

Welcome to the College Planning Process!



Dear Freeport High School Student,

During your junior and senior years of high school you will be working towards making plans for the next stage of your life. This is an exciting time but can also be a little daunting - we want to simplify the process as much as possible. We recognize that each student begins the college process in a different place, and as your counselors, we hope to meet you where you are and will support you every step of the way.

This packet is designed to assist you in starting the college planning process. Enclosed you will find a number of resources to help you stay on track and be prepared throughout your college search. However, you are bound to have questions that are not covered in this guide that are more specific to you, your career and college choices. Strive to become your best advocate and be sure to seek out your counselor to let us know how we can best support you.

We look forward to working with you during this exciting time!

Ms. Clark (A-G), Ms. Peirce (H-O) & Ms. Andreson (P-Z)

Inside this Packet

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Parts of the College Application● College Planning Timeline for Juniors● Transcript● Testing Plan● College Search Criteria● Your Personal Preferences● College Research Websites● Make a Balanced College List● Current College Interests● College Deadline Dates● College Fit Tracking Sheet● Getting the Most out of a College Visit● Making the Best of a College Interview● Extracurriculars: Create an Activity Resume● College Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Supplemental Questions● Teacher and Counselor Recommendations● Addressing COVID● Financial Aid● Scholarships● How to Apply to College● Community College Information● Tips and Other Considerations● Mental Health● Junior Spring College Checklist● College Application-Senior Fall Checklist● Student Brag Sheet● College Application-Parent Checklist● Parent/Guardian Brag Sheet● College Admissions Terms
--	--

Parts of the College Application

Colleges look at the following pieces of information when making admissions decisions. This packet will include more detailed information about each of these specific parts.

- Transcript & Courseload - Grades
- Standardized Testing (SAT/ACT/AP)
- Resume - Extracurricular Activities, Leadership, Awards
- College Essay
- Supplemental Questions
- Teacher Recommendations
- School Counselor Recommendation
- Interview/Tours
- Demonstrated Interest

College Planning Timeline for Junior Year

Winter

- ☐ Make an appointment with your school counselor for your Junior College Meeting
 - ☐ Join the College Google Classroom
 - ☐ Talk to your parents about Paying for College & Financial Aid
 - ☐ Finalize a Testing Plan for the SAT/ACT
 - ☐ Read through the FHS College Packet
 - ☐ Start researching colleges online
-

Spring

- ☐ Visit Schools: Start visiting schools you are interested in. Take a tour, attend an information session, sit in on a class, and try to get a feel for what it would be like to attend that school. If you visit a school you are very interested in, consider making an appointment for an on-campus interview, if available.
 - ☐ Ask for Letters of Recommendation: Decide which teachers you would like to write your recommendation letters and ask them if they can do that for you. Typically, students ask two academic teachers to write for them.
 - ☐ Work on your College List: Start narrowing your list. Be sure to include a range of schools.
-

Summer

- ☐ Complete your resume, audition portfolio, or other evidence of your talents for college applications.
- ☐ Continue to visit schools. Set up on-campus interviews, if applicable.
- ☐ Continue to finalize your college list - start considering whether you will apply early to any of your schools. Having a mostly finalized list at the start of the school year helps to reduce the stress of the application process.
- ☐ Make a Common Application account on commonapp.org and fill it out. This will reduce a lot of stress once school starts. Applications are available after August 1

Transcript

Cumulative record of your academic courses

Carries the most weight in admissions

Colleges look at the following when reviewing your transcript:

1. Cumulative GPA with Scale

**FHS reports GPA on an unweighted 100 point scale - this does not perfectly convert to a 4.0 scale. See below for a general conversion to help you with your search.*

97-100 - 4.0 - A+	84 - 83 - 2.3 - C+
95 - 97 - 4.0 - A	79 - 82 - 2.0 - C
93 - 94 - 3.7 - A-	77 - 78 - 1.7 - C-
91 - 92 - 3.3 - B+	76 - 75 - 1.3 - D+
87 - 90 - 3.0 - B	72 - 74 - 1.0 - D
85 - 86 - 2.7 - B-	70 - 71 - 0.7 - D-

2. Strength of Course Load (How did you academically challenge yourself)

**Colleges want students to take the most challenging course load they can manage.*

**The rigor of coursework greatly impacts the selectivity level of schools a student should apply to, sometimes more so than their GPA*

**More selective schools are looking for solid grades in AP & Honors courses, it is not beneficial for students to barely pass a high level course just to have it on their transcript*

Current GPA: _____

Number of Honors Classes: _____ **Number of AP Classes:** _____

LIST ANTICIPATED SENIOR YEAR CLASSES (Double check your graduation requirements)

Testing Plan

A piece of the puzzle & A deal breaker for some schools

Even in test optional times, sending a score can make a difference. More competitive colleges, particular programs (e.g. engineering, nursing), and some states (e.g.. Florida) might expect them. Work with your school counselor to make a testing schedule that makes sense for you.

CURRENT STANDARDIZED TESTING SCORES

Current PSAT scores: _____/_____

Current SAT scores: _____/_____

Current ACT scores: _____/_____

SAT REGISTRATION INFORMATION

School Day SAT Exam - April

- FHS pays for all juniors to take the exam in April.

Register for any additional tests in your CollegeBoard account:

- The CollegeBoard offers dates in the following months: March, May, June, August, October, November, December
- It is your responsibility to register for these exams. Please remember that deadlines are typically one month ahead of the test date.

ACT REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Register online for tests: www.act.org

- The ACT offers exams in the following months: February, April, June, July, August, September, November
- It is your responsibility to register for these exams. Please remember that deadlines are typically one month ahead of the test date.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) INFORMATION

Previous AP Scores: _____/_____/_____/_____

Current AP Courses: _____

College Search Criteria

Most colleges are either two or four year colleges.

- At two-year colleges, you can earn an associate degree or certificate.
- At most four-year colleges, you can earn a bachelor's degree.

Colleges are also categorized as either public or private. Public and private colleges vary in size and available resources. Public colleges are funded by state and local governments, and usually charge lower tuition prices for students who live in their state. That means that the ones in your state may be more affordable for you. Remember, though, that both public and private colleges offer financial aid from various sources.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE

SIZE

The number of undergraduates at a college can have a big impact on your experience there. It affects the range of majors offered, extracurricular possibilities, amount of personal attention you'll receive, and a variety of academic facilities, including labs, libraries and art studios. When looking at a college's size, be sure to consider more than just the total number of students attending. For example, if you choose a small academic program within a large college, your experience might be very much like attending a small college. Investigate not just the number of faculty members, but also how accessible they are to students.

LOCATION

Do you want to visit home often, or do you see this as a time to experience a new part of the country? Perhaps you like an urban environment with access to museums, ethnic food and major league ball games. Or maybe you hope for easy access to the outdoors and the serenity of a small town. Think about where you would be the most comfortable.

MAJORS

If you know what you want to study, look into the reputations of academic departments in that subject. Researching online is a good start. If you can talk with people who work in that field, that's even better. If you're undecided, pick an academically balanced institution that offers a range of majors and programs. Also consider whether you are interested in getting a master's degree immediately after your bachelor's - some colleges offer 4+1 or 3+2 programs to accelerate the process and save you money.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

You should consider what the colleges you are interested in require for admission and whether you are a strong candidate for each school. What is the average GPA of a student at that school? What level of rigor do they expect in your transcript? Do they require SAT scores, if so, what is the SAT range needed? What is the admission rate for that school?

COST AND FINANCIAL AID

Today's college price tag makes cost an important consideration for most students. Go to each school's Financial Aid page to find out about costs associated with the school. Fill out the Net Price Calculator for each school to see how much you might be expected to pay for that school. Keep in mind that almost every college works with its financial aid office to make sure that academically qualified students can attend.

RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

One of the best ways to judge a college's quality and the satisfaction of its students is to find out the percentage of students who return after the first year (called the retention rate) and the percentage of entering students who stay until graduation. Good retention and graduation rates are a sign that the college has good academic, social and financial support systems for students.

ACTIVITIES

Think about what your college life will be like beyond the classroom. What extracurricular activities and athletics are available? Are students welcomed by the local community? What are the dorms like - how are you assigned a roommate - are you guaranteed housing? How do fraternities and sororities influence campus life? What ethnic, religious, and special-interest organizations are on campus? Make sure that the college any activity you're passionate about is available at the colleges you're considering.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS & STUDY ABROAD

Are you interested in participating in any special programs like internships, co-ops, or going to study abroad? Be sure to research your colleges to find out what they have to offer for these special programs.

HOUSING & DINING

Often, part of the college experience is living as part of a community. Consider whether you want to live on campus. Does a school guarantee housing - and for how many years? How do they assign roommates? What is the dining plan? Are there different options for plans? How many dining options are on campus?

DIVERSITY

How important is diversity to you? Consider what you might gain from living and learning among students with diverse backgrounds. Think about the ethnic, racial and religious diversity of the students as a means of learning more about the world. Investigate what kinds of student organizations with ethnic or religious foundations are active and visible on campus to get an idea of what it might be like. Another option is a single-sex college. There are colleges specifically for men and others for women throughout the country. You might want to consider one of these if you feel that you would thrive in a same-sex environment.

Your Personal Preferences

Use the worksheet below to start thinking about some of your current personal preferences when you think about your ideal college experience.

2 Year (Community College) or 4 Year College	
Intended Major/Minor	
Desired Level of Academic Rigor	
What kind of Activities do you want in school? Music? Sports? Clubs?	
Location Urban - City Rural - Country Suburban - Near a City	
How far from home do you want to go? How many hours drive? Is an airplane ride OK? Would you leave the country?	
List any particular states or regions that appeal to you	
What Size School do you want? Small: less than 3,000 Medium: 3,000 - 10,000 Large: 10,000 - 20,000 Extra Large: More than 20,000	
Do you want Study Abroad?	
Do you want Internship Opportunities?	
How will cost factor into the equation?	

College Research Websites

The internet is filled with many college research websites. Check out a few of them and find the one you like.

- ❖ BigFuture at College Board (<https://collegesearch.collegeboard.org>)
 - ❖ College Confidential (www.collegeconfidential.com)
 - ❖ College Data (www.collegedata.com)
 - ❖ Niche (www.niche.com/colleges)
 - ❖ UniversityTV (www.youniversitytv.com)
 - ❖ The College Tour (www.thecollegetour.com)
-

Making a Balanced College List

Find your “Vibe”

- ❖ Use the Mid-50th Percentile GPA & Test Scores, Expected Strength of Courses, and Acceptance % to help determine your academic fit.
- ❖ Simply Google “Mid-50th Percentile” or “Freshman Class Profile” for each school.
- ❖ Tip: Look beyond the name brand!
- ❖ Tip: Fall in love with a Safety School!

Long Shot/Reach

Schools above your GPA & Test Score Range. Also schools with a low acceptance %.

Good Match/Just Right

Schools where you are in the middle of their average GPA/Test Score Range. Also schools with an acceptance %, typically over 30%. Most of your schools should fall in this category.

Sure Thing/Safety

Schools where you are well above the average GPA/Test Score Range PLUS they have a high acceptance %, typically over 75-80%.

Financial Safety

A sure thing school that is also affordable. This is often an in-state school known to have a lower tuition.

Click this article for more information about how to make a balanced list:

<https://www.cappex.com/articles/match-fit/what-are-safety-reach-and-match-schools>

Current College Interests

- ❖ Fill out a [College Tracking Spreadsheet](#) to track your GPA, test scores, acceptance rates
- ❖ Most of your schools should be in the Target/Good Match Category
- ❖ You might wonder how many schools to apply to put on your list. We suggest you start by going broad, then narrowing them down after you start going on tours and spending time researching your list. There is no one right number of colleges to apply to. It depends on what is on your list.

Sure Thing / Safety:	Target/Good Match:	Reach/Lottery:

College Deadline Dates

EARLY ACTION/EARLY DECISION/ROLLING/REGULAR DECISION ADMISSION

Early Decision (ED) is a binding agreement, students may only apply ED to one school - there are times when you can get out for financial reasons, but you should only do this if you are 100% certain you want to go to this school.

Early Action (EA) is not binding - Apply to as many of these as you can!

Rolling - they make the decision as they get applications. Apply early to these!

Regular Decision - You have longer to submit your application and you find out typically in March or early April about the school's decision.

Note: More schools are accepting a higher percentage of students from Early Decision and Early Action than ever before. We encourage students to be ready to submit their applications by **November 1** (most EA/ED happen between Nov. 1 - Dec. 1).

<https://www.collegeraptor.com/getting-in/articles/college-applications/understanding-the-4-different-types-of-college-deadlines/>

COLLEGE FIT TRACKING SHEET

Fill out this sheet to help you determine where you stand with your college interests.

Your GPA: _____ Your Test Scores: _____

[illegible]

Getting the Most out of a College Visit

Being on a college campus even for a few hours can tell you a lot about a college and how well you might fit in at that institution. Below are some tips for how to get the most out of your visit.

Things to Consider Before You Visit

- While it is tempting to visit only the most prestigious schools on your list, you should make sure you visit colleges that are within the realm of possibility for you.
 - **Good times to visit:**
 - Any school breaks you may have during 11th and 12th grade
 - Summer before senior year – remember that campuses may not seem lively over the summer because the student body is not there. Try not to let this sway your opinion.
 - Online Anytime! All colleges have adapted during Covid and now offer tours and info sessions online
-

Ways to Visit & Connect with Colleges

- **Campus Tours:** Colleges are doing both in person and online tours. You typically need to register in advance. Show interest while on your tour and ask good questions.
- **Information Sessions:** Information Sessions are typically hosted by admission officers at a college. These are a great way to get a high level overview of the school. Show interest and ask questions.
- **Classroom Visits:** Many colleges invite prospective students to sit in on a class or two. Contact admissions or check the website for specific information and to arrange a visit..
- **Overnight Visits:** Many colleges arrange for prospective students to stay on campus with a student host. You can eat in the dining hall, visit classes, and spend the night in a residence hall.
- **Meeting with an Academic Department or Professor:** If you have specific questions about the opportunities in a specific major, use this occasion to try to meet with someone in the department. Be sure to arrange this in advance. If you are unable to get to campus, consider calling.
- **Meeting with a Financial Aid Counselor:** If you will be applying for financial aid, this is your opportunity to ask about grants, scholarships and student loans.
- **On-Campus Interviews:** If you are visiting a school that offers interviews and you are very interested in the school, make an appointment before you get to campus for an interview. Be sure to prepare ahead of time.

Scheduling Tours

There is no doubt that the best way to get a feel for a school is to tour it in person. We know that may be impossible due to the location. Not to worry, you can also schedule an online tour, take a self-guided online tour, or watch a pre-recorded online tour.

How to Schedule a Tour or Information Session

- Most colleges have prospective student information on their admissions website. The links to schedule a tour and/or information session are housed there.
- You can use google to find the direct link to register for a visit. Simply type in, "College Tour at X School."

Making the Most of Your Tour

- **Don't let the tour guide sway your opinion too much one way or the other:** These students love their college and are trained by the admissions office to be honest, but to say positive things about the school. Their view may not be the most objective. You may really like or dislike your guide - keep in mind, this is just one person on campus.
 - **Pay close attention and ask questions of the tour guide:** Why did you choose College X? What do you like best about this college? What do you like least? What courses have you enjoyed the most and why? What are the big issues on campus right now?
 - **Things to consider and observe while you are on tour:** The appearance of campus; student dress – casual or sophisticated; friendliness of the community; hot topics – pick up a student newspaper to see what's happening on campus; how are students getting around campus; library; residential options; amenities; food.
 - **If there is something you want to see that wasn't on the official tour, ask your guide if you can see it!**
-

Other Ways to Connect to Colleges

- **Visit with an Admission Representative at Freeport High School:** We have many admissions reps who come to FHS to meet with students. This is a great way to make a connection, to find out more about a school, and to sell yourself!
- **Connect on Social Media:** Following a college or university on Social Media is a great way to connect with a school and to find out what's happening on campus.

Interviews

Every college has a different policy on interviews. Some schools offer optional interviews, others require interviews, and others offer no interviews at all. Interviews also vary by type - some offer informative interviews, others offer evaluative interviews. Sometimes interviews are with an admissions representative and other times they are with a school alumni.

Preparing for Your Interview

- ✓ Learn as much about the college as possible before your interview through the school's website.
 - ✓ Review your application materials (if you have already applied), including your essay. The interviewers may use these materials to strike up a conversation with you.
 - ✓ Think through and practice some generic questions you will most likely encounter: Why do you want to go to this college? What do you expect to gain from the college experience? What do you plan to major in and why?
 - ✓ Practice some specific questions that ask you to identify key topics or experiences that are important to you, including some of your favorite experiences, activities or plans.
 - ✓ Prepare some questions to ask. Show your interest in the school by asking specific questions, such as, how would you describe the student body? What are the most popular majors (and why)? What are the school's strengths? Where does the school need to improve?
-

Tips

- ✓ Dress appropriately by choosing a more conservative outfit; modest and non-distracting with a minimum of accessories, make-up, jewelry and perfume.
 - ✓ Make sure you know exactly where your interview is being held. Call in advance and ask for directions if you're unsure, and schedule enough time to get there. You should plan to arrive several minutes early. Arriving early will let you take a few moments to relax and mentally prepare.
 - ✓ Introduce yourself and greet the interviewers with a handshake, smile and positive attitude.
 - ✓ Remember that this is a conversation, and that the interview wants to know about you. Be yourself and be honest in your answers.
 - ✓ Provide more than a "yes" or "no" answer. Keep your answers as conversational as possible. Try to find specifics that naturally backup your answers.
 - ✓ Be spontaneous. Though you should practice answering some basic questions, answer honestly, naturally and spontaneously in the interview.
 - ✓ Be positive. Highlight the good things from your academic past and put a positive "spin" on your background.
-

Post- Interview

- ✓ Send a thank-you note or thank-you email shortly after the interview. Showing interest and appreciation goes a long way.

A good interview feels like a good conversation!

Extracurriculars:

Create an Activity Resume

- Colleges want to know what you do with your time.
- Be authentic and passionate - go deep in your activities. Colleges like to see some activities that you have engaged in for longer periods of time and/or crossover or themes in your activity selection. This is more important than box checking.
- Seek out leadership positions. They do not have to be huge and come in different forms.
- Colleges want to know what you will bring to their campus - who will you be?
- Feel free to use the space below to start organizing your activities prior to creating your resume. After you create a resume, please share it with your school counselor.

Grade	Activity - sports, theater, music, clubs, work, etc.	Leadership/Highlights/Awards
9		
10		
11		
12		

College Essay

Most college applications ask for a personal statement, giving you a chance to share something about you, your life experience, or your personality. Take advantage of this opportunity to let the college learn something new about you!

The Common App essay prompts can be found here: www.commonapp.org/apply/essay-prompts

Tips:

- Get started by brainstorming. Spend time over the summer freewriting essay questions.
- Be Honest. Your essay topic should be something that was important to you and showcases your voice. Choose a topic that is not already highlighted in other parts of your application.
- Most senior English classes will focus on the college essay in the Fall. This is a great opportunity for feedback and editing help.
- Sometimes the first essay is not the best. Consider writing 2-3 essays.
- Check out this blog for more targeted help: www.collegeessayguy.com
- Read about staying away from certain essay topics:
 - The last minute sports victory, sports injury, challenge, or success
 - The mission trip/volunteer trip epiphany
 - A resume of your accomplishments
 - <https://collegeadmissionsstrategies.com/stray-from-the-liche-essay-topics-that-will-hurt-you-more-than-help-you/>
 - <https://blog.collegevine.com/cliche-college-essay-topics/>

Supplemental Questions

Different colleges have various characteristics that they look for in incoming students and supplemental essays are often what they use to determine a good fit. Often the more competitive colleges will have these additional questions on your application. They are super important and can be time consuming.

General Tips

- Here are some general tips: <https://ingeniusprep.com/blog/supplemental-essay-tips/>
 - Don't repeat your personal statement or your activities list
 - Be authentic
 - Be as specific as possible - Cut unnecessary words
 - Read about what the school is looking for
 - If there are choices, think carefully about the options
- Start keeping track of your supplemental questions once you start your college list.
- Why "X School" is one of the most important supplemental questions that gives colleges insight into what it is about that school that interests you. Read more on how to tackle this question: <http://tuadmissionjeff.blogspot.com/2013/09/the-optional-statment.html>

Teacher Recommendations

Most applications will require 1-2 teacher recommendations. Anyone asked to write a recommendation will most likely ask you to answer some questions to help them write the best letter possible. These people should also be given your list of activities and resume.

- Ask teachers in the spring of your junior year and remind them in the fall. Ideally you should choose 11th-12th grade core teachers.
- Give your recommender a resume and thoughts on what you brought to that particular class. This will help them write the letter.
- Thank all your recommenders for writing your letters. Letter writing can be time consuming and teachers typically write letters in their own free time. Expressing gratitude can go a long way!

Counselor Recommendations

Most applications will require a letter of recommendation from your school counselor. We need your Brag Sheets to write the best possible letter of recommendation. We also ask that you provide us with your list of activities and resume.

- Make sure to fill out the student brag sheet and highlight all your awesomeness! These are due at least 3 weeks prior to your first deadline.
- Remind your parents to fill out their brag sheet - their information often adds more depth to your letter. These should also be in at least 3 weeks prior to your first deadline.
- Thank your recommenders for writing your letters.

Other Recommendations

Sometimes colleges will allow you to submit letters of recommendations from other people, including coaches, art, music, or theater teachers, ministers, volunteer coordinators, employers, etc. Think carefully about whether you should submit an additional letter. These can enhance an application if that person can add new information about who you are.

- If you are not sure about whether you should ask someone for an additional recommendation, ask your school counselor for input.
- Be sure to give your recommender highlights about your contributions.
- Thank all of your recommenders for writing your letters.

Addressing Covid

The Common App added a question about how you were affected by covid. Should you answer it? *It Depends...* The following articles may help you decide whether to answer the question. Your school counselor can also give insight into whether you should answer it.

<https://www.niche.com/blog/heres-the-deal-on-the-covid-19-question-on-the-common-app/> (Niche)

<https://www.collegeessayadvisors.com/how-to-write-the-common-apps-new-optional-covid-19-essay/> (College Essay Advisors)

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/common-app-covid-question> (College Essay Guy)

Financial Aid

Thinking about the cost of college is perhaps one of the great stressors of the college process. The sticker price on a college website is often not the final price. It is worth doing some research and utilizing some of the resources available to help cut the cost of college. Even if you think you may not qualify for financial aid, it is worth exploring as more schools are offering more grants and scholarships to families with higher incomes.

RESOURCES & TIPS

- **Watch a webinar from local Financial Aid Guru, Bill Smith.** This webinar gives a comprehensive overview of the financial aid process in a way that is understandable for families. www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hs0XlkyiHWc
- **Check the Financial Aid tab for each school.** Each school has a separate financial aid application, typically due the same day as your app or within 1-2 weeks of your deadline.
- **Use the Net Price Calculator to determine what type of aid you might receive.** Colleges are required to have Net Price Calculators on their websites to help families figure out how much the college might cost. This is strongly recommended for any Early Decision (ED) applications.
- **Look for any grants/merit scholarships on each school's website.** Some are automatic, some you have to fill out a separate application to receive.
- **Have a Financial Aid conversation.** Students and parents/guardians should sit down and talk about what the plan is to pay for college. These conversations can help students understand which colleges are financially possible and can reduce later disappointment.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid - updated this year!

- Used to determine eligibility for Financial Aid - used by all colleges and universities
- Changes made this year to make it easier!
- Application will open in December: <https://studentaid.gov/>
- FAME Maine is a great resource to answer any questions and to help families navigate specifics on the FAFSA: <https://www.famemaine.com/>

CSS PROFILE:

- Used to determine eligibility for non-federal financial aid.
- Only required by 300 colleges - typically the most competitive schools.
<https://profile.collegeboard.org/profile/ppi/participatingInstitutions.aspx>
- Application through College Board <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>

Tips on How to Cut Costs in College

Attend an in-state public college - Public colleges are supported by tax dollars and are generally less expensive than private colleges. Attending a public college in the state of Maine usually costs much less than attending a public college in a different state.

Attend a college with large grants or merit aid scholarships - There are many colleges who offer large grants or merit scholarships to attract students to their schools.. Check each school's financial aid tab to see what sorts of scholarships they offer. Be sure to read the fine print - sometimes students are automatically considered for these scholarships, and other times students need to apply.

Start at a Community College - Attending a community college costs less than half of what it costs to attend a four-year college for a year.

Live at Home and Commute - Students can save money not paying for room & board.

Spend Less Time in College - Students can shorten their time in college by taking advantage of Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), and free college classes during high school. Some colleges offer accelerated programs where students can combine their undergrad program with masters or other professional degrees.

Earn Money Through A Co-op program or Internship - Students in these programs often earn enough to cover a good portion of their college expenses. When they graduate, they not only have a degree, but also have valuable work experience and less debt.

Work Study - provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. The program encourages community service work and work related to the student's course of study.

Apply to Scholarships Before and During College - Scholarships can add up to additional cost savings during college. Take advantage not only of the scholarships offered at the local and state level while you are still in high school, but continue to look for scholarships once you get to college!

Look for a New England Tuition Break Program - Maine residents are eligible for more than 1,400 programs. The programs are offered by public colleges and universities in CT, MA, NH, RI and VT — all at a substantial tuition discount. Eligible students are charged a tuition rate that is significantly less than the regular out-of-state tuition rate. www.nebhe.org/tuitionbreak/

Take Advantage of Military Programs - The military has a number of programs to help students pay for college.

Grants & Scholarships

Grants and scholarships refer to the FREE money students can receive for college. There are three ways in which to get grants and scholarships to help pay for college.

1. **College Grants & Scholarships:** Most of the money students will get for college will be from the college itself. Check Each College's Financial Aid Tab for Grants & Scholarships. Some schools will automatically consider you for scholarships while others will need you to apply directly for specific ones.
2. **State & Local Scholarships.** The Freeport High School Guidance Office helps to coordinate many local scholarships. Students apply to most of these scholarships during the spring of their senior year.
3. **National Scholarships.** These are more competitive and can have less return on your efforts. Well-known scholarship matching sites that use data students input into their system to match with potential scholarships include:
Going Merry - Big Future - Unigo - Chegg - Scholarships.com
 - Competition is greater because they are open to many more student applications. These can be more time consuming with not as much return.
 - Deadlines will vary. AVOID SWEEPSTAKES & SCAMS.

Junior Year Scholarship Opportunity

Freeport High School Scholarship Foundation (\$20,000)

The Freeport High School Scholarship Foundation awards one scholarship each year to a junior in the amount of \$5,000 per year renewable for up to four years. The scholarship is awarded to a student who intends to attend a post-graduate educational program - either a skills/trade school or two or four-year college program. Selection criteria and scholarship applications can be found at <https://www.fhsscholarships.org/apply>

First Generation & Low Income Scholarship

Questbridge - Get Matched & Receive a Full Ride Scholarship

Are you a low-income high school senior who has excelled academically, but feels that the nation's best colleges are financially out of reach? The QuestBridge National College Match can be your pathway to a top college. We are looking for high school seniors who have shown outstanding academic ability despite financial challenges. Through this college and scholarship application process, you can apply for free to the nation's best colleges and be considered for early admission and a full four-year scholarship.

**Applications due by the end of September of senior year: www.questbridge.org

Grants & Scholarships

Senior Year Local & State Scholarships

Here is a sampling of some of the local and state scholarships offered to FHS students. Each year FHS awards over \$100,000 in scholarship money to graduating seniors.. Scholarship applications are typically due in early spring of senior year.

A full list of scholarships can be found on the FHS Scholarship page:

<https://sites.google.com/a/rsu5.org/fhsguidance/collegesearch/local-scholarships?authuser=0>

Freeport High School Scholarship Foundation (\$20,000)

The Freeport High School Scholarship Foundation awards one scholarship each year to a senior in the amount of \$5,000 per year renewable for up to four years. The scholarship is awarded to a student who intends to attend a post-graduate educational program - either a skills/trade school or two or four-year college program. Selection criteria and scholarship applications can be found at <https://www.fhsscholarships.org/apply>

The Mitchell Scholarship (\$10,000)

The Mitchell Scholarship award amount was \$10,000 for each 2021 Mitchell Scholarship recipient! Mitchell Scholarships are awarded to students who attend two- and four-year degree programs at colleges both in- and out-of-state. The strongest applicants demonstrate financial need, academic promise, and community impact.

UMaine Pulp + Paper Foundation (varies)

The [University of Maine Pulp and Paper Foundation](#) offers scholarships to chemical, civil, computer, electrical and mechanical engineering students interested in the paper industry.

Mid Coast Hospital Scholarship (\$2,500)

This scholarship is open to all graduating high school seniors who reside in the MCH catchment area who are pursuing higher education that will lead to a healthcare career. Amounts vary up to \$2500 per year for up to four years.

Mainely Character Scholarship (\$2,500-\$5,000)

Since 2001 the [Mainely Character Scholarship](#) has awarded \$2500 and \$5000 scholarships to graduating seniors who demonstrate courage, integrity, responsibility, and concern for others. They look not at grades, athletics, or extracurricular activities, but only at a student's character.

Maine Blue Collar Scholarship (\$500-\$2,500)

The [Maine Blue Collar Scholarship](#) are student scholarships for secondary education, certificate programs and tools.

How to Apply to College

There are 3 primary ways to apply to college - through the Common Application, through the Coalition Application, or directly to the institution. Most applications include an application fee. If you need a fee waiver due to financial hardship, please reach out to your school counselor.

Common Application

The Common Application is a platform that enables you to apply to multiple colleges using the same general application. It is a single online college application form used by over 900 colleges and universities. Instead of filling out the same general information—like your address, GPA, and extracurriculars— a dozen times, you only have to do it once. The Common App dashboard also helps you track necessary application documents (like your letters of recommendation) and important deadlines.

www.commonapp.org

Coalition Application

The Coalition Application is another platform that is used as a common tool for applications. It is used by 150+ colleges and universities committed to increasing access to higher education in the United States. The Coalition will only accept colleges who provide significant support to low-income and/or underrepresented students.

<https://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>

Directly to the Institution

- Some schools are not on the Common App nor the Coalition App. For these schools you will need to apply directly to the institution itself.
- Some state university systems have their own application where you can apply to multiple state schools using the same application (i.e. The University of California system).
- Though some schools will give the option of using the Common App, Coalition App, or their own application - sometimes you can get an application fee waiver by using the school specific application. Check the fine print!

Community College Information

Maine's community colleges are open access institutions and seek to admit all students who meet certain minimum requirements. Students apply directly to local community colleges through each school's website. Freeport High School also sometimes offers "Same Day Admit" programs where students can apply and be admitted on the spot!

Degree and Certificate Programs

Maine's community colleges offer nearly 300 degree and certificate options that are designed to lead to immediate employment or continued education. Look for a program that fits your needs and interests by using the search below, or view and print a copy of the [MCCS Programs of Study](#).

Whether you're looking for the technical skills you need to get a good job or you plan to [transfer](#) to a four-year degree, the colleges offer high quality programs that are the most affordable in New England.



[Central Maine Community College](#)

Auburn, Maine

[Eastern Maine Community College](#)

Bangor, Maine

[Kennebec Valley Community College](#)

Fairfield and Hinckley, Maine

[Northern Maine Community College](#)

Presque Isle, Maine

[Southern Maine Community College](#)

South Portland and Brunswick, Maine

[Washington County Community College](#)

Calais, Maine

[York County Community College](#)

Wells, Maine

Tips & Other Considerations

Demonstrated Interest

Demonstrated interest is how colleges assess how interested a student is in attending their school. Demonstrated interest can also impact whether a student is admitted or not! This means that it can be a very important part of the admissions process for students, especially for more competitive schools. *Note, though not all schools will count demonstrated interest, it is a good idea to really spend time vetting and engaging with a school before you apply!*

Ways to show interest:

- Sign up to visit colleges in person.
- Visit with reps when they visit your school.
- Attend a college fair - virtual or in person
- Go on virtual tours - attend info sessions
- Interact online with colleges - sign up for information on website
- Click open emails they send to you - and read them!
- Follow schools on social media

Clean up Your Social Media Accounts

In 2017, over 75% of colleges monitored social media as a part of their admissions/merit aid decisions (AACRAO). Although no one really knows how often that happens, your best bet is just to assume it is all part of the evaluation process. Also, it is important to note that colleges have been known to rescind admission offers after the fact - keep your social media clean!

www.edweek.org/leadership/yes-college-admissions-officers-do-look-at-applicants-social-media-survey-finds/2020/01

- Take some time to check your social media sites - note: even private accounts can be discoverable.
- Remove all inappropriate content, including photos and comments. Ask friends to remove any inappropriate content where you may be tagged.

Create a Positive Online Presence

Some colleges may review your Social Media presence in an attempt to learn more about you. Consider using Social Media to your advantage to convey your character, commitment, creativity, and credentials to college admissions representatives.

- Establish an online identity - and try to establish a theme.
- Find your digital voice - what inspires you, what are you passionate about?
- Think about using platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn

Join the College Classroom

College Google Classroom

Be sure to join the FHS Student College Google Classroom. This classroom is filled with resources to help you with the college process. If you do not see the invite to the classroom or it is not in your Google Classroom already, please reach out to your school counselor for the code.

Read a Book

Where You Go is Not Who You'll Be - Frank Bruni

Colleges that Create Futures - Robert Franek

Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About Colleges - Loren Pope

Who Gets in and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions - Jeffrey Selingo

Fiske Guide to Colleges - Edward Fiske

The Complete Book of Colleges - Princeton Review

Admission Matters: What Students and Parents Need to Know about Getting into College - Sally P. Springer

College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You - Steven R. Antonoff

Read a Blog or Listen to a Podcast

The following Blogs contain comprehensive information & articles about the college application process. Many contain tips and pointers and offer a variety of online webinars throughout the application process. Sign up for their email lists to get all the information you could want!

www.collegevine.com

www.ivywise.com

www.collegedata.com

www.collegeessayguy.com

www.collegewise.com

Podcast - *The Search* - Dartmouth Podcast on Admissions - super informative, especially for those looking at more competitive/elite schools.

<https://admissions.dartmouth.edu/follow/thesearch#readingseason>

Mental Health & The College Process

The College application process can be an exciting time as well as one that can be increasingly stressful. Not only are students juggling their many responsibilities, they are being asked to make big decisions about their future. They are weighing important questions, wondering if they are enough, comparing themselves to peers, dreaming of possibilities, hoping for the best and setting themselves up for potential rejection. It's a lot!

Take Care of Yourself

During this time it is important that students take care of themselves and that they seek out support and resources along the way. Some ways to reduce the stress are:

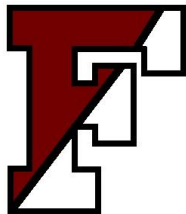
- Seek out support. Parents, peers, teachers and school counselors are all here for you.
- Recognize how this process is impacting you and talk about it with a trusted person.
- Try to keep perspective that there are many great schools out there and if one door closes there are many others that will lead you to wonderful places.
- Be organized! Break down the steps and start plugging away at your checklist now. Summer is a great time to generate essay ideas, establish your common app account, and develop a solid college list.
- Know you are enough - ALWAYS!

Parting Thoughts

- An elite college education is not a golden ticket to success and happiness.
- Be sure to have realistic expectations when making your college choices.
- What you do when you get to college is more important than where you go - sometimes you will have more opportunities at non-elite schools.
- Keep a proper perspective and recognize there are many choices. Remember, there are over 5,300 Colleges & Universities in the United States and most of them have high acceptance rates.



At any point in time in this process be sure to seek out support when needed.



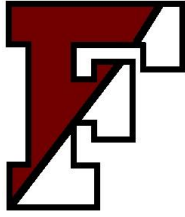
Junior Spring College Checklist

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

- ☐ I have signed up for my junior meeting with my school counselor
- ☐ I re-read the Junior College Presentation or watched the recording of the presentation
- ☐ I have talked with my parents about financial aid
- ☐ I have identified and asked my teachers in person for upcoming recommendation letters
- ☐ I have googled myself and cleaned up my Social Media accounts

CREATING A COLLEGE LIST - RESEARCHING & VISITING COLLEGES

- ☐ I have looked at the College Research Worksheet to help narrow down some college choices.
- ☐ I have used Niche, the Big Future, College Hunch, or other search engines to look for schools
- ☐ I am in the process of creating a balanced list of colleges (I have checked the mid-50th percentile scores and admit rates)
- ☐ I have signed up for virtual tours and/or in person tours on college campuses
- ☐ I have signed up for emails on each college's website
- ☐ I have looked at specific admission requirements for my intended major - and signed up for my senior year classes to fit those requirements.
- ☐ I have read all of the admission requirements on EACH SCHOOL'S website (this includes assessment requirements, interview requirements, additional writing prompts, financial aid, deadline dates, school process for applications/notifications)



College Application Senior Fall Checklist

CREATING A COLLEGE LIST

- ☐ I have used Niche, the Big Future, College Hunch, or other search engines to look for schools
- ☐ I have a balanced list of colleges (I have checked the mid-50th percentile scores and admit rates)
- ☐ I have filled out the college chart in my college packet and shared it with my counselor
- ☐ I have signed up for emails on each college's website
- ☐ I have read all of the admission requirements on EACH SCHOOL'S website (this includes assessment requirements, interview requirements, additional writing prompts, financial aid, deadline dates, school process for applications/notifications)
- ☐ I have set up any recommended interviews (required or optional)

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

- ☐ I have created a Common App Account
- ☐ I have signed the FERPA Waiver in Common App
- ☐ I have asked my teachers in person for recommendation letters (*remember, you need to give them at least 2 weeks notice)
- ☐ I have finished and uploaded my college essay
- ☐ I have double checked which semester/year I am applying to for each application
- ☐ I have double checked all of my information on the Common App/College Application for typos (triple check your email address)
- ☐ I have sent my Common App to my colleges
- ☐ I have sent my non-Common App schools' applications to my colleges
- ☐ I have sent the appropriate College Board Scores to EACH college on my list. (*Note, College Board can take 2+ weeks to get scores to your schools. Send them as early as possible).
- ☐ I have completed my FAFSA and sent it to my schools
- ☐ I have checked to see if my school needs a CSS Profile and if so, sent it to my schools

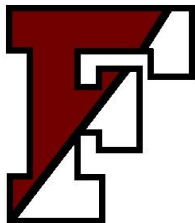
COLLEGE APPLICATION FOLLOW-UP

- ☐ I have checked my email to make sure my colleges have received my application and it is complete
- ☐ If my application is incomplete, I have completed the necessary items and have sent/resent them
- ☐ I have set up my portal at each college who requires it.
- ☐ I have researched any additional financial aid requirements for EACH school to which I am applying
- ☐ I have researched scholarship opportunities for each school to which I am applying
- ☐ I have checked in with the Guidance Office regarding local scholarships
- ☐ Google yourself. Clean up your Social Media Accounts.

Start Your Brag Sheet

School counselor recommendations are required as part of the application process at most 4-year colleges. It's important that your counselor is aware of all of the great things that you're doing, as well as any important information about challenges you may have faced through your High School Career. Your Brag Sheet is located as a Google Doc in the College Classroom - please make a copy, fill it out, and send it back to your school counselor. This Brag Sheet will only be seen by your counselor - we use this as our guide to writing your letter of recommendation. Please be as thorough as possible and don't worry about saying good things about yourself - this is the time to share your strengths.

1. List any careers and/or intended major(s) that you are considering and why.
2. What is your proudest academic or personal accomplishment? Also, please name any academic honors or awards you may have won in high school.
3. Is there anything unique about your course history/transcript that I should mention to colleges (e.g. a drop in level, dropping a class at semester, choosing to stop a language due to pursuing other courses, elective courses)?
4. Are there any personal circumstances that have impacted your academic performance in high school? Please let me know if you are disclosing any circumstances that have interfered with your academic success (e.g. family issues, learning differences, prolonged illness) and let me know where you are addressing this in your application. Also, please let me know if you would like me to address it in your letter.
5. What academic skills have you demonstrated in high school that provide evidence that you will be successful in college? Be specific, and please provide a concrete example of how you learned or utilize that skill.
6. What are some weaknesses that you have had in high school that you worked to improve (provide specific examples of what you did to improve)?
7. List your in school activities in order of importance to you. These could include jobs, internships, volunteer opportunities, creative work, hobbies or interests. Please include years involved, positions held, and/or significant contributions. Any leadership roles? Please use bullets or numbers to separate.
8. What personal experiences, summer experiences, travel, special interest and/or hobbies have significant importance to you and why?
9. List 3 adjectives to describe yourself, your personality, academic accomplishments, or work ethic. Please also include one example from the past three years that illustrate how these activities fit you.
10. What sets you apart from your classmates who have similar grades (list any specific strengths, interests, talents, passions)
11. How have you changed over the course of the last three years?



College Application - Parent Checklist

Encourage, Discuss, and Confirm are the 3 rules of parent involvement in the college process. Parent support can come in many forms and will look different for each family. Ultimately, colleges want students who are able to navigate the process somewhat independently. Figure out which approach works best for your family!

JUNIOR SPRING

- ☐ Discuss college interests with your student.
- ☐ Encourage your student to use the chart to track school requirements & chance of admission.
- ☐ Discuss a college visitation plan.
- ☐ Discuss a Testing Plan and pay attention to deadline dates.
- ☐ Encourage your student to meet with his/her counselor to help with the process or questions.
- ☐ Encourage your student to link their College Board account with Khan Academy and to do SAT prep.

SUMMER BETWEEN JUNIOR AND SENIOR YEAR

- ☐ Encourage your student to freewrite for their college essay. Freewriting on each question might generate great ideas and eventually, a great essay!
- ☐ Help your student access and visit colleges, go on interviews, and tours.
- ☐ Encourage your student to create a “resume,” including a list of all extracurricular activities, awards, recognitions, and leadership roles they have earned.

SENIOR FALL - COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

- ☐ Confirm that your student created a Common App Account.
- ☐ Confirm your student’s balanced college list and discuss/understand application fees.
- ☐ Encourage your student to set up a senior meeting with his/her school counselor.
- ☐ File the free FAFSA Application with your student, beginning October 1st. Send your FAFSA report to all schools.
- ☐ Check if any of your student’s schools also require the CSS Profile for additional information. If so, be sure to fill out the CSS Profile and send it to those schools.
- ☐ Encourage your student to meet with their English teacher for essay support.
- ☐ Proofread your student’s essay, or confirm that their teacher has proofread it.
- ☐ Confirm that your student sent their Common App to all of their colleges.
- ☐ Confirm that your student has sent all of the appropriate College Board Scores to EACH college on their list (*Note, The College Board can take 2+ weeks to get scores to your schools. Send them as early as possible).

POST APPLICATION FOLLOW-UP

- ☐ Encourage your student to check email and set up any college portals that are required. This is typically how colleges communicate with applicants and will let students know if anything is missing.
- ☐ Confirm that you and your student are clear on each individual school’s financial aid requirements and deadline dates.

Parent/Guardian Brag Sheet

Parents, we need to hear from you! Here is a list of questions we would like you to answer about your student. These help us write the best letter of recommendation for your student.

1. What are your student's career aspirations?
2. What do you consider to be your child's outstanding personality traits? Choose 3 adjectives that describe your child's personality, character, academic achievements, and work ethic, and give one anecdote from the past three years to support each adjective.
3. What do you believe is your student's greatest strength?
4. Describe a particular challenge or disappointment which your son/daughter has handled effectively.
5. Based on your observations over the last 3 years, what classes has your child enjoyed the most? Has any course inspired them to learn more about the subject or have they done any extra work in this area, special projects, or extra community involvement?
6. Is your child's high school academic record an accurate measure of their ability and potential? If not, what do you consider the best measure of their potential for success in college work?
7. Does your student have any particularly strong hobbies or interests outside of school that have shaped their thinking/actions? Do you see that activity influencing what they would like to pursue in the future?
8. What activity or topic is your student most passionate about?
9. What are your student's out of school interests and activities that may not be known at school?
10. What's an example where your student demonstrated leadership during high school?
11. Are there any unusual or personal circumstances that have affected your child's education or personal experiences?
12. Is there anything else you want us to know about your student?

College Admission Terms

Common App - A standardized application used by over 900 colleges and universities.

Coalition App - A standardized application used by over 150 colleges and universities.

The College Board - The College Board develops and administers standardized tests and curricula used by K-12 and post-secondary education institutions to promote college-readiness and as part of the college admissions process.

Transcript - Official record of a student's courses and grades. Colleges usually require an official transcript, sent directly from the high school, as part of the application.

GPA - Abbreviation for Grade Point Average. This is an overall average of a student's grades.

Weighted/Unweighted Grading - Traditionally, GPA is calculated on an unweighted scale. Unweighted GPA at Freeport High School is measured on a scale of 0 to 100. It doesn't take the difficulty of a student's coursework into account. A weighted GPA takes into account course difficulty rather than providing the same letter grade to GPA conversion for every student.

Class Rank - A student's place based on a rank ordering of students in a class by grade point average (GPA). Freeport High School DOES NOT rank students.

Associate's Degree - A diploma earned after completing an associates course of study at a community college, typically after 2 years of study.

Bachelor's Degree - A diploma earned after completing a required course of study at a college or university. The degree usually takes 4 years and is abbreviated B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) or B.S. (Bachelor of Science).

PSAT - Abbreviation for Preliminary SAT. A short version of the SAT, taken in the fall by 10th & 11th grade students as practice and in 11th grade as a qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program.

SAT/ACT - The SAT is a standardized test that measures a student's skills in three core areas: Critical Reading, Math, and Writing. The SAT is administered by the CollegeBoard. The ACT is a standardized test that contains four multiple-choice sections—English, mathematics, reading, and science—and an optional writing test.

Test-Optional - A test-optional college either doesn't require SAT or ACT scores for admission or deemphasizes the importance of SAT and ACT scores in the admissions process.

Deferred Acceptance – Sometimes students aren't accepted or rejected; they are deferred. This means that the college is postponing the admission decision. Deferred students can often improve their chances for admission by providing additional information (e.g., evidence of improved grades, higher test scores, an impressive letter of recommendation).

Early Action (EA) - Students who apply Early Action submit their application for admission early in their senior year. These students receive early notification of the college's decision. Early Action is not binding.

Early Decision (ED) – Students who apply Early Decision submit their application for admission early in their senior year. These students then receive early notification of the college's decision. Early Decision is binding and students are required to rescind their applications to other schools on receipt of an admittance to that school.

Single Choice Early Action - A type of early action plan that places restrictions on the student's ability to apply early action or early decision to other schools.

Rolling Admission – Colleges with rolling admission make decisions on applications as they receive them. Applicants are typically notified of their acceptance within four to eight weeks.

Regular Decision (RD) - Regular decision is the normal process by which students apply by published deadlines. While the application submission deadlines will vary between institutions, Regular Decision deadlines typically fall in early January, and offers of admission are sent out in late March or early April.

Waitlisted – Waitlisted students may be reconsidered if enough accepted students don't enroll. Like deferred students, waitlisted students may improve their chance of acceptance by providing additional information.

Yield - The percentage of students offered admission to a college who subsequently enroll.

FAFSA - Abbreviation for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This is a free form used by colleges to determine eligibility for federal financial aid.

CSS Profile - A financial aid assessment form located in The College Board website. The CSS Profile provides a more thorough picture of your household income which helps colleges determine your financial need and award you with a financial aid package that can make college both affordable and accessible.

Need-Blind/Need-Aware Admission – Colleges that have “need-blind” admissions policies do not take students' financial needs into consideration when making admission decisions. Colleges that have “need-aware” admissions policies do consider students' financial needs when making admission decisions.