



Dear MBHS Students and Families,

We look forward to working with you as you begin your journey on college selection and admission! Our goal is to make this process manageable and easy to understand.

Use this handbook as a reference guide and remember to maintain frequent contact with your counselor.

Sincerely,

The Counseling Department ☺

Mission Bay High School



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Overview – Types of Colleges

Community Colleges in California

California is particularly fortunate in having many excellent state supported community colleges. There are over 115 publicly supported community colleges located throughout the state of California. They offer low-cost education to more than 2.1 million students annually. To be eligible for admission to a community college, a student must be 18 years of age or a high school graduate. At the community college, students who plan to transfer to a four-year college as a junior will take regular lower division college classes, completing their general education requirements before beginning work in their major at the four-year institution. Students may also earn a Bachelors (BA/BS) degree, Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree, or complete a certificate program in vocational training. Several community colleges offer study abroad programs and Honors programs which enrich academic opportunities.

The community college may be a good choice for you if:

- You plan on four years of college but, for any reasons, prefer to stay at home or save money for the first two years.
- You plan on four years of college, but you haven't met the academic requirements to directly enter a four-year college.
- You know you want to attend college, but you are unsure of where to attend or what your career focus should be, so you want to complete your general education requirements first with fewer costs.
- You wish to attend a college which will train you in two years for a vocation.

California State University

Ranging from Humboldt near the Oregon border to San Diego, there are currently 23 campuses in the California State University system with an enrollment exceeding 425,000 students. CSU is committed to enrolling the top third of California high school graduates who have met the CSU minimum eligibility requirements, including a-g coursework. Each campus has its own unique geographic and curricular character. All campuses offer undergraduate and graduate instruction for professional and occupational goals as well as broad liberal arts education.

Application filing period: October 1st - November 30th (subject to change)

Application deadline: November 30th

CSU web Application Website: www2.calstate.edu/apply

University of California

With over 234,000 students, including undergraduate and graduate students, the University of California (UC) has nine campuses offering instruction in a wide range of fields. Among the campuses are six medical schools, three law schools, and a school of veterinary medicine, as well as many professional schools including business administration, education, engineering, and oceanography.

Admission to the University of California is quite competitive. To be eligible for admission to the UC system as a freshman, you must meet the a-g requirements, the examination requirements, and the academic eligibility requirement. Meeting minimum requirements does not necessarily guarantee you a place at a campus or in the major of your choice. Because there are more applicants than there are spaces, admission is very selective. The campuses further screen applicants and generally admit students with higher qualifications than the minimum required. Senior students, among the top 9% of participating high schools, are offered a spot at one or more of the UC campuses. This is known as “Eligibility in the Local Context” or ELC.

A placement exam will be required for English if the writing portion of the SAT is less than 680. A score of 3 or higher on either AP English exam and a 5 on the IB English HL exam will also demonstrate proficiency.

Application filing period: November 1st – November 30th (subject to change)

Application deadline: November 30th

UC web site: www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply

A – G Requirements for CSU and UC Universities

A grade of **C or better** in the following college preparatory course requirements, plus an acceptable standardized test score on the SAT or ACT is required in order to meet the *minimum* standard of admission to the CSUs and the UCs. Students must complete a minimum of 11 of these courses prior to the beginning of the senior year.

English	4 years
Mathematics	3 years, 4 recommended (Including Integrated Math II, III, or Geometry)
US History/World History	2 years
Science	2 years with lab (3 recommended)
Foreign Language	2 years of same language (3 recommended)
Visual and Performing Arts	1 year
Electives	1 year of a college-prep elective; can be additional coursework in any of the above subject areas or other “g” approved (i.e. computer) course.

Private Colleges and Universities

Among the 218 colleges and universities in the state of California, there are approximately 80 private schools. These colleges do not have direct financial support from the state of California. This independence means that they have greater freedom in designing programs, defining admission criteria and procedures, and determining the focus and culture of the school. Because of this self-direction, you will find great diversity among the private colleges. There are large, medium, and small; nonsectarian and religious; greatly selective to moderately selective; traditional to innovative; specialized and liberal arts. Some are single sex institutions. Some are

nonprofit; some are for-profit businesses. Campuses vary widely in location, environment, goals, admission requirements, and programs and degrees offered.

There are four types of private, four-year colleges:

- **Research institutions** such as the University of Southern California or Stanford University.
- Small, **comprehensive universities** such as the University of the Pacific or Loyola Marymount University.
- Small **specialized schools** such as Harvey Mudd College and the California Institute of the Arts.
- Small **liberal arts colleges** such as Pomona, the University of Redlands and Occidental College.

In addition to four-year institutions, there are **private two-year liberal arts colleges**, such as Marymount College in Rancho Palos Verdes, that award Associate (AA) degrees or offer transfer programs. There are also private career colleges that offer Associate or Bachelor Degrees or certificate programs.

Factors taken into account when applying to private colleges:

- Your high school record
- Your high school
- College admission tests
- Extracurricular activities
- Essay
- Recommendations
- Interview
- Special talents/achievements
- Personal background

Factors taken into account by all colleges:

- A sound college preparatory program
- Challenging course selection that requires critical thinking
- Participation in extracurricular activities
- Participation in community activities
- Good writing skills
- Indication of personal development (maturity, responsibility, ability to collaborate, decision-making skills, and flexibility).

The single most important thing you can do to improve your overall level of education is to read. Reading is the key to academic development, personal development, better standardized test scores, and wider knowledge.



Xello is a comprehensive college and career search tool. It can help you identify colleges of interest, and is the primary tool used at Mission Bay High to manage your college applications.

GETTING STARTED

1. Log on through Clever using Active Directory: <https://clever.com/in/sdusd>
2. Research and select prospective colleges:
 - Under the **college planning** area, there are several research tools.
 - You can add colleges to your list – We recommend you find at least five colleges for your list. Consider a variety that may be considered “safe” “target” or “reach” schools by reviewing admissions data trends.

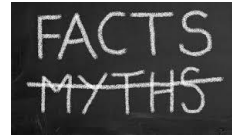
COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

****In order for any of your school records or college application materials to be sent to postsecondary schools, students and parents must authorize our school to share your relevant records.**

All transcript requests will be done via a form with our school and on Xello.

Many private and out of state schools use The Common Application or The Coalition Application. Students will complete their applications on these sites; however, school documents will be submitted primarily through Xello. This includes your teacher and counselor letters of recommendation, your Secondary School Report and/or your transcript. You must first link your Common Application account with Xello.

Seven Myths About College Admissions



Myth #1: Colleges receive so many personal essays they probably only glance at them.

Fact: Private college admission officers read personal essays with great care (same for the UC as a part of their Review of applications). Writing about yourself in a way that makes you unique is the one significant thing you can do to overcome lackluster test scores and a mediocre school record. Don't wait until just before the deadline to rush to write your essay just to submit your application on time. Even at the UC, a well-written essay can tip the scales in your favor; the personal essay *can make a difference*.

Myth #2: Colleges don't look at the senior year grades.

Fact: All college admissions committees analyze the degree of difficulty of the senior year course of study and they also review grades in the first semester prior to or after accepting students. As for the second semester grades, if there is a significant change (decline) in academic performance from February to June, the college that originally accepted you might require summer school work, put you on probation for the first semester of college, or rescind your acceptance on the grounds that you are not the same strong student they originally admitted. The University of California will not officially accept you until they see your final transcript. Since that arrives in July or August after high school graduation, there are serious consequences for you if your admission offer is rescinded one month before the fall term begins.

Myth #3: It is important to have as many extra-curricular activities as possible to impress college admission people because it "looks good."

Fact: Colleges are "looking" for *quality* of involvement, not *quantity*. They want a well-rounded student body made up of students who are passionately interested in particular activities, those who haven't spread themselves so thin that their extra-curricular commitments are superficial. Colleges prefer, for example, the student solely dedicated to being the yearbook editor over the student who has some participation in 10 different short-term activities.

Myth #4: It is better to go to a big university that is well known than to a small college that few people have heard of.

Fact: This generalization about large versus small schools is quite misleading. While a large university with wide name recognition (such as UCLA) may be ideal for many students, others may perform better in a smaller, more personalized environment (such as the University of La Verne). Just because your next door neighbor hasn't heard of a particular college doesn't mean the school is not prestigious. Graduate schools and employers make it their business to know

which colleges turn out the brightest and most capable graduates, and the size of the school has very little to do with it. It is important to define the things *you* want in a college – not to be unduly influenced by the opinions of others.

Myth #5: The only private colleges worth applying to are the Ivy League colleges.

Fact: This is another cliché. The eight Ivy League colleges are among the most selective schools in the nation, but they may not offer what *you* want; besides, did you know that the “Ivy League” is simply an athletic league like the Big 10 or the Pac 10? Certainly the Ivy League is known for its academic quality, but it does *not* have a monopoly on academic quality. Suggested reading: *Looking Beyond the Ivy League* by Loren Pope.

Myth #6: Colleges just don’t have enough money to give families financial aid.

Fact: Financial aid continues to be more readily available than you might think in the forms of grants, loans, work-study, and merit scholarships. Read the financial aid section in this handbook and attend the evening financial aid session at school this fall. Investigate websites such as www.fastweb.com or www.finaid.org.

Myth #7: If I make the wrong decision about college, my life will be ruined.

Fact: While it is important to realize the significance of your college choice, take it seriously, and spend time on all the steps of the college process, you should remember to keep things in perspective. If you find, in spite of an informed choice, that you are not well suited to your college, you can transfer to another college. So be conscientious about the selection process.



Where to Start

The admissions process is an attempt by colleges and universities to select the most qualified students for their particular institution, carefully matching student and program. The basis of this selection is determined by an evaluation of the following:

Academic Information

- 1) The transcript which includes:
 - a) Academic grades
 - b) Type and number of courses
 - c) Level of courses
 - d) Cumulative grade point averages

- 2) Test results you (student) report or send from the testing company's website.

Personal information contained in:

- 1) Autobiographical essay/writing sample
- 2) Resume of extracurricular activities:
 - a) Leadership roles
 - b) Activities and clubs
 - c) Sports participation
 - d) Work and travel experiences
 - e) Unique talents and interests
 - f) Volunteer service
- 3) A personal interview
- 4) Letters of recommendation by teachers and counselor

Academic

More than anything else, strong academic credentials build the foundation for college admissions. These credentials include your course rigor, academic achievements, and possibly standardized test results. The most important criteria will be performance shown by your record over the four years of high school. Admissions officers place a high value on students with consistent academic success in demanding programs. A simple rule-of-thumb for courses and grades: Take the most rigor that is healthy and balanced, while focusing on your GPA. "C" grades are acceptable in college admissions, but "acceptable" doesn't mean "desirable." Of course, you should always do the best you can, and sometimes a "C" is doing the best you can. But you are going to have to be very realistic about your chances at selective institutions if the best you can do is a "C" in a high school level class. Colleges do not accept courses in which you earn "D's" or "F's". "D's" or "F's" must be made up in summer school or repeated during the school year if there is room in your schedule.

Some Perspective from the National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC)

"2011 State of College Admission" Report

The factors that admission officers use to evaluate applications have remained largely consistent over the past 17 years.

Top factors in the admission decision are (in order)

- grades in college preparatory course
- strength of curriculum
- standardized admission test scores (as of 2020, this may not be applicable)
- overall high school grade point average

Among the next most important factors were

- the essay
- demonstrated interest in the school

- counselor and teacher recommendations
- extracurricular activities

Develop Good Study Habits

If you are at a loss, and do not know where to begin to learn more effective study habits, try this website: www.studygs.net. It is a compendium of study skills and test taking information. The site is authored, maintained, and revised by Joe Landsberger, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN.

Personal

It is time to find out who you are, what you are good at, and how adventuresome you are. Achievements outside the classroom are also a factor in admission of an applicant, and for many of the selective colleges, a student's non-academic record can allow him or her to be accepted before applicants with similar academic credentials. Colleges are not as interested in students who participate or dabble in a large number of activities as they are in applicants who have become sincerely involved in a few meaningful endeavors. Choose the activities that interest you most and make a real commitment to them. If possible, work toward a leadership position in your activity. Spend some time with yourself and notice what you think about, dream about, and perhaps want to try out. If you think you would be good at public speaking, join a club or become involved in student government. If you would like to develop artistic talent, take advantage of the excellent visual arts program at or outside of school. Though it is important that you learn about yourself and develop yourself as a person, it is also important in the college admission process. Colleges are looking for interesting people. You will hear that they want people who have a passion. Perhaps some of your classmates have already found theirs, but maybe you are still looking. There are unlimited opportunities for exploration. If you get stuck, see your counselor for ideas about volunteering, interesting classes, or summer opportunities. Most colleges are looking for students who are growing steadily as a student and a person. Achieving just a satisfactory level of performance and staying there often indicates complacency and a lack of motivation. If you apply yourself daily and pursue real interests, you will enter the college application process with confidence and direction.

Where Do I Apply?

Let's start with a reality check: The vast majority of colleges in the United States DO NOT turn down more applicants than they accept. In fact, the average admit rate for all four-year colleges is 65.5%. So does it make sense to limit yourself to the stressful, hardball game of highly selective college admissions? Only *you* can answer that. Ideally, you will have a range of colleges on your list, based not only upon selectivity, but also upon the important things: environment, programs, great teaching, the opportunity to meet interesting people and perhaps lifelong friends, and the chance to be challenged both personally and academically. In the field of college counseling, we call this *the right match*. And there is no *perfect* college for you.

There are a number of colleges that may be right for you. While it is true that there is undoubtedly a type of college which is more suited to your needs than another type, it is not wise to narrow your sights to only one or two colleges. A better plan is to investigate several possible options and you will discover that each one has its own advantages.

Step 1: Factors to Consider in Researching and Selecting a College

What Not To Do:

Put any faith in *US News and World Report* or similar rankings

Just because a school is highly ranked doesn't mean that you will like it or that it suits your needs. The rankings are based on factors that include things like faculty salaries, average spending per student, alumni giving rate, and the number of students who transfer. While these factors are important to the college, they have little or nothing to do with whether or not you will be happy there.

Your best friend's boyfriend didn't like the school he attended.

Just because he didn't like the college doesn't mean that you won't. There might be a very specific reason that he was turned off by the school – a weird freshman year roommate or a professor with whom he didn't click. Those things can happen at any school. Be your own person in researching colleges.

“I heard that . . .”

Much of the information that floats around about particular colleges is at least 10 years old, sometimes older. Many colleges that had fairly lightweight academic reputations in the 70's or 80's have refocused their priorities and are now top institutions. Similarly, some schools were considered party schools, and others were considered easy to get into. Schools have changed, and the way they might have been 10, 20, or 30 years ago is the way they might seem to your parents. Do your research. What are the social and academic realities *now*?

I've never heard of it.

Many of the small, liberal arts colleges are actually some of the best colleges in the country, and they might be some of the best-kept secrets too. The average well-educated person can probably name only a small number of the almost 3,500 colleges and universities in the United States. These tend to be older Eastern schools, the large state universities, those with outstanding athletic teams, or those that happen to be near home. It is important to remember that a college which may be right for you may be one that is unknown to you now, while some of the universities you are most familiar with may not be appropriate choices.

Start by making a list of things you want in a college. Some suggestions for consideration:

- **Size:** Do I want the anonymity of a large school versus the personal attention from professors at a smaller school? Think about the learning environment in a lecture hall of 400, where you might be able to go through four years without being called on more than a few times; as opposed to the smaller **class size**, even seminar classes at small schools, where your participation is expected. It is much easier to have a big impact on life at a

smaller school, since you will be better able to get to know the administration and many of the other campus leaders personally. At large schools, meetings will be announced, but unless you seek them out, clubs and organizations won't come to find you.

- **Weather:** Can I live through wind, snow, rain, and sleet – in a word: weather. We don't really have that in Southern California, so this is an important question if you are considering leaving the area or the state.
- **Location:** Have I visited a school in a suburban or rural area, so that I know what it means to distinguish between urban, suburban, or rural campuses?
- **Programs:** Am I looking for a specialized school? (Engineering, music, fashion design)
- **Co-Curricular Activities:** Do I want to attend a school with a strong sense of campus community? Big-time sports can make you feel like you belong the minute football season begins. Do you like the tradition that goes along with big-time sports programs? Or are you trying to find a school with an orchestra, an award-winning student newspaper, political demonstrations, or important guest speakers?
- **Academic Atmosphere:** What environment suits me? Tense or relaxed, competitive or geared to individual progress, high or low academic expectations, opportunities for recreational and cultural activities to supplement academics, honor systems and academic discipline codes?
- **Graduation in 4 years:** Is it important to you to graduate in four years? You may not know that the norm for colleges to quote graduation statistics is now *six years*, as in "We graduate 65% of our students in 6 years." It is possible to graduate in four years. Be sure to find out how many students do that at the school you are considering.
- **Social Structure and Campus Lifestyle:** Is a residential campus important? This is an especially important question for students planning to attend out-of-state colleges. Weekend social life, on and off campus, types of entertainment favored by the students, fraternities and sororities, and system of student rules are all important factors in the daily life of a student.
- **Position in the incoming class:** Do you want to be one of the better students at the school, or do you want the challenge of working extra hard to keep up with the top 25%? Would you consider entering an Honors program at a somewhat less competitive school in order to get the best education possible at a large school in a smaller group experience? Think Arizona State University or U Mass–Amherst.
- **Calendar:** Is the school's calendar important to you – semesters or quarters?
- **Your Own Priorities:** Think about the dozens of other things that you as an individual might consider: athletics, performing arts, distance from home or relatives, cost, public/private, religious affiliation, specific programs or interdisciplinary majors, . . . add your own special considerations.

Researching colleges in Xello, on the College Board and Niche websites (among many others) can help you identify the best fit based on above criteria.

Step 2: Honestly Assess Your Profile

A realistic self-assessment will help you examine your academic and personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as your reasons for going to college and what you are seeking in a college education. The process involves a combination of looking back at your high school career and looking ahead to how a college education will prepare you for your post-collegiate years.

Answer these questions in an honest and thoughtful manner. A self-evaluation will help you understand what to look for in your selection of prospective schools, and it can prepare you for statements you will be asked to make about yourself in essays and interviews when you apply.

Goals and Values

What is your main educational goal?

What values do you consider most important?

What kind of person would you like to become?

Which of your unique gifts and strengths would you like to develop?

What events or experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

Education

What are your academic interests?

Which courses have been most satisfying for you?

What interests beyond daily class assignments have you pursued in research papers, through independent projects, and recreational reading?

How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss issues and exchange ideas?

What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience in recent years?

In what academic areas do you feel confident? Inadequately prepared?

Are there outside distractions which have interfered with your academic performance?

Consider such things as family problems, health, after-school job responsibilities.

Activities and Interests

What activities outside of the daily school routine do you enjoy the most?

Which have meant the most to you?

Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence or contribution?

What do you do for fun and relaxation?

What distresses you most about the world around you?

What would you do if you could change certain aspects of your world?

Personality and Relationships with Others

Are you competitive? If so, to what extent?

What kind of a person are you?

What three adjectives would you use to describe yourself?

How would someone who knows you well describe you?

What are your finest qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings?

How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself?

Step 3: Create a List of Colleges to Investigate

You might want to create a word document or use a section of a notebook for keeping track of your research. Make notes initially about size, location, selectivity, and special features based upon some of the qualities/characteristics noted in Step 1. Be honest about the kind of student you are. In terms of grades, testing, extra-curricular achievements - what kind of student are you?

Once you can be honest with yourself, you can begin to categorize colleges as *Reach/Risky*, *Realistic/True Possibility*, and *Likely/Safety*.

Help in your research:

- Talk with your counselor who is a professional in the area of college counseling. Meet with the counselor and keep open lines of communication. Counselors are there to answer questions and make suggestions, but they are not there to do your work for you. Research is work.
- You can use **Xello** to identify colleges that match your interests and academic profile. Links are provided to the websites of each college.
- Other online search sites are College Board (Big Future) and Niche.
- Also take advantage of some of the excellent guidebooks available for purchase or in the reference areas of your public library and in our College Center. These include *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*, Princeton Review's *Best Colleges*, or The College Board's *College Handbook*.
- Attend college representative visits to MBHS in the fall. These are great opportunities to learn more about academic programs and campus life, and to meet with the person who will probably be reading your application.

A list of 20 or more colleges to research is reasonable. You should begin narrowing your list down to a reasonable eight to twelve colleges. Narrowing down the list is a task made successful by good research. A good list will include some “reach, target and safety” schools.

Step 4: Visiting Colleges

Beyond all of your research, there is nothing like visiting a campus and seeing for yourself what a school is like. You will want to visit the schools that especially interest you, and certainly the ones that accept you, once you have completed the application process. If you are lucky enough to be able to visit major cities with loads of colleges, like Boston or Philadelphia, then by all means, go and see as many schools as you can. If you are not, we recommend that you visit some campuses in Southern California. You can visit virtually any type of college right here within driving distance. Some of the area colleges might approximate the size and setting of an out-of-state school that you may be considering. There is a list of suggested colleges for visiting in the Appendix of this handbook.

Before the Tour

- The timing of a visit can make a significant difference in your impressions and opinion of the school. Try to plan your visit when school is in session, if at all possible.
- Advance planning with the college's admission office is important to help you make the most of your visit. Most colleges encourage campus visits, and many publish special brochures to help you plan one. The admission office can assist you with travel information, driving directions, and scheduling your itinerary (distances/driving times to nearby schools, the feasibility of visiting their school and another on the same day, etc).

- Visit the website of undergraduate admissions and find/set up a day and time for a tour. If this is a serious visit, you might want to ask about staying overnight in a residence hall. Ask if they can make arrangements. If this is not possible, ask for assistance in finding lodging for the night, if you need a place to stay. Some offices have arrangements with hotels or motels in the area.
- During your visit, try to meet with someone from the admission office, attend an information session, and take a tour of the campus.
- Learn all you can and take notes. You will never be indifferent after a college visit. You will have strong impressions. Write them down, good or bad, and start learning about what you want in terms of size, type of school, people, dorms, activities, etc. You might want to make a comparison chart to take with you if you plan to see several schools at one time.
- Attend college representative visits to MBHS in the fall. These are great opportunities to learn more about academic programs and campus life, and to meet with the person who will probably be reading your application.

A list of 20 or more colleges to research is reasonable. You need to begin narrowing your list down to a reasonable eight to twelve colleges. Narrowing down the list is a task made successful by good research. A good list will include some reach, target and safety schools.

What to Look for On a Tour

- General appearance of the campus (poor maintenance, vandalism, campus pride)
- Student attire (J. Crew, Gap, very casual, sloppy)
- Friendliness (eye contact, offer to help, hello's)
- Student conversations (topic, tone, classes, papers, books, parties)
- Transportation (bikes, cars, foot, shuttles)
- Faculty presence (office hours posted, open doors, student interaction)
- Library (hours, easy access)
- Laboratory and computer facilities (hours, easy access)
- Fine arts facilities (studios, practice rooms, performances)
- Residence Halls (singles, doubles, suites, coed, substance free or wellness, guaranteed housing)

Questions to Ask Campus Representatives on a College Visit

What percent of applicants are accepted?

What percent of first year students return as sophomores?

What percent of entering students actually graduate?

In how many years?

How much flexibility will I have in my curriculum?

Can I double major?

Is a core curriculum required?

What is the average class size?

What is the faculty/student ratio?

Will I be taught by graduate assistants?

What percentage of the faculty teach first and second year students?

How many credits/classes do students usually take in one term?
What percent of graduates who apply to law school are admitted? Medical school?
MBA programs?
Honors programs?
Financial Aid?

Questions to Ask Students on a College Visit

Stop several students and ask them about the school and their programs. Watch for their facial expressions and any hesitation in their voice.

Some sample questions you could ask:

If they were choosing a college today would this college be their first choice?
Is there anything about the school they wish they could change? If so, what would it be?
What are the school's strongest or most popular majors?
Is housing guaranteed for freshmen?
Will you need a car?
Parking costs?
What do students do on weekends?
Is there public transportation to nearby destinations (shopping, museums, etc)?

Also, ask questions about your own particular interests, such as internships in your field, fraternities/sororities, student organizations, intramural leagues and/or club sports and student government.

Other Helpful Activities When You Are on a Campus

Look at school newspapers, kiosks, and bulletin boards for activities that interest you and give you insight into issues students care about.
Eat in the dining hall (you might need permission from the admissions office).
Visit the student union.
Talk to professors in majors you may be interested in.
Talk to coaches if you plan to play a sport.
Visit the housing complexes.
Visit the libraries.
Stroll through the adjacent community.

Step 5: Meet with College Representatives on Our Campus and Attend College Fairs

You can take advantage of meeting admission representatives right on your own campus. The schedule of visits is listed online and in the bulletin. Juniors and Seniors may attend these workshops.

How Do I Apply?

Step 1: Get the College Applications

You know your sixth semester grades and you have done your research. You have your final list categorized by *Reach/Risky*, *Realistic/True Possibility* and *Likely/Safety*. Run the final list by your counselor for input and information that may be new to you. Then start your applications. College applications are online and many use the *Common Application* or *Coalition Application*. Look up the websites at <https://commonapp.org> and <https://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>. If two or more of the schools on your list are there, you may want to use these systems rather than the institutional applications to save repeating the same information over and over. Be sure to look for supplements required by many colleges.

Organizational Note: Set up a filing system that works for you. Keep a separate file for each college to which you are applying. Be sure to save copies of all applications you submit.

Step 2: Keep a Log of Deadlines

Chart each application deadline, counselor/teacher recommendation(s) required, personal essay requirement, SAT/ACT test dates and scores, and date sent. Applying to colleges can be a draining and time-consuming business. Organization of files and information will help alleviate some of the stress during this time.

Deadlines are critical. Given that deadlines are as varied as the 3,500+ colleges out there, keeping track of them is crucial. In California, we have very early deadlines for our state university systems. You may apply to the **California State University (CSU) from October 1 - November 30**, and to the **University of California (UC) from November 1 - November 30**. Note the other school's deadlines carefully, as well as any standardized testing deadlines if you plan to test in the fall.

Some competitive colleges have deadlines called **Early Decision** and **Early Action**. Deadlines for these applications are usually November 1st, with a promise of an early answer, usually around mid-to-late-December. If you are a strong applicant for a school that accepts early applications, you may want to consider applying early. The response to your application may be an early acceptance, deferral to the regular applicant pool, or denial. If accepted, it is comforting to know by the winter break that you have been admitted to at least one college.

Early Decision (E.D.): If you are admitted as an EARLY DECISION applicant, you must attend that college, and you must withdraw all other applications. This is a highly competitive applicant pool, but because the college can get the best applicants early out of this pool, they sometimes take students with *slightly* lower overall grades/test scores than they might in the regular application pool. The real issue for counselors, and hopefully for you too, is that you might change your mind between December and the universal May 1st decision date. Most high school seniors do, and if you are accepted E.D., the entire process of decision-making is short-circuited. You absolutely must see your counselor before you can send in your E.D. application anyway, since he or she must sign it, but do be careful that you have absolutely no

doubt that if accepted, you will attend this school. There is no room for doubt - EARLY DECISION is a binding contract.

Early Action (E.A.) refers to a *non-binding* early admission program. Students admitted under this program are not committed in any way, and may, if they wish, file admissions applications to other colleges. Colleges that have “**Single Choice Early Action**” (S.C.E.A.) programs do not allow candidates to apply to other schools during the early-action period only. However, once they receive E.A. (Early Action) decisions (mid-December), then applicants are free to apply elsewhere, if they so choose. Students receiving deferral notifications will be reconsidered with the regular applicant pool. Early action pools are also very strong, so if you aren’t that strong, you might actually run the risk of being rejected outright. Talk it through with your counselor. There are issues concerning Financial Aid with both E.D. and E.A., so again, speak with your counselor regarding these early deadlines.

Finally, you should be aware that if you file an application as an Early Decision or Early Action applicant to a school and are denied admission, you may not apply again to the same school for the same admissions year as a regular admissions applicant.

Rolling Admissions: With rolling admissions, the admission application is reviewed as soon as the file is complete. The college notifies the student of its decision within a short time, usually four to six weeks. Due to the increasing competitiveness of college admissions, it is a good idea to apply early to these colleges.

Open Admissions: Some colleges do not practice selective admissions and offer admission to all students who apply. Generally, there are no admission deadlines for colleges that follow this policy. The community colleges are an example of this type of admission.

Step 3: Complete the Applications

Do not procrastinate. Do not treat the deadlines as though they are flexible. Be sure you mark your progress on your Deadlines Chart. Welcome your parents pestering you to stay on top of the deadlines, because this is serious business, and it is not just about you.

With the UC and CSU, as soon as the applications are available online, you may begin filling them out, but they will not be processed until either October 1 (for the CSU) or November 1 (for the UC). **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO FILE APPLICATIONS.** Computer systems have been known to crash due to overload.

Extra-Curricular Activities and Resume: Most applications will ask you to list or describe your extra-curricular activities. If you are limited in space, list the most significant activities. Provide as much descriptive detail as you can in the space provided, including your responsibilities and accomplishments. In the extra-curricular activities and work experience section on the Common Application it states: **To allow us to focus on the highlights of your activities, please complete this section even if you plan to attach a resume.** Do not attach a resume unless you have significant additional information to add to the list of extra-curricular activities. Most public universities, including the UC and CSU campuses will not allow students to attach a resume.

A resume is much more than a chronology of your activities. It allows you to *expand* your descriptions of *significant* accomplishments or experiences. Using a variety of **action verbs** you can provide a deeper and richer picture of your achievements. For example, you can expand on your accomplishments as president of a club, the responsibilities given to you in an internship or your achievements as leader of a service club. If you have lived in several countries or have traveled extensively, you can include this in your resume. Resumes can be helpful not only in the college application process, but in obtaining a part-time job, applying for a scholarship or summer internship, or attending a college interview. It can serve as a “launching pad” for a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. In addition, the resume gives the student the opportunity to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their involvement and how positively different they are from other students.

Information that could be included in a college resume:

- Personal data: full legal name, address, telephone number, email address, date of birth.
- Educational background: School(s) attended, the CEEB Code (MBHS Code: 052860)
- Extracurricular, personal, and volunteer activities you have done either in the summer or during the school year while in high school – community service; family activities; church, synagogue, or youth group projects or activities; school activities outside of class (sports, theater, musical talents, art projects, cheerleading, scouting, student committees, etc); significant travel experiences; summer camps or special outdoor programs; independent projects you have completed.
- Include specific events, major accomplishments, special awards, or honors in any of these activities (musical instruments played, acceptance to a program by audition, elected offices held, varsity letters, workplace awards, etc.), and note any leadership roles you may have held.
- Indicate your level of involvement with each item. The length of time spent in each of your endeavors is not the most crucial factor since the type of venture or your level of responsibility may be more important. However, time spent reveals the degree of your commitment.
- Special interests and hobbies: This category usually includes activities that show great dedication and participation over a long period of time.
- Work experience: Not only should you list your job(s), but also the number of hours you worked during the period(s) of employment, as well as your responsibilities.

Note: Separate athletic, drama, music or other specialized resumes are very significant when applying for competitive programs. They should give a complete review of training, participation and performance as well as future intentions. Include references with names, addresses and telephone numbers. (See resume sample on page 36.)

Teacher recommendations: Limit your requests for recommendations to two teachers. It is important that you **personally** ask a teacher if they will write your letter. The teacher you choose should know you well enough to give several specific examples describing your characteristics as a person and student, your written work, the degree and quality of class participation, and your interest in the subject. This is not necessarily the teacher who gave you an “A.” Recommendations should come from junior year teachers.

If you are applying to a Non-Common App school, follow the instructions found on the college or university's website. Look specifically for any required counselor or teacher evaluation forms.

NO LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION ARE REQUIRED FOR GENERAL UC OR CSU APPLICATIONS.

Letters of Recommendation: What Not To Do

- Assume that recommendations are quickly and easily prepared (they are not).
- Ask a teacher to write a recommendation on the day it is due – give them a *minimum* of three weeks notice (four weeks is even better).
- Ask more teachers (than required) to write recommendations for you unless special circumstances dictate. This is an inefficient use of teachers' time and is considered to be an imposition on the third teacher when only one or two recommendations are needed.
- Forget to thank the teacher for his or her help.
- Neglect to let the teacher know where you have been admitted, especially if they wrote and sent a letter of recommendation to a school where you have been accepted.

Writing Your Essays

There will be a prompt in the application if an essay is required. This can be anything from “Tell us something about yourself” to something off-the-wall that will enable the creative student to do his or her thing. Usually, prompts look something like this:

- Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
- Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
- Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
- Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and describe that influence.
- Topic of your choice.

Essays are important, so do not leave this piece until the night before you submit online or mail your application package. Write it (three or four rough drafts is the norm for writing a good essay), set it aside, revise it, have someone else edit it, then finalize it when you know it really reflects who you are. If you are short on ideas, one of these might help:

- Do you participate in class? Think of a time when something you said sparked an interesting discussion.
- Think of your best qualities: leadership, persistence, compassion, humor. Tell a story about a time when that quality exhibited itself in your life.
- Do you excel in some extracurricular activity? Do you play the French horn? Do you tear up the soccer field? Do you write so beautifully that it brings tears to the eyes of the reader? Tell an anecdote from your life concerning your talent.

- Do you bring diversity to the (future) campus? If you have a different perspective to add to the student body at your hoped-for college, talk about it.
- Was there a time in your life when you failed at something, and now, looking back, you can see how much you learned from your failure/mistake?
- Did you gain insight after an experience, or after meeting someone special, that changed your outlook on a person, a group, or a situation? Talk about that personal growth.

Essays: What to Do

- Be original in your word choices and the way you present your ideas.
- Personalize your essays. The admissions reader wants to know about you.
- Avoid generalities.
- Keep your essays short, and stay within the space provided whenever possible.
- Have someone else read your essay and give suggestions. Your English teacher and counselors are good resources.
- Write about something you really care about.

Essays: What Not To Do

- Try to write a funny essay if you are not a good comic writer unless the prompt allows for it.
- Repeat information from other parts of your application.
- Use your essay to list things you have done.
- Write about “last summer” unless it is really important to you.
- Write your essay for the admissions reader. Write it for yourself, but make it interesting for the people evaluating your essays.

You are responsible for sending **official test scores** to each college, if testing is required. If you coded colleges on your standardized test registration forms, then you have already sent official copies. If you didn't, contact the College Board www.collegeboard.org or ACT www.actstudent.org and send the scores immediately. There are charges for sending scores if you did not use a fee waiver.

Interviews might be recommended or required for some colleges. If so, there should be a representative coming to the San Diego area. You must call and schedule the interview according to the instructions given in the application. Sometimes interviews are optional. If you are a borderline student, you should try to interview. Once the interviewer sees that you are a great student who would be an asset to the school, the input from the interview just might tip the balance in your favor. Interviews are rarely make-or-break events, so *relax and be yourself*. Dress appropriately, speak well, make eye contact, and be confident that the interviewer will only ask you questions for which you know answers.

Step 4: Submit the Applications

Try very hard not to submit the applications the night before they are due. There may be processing delays, so allow 2-3 days prior to the deadlines. You will receive an acknowledgement via email from each college confirming receipt of your applications.

Step 5: Mid-Year Reports

Note: Transcripts are not submitted to the UC's during the application process, nor do they accept mid-year reports; therefore you do not need to send early transcripts to these schools. Only the final transcript is sent, once you have been admitted and graduated.

Step 6: Communicate Any Changes

Take responsibility for communicating with the college admissions office if anything should change *after* you file your application. For example, if you drop a class that you listed on your application, you must notify the college in writing that you have done so. If you stated that you planned to be on a team or club during the year and you decided later not to participate, you must notify the college in writing of this change. If you receive a “D” or an “F” in a college prep class first semester, you must also either write or call and discuss with an admissions counselor the impact this might have on your application. See your counselor to discuss anything that you have doubts about.

Testing

PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT is offered each year in October. Juniors may take it for consideration in the National Merit Scholarship Program. It is considered a strong indicator of the anticipated range of scores you will earn on the SAT. For those juniors whose test results rank in the top 2% in the nation, the National Merit Program will follow up with the student to proceed with an application into their Scholarship.

SAT

Some colleges require either the SAT or the ACT, or make it optional for admissions consideration. It is advisable to take the first test (if needed) in the spring of Junior year. Seniors have three main test dates remaining for fall admissions: October, November, and December. All SAT exams are administered on Saturdays at national test sites. **Registration is available online at www.collegeboard.org.** Make sure to observe registration deadlines.

ACT

The ACT is also a college admissions test option. The ACT is administered on Saturdays, just as the SAT's are, but never on conflicting dates. The ACT has four sections, each of which count as 25% of the composite score: Reading, English, Science Reasoning, and Math. Registration is available online at www.actstudent.org.

Test Preparation

There are many excellent test preparation experts available. Test preparation is valuable if the student experiences test anxiety, if the student does not understand test-taking strategies, or if the student needs review of material studied several years ago (e.g., student took Integrated Math 1 in 8th grade). Please visit the MBHS Counseling website (“Testing”) for more information and resources.

Financial Aid

The first smart step in the college application process is to apply to a college that is a financially safe choice. For *middle-income* families, state colleges such as the CSU or UC systems might be the best choices available.

Who is most likely to get some type of financial aid?

- Students with “A” averages who apply to schools where there are mostly “B” students. Another way to look at it is this - apply to colleges where academically you will be in the top 25% of the class, not the middle 50% or the lowest 25% of the class.
- Star athletes or other special talents
- Students whose family income meets federal guidelines for aid.
- Underrepresented students (African Americans, Hispanics, or Native Americans) who apply to schools where they will be at least in the middle academic range for that college.

Next, apply for financial aid. Many colleges require that you apply even if you are interested only in a merit-based (versus need-based) scholarship or loan. To apply for financial aid, your parents will have to fill out one or more financial aid forms.

If a college’s financial aid materials state that their admissions policy is “need aware,” that means the college is likely to admit applicants who are willing to pay the full sticker price. If paying full price for four years might jeopardize your family’s financial security, then by all means, apply for financial aid.

If you are hoping to get need-based financial aid, then study hard. The better your grades and test scores, the more likely you are to receive a generous package. As noted above, you are more likely to receive aid if you apply to a school where you will be in the top 25% of the applicants.

You must meet each college’s financial aid deadlines. Check with each college. For early decision and early action, deadlines can be as early as October of Senior year.

There are three main financial aid forms: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application, and the CSS Profile. It is best to fill out the FAFSA or Dream Act forms as soon as possible after October 1st of your senior year. The deadline is March 2nd for priority consideration in California. If your parents’ prior prior year’s tax returns are not finalized by that date, they must use estimates rather than miss the deadline. There is time to file an amendment if the estimates are way off – just don’t miss that deadline.

The FAFSA form is available online at <http://www.fafsa.gov> and the Dream Act at <https://dream.csac.ca.gov/>.

The FAFSA and Dream Act are automatically reviewed for:

- **Federal Pell Grants:** Unlike a loan, a Federal Pell Grant does not have to be repaid. Generally, Pell Grants are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned a BA or professional degree. The maximum amount of the award is \$5,550 per year.
- **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG):** A FSEOG is for undergraduates with exceptional financial need and gives priority to students who receive Federal Pell Grants. The FSEOG does not have to be paid back. The maximum amount awarded is \$4,000 per year.
- **Federal Work-Study:** The Federal Work-Study Program provides jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money at a campus job to help pay education expenses. The total Federal Work-Study award depends on when you apply, your level of need, and the funding level of your school.
- **Federal Perkins Loan:** A Federal Perkins Loan is a low-interest loan for both undergraduate and graduate students with financial need. Your school is your lender, with government funds, with a share contributed by the school. You must repay this loan to your school. The maximum loan amount is \$5,550 per year.
- **Federal Stafford Student Loan:** These loans may be subsidized or unsubsidized. Subsidized loans are awarded based on need, and interest does not accrue until after you have completed your studies. Unsubsidized loans are not based on needs and start accruing interest during your studies.
- **Federal PLUS Loan:** These are loans available to parents of dependent students.

Note: If you list a California college on your FAFSA form, then you will automatically be considered for a **Cal Grant**, which is state-funded money which is not repaid. You do not need to fill out the GPA Verification form. Your GPA is automatically verified by our school district.

Once you have filed your FAFSA form, it will be processed and a **Student Aid Report (SAR)** will be mailed to you. If there are corrections to be made, make them at once and return the form as instructed. Remember that accurate figures from completed income tax returns are necessary.

The third form you might be asked to fill out is the **CSS/Profile**. This is a financial form used in addition to the FAFSA by *some* private colleges. If the school you are applying to is listed on the CSS Profile registration form, then you must fill it out. Go to www.collegeboard.org to complete your personalized Profile application. Site opens October 1st. It is not free, so be sure to fill out the registration form and send in the correct payment well in advance of January 1st. Individual forms customized for each college will be sent to you so that you can file them during the same time period as the FAFSA. For complete financial aid information, go to <http://www.finaid.org>.

Undocumented Students: The California Dream Act makes it possible for undocumented students who qualify for AB540 and who attend college in California to receive state-funded financial aid. For more information, visit www.caldreamact.org.

Scholarships: Most students who receive large scholarships earn them from the institution they end up attending. There are however, thousands of outside scholarships that range from very

small amounts (\$25) to very substantial (\$10,000). Most of these scholarship applications will ask for an essay. Here are some ideas for researching scholarships:

- Check our MBHS Website – Counseling/Scholarships page often.
- If your parents work for a large company, be sure they check with their Human Resources office to see if scholarships are offered to children of employees.
- The most reliable website for scholarships is www.fastweb.com. It is very difficult to get through the thousands of entries, but there is a search engine that can help you sift through some of it. It is not always realistic in its search results, but at least it will narrow the list of those you have to read.
- If you belong to an ethnic group with an active club, they likely will offer scholarships. Call and find out.
- Local chapters of civic organizations such as the Optimists/Soroptimists, Rotarians, Eagles, Elks, etc., all offer some type of scholarship. Call the local offices and ask.
- Watch for announcements and advertisements in the local newspaper. It is amazing how many organizations decide to offer a scholarship and simply tell the local press.

Note: Whatever you do, **stay away from the scholarship scams**. You will receive very official looking envelopes that offer to do the scholarship search for you. If you have to spend money, then it is a scam. If they promise to find money for you that no one else can find, then it is a scam. There is no scholarship out there that a scam artist can find for you that you cannot find for yourself. Do not fall for their promises. Let your counselor know about these organizations if you are not sure about something you receive in the mail. It is imperative that they are reported to the Federal Trade Commission, who attempts to prosecute the worst of them. You can report them at http://www.nacac.com/hill_activism.html. Click on “report scholarship scams.”

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ATHLETES

NCAA Eligibility Center

The key features of the new Eligibility Center services include:

- You may access the Eligibility Center Home Page directly at www.eligibilitycenter.org or through links from the NCAA's Website at www.ncaa.org.
- From the Eligibility Center website, prospective student-athletes are able to access information needed to understand the Division I and Division II eligibility requirements, register with the Eligibility Center and access individual Eligibility Center records.

General Information on the Eligibility Center Website:

- Links to the NCAA website.
- Core-course listings for high schools.
- Online version of NCAA *Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete*.
- Online information about Division I and Division II initial-eligibility requirements.
- Online Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Prospective Student-Athletes:

- Submit your Student Release Form (SRF) via the Web.
- Registered Students - Update your registration information (if necessary).
- Registered Students - Check your certification status.
- Registered Students must send their transcripts to NCAA. You can order your transcript through our registrar.





Eligibility Center Customer Services

- NCAA Eligibility Center mailing address:
NCAA Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 7136
Indianapolis, IN. 46207
- Eligibility Center customer service hours:
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday
- Toll Free phone numbers (domestic callers only):
Customer Service Line - 877/262-1492





COLLEGE COUNSELING TIMELINE

JUNIOR YEAR-SAMPLE





January:

-  SAT or ACT practice (if done with Math III)
-  Read the MBHS College Counseling Handbook (this document)
-  Always read your messages from the Counseling Department throughout the college search and application process
-  Start thinking about your senior year courses after speaking with your teachers



February/March:

-  Check the bulletin for college planning events
-  Get familiar with Xello and do a preliminary college search.
-  Create a list of colleges in Xello
-  Begin thinking about summer plans. Looking for ideas? See MBHS Counseling website – Student Opportunities

April/May:








-  SAT or ACT practice (if done with Math III)
-  Spring Break can be a good time to start visiting some college campuses. If colleges are in session, visit classes in addition to taking tours
-  Develop a broad, realistic, and appropriate list of colleges to investigate further. With the help of your counselor and the MBHS College Counselor, separate your colleges into three categories based on your academic profile, colleges' admission statistics, and MBHS admission history. A good college list should have: colleges that are realistic reach schools, colleges that are target schools, and colleges that are likely to accept you.
-  Finalize your plans for the summer

June:

-  June: SAT or ACT, if needed.
-  Ask your counselor and your teachers for letters of recommendation before you leave for the summer - you will also follow up in the fall.

SENIOR YEAR-SAMPLE

July and August

-  Keep investigating. Read blogs and websites, talk to current students, and visit college campuses (schedule interviews where appropriate). Begin to narrow down your list of appropriate options.
-  Read and organize application materials.
-  Write drafts of college essays.
-  Start filling out the Common or Coalition Application (available on August 1)
-  Register for all fall standardized testing, if needed.
-  Review your senior year course selection and make sure it meets your colleges' admission requirements.
-  Brag Sheet (for letters of recommendation)

- 📖 Use Xello to send an official invitation to your teachers and to your counselor to write your letter of recommendation.

September:

- 📖 Ask your counselor and/or your teachers for letters of recommendation for Early Action/Early Decision applications due October 1 or 15.
- 📖 Request transcripts for Early Applications.
- 📖 Start making final application plans, particularly for the UC system, CSU system, early action, or early decision. Pay attention to schools with rolling admissions.
- 📖 Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to finalize your list of colleges. Narrow the list down to 8-12 schools.
- 📖 Check your emails weekly for information from the Counseling Dept. on deadlines, college visits, college workshops, and required procedures.
- 📖 Attend Senior College Planning Evening Program and lunchtime workshops
- 📖 Check the fall schedule of college admissions officers visiting our campus.
- 📖 Show interest in the colleges to which you are applying by attending events.
- 📖 Work hard in your courses—first semester grades count! If you are applying early, keep in mind that many colleges request the 10-week grades.
- 📖 Start checking the monthly scholarship listings online (MBHS Website – Counseling/Scholarships)

October:

- 📖 Attend lunchtime or afternoon workshops (i.e. writing college essay, how to prepare for a college interview, UC application-filing and other college application related topics presented by the MBHS counseling department and affiliates).
- 📖 Senior Financial Aid Evening Program at MBHS
- 📖 Begin submitting Rolling Admissions applications.
- 📖 Early October: Order your test scores through the College Board (SATs) and/or ACT websites to be sent to your schools with Early Decision/Early Action deadlines and to Rolling Admission schools, if applicable.
- 📖 If you are applying to private colleges and universities and need financial aid, submit online the CSS PROFILE Registration Form on the Collegeboard website.

November:

- 📖 November 1 and 15: Deadlines for most Early Action and Early Decision applications.
- 📖 TBD: Deadline to ask your counselor and your teachers for letters of recommendation for regular decision applications.
- 📖 TBD: Deadline to order Regular Decision Transcripts (for Dec. 1- Jan. 1)
- 📖 November 30: Deadline to file your UC and CSU applications
- 📖 Consult with your English teachers regarding essay drafts
- 📖 Finalize your list of colleges in Xello.
- 📖 Continue submitting Rolling Admissions applications.
- 📖 Start working on applications with January deadlines.
- 📖 Attend Financial Aid Workshop anywhere in the county (check Cal SOAP updates)
- 📖 Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

December:

- 📅 If you are applying to private colleges/universities and your family is applying for financial aid, submit the CSS Profile (if you are applying Early Decision, check the college's financial aid deadline for early applicants)
- 📅 Order your test scores through the College Board (SATs) and/or ACT websites to be sent to all your regular decision schools, if applicable.
- 📅 Early Decision/Early Action decisions are usually released this month.
- 📅 Notify and thank teachers who wrote letters for you.
- 📅 Work on applications with January and February deadlines, if applicable.
- 📅 Notify your counselor and the registrar if you added colleges to your list.

January:

- 📅 January 1 and 15: Meet appropriate application deadlines

February:

- 📅 February 1: Meet appropriate college application deadlines

March:

- 📅 Many colleges begin notification of admission decisions. Most highly selective schools will notify near middle to end of the month.

April:

- 📅 All admissions decisions should be received by mid-April. If you have done all you were supposed to do, you will have choices.
- 📅 Decision-making time.
- 📅 Attend Open Houses for admitted students.
- 📅 If you have been wait-listed and wish to pursue admission to that institution, follow instructions in your portal.
- 📅 Continue to work hard. Colleges do look at your final senior grades—your matriculation is dependent on continued academic performance through the end of the senior year .

May:

- 📅 May 1: National Candidates' Reply Date—Notify all colleges to which you were admitted where you have decided to matriculate
- 📅 May: SAT, if needed
- 📅 Request that a final transcript be sent to the college you have chosen by completing the form with our registrar.

June:

- 📅 June: Graduation

Advice to Juniors from Graduating Seniors

- The cumulative GPA you have by the end of your Junior year is the GPA you will put on your college application. Work hard now. It is harder to raise your GPA in the senior year than you think it will be.
- Start looking at colleges in the spring; start your essays over the summer.
- When visiting campuses, ask yourself, “Could I feel at home here?”
- Ask about the negatives when you visit colleges.
- Quick campus tours can help you narrow your list. Fully visit your final choices.
- Like your back-up schools – you may need them.
- Don’t just pick a school because your friend likes it.
- Don’t get hooked on just one school – you might not get in there.
- Your ideas about what you want will change over time.
- Don’t obsess over the college process – you still need to do well in school.
- Don’t just focus on school. Find something you love and make a difference.
- Don’t let the college process dictate what activities you do.
- Start forming good relationships with teachers now so you have people you can ask to write recommendations for you.
- Ask your teachers early to write letters for you so they have time.
- If you want to submit artwork with your applications or audition, talk to your art, drama, or music teachers now about what you will need to do.
- Look at some applications now to learn what they ask.
- Plan carefully to take your SAT or ACT, if needed. Research ACT and SAT differences and similarities. You may find that you are better suited to one over the other. Current experts’ advice: Pick one test and prepare for one test.
- Save an excellent, highly graded writing sample from junior year.
- And finally, THANK your parents, teachers, counselors, administrators and friends for the support they have given you during high school.

Alex Lora
154 Beach Avenue • Your City, CA 91234 • 888.374-1234 • alora24@gmail.net

Education Mission Bay High School, San Diego, CA Grades 9 - 12

Employment

Swim Instructor: June 2009 - January 2012

Community Aquatic Center

- Taught 4 to 12 year olds how to swim
- Prepared a select group for the transition to swim team by teaching them all the strokes, how to do flip-turns and dive
- Assisted in coaching the Marlins Swim Team - 12 to 17 year olds

Research and Data Entry: June 2010 - December 2010

California Hardscape, Inc.

- Collected and entered data on all of the tile and stone distributors in California
- Organized data into files based on location, size of company and sales volume
- Worked full time 4 weeks in the summer, 6 hours a week during fall semester.

Campbell High Tutoring Services Club: September 2010 - present

- Founder and President of the Tutoring Services Club, designed to provide free and continuous support for students struggling in any academic area.
- Coordinated with school administrators and teachers to expand the program to 75 tutors, serving hundreds of students each month.
- Honored at a School Board of Education meeting (May 12, 2011) and awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by City Mayor Geoffrey Frey.
- Met with three students each week providing tutoring in Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II, Biology and Chemistry.

Viking Express, Campus Newspaper

- Managing Editor - 2010–present. Responsible for assisting the editor and managing the production schedule and staff.
- Layout Editor - 2010–2012. In charge of designing the entire paper and managing the layout process.
- Staff Reporter - 2009--2010. Wrote several articles for various beats.

Swimming

- Varsity Swim Team 2009-2012
- Team Captain 2011 and 2012
- Awarded Most Inspirational Swimmer 2011
- Mountain League Individual Champion 2011

Water Polo

- Varsity Water Polo 2009-2012
- Team Captain 2011

Glossary

ACT: Abbreviation for the American College Test. This is an assessment in English, mathematics, social studies reading comprehension, and science reasoning. Accepted by most colleges in lieu of the SAT.

Associate's Degree: An Associate of Arts (AA) degree is traditionally earned in two years at a community college.

Bachelor's Degree: BA – Bachelor of Arts, BS – Bachelor of Science. A diploma earned after successful completion (traditionally in four years) of required courses at a college or university.

Calendar: The system used by an institution to divide its year into instruction periods. The most common are semester, quarter, and 4-1-4.

- A semester system is a division of the school year into two parts, usually 18 weeks in length. Schools may have an additional 8-week summer session.
- A quarter system is a division of the school year into three quarters, usually 11 weeks in length. Students take three or four courses per quarter rather than the traditional five in a semester system.
- A 4-1-4 system consists of two terms of about 16 weeks each, separated by a one month intersession used for intensive study in one area, research, or internships.

Cal Grant GPA Verification Form: See Financial Aid Section of this handbook.

Candidate Notification Date: The date by which colleges notify students of admission decisions.

Candidate Reply Date: The date by which students must reply to the colleges that admitted them. The universal date is May 1st.

CEEB: Abbreviation for the College Entrance Examination Board, which creates and supervises the administration of the SAT. The CEEB code for MBHS is 052860. You will need this number every time you register for an SAT, ACT, or apply to college.

College: The term commonly used to describe any institution of higher education. This is usually an institution that grants a Bachelor degree. A college may also be one part of a university. For example, undergraduates apply to Harvard College, not Harvard University. Columbia College is the undergraduate division of Columbia University.

Common Application: A form devised and accepted by most colleges which makes things easier for the student who is then able to fill out one application for many colleges, rather than repeat basic information over and over again on multiple applications. See www.commonapp.org for additional information and a list of colleges who accept the Common Application.

Common Application Supplement: Additional, required sections on the Common App which are specific to certain colleges/universities and which must be completed by applicants to the specific colleges/universities that require them.

CSS/ FINANCIAL AID PROFILE: A financial aid form used by some private colleges and universities in addition to the FAFSA (see section on Financial Aid in this handbook).

Early Action: An admission plan whereby the student submits an application by November 1st and receives a decision by mid-December. If accepted, the student is not required to enroll, but is expected to notify the college about his/her decision by May 1st.

Early Decision: An admission plan whereby a student can apply to a first-choice college by November 1st and receive a decision by mid-December. Upon making the decision to apply early decision, the student agrees to enroll if accepted. Also, the student is expected to make no other application if accepted and withdraw all other applications already submitted.

Educational Opportunity Program: The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) is designed to improve access and retention of historically low-income and educationally disadvantaged students. The program provides admission and academic assistance to EOP eligible undergraduate students. In many cases, the program offers financial assistance to eligible students. Support services include: academic advising, tutoring, developmental workshops, study skills courses and a Summer Bridge Program, which is a comprehensive transitional program designed to assist incoming freshmen prepare for the rigors of university work.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (see more in the Financial Aid section).

General Education Requirements: Also called G.E., breadth, distribution, or core curriculum requirements, they are courses required by all candidates for the bachelor degree at a college.

Graduate School: Usually part of a university, graduate school is an institution for students who have already earned the bachelor degree.

Greeks or Greek Life: At a college campus, the collective term for members of sororities and fraternities. See www.GreekPages.com for information.

Ivy League: The term used to designate highly selective eastern colleges. Strictly speaking, however, it is an athletic league comprised of the following colleges: Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale.

Legacy: An applicant who is the son or a daughter of an alumnus or alumna (or sometimes a more distant relative). Private colleges sometimes give special consideration to such candidates.

Liberal Arts: The studies in a college (such as language, history, mathematics, literature, and abstract science) intended to provide chiefly general knowledge and to develop the general intellectual capacities, such as reason and judgment, opposed to professional or vocational skills.

Major: The field of concentration or specialization for a college undergraduate. Usually students are asked to declare a major by the end of their sophomore year. A student normally spends one quarter to one third of their total undergraduate work in their major field.

Minor: A secondary area of academic concentration, but requiring fewer courses than a major, which may or may not be required by an institution.

NMSQT: The National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is combined with the PSAT, taken in October of the Junior year. Scoring well on this test is the first requirement toward recognition in the National Merit Scholarship competition.

PSAT: The Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test is a scholastic assessment test administered to high school juniors. Scoring well on this test is the prerequisite towards qualifying for the National Merit Scholarship. Scores are reported on a scale from 20-80 for verbal, quantitative aptitude, and writing skills. Sophomores take this test for practice only.

Rolling Admissions: A decision notification program whereby colleges inform applicants of admission decisions throughout the year on a “rolling” basis rather than by a specified date. Students who apply to a college with a rolling admission program usually learn the admission decision within 4-6 weeks after the application is submitted.

SAR: Student Aid Report. This report is mailed to you after you complete the FAFSA application. It gives a student their family’s EFC (Expected Family Contribution) as it relates to their college expenses.

SAT: This is a multiple choice test made up of English, Math and Writing sections designed to measure skills that are related to college success.

Scholarship: Money or aid awarded that does not have to be repaid. Some scholarships are based on need, but most are awarded for exceptional talent or achievement in academics, athletics, or for special characteristics. In addition to awards offered by the colleges, many scholarships are awarded by corporations, ethnic organizations, and religious groups. Each scholarship opportunity has different eligibility criteria.

Selectivity: A term used by admission offices to describe the ratio of admitted applicants to the total number of applicants at a given institution.

Seven Sisters: Refers to Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Radcliffe, Smith, Vassar, and Wellesley Colleges. Today all are women’s colleges except Vassar and Radcliffe.

Transcript: The complete official listing of a student’s academic record (courses, grades, credits). In the college admission process, this document is traditionally given the most weight.

Undergraduate: A college student who is a candidate for a Bachelor’s Degree or a program of study leading to a Bachelor’s Degree.

University: A public or private institution that has both undergraduate and graduate programs.

Yield: The number of students admitted to a college who ultimately attend that college. The yield is usually extremely high at selective colleges.

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