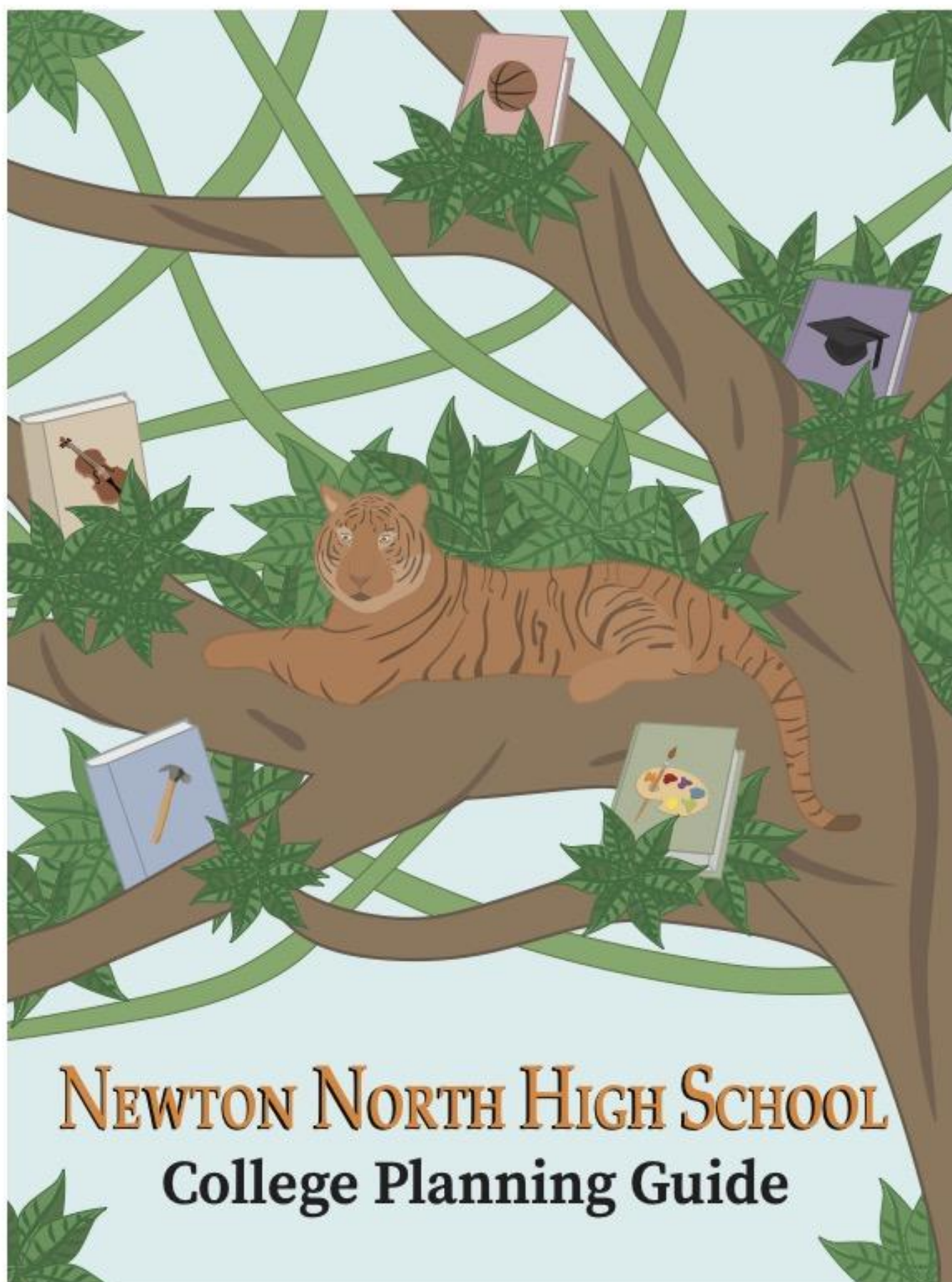




NEWTON NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

College Planning Guide



Newton North High School
457 WALNUT STREET
NEWTONVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS 02460

Dear Newton North Parent/Guardian and Student:

We are very pleased to introduce the updated Newton North College Planning Guide, a comprehensive guide to the college search and application process for Newton North students and their families.

At Newton North, we understand that students take different paths after they graduate. Since a majority of Newton North graduates go on to some form of post-secondary education, the Counseling Department has designed this Guide to be relevant to all Newton North families contemplating college, whether you have previously navigated the college process or are embarking on it for the first time.

It is our intention to review and update the Guide every year, and **access to the document is free online to all Newton North students and their families through the Newton North website**. This Google Doc can be translated into various languages. First open the document and click on "File," then "Make A Copy." In your Google Document, click on "Tools" and then "Translate Document." Your new translated document will now be saved in your Google Drive.

Although it may seem a bit early for sophomores to think about college, we believe it is helpful for sophomores to be aware of some aspects of the college application process before the end of their sophomore year, and wanted to make this information available in a timely manner. We encourage you to consult the Timelines provided in the Guide's Appendices and make your own determination as to the right time for you and your student to read the Guide.

Please remember that our school counselors, college counselors, staff and faculty are all looking forward to supporting you as you embark on this exciting period in your life.

We hope you find this guide helpful.

Sincerely,

Henry Turner

Henry Turner
Principal

Beth Swederskas

Beth Swederskas
Counseling Department Chair

The College Planning Guide

Newton North High School

Newton, MA



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in the College & Career section. Follow us on Twitter [@NewtonNHSCandCC](https://twitter.com/NewtonNHSCandCC).

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The Newton North College Planning Guide is designed to help both students and parents/guardians navigate the nuts and bolts of the college process. The process of applying to college is as much about planning and preparation as it is about patience and persistence. The appropriate timeline will be different for each student. There may be some information in this Guide that will be useful for sophomores, but most will be relevant to students at the beginning of junior year.

For an overview of the timing of the college process at Newton North from freshman through senior year, see [Appendix 1 – Newton North Four-Year College Timeline.](#)

For an overview of the tasks directly related to the college application process [see Appendix 2 - College Application Timeline.](#)

At Newton North, we understand that students take different paths after they graduate. Based on the fact that the majority of Newton North graduates go on to some form of post-secondary education, the Counseling Department thought that it would be helpful to students and parents/guardians to have a written guide pertaining to the college search and application process.

Please note that in this guide, we use the word “college” to refer to all post-secondary education options. This includes universities, community colleges, etc.

This Guide is a supplement to the direct and personal support given by the Newton North school counselors and college and career counselors in the College and Career Center through individual and group seminars, meetings, discussions and presentations.

We hope this Guide is relevant to all Newton North families, whether you have previously navigated this process or are embarking on it for the first time.

[Section 1: How to Start](#)

You are starting to plan for life after Newton North High School and, for the first time, you can choose what kind of education you’d like to pursue and where and how you’d like to pursue it.

This Guide is designed to give you extensive information about applying to college, keep anxiety at bay, and give you the tools to make this a successful experience.

Over 100 Pages! Are you kidding?

Don't worry - it is not necessary to read this Guide in one sitting. Use the table of contents to select the topics that are most pertinent to you at any given time. Individual sections can be printed out.

How do I start the process?

You may be wondering how to begin. There is a temptation to dive right into the process and work on several fronts at once. Before you give in to that temptation, we have some advice.

Stop, sit and think.

One of the most important things you can do at the outset is to ask yourself some questions that only you know the answers to. This is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers.

Take time to think about what matters to *you*, what *you* want and how to take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead. Set aside an hour or so, without distractions, and think about how you would honestly answer the following questions:

- ❖ What are my goals and values with respect to my education?
- ❖ What are my personal and academic strengths and weaknesses?
- ❖ Why do I want to go to college?
- ❖ What do I want from college? (What talents/interests would I like to develop? What new things would I like to try in college?)
- ❖ How do I learn? What kind of learning environment am I looking for?
- ❖ What kinds of people do I want in my learning environment?
- ❖ What degree of academic challenge is best for me? What balance of study, social life and activities do I prefer?
- ❖ How involved do I want my parents/guardians to be in the process of applying to college?

Keep in mind that your answers to these questions may change over the course of the process, but your answers at this time will give you a baseline from which to work. They will help guide you in your thinking about what type of college you might apply to, what questions to ask, and help you ultimately choose a college that is the best fit for you.

Parents/guardians, it is also important that you think about some of these questions:

- ❖ Are there geographic, financial or other factors that should be addressed with your child at the outset of this process?
- ❖ How do you envision being involved in this process? Are you and your child's expectations the same?
- ❖ Do you have specific expectations of where and what type of college you want your child to attend?

Once you have thought a bit about these questions, compare notes and have a discussion about overall goals and how you might collaborate in this process.

Section 2: Working Together

Different people will be involved in the process along the way and each has an important role.

2.1 Students

As a student, you drive this process and are ultimately in charge of your future.

Whether you have heard a lot about the college process or very little, the prospect of leaving high school in a year or two may be daunting and a bit scary. Some of you may be eager to start thinking about the next stage in your life, and others may need more time to ease into the process. Both are normal reactions to a time of transition and change. When you are ready, know that your teachers, your school counselor, college counselors in the College and Career Center, and administrators are ready to support and help you pursue your aspirations. Grasp this opportunity, set aside any preconceived notions about the process and embrace the possibilities.

You are the decision-maker and executor of your applications. Remember, though, you are not alone; people are here to help you.

2.2 Parents/Guardians

As a parent /guardian you are the head cheerleader, advisor, administrative assistant and the person who can help your child keep things in perspective.

With the right attitude, the college search process can be a time for parents/guardians and students to connect with each other. Communicate, make suggestions, support, help your student plan and manage time, encourage self-exploration, and try to leave these things in your child's control. Think of this as a time of discovery for all of you and the ultimate teaching moment for your child. Your child's independence, self-awareness and confidence can actually be fostered as you go through the college search.

2.3 Newton North Counselors

The Counseling Department guides and supports students as they navigate the college admission process. School counselors and college counselors, who make up Newton North's Counseling Department, work together as a team throughout the college search process.

Role of the School Counselor:

A school counselor is assigned to each student as they enter high school, and this counselor stays with the student throughout their years at Newton North. As part of college planning, the school counselor works with students on course selection and Newton North graduation requirements. Students begin to meet more frequently with their school counselor throughout the entire search and application process. Juniors should schedule an appointment with their school counselor in the spring and then again early in the fall, especially those seniors applying Early Decision/Early Action/Rolling.

As part of the college application process, students attend Junior Seminars and Senior Seminars which are led by their school counselors, and focus on college planning. All school counselors write a counselor statement for each of their students as part of the admissions requirement for each college.

Role of the College Counselor in the College and Career Center:

The College and Career Center is staffed by specialized counselors who provide college and career counseling. Students can make College and Career Center appointments beginning in January of junior year. They often meet a few more times during junior year and the fall of senior year. The student's school counselor and/or parents/guardians may also participate in the College and Career Center

meetings, as long as the student is present. These meetings focus on specific post-secondary educational plans and how they fit with career and life objectives.

The counselors in the College and Career Center help students identify the college characteristics that are important to them, develop strategies for exploring colleges at an in-depth level, create a broad list of colleges to consider, and in senior year, help focus on a balanced final list for application. They also offer advice and counseling on all aspects of the college application. The college counselors work closely with the school counselors to support the students throughout the process. Information generated in the College and Career Center meetings is shared with the student's school counselor who uses it in individual follow-up meetings.

2.4 What If I Want to Take a Gap Year?

A gap year is a year-long break between high school and college. If you are interested in taking a gap year before starting college, you should still apply to college in your senior year and follow the regular application process and deadlines. Once you are admitted, you can notify the college that you would like to defer your admission for a year. Colleges are generally amenable to letting students defer for a year and view the gap year as a positive experience.

Chapter 2 – SCOIR

Newton North uses a college and career planning system called [SCOIR](#). SCOIR is a system that helps students organize information regarding their postsecondary planning. SCOIR was chosen because it is user-friendly, easy to navigate, and helps students identify colleges and career options that align with their interests. SCOIR is also used to submit documents (including transcripts and recommendation letters) to colleges during senior year. Students can access information about different careers and college profiles that contain information specific to that college, including historical Newton North data in a scattergram.

Section 1: SCOIR For Students

Students are invited to create their SCOIR accounts by their school counselor during their freshman year. Once you create an account, students are asked to please follow [these instructions](#) to change their email from their NPS email address to a personal email address. This will allow students to receive an email from SCOIR if they ever need to reset their password.

Please find the following SCOIR resources to help you best use the platform:

- [Student Getting Started Guide](#)
- [Student Overview](#)
- [Student College List Management](#)
- [Student Overview](#)
- [Searching for Colleges](#)
- [Requesting Letters of Recommendation](#)
- [Discover Careers](#)
- [My Colleges](#)
- [College Profiles](#)
- [What to do if you have Multiple Accounts](#)

The following resources are NNHS-specific for SCOIR:

- [Instructions to request Teacher Recommendations in SCOIR](#)
- [Student SCOIR Instructions for Applying to College \(FERPA, Transcript Request, Fee Waivers, etc.\)](#)
- [SCOIR Instructions after Applying to College](#)

My Profile

When a student clicks on their name in the top right corner, they can view their Profile. A student's profile includes their demographic information, the option to invite a parent to SCOIR, and their email address. Also found in the Profile is a student's GPA, standardized test scores, and the ability to enter extracurricular activities. Completing the activities section is a great way to prepare for the Common Application activities section or to build a resume!

In the Profile, students can enter their college and/or career preferences in order to be matched with colleges and/or careers that best match their interests. Students can access Newton North-specific resources in the My Drive section of their SCOIR profile. These resources include summer programs, job listings, and more information!

My Colleges

Under the My Colleges tab at the top of the page, students can keep track of different colleges that they are interested in. In the My Colleges section, there are five columns: Suggested, Following, Not Interested, Applying, and Applied. Students can use the various columns throughout their time in SCOIR.

When researching colleges in SCOIR, students can choose to “Follow” a particular college. Students can follow colleges from the college’s profile, from a college search, or by adding the college in manually. Colleges in a students’ “Following” list will send the student messages through SCOIR.

School counselors, college and career counselors, or parents are able to add colleges to a student’s “Suggestions” list, but only the student can choose to move these suggestions into either the “Following” column or the “Not Interested” column.

During a student’s senior year, they can request their NNHS materials be submitted to a college by adding that college into the “Applying” column. NNHS will send all necessary documents, including transcripts, teacher recommendations, and counselor statements, to the colleges added into a student’s “Applying” column. Colleges must be added by the Newton North Transcript Deadline in order to ensure arrival by a student’s deadline.

After submitting an application, students will then move the college into the “Applied” column. As students receive their decisions, they are able to update SCOIR with these decisions. And once a student has decided where they will be enrolling, they are able to mark this in SCOIR in order to have their final transcript sent to their college.

Section 2: SCOIR For Parents/Guardians

Your student can invite you to connect with them on SCOIR. Once you're linked to your student, you can enjoy researching colleges together. Students can invite their parents/guardians to SCOIR in the Profile section of their account and clicking “+ Invite a Parent”

Overview of SCOIR Sections:

On your Parent account, you’ll be able to view your student’s: Student Profile, College List, Drive and any Early Decision requests:

Student Profile: Your Student’s Profile hosts all of their personal information on SCOIR including personal details, academic information, and test scores, activities and achievements, college preferences, and their student drive. Please note that the parent/guardian view of the Student Profile is read-only and cannot be edited. If you spot any inaccuracies or would like to update your student’s information, please notify the student or their counselor.

**College List:* Your Student’s College List can be displayed by clicking on the My Student tab at the top of the page, then on Colleges & Applications.

Drive: Scoir offers a comprehensive document storage solution for students with support for common file types and external links. Parents/guardians have the ability to view and add items to their student’s drive.

Early Decision Contract Request: If your student decides to apply Early Decision (ED) to a college, the institution requires signatures from the student, the family, and a school counselor. They will need to ask a parent/guardian to sign a contract because it is a binding agreement.

*College List

Using the search bar at the top of the home page, you can either type in the specific name of a college to find their College Profile or you can search for colleges based on different search criteria (you'll see location, academic focus, campus setting, etc.). Once you find a college you'd like for your student to consider, you can select the blue "Suggest" button. The college will then show up on your student's "Suggested Column."

Being connected to your student's SCOIR account can help parents/guardians feel more connected to the process. For more detailed information, check out this great resource from SCOIR: [SCOIR: Getting Started as a Parent or Guardian](#)

Chapter 3 - Building Your List of Colleges

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There is no magic to creating the list of colleges to which to apply. Starting in the winter of junior year, you, your parents/guardians, your school counselor and the college counselors will all work together to find a number of colleges that suit your skills, interests and goals. Ideally, this list will be very broad when you begin exploring colleges in the winter of junior year (see [Appendix 2 - College Application Timeline](#)).

As you learn more about what you want in a college and what the different schools offer, your list will evolve until it is finalized in the fall of senior year. The ultimate goal is to create a balanced list of colleges based on the guiding criteria you have laid out (See [Chapter 1 - Where to Begin](#)).

[Section 1: Beyond Numbers](#)

Families may feel a great deal of pressure during the college search process. Please try to keep perspective. College admission is more than just a *numbers game*. A student is not just a 30 ACT, a 1030 SAT or a 3.25 GPA. While colleges may use numbers as a starting point, admissions decisions are not always obvious and involve many factors.

As you begin crafting your list of colleges, you will probably ask yourself what makes a “good” college. Is it the college’s average SAT scores? Is it the rating the institution receives in a national magazine’s report? Is it the college’s acceptance rate? While interesting, these numbers may lead you away from the more challenging work of finding a “good fit.” **A college is a “good fit” if it matches well with your academic, extracurricular, social, financial, and personal needs and goals.**

Of course, you will add your own criteria to your “good fit” definition, such as the quality of academic programs, size, location, cost, etc. Exploring websites and reading the literature received from colleges will help, as well as conversations with your school counselor and college counselors. Research and add at least a few colleges to the initial list that you don’t know that much about, but might be a good match. It is also important that your initial list is well-balanced in regards to admission selectivity.

[Section 2: Creating a Balanced List](#)

Once you have had an opportunity to evaluate a broad range of schools that fit your academic, extracurricular, and social needs, you then need to organize your list based on the selectivity of the

schools. You should make sure that your list includes a balanced selection of "reach," "target" and "likely" choices in terms of your grades and test scores. You should also make sure that your list contains "likely" colleges that are within your financial reach. The point of this list is to identify schools you would be interested in attending that represent the range of selectivity.

2.1 Demonstrated Interest

Schools want students who are really interested in attending their institution which is why "demonstrated interest" is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the admissions process for many, but not all, colleges. The most common ways to show demonstrated interest are:

- Visit the campus – attend an information session and/or take a tour.
- Attend Newton North's College Nights – visit the tables of the schools you are interested in and introduce yourself to the admissions representative(s).
- Make time to visit with admissions representatives when they come to Newton North.
- Email the regional admissions representative – reach out judiciously and do not ask questions that can be easily answered with a bit of time on the college's website.
- Interview with the college – either arrange an on-campus interview or a local alumni interview (if the school is far away).
- Check your email and "click through" on emails from colleges on your balanced list – many schools are beginning to track these points of contact and it is something you can easily do to show your engagement.

The good news is that showing demonstrated interest is completely in your control! It's important to remember that schools, like applicants, want to be "chosen" so be sure to use some of the tools available to you to show your interest. Each interaction with a college shows your interest in attending while also giving you additional opportunities to assess whether that college is a good fit for you. One last point, do **not** forget to show some level of demonstrated interest to **all** of the schools on your balanced list regardless of whether they are a "reach," a "target," or a "likely" school.

Section 3: Individual College Websites

Looking at individual college websites is the DEFINITIVE way to find detailed information about each school. These websites are easy to find through SCOIR, or you can search for the college online. Once on a college's website, you can get specific details about academic offerings, extracurricular programs and financial aid. You can also get admission information including application deadlines and requirements, contact information for regional admission representatives, and upcoming admission events. Almost every college now offers virtual tours on their websites as well. Often you can fill out an online form with your contact information, which will put you on the college's mailing list. This is a great way to stay connected with the college and find out about upcoming admissions programs, including regional admissions events that are in the Boston area. Always check individual college websites for specific up-to-date information.

Section 4: College Search Factors

Beyond the guiding criteria you developed in [Chapter 1 - Where to Begin](#), students and families can use more specific considerations to evaluate and ultimately choose a college. Some of these considerations (college size, geographic location, academic environment) are outlined below. Some may be more

important than others to you in your search. Please note that the SCOIR *college search* feature will allow you to search for colleges on most of the following criteria.

Major / Career Goals

- What are your areas of academic interest?
- Double majors / minors?
- Special programs (conservatory, nursing, ROTC, etc.)

Size

- What is your preferred size? (Keep in mind that a college of 2,000 is very different from a high school of 2,000 classmates you've known most of your life...)

Geographical Location

- Specific region?
- Urban, suburban or rural?
- College town?
- Ideal weather?
- Nearest city, airport?

College Type and Setting

- 4 year?
- 2 year/Community College?
- Military Academy?
- Private, public?
- Co-ed, male, female?
- Religious affiliation?
- Academically Specific (Business, Fine and Performing Arts, Technical, Engineering, Liberal Arts, etc.)?
- Historically black colleges and universities (HBCU)?
- Atmosphere: conservative/liberal, Greek life, School Spirit, Artsy, Intellectual, LGBTQ-friendly?

Housing

- Do you want to live on or off campus?
- Percentage of students who live on campus?
- What types of housing options are available? (learning communities, fraternities, single sex living, substance free, etc.)

Admissions Selectivity

- What is your GPA? Standardized test scores?
- Do you want Early Action, Rolling, Early Decision options?
- How does this fit into your balanced list of colleges ("reach," "target" and "likely")?

Academic Environment

- Do faculty teach and/or do research?
- Who teaches courses, especially to freshmen?
- Average class size?
- Is it important that the college offers an honors program?
- What courses are required and are there distribution requirements?
- Are there any unique classes/travel abroad/co-op opportunities you are interested in?
- Are academic support services available?
- Are there career planning services available?

Activities/Athletics

- What activities and/or athletics are you likely to participate in?
- Intercollegiate, club or intramurals

- Traditions
- **Student Body characteristics**
- What is your ideal ethnic mix / diversity?
- Geographic distribution?
- Gender ratio?

Admission Requirements

- SAT and/or ACT, GPA?
- Essays / Letters of Recommendation?
- Common Application?
- Interview requirement?
- Test Optional Schools?
- Required high school courses?

College Expenses:

- How much will it cost? Include tuition, room and board, application fees, deposits.
- Books, additional fees, travel costs to home?
- In-State vs. Out-of-State tuition?

Financial Aid:

- How important is the availability of financial aid?
- Need-based, merit-based scholarships?

Using [Worksheet 1: College Comparison Worksheet](#), consider how your college choices match up against characteristics that are important to you. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each. A good match is a place where you feel at home and will get the most out of the overall college experience. If you and your parents/guardians are looking at rankings of colleges, keep in mind that these rankings are devised by for-profit entities that are using evaluation criteria that may or may not be important to you and your decision. The ranking of a college is not necessarily a determinant of whether it is a good match for you. During the college search and application process, look at your own needs and preferences, learn more about the many great colleges out there and try to find the colleges that are best for you. Make sure you include a range of selectivity in your working list.

Section 5: Visiting Colleges On and Off Campus

It is very helpful to make some form of contact with each of the colleges you are considering. There are a number of ways you can accomplish this: onsite campus visits, information sessions held locally by admissions representatives, college fairs, admission representatives' visits at Newton North, and a visit to the college's website.

5.1 Newton North College Night

Newton North College Night is held every October. Approximately 150 colleges send representatives to speak with parents/guardians and students. Newton North College Night is a great opportunity to get more information about colleges that interest you, to ask questions of the representatives and to discover new colleges. A wide range of colleges participate, and the list of attending colleges is posted on SCOIR a few weeks prior to the event.

Getting the most from the College Nights takes some advanced planning, and here are some suggestions:

1. Look over the list of visiting institutions and identify several colleges to contact during the evening. Your school counselor or a college & career counselor can help with suggestions of colleges in which you may be interested. The colleges are arranged in alphabetical order at the event, so you'll know where to find each college.
2. Develop a few specific questions to ask each college representative. They shouldn't be questions that are easily answered in the college's literature. Questions might include special academic interests, particular sports, support services available, interviewing opportunities or financial aid procedures. Collect written materials from colleges that look interesting. Also, bring a notebook and a pen to jot down notes, names, addresses, websites, phone numbers and answers to your specific questions. You may also write down some of your general impressions of the college and/or the representative with whom you spoke.
3. Get on the college's mailing list to receive more information. If you have already visited a college or have had an interview, a quick hello to the admissions person visiting Newton North is a good way to be remembered.
4. Be open to colleges that might not have been on your original list, but which seem interesting. Talk to at least three representatives from colleges that you've never heard of! You may find yourself interested in a college you never considered.
5. Bring your parents/guardians. No, you don't have to hang out with them all night. Split up if you like, feel free to hit the same colleges, and then you can compare notes afterwards.
6. Make a good impression. The college reps are going to see hundreds of students and parents/guardians that night, so they probably won't remember all of them. However, if you plan on meeting with a rep at a college that you are sincerely interested in, and you plan on asking them several well-thought out questions, make a good impression on them. They could be the person who reviews your application and/or the one who conducts your admission interview. A three-piece suit is not necessary, but look presentable. If the representative has a business card, ask for one. You can send them a nice note thanking them for their time.

5.2 Admissions Representative Visits

During the fall and spring, the College and Career Center hosts admissions representatives during a lunch block. These visits take place in the College and Career Center in a small group setting and include a brief presentation from the college representative with time for questions from students. These visits will be posted on SCOIR, and you can sign up in MyFlex Learning. Please follow the College Night suggestions listed above to prepare for these sessions.

5.3 College Campus Visits

5.3.1 How to choose colleges to visit

Visiting a variety of colleges is important if you wish to learn firsthand about an institution's programs and "personality." Visits are time-consuming, yet they are invaluable to the process. Parents/guardians can play the role of a research assistant during these visits. By comparing notes, reactions and insights, you and your family can reach more informed decisions. Even if you have strong opinions about size, location, selectivity, programs, cost, etc., it's good to be able to compare and contrast different colleges.

You can explore just about every type of college within half an hour of Boston. Take advantage of our location and visit local colleges. If you are taking a family vacation, drop by a couple of colleges in the

area where you are vacationing. If you're planning a college trip, plot it out on a map, and don't try to squeeze in more than two in a day. Include colleges that are on the more likely side of your list as well as the more selective options. See [Appendix 5 – College Visit Clusters](#).

You never know where you're going to end up, and many colleges include "demonstrated interest" as one of their many criteria for admission. For suggestions on how to show "demonstrated interest," see [Section 2: Creating a Balanced List](#).

5.3.2 Tips for a Successful College Visit

February is the time of year when many juniors and their parents/guardians start visiting prospective colleges. Here is some advice for families to help make the campus visit successful and informative.

1. Visit the college's Admissions Office website to schedule a campus tour and/or information session. Be sure to do this well in advance of your intended visit to ensure that tours are available on the date you prefer. When scheduling the campus visit, you may also be able to make arrangements for the following (this may require a phone call):
 - A personal or group interview
 - A visit to a class of academic interest, a rehearsal, or a sports practice
 - A conversation with a faculty member of a department of interest (academic, athletic, dramatic, etc.)
 - An overnight stay in a dormitory and at least one meal in the campus dining hall
2. February and April vacations are prime times for juniors to visit colleges. Many colleges host open houses, special information sessions and extra campus tours during this very busy week. Check individual college websites for the dates and times of tours. Make sure to plan ahead because these weeks fill up - check websites and call early!
3. College students are very open to offering their opinions and assistance to visiting high school families. Take advantage of their availability, especially tour guides, to ask questions.
4. Be attentive to the condition of campus buildings, the upkeep of the campus grounds, and how well-equipped the academic and technology buildings and labs are. The library, career center, student union, performing arts and athletic facilities are also areas to consider. Talk to students in the dorms, in the student center, bookstore, or wherever they congregate. If possible, sit in on classes.
5. Pay close attention to what students talk about. Get a sense of what their priorities are at each college. It's always impressive to see students who are genuinely excited about certain classes, or professors, or an upcoming internship or semester abroad. Yes, college students all want to have fun, but you could be especially impressed by a college whose students clearly know the main reason they are there—getting an education!
6. Ask students about availability of faculty and academic advisors. Many colleges like to boast about close faculty/student interaction and support, but it's more a fact at some colleges than others.
7. If relevant, ask about academic support services.
8. Always ask to see typical freshman housing. Most colleges offer quite a range of housing options. Try to see a variety of housing options from the nicest to the less desirable - often reserved for first-year students.

9. A choice of college is a major decision. Tours often highlight a college's strengths. Make sure you probe students to also determine some of the college's drawbacks. Every college has them - make sure they're acceptable to you.
10. Make some brief notes about each visit and/or take some pictures, including things you liked and things you didn't particularly like. Fill in your [Worksheet 1: College Comparison Worksheet](#) with information you want to make note of. These notes will be helpful as decision time approaches.
11. At the end of your visit, ask yourself two very important questions:
Do I see myself fitting in here? Am I comfortable here?

5.3.3 Sample Questions to Ask of Students and on a Campus Tour:

- *What makes this college unique?*
- *How intense is the academic competition in the classroom?*
- *What is the average class size?*
- *What do students praise most about this college?*
- *Describe your typical workload for a night.*
- *Describe your typical weekend.*
- *Who is your favorite professor and why?*
- *What campus events have you attended recently?*
- *How would you characterize the relationship between this college and the town?*
- *Name one thing you dislike about this college and how would you change it?*
- *Why did you choose this college over the other schools where you were admitted?*
- *What is the biggest campus issue currently?*
- *What percentage of students live on campus?*
- *How long did it take you to adjust? At what point did you finally feel comfortable?*
- *What do you think made your application stand out?*

5.4 The College Interview

5.4.1 Introduction

Each college determines its own policy regarding the interview and its importance in the admissions process.

While the majority of colleges do not require an interview, a small number of colleges still do. There are also a few colleges that "recommend" that you have an interview. The word "recommend" usually means that you should do whatever it is that a college is recommending you do. However, if you are not ready or comfortable in an interview setting, don't feel compelled to interview if it is not required.

That being said, if you are comfortable in an interview setting and are prepared to discuss yourself and your interests, an interview is another opportunity to present yourself in a favorable light and improve your chance of admission.

5.4.2 Interviewing

There are two types of interviewing options a college might use:

- ❖ The Admissions Counselor Interview

❖ The Alumni Interview

The Admissions Counselor Interview:

This is an interview that is held on-campus or virtually, typically by appointment only. During the interview you meet with an admissions counselor for a conversation about yourself and your interest in the college.

This interview may be evaluative, which means that it is used to help the admissions office determine whether you are the type of student the college is looking for. Your interview becomes part of your application file at that college.

The Alumni Interview:

This type of interview is similar to the On-Campus Interview in that it helps the admissions office determine whether you are the type of student the college is looking for. The difference is that these interviews are conducted by alumni of the college and are held virtually or off-campus all over the country and the world. These people act as representatives of the college and return an evaluation form back to the college with their impressions of their conversation with you.

A Word About Timing

Colleges may offer interviews as early as spring of junior year and through the fall of your senior year. Some colleges don't offer interviews as an option until **after** you have submitted your application. Check the college's website for complete details as to whether, how, where and when interviews are held. Keep in mind that slots for interviews may be limited; act as soon as possible to make an appointment.

5.4.3 Ten Tips for a Great Interview

You can make your interviews work to your best advantage with the right preparation. Going into the meeting cold and mumbling monosyllabic answers to the interviewer's questions isn't a winning game plan. Here are some tips that will help you come across as a strong candidate:

1. **Make an Appointment**
 - Call the admissions office **at least** six weeks before you plan to visit.
2. **Dress Neatly and Comfortably**
 - Dress in a style natural for you and appropriate for a somewhat formal occasion. Don't let your attire be distracting. Choose something not too dressy, nor too casual.
3. **Display Courtesy**
 - Arrive on time for the interview, deliver a firm handshake and make eye contact with the interviewer.
4. **Don't Let Your Parents/Guardians Sit in**
 - The interviewer will be trying to gauge how well you can speak for yourself. Having a parent/guardian in the interview won't work in your favor. The interviewer may, however, come out after the interview to meet your parents/guardians and ask if they have any questions.
5. **Know About the School in Advance**
 - Access the college website before the interview so that you are well informed.
 - **However**, you don't need to memorize every detail about the college - part of the reason for the interview is to help you learn more!
6. **Present Yourself in the Most Favorable Light**

- Develop a personal strategy beforehand that will help you come across well. Decide which of your qualities, interests and achievements you would like to mention.
- What sets you apart from the other applicants? How do you want the admissions officer to remember you? Be confident! This is your time to shine—practice discussing your strong points or noteworthy accomplishments in a positive, but not boastful manner.
- If you have created a resume, bring it with you to the interview. It gives the interviewer a bit more information about you and allows you to leave something behind.

7. Formulate Thoughtful Answers to Certain Types of Questions

- Be prepared to field questions like these:
 - Why do you want to go to college? What do you expect to gain?
 - Why are you interested in our college?
 - What academic areas are you most interested in?
 - What do you like or dislike most about high school?
 - What are your plans for the future?
 - What would you like to tell us about yourself?
 - Tell us about a challenge you have faced and how you dealt with it.
 - How are you doing in school and what are some of your favorite classes? What are your least favorite classes?
- None of the questions has one right answer, but your responses should show maturity, responsibility and honesty. If you're thrown by a question you don't understand, don't try to fake it – *ask for clarification*.

8. Prepare Questions of Your Own

- The interviewer will be impressed by an applicant who shows enough interest to ask pertinent questions about the college. You'll also get points for doing your part to keep the conversation moving at a comfortable pace.
- Ask questions that are not easily determined by looking at the website (i.e. do not ask basic questions such as: "*What is the size of your student body?*"). Instead, you might ask about specific courses or programs, things that relate to the culture of the college or things that are unique to the college.

9. Be Positive

- Be upbeat and talk about your strengths and your accomplishments in and out of school. Don't be afraid to acknowledge your weaknesses, but don't focus on them.

10. Send a Thank-You Note

- Follow up the interview with a friendly written note or an email to the admissions officer (spell their name correctly!). Personalize your note by referring to points you discussed during the interview. Reiterate why the college is right for you and why you would be a great addition to the college community.

Please note that if requested, the school and college counselors will work on interviewing skills with students on an individual basis. Please see them for further information.

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CEEB (College Entrance Examination Board) NNHS Code: 221555

[Section 1: Important Questions](#)

Some colleges require students to submit standardized test scores as part of the application. These include the SAT or ACT as no colleges require both the SAT and the ACT. All colleges that require testing will accept either the SAT or the ACT. We advise students to prepare to take either the ACT or SAT so they have a test score if they need it. Understanding the testing requirements and the process involved will, hopefully, make the experience less stressful and more successful. Keep in mind that it is a student's academic achievement, not test scores, that is the most important factor in college admissions.

Since COVID, most colleges do not require standardized tests for admission. A list of these colleges can be found on [FairTest](#). For definitive information on a college's requirements please visit its website.

Some questions that are important to consider when planning your standardized testing are:

- What tests should I take?
- When should I take the tests?

- How should I prepare for the tests?

Also, it is important to understand:

- How to register for the tests
- How to submit scores to colleges

Section 2: Description of Tests

The SAT, ACT, and ACT with Writing are tests designed to help colleges assess your academic readiness for college. The PSAT and PreACT are offered at Newton North. For more information, refer to [Section 4: Determining When to Take Your Tests](#).

2.1 SAT

The SAT is a digital test and is composed of two sections: Reading and Writing, and Math. Students have 64 minutes to complete the Reading and Writing section and 70 minutes to complete the Math section for a total of 2 hours and 14 minutes.

Each section is divided into 2 equal length modules, and there is a 10-minute break between the Reading and Writing section, and the Math section. The first module of each section contains a broad mix of easy, medium, and hard questions. Based on how students perform on the first module, the second module of questions will either be more difficult or less difficult.

You are required to bring your own device to the test. You can take the SAT with any personal or school-managed Windows laptop or tablet, personal or school-managed Mac laptop or iPad, or school-managed Chromebook (personal Chromebooks aren't permitted).

Registration

Students are responsible for their own registration for the SAT. Registration is done online through [College Board](#). Test sites fill up so it is advisable to register early. Make sure that you will be able to get to the testing site you choose on time on the given Saturday morning. Note that Newton North is NOT a test site for the SAT.

Receiving Scores

It takes approximately two to three weeks to receive your scores from [College Board](#).

Sending the Scores

If an official score report is required by a specific college, students are responsible for sending their SAT scores to that college. Scores must be sent through [College Board](#). From the time that scores are officially available to you, it can take up to 10 days for scores to arrive at a college, even if they are submitted electronically. Consequently, it is important to **plan carefully** so that you can meet your colleges' deadlines.

Some colleges do not require an official score report (they would accept a self-reported score), so it is worth checking each individual college's score reporting policy. Sending an official score report does cost money, so you can save money by only sending to the schools that require it.

Note: Scores are NOT included in the transcript materials sent by NNHS.

The SAT's "Score Choice" Option

The SAT has a policy called *Score Choice*. *Score Choice* gives students the ability to choose which test sittings they wish to send to individual colleges. When sending scores to a college you can either select to send all SAT scores from all sittings or select *Score Choice*, after which you can choose which **test sittings** to send to a given college. When you send your SAT scores, your scores for all sections from the test sittings selected will be sent.

Not all colleges allow *Score Choice* and want to see all tests taken. Refer to individual college websites for more information.

Super Scoring

Some colleges have a practice of "super scoring" a student's test scores. This means that they take the highest score for each section from across all the test dates submitted. Therefore, it is often advantageous to send all your test dates to a given college. You can try to check the policy for each college before you send your scores, but this information is not always made public.

2.2 ACT

The ACT is a three-hour test consisting of four subject areas: English, Math, Reading and Science. The ACT Plus Writing includes the four subject area tests plus a 40-minute Writing test.

The ACT is not an aptitude test. The questions on the ACT are related to what is taught in high school in English, math, reading, and science courses. For more details see [ACT](#).

2024-2025 School Year: The ACT will remain a paper test at most locations, but it is important to know that this is evolving and the ACT has begun offering Digital testing on some dates at some locations. Even though the ACT has begun to offer the choice between paper and pencil or digital testing, one aspect that remains consistent is the structure of the exam. Regardless of the format students choose, the test's fundamental components and scoring criteria remain unchanged. More information about this can be found on the [ACT](#) website.

Receiving Scores

It takes approximately two to three weeks to receive your scores from [ACT](#).

Registration

Students are responsible for their own registration for the ACT. Registering is done online through [ACT](#). Test sites fill up so it is advisable to register early. Make sure that you will be able to get to the testing site you choose on time on the given Saturday morning. Newton North is a test site for the ACT.

Sending the Scores

Students are responsible for sending their ACT scores to the colleges of their choice. Scores must be sent through [ACT](#).

If you take the test more than once, you can choose which test sitting results the colleges will receive. ACT sends scores only for the test dates you select. Some colleges wish to see your scores from all of your sittings of the ACT. Check the college's website. From the time that scores are officially available to you, it can take up to 10 days for scores to arrive at a college, even if they are submitted electronically.

Some colleges do not require an official score report (they would accept a self-reported score), so it is worth checking each individual college's score reporting policy. Sending an official score report does cost money, so you can save money by only sending to the schools that require it.

Note: Scores are NOT included in the transcript materials sent by NNHS.

Super Scoring

Some colleges have a practice of "super scoring" a student's test scores. This means that they take the highest score for each section from across all the test dates submitted. Therefore, it is often advantageous to send all your test dates to a given college. You can try to check the policy for each college before you send your scores, but this information is not always made public.

2.3 PSAT

The PSAT is a practice test for the SAT that runs approximately three hours. It is offered **only once** during the fall. The PSAT covers evidence-based reading, writing and math.

Newton North recommends that all **juniors** take the PSAT in the fall of junior year. A high score on the PSAT in your junior year may make you eligible to participate in the [National Merit Scholarship program](#).

The PSAT is normed for high school juniors and presents a good opportunity to prepare for taking the SAT under real test conditions.

Registration

Newton North administers the PSAT and registration is done through Newton North.

Scores

Since this is a practice test, PSAT test results are not shared with colleges. PSAT scores are sent directly to students through electronic submission from the College Board. Students should make an appointment to meet with their school counselor to gain a better understanding of their score report and to receive their test booklet to help research wrong and omitted responses.

2.4 PreACT

The PreACT is a practice test for the ACT that runs approximately three hours. It is offered **only once** during the spring.

The PreACT covers four subject areas: English, Math, Reading and Science. The PreACT is not an aptitude test. The questions on the PreACT are related to what is taught in high school in English, math, reading, and science courses. The PreAct also includes an ACT Interest Inventory which can help students start thinking about career paths. For more details see [ACT](#).

Newton North recommends that all **sophomores** take the PreACT in the spring of sophomore year.

The PreACT is normed for high school sophomores and presents a good opportunity to prepare for taking the ACT under real test conditions.

Registration

Newton North administers the PreACT and registration is done through Newton North.

Scores

Since this is a practice test, PreACT test results are not shared with colleges. PreACT scores are sent directly to students through electronic submission from the ACT. Students should make an appointment to meet with their school counselor to gain a better understanding of their score report and to receive their test booklet to help research wrong and omitted responses.

2.5 Accommodations for IEPs, 504 plans and Other Special Needs

Testing companies sometimes allow for accommodations based on information provided about the student, accommodation plans, or other special needs. Students and parents/guardians should speak to their school counselor about testing accommodations **at least three months** before a testing date. Specific paperwork must be filled out and filed in order to get approval for an accommodation from the testing board. Please note that requested accommodations are not guaranteed.

2.6 Advanced Placement Tests (AP)

Newton North offers a wide range of AP classes, typically for juniors and seniors, which culminate in a standardized AP exam. These classes can provide opportunities for students to gain college credit or advanced placement for some college courses. The exams are usually given in May. **AP exams, however, are not required or necessary for most college admissions purposes.**

Registration

Registration for AP tests is done through Newton North. The tests are given in May at Newton North during school hours. Students enrolled in AP classes will receive notification from Newton North about registration, test dates and applicable fees.

2.7 Fees and Fee Waivers

There are fees associated with registering for all the standardized tests and for submitting scores. If the fees are a financial hardship, you may be eligible for a fee waiver. See your school counselor for more information.

Section 3: Determining Which Tests to Take

First and foremost, it is critical to check the requirements for each college to which you will be applying to determine their specific test requirements. Colleges that require standardized tests will accept either the SAT or the ACT.

3.1 SAT vs. ACT - Which Test is Right for Me?

Both the SAT and ACT are equally well-regarded by colleges. Students should pick the test they are most comfortable with and feel they can get the best score on. Some students may perform better on one than the other.

The best way to determine which test is right for you is to try a practice test of each type. You can take the PSAT (the practice test for the SAT) and/or the PreACT (the practice test for the ACT) at Newton North. You can also take free practice SATs online through the College Board/Khan Academy collaboration. Another option is to take a full, timed SAT and/or ACT practice test from a standardized testing book available online or at most bookstores; or you could take an SAT and/or ACT practice test at a private testing center which are typically given free with no obligation for further services.

Rather than choose between the two tests, you may decide to take both the SAT and ACT. If you take both, you can send results from either test or both. Colleges will only see the scores you send.

If you would like to learn more about the differences between the two tests see [Appendix 12 - SAT vs ACT](#).

Section 4: Determining When to Take Your Tests

4.1 Plan Ahead

It is helpful to develop a tentative testing schedule in the second semester of sophomore year. This schedule can be modified, but a plan will help you see what tests are offered on given dates and how you might want to schedule your testing. Students may also want to consider the timing of tests in light of academics, extracurricular activities, athletic events, etc.

The tests are offered in the following months-

PreACT - March (10th grade)

PSAT - October (11th grade)

SAT - August, October, November, December, March, May, June

ACT - September, October, December, February, April, June, July

Make sure to check your schedule when planning your testing.

See [Worksheet 2: Planning for Standardized Testing Worksheet](#), which is designed to help you organize your testing schedule. This worksheet can be used by students in any grade.

If you are taking multiple tests, the timing of your testing can be tricky and you should spend some time thinking ahead. Here are some things to consider:

- **Am I taking the SAT or ACT or both?**
- **Will I be taking AP tests in May of junior year?**
 - While SATs can be taken in the same month as APs, it may be more than a student will want to take in one month.
- **How much time will I need or do I want to spend practicing and preparing for the test?**
 - If you plan to do some test prep, you will want to know your test dates in order to plan and schedule your test prep accordingly.
- **What if I want to or need to take the test more than once?**
 - Make sure you leave yourself time to retake a test before your application deadlines.
- **Will I be applying Early Decision, Early Action or Rolling Admission to any colleges? Know your college testing deadlines.**
 - These applications will require submission of test scores earlier than regular decision applications. It can take up to two or three weeks to receive your scores and another 10 days to have them delivered to your college (if required).
 - Check individual college websites to find out the last testing date that the college will accept.
- **Are there any conflicts with final exams, vacations or extracurricular activities?**
- **What if I hope to be recruited to play NCAA sports in college?**
 - You may need to know your scores early to determine your NCAA eligibility. See [Chapter 9 - NCAA Athletic Recruiting](#) for more details.

4.2 PSAT

The Newton North Counseling Department recommends that students take the PSAT (a pre-SAT) junior year.

4.3 PreACT

The Newton North Counseling Department recommends that students take the PreACT (a practice ACT) sophomore year.

4.4 SAT and ACT

The SAT and ACT are given several times a year but NOT every month.

The SAT is typically administered in August, October, November, December, March, May and June. More information about the exact dates for the SAT is available at [College Board](#).

The ACTs are typically administered in September, October, December, February, April, June, and July. More information on the exact dates for the ACT is available at [ACT](#).

Most students will take the SAT and/or ACT sometime between January and July of junior year. August or the fall of senior year is often when students will take the tests for a second or third time if they choose.

Students who are taking AP test(s) in May and June will need to pay extra attention to planning their testing schedule. Please refer to [Worksheet 2 – Planning for Standardized Testing Worksheet](#) and discuss this with your school counselor and/or college counselor(s).

4.5 When to Prepare for the Test

Keep in mind that preparing for a test can take weeks or even months. Therefore, once you have thought about the timing of your testing, plan your test preparation accordingly. See section on “Test Prep” in this chapter for more details on test preparation.

Completing testing in your junior year or at the very beginning of your senior year is strongly advised. With the need to complete applications and course work, among other things, fall of senior year is often the busiest time in a student’s high school career. Not having to complete testing during this first semester is a great benefit, and important if you think you might be applying under Early Decision, Early Action or Rolling Admission plans. If you are still testing into the fall of your senior year, however, note that the SAT and ACT.

4.6 When to Retake a Test

If you are not satisfied with your scores, you are not alone. Many students opt to take the SAT and/or ACT a second time. Sometimes your score will help you determine which areas need improvement. Make sure to leave enough time between tests so that you can do additional preparation and cover more course material in your classes. Generally it is not recommended that you take a test more than three times.

A possible testing plan might be to take the SAT in March and repeat in August, or take the ACT for the first time in April or June and repeat in September. [Worksheet 2 - Planning for Standardized Testing Worksheet](#) can be a helpful tool.

It takes about two to three weeks to get scores from a given test. As part of your planning, you should think about possible dates when you might retake one of your tests, if needed. Think also about how much time you might need to prepare for your retake test and how it fits in with your other testing and application deadlines.

Make sure you have completed everything by your college's deadline! These deadlines are firm.

Section 5: Test Prep

Students who plan carefully and familiarize themselves with the test format through practice materials may improve their scores.

For some students test preparation can take a few weeks, for others, it can span over a few months.

Test preparation can be done by taking full practice tests and/or sample questions from books, online at [College Board](#) and [ACT](#) or at private test centers. Lastly, you can hire private tutors and/or sign up for test prep classes.

5.1 Khan Academy: Test Prep for the SAT

The stated goal of the College Board is to tie the SAT more closely to the high school curriculum, making specific test taking skills less important. In an effort to make test prep accessible to all, the College Board is partnering with Khan Academy (a free, online learning resource) to make comprehensive test prep for the SAT free to students. It is recommended that this option of test prep be used by all students. See [College Board](#) or [Khan Academy](#).

5.2 Newton Community Education

The City of Newton offers test preparation classes through Newton Community Education. Please see their [website](#) for more information.

Section 6: English Language Tests

Some colleges will require students whose first language is not English to take an English Language test. These tests are a supplement to your application and possibly other standardized testing and can help the college ascertain your mastery of the English language. Colleges may require the TOEFL and/or Duolingo.

TOEFL stands for "Test of English as a Foreign Language." See [TOEFL](#). The test measures your ability to use and understand the English language as it is read, written, heard and spoken in the college classroom. [Duolingo](#) is a less expensive English Language test that many colleges are accepting. This test measures English proficiency.

Although there is no single rule about which students should or should not take an English language test, some colleges do require it under certain circumstances. Please be sure to check your college's website. Students whose first language is not English should talk to their school counselor and a college counselor about whether and when to take one of these tests. Traditionally these students take this test in the fall of senior year, since their English proficiency will improve throughout their high school career.

Chapter 5 - The Application

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CEEB (College Entrance Examination Board) NNHS Code: 221555

[Section 1: A College Application Consists of...](#)

The college application is your opportunity to present yourself to colleges that you are interested in. Colleges look at a variety of factors when evaluating your application. Some factors are objective such as grades and test scores; others are more subjective such as your extracurricular activities, teacher evaluations, and essays.

A college application typically includes:

- A form, which people typically refer to as “the application,” in which you include biographical information, extracurricular activities, and personal statements (essays). Example = Common Application
- Official High School Transcript
- Standardized test scores (if the college requires them)
- Teacher Evaluation(s)
- Counselor Statement
- Supplemental materials which might include additional applications, essays, an art or music portfolio, or other items.

Materials sent by Newton North

After an official request is submitted by the student, Newton North will send the following official materials to the requested college(s):

- Official Transcript with unweighted (4.0) GPAs from students' sophomore and junior years, and senior year grades available at the time of application submission. For transfer students, previous high school transcripts will be sent as well
- Teacher Evaluation(s)
- Counselor Statement
- Newton North High School Profile (including Histogram)

The process for making these requests is fully explained to students in Senior Seminars. Check with your school counselor if you have questions.

In order to help organize the information associated with this process please see [Worksheet 4 - College Application Worksheet](#).

Manage your time. Since there are many components to the application, make sure to leave yourself plenty of time to complete it. Do not expect to finish an application in one sitting. Also, be sure to leave time for adequate proofreading and checking the accuracy of everything you submit.

Section 2: The Common Application

2.1 What is the Common App?

The [Common Application](#) (also known as the **Common App**) is an online form through which you can apply to many colleges. It is a standard form that you complete once and is then available for you to send to multiple colleges. Note, you do have the opportunity to edit some of the details of the application form before you submit it to a particular college..

2.2 Colleges That Do Not Accept the Common App

Not all colleges accept the Common App. These colleges have their own application forms and directions for applying specified on their websites. Make sure to check a college's website to determine its requirements.

While this chapter primarily focuses on the process of completing and submitting an application through [Common App](#), much of the following material will be relevant to most application processes because the components of the applications tend to be similar.

2.3 Accessing the Common App

To access the [Common App](#) you must register using your personal email address (Do NOT use your NPS-issued email address). Once you have created your Common App account you can list the colleges to which you intend to apply and start to complete the form. It is not necessary to fill in all the information at one sitting. All of your data will be stored online. You can always update your list of colleges and edit the information in the form before it is sent to any given college.

WARNING: Do not open an additional Common App account **UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES**. Remember to keep track of your Common App password.

2.4 What's in the Common App

The Common App consists of several sections. You will be asked to input biographical information, information about your high school, a list of extracurricular activities, a list of honors and awards, your senior year classes, your self-reported test scores (if required), and one essay.

NOTE: You will likely still have to send the official scores through the [College Board](#) and/or [ACT](#). Please check each college's website to see if self-reported standardized test scores are accepted.

As you fill out the application, the program will tell you when you have entered all the necessary information in a given section.

Should I complete the section that asks for "Additional Information"?

In order for the colleges to get the fullest picture of you, the "Additional Information" section of the Common App may be used to expand on something that has not been previously mentioned in detail. This section can cover one or multiple topics, depending on what is necessary/appropriate. Examples include:

- Interest / Passion / Extracurricular Activity
- Challenges you may have faced
- Explanation of something on the transcript

Should I include a resume?

Each student will develop a resume with their school counselor as part of the Sophomore Seminars and continue the process through their senior year. A resume is a very useful tool for organizing activities and other extracurriculars in preparation for the college process and beyond. At Newton North, students are directed to create their resumes in SCOIR.

The question of whether to include your resume and how to do it is one that you should discuss with your school counselor.

2.5 Application Supplements

The Common App site will also show you which colleges require a "Supplement." The supplement is an additional application form specific to a given college which often requires additional essays and other information.

Like the main part of the [Common App](#), the supplement is filled out and submitted electronically, and is unique to that college or university. For some colleges, the application supplements are submitted separately from the Common App. Please make sure you submit both!

Section 3: Additional Application Requirements

Some colleges may require additional information beyond what is included in the Common App and/or a college's application supplement. You will need to find these requirements on specific colleges' websites as they will not be listed on [Common App](#).

3.1 Supplementary Artistic Presentations

Students interested in the Fine & Performing Arts (art, music, theater, and dance) have a number of options in furthering their studies. There are schools specifically dedicated to the Arts including conservatories of music, visual arts colleges, etc. where students can fully immerse themselves in Arts study. Additionally, many schools have art/music/theater or dance departments that allow students to either major or minor in a given Arts area or to take enrichment courses.

Fine and Performing Arts programs (art, music, theater, and dance) may want you to supplement your application with an audition, recordings or a portfolio. These requirements may have different deadlines than the general application. Please check with each college's website for detailed information.

Even if not required, students may choose to submit additional artistic presentations as part of their application. Please check with each college's website as to their submission process. Please **be in touch early** with the NNHS Fine and Performing Arts faculty for more information on this process.

Section 4: Essays

The Common App requires one essay (currently a maximum of 650 words) based on one of a choice of seven writing prompts, including a topic of your choice. See [Chapter 6 - The College Essay](#) for a detailed discussion on writing good college essays.

Note that while you can type the essay directly into the Common App form, it is best to write it in a Google or Word document and cut and paste it into the Common App when you are ready to submit your application. You should NOT personalize this essay for individual colleges because this essay is being sent to all of your schools. This strategy avoids potential accidental submissions and lets you use the advanced spell checking and formatting capabilities of your editing software. It also makes the essay available to you for use elsewhere if necessary.

Section 5: Teacher Evaluations

Teacher Evaluations are NOT submitted through the Common App but are submitted by the teacher through SCOIR. Teacher evaluations are an essential part of the application. Each college will indicate how many and what type of Teacher Evaluations are required. Two Teacher Evaluations and one Counselor Statement are the norm.

Newton North has a well-defined process for helping you identify teachers who will be writing your evaluations. Your school counselor will explain this process in detail to you as part of the Sophomore, Junior and Senior Seminars.

Section 6: Counselor Statements

Counselor statements are submitted separately by the school as part of the transcript materials. The counselor statement provides a comprehensive picture of your academic, social, and extracurricular contributions to the Newton North community. School counselors are in the best position to collaborate with staff, communicate with you and review your record to provide colleges with a broad and unique perspective. The statement may also include an explanation and clarification of any special circumstances in your background that affected your academic achievement or attendance (e.g. transfer student, extended illness).

Section 7: Standardized Test Scores

The Common App will ask you to self-report your standardized test and AP scores directly on the application. This data is typically NOT a substitute for submitting your official scores either through [College Board](#) or [ACT](#). Please check each college's website to see if self-reported standardized test scores are accepted. See [Chapter 4 - Standardized Testing](#) for details on submitting test scores.

If a college specifically requires you to submit your AP score(s) as part of your application, you must do this through the [College Board](#).

You may omit your test score information if you are applying to a test-optional college. Students on IEPs or 504s can waive their test scores for the Massachusetts public universities. Please see Chapter 8 ["Special Circumstances"](#) for additional information.

Section 8: Submitting Your Application

The [Common App](#) is submitted electronically. Do not wait until the last minute. There have been years where major snowstorms and power outages have occurred and students were unable to meet college deadlines. These deadlines are firm!

Note that submission of the application is done separately for each college to which you apply. While most of the application will stay the same, you do have the opportunity to edit some of the details of the application before you submit it to a particular college. For example, you may wish to remove test scores for colleges that are test optional.

There is a fee to submit the Common App. If the fees are a financial hardship, you may be eligible for a fee waiver. See your school counselor for more information.

Colleges that don't use the Common App will have instructions on their websites on how to submit the required materials.

Section 9: Checking the Status of Your Application

You should receive a confirmation from [Common App](#) that your application was successfully submitted. In addition, the college will usually send you instructions on how to check the status of your application on its website or you may be assigned a login for an applicant portal.

It is important to check with the college to which you applied to make sure that it has received all components of your application, including Teacher Evaluations, scores and transcripts. Even if SCOIR or [College Board](#) indicate that materials have been sent, **do not assume** that all materials have been received. You need specific confirmation from the college that your application is complete. Many colleges allow you to check the status of your application on their website. If not, contact them. Do not assume that the college will contact **you** if information is missing.

Chapter 6 - The College Essay

[Section 1: Essay Preparation](#)

[Section 2: The Essay: Step by Step](#)

[2.1 Purpose of the Essay](#)

[2.2 Choosing a Topic](#)

[2.3 Preparing To Write](#)

[2.4 Writing the Essay](#)

[Section 3: Dos and Don'ts](#)

This chapter was prepared in part by using the thoughts of John C. Conkright, Dean of Admissions, Randolph Macon College, Ashland, VA.

[Section 1: Essay Preparation](#)

Most colleges require that an applicant submit an essay or personal statement as part of the college application. In general, the essay helps the college assess your critical thinking and writing abilities. It is also designed to shed light on your special interests or experiences, values, attitudes, and expectations of the future.

The Common Application (also known as the Common App) essay prompts are usually released by the spring of a student's junior year. At that point, you can preview the essay questions in order to best prepare for drafting the essay. A good activity to help you begin the process of writing an essay is to complete [Worksheet 3 - College Essay Brainstorming Worksheet](#).

In order to avoid essay-writing anxiety, it is best to begin drafting an essay sooner rather than later. The summer between junior and senior year is an ideal time to begin brainstorming ideas for essay topics. The Common App requires a student-written essay. There are seven essay prompts to choose from with a maximum of 650 and minimum of 250 words. To preview the essay prompts, log into [Common App](#).

In addition, some colleges require a supplemental essay or essays to be submitted along with the Common App; these supplemental questions are released on August 1st. The supplemental essay topics tend to be more specific. For example, they might ask you to expand on your choice of major or reasons for applying to that specific college.

Make sure you are aware of the essay requirements for each college you are applying to. If you apply to multiple colleges with supplements, you may need to write multiple additional essays. If this is the case, review all of the supplemental essay topics to see where you can use a response for more than one college.

[Section 2: The Essay: Step by Step](#)

If you are like most students, you see the college essay as another hurdle you must jump over on the way to being accepted at the college of your choice. In fact, the essay is not a hurdle but a rare opportunity. It is a chance for you to “talk” directly to the college’s admissions committee and to help them “see” you as a thinking and feeling person, rather than simply a set of impersonal statistics. Except for the interview, it

is your only chance to share your thoughts, insight, and opinions; to highlight your accomplishments; and to convey your maturity and outlook on life. If you see the college essay in this way, as an opportunity, then it is clearly worth the effort to put some extra time, thought and energy into writing it.

2.1 Purpose of the Essay

The college essay is extremely important for two major reasons:

1. It enables the college admission office to evaluate your communication skills. Through your essay they can assess the clarity of your thinking and your ability to convey your thoughts in written form.
2. It enables the admissions officer to learn more about you as a person, beyond what grades and standardized test scores can convey. A well-written essay can speak volumes about your attitudes, feelings, personal qualities, imagination and creativity. For the admissions staff, it adds another important piece to the puzzle because it distinguishes you as an individual and differentiates you from other applicants.

2.2 Choosing a Topic

Regardless of whether you are writing an essay to meet the requirements of the Common App or a college's supplemental application, here are a few general hints about the most effective way to approach your topic:

- Tell a story only you can tell. Highlight information about yourself that is not evident anywhere else on your application. Since one important purpose of the essay is to reveal something unique about you, your beliefs, and/or your values, this is not a time to be shy or modest. Remember that little incidents or moments can be most revealing of one's character and outlook.
- Narrow your topic and try to be as specific and illustrative as possible.
- Do not be afraid to write about something you think is a little different. A unique topic or approach is often refreshing to a college admissions officer who has been reading applications all day. Further, an unusual or offbeat essay may be an excellent way to show your creativity.

2.3 Preparing To Write

Before sitting down to write a first draft of your essay, spend time organizing your thoughts. Develop a framework for your essay so it will have a smooth and logical progression from one idea or incident to the next. Consider your purpose in writing, what you want to convey, and the tone you think is most appropriate for the topic. Decide on a style that is comfortable for you, not one that you think the admissions committee prefers. Finally, remember that organizing your thoughts and deciding on a framework does not mean you must be overly rigid at the start: leave room for flexibility and creativity as you actually begin writing.

2.4 Writing the Essay

You do not have to get it right the first time! Instead, write the first draft of your essay with the main focus on having the content communicate your thoughts. Then set it aside for a day or two, reread it with a fresh perspective, and make any necessary changes. This is also the point at which you should consider matters of organization, style, grammar, spelling, and tone. Once you have rewritten your first draft you may wish to try it out on your family, friend, English teacher, or school counselor. While automated spell check is helpful, do not solely rely on it. Find a person to proofread your essay. In the first term of senior year, all senior English classes will complete a unit on personal essay writing, which

may help in this process. While the final product and final “voice” should be yours, outside readers may be able to offer helpful suggestions for technical or other improvements to see what kind of impression you would make on someone who doesn’t know you as well.

Note that while you can type the essay directly into the Common App form, it is best to write it in a Google or Word document and cut and paste it into the Common App when you are ready to submit your application. This strategy avoids potential accidental submissions and lets you use the advanced spell checking and formatting capabilities of your editing software. It also makes the essay available to you for use elsewhere if necessary.

Please use the “Preview” in the Common App to make sure your essay is complete and formatted correctly.

Section 3: Dos and Don’ts

Within this general outline for writing the essay, there are some “Dos” and “Don’ts” to consider:

DOs

- Do tell a story only you can tell.
- Do think “small” and write about something you know.
- Do reveal yourself in your writing.
- Do show rather than tell. By giving examples and illustrating your topics, you help bring it to life.
- Do write in your own “voice” and style.

DON’Ts

- Don’t write what you think others want to read.
- Don’t exaggerate or write to impress.
- Don’t use flowery, inflated, or pretentious style.
- Don’t neglect the technical part of your essay (grammar, spelling, sentence structure).
- Don’t ramble – say what you have to say and conclude.

Your college essay, along with your high school record, standardized test scores, and extracurricular involvement, will provide the basis upon which the college makes its admissions decision. A thoughtful, well-written essay can affect that final decision in a positive way. Keep this in mind and take full advantage of the opportunity that the college essay affords you.

Chapter 7 – Admission Application Options

[Section 1: Regular Decision](#)

[Section 2: Rolling Admission](#)

[Section 3: Open Admission](#)

[Section 4: Early Action](#)

[Section 5: Early Decision](#)

[5.1 Points to Consider When Thinking about Early Decision](#)

When you apply to a college, you may have a choice of which type of application to submit. These options affect the deadline for submission, the date you will receive notification about admission, the date by which you must notify a college that you will attend, and in some cases, it may determine what other applications you are allowed to submit to other colleges.

[Section 1: Regular Decision](#)

- Regular Decision means you apply to the college's regular deadline (typically in early winter).
- You can apply to more than one college Regular Decision.
- You typically receive your admission decision between March and April.
- If you are accepted, the decision to attend the college does not usually have to be made until May 1.

[Section 2: Rolling Admission](#)

- Rolling Admissions means applications are reviewed by the college as they are received. That is, as the applications come in, the admissions office reviews them and makes the decision on a "rolling" or on-going basis.
- You typically receive your admission decision as early as a few weeks after receipt of the application.
- It is best to submit your application as soon as you have decided to apply to the college, as the chance of acceptance may improve if you apply early.
- If you are accepted, the decision to attend the college does not usually have to be made until May 1.

[Section 3: Open Admission](#)

- Open Admission means that the college admits almost all applicants who have earned a high school diploma or a GED.
- Open Admission colleges usually have no deadline by which you must submit your application.

[Section 4: Early Action](#)

- Early Action means you apply to the college by a specific early deadline, usually between early November and early December. A few colleges have deadlines as early as October 15.
- You typically receive your admission decision 4-6 weeks after the application deadline (this is earlier than Regular Decision notification).
- If admitted early, you are not committed to enroll at that college and can choose to apply to other colleges.

- If you are accepted, the decision to attend the college does not usually have to be made until May 1.

Early Action Unrestricted

- Early Action Unrestricted means that you are free to apply to more than one college with “Early” admissions options at the same time.

Early Action Restricted

- Early Action Restricted means that you are typically not allowed to apply to other colleges with “Early” admissions options at the same time, but some colleges may have some exclusions. For example, some colleges with Early Action Restricted may allow you to apply to a public college at the same time. Check specific details on each college’s website.

Section 5: Early Decision

- Early Decision means you apply to the college by a specific early deadline, usually between early November and early December.
- Some colleges have a second early decision program (often called Early Decision II), usually with a January deadline.
- You typically receive your admission decision 4-6 weeks after the application deadline (this is earlier than Regular Decision notification).
- Under Early Decision, you must commit to attend that college if accepted. You, your parents/guardians, and school counselor may be required to sign a statement on the application agreeing to this binding policy. This is different from Early Action where you still apply early but you are not required to attend if accepted.
- **If admitted ED, you must enroll, you must withdraw any pending applications to other colleges and you must inform your school or college counselor.** Once you are admitted Early Decision, Newton North High School will NOT send transcript materials to any other colleges.

5.1 Points to Consider When Thinking about Early Decision

1. Applying Early Decision means, if accepted, you **will** enroll at that college. The decision is **binding**, which means that you must withdraw applications that have been submitted to other colleges and apply to no other colleges.
2. Early Decision **should be discussed in detail with your counselor and parents/guardians**. This decision must be well thought out and carefully considered. You should only apply Early Decision if you have visited the preferred college or attended an informational session.
3. The only way to nullify an Early Decision commitment is if the financial package is insufficient; however, this may not leave you much time to apply to other colleges.
4. You should request your teacher recommendations from a teacher in the spring of the junior year if you intend to apply to college on an Early Admission plan.

ADVANTAGES:

- Applying Early Decision is a way of sending a strong message to that college that “This is my definite first choice.”
- It can save time, energy and the cost of filing more applications.
- If the college is a realistic match with your academic background, applying early **might** give you an advantage.

DISADVANTAGES:

- If you are accepted by a college through Early Decision, it is binding if you have a change of heart.
- By agreeing to attend the college if accepted, you are giving up the opportunity to compare financial award letters from other colleges that accept you. You are also giving up the bargaining position. The Early Decision route may be a risk for a family with moderate or high financial need.
- If you are applying Early Decision, you must have applications to other colleges “ready to mail” in the event of a deferral decision, rejection decision or insufficient financial aid. While getting admitted early can reduce stress, the impact of an Early Decision deferral or rejection letter can be stressful.

Chapter 8 – Students with Special Circumstances

[Section 1: First-Generation College Applicants](#)

[Section 2: ELL \(English Language Learner\) and/or International Students](#)

[2.1 What is the TOEFL?](#)

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[Section 3: CAPS Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students](#)

[Section 4: Special Education and 504 Accommodations](#)

[4.1: What is required by law?](#)

[4.2 Programs and Evaluating Services](#)

[4.3 Questions students with learning disabilities \(LD\) should ask when researching colleges:](#)

[4.4 Preparing for Standardized Testing](#)

[4.5 Diagnostic Testing](#)

[4.6 Disclosure](#)

[4.7 Once You've Been Accepted](#)

[4.8 Resources](#)

Some students applying to college have special circumstances and/or accommodations which may include first-generation families, English Language Learners (ELL), Deaf and hard of hearing students (CAPS) or students on IEPs or 504 Accommodation Plans. Special circumstances should play a role in the college search process. When searching for a college, it is important to gather information about whether student services (academic support) and disability services are offered. There are often a wide range of services at various colleges. Some colleges have structured programs where students are closely monitored, other colleges have coordinated services that are less comprehensive and finally, there are colleges that have services available only to students who advocate for them.

[Section 1: First-Generation College Applicants](#)

For students who are the first generation in their families to apply and attend college, the process may seem overwhelming and intimidating. First generation is often defined as an applicant whose parents do not have a bachelor's degree. Please let your school counselor know that you and your family are going through this process for the very first time, and school counselors will help you throughout the process. In addition, the counselors in the College and Career Center are an important resource for first-generation college students and their parents/guardians.

In addition, Newton North also offers a mentoring program for first generation students in the process of applying to college. This program is called Transitioning Together, or T². Each T² student and their family are paired with a mentor from our community who has been through the college planning process. Together they actively participate in group meetings and individual sessions focusing on college matching, financial aid, essay writing and applications. They also attend college visits and workshops throughout the year. Mentors and mentees work together from January of junior year through graduation. T² applications will be available for juniors in the fall with a November application deadline.

Students will be notified in December if they are accepted into T². Find more information at [Transitioning Together](#).

Section 2: ELL (English Language Learner) and/or International Students

ELL students and their parents/guardians are encouraged to work with their school counselors, teachers and the ELL staff. In addition, the college and career counselors have a great deal of experience working with ELL students and are a valuable resource for them. In order for a student to receive ELL services, they are deemed eligible by the district's ELL Office. This is done through screening tests that help determine English proficiency for students whose first language is not English.

The college application process for international students can be very complex. It is also very different for each student and family. There are many factors that must be considered, including the student's status in the U.S. (e.g., visa type, permanent resident visa, in process for "green card").

Parents/guardians of international students should inform the student's school counselor, a college counselor and the colleges to which the student is applying about the student's status in the United States. This status has critical implications for the application process and the awarding of financial aid. Please see [Appendix 9 - Financial Aid Information for Non-US Citizens](#).

ELL students and their parents and guardians are encouraged to speak to teachers, counselors, and ELL staff about a plan for standardized testing.

2.1 What are English Language Tests?

Some colleges will require students whose first language is not English to take an English Language test. Please refer to [Chapter 4-Standardized Testing, Section 6](#).

Although there is no single rule about which students should or should not take an English Language Test, some colleges do require it under certain circumstances. Please be sure to check your college's website. Students whose first language is not English should talk to their school counselor and a college counselor about whether and when to take a test. Traditionally these students take this test in the fall of senior year since their English proficiency will improve throughout their high school career.

2.2 ELL College Resources

[Getting Ready for College: What ELL Students Need to Know](#) provides information for ELL students applying to college.

[ESL Directory](#) is a search engine for ESL programs at national universities.

Section 3: CAPS Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

[CAPS services](#) are provided for students who are either deaf or hard of hearing. While Deaf and hard of hearing students have been attending college for many years, only the last few generations have had access to auxiliary aids and services that can contribute significantly to a successful educational experience. Deaf and hard of hearing students should contact their school counselor to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made for standardized testing, such as the ACT, SAT or other college entrance exams.

A wide range of services and technology are now available to students, including professional sign language interpreters, Computer-Assisted Realtime Transcription (CART), or assistive listening devices. However, prior to identifying which aids and services may be beneficial, Deaf and hard of hearing students must identify for themselves the kind of academic and social environment in which they would like to spend their college years. Sign language interpreters may be completely appropriate in the classroom, but the ability to develop a strong social network and participate in non-classroom activities and events may not be as accessible. Therefore, students must decide if they want to attend a mainstream college or would prefer a college environment that has a sizable Deaf and hard of hearing population.

Once students have been accepted to college, they should contact the Disability Services Office on campus to discuss accommodations required and inquire about any supporting documentation needed. Most often, colleges want evidence of current evaluations rather than an IEP. Bear in mind that equal access to Deaf and hard of hearing students on college campuses is required by law and the Disability Services Office is the appropriate contact to make sure that this happens.

Section 4: Special Education and 504 Accommodations

Whether you need comprehensive services or more common accommodations to access the educational environment, there is a college for you.

Preparing for the college search and application process begins earlier for students with learning or other disabilities in order to maximize the possible positive outcomes. Consider thinking about the process early in order to have enough time to fully research programs offered by colleges, determine your needs, update your diagnostic testing and prepare your application. You may also want to start thinking about the supports you now use and what supports you might need when you are in college. Like the process to develop an Individualized Education Plan ("IEP") or 504 Accommodation Plan at Newton North, finding the right college(s) and successfully applying will require a team effort involving you, your family and your counselor. It is also important to remember that the planning process for a student with learning or other disabilities involves all the same steps as for other students, plus a few more. So be sure to use this entire College Planning Guide, and think about how each step may be impacted by your particular circumstances.

First, familiarize yourself with [Appendix 6 - High School vs. College Disability Laws](#) which describes and compares the differences between disability laws applicable to high school and postsecondary education and [Appendix 7 - Applying to College with an IEP or 504 Plan](#) which provides a decision-tree to help guide your thinking about how big a role your disability has played in high school and may play in college..

4.1: What is required by law?

There are a variety of ways colleges and universities support students with learning and other disabilities. All colleges are required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities. See [Appendix 6 - High School vs. College Disability Laws](#) for a review of the framework applicable to colleges. To access the services which comply with the ADA, the student must have a diagnosed disability and the supporting documentation, must initiate contact with The Disability Services Office of the college, and must specifically request particular accommodations. This process requires you to take the initiative, and be able and willing to discuss your disability, including identifying what accommodations you will need and why. Although this may sound

daunting, many colleges are willing to help you through the process before and after admission and provide other support. How to determine which college does the bare minimum required by law and which college provides more is the challenge when searching for a college for a student who may need more than the minimum required by law.

4.2 Programs and Evaluating Services

In addition to the usual considerations for selecting a college and determining what level of services may be needed for a student to be successful in college, there are a few more things to think about when researching colleges. It is important to understand the college's graduation requirements, including any core curriculum requirements which might include math, science or foreign language requirements. Even colleges with core curriculum have options in each category, and may permit waivers or substitutions. Deeper research, such as directly contacting colleges, will help you figure out if their services will meet your needs.

4.2.1 Comprehensive Support Programs

Some colleges have developed comprehensive support programs for students with learning disabilities. These programs typically require a second application that is either submitted by the student along with the regular college application or shortly after being notified of acceptance. Many of these programs are limited in the number of students they will accept as they typically involve one-on-one educational coaching or small group work. Colleges offering these programs often require an additional fee beyond tuition; this fee can vary depending on the college. If you are interested in applying to a college with a comprehensive support program, it is very important to identify the colleges early on and to plan for the application (which may have diagnostic documentation requirements that are different or more extensive than those used to develop the IEP). Almost all of these special programs will require a separate essay from you about how your learning disability has impacted your education. Some require in-person interviews. Careful planning will go a long way towards improving the process. Note that there are also a small number of colleges which specifically cater to students with learning disabilities where many, if not most, of the student body has some sort of learning disability or needs additional support.

4.2.2 General Support Programs

Many colleges have academic support services for ALL students. These services may include tutoring, writing centers, study groups and similar helpful programs. Please note that these programs may or may not be identified on the disability services webpage for a college. Ask about them during tours (even if you don't want to mention the word "disability"). Schools with general academic support services may still be a good fit and sufficient to meet your needs.

4.3 Questions students with learning disabilities (LD) should ask when researching colleges:

- *Who is responsible for all LD support services?*
- *What level of support is offered for students with LD?*
- *Is there an additional cost for the services/programs?*
- *How many people are on the support center staff?*
- *How many LD students do you serve?*
- *Do students meet with LD staff on a regular basis?*
- *Who advises students with learning disabilities about academic issues?*
- *What accommodations are available?*

- *Is there a writing support center? Who staffs it? Where? Days/Hours?*
- *Is there a math support center? Who staffs it? Where? Days/Hours?*
- *I plan to be a _____ major. Are there specific, targeted supports in this major?*
- *What if the student has not taken a foreign language?*
- *What type of diagnostic testing and other documentation is required for a student to receive services? How old can acceptable testing be?*
- *Where are the services available on campus?*
- *How many credits per semester is a student required to take?*
- *Does the college provide services or a program or both?*

4.4 Preparing for Standardized Testing

Sophomore year is a good time to become familiar with the policies of ACT and College Board (PSAT, SAT, and Advanced Placement) exams to request testing accommodations. This information will be critical to planning for those standardized tests. See services for students with disabilities on [ACT](#) and [College Board](#) for details concerning documentation and your diagnoses (as determined by your diagnostic testing) required for testing accommodations. Since this process takes considerable time and requires specific applications and documentation transmitted from the school, it is best to plan well in advance. Be sure to coordinate with your school counselor and/or special education administrator. In the spring and fall, the Counseling Department will send Newton North's College Board/ACT Test Accommodation Request Process letter to all students on either an IEP or 504 Plan.

Sophomore year is also a good time to start familiarizing yourselves with the "practice" tests for both the SAT, known as the PSAT test, and the ACT, known as the PreACT. These tests are more fully described in [Chapter 4 - Standardized Testing](#). For both tests, you may want to apply for testing accommodations. Be aware that some accommodations which may be available at Newton North, like the use of word processing technology (computer) for written essays, may be more difficult to obtain from standardized testing companies without specific, detailed diagnoses, like dysgraphia.

Note that the policies and process for applying for testing accommodations differ between the SAT and ACT. For the ACT you will need to apply for accommodations every time you take the test. For the SAT, you apply for accommodations once and, if approved, they apply to every College Board test you take (PSAT, SAT, and AP tests).

Students with variable strengths and weaknesses may do better on one versus the other. Seriously consider taking a practice test for both the ACT and SAT under simulated testing conditions early enough to help you determine which test might best match your learning style. For a more detailed description of the standardized tests, planning your testing schedule and a discussion of determining which test might be the best fit for you, see [Chapter 4 – Standardized Testing](#).

Please consult your school counselor and individual college websites to decide if you should take the ACT and/or the SAT with Writing.

Lastly, more and more colleges are providing an application process which is "test optional," meaning standardized test scores are not required to be submitted for admission (although they may have additional requirements in lieu of test scores). For a list of colleges which are "test optional" see [Fair Test](#). In addition, some colleges, like the ones in the University of Massachusetts system, waive the

standardized test requirement for students on IEPs and 504 Accommodation Plans. Be sure to check your college's website.

4.5 Diagnostic Testing

It is important for students with learning disabilities to make sure that their diagnostic testing is up-to-date. Most colleges require diagnostic documentation current within three years in order to access disability services and "reasonable accommodations." The SAT and ACT also require diagnostic testing to qualify for any testing accommodations. Some comprehensive college programs require more current, specific assessments and special applications. The key to finding the right college for a student with learning or other disabilities is having the best available information about the student's strengths, challenges, needs and desires. Self-reflection as well as objective data will be necessary to maximize the chances for a successful transition to an appropriate college.

4.6 Disclosure

The type of college you intend to apply to (based on your strengths, challenges, needs and desires), will impact whether, when and how to disclose information about your learning or other disability. For some colleges, especially those with comprehensive programs, the application offers you an opportunity to indicate your interest in the college's learning support program and provides you with a separate application process through which you can submit current diagnostic information and a personal essay or statement. Colleges with these programs usually have close coordination between the disability services and the admissions office. If a college does not specifically ask for pre-acceptance learning disability information, then the admissions office typically does not consider documentation related to learning or other disabilities. Most admissions offices do not consider or accept IEPs or 504 Accommodation Plans with the application. It is important to check each college website (search for "disability" on the homepage to quickly access the proper information) or call the admissions office if you are unsure about when or what to submit.

If you feel strongly that your disability has significantly shaped your high school experience, either positively or negatively, there are some appropriate methods to communicate these circumstances with an admissions office. This is a particularly important consideration if there is some aspect of your application (e.g. test scores, grades, gaps in attendance, no world language) which might be better explained or put in context with information about your disability. You may choose to write about your disability in the college essay, disclose it in an interview, or include it in response to the "additional information" question on the Common App (but note there is a word limit on the Common App). For more information about writing your essay see [Chapter 6 – The College Essay](#).

4.7 Once You've Been Accepted

Once you have been accepted to a college, you can contact the Disability Services Office (or its equivalent) on campus and see what documentation they will need for you to send in order to receive accommodations. In almost every instance, you will be asked to send your most recent testing evaluation and 504 (if applicable), not the IEP. Even if you decide that you will not require support services at the college level, it still may be a good idea to provide the college with your testing in case you decide to utilize services at some point in the future.

4.8 Resources

Below is a list of resources, college handbooks and websites, to help you identify colleges with programs to match your needs. The College and Career Center has copies of the books available to review.

- [The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities](#) (book)
- [Peterson's Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD](#) (book)
- [The Parent's Guide to College for Students on the Autism Spectrum](#) (book)
- [College Planning for Students with Learning Disabilities](#)
- [National Center for Learning Disabilities: Post-High School Planning](#)
- [Selecting a College for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder](#)
- [Association of Higher Education and Disability \(AHEAD\)](#)
- [Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology \(DO-IT\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education, Transition](#)
- [Strategic Alternative Techniques Center at The University of Arizona](#)

Chapter 9 - NCAA Athletic Recruiting

[Section 1: Athletic Divisions](#)

[Section 2: National Collegiate Athletic Association \(NCAA\)](#)

[Section 3: NCAA Recruiting Rules](#)

[Section 4: Timeline](#)

[Section 5: Evaluating Your Options](#)

[Section 6: Tips for When & How To Talk to Recruiters](#)

[Section 7: Final Advice](#)

There are many different ways in which a student can play sports at college. Being recruited or walking on to play at a Division I, II or III school are options. Playing at a club or intramural level at college is another. It is important to first establish what level is best suited to you as a student-athlete. You can do this by speaking with your Newton North or club coach to get a sense of your competitiveness in regard to college play. They will give you a realistic evaluation of your talent. An important fact to keep in mind: *Approximately two percent of college athletes are highly recruited and receive full scholarships. The remaining 98 percent must find their own way to the right college.* Please see [Appendix 8 - The Reality of College Sports](#) for a helpful chart.

Remember to pick a college based on where you feel most comfortable. NEVER pick a college based solely on its athletic program because if you get injured and can't play, or lose interest in the sport you still want to be happy with the rest of your college experience.

The [National Collegiate Athletic Association](#) (NCAA) provides the most comprehensive information about the recruitment of student-athletes and provides many resources. As recommended throughout this College Planning Guide, always refer to the individual college websites for more information.

[Section 1: Athletic Divisions](#)

It is important to understand the difference between Division I, Division II and Division III levels of play and how athletics factor into admission. Division I and Division II colleges may offer athletic scholarships. Division III colleges do not offer scholarships based on athletic ability, but coaches may influence admission decisions for students and affect financial aid packages.

[Section 2: National Collegiate Athletic Association \(NCAA\)](#)

To play Division I or II sports at any US college, a student-athlete must have registered with the [Eligibility Center](#) which will ultimately certify their academic and amateur credentials. This process can be started as early as sophomore year. In Division III, this certification of a student-athlete is conducted by each college and not by the NCAA. Please note that there is a charge to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center, unless you are eligible for a fee waiver. Please see your counselor for more information as to whether you may be eligible for a waiver.

The NCAA website is the number one source of information for you during this process. The Eligibility Center provides an extensive “Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete” which can be downloaded **FREE** on the [NCAA](#) website.. It is essential to check here to find out all you need to know about the academic and amateur eligibility requirements, the list of approved and required college prep courses, statistics, links to member conferences (e.g. Big Ten, ACC, Atlantic 10), etc. It also identifies important differences in the college application process for the DIV I or II bound student-athlete. For instance, while you still apply to each individual college you also need to ask the NNHS Records office to send your official transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center. If you have transferred from another high school please refer to the NCAA’s Eligibility Center for the correct procedure.

Please check with the NCAA Eligibility Center for academic eligibility requirements for student-athletes.

Section 3: NCAA Recruiting Rules

The NCAA mandates the recruiting regulations for Division I, II and III colleges, which bind both the coach and the student-athlete. There may also be certain recruiting requirements specific to a particular sport. These rules indicate when a coach is allowed to send recruitment materials to or contact a prospect or invite the prospect to visit a campus. For a complete list of recruitment rules for each sport go to the [NCAA](#) website.

Section 4: Timeline

Junior Year...

- Establish an athletic resume. [See Appendix 13 – Sample NCAA Letter and Resume.](#)
- Fill out “Prospective Student Athlete” forms online for any of the colleges that you’re potentially interested in. This should be available on the Athletics website for each individual school you are interested in.
- Send your athletic resume and a letter of recommendation(s) from one of your current coaches. Also feel free to send the coach a link to video highlights of yourself if you have one.
- If a coach responds to you, be sure to keep in contact with them. Send a schedule of your upcoming games so that he/she can come see you play live and in person! Be sure to read up on the rules/regulations regarding visits on the NCAA website.
- Register with the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) by the end of your junior year if you haven’t already done so.
- VISIT THE COLLEGES! Go see the colleges that interest you. Talk to student-athletes there. Watch practices & games of the team you are interested in playing on. Check out all of the facilities, do your research about classes and majors offered and investigate activities other than your sport of choice.

Senior Year...

- Continue to keep in touch with the coaches that have reached out to you. Maintaining this relationship is important personally and for the admissions process!
- Apply to the colleges of your choice. Let the coaches know that you have applied and that you are still very interested in playing for them.
- Even if you are being recruited, remember to apply for financial aid. Refer to [Chapter 10 Financial Aid.](#)

- Review your amateur status on the NCAA website and request your final amateurism certification on or after April 1st (for fall enrollees) or October 1st (for spring enrollees).
- After graduation, ask the Records Office to send your final transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center with proof of graduation (again, this is on the NCAA timeline on their website).

Section 5: Evaluating Your Options

Before you accept an offer to play sports at a college, ensure you do your research before you sign with them. If it is a Division I or II college, make sure you ask for all the details about any scholarship money and the rules for maintaining the scholarship. Even if the coach of a Division I or II college wants you to play for them, it doesn't mean that you will get a "full ride." They may not have any money to give you!

Make your decision only after you have compared the total cost of attending each college you have been accepted to and compare any scholarships, grants and financial aid packages.

For further information refer to [Worksheet 5 – Financial Aid Comparison Worksheet](#).

Section 6: Tips for When & How To Talk to Recruiters

When is the right time to start talking to coaches? That will depend on many factors such as the season you play your sport in, your level of competitiveness (whether you play at a club level etc). For instance, if you would like to play Div III soccer and you play high school and club level soccer, you could contact coaches of colleges you are interested in during the fall and/or spring of your junior year. Let the coaches know your game schedule and invite them to come to see you play. If you decide to contact coaches earlier than this, remember that at this level, they might not be ready to think about their team's needs that far into the future. For Div I & II sports teams, the timetable might be earlier. Each sport is different and this is something you should investigate and discuss with your school, town, or club coach.

Please refer to the Recruiting Calendar on the [NCAA](#) website found in the "Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete."

You can connect with college coaches through a variety of ways including:

- Letter or athletic resume. [See Appendix 13 – Sample NCAA Letter and Resume](#)
- Player profile/Prospective Student Athlete forms
 - Fill out the player profile form online for any college you are interested in. These should be available on each college's individual athletics website
- Highlight video
 - Consider making a short video that you can upload to the web, highlighting your playing ability. Whether a coach has been able to see you play or not, this video will be a helpful reminder. The video does not need to be a professional production, but you will need to spend some time researching what a coach of your chosen sport will want to see and the best ways to showcase your ability.
- College showcases
 - Generally speaking these opportunities relate to team sports so talk to your town or club coach if they plan to attend any of these events. If so, find out which coaches will be attending and spend some time contacting those you are interested in playing for and invite them to watch you play.
- College camps

- Most colleges run sports camps during vacations, which are another good way to connect with coaches.
- Campus visits
- High School and/or club coach.

Coaches want to hear from the athlete, not the athlete's parents/guardians. Here are a few questions to keep in mind when talking to college coaches and recruiters:

1. Ask for details about academic programs that interest you.
2. How can you manage your academics with your sport ?
 - What types of tutoring are available?
 - Do the requirements of the sport allow you to pursue your academic interests?
 - Does the schedule of the sport match the demands of your major?
 - What percentage of student athletes take summer courses in order to meet their academic requirements?
 - Can I major in any subject that I want to study?
 - Are there limitations on what I can study based on athletic performance?
 - Is there a minimum GPA requirement I must attain in order to participate in the sport?
3. What is the recruiter's role at the college? Will the recruiter monitor your academic process? Will the recruiter provide tutors to assist with your academics?
4. What are the coach's expectations of their players? (time commitment, appearance, etc..)
5. What are the rules for maintaining the athletic scholarship?
6. What happens if you get injured, benched or are on academic probation?
7. What are the housing and eating arrangements for athletes? (Some colleges require athletes to live and eat together during the season.)

You can also get suggestions of questions to ask coaches and administrators on the [NCAA](http://www.ncaa.org) website.

Section 7: Final Advice

It is important to keep a level head. Stick with the principal criteria on your college list and do not allow athletics to totally dictate your college search. You are attending college to do more than play sports.

Chapter 10 - Financial Aid

[Section 1: Sources of Financial Aid](#)

[Section 2: Getting Started](#)

[Section 3: What's Involved](#)

[3.1 The Forms](#)

[Section 4: Ten Things You Should Know About Financial Aid](#)

[Section 5: Financial Aid Timeline](#)

[Section 6: Web Resources](#)

The cost of college is a major consideration when going through the application process. College costs go beyond just tuition and include room, board, books, fees, and travel, and can exceed \$80,000 per year depending on the college. While colleges are required to report their total costs on their websites, you will not know what the actual cost of that college will be for you until the financial aid process is complete and you have received notification from all financial aid sources. Keep that in mind if you are interested in a college that may appear to be financially out of reach.

Applying for financial aid isn't easy, but it is very manageable if you fill out the forms on time, stay organized and know where to go when you have questions.

If you are not a U.S. citizen you may still be eligible for financial aid. See [Appendix 9 – Financial Information for Non-US Citizens](#) for more information.

[Section 1: Sources of Financial Aid](#)

Financial aid can come in many forms:

Scholarships and Grants: money that does not need to be repaid, also known as “gift aid”

Loans: money that does need to be repaid

Need-Based: determined by a family’s ability to pay

Merit-Based: determined by a student’s achievement (academic, artistic, athletic, service, etc.)

Work Study: money that you must work for. You will maintain an on-campus job and you will earn this money gradually on an hourly wage.

The main sources of financial aid are:

- The federal government
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Colleges and universities
- Private sources such as foundations, corporations and banks

Financial Aid from Colleges and Universities

From a cost perspective, there are several things to consider when choosing which colleges to apply to.

Cost of tuition is certainly important. The Massachusetts State System (universities and community colleges) are going to offer tuition rates lower than private colleges or out of state public colleges.

For private colleges, it is important to look not just at tuition but how much financial aid a college offers. Sometimes colleges with very high tuition may end up being more affordable because of the generous financial aid they offer. You may want to look at the following information on a college's website:

- What are the college's resources for scholarships?
- Does the college give merit scholarships that you might apply for?
- Does the college have "need blind" or "need aware" admissions?
- Does the college meet full-need?
- What percentage of students at the college typically get financial aid awards?
- What is the average financial aid package offered to students?

Section 2: Getting Started

Utilize MEFA: A great way to get started and learn about how financial aid works and what financial aid options exist is to utilize The Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA). MEFA offers FREE webinars that provide a comprehensive overview of the full financial aid application process. Presenters include MEFA staff members as well as guests from financial aid offices across the Commonwealth, providing families the opportunity to hear from many of the most knowledgeable financial aid leaders in the industry. Click [on MEFA Events](#) for a complete schedule of upcoming live events and recordings.

All of the MEFA resources are free, including events to help complete financial aid forms. Additionally, MEFA offers free individual phone calls where you can speak with an expert to ask personal/specialized questions about your unique family situations.

We recommend subscribing to the MEFA emails, listening to their [podcast](#), and watching all the relevant webinar videos. It is important to start educating yourself on the financial aid process and paying for college as soon as possible.]

Another helpful tool is the **Net Price* Calculator**. Every college is required to post a Net Price Calculator to their individual website. This is a tool that you may use to enter your personal financial information to determine what the financial aid award may look like for you at that particular school.

*Net Price: the difference between the "sticker" price (full cost) of a college minus any grants and scholarships you receive (COST – GIFT AID = NET PRICE)

Section 3: What's Involved

There are several forms required as part of the financial aid application process. All colleges require the FAFSA (see below) and some colleges require the CSS PROFILE (see below). In addition, there may be other requirements so make sure to check the college's website for all required forms and deadlines.

You can also consider applying for scholarships offered by local community groups or other institutions. Some of these scholarships may be targeted to a particular area of interest or tied to specific criteria. There is a list of outside scholarships accessible to students on SCOIR. Consult with a school and/or college counselor for more information.

A free resource to determine what outside scholarships you might be eligible for is [FastWeb](#).

3.1 The Forms

- **The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid):** All prospective U.S. college students who want financial aid must complete the FAFSA. Instead of filing one application for each separate college, each student only files one FAFSA for each academic year. There are spaces on the form where you can list your prospective colleges.
- **Institutional Documentation Service (IDOC):** The College Board collects families' federal tax returns and other documents on behalf of participating colleges and programs. The College Board notifies students selected by participating institutions when to submit the required documents.
- **The CSS (College Scholarship Service) PROFILE:** Used mostly by private colleges, this is a supplemental financial aid form. Check each college's website or the CSS PROFILE website to see if any of the colleges where you are applying require it.
- **Institutional Financial Aid Forms:** Some colleges have their own financial aid forms. If required, these are included in admissions applications, and usually have specific questions that the FAFSA does not cover. If a college requires the CSS PROFILE, it will NOT require an institutional form as well.
- **The Newton North Scholarship Form:** Newton North students can fill out this one form and become eligible for the Newton North scholarships that generous members of the Newton North community have established. This form will be available online in late fall. Completed forms are usually due in the Scholarship Office in January.
- **Outside Scholarships:** The term "scholarship" is sometimes mistakenly used to refer to all types of financial aid. Scholarships are, however, only one type of aid and should be looked at, in addition to, and not instead of, other types of aid (i.e., grants, loans and college work study) that are triggered by the FAFSA, the CSS PROFILE and institutional financial aid forms. Applying for scholarships is hard work, and we suggest approaching it in the following manner:
 - Make the FAFSA, the CSS PROFILE (if required), institutional financial aid forms (if required) and the Newton North Scholarship Form priorities. Fill these out thoroughly, accurately, and submit them on time.
 - Consider applying for "targeted" or "focused" scholarships first. Are there any scholarships that you might be eligible for that most others students are not? Look at these sources first. Examples include employers, foundations, social/ethnic/religious/ organizations and labor unions.
 - NEVER pay money to a scholarship service or to anyone who offers you financial aid or scholarship information for a fee. There are a lot of SCAMS out there.
 - Use a free scholarship search like FastWeb and check SCOIR for the scholarship newsletter to find outside scholarships for which you are eligible.

Section 4: Ten Things You Should Know About Financial Aid

Based on an article by Beckie Supiano "In a Rocky Economy, 10 Steady Tips About Student Aid" from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

1. **Every student should apply for aid** —regardless of family income or citizenship. Even families who think they will not qualify for need-based aid at the time they apply, should still complete required financial aid forms by the required deadlines. If a family's financial situation changes during the course of the year, the financial-aid office cannot offer aid if forms have not been submitted at the required times.

2. **Deadlines matter.** Students have to apply for aid each year, and they must do so on time. First-year students need to understand that different colleges may have different deadlines. Give yourself sufficient time to collect the information you need, complete the form and submit it to the institution in time to meet their deadline.
3. **Check Each College's Financial Aid Application Requirements** - All colleges require the FAFSA. About 250 colleges require a CSS/Financial Aid Profile. State grants and outside scholarships may also require additional paperwork. It is important to check each college's website to see what forms you will need to submit when applying to that college.
4. **Understand what your 'Student Aid Index' will be** - When you apply for need-based financial aid through the FAFSA or CSS PROFILE, a calculation is done to assess how much financial need your family has. This is called the "Student Aid Index." It is calculated from information provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, and can range from -1500 to 999999. A negative SAI indicates a higher financial need. Knowing your SAI will help you understand your eligibility for need-based aid.
5. **Be aware of what is included in the cost of attendance** - This figure includes tuition, fees, housing and indirect costs like books, supplies and transportation. The actual cost paid for some of these items will vary from student to student.
6. **Eligibility and need aren't always the same** - If a student meets the criteria for a federal Pell Grant, the college has to award it. But the college may determine that a student who is eligible for a Pell Grant on paper doesn't demonstrate the level of need to get other institutional need-based aid.
7. **There is a big difference between need-based and merit aid** – You cannot apply for merit aid. It is awarded by the college and is almost always tied to academic performance or some specific circumstances that the college selects. Need-based aid is based solely on a family's demonstrated financial situation as documented in the financial aid application materials.
8. **There are different forms of aid** - Students can receive federal, state and institutional aid. Aid can come in the form of grants, loans, or work. And yes, financial-aid offices view loans as a form of aid.
9. **Award letters vary** - Be sure to note whether aid is in the form of grants or loans and whether it is renewable from year to year. See [Worksheet 5 – Financial Aid Comparison Worksheet](#).
10. **Award letters can be appealed** - If a family knows or expects its financial situation will change, it should talk it over with the financial-aid office. Most offices can help a family with special circumstances.

Section 5: Financial Aid Timeline

Fall - Winter of Senior Year

- September-December- Educate yourself on the financial aid process. Use [MEFA to watch webinars](#) and get your questions answered
- October 1 - First day the FAFSA may be filed. Use your prior prior year tax information and list all of the colleges to which you will be applying.
- October 1 – First day the CSS PROFILE may be filed. However, the CSS PROFILE should not be filed later than two weeks before the EARLIEST priority filing date specified by the colleges or programs of choice.
- November to January - Complete and submit the Newton North High School Local Scholarship Application. NNHS Scholarship Committee will announce when the application becomes available. Other outside scholarships are available through a list on SCOIR. The list of outside scholarships will provide details and deadlines pertaining to individual applications.

- Usually by early February - Submit the FAFSA by the earliest financial aid deadline of the colleges to which a student is applying. Check deadlines for your colleges and submit the FAFSA by the earliest financial aid deadline and any other financial aid applications that the college(s) may require.
- After the FAFSA is submitted, a student should receive the Student Aid Report (SAR) within three days to three weeks. Quickly make any necessary corrections and submit them to the FAFSA processor.

Spring of Senior Year

- Research/visit colleges where a student receives acceptance of admission.
- Review the college acceptances and compare the colleges' financial aid offers. Use [Worksheet 5: Financial Aid Comparison](#).
- Contact a college's financial aid office for any questions about the aid that a college has offered. Getting to know the financial aid staff early is a good idea no matter what—they can tell students about deadlines, other aid for which to apply and important paperwork that might need to be submitted.
- When a student decides which college to attend, notify that college of the commitment and submit any required financial deposit. Most colleges require this notification and deposit by May 1st.

Section 6: Resources

- **FAFSA - Free Application for Federal Student Aid**

FAFSA is the KEY form in the federal financial aid process. Massachusetts also uses the FAFSA information for state scholarships. The FAFSA is required by all colleges. Newton North recommends that all students fill out a FAFSA.

It is FREE to fill out the FAFSA. Do not use sites ending in .com to fill out the FAFSA. You should not pay a fee to fill out this form.

The FAFSA hotline number is 1-800-4 FED AID.

- **Federal Student Aid**

The U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid website

- **CSS PROFILE**

The CSS PROFILE financial aid application required by SOME colleges

- **FinAid**

finaid.org is a great resource for information about financial aid.

- **FinAid Calculator** -

finaid.org's custom calculators can help you figure out how much college will cost, how much you need to save, how much aid you'll need and give you a quick approximation of your Student Aid Index (SAI).

- **MEFA** -

MEFA — the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority — is a non-profit state organization that serves students and families in Massachusetts and out-of-state students and their families pursuing

higher education in Massachusetts. MEFA offers a number of resources to help make paying for college possible:

- o Straightforward information and advice on applying for and choosing college financing
 - o Innovative college savings plans for parents/guardians of young children preparing for future education expenses
 - o Free financial aid seminars and helpful calculators and tools to help you understand your options and plan your college funding strategy
 - o Low-cost loan programs for parents/guardians and students
 - o "Ask a MEFA expert"
 - o Link to financial aid apps and scholarship search engine
- [**The Common Data Set \(CDS\)**](#)
CDS is a detailed report covering University-wide information (eg. class size, cost, enrollment, demographics, etc.). Data is presented in the same "common" format used by most institutions of Higher Education to facilitate comparisons among institutions. Much of these data are used by the College Board, Peterson's Guides, and U.S. News & World Report.
- [**"Is it a Scam?" - Federal Trade Commission**](#)
"Is it a scam?" Beware of scholarship and other financial aid scams! This website can help you spot scams and avoid wasting your money.
- [**American Student Assistance**](#)
ASA has a location in the Boston Public Library that provides assistance to families with the FAFSA form and the CSS Profile (for no cost!). This service is offered most days of the week. ASA also has digital resources to help students prepare for life after high school.
- [**John and Abigail Adams Scholarship**](#) and [**the Stanley Koplik Certificate of Mastery**](#)
These awards are made available to students based on the results of their individual MCAS scores. Students, who are deemed eligible, automatically receive the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship (they are informed in the late fall of their senior year), and students are informed in the fall of senior year if they meet the initial qualifications for the Koplik Certificate. See your school counselor or College Counselor if you have questions.

Chapter 11 – Two-Year Colleges and Other Options

[Section 1: Community Colleges](#)

[Section 2: Certificate Programs/Trade Schools](#)

[Section 3: Distance Learning](#)

[Section 4: Gap Year](#)

[Section 1: Community Colleges](#)

Community colleges have become an increasingly popular choice. It's much less expensive to fulfill basic requirements at a community college. You can finish with a two-year associate degree or transfer and get a bachelor's degree from a four-year college. Another advantage to a community college is that if you didn't do as well as you hoped in high school, you essentially start with a clean slate. Four-year colleges will primarily look at your college grades when considering a transfer application.

The community college application process is very simple. These colleges do not require standardized tests or essays, only a high school diploma or high school proficiency equivalent. You can decide to attend a community college as late as the end of your senior year, but use the resources available to you (including your school counselor and the counselors in the College & Career Center) during the year. As a Massachusetts resident, in-state colleges will be much less expensive for you and are spread across the state.

Here is a listing of the 15 community colleges in Massachusetts: [MASSCC](#)

Another advantage to the community college system is that if you are in good academic standing, your credits will automatically transfer to a Massachusetts public university. Please see [MassTransfer](#) for additional information.

Also, you can choose to attend a two-year program in another state. You don't get the in-state tuition, but it's still a more affordable financial option.

[Section 2: Certificate Programs/Trade Schools](#)

If you want short-term specialty training in fields such as automotive, culinary, cosmetology, construction, or electrical technician, there are many certificate programs and trade schools available in Boston and beyond. The [MassHire Career Information System](#) is a free online service designed to provide occupational and educational information to help students learn more about careers, certificate programs, and trade school choices.

If you know you are interested in going into a trade (example: carpenter, bricklayer, HVAC, laborer, painter, plumber, roofer, etc.), you will need to pursue hands-on training in addition to some classroom instruction. Depending on which field you are interested in, there will be different paths and processes. Many of these fields do require an apprenticeship- an apprenticeship is a training program- usually

lasting 2-5 years- and is a combination of work hours and classroom work. You will get paid as an apprentice.

For more information about these trades, apprenticeship programs, union information and more, please refer to these guides:

- [2020 NNHS TRADE GUIDE](#)
- [THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BECOMING A TRADE APPRENTICE](#)
- [BUILDING PATHWAYS](#)
- [TRADE SCHOOLS](#)

Your school counselor and the counselors in the College and Career Center can assist you in exploring these options.

Section 3: Distance Learning

More and more colleges and universities are offering online courses and degrees, whether for individualized learning or as a “virtual” class. These can be especially useful if you need a more flexible academic schedule, and they can be much less expensive or free. Some programs are completely online, and other colleges, including a growing group of selective institutions, are offering online options.

Web Resources:

- [StraighterLine](#) - offers low-cost online courses that are guaranteed to transfer to schools in a network of 100+ accredited colleges.
- [Coursera](#) - provides online courses from top universities and organizations.
- [EdX](#) - offers free online courses and classes through a partnership between Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University.
- [ASU](#) - offers fully online certificate, bachelor's degree and graduate degree programs.

Section 4: Gap Year

Many colleges will allow you to defer your enrollment for a year, but you must check each college's website or call the admissions office to confirm this. If you choose to defer, most colleges will hold your enrollment spot if you provide a deposit. Be in touch with your counselor and the college to discuss these options.

According to the American Gap Association, “A gap year is a structured period of time when students take a break from formal education to increase self-awareness, challenge comfort zones, earn money, and experiment with possible careers. Typically these are achieved by a combination of traveling, volunteering, interning, or working.

Benefits of Taking a Year Off:

- Allows for greater opportunity to learn about the world around you and self-understanding
- Enables greater engagement and purpose for attending college
- Improves self-confidence
- Earn money for college/advanced educational training
- Discover new interests and develop skills.

[Gap Fairs](#), which are similar to college fairs, are typically held in January in Brookline and Dedham. These events will give you a chance to speak with representatives from an array of gap year organizations.

Gap Year Resources:

- [American Gap Association](#)
- [Dynamy](#)
- [Gap year search](#)
- [Center for Interim Programs](#)
- [National Leadership Outdoor School](#)
- [Teenlife](#)

Chapter 12 – Military Options

[Section 1: ROTC](#)

[Section 2: Military Academies](#)

[Section 3: National Guard](#)

Another option after Newton North is to join the military, attend a military academy or participate in a ROTC or National Guard program. There are also colleges that focus on military education. Like any post-secondary decision, choosing a military path requires a great deal of research and reflection. There is a designated military liaison at Newton North who is available to provide information about these programs. Contact the Newton North Counseling Department to get contact information.

[Section 1: ROTC](#)

Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) is a college-based military officer training program offered by more than 1,000 colleges. Academic scholarships are offered in exchange for military service after graduation. You should contact individual colleges to see what's available.

[Section 2: Military Academies](#)

If you are interested in the very selective military academies, the process begins in junior year. There is no cost to attend any of the five academies; in fact you can earn a small salary while at the academy. You are required to give at least five years of active service and three years in the reserves after you graduate from an academy.

[The United States Military Academy](#) (Army)

West Point, New York

[The United States Naval Academy](#) (Navy and Marines)

Annapolis, Maryland

[The United States Air Force Academy](#)

Colorado Springs, Colorado

[The United States Coast Guard Academy](#)

New London, Connecticut

[The United States Merchant Marine Academy](#)

Kings Point, New York

All military academies (except the Coast Guard) require a nomination from a member of Congress.

If you want more information about how to choose among the branches, this is a helpful website:

[JOIN THE MILITARY](#)

If applying to a military academy you must be:

- A U.S. citizen (or an eligible non-citizen)
- At least 17 years old, but younger than 23, by July 1 of admission year (for the United States Merchant Marine Academy the upper age limit is 25)
- Unmarried
- Not pregnant
- Without dependents

Section 3: National Guard

The National Guard (Army and Air) is a component of the reserve services for the United States military, serving as a supplement to the regular Army or Air Force. It is a state-run militia, with those enlisting training close to home, one weekend a month and one, two-week training period a year. Their state's governor can call those serving in the National Guard in times of crisis or state of emergency, as well as by the President of the United States. Many who serve in the National Guard simultaneously pursue a college education, with the Guard offering tuition assistance programs. To learn more about the National Guard, consult their website - [ARMY NATIONAL GUARD](#)

Chapter 13 – Making Your Decision

[Section 1: Admission Decisions](#)

[Section 2: How to Decide](#)

[Section 3: What To Do If You Have Been Waitlisted](#)

[Section 4: Gap Year](#)

[Section 5: Some Helpful Articles](#)

Although many people will help in this process, the final decision should be yours.

If you applied to college through an Early Decision or Early Action program, you will probably hear back from your college six to eight weeks after submitting your application.

If you have applied through a Rolling Admissions program, you may hear as early as a few weeks after submitting your application.

If you have applied through the Regular Decision process, you will usually hear back from colleges sometime between February and April.

[Section 1: Admission Decisions](#)

The Early Decision, Early Action, Rolling and Regular Decision decisions can come back in several different forms:

Admit: Congratulations! You have been admitted to the next year's class, and the only information you may still need before you can make a choice is what kind of a financial aid package you may be offered.

Defer: If you applied Early Decision or Early Action your admission decision may be "deferred" to Regular Decision. This means you're qualified, but the college wants to compare you to applicants in the Regular Decision pool. If you have just begun to improve your record, they might want to make sure you're continuing on an upward trend through your senior year. If deferred, it is important to send an email/letter of continued interest ([See Appendix 14 - Letter of Continued Interest](#)). You should be sure to send updated first semester grades.

Deny: If you are denied it means they do not have room for you in the incoming class. Few colleges permit appeals but it may be helpful to check if there is a process.

Waitlist: If you've been waitlisted it means you may be admitted once the college has heard back from its accepted students and has determined whether there is additional space in the upcoming class. Waitlist decisions are typically made by the college after the May 1st deadline for accepted students. Some colleges may contact waitlisted students throughout the summer.

Therefore, even if you choose to stay on a waitlist, you will need to accept and submit a deposit to **ONE** of the colleges to which you **have been admitted** by May 1st. This deposit is typically not refundable.

Remember that waitlists can be very long, and that their usage depends on the acceptance rate for admitted students. This is unpredictable and can be frustrating and varies from year to year. **The best strategy is to focus on and get excited about one of the schools that has admitted you, and have your waitlist school(s) as a happy backup plan.**

Section 2: How to Decide

Making a final choice at the end of this long process can be challenging. However, you will probably end up feeling great about the school you pick.

- If you have received financial aid packages, compare them very closely and make sure you understand the differences among the offers. You can always call [MEFA Support](#) who will answer your questions for free. See [Worksheet 5: Financial Aid Comparison](#).
- Conduct thorough research by exploring the websites deeply. Take a virtual tour. Look at blogs. Ask questions online. Go to the Facebook page for the college. There may be a specific page for admitted students.
- Fill out [Worksheet 1: College Comparison Worksheet](#) - It will give you a visual record of the pros and cons for each school as you think about your priorities.
- Visit. If you're invited to an open house or other on campus programs for accepted students, you should try to take advantage of this opportunity. The benefits of these programs include seeing the campus in action, attending a class, spending the night in a dorm, and potentially meeting other prospective students. Also try to check in with students, faculty, coaches, etc. who are not specifically part of the admission event to get the most out of your visit. If you can't make the accepted student events, you can still visit. Try to arrange for a tour, sit in on a class, see a rehearsal or practice, visit the career center, eat in the cafeteria, and explore the town where the college is located. Contact the college's Admissions Office to arrange this visit.
- Ask North counselors, teachers, friends, alums about their experiences with the schools you're considering.

Once you've made your final decision **please make sure to email all the colleges to which you have been accepted and let them know whether you plan to attend. You don't need to wait for the May 1st deadline to respond.**

Section 3: What To Do If You Have Been Waitlisted

Being waitlisted at the college of your choice is never easy.

If you are offered a spot on a college's waitlist, most colleges will give you the option to remain on the list or opt out. Each college has different policies and procedures, so carefully read the waitlist information provided by the college and adhere to the instructions. Some colleges require that you

simply agree to remain on the waitlist, some allow you to submit a paragraph describing your interest and/or update your application materials, and others allow you to submit unlimited additional material. If you are waitlisted and you want to remain on the waitlist, you should consult with your school counselor who can help create a plan for moving forward. Your school counselor is available to contact **ONE** school, of your choice, to support your application to come off of the waitlist.

If the college allows it, it is recommended that you do one or more of the following things:

- Write a letter to the college detailing your continued interest in attending. Although colleges typically do not rank order their waitlists, it is good for them to know that you are serious about wanting to attend their college and why. Be specific ([See Appendix 14 - Letter of Continued Interest](#)).
- If you are writing a letter, include any **new and relevant** information (grades, scores, activities, honors, projects and/or special summer activities) for their information.
- Be in touch with your alumni/off-campus interviewer (if applicable) if you had a very good interview. He or she may be willing to advocate for you.
- Send an additional letter of recommendation from someone who knows you well.

Remember to send a deposit to one (and only one) of the schools to which you have been accepted while you wait.

Most importantly, look at the pluses of the colleges to which you have been admitted. You are most likely to have a wonderful experience at one of these if you decide to attend with a positive attitude!

Section 4: Gap Year

Most colleges will allow you to defer attending for a year, but you need to check each college's website or call to confirm this. If you decide to defer your admission for a year, most colleges will hold your spot if you put down a deposit. Be in touch with your counselor and the college to talk about your options.

Section 5: Some Helpful Articles

[On College: The acceptances are in, now you must choose](#)

[You Made Your College Choice, What's Next?](#)

Finally, don't forget to tell your school and college counselor all your college news, and congratulations for making it all the way through!

Appendix 1 – NNHS Four-Year College Timeline

Newton North College Search and Application Activities: A Four-Year Timeline

Each student at Newton North is assigned a school counselor who will provide academic and post-graduate planning support throughout their high school career. This document provides a brief overview of the counseling activities and testing related to college planning at Newton North High School.

FRESHMAN YEAR

September – Freshman Seminar: Students meet with their school counselor, in small groups, to focus on transition and orientation to high school. Topics discussed and information provided include: academic and social adjustment and school support and resources.

February – Freshman Seminar: Students meet with their school counselor, in small groups, to focus on graduation requirements, GPA information and course registration for sophomore year.

February – March – School Counselor Meetings: School counselors are available to meet individually with freshmen about appropriate course choices and the importance of the right level of academic challenge for each student.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Fall – Create a positive social media presence. Pay attention to privacy settings. Create an email address for college correspondence.

February – Sophomore Seminar: Students meet with their school counselor, in small groups, to focus on graduation requirements and appropriate course selection for junior year.

March – Take PreACT: Sophomores take the PreACT test, which is a practice test for the ACT college admission test. Information regarding test details and dates can be found on Newton North's website. Students register for the PreACT through an online system and details regarding cost and registration dates will be given in mid-September.

JUNIOR YEAR

Summer – Newton North College Planning Guide: Juniors and their parents/guardians read through the Guide, focusing on the introduction and the first four chapters.

September-November – College Admission Rep Visits: College admissions representatives offer informational sessions during WIN blocks.

October – PSAT Test: Juniors take the PSAT test, which is a practice test for the SAT college admission test. Information regarding test details and dates can be found on Newton North's website. Students

register for the PSAT Test through an online system and details regarding cost and registration dates will be given mid-September.

October – College Night: Juniors and their parents/guardians attend College Night with admission representatives from over 150 different colleges and universities.

January – PSAT Test Results: Juniors who took the PSAT Test receive their results directly from the College Board through electronic submission. Students should make an appointment to meet with their school counselor to gain a better understanding of their score report and to receive their test booklet to help research wrong and omitted responses.

January – Junior Seminars: Students meet with their school counselor, in small groups, to focus on graduation requirements and receiving information on the college planning and search process.

January - June – School Counselor Appointment: Juniors meet individually with their school counselors to review and discuss their post-graduation planning.

January - June – College and Career Center Appointments: Juniors make appointments in the College and Career Center, beginning on the first day of second semester through the end of the school year. All information generated in the meetings is shared with the student's school counselor.

January – Junior Night: Juniors and their parents/guardians attend Junior Night. This program offers a variety of presentations on various aspects of the college application process.

Mid-January - Unweighted GPAs: GPAs can be viewed on the student's transcript, found in Aspen, in the beginning of the second semester. Newton North calculates an unweighted GPA/4.0 scale, which takes into account grades from all four years of high school.

February–July – Standardized College Admission Tests: Juniors take the SAT and/or the ACT. Students can work with their school counselors to help determine the type of tests to take and a testing schedule.

March-April – Teacher Recommendation Requests: Juniors also ask up to two different junior teachers to agree to write a Letter of Recommendation for college applications.

May – Junior Seminar: Students meet with their school counselor, in small groups, to create a Common Application account, access essay prompts, review the Junior Questionnaire, and discuss a summer to-do list.

SENIOR YEAR

September-June – School Counselor Meetings: Seniors meet with their school counselors individually about choosing and applying to colleges and other institutions. Students review their college application status and materials.

September – January – College and Career Center Appointment: Seniors make follow-up college planning appointments in the College and Career Center.

September – Senior Family Night: Parents/guardians and seniors attend Senior Family Night. This evening gives an overview of what to expect in the senior year and specifics about the college application process.

September – Senior Seminars: Students meet with their school counselor, in small groups, to focus on fulfilling graduation requirements and the details regarding the college application process.

September-January – Standardized College Admission Tests: Seniors may take the SAT and/or the ACT. ELL students should consider taking the TOEFL or another English language test for students for whom English is not their first language. Students can work with their school counselors to help determine the type of tests to take and a testing schedule.

October – College Night: Seniors and their parents/guardians attend College Night with admission representatives from over 150 different colleges and universities.

October – March: Complete financial aid and scholarship applications. Use [MEFA Financial Aid 101](#) for financial aid education.

November – First Term Grades: Seniors' first term grades will automatically be sent to the colleges for which a transcript request was submitted.

Fall-Winter – College Essay Support: All senior English classes will complete a unit on personal essay writing, which can help in the college application process.

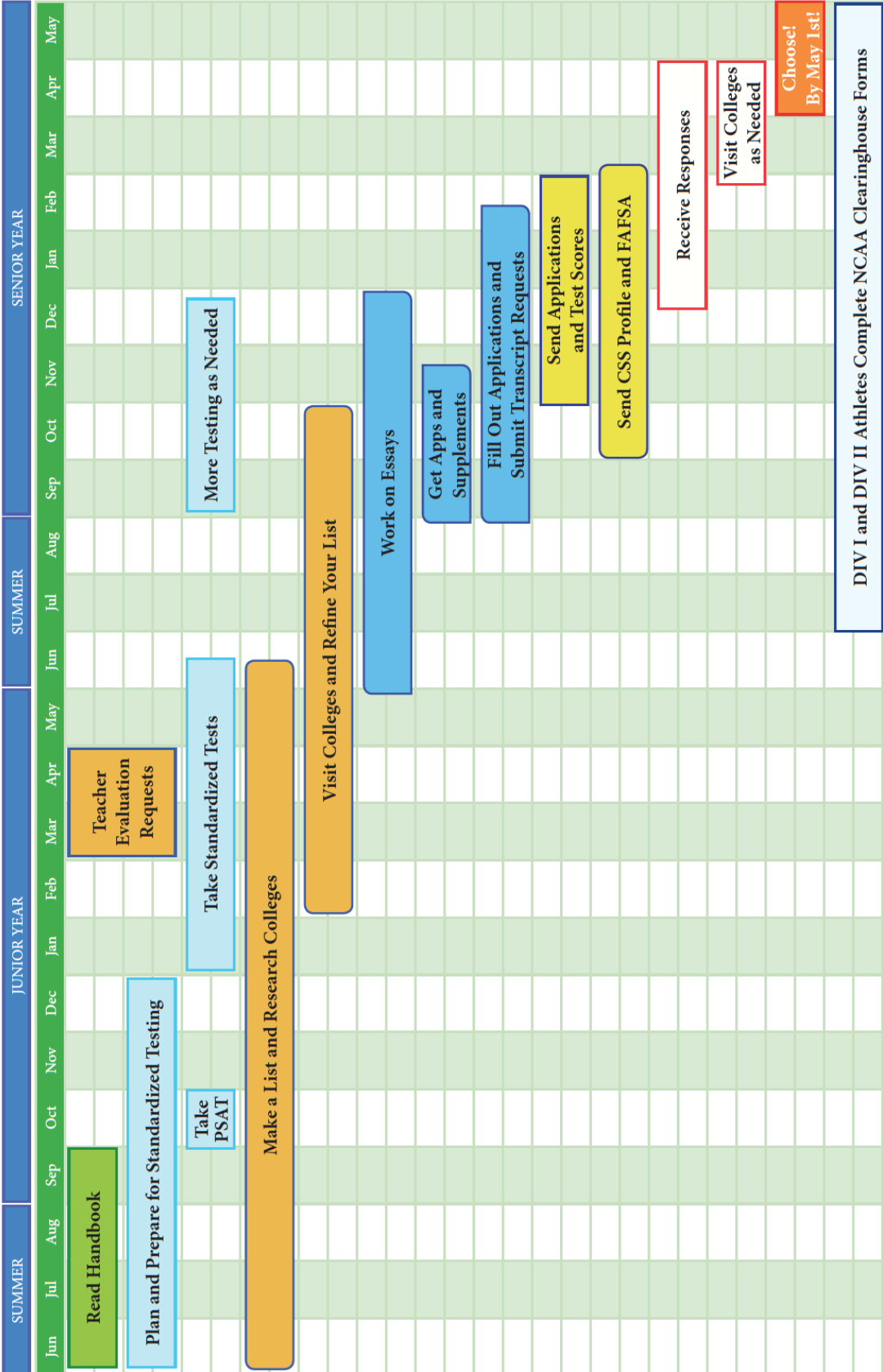
January - Newton North Scholarship Application: Seniors apply to a common local scholarship application to receive funds from Newton local businesses and organizations.

January – Second Term Grades: Seniors' second term grades and updated GPA will automatically be sent to the colleges for which a transcript request was submitted.

May 1 – Common Reply Date: This is the date for depositing at **ONE** college for the fall.

June – Senior Exit Survey: Seniors complete a required survey letting Newton North know where to send a final transcript to the college they will attend.

Appendix 2 - College Application Timeline



Appendix 3 - Printing Instructions

This document is available online in PDF format and is printable from any computer and on any printer. You can print the entire document similarly to printing any document on your computer.

- Click FILE on the top menu of the document
- Click PRINT
- A print-menu pop-up will appear
- Click OK or PRINT (the name of the button will depend on your computer)

You can print just a section of the document by specifying the range of pages you want to print.

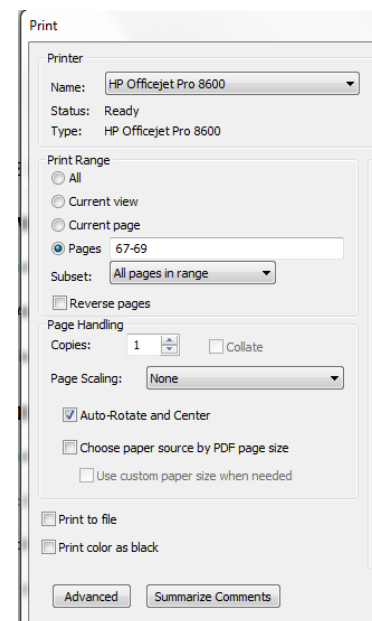
Look at the table of contents and determine which pages you want to print

- Click FILE on the top menu of the document
- Click PRINT
- A print-menu pop-up will appear
- On the MAC – Select the “From” option and enter the page range to print
- On the PC – Select the “Pages” option and enter the page range to print

MAC EXAMPLE



PC EXAMPLE



Appendix 5 - College Visit Clusters

This listing can serve as a good starting point when beginning a college search and will help in planning visits to different regions and areas of the U.S. and Canada.

- **Large** colleges and universities have approximately 10,000 or more undergraduates.
- **Medium** colleges and universities usually have between 3,000- 10,000 undergraduates.
- **Small** colleges and universities usually have less than 3,000 undergraduates.

The groups of colleges and universities listed below are by no means exhaustive for each region.

5.1 Boston/Rhode Island Area

Large:

Boston University
UMASS Boston
UMASS Lowell
Northeastern University
University of Rhode Island

Medium:

Bentley University
Boston College
Brandeis University
Brown University
Emerson College
Framingham State University
Harvard University
Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
UMASS Dartmouth
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Providence College
Rhode Island College
Roger Williams University
Salem State University
Suffolk University
Tufts University
Wentworth Institute of Technology

Small:

Babson College
Emmanuel College
Lasell University
Lesley University
Massachusetts College of Art & Design
Merrimack College
Regis College
Rhode Island School of Design
Salve Regina University
Simmons University (Women)
Stonehill College
Wellesley College (Women)
Wheaton College

5.2 Maine/NH/VT

Large:	University of Maine University of New Hampshire University of Southern Maine University of Vermont
Medium:	Dartmouth College Keene State College University of New England Southern New Hampshire University
Small:	Bates College Bowdoin College Colby College Colby-Sawyer College Franklin Pierce University Middlebury College New England College Saint Anselm College Saint Michael's College

5.3 Central/Western Massachusetts

Large:	UMASS Amherst
Medium:	Westfield State University Worcester Polytechnic Institute Worcester State University
Small:	Amherst College Assumption University Clark University Fitchburg State University College of the Holy Cross Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Mount Holyoke College (Women) Smith College (Women) Western New England University Williams College

5.4 Connecticut

Large:	University of Connecticut
Medium:	Fairfield University Quinnipiac University Sacred Heart University Yale University
Small:	Connecticut College Trinity College Wesleyan University

5.5 New York City Area

Large:	New York University
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Medium: Adelphi University
Columbia University
Fordham University
Hofstra University
Long Island University – Brooklyn
Long Island University - Post
Pace University

Small: Barnard College (Women)
The New School
Sarah Lawrence College
Wagner College

5.6 New York/NJ

Large: Cornell University
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
SUNY system
Syracuse University

Medium: Ithaca College
Fashion Institute of Technology
Marist College
Pace University
Princeton University
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
University of Rochester

Small: Bard College
Colgate University
Clarkson University
Drew University
Hamilton College
Hobart & William Smith Colleges
Marymount Manhattan College
Skidmore College
St. Lawrence University
Union College
Vassar College

5.7 Philadelphia and Surrounding Area

Large: University of Delaware
Drexel University
University of Pennsylvania
Rutgers University
Temple University

Medium: Villanova University

Small: Bryn Mawr College (Women)
Haverford College

Swarthmore College
Ursinus College

5.8 Pennsylvania

Large: Pennsylvania State University
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh

Medium: Bucknell University
Carnegie Mellon University
Duquesne University
Lehigh University

Small: Allegheny College
Dickinson College
Franklin & Marshall College
Gettysburg College
Juniata College
Lafayette College
Muhlenberg College
Susquehanna College

5.9 Washington DC/Baltimore Area

Large: University of Delaware
George Washington University
University of Maryland, College Park
Towson University

Medium: American University
Catholic University
Georgetown University
Howard University
Johns Hopkins University
Loyola University of Maryland

Small: Goucher College
St. John's College
St. Mary's College
Washington College

5.10 Virginia/North Carolina/Tennessee

Large: East Carolina University
James Madison University
North Carolina State University
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
University of Virginia
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Medium: Duke University
Elon University
University of North Carolina, Wilmington
University of Richmond

Vanderbilt University
Wake Forest University
College of William and Mary

Small:

Davidson College
Guilford College
Hampden-Sydney College (Men)
High Point University
Lynchburg College
Roanoke College
Rhodes College
Washington & Lee University

5.11 South/Florida

Large:

Clemson University
College of Charleston
University of Florida
Florida State University
University of South Carolina
University of Tampa

Medium:

Emory University
Furman University
Loyola University New Orleans
University of Miami
Nova Southeastern University
Savannah College of Design
Tulane University

Small:

Eckerd College
Lynn University
Morehouse College (Men)
Rollins College
Sewanee: University of the South
Spelman College (Women)
Stetson University
Wofford College

5.12 Chicago/Michigan/Wisconsin/MN

Large:

DePaul University
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Michigan
University of Wisconsin

Medium:

University of Chicago
Loyola University of Chicago
Marquette University
Northwestern University

Small:

Beloit College
Carleton College
Kalamazoo College

Lake Forest College
Lawrence University
Macalester College

5.13 Ohio

Large: Miami University of Ohio
Ohio State University

Medium: Case Western Reserve University

Small: Denison University
Kenyon College
Oberlin College
Ohio Wesleyan University
Wittenberg University
College of Wooster

5.14 Southwest/Texas

Large : University of Arizona
Arizona State University
University of Texas, Austin

Medium: Rice University
Trinity University, San Antonio

Small: St. John's College, Santa Fe

5.15 Colorado

Large: University of Colorado at Boulder
Colorado State University

Medium: University of Denver

Small College: Colorado College

5.16 Southern California

Large: University of California at Los Angeles
University of California at San Diego
University of Southern California

Medium: Loyola Marymount University
University of San Diego

Small: Chapman University
Claremont Colleges (Claremont McKenna, Harvey Mudd, Pitzer, Pomona & Scripps)
Occidental College
University of Redlands
Whittier College

5.17 Northern California

Large: University of California at Berkeley
University of California at Santa Cruz

Medium: University of the Pacific
Stanford University
Santa Clara University
University of San Francisco

Small: California College of the Arts

5.18 Pacific Northwest

Large: University of Oregon
University of Washington
Western Washington University

Medium: Evergreen State University
Gonzaga University
University of Puget Sound

Small: Lewis & Clark College
Reed College
Whitman College
Willamette University

5.19 Canada

Western: University of British Columbia
Simon Fraser University

Eastern: Acadia University
Concordia University
Dalhousie University
University of Guelph
McGill University
Mount Allison University
Queens University
Ryerson University
University of Toronto
University of Waterloo
University of Western Ontario
York University

5.20 International: Please talk to the college counselors if you are thinking about applying to colleges outside the United States.

Appendix 6 – High School vs. College Disability Laws

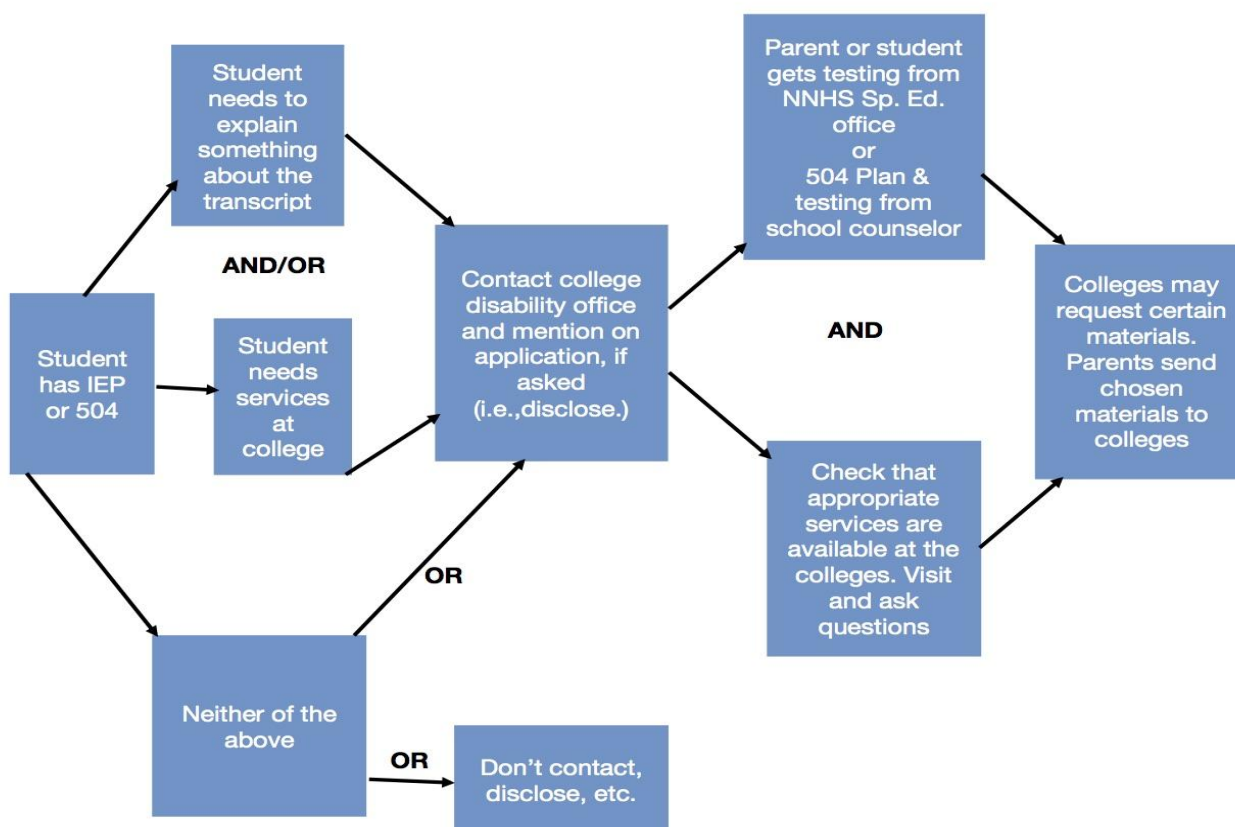
The Differences Between Secondary (High School) & Post-secondary (College) Disability Laws

One key step to a successful transition from high school to college is to anticipate and be prepared for the differences between the two settings. This is especially true for students with disabilities. In addition to dealing with the same transition issues that all students face, they also have the added challenge of changes in how support services are requested and arranged. In college, students must play a more active role and assume more responsibility. The chart below compares the legal rights and responsibilities in high school versus those in college.

Question	Secondary (High School)	Postsecondary (College)
What is the law?	IDEA and Section 504	ADA and Section 504 (Subpart E)
What is the intent of the law?	IDEA: To provide a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to students with disabilities. 504: To ensure that no otherwise qualified person with a disability is denied access to, benefits of, or is subjected to discrimination in any program or activity provided by any public institution or entity.	To ensure that no otherwise qualified person with a disability will be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination by any program or activity provided by any public institution or entity.
Who is covered under the law?	All infants, children and youth requiring special education services until age 21 or graduation from high school.	All qualified individuals with disabilities who meet the entry age level criteria or particular program entry criteria of the college and who can document the existence of a disability as defined by the ADA.
Who is responsible for identifying and documenting the need?	School districts are responsible for identifying, evaluating and planning educational services at no expense to the parent or individual.	Students are responsible for self-identification and for obtaining disability documentation from a professional who is qualified to assess their particular disability. The student, not the institution, assumes the cost of the evaluation.
Who is responsible for initiating service delivery?	School districts are responsible for identifying students with disabilities and providing special instruction, individualized education plans, and/or accommodations.	Students are responsible for notifying the Office of Disability Services staff of their disability and of their need for accommodations. Accommodations (not special education) are provided on a semester by semester basis in order for students with disabilities to have equal access to the institution's programs, services and activities.
Who is responsible for enforcing the law?	IDEA is basically a funding statute, enforced by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services in the U.S. Department of Education. ADA/504 are civil rights statutes, enforced by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Justice, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).	Section 504 (Subpart E) is a civil rights statute enforced by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Education. The ADA is also a civil rights statute enforced by the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).
What about self-advocacy?	The parent or guardian is the primary advocate. Students with disabilities should learn about their disability, the importance of self-advocacy, the accommodation(s) they need, and ways to become a self-advocate accommodations.	Students must be able to communicate what their disability is, their strengths, weaknesses, and how the disability impacts and functionally limits major life activities. They must be able to identify and justify any requested.

Source: Kay McVay, Faculty Development Specialist, PROJECT CONNECT, Henderson State University

Appendix 7 - Applying to College with an IEP or 504 Plan



Appendix 8- The Reality of College Sports

	High School Participants	NCAA Participants	HS to NCAA	NCAA Division I	Division II	Division III
Men						
Baseball	478,451	38,849	8.1%	2.4%	2.4%	3.2%
Basketball	537,438	19,213	3.6%	1.0%	1.0%	1.5%
Cross Country	240,201	14,787	6.2%	2.1%	1.7%	2.4%
Football	1,028,761	77,204	7.5%	3.0%	2.0%	2.5%
Golf	150,175	8,602	5.7%	1.9%	1.6%	2.2%
Ice Hockey	33,013	4,388	13.3%	5.0%	0.8%	7.5%
Lacrosse	111,108	16,030	14.4%	3.3%	3.2%	8.0%
Soccer	450,455	27,284	6.1%	1.4%	1.7%	2.9%
Swim & Dive	116,741	9,945	8.5%	3.3%	1.5%	3.7%
Tennis	158,306	7,549	4.8%	1.5%	1.1%	2.2%
Track & Field	604,983	31,278	5.2%	1.9%	1.4%	1.9%
Volleyball	77,287	2,933	3.8%	0.7%	0.8%	2.3%
Water Polo	21,289	1,156	5.4%	3.1%	0.9%	1.4%
Wrestling	259,431	8,309	3.2%	1.0%	0.8%	1.3%
Women						
Basketball	373,366	16,668	4.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.8%
Cross Country	197,630	14,621	7.4%	2.9%	1.9%	2.6%
Field Hockey	52,962	6,456	12.2%	3.6%	1.9%	6.7%
Golf	80,970	5,733	7.1%	2.8%	2.0%	2.3%
Ice Hockey	8,601	2,888	33.6%	10.2%	2.1%	21.3%
Lacrosse	98,014	13,481	13.8%	4.3%	3.2%	6.3%
Soccer	377,838	29,959	7.9%	2.7%	2.2%	3.0%
Softball	344,952	21,646	6.3%	2.0%	1.9%	2.4%
Swim & Dive	140,711	13,259	9.4%	4.2%	1.6%	3.6%
Tennis	191,036	8,343	4.4%	1.5%	1.1%	1.9%
Track & Field	486,355	31,475	6.5%	2.8%	1.7%	2.0%
Volleyball	470,488	18,569	3.9%	1.2%	1.1%	1.6%
Water Polo	18,728	1,337	7.1%	4.4%	1.2%	1.6%

Sources: High school figures from the [2022-23 High School Athletics Participation Survey](#) conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations; data from [club teams](#) not included. College numbers from the NCAA [2022-23 Sports Sponsorship and Participation Rates Report](#).

Appendix 9 – Financial Aid Information for Non-US Citizens

I am a non-U.S. citizen. Can I get federal student aid?

If you fall in one of the categories below, you are considered an “eligible noncitizen.”

1. You are a

- U.S. national (includes natives of American Samoa or Swains Island) or
- U.S. permanent resident with a Form I-551, I-151, or I-551C (Permanent Resident Card, Resident Alien Card, or Alien Registration Receipt Card), also known as a green card.

2. You have an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) showing

- “Refugee,”
- “Asylum Granted,”
- “Cuban-Haitian Entrant (Status Pending),”
- “Conditional Entrant” (valid only if issued before April 1, 1980), or
- “Parolee” (you must be paroled for at least one year, and you must be able to provide evidence from the USCIS that you are not in the United States for a temporary purpose and that you intend to become a U.S. citizen or permanent resident).

3. You hold a T-visa (for victims of human trafficking) or your parent holds a T-1 visa. Your college or career school’s *financial aid office* will ask to see your visa and/or certification letter from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

4. You are a “battered immigrant-qualified alien” who is a victim of abuse by your citizen or permanent resident spouse, or you are the child of a person designated as such under the Violence Against Women Act.

5. You are a citizen of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau. If this is the case, you are eligible only for Federal Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, or Federal Work-Study. Check with your college or career school financial aid office for more information.

Does my parents’ citizenship status affect my eligibility for aid?

No, your parents’ citizenship status does not affect your eligibility for federal student aid. In fact, the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSASM) doesn’t even ask about your parents’ status.

What if the expiration date on my documents has passed?

- If your green card has expired, it doesn't necessarily mean that your status as a legal permanent resident has expired. You might just need to renew the card. Be sure to do so promptly!
- If your permanent residence status has in fact expired, you are no longer eligible for federal student aid.
- If your documentation shows that you are a Cuban-Haitian entrant, you are still an eligible noncitizen even if the expiration date has passed.
- For all other documents listed in 1–3 above, if the expiration date has passed, you are not an eligible noncitizen and cannot receive federal student aid.

For more information about eligible noncitizen status, contact a college financial aid office.

What if I have documentation that isn't listed above?

You are NOT an eligible noncitizen and cannot receive federal student aid if

- you have only a "Notice of Approval to Apply for Permanent Residence" (I-797),
- you are in the U.S. on an F-1 or F-2 student visa, or on a J-1 or J-2 Exchange Visitor Visa, or
- you hold a G series visa (pertaining to international organizations).

So if I'm not an eligible noncitizen, can I get any type of financial aid to study in the U.S.?

Yes, there may be some scholarships and other aid you can get.

- Check with your country's embassy or a consulate here in the U.S. or with the appropriate government office back in your country to see what they offer.
- Try the U.S. Department of Labor's free online scholarship search.
- Ask the college or career school you plan to attend whether they offer any aid for students like you.
- Check out the following websites:
 - [Education USA](#)
 - [Unafraid Educators Resources for Undocumented Students Applying to College](#)
 - [Private Colleges that Accept Undocumented Students as Domestic Students](#)
 - [Resource Guide: Supporting Undocumented Youth](#)
 - [MALDEF Scholarship Resource Guide](#)

Source: www.studentaid.ed.gov/eligibility/non-us-citizens

Appendix 10 - UMASS Admission Requirements

MINIMUM ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE UNIVERSITIES AND UNDERGRADUATE UMASS CAMPUSES

The minimum undergraduate admissions standards for the state universities and UMass campuses were established for several primary reasons: first, to emphasize the importance of successfully completing a rigorous academic course of study in high school (example MassCore, a recommended program of study that includes specific numbers and types of courses across academic subjects); second, to ensure that students are well prepared to begin college courses and their path to degree; and third, to increase consistency of undergraduate admissions across the state universities and UMass campuses. Again, these standards are minimum requirements. Eligibility for undergraduate admission is not an entitlement of admission for any applicant; as such, meeting the minimum standards does not guarantee admission, since admissions officers consider a wide range of factors when reviewing students' applications, and the state universities and UMass campuses can establish additional requirements. For information about any additional requirements, please contact the admissions office at the institution(s) to which the student is interested in applying. Note: These standards do not apply to the community colleges, which implement open admissions and enrollment policies. For additional information about admissions policies at the community colleges, please contact the admissions office at the institution(s) to which you are interested in applying.

FIRST-YEAR APPLICANTS

The admissions standards for first-year applicants at Massachusetts' public four-year institutions have three primary components:

1. Successful completion of required academic courses in specific subjects; and
2. A minimum average and weighted grade point average (GPA) earned in high school level academic courses; and
3. The submission of SAT or ACT scores - A number of institutions are participating in a test optional pilot. For more information, please see page four of this document.

ACADEMIC COURSE REQUIREMENT

All first-year applicants are required to complete successfully the following courses in each academic subject over their four years of high school. Applicants are required to have completed 17 courses. This reflects the required completion of four courses of mathematics in high school including mathematics in the senior year, effective Fall 2016. As of Fall 2017, an additional lab science is also required. The table below provides detailed information about the course requirements for each academic subject.

Table 1: Academic Course Requirements for first year students

Subject	Requirements for first-year students		
	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017 and beyond
English	4 courses		
Mathematics	3 courses (Algebra I & II and Geometry or Trigonometry or comparable coursework)	4 courses (Algebra I & II and Geometry or Trigonometry, or comparable coursework) including mathematics during the final year of high school*	
Sciences	3 courses (from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/Engineering, including 2 courses with laboratory work).		3 courses (from Natural Science and/or Physical Science and/or Technology/Engineering), including 3 courses with laboratory work*
Social Sciences	2 courses (including 1 course in U.S. History)		
Foreign Languages	2 courses (in a single language) <i>Note: American Sign Language (ASL) is a foreign language.</i>		
Electives	2 courses (from the above subjects or from the Arts & Humanities or Computer Sciences)		

Note: comparable courses are defined as coursework that is equal to or beyond the content defined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

*Computer science courses may substitute a required math or science course if the course qualifies for an approved substitution as determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Please see the next page for more information.

Technology and Engineering:

Technology and Engineering course(s) should be identified and high school transcripts should clearly indicate that the course(s) are mathematics or science courses. Computer Science: As of June 2018, MassCore policy allows for the substitution of a sufficiently rigorous computer science course for a required math or science course. Admissions officers should therefore accept the courses allowed for this substitution. Note, however, that such a substitution must have been recognized as such by the

student's district, and approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as appropriate for substitution.²

Minimum GPA Requirement

The minimum average GPA for first-year applicants, weighted for accelerated (Honors, Dual Enrollment, and Advanced Placement) courses, is 3.0 for both the state universities and the UMass campuses. Detailed information about calculating the weighted GPA is available in the Appendix, pages 14-18. Calculating the weighted GPA is a process conducted by admissions offices and does not reflect policies and practices in place in high schools. This GPA is based on all academic courses completed and grades received for courses in which the student is currently enrolled (for example, mathematics courses in which the student is enrolled during the senior year of high school).

SAT/ACT Score Requirements for Applicants

Note: For Fall 2016, 2017, and 2018, a number of Massachusetts State Universities and UMass campuses are participating in a test optional pilot. At present, Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, Mass Art, Salem State University, UMass Boston, UMass Dartmouth, UMass Lowell, and Worcester State University allow SAT test optional. Please note that some programs at these institutions may require SAT submission. For further information, please contact the admissions office at these institutions. If an institution is not participating in the test optional pilot, all first-year applicants (including international) who meet the minimum average weighted GPA of 3.0 and are within three years of their high school graduation must submit their SAT or ACT scores.

International first-year students may be exempt if it is not possible to take these tests due to extreme hardship. For first-year applicants (including international) who do not meet the minimum weighted 3.0 GPA requirement, they must earn the following SAT or ACT scores in order to be eligible for admission.

NOTE: AN APPLICANT WITH A HIGH SCHOOL MINIMUM WEIGHTED GPA BELOW 2.0 MAY NOT BE ADMITTED TO A STATE UNIVERSITY OR UMASS UNDERGRADUATE CAMPUS.

SAT Score Sliding Scale Tables for University of Massachusetts

Table 2: SAT Test Administration After March 2016 Required SAT or ACT scores for first-year applicants to UMass

Weighted Average GPA	Combined SAT Score (Critical Reading and Mathematics)	ACT Score
2.51 - 2.99	950	20
2.41 - 2.50	990	21
2.31 - 2.40	1030	22
2.21 - 2.30	1070	23
2.11 - 2.20	1110	24
2.00 - 2.10	1150	25

SAT Total Score Sliding Scale Table for State Universities

Table 3: SAT Administration After March 2016 Required SAT or ACT Scores for first-year applicants to State Universities

Weighted Average GPA	Combined SAT Score (Critical Reading and Mathematics)	ACT Score
2.51 - 2.99	920	19
2.41 - 2.50	960	20
2.31 - 2.40	1000	21
2.21 - 2.30	1040	22
2.11 - 2.20	1080	23
2.00 - 2.10	1120	24

Source: https://www.mass.edu/foradmin/admissions/documents/DHEAdmissionsStandardsReferenceGuide_2019.pdf

Appendix 11 - Newton North Matriculations

The following is a list of colleges that two or more students from Newton North have attended in the past three years.

American University	Emerson College	Muhlenberg College
Amherst College	Emory University	New York University
Babson College	Endicott College	Nichols College
Bard College	Fairfield University	Northeastern University
Barnard College	Fitchburg State University	Northwestern University
Bates College	Fordham University	Oberlin College
Bennington College	Framingham State University	Occidental College
Bentley University	George Washington University	Ohio State University
Boston College	Georgetown University	Pace University, New York City
Boston University	Georgia Institute of Technology	Pomona College
Bowdoin College	Hamilton College - NY	Pratt Institute
Brandeis University	Harvard University	Princeton University
Bridgewater State University	High Point University	Providence College
Bridgton Academy	Howard University	Purdue University
Brown University	Husson University	Quinnipiac University
Bryant University	Indiana University- Bloomington	Reed College
Bryn Mawr College	Ithaca College	Regis College
Bunker Hill Community College	Johns Hopkins University	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
California Polytechnic State University- San Luis Obispo	Johnson & Wales University (Providence)	Rice University
Carleton College	Kenyon College	Rochester Institute of Technology
Carnegie Mellon University	Lafayette College	Rollins College
Case Western Reserve University	Lasell College	Roxbury Community College
Champlain College	Lehigh University	Sacred Heart University
Clark University	Lesley University	Salem State University
Clemson University	Macalester College	San Diego State University
Coastal Carolina University	Massachusetts Bay Community College	Sarah Lawrence College
Colby College	Massachusetts College of Art and Design	Savannah College of Art & Design
Colgate University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	School of the Art Institute of Chicago
College of Charleston	MCPHS - Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences	Scripps College
College of the Holy Cross	Massachusetts Maritime Academy	Simmons University
Colorado College	Massasoit Community College	Skidmore College
Columbia University	McGill University	Smith College
Concordia University-Montreal	Merrimack College	Springfield College
Connecticut College	Michigan State University	Stonehill College
Cornell University	Middlebury College	Suffolk University
Curry College	Middlesex Community College	SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry
Dartmouth College	Mount Holyoke College	Swarthmore College
Denison University		Syracuse University
Drexel University		Temple University
Duke University		The New School - All Divisions
Eckerd College		
Elon University		

Trinity College	University of Maryland, College Park	University of Virginia
Tufts University	University of Massachusetts Amherst	University of Wisconsin
Tulane University	University of Massachusetts, Boston	Vanderbilt University
University College Dublin	University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth	Vassar College
University of British Columbia	University of Massachusetts, Lowell	Villanova University
University of California, Berkeley	University of Miami	Virginia Tech
University of California, Davis	University of Michigan	Washington University in St. Louis
University of California, Los Angeles	University of New England	Wellesley College
University of California, San Diego	University of New Hampshire at Durham	Wentworth Institute of Technology
University of California, Santa Barbara	University of New Haven	Wesleyan University
University of California, Santa Cruz	University of Oregon	Western New England University
University of Chicago	University of Pennsylvania	Westfield State University
University of Colorado at Boulder	University of Pittsburgh	Wheaton College MA
University of Connecticut	University of Rhode Island	William & Mary
University of Denver	University of Rochester	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
University of Florida	University of Southern California	Yale University
University of Hartford	University of Tampa	
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	University of Toronto	
University of Maine	University of Vermont	

Appendix 12 – SAT vs. ACT

Compare the ACT and SAT tests

- ACT includes a Science section
- SAT is a computer-based test

	SAT	ACT
Why Take It	Colleges use SAT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.	Colleges use ACT scores for admissions and merit-based scholarships.
Test Structure	Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Math	English Math Reading Science Reasoning Essay (Optional)
Length	2 hours, 14 minutes	2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	2 modules	4 reading passages
Science	None	1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge)
Math	Covers: Arithmetic Algebra I & II Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis	Covers: Arithmetic Algebra I & II Geometry, Trigonometry, and Probability & Statistics
Calculator Policy	You can use a calculator on all math questions.	You can use a calculator on all math questions.
Essays	None	Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
How It's Scored	Scored on a scale of 400–1600	Scored on a scale of 1–36

Source: <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-act>

Appendix 13- Sample NCAA Resume and Letter

ATHLETIC RESUME:

Ann Athlete

Volleyball Information

1234 Any Street, Any Town, Any State 81235

Telephone: (301) 534-1313 or (301) 223-3232

annathlete@gmail.com

Coach: Mary Jones
1010 Training Avenue
Any Town, Any State 81234
Telephone: (500) 111-1212
Email: mary.jones@hotmail.com

High School: Academy of the Holy Cross
4920 Strathmore Avenue
Kensington, MD 20895
(301) 929-6453 (College Counseling Office)
(301) 929-6446 (Athletics Office)

Volleyball Division: Class 4A (Highest Level within the State)

Position: Setter

Jersey: #1 Dark / #10 Light

Offense Used: 5-1 Offense

Years Starting Varsity: 3 years

Awards / Honor: Best Setter (2013, 2014, 2015)
Most Valuable Setter (2014)
All Conference (2013, 2014)
All State (2015)

Experience: AAU Volleyball (2014, 2015)
Coed Power Outdoor & Indoor Tournament (2014-15)
Aspen Volleyball Camp (2013, 2014)
Any University Summer Camp (2013)

Height / Weight: 5'8" / 145 lbs.

Vertical: 23"

GPA & Rank: 3.74 on 4.0 scale (unweighted)

Graduation Date May 2016

Source: The NCAA & College: What You Need To Know About Playing Competitive Sports in College. Academy of the Holy Cross, Kensington, MD.

SAMPLE NCAA LETTER FROM HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE TO COLLEGE COACH:

DATE

COACH'S NAME

COLLEGE / UNIVERSITY

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

Dear Coach So & So,

I would like to introduce myself. I am currently a sophomore/junior/senior at the Academy of the Holy Cross. I have played high school volleyball for four years. I am 5'8" and weigh 145 pounds. I have been All-Conference for the past two years and All-State this year. I was also selected for the WCAC All Star Team this year.

My coach's name is Mary Jones. Her contact information is included on the attached information page. She has indicated to me that she would welcome your calls; email is also a reliable way to reach her (mary.jones@hotmail.com is her email address).

My GPA for my junior year is a 3.7 on a 4.0 unweighted scale, and although my high school does not rank, I have taken a challenging course load. My highest combined SAT score was 1200 and I plan to retake it in October. I am interested in pursuing a four-year degree in biology. I also hope to continue playing volleyball at the college level. Your program especially interests me. I have followed your team's season in The Washington Post and have attended two games.

I have included a skills tape and a game tape. My jersey is #1 in the light-colored uniforms. Also included is a schedule of our upcoming volleyball season. Please let me know if there is additional information that any coach or I can send you.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Athlete's Name

Source: The NCAA & College: What You Need To Know About Playing Competitive Sports in College. Academy of the Holy Cross, Kensington, MD.

Appendix 14 - Letter of Continued Interest

Goal – formally express your desire to attend the college

The letter must be:

1. Written as a formal document/letter.
2. Emailed or mailed to the admissions office, ideally to a specific contact.
3. Be sure to ask that it is included in your application file.
4. Sent by the end of January, ideally, or first week in February **for deferral**. **For Waitlist**, send by mid-April at the latest.
5. If you want to submit new SAT/ACT/TOEFL scores be sure to share this with the rep and send it officially.

Additionally, notify the Records Office to send either your mid-year grade (**if deferred**) or third quarter grades (**if waitlisted**).

Format

Paragraph 1 – Re-introduce yourself as an applicant for admission. While you are disappointed to be deferred or waitlisted, you are grateful that you can continue to be competitive in the application process and that they'll re-read your application.

Paragraph 2 – Update – Update them on new academic interests or accomplishments, new activities/involvements, even new hobbies. The goal is to update them on new information - be specific.

Paragraph 3 – Why Them? – Give a well-written, solid, specific paragraph about why you like the college, why it is such a good fit for you, and why you are a good fit for them. Make it sincere, specific, and heartfelt. If this is your first choice, say so, but don't say it if it isn't true.

Paragraph 4 – Conclusion – Tell them you'll have new grades sent when they are available, and thank them for their continued interest in you as a prospective student at their college.

Sample Letter of Continued Interest

Date

Ms. Admissions
Director of Admissions
Ideal University
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Ms. Admissions,

(Re-Introduction) Thank you for taking the time to review my application. I know that Ideal University is a competitive school, and I'm honored to be included on the waitlist. I'm writing to express my continued interest in your school and to provide you with some additional information for my application. Ideal University remains my first choice, and I would absolutely attend if accepted.

(Update) Since applying to Ideal University, I have received the Seal of Biliteracy in Russian, which is awarded by the state in recognition of a student's proficiency in two languages. This award means a lot to me as it celebrates my family's culture and demonstrates my passion for linguistics, language and communication. I also was a part of the Newton North Varsity Ice Hockey team that won the state championship this past March. It was an unforgettable experience to be captain of this selfless team that overcame adversity and injuries to achieve this amazing accomplishment.

(Why Them?) I'm still very excited about joining Ideal University's English Department and working on literary research and writing poetry with inspiring faculty like Professor Smith. I love the sense of community on campus and school spirit - especially at the basketball games (Go Tigers!). The idea of joining Ideal University's Outing Club and participating in their annual trip to Lake George greatly appeals to me and my sense of adventure.

(Conclusion) Thank you so much for your time and consideration. I will send my updated transcript as soon as it is available - I am anticipating all A's and B's this quarter and I feel that these grades are a better reflection of my ability. Please let me know if you have any additional questions and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Student's Name

Adapted from [The Admissions Strategist's "Writing an Amazing Letter of Continued Interest \(Samples Included\)"](#)

Worksheets

[Worksheet 1: College Comparison Worksheet](#)

[Worksheet 2: Planning for Standardized Testing Worksheet](#)

[Worksheet 3: College Essay Brainstorming Worksheet](#)

[Worksheet 4: College Application Checklist](#)

[Worksheet 5: Financial Aid Comparison Worksheet](#)

Worksheet 1: College Comparison Worksheet

Considerations	College #1	College #2	College #3
Name of College or University			
Major / Career Goals Is your area of academic interest strong at this college?			
Campus Statistics Student enrollment / size of freshman class Size of campus Student/faculty ratio Average class size			
Geographical Location Specific region Urban, suburban or rural Weather/Geography Nearest city, airport			
College Type and Setting 2 year / 4 year Private, public, technical Co-ed, male, female Religious affiliation			
Housing % living on campus Residence hall requirement Food plan options Apartment/off-campus housing			
Admissions Selectivity Middle 50% SAT range # of applicants vs. # of accepts Early Action, Early Decision?			
Academic Environment Honors program Double Majors/Minors Required courses / Distribution requirements Undergraduate Internships, Co-ops, Year Abroad / Exchange Programs Support Services/Program			
Activities Organizations –religious, affinity groups Greek Life (what %) Athletics – NCAA division, intramural, club, Traditions			
Student Body characteristics Diversity Geographic Distribution Female/Male Ratio			
Campus Events Tours, interviews, Open Houses			

College Fair / College Rep Visit at Newton North			
Admission Requirements SAT and/or ACT - what is the college's testing policy? Required, optional, or test-blind? GPA Essays / Letters of Recommendation Common Application or Individual College Application			
College Expenses: Tuition, Room and board In State or Out of State Tuition Application fees, deposits Books, additional fees, travel costs to home Fee for Support Services (if applicable)			
Financial Aid: FAFSA / Scholarships			
Retention Rate: What percent of freshmen return for Sophomore year?			
Graduation Rate: What percent of students graduate within 6 years?			
Placement Rate/Outcomes: What percent are employed or attending graduate school 6 months after graduation?			
Other Information			

Worksheet 2: Planning for Standardized Testing Worksheet

Sophomore Year: March: PreACT Test _____

Junior Year: October: PSAT Test¹ _____

December SAT _____

February: ACT _____

March: SAT _____

April: ACT _____

May: SAT _____

June: SAT _____

ACT _____

July: ACT _____

August: SAT _____

Senior Year: September: ACT _____

TOEFL/Duolingo _____

October: SAT _____

ACT _____

November: SAT ² _____

December: SAT _____

ACT _____

¹ The PSAT is most commonly taken at this time by the junior class.

² Early November is often the deadline for Early Decision and Early Action applications. Some schools will accept testing from this test sitting, others may not. Check your college's website for more information.

Worksheet 3: College Essay Brainstorming Worksheet

Step 1: Brainstorming – Finish the following sentences:

1. An achievement that made me feel really proud was...
2. Something I have struggled to overcome or change about myself was...
3. An event or experience that taught me something about myself or the world was...
4. A bad experience or something I had to get past was...
5. Someone's act of strength or courage that affected me was...
6. A family experience that influenced me in some powerful way...
7. A lesson, class project, activity or job that had an impact on my academic or career goals was...
8. A time I failed or made a bad choice/decision was...
9. An item, place or activity that has special meaning to me is...
10. An event that helped to define me in terms of my background was...
11. I feel passionate about...?

12. One memory that helps define my character is...?

13. If I could change one thing about the world, I would...

14. If your parents/guardians or friends or friends were to be interviewed about you, what would they say?

Step 2: Expanding on a Topic – Choose one of the events from the list above and answer the following questions:

1. What were the key moments and details of the event?
2. What did I learn from this event?
3. What aspect of this event stays with me the most?

Step 3: Developing a theme:

1. What does this event reveal about me?
2. What makes it significant or special?
3. How does this event make me stand-out? Would others have viewed it differently or handled it in a different way?
4. How has this event taught me lessons or changed my views?

Worksheet 4: College Application Checklist

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Name: _____

OVERALL TO DO:

_____ = Fill in date(s)

- ☐ Had an Appointment in College & Career Center: _____
- ☐ Met with School Counselor to Review Plans: _____
- ☐ Spoke with School Counselor about Application Fee Waivers (if eligible): _____
- ☐ Submitted Questionnaires to Teachers Writing Rec: _____
- ☐ Electronically signed Transcript Release Form in MySchoolBucks: _____
- ☐ Notified Counselors of Colleges' Response (Accept/Deny/Waitlist): _____
- ☐ Notified Counselors of Final Decision & Deposited to ONE college by May 1 _____

FINANCIAL AID:

- Received SAT / ACT Fee Waiver from counselor (if eligible): _____
- Date Filed FAFSA: _____
- Date Filed CSS Profile (if required by college): _____
- Date Received Student Aid Report: _____
- Submitted NNHS Scholarship Application: _____
- Additional Scholarships submitted: _____

	College 1:	College 2:	College 3:	College 4:	College 5:	College 6:	College 7:
FOR EACH COLLEGE:							
TESTING: ACT/SAT Required?							
If yes, do they accept self-reported scores?							
If required, date ACT scores sent from ACT							
If required, Date SAT scores sent from CollegeBoard							
RECORDS OFFICE: Request for Transcript to be sent. This is done via MySchoolBucks (and also includes a \$3 fee per college)							
APPLICATIONS: College Deadline							
Application Type? - Common App, Coalition App, College-Specific Online App, or Mail Delivery							
# of Recommendations Required							
Date you let your teacher know your first deadline (so they can upload their rec letter in time)							
Essay & Supplements Completed, Portfolio (if applicable)							
Date Submitted / Mailed Application							
FINANCIAL AID: College added to FAFSA list							
Is CSS-PROFILE required? - Date submitted							

Worksheet 5: Financial Aid Comparison Worksheet

	College #1	College #2	College #3
[A] Annual Expenses			
A1 Tuition			
A2 Room and Board			
A3 Fees			
A4 Books and Supplies			
A5 Travel			
A6 Personal Expenses			
TOTAL EXPENSES (A1 through A6)			
[B] Gift Aid (not loans)			
B1 Merit Scholarships			
B2 Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG's)			
B3 Pell Grants			
B4 Any Additional Gift Aid			
TOTAL GIFT AID (B1 through B4)			
[C] Work			
C1 Work Study			
C2 Job			
TOTAL WORK (C1 thru C2)			
[D] Loans (Repayment required)			
D1 Federal Direct Loans			
D2 Federal Perkins Loans			

D3 Direct Stafford Loan (Subsidized)			
D4 Direct Stafford Loan (Unsubsidized)			
D5 Additional Student Loans			
D6 Additional Parent Loans			
TOTAL LOANS (D1 through D6)			
Annual Family/Student Contribution Needed While In College <u>Including</u> Loans A - (B + C + D)			
Annual Family/Student Contribution Needed While In College <u>Excluding</u> Loans A - (B + C)			

Glossary of Terms

504 Accommodation Plan	A plan for an eligible student developed between Newton Public School and the student's parents/guardians that documents the accommodations allowed for the student within the regular education classroom in order to access the curriculum.
ACT	A college entrance examination, which measures aptitude and skill in 4 areas - English, Mathematics, Reading and Science – plus an optional writing test required by some colleges.
AP Test	<u>A</u> dvanced <u>P</u> lacement test taken by high school students usually at the end of their junior or senior year, after they have completed certain AP courses. Many colleges give advanced standing and/or credit for these College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) sponsored tests if students earn certain scores on them.
Associate's Degree	Degree granted by a college for a program earned in 2 years.
Bachelor's Degree	The Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or any other bachelor's degree granted by a college or university for a program that typically requires 4 years of full-time study.
CAPS Services	Services provided to students who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
Certificate Program	A qualification earned from short-term specialty trainings that are offered in fields as varied as automotive, culinary, or teaching English as a Second Language.
Coalition for Access, Affordability and Success	A universal application accepted by a select number of colleges and universities, separate from the Common App.
College Board	The organization responsible for the administration and administering of the PSAT/SAT/AP exams. It also offers the CSS PROFILE for financial aid applications.
Common Application or App	An universal application form widely accepted by participating colleges and universities.
Common App Supplements	Supplemental forms used by Common App schools that request further information or essay questions, not found on centralized Common App.
Community College	A 2-year public college, offering 1-year Certificate programs, 2 year Associate Degrees, and transfer programs to public and private 4-year colleges.

Consortium	Several colleges and universities in one area often join together in a consortium, or cooperative association, which gives students the opportunity to use the libraries and/or take courses at all member institutions.
Counselor Statement	A comprehensive picture of the student's academic and social contributions to the Newton North community written by the student's school counselor. It incorporates comments provided by teachers chosen by the student.
CSS PROFILE	A financial aid form, different from the FAFSA, required by many colleges and universities that helps them award non-federal student aid funds. The form is available online and fees are charged to first register and then for each college the form sent to.
Defer / Deferral	If you applied Early Decision or Early Action your admission decision may be "deferred" to Regular Decision. This means you're qualified, but the college wants to compare you to applicants in the Regular Decision pool.
Distance Learning	Term given to describe online courses and degrees offered by many institutions.
<u>Early Action</u> (EA)	Under EA a student applies usually between early November and early December and will know within 4 to 6 weeks whether they are accepted, denied or deferred. If admitted early the student is not committed to enroll and may elect to apply to other colleges. The decision to attend usually does not have to be made until May 1 st .
Early Action Unrestricted	An admission policy that allows a student to apply to more than one college with "Early" plans at the same time.
Early Action Restricted	An admission policy that does not allow a student to apply to other colleges with "Early" plans at the same time.
<u>Early Decision</u> I and II (ED)	An early application option that demands a binding decision whereby if the student is accepted ED they must attend that college. Therefore a student can only apply to one college under ED . ED I deadlines are usually in November. ED II deadlines are usually in January.
Engineering or Technical College	An independent professional college that provides 4-year programs in the fields of engineering and physical sciences. They are often known as "Institutes of Technology" or "Polytechnic Institutes."

ELL services	English Language Learner services provided to students for whom English is not their first language.
Fee Waiver	Permits eligible students to submit college applications or test registration forms without the fee. A limited number of waivers are available to students who qualify and are obtained through their school counselors.
FAFSA	The Free Application for Federal Student Aid form that all prospective U.S. college students who want financial aid must complete and submit to determine their eligibility. This application is FREE and is required by all colleges and universities, unlike the CSS PROFILE, which only some colleges require. Massachusetts also uses the FAFSA information for State scholarships.
Gift Aid	Grants and scholarships are often called “gift aid” because they are financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Grants and scholarships can come from the federal government (e.g., Pell Grants), the state government, your college, NNHS, or a private or nonprofit organization.
GPA	Newton North High School calculates a 4.0 unweighted GPA. For more information see the NNHS Course Catalog.
IEP	An Individualized Education Plan developed between Newton Public School and the student’s parents/guardians for a student who is eligible for Special Education services based on their learning profile.
Khan Academy	Khan Academy is an online resource that has partnered with the College Board to offer free practice tests, questions and instructional videos for the SAT.
Liberal Arts College	A 4-year institution which emphasizes a program of broad undergraduate education.
NCAA	The National Collegiate Athletic Association is an athletic governing body to which approximately 1,200 colleges and universities belong. Each college chooses a general division I, II or III and is required to follow the policies regarding recruitment and scholarship awards that have been established for that division. Students must register with the NCAA if they intend to play Division II or I sports in college.
National Merit Scholarship	National academic competition for scholarship awards open to all eligible high school juniors taking the PSAT.

Need Aware/Need Sensitive	A family's ability to pay for college may be a factor in the college's admission decision process.
Need Blind	A family's ability to pay for college is not a factor in the college's admission decision process.
Newton North College Night	Opportunity for juniors, seniors and their parents/guardians to meet representatives from some 150 colleges at an event held over two evenings in October.
Newton North Scholarships	Scholarships established through the generosity of the Newton North community. For eligibility Newton North students must complete the Newton North Scholarship form available online.
Matriculated	A matriculated student is one who has applied and been formally admitted to a degree-granting program at that institution.
MEFA	<u>Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority</u> , a non-profit state organization that serves students and families in Massachusetts, and out-of-state students and families pursuing higher education in Massachusetts.
Open Admissions	An admissions policy whereby the college admits almost all applicants who have earned a high school diploma or a GED.
Pell Grant	The Federal Pell Grant Program provides need-based grants to low-income undergraduate and certain post-baccalaureate students to promote access to post-secondary education. Students may use their grants at any one of approximately 5,400 participating post-secondary institutions. Grant amounts are dependent on: the student's expected family contribution; the cost of attendance as determined by the institution; the student's enrollment status (full-time or part-time); and whether the student attends for a full academic year or less. Pell grants do not have to be repaid.
Post-graduate Year (PG)	The "PG" year, as it is often called, is a full academic year of study generally pursued between graduation from high school and matriculation at a college or university.
PSAT	A practice test for the SAT, it contains fewer sections than the SAT, takes two hours. A high score on the PSAT in your junior year may make you eligible to participate in the National Merit Scholarship program.
Regular Decision	Allows a student to apply to more than one college by the college's regular deadline (typically early winter). Decisions tend to be received between March and April and the decision to

attend does not usually need to be made by the student until May 1st.

ROTC

Reserve Officer Training Corps is a college-based military officer training program offered by more than 1,000 colleges. Academic scholarships are offered in exchange for military service after graduation.

Rolling Admission

Application is reviewed when it is received and the college makes a decision on a rolling or on-going basis usually a few weeks after receipt. The decision to attend does not need to be made until May 1st.

SAT

The SAT is a college admissions test offered by the College Board, which comprises two sections: reading and math.

Scattergram

Graphical representation of Newton North applications to specific colleges and the admissions decisions for each of those colleges from past graduating classes. This data, which includes the SAT/ACT scores and GPAs of applicants (without names) allows students to have an understanding of how their statistics match up to previous Newton North applicants.

SCOIR

A comprehensive web-based tool used by Newton North for post-high school planning. This program contains data on colleges throughout the country and keeps track of recent Newton North college applications, student statistics, and admissions decisions.

Score Choice

Offered as an option for the SAT and Subject Test, this gives the student the ability to choose which test sittings to send to a given college. Not all colleges allow Score Choice.

Student Aid Index (SAI)

A formula-based index number calculated after completing the FAFSA ranging from –1500 to 999999. Where your SAI falls within the SAI range helps your school determine how much financial support you may need.

Super Scoring

Policy of some colleges to select the highest score for each section from across all the test scores submitted (SAT or ACT) therefore encouraging submission of all tests taken.

Teacher Evaluations

Normally a college will require two Teacher Evaluations and one Counselor Statement. Teacher Evaluations are not submitted through the Common App, but separately through SCOIR. Newton North has a well-defined process for teacher evaluations, which will be explained to students in their seminars.

TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language is a test used to evaluate the English proficiency of those students whose first language is not English.
Trade School	Offering a qualification earned from short-term specialty trainings that are offered in fields as varied as automotive, culinary, or teaching English as a Second Language.
Transcript	A list of final course grades and credits for all classes awarded for freshman, sophomore and junior classes as well as first and second semester during senior year.
Waitlist	A term used by many institutions to describe a process in which they may initially delay offering or denying admission and extend the possibility of admission into the future. Colleges offer admission to waitlist candidates if insufficient numbers of regularly admitted candidates accept their offers of admissions.