript to admissions offices. Please follow the directions at https://www.zps.org/schools/grades-6-12/zeeland-hs/counseling/ to request a transcript.

FINANCIAL AID

Types of Financial Aid

Financial Aid is funding from scholarships, grants, student employment, and loans available to college students to assist with the cost of attending school. Financial aid is available from the federal and state governments, colleges and universities, and other private and public sectors.

Need-Based Aid - Need-based means that your family's financial resources, as measured by a formula established by the federal government, are not sufficient to cover your educational costs. This formula analyzes a family's income and assets to determine how much/what types of aid a student may qualify for college. The federal government's definition of financial need compares your income and savings to the cost of the college you plan to attend. Once you determine your financial need, the college you plan to attend will help you identify sources of financial aid to meet your need.

Merit-based Aid – This includes both scholarships awarded by the individual college or university and those awarded by outside organizations. Merit-based scholarships are typically awarded for outstanding academic achievements, although some merit scholarships can be awarded for special talents, leadership potential and other personal characteristics.

Grants – gift of money; generally based on need
- Do not need to be repaid
- Typically come from state or federal sources (ex. Federal Pell Grant)

Scholarships – financial awards based on academic performance, talent, or other factors
- Do not need to be paid back
- School Scholarships
  - Almost all schools offer some sort of scholarship to their students.
  - These scholarships are based on a number of factors including GPA, standardized test scores, portfolio review, or athletic or artistic contributions
  - For some scholarships, you become eligible just by applying to the college; others have separate application procedures
- Private Scholarships
  - There are thousands of private organizations that offer scholarships to students.
  - Various application requirements.

Loans – borrowed money
- Must be paid back
- Interest rates vary.
- Government loans – government agencies determine what type of loan you are offered through several factors, including income level
  - *Subsidized* – government pays interest on loan
  - *Unsubsidized* – interest accrues while student goes to school
  - Generally the best type of loan to take out because they're designed to benefit the student and usually offer the most reasonable rates and terms
- Private loans – generally from individual banks; have higher interest rates and less negotiable terms

Work Study – program funded by federal and state governments that provides jobs for students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay educational expenses

The FAFSA

Please watch this brief video below to understand the application form that is utilized to determine your eligibility for federal and state financial aid programs

SCHOLARSHIPS

How to Apply for Scholarships

1. Find scholarships whose criteria you meet.
    a. Research the scholarships listed on the counseling office website. These are typically only local scholarships - https://www.zps.org/schools/grades-6-12/zeeland-hs/counseling/. This page becomes quite active in the winter months.
    b. Conduct online scholarship searches to obtain information on which scholarships you qualify for. There are many good, FREE search sites to investigate. Here are a few:
        - BigFuture – http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org
        - FastWeb – http://www.fastweb.com
        - Going Merry - http://goingmerry.com
    c. Check with the college you plan on attending for available scholarships. For most schools, you are automatically considered for merit-based scholarships by completing an application (these are based on GPA and SAT/ACT scores, and many times, are listed on the college's website). There are additional scholarships that colleges and private donors offer that a student might be eligible for.
    d. Check with employers to see if they offer scholarships to employees or children of employees.
2. Complete the scholarship application.
    a. Individual scholarship directions will vary. Be sure to follow a particular scholarship application directions explicitly or you may be disqualified from the scholarship.
    b. Be sure to double-check for spelling and grammar errors. These are major turn offs to evaluators.
    c. If a letter of recommendation is required, be sure your request for a letter is given to the writer well in advance and that person is prepared with enough background information about you and about the scholarship to write a meaningful letter.
    d. If the school is required to supply information, be sure to request this information from the counseling office well in advance of the deadline for your counselor to complete it.
3. Submit the scholarship application on time.

10 Scholarship Scam Warning Signs

Knowing these warning signs can keep you from being a scholarship scam victim.

1. **Fees:** You shouldn't have to pay to search for or apply for scholarships.
2. **Credit card or bank account information needed:** You should never have to give credit card or bank account information to award providers.
3. **Scholarship guarantee:** No one can guarantee that you'll win a scholarship because no one can control scholarship judges' decisions. Also, be wary of "high success rates" - they usually do not refer to actual award winners.
4. **No work involved:** You can't avoid putting in time to fill out a scholarship application.
5. **No contact information:** Legitimate sponsors should provide contact information upon request. If the sponsor does not supply a valid email address, phone number and mailing address (not a PO box) after you've asked for one, that could be the sign of a scam.
6. **Unsolicited scholarships:** If you are called to receive an award for which you never applied, be alert - it's most likely a scam.
7. **Pressure tactics:** Don't allow yourself to be pressured into applying for a scholarship, especially if the sponsor is asking for money up front.
8. **Claims of "exclusive" scholarships:** Sponsors don't make their scholarships available through only one service.
9. **Sponsor goes out of their way to sound "official":** Scammers sometimes use official-sounding words like "national," "education" or "federal" or they display an official-looking seal to fool you into thinking they are legit. Check with your school if you question a scholarship provider's legitimacy.
10. **Your questions aren't answered directly:** If you can't get a straight answer from a sponsor regarding their application, what will be done with your information or other questions, proceed with caution.

**Information taken from www.fastweb.com.*

PARTICIPATING IN COLLEGE SPORTS?

Most college athletic programs are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which is an organization that has rules on eligibility, recruiting, and financial aid for prospective student-athletes. If you are interested in playing college sports or receiving an athletic scholarship, here is some info you need to know about NCAA rules.

Divisions
The NCAA has three membership divisions: Division I, Division II, and Division III. Generally, larger schools compete in Division I and smaller schools compete in Divisions II and III. Division I schools (ex. University of Michigan) recruit athletes in multiple sports, and they also offer athletic scholarships. However, some Division I schools, such as Ivy League and some Patriot League schools, do not offer scholarship money due to institutional or league policy. Division II schools (ex. Grand Valley State University) also recruit and offer scholarship money, but Division III schools (ex. Hope College) cannot offer athletic scholarships, although they may or may not recruit actively.

Guidelines for Eligibility
If you intend to participate in Division I or Division II athletics as a college freshman, then you must be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center. The Eligibility Center certifies the academic and amateur credentials of all college-bound student athletes who wish to compete at the Division I or II level. Eligibility is determined solely by the Eligibility Center and not by the college or university you wish to attend. Eligibility decisions are different for each division and are based on grade-point averages for core curriculum courses (English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Language ONLY). You should start the certification process after your junior year of high school, but taking the appropriate classes to determine eligibility starts already in your freshman year. Check with your guidance counselor to make sure you are taking a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements. When you are ready to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (preferably spring of junior year or summer before senior year), speak with your counselor about the registration process. Upon registration, the Eligibility Center will determine your eligibility for practice, competition, and athletic scholarships.

For Division III athletics, eligibility requirements are different. Since Division III schools do not award athletic scholarships, eligibility for practice and competition are set by the college and the college's participating athletic conference.

It is important that potential college student-athletes carefully read through the NCAA's "Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete" to fully understand all requirements. The full version of the guide is available at http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future. For a brief overview, the "NCAA Eligibility Center Initial Eligibility Brochure" provides college freshman eligibility standards and required grade point averages.

(Some colleges are members of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. For instance, both Aquinas and Davenport belong to the NAIA. This organization has its own rules and regulations for eligibility. For more information, please visit http://www.playnaia.org.)

CREDIT COMPARISON CHART

Subject	ZPS	Recommended for College	NCAA Core** Requirements
English	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits
Math	4 credits*	4 credits	3 credits (Algebra 1 or higher)
Science	3 credits*	3-4 credits	2 credits of natural/physical science (1 credit lab)
Social Studies	3 credits*	3-4 credits	2 credits
World Language	2 credits*	2-3 credits	Approved world language courses may count as core
Health/Physical Education	1 credit*		
Visual, Performing, or Applied Art	1 credit*		
Electives	4 credits		1 year of additional English, math, or science and 4 credits of additional academic core classes
TOTAL	22 credits		16 core credits

* Students can waive or modify these requirements to some extent. Contact your counselor for more information.
**Core = English, math, science, social studies, foreign language

It is important to note that many colleges have specific credit requirements for admission. It is critical that students research the admissions standards of the colleges/universities that are of interest to them.

JUNIOR / SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

Note: This timeline is merely a guide. Many of the times are approximate and may vary based on the institution and/or situation.

<u>JUNIOR YEAR</u>

Fall

- ★ Meet with visiting college representatives. Schedule available through Google Classroom and school announcements.
- ★ Attend the Holland-Area College Fair, held in late September/early October at Hope College's DeVos Fieldhouse. Typically, over 60 colleges are in attendance.
- ★ Meet with the counselor to discuss academic progress, post-high plans, etc.
- ★ Register for AP exams (if applicable)

Winter/Spring

- ★ Schedule appropriate senior year classes. Colleges review the type of classes you take.
- ★ Prepare for the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) by using the test preparation resources available through the College Board - https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice
- ★ Take the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), which includes the SAT.
- ★ Attend the West Michigan National College Fair at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids.
- ★ Visit colleges of interest. Schedule an admissions interview and an overnight stay if possible.
- ★ Take AP exams.
- ★ Retake the SAT/ACT if needed.

Summer

- ★ Re-take the SAT/ACT if needed.
- ★ Find a good summer job – senior year can be expensive!
- ★ Continue to research and visit colleges.
- ★ Talk to your parents about college costs. Visit https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/ to do some preliminary calculations concerning financial aid.
- ★ Complete a free online scholarship search with BigFuture (http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org) or FastWeb (http://www.fastweb.com)
    - o You may want to set up a new email account just for scholarship searching with a password that both you and parents know and can access. This can avoid a lot of junk email to your regular account and the scholarship email account can be closed once you are complete with the search process.
- ★ Potential NCAA athletes should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center after the end of their junior year. This can be done at http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future

SENIOR YEAR

Fall

- ★ Conduct final visits to colleges that interest you (remembering to communicate these visits with the attendance office).
- ★ Meet with the college reps when they visit ZHS to learn more about schools that interest you
- ★ Attend the Holland-Area College Fair, held in late September/early October at Hope College's DeVos Fieldhouse.
- ★ Make a calendar of key application and financial aid deadlines.
- ★ Complete and submit college applications.
    - o Apply in September and October to increase your chance of admission.
    - o Remember that although colleges may give a deadline, you shouldn't wait until the last possible moment to apply.
    - o Some colleges waive the application fee if submitted by a certain date.
- ★ Take/retake the SAT/ACT if necessary
- ★ Review the financial aid information shared by the counseling office. The FAFSA can be submitted beginning October 1.
- ★ Search and apply for scholarships.
- ★ Register for AP exams.

Winter

- ★ As 1st semester ends in January, make sure you have passed the courses required for graduation.
- ★ Most regular decision applications are due in January or February; be sure all the necessary materials have been sent and received. Remember, though, that although colleges may have official application deadlines, your chances are often better if you apply earlier.
- ★ Submit the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) online as soon as possible after October 1 and no later than March 1. Submit online at http://studentaid.gov.
- ★ Check with your prospective schools about any additional financial aid application forms and requirements.
- ★ If you need additional assistance in completing your financial aid paperwork, feel free to contact the financial aid office at one of the colleges you applied to.
- ★ Continue searching and applying for scholarships. Local scholarships offered through the Holland/Zeeland Community Foundation generally become available in early February. Descriptions are listed on the counseling office website.

Spring

- ★ Review your Student Aid Report (SAR) from filing the FAFSA and financial aid award letters from the colleges you've applied to. Compare financial aid packages.
- ★ Make an official decision on what to do after graduation and let the proper parties know of your decision. (This generally needs to be done by May 1.)
- ★ Take AP exams.
- ★ Do NOT allow senioritis to kick in. Most schools review final grades and may rescind an offer of admission if senior year grades slip.
- ★ Complete the senior survey informing ZHS of your post-high school plans and of any scholarships you may have received.
- ★ Final high school transcripts should be submitted to the college you are planning to attend. Directions are available on the counseling office website and are shared with seniors in Google Classroom.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

College

- College Board – http://www.collegeboard.org
- ACT – http://www.actstudent.org
- College Navigator - http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/
- Campus Tours – http://www.campustours.com
- College Confidential – http://www.collegeconfidential.com
- College Navigator - http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/

Financial Aid/Scholarships

(Note: Many of the college sites also contain financial aid information)

- FastWeb – http://www.fastweb.com
- Big Future – https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org
- Federal Student Aid – http://www.studentaid.ed.gov
- FinAid – http://www.finaid.org
- Michigan Financial Aid – http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid
- Scholarships.com – http://www.scholarships.com

Career Info

- Naviance - https://student.naviance.com/zeelandhs
- Bureau of Labor and Statistics – http://www.bls.gov; Occupation Outlook Handbook – http://www.bls.gov/oco
- Career One Stop – http://www.acinet.org
- Michigan Jobs and Careers Portal – http://www.michigan.gov/careers
- O*NET OnLine, United States Department of Labor - http://online.onetcenter.org

Standardized Tests

- College Board: SAT, AP – http://www.collegeboard.org
- ACT – http://www.actstudent.org
- Michigan Merit Exam – http://www.michigan.gov/mme