CEHS
School Counseling

Grade 12
Parent Handbook

Class of 2027
September, 2026

HOW TO CONTACT US

Eamon Keenan, School Counselor ekeenan@capeelizabethschools.org

Elizabeth Thomas, College Counselor ethomas@capeelizabethschools.org

SCHOOL COUNSELING OFFICE: 799-7265
Eamon Keenan, School Counselor
Eileen Hetrick, Registrar

SOCIAL WORKERS:
Danielle Grimes, LCSW
Jennifer Shumway, LCSW

ADMINISTRATION:
Joe Greenberg, Principal
Elizabeth Yarrington & Andrew Lupien, Co-Assistant Principals:
cehsap@capeelizabethschools.org

Academics

Senior year academics are important for both college preparation and college admission. It's vital for seniors to stay engaged and do their best work in their classes as senior grades are equally important in the college admissions process. Colleges will request 1st Quarter grades along with 1st semester and final transcripts. 1st Quarter grades will be recorded in early November and students will be notified in advance.

Government classes are highly focused on contemporary issues. Seniors should be following the news. They will be preparing to vote and will write a public policy analysis that will include a letter to Congress advocating a particular point of view.

Seniors are enrolled in one of five English courses, and the content varies depending on the course's focus. Common among all senior English classes are the consistent practice crafting sophisticated pieces of writing, the examination of appropriately challenging texts, and a focus on honing speaking and listening skills.

In science courses, seniors will be working independently toward long term projects as well as class assignments. They'll be developing responsibility in getting their work in on their own.

Senior Transition Project (STP) will run for two weeks in May. Seniors will submit their proposal in January.

CEHS Transcript

Your student can pick up a copy of their 6-semester CEHS transcript from the School Counseling office on or after September 10th. Please review it with them carefully. **Colleges expect seniors to take all senior classes listed on their transcripts. Any changes made to senior schedules after a student submits a college application will need to be reported to the college.** Please note that all college acceptances are conditional upon successful completion of the full school year.

DAILY SCHEDULE

	MAROON DAY	GOLD DAY
7:55- 9:10	1	5
9:10- 9:20	Morning Break	
9:20- 10:35	2	6
10:35- 11:10 11:15- 12:30	Lunch A 3	Lunch A 7
OR	OR	OR
10:40- 11:55 11:55- 12:30	3 Lunch B	7 Lunch B
12:35- 1:50	4	8
1:55- 2:20	Achievement Period/ Advisory	
	Lunch A — Floors 1 & 3	Lunch B — Floor 2 & Math

EARLY RELEASE SCHEDULE		
	MAROON DAY	GOLD DAY
7:55- 8:45	1	5
8:45-8:55	Morning Break	
8:55- 9:40	2	6
9:45- 10:30	3	7
10:35- 11:20	4	8

COLLEGE COUNSELING TIMELINE for SENIORS

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER

· Ms. Thomas visits senior classes.

- Individual student meetings with Ms. Thomas continue.

· 125+ College representatives visit CEHS to provide small group information sessions to students.

· Revise and finalize your college list

· Set up interviews if required or recommended.

· Take the SAT or ACT again if necessary

· Complete Common App and any supplemental essays required by colleges

· Submit Early Action/Early Decision

OCTOBER 1st- The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) can be filed.

NOVEMBER:

· Early Action and Early Decision deadlines for *most* colleges.

· Application deadline for some colleges if you want to be considered for merit aid/scholarships.

JANUARY & FEBRUARY:

· Regular Decision deadlines for most colleges.

MAY 1st: Choose your college and submit deposit.

JUNE: Graduation!

Admissions Test Requirements and Dates

Standardized testing requirements have changed dramatically over the past few years. It is important to check each college's website carefully to determine its testing requirements.

Test-Optional: The college does not require SAT or ACT scores for admission however students may submit them if they feel it strengthens their application. For test-optional schools it is recommended that students should only submit scores if they are within or above the median range (in each section) for admitted students at that institution.

Test-Blind or Test-Free: Scores will not be considered by the college even if the student wishes to submit them.

Test-Flexible: Students can choose which test scores (or combination of) they want to submit to the college (SAT, ACT, AP).

Over 2,000 colleges and universities are now test-optional and 85 are now test-blind.
www.fairtest.org provides a complete list of schools that are test-optional and test-blind.

<u>Students must register themselves for all upcoming tests through the testing agency:</u>

Seniors who wish to apply Early Action or Early Decision in November should test no later than October to ensure that their scores will arrive by the college's deadline.

SAT: collegeboard.org

October 3rd (registration deadline 9/18)
November 7th (registration deadline 10/23)
December 5th (registration deadline 11/20)

ACT actstudent.org

October 17th (registration deadline 9/11)
December 12th (registration deadline 11/6)

AP Exams

All exams will be given May 3rd-15th, 2027

Sending Test Scores

SAT & ACT

Colleges that require "official" test scores require that they be sent *by the student* directly from the testing agency. (www.collegeboard.org or www.act.org). The College Board charges a $14 fee for each report that is sent to a school. ACT charges $18.50 per report.

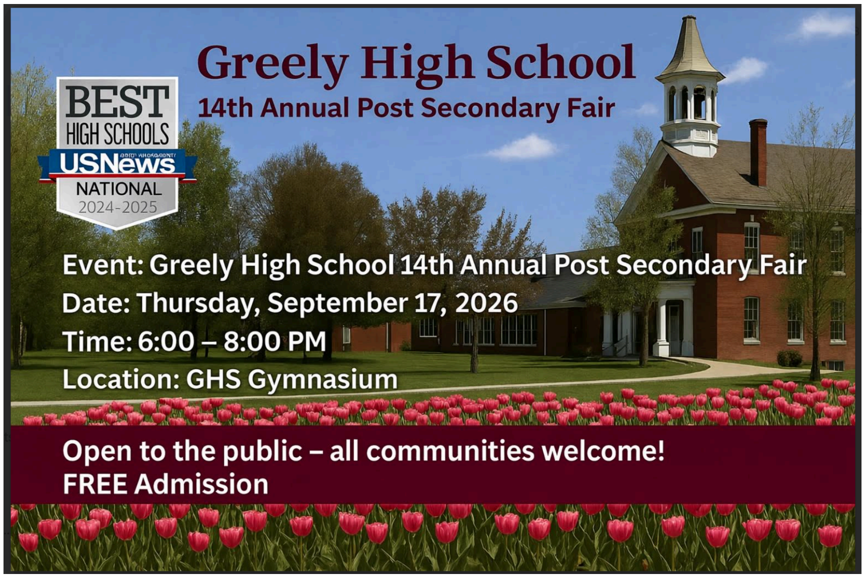
Many colleges will also allow students to "**self-report**" their scores on their Common Application and send official scores through the testing agency after they are admitted and choose to enroll. **Check individual college requirements carefully**.

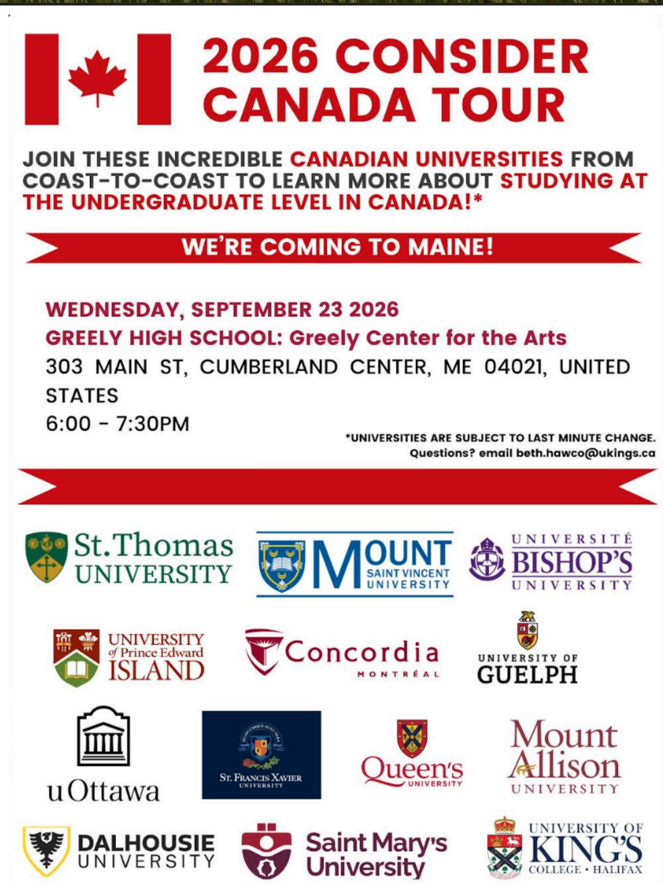
AP SCORES

- Can be self-reported on the student's Common Application (this is entirely optional).
- Official AP Scores should be sent in May or June of senior year to the college the student is attending.
- Check individual college websites for policies around what scores are accepted by the institution.

UPCOMING COLLEGE FAIRS

NEACAC College Fair: [List of colleges attending]
Wednesday, October 7th, 9:00 am -11:00 am
University of New England, Biddeford Campus
Harold Alfond Forum





SERVICE ACADEMY NIGHT

hosted by Maine's U.S. Congressional Delegation in cooperation with Maine Maritime Academy

Thursday, September 10, 2026 | 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. | Doors open at 5:30 p.m.
Clarion Hotel | Portland, Maine

Join us to learn more about the world-class educational opportunities that service academies offer, the Congressional nomination and academy selection processes, and ways to achieve your career goals. Also, get your questions answered by service academy professionals in the areas of admissions, career services, and financial aid. Representatives from the following offices will be in attendance.

Federal Service Academies
U.S. Military Academy
U.S. Naval Academy
U.S. Air Force Academy
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
U.S. Coast Guard Academy

Private Military Colleges
The Citadel
Virginia Military Institute

Reserve Officer Training Corps
Navy/Marine Corps ROTC
Army ROTC
Air Force ROTC

Congressional Delegation
Senator Susan Collins
Senator Angus King
Rep. Chellie Pingree (1st District)
Rep. Jared Golden (2nd District)

State Maritime Academies
Maine Maritime Academy

National Guard Scholar Programs
Maine Army National Guard
Maine Air National Guard

Confirm your attendance at https://bit.ly/452vM6n 207-326-2207 | admissions@mma.edu

POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS

Workforce Training Programs: offered through the Maine Community College System

- 200+ programs state-wide
- Majority of programs are grant-funded and completely FREE to Maine residents
- Some offer weekly stipends, housing opportunities, and guaranteed job interviews with local businesses that have open positions.
- Must be 18 years old to enroll (or turning 18 soon).
- A complete list of programs can be found here

Trade and Apprenticeship Programs

- Maine Apprenticeship Program
- Trade and Apprenticeship Programs for high demand programs

Maine Community Colleges

- **FREE** for Maine graduates
  *Applicants must file the FAFSA in order to qualify for the tuition waiver.
- 300 degree and certificate programs offered statewide. A complete list can be found HERE
- Transfer ME Program: Guaranteed transfer to UMS colleges. No application paperwork, no fees.
- Black Bear Advantage: Co-enroll at the University of Maine while you're still in community college, with guaranteed transfer after graduation.
- Maine Transfer Guarantee: Associate degree graduates are guaranteed admission to College of the Atlantic, Husson University, St. Joseph's College of Maine, Thomas College, Unity Environmental University, and the University of New England

SCOIR: (pronounced "score") is a comprehensive web-based system that gives you and your student access to a wealth of college and career information. SCOIR integrated with Common Application last year allowing for the seamless submission of all documents to your student's colleges.

- Students will use SCOIR to conduct college searches, organize their college list, keep track of deadlines, and sign up for college rep visits to CEHS.
- Students will complete the required FERPA Release Authorization, submit fee waiver requests, and complete their portion of Early Decision Agreements in Common App for those colleges they're applying via Common App.
- Students applying to non-Common App schools will need to manually enter them into their SCOIR account.
- **All supporting documents (transcripts, recommendations, school profile, etc.) are submitted to ALL colleges through SCOIR by Ms. Thomas on the colleges' deadlines.**

In addition to student accounts, **SCOIR also offers parent accounts** which allow you to conduct your own college search, view your student's progress, view the list of colleges suggested for your student to research and add your own suggestions. To register for a parent account, please contact Elizabeth Thomas at ethomas@capeelizabethschools.org.

College Admissions Rep Visits:

Over 120 college admissions representatives visit CEHS in the fall to provide students with additional information about their school. Seniors can meet with college reps in the School Counseling Office if they are free at the time or if they have a pass with teacher permission.

Students can access the list/schedule of these visits and sign up through their SCOIR accounts. While these visits are for students only, parents can also view the list/schedule on the School Counseling website. Please encourage your student to check this list regularly as colleges will be scheduling visits on an ongoing basis.

All seniors are *strongly* encouraged to attend as many of these visits as possible. These visits can be a great way for students to learn about colleges they are unfamiliar with or that they are unable to visit in person. While they are informational only, the representative coming to our school is often the person who will be reading their application so it's a great opportunity for students to introduce themselves. For some schools, attending a rep visit is also a way of "demonstrating interest" in the college/university.

College Athletic Eligibility:

If your student is interested in playing Division I or Division II college athletics, they must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. Division III information can be found on individual college websites. To register with the NCAA, go to ncaa.org, then click the link to NCAA Eligibility website.

NCAA Guide for Student Athletes

List of colleges by division and sport

Understanding Application Deadlines

Every college offers different options to apply and deadlines can vary. Refer to the Common Application instructions, SCOIR, or check each college's website.

- *Regular Decision*: Applications are accepted on or before a specific deadline. Most "Regular Decision" deadlines are around the 1st or 15th of January or February. Decisions are usually announced by mid-April.

- *Early Action (EA)*: Non-binding, early review of credentials. Deadlines are typically in early November (some are now in October) and decisions usually announced by mid-December.

- *Early Decision (ED)*: Binding agreement to attend the college if admitted. Students are only permitted to apply ED to one college, but can apply EA to others at the same time. Deadlines are typically in early November and decisions usually announced by mid-December. An Early Decision application requires an agreement form signed by student, parent and School Counselor. Some colleges also offer a second round of Early Decision in January.

- *Rolling Admission*: Non-binding. Applications reviewed on a rolling basis as they are received. Decisions are often made a few weeks after an application is submitted or after first quarter grades have been received. Students are encouraged to apply early in the fall to Rolling Admissions schools for the best possible opportunity of admission and financial aid.

DIRECT ADMISSIONS: Many colleges are now proactively offering admission to eligible students based on information they have entered into their accounts before they even apply. These offers are not binding and are intended to eliminate barriers and streamline the application process.

- **Common Application:** 230 participating colleges**.** Admission offers are made to eligible first-generation and low- and middle-income students.
- **Niche.com**
- **University of Maine system**

COLLEGE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

As you begin to build your college list, it is important to check individual college websites for the following information:

- ☐ Application method (Common App, apply directly through website, UC, UCAS, etc.)
- ☐ Standardized Testing:
  - ☐ Does the college require test scores?
  - ☐ Do they accept “self-reported” scores or require” official” scores?
- ☐ Options to apply (Early Action, Early Decision, Regular Decision, Rolling Admissions, Restrictive Early Action)
- ☐ Application deadlines (Check carefully! Some colleges also have specific deadlines for certain majors or honors programs)
- ☐ Financial Aid requirements (FAFSA and/or CSS Profile)
- ☐ Financial Aid deadlines
- ☐ Other Application Requirements:
  - ☐ Does the college accept teacher recommendations? (Many larger universities do not).
  - ☐ Does the college require STARS (Self-reported Academic Record System)
  - ☐ Is there a fee to apply?
  - ☐ Does the college have an Honors Program? If so, is a separate application required or are applicants automatically considered? Is there a specific deadline to apply for Honors College consideration?
- ☐ Art/Theater/Music majors: is an audition or portfolio required? If so, what is the process/timeline?
- ☐ Are interviews offered, recommended or required?

College Application Responsibilities

- ☐ Transcripts – submitted by Ms. Thomas through SCOIR.
  - ☐ 1st Quarter senior grades (submitted in early November)
  - ☐ 1st Semester senior grades/Midyear Transcript (submitted in early February)
- ☐ Application – filled out and submitted by student (most via commonapp.org)
  - ☐ Student links Common App and SCOIR accounts. (We will complete this step together in class in September)
  - ☐ Non-Common App schools must be manually added to SCOIR by the student.
  - ☐ Update your admissions decision for each school in SCOIR as you receive them from colleges. You are also responsible for indicating where you decide to enroll so that Ms. Thomas can send your final transcript at the end of senior year.
- ☐ Teacher & Counselor Recommendations-submitted by Ms. Thomas through SCOIR.
  - ☐ Student adds teacher info into Common App and SCOIR (We will complete this step together in class in September)
  - ☐ Student turns in orange "1st Deadline Notification Form" 3 weeks ahead of 1st deadline.
- ☐ Standardized test scores (SAT/ACT)*: submitted by student
  - ☐ "Self-reported" scores are listed on the Common App.
  - ☐ "Official" scores must be submitted by the student through the College Board or ACT website.
- ☐ Financial aid applications - filled out and submitted by student & parent
  - ☐ FAFSA
  - ☐ CSS Profile
- ☐ Early Decision Contract:
  - ☐ Student: signs in Common App and adds parent contact information
  - ☐ Parent: signs through link from Common App
  - ☐ Ms. Thomas: signs and submits through SCOIR
- ☐ "STARS" (Self-reported Academic Transcript Record System)*- filled out and submitted by student*. A list of colleges that require the STARS can be found here

* may be required by *some* colleges

AFTER YOUR STUDENT SUBMITS AN APPLICATION they will receive a confirmation email from the college/university that includes instructions about next steps. Most colleges require that students create a college-specific portal/account to track their application and receive their admissions and financial aid offer.

Selective schools: *ANY* school that admits fewer than 25% of applicants

- Highest expectations of applicants
- Admission decisions are highly unpredictable
- Look for consistent record of Honors/AP courses
- Increasingly common for 50-60% of the incoming class to be admitted through Early Decision (if offered).

  CollegeKickstart.com: Class of 2023 Early Action & Early Decision Results
- Demonstrated interest may be considered
- Institutional needs are a much higher priority and are the “unknown” factor each year.
- An applicant’s financial need may also be considered when making an admission decision. (Research whether the college is “need aware or “need blind”)

Liberal Arts Colleges:

- Holistic admissions. Apply to college vs. directly into major.
- Selectivity varies
- Less likely to offer Early Action as an option

Public Universities:

- Admissions can be more straightforward due to higher volume of apps. In some cases this means no letters of recommendation or essays.
- A student’s choice of major/college may influence how admissions reviews their application and have an impact on students’ opportunity of admission.
- Selectivity varies. Some may favor in-state students over out-of-state applicants.

Search for the “Common Data Set” for individual colleges for more detailed information and insights into their admissions practices.

College	#Apps 2026	Admit Rate % 2026	Early Decision Admit Rate % 2026	Admit Rate % 2021	Admit Rate % 2015	Admit Rate % 1998
Boston College	41, 898	13	29	19	28	40
Boston University	79,486	14		17	29	79
Bowdoin College	14,727	7	13	8	15	31
Brown University	47,937	5	17	5	9	19
Colby College	21,065	8		8	19	34
Colgate University	16,774	20	30	17	26	
Columbia University	61,031	4		4	7	21
Dartmouth College	28,863	6		6	12	20
Duke University	61,935	5	14	5	9	31
Fairfield University	21,660	21	22			
Georgetown University	26,900	13		12	17	23
Holy Cross	10,600	17		38	38	
M.I.T.	28,349	5	6	4	6	24
Northeastern University	106,000	5	27	18	35	78
Tufts University	36,000	10		11	11	33
Tulane University	32,000	15	53	9	30.5	
Villanova University	28,865	27	28	25	17	60
University of Virginia	62,154	10	23	17	43	33
Williams College	16,853	7	25	8	18	26
Yale University	54,919	4	11 (REA)	5	19	18

Financial Aid

<u>Financial Aid requirements and practices vary by institution.</u> It is therefore important for you to research each school's financial aid policies carefully before your student applies.

Take advantage of the "net price calculators" that are available on every institution's website. These calculators use the individual institution's methodology for calculating aid and can provide you with a ballpark estimate of what your student may receive at that school. (Tip–read the fine print carefully as many calculators only provide an estimate of *need*-based aid).

Here are some tips for what you should look for at each institution:

- What documents are required for my student to apply for financial aid (FAFSA only or FAFSA + CSS profile)?
- Does the school offer merit scholarships? (Many of the more selective colleges and universities now only offer need-based aid)
- Is the school "need aware" or "need blind" in their admissions process?
- Does the school "meet 100% of demonstrated need"?
- How does the school handle outside scholarships? Do they require that students report outside scholarships they receive? Will they reduce aid already awarded by the college/university or will they allow students to apply these scholarships to the remaining balance?
- What are my options if I cannot pay the balance after the financial aid award? **Even if your family's financial need is significant, don't assume that the college will give your student enough financial aid to make it affordable for them to attend.** Many colleges expect parents to take out parent loans or private loans to cover this balance.

<u>If you missed our spring College Admissions and Financial Aid webinars, you can access the recordings through the links below:</u>

College Admissions Webinar

Financial Aid Webinar. * *I strongly encourage all parents to watch this webinar if you are planning on applying for financial aid.*

The **CEHS School Counseling website** has a wealth of information and resources to help you navigate paying for college including:

- How to apply for financial aid
- Completing the FAFSA
- Completing the CSS profile
- Applying for scholarships (including links to scholarship websites!)
- Links for our annual **Financial Aid webinar** and presentation slides.

The Finance Authority of Maine is an outstanding resource for ALL of your financial aid questions! They can assist with developing a plan to pay for college, navigating the financial aid process, completing the FAFSA and more.

- Book an appointment with FAME for one-on-one help HERE
- Call 800-228-3734 (option 4) or email Education@FAMEmaine.com

Other Financial Considerations

- Be sure your student has at least one or two affordable 'Likely' colleges on their list in case financial aid doesn't work out.

- Check out the Tuition Break Program for discounted tuition on select New England state school programs: nebhe.org/tuitionbreak

- Many colleges are now offering tuition discounts based on family income.

Scholarship Search

- **Many colleges require that students apply by a specific date to be considered for institutional scholarship/aid. In most cases, this would be their "Early Action" application round/deadline.**

- Check individual college websites for more information as well as additional scholarship opportunities that may require an additional application.

- Students can apply for local/CEHS scholarships in the spring of their senior year.

- **Scholarship Search Websites:** If you have to pay money to get money, it's probably a scam. In general, be wary of scholarships with an application fee, scholarship matching services who guarantee success, advance-fee loan scams and sales pitches disguised as financial aid "seminars". A suggested list of websites can be found here.

RECOMMENDED "TO DO" LIST FOR SENIOR PARENTS

COLLEGE LIST:

- **Encourage your student to sign up for "Rep visits" at CEHS this fall.** Parents can view the list of colleges that are scheduled to visit HERE.
- **Help your student develop and finalize a reasonable list** of colleges that includes at least two or three "Likely"schools that they would be willing to attend.

APPLICATIONS:

- Help your student research, manage and track each of their school's application deadlines and requirements.
- **Help your student complete the "FAMILY" section of their Common Application**. It's ok to preview their application for errors before they submit but please do not complete any sections of the application for them. If your student's college does not use the Common Application, they may complete their application through the colleges' website and then manually add it to their SCOIR account.
- **Confirm with your student that they have turned in an orange "1st College Deadline Notification Form" to Ms Thomas at least 3 weeks before their first deadline.**

ADMISSIONS TESTS:

- Double check college websites to be sure that your student has met the institution's standardized testing requirements and understands their policy for submitting scores.
- If your student is planning on submitting test scores, check individual college websites to confirm if they allow "self reported" scores or if they require "official" scores which must be sent by the student through their College Board or ACT account.

SCHOLARSHIPS and FINANCIAL AID:

- **Check individual college websites for additional scholarship opportunities as well as financial aid deadlines and requirements.**
- Establish your FSA ID for FAFSA filing and updating.
- File the FAFSA after October 1, 2026
- If required, complete the CSS PROFILE as soon as your student's college list is complete.

ADVICE FOR SENIOR PARENTS

- Choose a mutually agreed upon day of the week that you will discuss college and ask questions.

- Students must take the lead in this process and be the primary point of contact for their colleges. Be a manager and consultant.

- Help your student stay organized (tracking application, financial aid and scholarship deadlines is especially helpful).

- Don't make the entire process about getting into "reach" schools. College lists should be set up so there is more good news than bad.

- Focus on fit and challenge your definition of what makes a college a "good" school.

- Talk about finances and what your family can afford to pay. Be upfront and transparent. Avoiding these conversations often leads to more stress for students.

- Long lists cause more stress. Help your student identify what is most important to them and then narrow down.

- Help your student learn to cope with rejection. This is an unprecedented time as far as selectivity in college admissions. Celebrate their successes and remind them how proud you are of them!

- Remind your student to check their email *regularly*!

<u>What to avoid:</u>

- **Do <u>not</u> complete any part of your child's college application.** Help them edit, check for spelling errors and assist them in filling out any parent/family information.

- **Do not contact college admissions representatives on behalf of your student. Your student must be the primary contact person for their colleges.** Financial Aid is the exception here as parents are generally in the best position to inquire about financial aid related questions or circumstances.

- Avoid "McRankings" and stick to the data that colleges provide.

- Don't try to change your child to fit a college, change the list of colleges to fit your child.

USEFUL WEBSITES

SCOIR is a web based system that gives your student access to a wealth of college information. You can do college research as well with parent access. You will receive an email from Ms. Thomas with a link and more information.

www.collegeboard.org SAT registration and information.

www.actstudent.org ACT test registration and information.

www.fairtest.org List of colleges that are test optional

www.studentaid.gov Information about federal student aid and link to the FAFSA application.

https://www.bls.gov/ooh/ Occupational Outlook Handbook. Current information on careers including job outlook, education, and salary.

www.famemaine.com Financial aid basics, scholarship search, college aid calculator

www.todaysmilitary.com, a site created by the US Department of Defense as a resource for parents, educators and young adults curious about military service.

www.careeronestop.org: a page for students sponsored by The US Department of Labor for a variety of resources.

For a comprehensive list of Gap Year programs, visit: usagapyearfairs.org/programs

The College Essay Guy: Excellent (and accurate!) information about college admissions, the college essay, supplemental essay help and more

College Kickstart: Up to date information and data about admissions results at colleges across the country.

Common Data Sets: Each year colleges publish detailed information about their most recent applicant pool and admissions process. A simple Google Search for "X university Common Data Set" should take you there. Most colleges will include a chart that indicates what factors are most important to them in the admissions process which I find particularly useful!

CEHS Care Closet

Like many schools across our state and country, we have seen a growing number of CEHS students and families struggling to meet their basic needs. In response, the CEHS Care Closet was established to provide students with access to personal care items, school supplies, clothing, and other essentials they may not be able to afford.

As families continue to navigate financial hardships and challenging circumstances, we have also expanded our support by offering gift cards to help cover groceries, transportation, and other everyday expenses.

Because the Care Closet is funded solely through donations, your support is essential to sustaining this work. Your gift will make both an immediate and lasting impact, ensuring that students can focus on what matters most—learning, growing, and thriving—without the added stress of meeting their basic needs. Your generosity truly makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and families.

HELP US SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES IN NEED

How You Can Help

- Donate by cash or check payable to: Cape Elizabeth High School
- Donate Hannaford, Shaws, Cumberland Farms or Visa gift cards
- Donate Using the QR code or link below:

HTTPS://WWW.VANCOEVENTS.COM/US/DONATE/CEHSCARECLOSET

QUESTIONS?

Contact:

Elizabeth Thomas

(207) 799-7265

ethomas@capeelizabethschools.org