



College



Trades



Military

**Finding the
Right Fit**

**Post Secondary
Planning Guide**

NATHAN HALE-RAY HIGH SCHOOL

DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL COUNSELING

The time has come to plan for life after high school! This post-secondary planner provides information and resources that you will find helpful throughout your post high school planning. You will notice that many of your questions will be answered by this guide, but remember to also use your school counselor as a resource throughout the planning process.

At this point, you might be wondering where you should begin. We ask that you start by thinking about the “bigger picture” throughout your high school career. Reflect upon who are you as a person, your personality, interests and strengths. Think about and research what type of a career interests you and what education or training is required to pursue it. If your career interest requires a four year college degree, it is important to ensure you understand the necessary steps.

By your senior year, you should have a clearer vision of what your post-secondary plans are. At that time, you should utilize your resources as you begin to apply to four year colleges, community college, technical school, military, or work. Along with the valuable resource of your school counselor, this planner will help you with all of the steps necessary for these applications.

In addition to the resources of your school counselor, and this planning book, Hale-Ray provides an online program called Naviance that can be very helpful throughout each step of your college or career planning process. We issue all students and their parents an account that can be accessed from any computer with internet. This planning book includes information about how to log into your account and use Naviance to your full advantage.

Enjoy planning for your future and just think about the multitude of opportunities that lie ahead! Remember to work with your school counselor and parent or guardian along the way. Please let your counselor know if you have any questions after looking through your post-secondary planning book.

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School Counselor, A Source of Information

Your high school counselor can be a very helpful source of information about colleges, and can often help you weigh critically the pros and cons of individual colleges.

- ☐ Your counselor may have access to school-related information about you that can help in your college planning. Discussions of your high school experiences, career plans, abilities, and preferences/interests can help you choose and rank your own college search factors.
- ☐ Your counselor helps students answer college planning questions every day. He/she will be able to help answer your questions about application forms and financial aid opportunities, and can refer you quickly to information resources such as college directories and catalogs.
- ☐ Your counselor can help you learn how to contact colleges or individuals at colleges (i.e. a financial aid counselor or coach) and suggest ways to arrange visits to specific colleges.
- ☐ As your plans develop, your counselor can act as a sounding board for your ideas, and can help you to clarify and organize your evaluation of each particular college.

Although you should take full advantage of your counselor's advice and help, remember that YOU (and not your counselor) will have to make the final decisions and live with them. That is why it is so important for you to gather as much information as you can and to evaluate that information carefully.

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Post-High School Planning Calendar

FRESHMAN YEAR		SOPHOMORE YEAR	
September -	March - April	September	January - February
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Get to know your resources and counselor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Keep your grades up. Your grades during Freshman to Senior years will determine whether students qualify for some schools or not. Academic scores do count. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Connect with your counselor and review your plan of study. ♦ Become familiar with college entrance exams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Plan to take challenging courses. Are you a candidate for an honors or AP course? Speak with your teachers and counselor.
October - December	May - June	October - November	March - April
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Take PSAT 9 ♦ Focus on study skills & time management. It is important to develop good study & planning skills. ♦ Explore opportunities to become involved - College admission offices prefer candidates that have good academic scores and who are involved in outside activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Explore summer programs and opportunities. ♦ Research college & career options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Take PSATs ♦ Become familiar with the college admission process and begin mapping out your college and career plans. ♦ 16 yr olds should consider taking the ASVAB exam. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Continue to develop important vocabulary, math, reading and problem solving skills. ♦ Develop your resume ♦ Attend the Career Expo
January - February	Summer	December	May - June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Review PSAT 9 results ♦ Many colleges require completion of academic courses in math, science, English, etc. Now is the time to find out what is required so that you can plan the course structure for your sophomore through senior years. Have conversations with your teachers and counselor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Research job trends ♦ Volunteer or secure a summer job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Review PSAT results ♦ Review ASVAB results ♦ Research college and career options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Research job trends ♦ Volunteer or secure a summer job.

Post-High School Planning Calendar

JR DECEMBER/JANUARY	JR MAY	SR NOVEMBER	SR MARCH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Plan standardized testing schedule ♦ Review PSAT/NMSQT results ♦ Use Naviance and on-line college sites to research colleges ♦ Plan extra-curricular and community service opportunities ♦ Register for Feb. ACTs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Register for June SAT ♦ Register for June ACTs ♦ File NCAA eligibility form ♦ Take AP exams ♦ Take SAT and/or SAT Subject test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Take SAT and/or SAT Subject test ♦ Register for Dec. ACTs ♦ Send Early Decision/Early Action applications ♦ Submit CSS Profile ♦ File the FAFSA (after October 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Send any new material to colleges which may help ♦ Review local Scholarships on Naviance - plan ahead to apply
JR FEBRUARY	JR JUNE-AUGUST	SR DECEMBER	SR APRIL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Make appointment with school counselor ♦ Register for March SAT ♦ Take ACT ♦ Plan senior year courses ♦ Research summer programs, opportunities at various colleges & universities, and summer job possibilities ♦ Use February break to visit colleges ♦ Explore Military career options if interested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Arrange college visits/interviews for summer ♦ Draft college essay ♦ Draft resume using Naviance ♦ Review transcript and credit history ♦ Formalize college list ♦ Take SAT and/or SAT Subject test ♦ Take ACT ♦ Finalize summer programs and opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Take SAT Subject tests ♦ Check application deadlines ♦ Submit FAFSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Review college responses and aid offer with parents and counselor ♦ Make a final decision – Send deposit by May 1 ♦ Write withdrawal letters to colleges you will not attend
JR MARCH	SR SEPTEMBER	SR JANUARY	SR MAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Make appointment with school counselor ♦ Consult your testing schedule ♦ Continue researching skills ♦ Take SAT ♦ Register for April ACTs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Make an appointment with counselor to review Post-Secondary plan ♦ Review Early Decision/Early Action deadlines & restrictions ♦ Arrange final college visits & interviews ♦ Fill out teacher recommendation forms ♦ Take ACT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ If needed, file other financial aid forms (check deadlines) ♦ Complete regular deadline college applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Take AP exams ♦ Fill out residential life forms ♦ Check arrangements for Student/Parent loans ♦ Send original and signed SAR to your choice college
JR APRIL	SR OCTOBER	SR FEBRUARY	SR JUNE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Take Connecticut SAT School Day ♦ Register for May SAT ♦ Take ACT ♦ Attend National College Fair in Hartford ♦ Use April vacation to visit colleges ♦ File application for Military Academics & ROTC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Take SAT and/or SAT Subject test ♦ Take ACT ♦ Review college essay with counselor & English teacher ♦ Attend College Fair ♦ Request teacher letters of recommendation ♦ Begin to apply and review college applications ♦ Follow Early Decision/Early Action deadlines ♦ Attend Financial Aid Night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Have mid-year reports sent ♦ Register for AP exams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Graduation! ♦ Have a great summer!!

Important Things to Consider when Planning for your Future

KNOW YOURSELF

Interests, abilities, achievements, values, and aspirations are important factors to be considered in setting your goals. Explore these areas including computer based surveys and the internet, paper and pencil tests, and conversations with friends, family, and your school counselor.

CAREER OPTIONS

Exploring career options can help in setting goals and possibly in selecting courses in high school. Use printed materials, computer generated information, job shadowing to assist you in more clearly identifying your direction.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

High school courses should be selected based on graduation requirements, exploration and development of personal interests, meeting college or other post-secondary school options, and preparing to enter the job market after graduation. You should consult with your counselor on a yearly basis to determine if you are meeting your goals.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Use your "free time" to develop hobbies or other interests. Get involved in school, community and church activities. In particular, seek out ways that you can provide service to your community and to others in need of your skills and talents. Broaden your interests through reading, travel and contact with knowledgeable people. Above all, remember that the quality and not the quantity of these activities is most important to colleges reviewing your application.

COLLEGE/ VOCATIONAL SELECTION

Investigate the institutions or training programs that offer the types of programs you desire. Consult with printed and computerized resource materials and with people who have attended these institutions. Learn about the projected demands in your selected vocational field. Attend information programs conducted by admission representatives from all types of schools in addition to attending the representative visits in the School Counseling Department.

VISIT SCHOOLS

Write or telephone for an appointment and a campus tour. Spend time visiting classes, dormitories, cafeterias, the library, and special facilities. Speak with students to find out what life is like both on weekend and weekdays.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Talk with your counselor and consult written materials to learn about the requirements of various schools and the degree of competition in gaining admission. Know the application procedures and deadlines.

FINANCES

Parents and students should become knowledgeable about financing further education. Consideration should be given to federal, state, and local sources of financial assistance. Be sure the sources you use are current and up to date. Investigate your eligibility for merit and/or need based financial aid. Attend the December Financial Aid Night to learn more about financial aid and the required application procedures.

PREPARE EARLY

Get references, transcripts, applications, and other materials early in the process. Applications for the admission should be completed well before deadlines. Scholarship applications and related material should also be completed prior to deadlines.

Self - Awareness

An honest and thoughtful self-evaluation can reveal what you should look for in a college or a job, and prepare you for statements you may be asked to make about yourself in essays and interviews when you apply.

Consider the following:

Your goals and values - how and what you want to accomplish in the future, what experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking, your unique gifts and talents, etc.

Your education - your academic interests, courses have you enjoyed the most, independent projects and reading, topics chosen for research papers and lab reports, outside circumstances such as jobs, home responsibilities or difficulties that have affected your academic performance, etc.

Your activities and interests - what activities you enjoy most and are passionate about

The world around you - your family and home, your expectations of them and theirs of you, concerns about the world around you, what you would change if given the opportunity

Your personality and relationships with others - how you would be described by others, how you have grown and changed during your high school years, your most important relationships and why, how you evaluate the decisions you make.

Career Awareness and Exploration

Evaluate yourself - your abilities, values and interests. Use available career resources to search out specific information about your possible career choice - necessary training, expected earnings, advancement possibilities, projected employment outlook and personal qualifications. If your career plans require college, make appropriate plans.

Arrange to spend time with people involved in your field of interest to watch them at work (called "shadowing" or "internship") and to interview them. Ask your school counselor for more information about shadowing.

Consider obtaining a part-time job that will help you explore a career field and give you experience and training that will be useful in obtaining full-time employment after graduation. Networking is a good way to find employment.

Make time to prepare a resume and practice filling out job applications.

Counselors and teachers may be used as references on applications, if asked.

Alternative Credit Programs

Middlesex Community College High School Partnership Program

Wesleyan University High School Partnership Program

College courses are available to Nathan Hale-Ray High School students in grades 11-12 through Middlesex Community College and Wesleyan University. Juniors and seniors, who have a minimum cumulative average of a B and are in the top 20% of their class may apply to enroll in one college course per semester, free of charge. The programs require applicants to complete a college "Student Application" packet that is provided to the high school the semester prior to student enrollment. The ability to participate is contingent upon times courses are offered, student's transportation to the campus, and students meeting course prerequisites.

University of Connecticut's Early College Experience Program

NHRHS participates in this concurrent enrollment program that allows motivated high school students to take UConn courses at their high schools for both high school and college credit. Every course taken at NHRHS through UConn ECE is equivalent to the same course at the University of Connecticut. If a student's final grade in the course is a D- or better, then they will receive credit on a UConn transcript, in addition to the credit earned at the high school level. We currently offer the following ECE courses: French IV, French V, Behavior and Training of Domestic Animals, Introduction to Companion Animals, Fundamentals and Ear Training I, Music Appreciation, and Individual and Family Development.

Early College Advanced Manufacturing Pathway

Nathan Hale-Ray High School has partnered with Goodwin University to offer the Early College Advanced Manufacturing Pathway (ECAMP™) program. Hale-Ray students can take part in a flexible, comprehensive program to learn manufacturing skills at the high school, while earning college credits towards a degree or certification in Manufacturing. ECAMP instructors are high school teachers certified by Goodwin. For each course taken and passed as part of ECAMP, students earn three credits toward a degree or certification from Goodwin University as well as credit earned at the high school level. The courses included in this program are: Introduction to Engineering, Introduction to CAD and 3D Printing and Computer Integrated Manufacturing. Should students choose to attend a school other than Goodwin University, these credits may transfer. The program provides a pathway to employment into good paying entry-level positions and pre-apprenticeships in the state's growing manufacturing sector.

A Guide to NAVIANCE

Naviance is an online data-management system purchased by the school district to offer support for our students and parents in the post-high school planning process. Naviance will allow you to do the following:

- Receive emails from your counselor about important events and special opportunities.
- Research careers and the necessary training required for each of the careers.
- Research colleges: conduct an individualized college search, compare colleges, and mark colleges of interest to you.
- Compare your academic profile with former applicants from your high school for each college.
- Find SAT/ACT test preparation and registration information.
- Obtain financial aid and scholarship information.

Grade-Specific Naviance Programs

Freshmen

- Freshman Transition Survey
- Career Interest Profiler

Sophomores

- “StrengthsExplorer” Inventory
- Resume building

Juniors

- Narrow down college and career search
- Resume updates

Seniors

- Transcripts and letters of recommendation requests
- Senior Exit Survey
- Local scholarship and National Scholarship Search

HOW TO START:

You can access Naviance by typing **<http://connection.naviance.com/nathanhale>** in the address box. Your first time on Naviance, you will be asked to register with the code provided by the School Counseling Department. From then on, sign in by entering your user name and password. When you open the Family Connection page, you will have the following tools available to you.

My Profile – Allows you to see all your personal information; e.g. name, phone number, email. You should check your profile and make sure that everything is accurate. Notify your counselor of any necessary changes.

My Resume – Allows you to list and keep a record of your accomplishments and extracurricular activities.

My Colleges – Allows you to record schools that you are considering and applying to.

My Test Scores – Displays scores of all the tests you have taken, e.g. PSAT, SAT, ACT, AP. You should check the scores to make sure that they have been entered accurately.

My Career Interest Profiler – Allows you to access the **Career Interest Profiler** program, an assessment used to help you learn more about your interests and possible careers related to those interests. It is a useful tool in thinking about your future as you can then research your favorite careers and training needed on Naviance.

COLLEGE

- Advanced College Search – This is a college search engine that will enable you to generate a personalized list of colleges based on your own criteria.
- College Lookup – Allows you to research various schools by name, state or country. College Lookup provides you with application deadlines, histories, profiles, fees, etc.
- College Compare – Provides a visual representation of your GPA and SAT scores in relation to previous students from Hale-Ray who have applied to your schools of interest.
- College Visits – Lists when colleges are coming for a high school visit and provides links to colleges.
- National Scholarship Search – Provides the opportunity to search for scholarships nationwide based on selection criteria you identify.
- Scholarship List – Provides a list of Local Scholarships available only to students who live in East Haddam. Also provides a list of any other scholarship made aware to the school counseling department.

**** The more work you do now, the less work you will have to do in your senior year!!!**

Choosing A Post-Secondary Plan

Decision-making is part of the process of choosing which post-secondary options should be considered. Keep in mind, the only poor choices are uninformed choices.

OPTIONS

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE

A four-year academic institution that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level in a specific field of study while also receiving a broad undergraduate education. Graduates of four-year colleges receive Bachelor degrees.

TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

A two-year institution of higher learning that provides career and vocational training and academic curricula (terminal and transfer). Community colleges are two-year colleges where you can earn an Associate's degree.

- Terminal Program: This is an academic program that is complete unto itself. A student who completes it may not be admitted to a four-year college for further study without completing additional course requirements.
 - Transfer Program: an academic program that is designed to lead into a four-year program at another college or university. The two-year graduate transfers as a junior to the four-year institution.
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MILITARY

Explore the various opportunities that the military has to offer. Talk with your counselor about the requirements for Military Academies, ROTC Programs and Direct Entrance.

TECHNICAL/TRADE

A two-year institution that offers terminal occupational programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment in fields related to engineering and the physical sciences. These schools may also offer one-year certificate programs in certain crafts and clerical skills. Trade schools offer specialized training in specific work fields such as cosmetology, computer technology, medical or dental technology, culinary arts or drafting.

GAP YEAR

An interim year for students who wish to participate in various national and international programs involving internships, volunteer work, academic classes, career exploration, and adventure.

EMPLOYMENT

Enter directly into the work force upon graduation. Reflect upon your skills, interests, and values to determine which job is the best fit. Explore various options through websites, job shadows, and informational interviews. You will want to compose a strong resume and retrieve letters of recommendation highlighting your work ethic, character, and strengths.

An excellent source of information is your high school counseling office. Your counselor will have available a variety of handbooks and computer software with descriptions of schools and the programs they offer. If you're not sure what you want to do, your counselor can help you clarify what your interests and talents are.

Quality of Coursework Matters

Students who plan on attending a four-year college should plan a high school curriculum focused on the five “core” academic areas and electives that enhance their interests and future goals.

English 4 years – (writing skills are very important!)

Math 3-4 years – (minimum requirement of Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry)

*****Please note that most colleges recommend a fourth year of math.**

Social Studies 2-3 years – The more, the better!

Science 2-3 years – (at least two “lab sciences”: Biology, Chemistry or Physics)

Engineering, Nursing, and Physical Therapy majors need Physics!

Highly selective colleges want 3 lab sciences.

World Language 2-3 years – (levels of proficiency) of the **same** language.

If you take up to the third level, you will probably not have to take more in college. If you only take two years, there is a good chance you will have to take more in college. Some colleges give proficiency tests.

Electives Choose electives from core academics, business, or CTEUA areas. Many colleges require 1.0 credit in the Fine Arts area.

Levels of Course Students should challenge themselves at the highest level possible that they can be successful in.

NHRHS Rank/GPA System

Nathan Hale-Ray High School class ranking and GPA are determined on a weighted 12- point scale, and the three-level system listed below:

GRADE	(0) College/Career Preparatory	(1) ACCELERATED	(2) Advanced Placement
A+	12	13	14
A	11	12	13
A-	10	11	12
B+	9	10	11
B	8	9	10
B-	7	8	9
C+	6	7	8
C	5	6	7
C-	4	5	6
D+	3	4	5
D	2	3	4
D-	1	2	3
F	0	0	0

Levels have been determined by the faculty and administration. Averages are computed using the grade and level values.

College Admissions Criteria

A college will use some, if not all, of the information below in deciding to accept an applicant. However, specific colleges may use the information differently, placing greater emphasis on one aspect over another.

What Counts Most in College Admissions

- ◆ Demanding Course Selection in High School
- ◆ Grade Point Average (GPA) (often recalculated)
- ◆ Class Rank
- ◆ Standardized Test Scores
- ◆ School Profile
- ◆ Recommendations
- ◆ Essay
- ◆ Student Resume (extracurricular activities/community service/employment)
- ◆ Special Talents / Unique Abilities
- ◆ Contribution to Diversity
- ◆ Demonstrated Interest in School
- ◆ Interview / Campus Visit
- ◆ Ability to Pay

Admissions Exams

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Standardized tests are only one of the many factors which colleges use in making admissions decisions. Such testing provides a reasonably accurate comparison of student performance on a nationwide basis. (Other types of schools will require specific entrance/placement exams.)

PSAT/NMSQT – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test: (College Board Test Program)

Given in October to high school sophomores and juniors. Same format as SAT. Useful as an indicator of SAT scores and/or practice test. The basis for some merit scholarships for juniors.

SAT (College Board Test Program)

A three-hour assessment measuring writing and language, reading, and mathematical skills. There is an optional fifty-minute essay. Most four-year colleges and universities require the SAT for admission. It is administered on typically seven dates throughout the year: March, May, June, August, October, November, and December. Register on www.collegeboard.org.

ACT – American College Testing Program (ACT Test Program)

Four 35-60 minute tests in academic areas of English, Mathematics, Science and Reading. There is an optional Writing test is available. Commonly required for admission by public colleges and some private colleges in the mid-west, west and south; however it is accepted by all colleges and universities. It is administered on typically seven dates throughout the year: February, April, June, July, September, October, and December. They are offered Register on www.actstudent.org.

OTHER COLLEGE TESTS

AP – Advanced Placement Tests (College Board Test Program)

Three-hour examinations based on full-year college level course in high school. Given once a year in May in United States History, Art, Biology, Calculus, Chemistry, English Language, English Composition and Literature, European History, French, German, Latin, Physics, Spanish, Statistics. Used for college credit and placement.

NOTE: Please see your school counselor for fee waivers for the SAT, ACT, and AP exams if you meet certain economic guidelines.

ACT vs. SAT: Key Differences Between the ACT and SAT

ACT vs. SAT: which test is a better fit for you? Students may take whichever test they prefer (assuming there are available testing locations for both tests). If you are not sure which test to take, consider the key differences between the ACT and SAT. Some students find that the ACT caters to their strengths more so than the SAT, and vice versa.

General Test Structure

	SAT	ACT
Total Time	3 hrs (plus 50 min for essay)	2 hrs 55 min (plus 40 min for essay)
Number of sections	4 plus essay	4 plus essay
Sections	Reading: 65 min Writing and Language: 35 min Math (No calculator): 25 min Math (with calculator): 55 min Optional essay: 50 min	English: 45 min Math: 60 min Reading: 35 min Science: 35 min Optional essay: 40 min
Scoring	Two section scores, Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (includes Reading and Writing and Language) and Math, on a 200-800 scale combined for a total score from 400-1600	Four section scores scaled from 1-36 averaged for a composite from 1-36
Wrong answer penalty?	No	No

Math

The SAT math section focuses on a more limited set of topics, primarily algebra. The diminished presence of geometry sets the SAT math section apart from the one on the ACT, which is roughly a third geometry and trigonometry questions.

The SAT math also includes a no-calculator section, a significant number of data analysis problems, and simpler wording for questions.

	SAT	ACT
Time	80 min	60 min
Format	Divided in to two sections No calculator: 20 questions (4 grid-ins), 25 min With calculator: 38 questions (9 grid-ins), 55 min	1 section, all questions multiple choice
Total # of questions	58 questions	60 questions
Time per question	No calculator: 75 sec With calculator: 87 sec	1 min
Content	Heart of Algebra — 33% Problem Solving and Data Analysis — 28% Passport to Advanced Math — 29% Additional Topics in Math — 10%	Pre-algebra — 20-25% Elementary algebra — 15-20% Intermediate algebra — 15-20% Coordinate geometry — 15-20% Plane geometry — 20-25% Trigonometry — 5-10%
Key Skills	Doing simple calculations without a calculator, translating word problems, analyzing data	Memorizing formulas, translating word problems, working quickly without making errors

Reading

	SAT	ACT
Time	65 min	35 min
Format	4 single passages and 1 pair, 10-11 questions each	4 passages, potentially including 1 paired passage, 10 questions each
# of questions	5 passages, 52 questions	4 passages, 40 questions
Time per passage/question	13 min/75 sec	8 min, 45 sec/53 sec
Passage types	1 U.S. or World Literature, 2 History or Social Studies, 2 Science	1 Prose Fiction or Literary Narrative, 1 Social Sciences, 1 Humanities, 1 Natural Sciences
Question types	Main Idea, Vocab-in-Context, Inference, Evidence Support, Data Reasoning, Technique, Detail-Oriented	Main Idea, Vocab-in-Context, Inference, Detail-Oriented
Key skills	Reading comprehension, inferring ideas, identifying evidence	Reading comprehension, inferring ideas, locating details

SAT Writing and Language/ACT English

	SAT	ACT
Time	35 min	45 min
Format	4 passages, 11 questions each	5 passages, 15 questions each
Total # of questions	44 questions	75 questions
Time per passage/question	8 min, 45 sec/48 sec	9 min/36 sec
Content	Standard English Conventions: 20 questions (45%), covering sentence structure, conventions of usage, and conventions of punctuation Expression of Ideas: 24 questions (55%), covering development, organization and effective language use	Usage and Mechanics: sentence structure (20-25%), grammar and usage (15-20%), and punctuation (10-15%) Rhetorical Skills: style (15-20%), strategy (15-20%), and organization (10-15%)
Key Skills	Understanding grammar rules, expressing ideas clearly, connecting sentences logically	Understanding grammar rules, connecting sentences logically, recognizing overall structure and argument

Science

The SAT does not have a separate science section, but it does include science questions in all three of the other sections. Those questions are primarily focused on reading charts and graphs, while ACT science tests a wider range of skills.

	SAT	ACT
Time	N/A	35 min
Format	No specific section, 2 passages in reading (21 questions), 1 passage in Writing (6 questions), and 8 questions in Math	7 passages, with 5-7 questions each
Total # of questions	35 questions	40 questions
Time per passage/question	Varies by section	5 min/53 sec
Content	Varies by section	Data Representation — 30-40% Research Summaries — 45-55% Conflicting Viewpoints — 15-20%
Key Skills	Understanding scientific ideas, reading charts and graphs	Doing simple calculations without a calculator, reading charts and graphs, analyzing experimental design

Source: PrepScholar.com

Test- Optional Admissions

A growing number of colleges and universities no longer require applicants to submit standardized test scores (SAT/ACT) as part of the application and admissions process. These schools believe that a student's day-to-day performance is a better indicator of how successful they will be in college. Therefore, they place more emphasis on a student's transcript, letters of recommendation, extra-curriculars and essay. If you are a student who has not achieved standardized test scores that accurately reflect your ability, you may want to consider applying to test-optional schools.

Some test-optional schools will require standardized test scores in order to be considered for merit-based aid or for acceptance into certain programs. Be sure to check individual school requirements.

A full list of test-optional schools can be found at www.fairtest.org

Factors to Consider for College Choice

Before you start a college search, it is helpful to know what attributes you are looking for in a school. This worksheet can help you prioritize these attributes. Rate the following factors according to the importance each has to you personally. Place a check in the appropriate rating column.

FACTOR	HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?		
	Very	Somewhat	Not
Overall academic curriculum			
Good preparation for career/graduate school			
Outstanding department/program/professor			
Prestige of school			
Opinion of friends			
Parental pressure			
Part of country/beauty of campus			
Rural/urban/suburban setting			
Proximity of parents home			
Proximity to other colleges			
Coed or single sex			
Social life/activities			
Favorable impression of student body			
Size of school			
Housing set-up			
Cost of school			
Financial aid offered			
Good chance for admission			
Athletic facilities/organizations			
Religious and/or ethnic organization			
Sister/brother/family alumni attended			
Possibility to exchange/transfer			

Obtaining Information About a College

START WITH THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

- ♦ Visit the college website and follow instructions there.
- ♦ Call the Admissions Office.
- ♦ Email the Admissions Office.
- ♦ Gather information when visiting colleges, attending information nights and college fairs, or meeting with college representatives.
- ♦ Visit specific colleges on Naviance and Collegeboard for “fast facts.”

Some key factors to consider when choosing a college include:

ACADEMICS

Colleges can be ranked according to the selectivity of their admissions. For example, some colleges only take students with a 3.2+ grade point average and very high (1200+) SAT scores. These institutions are considered very selective in their admissions. Other colleges simply require graduation from high school, or lower SAT/ACT scores. These colleges have lower selectivity and some have open admissions.

SIZE

Colleges range in size from 150 to 80,000 students. There is a great difference between attending a small institution (1,000-2,000), usually referred to as a college, and a large one (30,000 - 50,000), usually referred to as a university. Small colleges offer you more personal involvement, a community atmosphere and small classes (5 to 50 students). Large universities tend to be more impersonal, allow you to be more anonymous and offer large class sizes (20 to 350 students).

ATMOSPHERE

Colleges create their own atmosphere. Each college has a particular atmosphere or environment that affects the performance and satisfaction of each student there. Some factors that go into creating a college's atmosphere are: personal or impersonal handling of student questions, concerns and scheduling; an academic or less serious mood among the students and their approach to responsibilities; an aware, involved, active student body or students focused on individual pursuits. The type of atmosphere a college offers can best be discovered by visiting the campus and talking to as many people as you can.

COST

A major factor to be considered is the cost of attending a college. The total cost for a year, (as computed by the college financial aid office) includes tuition, fees, room and board, books, supplies, transportation and personal expenses. Total costs do vary widely. While cost is undoubtedly very important, don't limit your choice of colleges to only those you can afford without financial assistance. Many of the more expensive schools have solid financial aid programs, which may cover anywhere from 20% to the full cost, depending on your demonstrated financial need. A good plan would be to choose several colleges, including one you can afford and several for which you need aid. We encourage students to apply to any of the state colleges in Connecticut. Although financial aid may seem uncertain at times, limiting prospective colleges on a cost basis alone may exclude some

excellent colleges from your list.

LOCATION

There are many reasons why the location of the college may be important to you. You should always consider the expense of travel, the need for independence versus the desire to stay near your family, and the effects of living in a particular climate. When considering the location of a college, think about the campus setting. The physical environment of the college you go to may be very important to you. Some people prefer the social, cultural and economic activities of a large city or metropolitan environment. Others would be unhappy if they could not be near the ocean, mountains or countryside. A major metropolitan area can offer many benefits, but a student must adjust to the life-style of a big city. A college or university that is located in the heart of a city is often comprised of multi-storied classroom buildings and high-rise dormitories. There are also many colleges and universities that are in rural settings with widespread campuses located many miles from the nearest metropolitan areas. In addition, many institutions are located close to, but not in, large cities. The decision of a location and campus setting for your college should ultimately include those institutions where you will be most comfortable living for the next two to four years of your life.

Assessing Your List Of Colleges

There is no absolute when it comes to applying to a range of colleges. The goal is to be admitted to one college of your choice. Most students will apply to one or two schools in the “reach” category, two or three in the “realistic” category, and at least two in the “safe” category. The definitions of each category vary based on the individual student.

DEFINITION OF SELECTION CATEGORIES

REACH

The “reach” college can be defined as the college where the individual student would have considerable difficulty in gaining admission. Sometimes, it is due to the student’s record of achievement being lower than the records of the typically admitted student. Other times, colleges are considered “reach” schools because they admit a very small percentage of the applicants. Some colleges are considered “reach” schools for all applicants because of the small number of students they admit and the variety of characteristics they take into consideration.

REALISTIC

Schools that are “realistic” choices are those where the student’s record of achievement and the college’s typically admitted students’ records are closely aligned. While there are no certainties in this group, students will usually find one or more admission offers from this group.

LIKELY

“Likely” schools are those defined as places where the applicant’s record exceeds the records of the typically admitted students. Admission to these colleges is highly likely. Colleges in this group should be as carefully selected as those in the other two groups since it is possible that you will attend this school.

As you develop a list (mental or otherwise) of colleges that interest you, be sure you can answer these questions about them.

THE BASICS

- ◆ Where is the college? Can you locate it on a map? Is it too close to home? Is it too far? Is it too cold or too hot there?
- ◆ Have you taken the course work the college requires for admission?
- ◆ What size is the college? How many students are undergraduates?
- ◆ What is the college’s selectivity ratio (what proportion of applicants were admitted last year)?
- ◆ Does the college offer majors that interest you?
- ◆ Is the college coed or single sex?
- ◆ What percentage of students live off campus?
- ◆ How many of the students graduate in four years? Five years? Six years?
- ◆ How many first-year students return for their sophomore year?
- ◆ How much does the program cost? What is the total per-year expense?
- ◆ What type of financial aid is available?

WHERE WOULD YOU FIT IN?

- ◆ Are exam scores from SAT/ACT a required part of the application? If so, what are the college scores for the SAT or ACT? Where does that place you?
- ◆ What were the high school GPAs of most of the freshmen last year?
- ◆ Are freshmen guaranteed on-campus housing? If not, where do they live?
- ◆ Are there extracurricular activities that interest you?

VISIT THE COLLEGES' WEBSITE, READ THE GUIDELINES, AND LOOK AT THEIR LITERATURE

- What are their strong academic programs? (Ask a college representative, students, graduates, and teachers.)
- What courses are required for graduation?
- Are the courses you need/want available each semester? At convenient times?
- Are there special programs that interest you? (study abroad, internships, etc.)
- What is the social life like? What percentage of students join fraternities or sororities?
- Do the pictures and the language the college uses to describe itself attract you?
- What is your general impression of the college?
- Is the school accredited?
- If professional certification is required for employment in the field that interests you, how many students enrolled in the school's program pass the certification exam?

ADMISSION PROCESS

- ◆ When are applications due?
- ◆ Does the college accept the Common Application? If so, does it require supplemental forms?
- ◆ What does the application contain? Are essays required?
- ◆ Is an interview suggested or required? Is an interview available from staff or alumni?
- ◆ When may you visit the college? What is its policy regarding campus visits?
- ◆ What are the financial aid deadlines? What financial aid forms are required?

NOW ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

- ◆ Am I a strong candidate for admission to this college?
- ◆ If I am not a strong candidate, what are my chances?
- ◆ Do I want to visit this college?
- ◆ What additional information do I need?

Source: Susan Staggers, Cary Academy, North Carolina

Categories of College Deadlines

Regular Decision

Applications will be accepted by the college up until the stated application deadline. All applications will then be reviewed. Decisions will be mailed to all students at the same time, usually in late March or early April, but no later than April 15th.

Early Decision

Some students are so sure of their first choice college early in the senior year that they apply for what is known as Early Decision. Students electing this plan agree to withdraw any other application they have submitted, if the first choice college informs them that they have been accepted for Early Decision. This is a binding agreement to attend if accepted and may occur as early as November of the senior year. Depending on the date of notification and deadlines of other colleges of interest, students sometimes do not need to submit any other application when applying to their first choice school through the Early Decision program.

Early Action

Many colleges offer a plan known as Early Action. This differs from Early Decision because students are not committed to enrollment. They have until the customary Candidates' Reply Date (May 1st) to indicate their intention. For the most part, students may apply under Early Action to as many colleges as they choose. There are some colleges with restrictions. Students need to check each school's policies.

Open Admission

The policy of a college to admit high school graduates and other adults generally without regard to conventional academic qualifications, such as high school subjects, high school marks, and admissions test scores. Thus, virtually everyone who applies is accepted.

Rolling Admissions

Some colleges indicate decisions as soon as they have evaluated a student's credentials and they are complete. These decisions are made at any time during the year, usually by February. In most cases they do not require a response until May 1st, and no commitment to attend is expected until that date.

Wait List

Students who are qualified for admission but whose credentials are not as strong as others in the applicant pool, may be placed on the Wait List. This means that they might be offered a place after the May 1st Candidates Reply Date. The college then knows how many students plan to enroll. Some years colleges never resort to their Wait List because the original number of accepted and accepting students meets their quota for the fall.

As more and more qualified applicants are applying to colleges, the use of the Wait List appears to be increasing. Make sure you have one or more well-researched likely schools on your list.

Some Characteristics of a Good College Admission Essay

1. Interesting Topic – Be unique. Think of an interesting approach. You don't have to write about changing the world. Sometimes using an everyday experience can be more interesting. You want your essay to stand out from all the others.
2. Well Organized – Keep your thoughts organized. Don't ramble. Although the typical 5 paragraph essay may work, don't be afraid to try an alternate structure.
3. Edited and Revised – Have more than one person edit your work. This essay should be your very best work.
4. Personal and Meaningful – You want this essay to show your personality. You want to say something about you that is not obvious from the other information in your application.

Some Tips for Getting Started on Your College Essay

1. Be Prepared – Learn everything you can about writing a college essay. Go online and read examples. Look at the essay questions from the specific colleges you have applied.
2. Find a topic - Talk about your ideas. Find someone to discuss and brainstorm ideas with. Choose the topic that is most unique to you.
3. Plan and Draft – Think about the structure. Write a draft.

Sample Essay Questions

Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story. (Common Application)

Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others. (Common Application)

The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience? (Common Application)

Why is Central a good college choice for you? (Central CT State University)

How would you describe yourself as a human being? What quality do you like best about yourself and what do you like least? What quality would you most like to see flourish and which would you like to see wither? (Bates College)

Letters of Recommendation

- Most 4-year colleges require 2-3 letters of recommendation along with the application. This is in addition to a written evaluation from your school counselor. Some schools provide their own teacher evaluation forms to be completed as part of the application process.

- Senior and parents will be asked to sign a **“Transcript Release and FERPA Consent & Waiver for Letters of Recommendations”** for students needing the documents for College, Scholarships, Special Programs and Employment. Teachers and counselors completing evaluations, statements and letters of recommendation often wish to reference certain information such as grades, GPA or class rank contained in a student’s education record. Schools ask students to sign a ‘waiver’ stating that they have not read their letters of recommendation. Colleges generally believe that recommendations written with this understanding are more candid and honest. For this reason, we ask that teachers upload their letters/evaluation forms onto Naviance to be sent directly to colleges. We will keep these letters on file and make copies of them upon request to be sent with applications, scholarship programs, etc. These letters will not be released to students without the permission of their author.

- It is advised that two letters of recommendation be from teachers. Students may also consider asking coaches, advisors, mentors, employers, or church or community leaders for letters of recommendation. It is the responsibility of the student to be very clear as to the specific request of each college. Do not assume that what one college requires is the same for all!

- Provide the individual writing the letter with at least one month’s notice. Requests for letters should be in person followed by request through Naviance. Provide the person writing the letter with as much information as possible. (i.e. student resume/activity sheet, future plans/major, where you will be applying to, etc.) Additional information will be available at the beginning of your senior year.

- Letters **should not** be addressed to specific colleges. They should be written for a general audience so that they can be used for all schools/scholarship programs.

Write a thank you note to the individuals who took the time to write you a letter of recommendation! Follow up with each person with information about your acceptances and your final plans. This is the step that most students forget!

Format for Writing a College Resume

One section of college applications that stumps many students is the section on extra-curricular activities.

Resumes will be created using Naviance.

Most students simply create chronological lists of their extracurricular accomplishments. Big mistake!

This is your chance to show the college admissions officers what kinds of activities you did in high school, and how they made you:

**More mature,
Better at time management,
A leader,
More interested in the value of education, etc.**

1. Start by making a list of all your extracurricular activities, summer activities, and jobs. List everything big and small.

For every activity, job, and sport you should try to list as much of the following as possible:

- ◆ Name of the organization, program, or business
- ◆ A one to two sentence description of the group, program, or business
- ◆ Any leadership positions you held and your responsibilities (when describing your roles, and responsibilities)
- ◆ Any special projects that you initiated or oversaw (these could be either long-term or one-time projects)
- ◆ Dates you participated or worked
- ◆ Number of hours per week you spent on the activity or job.

If you are having trouble remembering everything, make use of other people's memories – families, friends, staff at the programs.

2. Once you have your list, you need to prioritize since you will not be able to fit everything on the application form. The single most important criteria in prioritizing is to find activities in which you have demonstrated **leadership**.
3. Use the following format and fill in your activities information.
4. Give your activities resume to your school counselor.

Objective

To attend a four-year college to major in elementary education.

Education

Sep 2015 – Present: **Nathan Hale-Ray High School**
Moodus, CT
High School Diploma

Work Experience

May 2017 – Present: **Ice Cream Scooper/ Cashier**
East Haddam
The Ice Cream Stop
Grades 11,12
15 Hrs/Week

Extracurricular Activities

Sep 2015 – Present: **Girl's Basketball Team**
Grades 9,10,11,12
JV- Gr. 9 and 10 Varsity- Gr. 11 and 12 Team Captain- Gr. 12
Sep 2015 – Present: **Student Council**
Grades 9,10,11,12
Collaborate with other officers to promote a positive school climate.

Awards/Certificates

Apr 2017: **National Honor Society**
Grades 11,12
Recognized for maintaining high grades and contributing positively to East Haddam through my involvement at school and in the community.

Music/Artistic Achievement

Sep 2015 – Present: **High School Band**
Grades 9,10,11,12
10 Hrs/Week

Play 3rd chair trumpet in the school band.

Email Etiquette

CORRESPONDING WITH A SCHOOL VIA E-MAIL: The DO's and DON'T's of E-Mail Etiquette

The nature of e-mail is informal compared to standard business mail, but it is important not to be too informal.

“DO’s”...

- ◆ Remember that your e-mail messages may be added to your admissions file.
- ◆ Choose an appropriate e-mail address. You may want to rethink addresses like wildthing@hotmail.com or hatetostudy@yahoo.com.
- ◆ Give your full name, address, phone number and high school in each message. Spellcheck your e-mail and use proper punctuation.
- ◆ Use salutations, i.e. Dear Admissions Officer.
- ◆ Be as polite and respectful in an e-mail as you would in a face-to-face meeting or telephone Conversation
- ◆ Use the “reply with history” function to help schools remember the questions you asked in previous e-mails.
- ◆ Check the e-mail address of the recipient before hitting the “send” button.
- ◆ Check the school’s Web site if you have a lot of questions before sending an e-mail. If you still have specific questions, it is better to call the school and have a conversation.

“DON’Ts”...

- ◆ Don’t use all lower or upper case letters; all lower case is difficult to read and upper case can give the impression of SHOUTING!
- ◆ Don’t use “IMPORTANT INFORMATION!!!!” OR “Please read” as subjects for your e-mail. These are commonly used for junk e-mails or viruses.
- ◆ Don’t use attachments. Schools are wary of attachments since they may carry computer viruses.
- ◆ Don’t send anything confidential in an e-mail. E-mails are more like a postcard than a letter in a sealed envelope.
- ◆ Don’t send blanket e-mails to a lot of schools at once. Do some research and then ask questions indicating genuine interest!

College Visitations

As it was mentioned before, visiting a college campus will give you a better understanding of the school's atmosphere and student population.

TIME TABLE: WHEN TO VISIT

1. It is never too early to visit colleges for a tour. It is recommended that students try to visit a couple of college campuses by the end of their junior year if possible.
2. Using a map to plan your trip, visit two colleges per day.
3. If at all possible, plan your visit at a time when college is in session. Don't make your only visit to a campus during the summer.
4. Return in fall to those schools you are most interested in for a day of visiting classes, talking with students, staying overnight, etc.
5. If you would like to see a coach or faculty member in an area of interest, mention that when you call. Colleges do their best to accommodate you.

THE VISIT: STEP BY STEP

1. Make an appointment for an information session or tour by **CALLING** the admissions office in advance.
2. Take a student guided campus tour. Check facilities including dormitories.
3. Talk to students. They are a useful source of information.
4. Have a meal on campus in the dining hall.
5. Read the campus newspaper as a means of finding out what the issues are on campus.
6. Ask questions... Don't be bashful!

Preparing for the College Interview

Schedule the Appointment well in advance by letter or phone. Many colleges will require several months advance notice during the most sought after times, usually September to December of the senior year.

First Choice Last. Practice your interview technique at colleges that are far down on your list of preferred choices and leave your first-choice colleges until last.

Research the College to gain information on courses of study, local atmosphere and entrance requirements.

Take a copy of your latest transcript and SAT or ACT scores and high school profile for referral if warranted.

Develop a Resume of your school activities, community involvement, work experience and hobbies. Be prepared to answer questions concerning the above and try to correlate them with the college you are visiting.

Sit down with your Counselor prior to your visit to campus for a discussion on that college.

Go over some of the Questions in the sections that follow with a friend, parent, teacher or counselor. Respond to them as you would at an interview. This will reduce anxiety and nervousness when the actual interview takes place. Recording yourself for practice is also advisable.

Dress Properly. Being neat, clean and conservatively dressed will never hurt you.

Be Prompt. Allow a sufficient time to arrive at the school before your scheduled interview. Walk around if possible. Call if you will be late for your appointment.

A Guide to a Successful College Interview

Many colleges require or recommend an interview of all or some of their applicants. Whether required or not, an interview is a great opportunity to make a case for yourself and your particular strengths. An interview is also a good opportunity to find out about a college. An on-campus interview with an admission officer is best, but most colleges will arrange for you to be interviewed near your home if you live far from the college.

Come prepared with a list of questions about the college and be ready for the interviewer's questions on topics such as : subjects you're interested in, extracurricular activities, books that are important to you and why, the importance of a college education, your reasons for wanting to go to that particular college, your career plans, your major strengths and weaknesses, etc. Probably the best piece of advice about interview, though, is to relax and be yourself.

INTERVIEW

The interview is a great opportunity for you to find out more about a school and for you to tell them about yourself. Some interviews can be very helpful in the decision-making process for you. Don't get stressed out! The interviewer will not be there to torture you, but be prepared for some challenging questions.

Interviews can have one of several forms. An interview can be designed to share information or to evaluate you as a candidate for admission. The information type can be either an individual or group interview. Some colleges use the evaluative interview to determine your viability as an applicant.

Most interviews are designed to collect information about you, your interests, your activities, your family and your insights into the things you do. A good interviewer will allow you to do the talking, only asking questions to help the process.

QUESTIONS ASKED BY COLLEGE INTERVIEWERS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What got you interested in our college?
3. What will be your major in college? Why?
4. Where do you see yourself after college?
5. What activities did you do in high school? Did you hold any part-time jobs?
6. What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school?
7. What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
8. How do you spend your leisure time?
9. What teacher impressed you the most in the past year?
10. What three books have impressed you the most in the past year?
11. What were the three most important events in your lifetime? What decisions have you most regretted and why?
12. Can you give me an example of how well you get along with your classmates?
13. Do you prefer working alone or with a group?
14. Who was the greatest influence in your life?
15. Are there any questions that you want to ask?

QUESTIONS A STUDENT MIGHT ASK A COLLEGE INTERVIEWER

1. Are you familiar with my high school? Is there anything I can tell you about it?
2. How many of your graduates go on to graduate school?
3. What do students do on weekends?
4. Could you comment on the placement records of graduates with the major companies?
5. What athletic teams and clubs are the most popular here?
6. Do you place more emphasis on class rank or standardized test scores in your admission decisions?
7. Do you have a cooperative plan? Independent study? Study abroad?
8. What percent of the entering freshman class graduate in four years?
9. How large are your freshman introductory classes?
10. How do I compare academically with students already attending this school?
11. Is there a computer network from the school library that can be accessed from all dorm rooms?
12. If majoring in an area requiring certification, licensing, etc., ask whether the program will qualify you for entrance into the profession and prepare you for state or national certifying examinations.

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS IN COLLEGE INTERVIEWING

DO:

1. Come prepared
2. Dress properly and be on time
3. Ask good questions
4. Answer questions honestly and to the point
5. Be familiar with the college you are visiting
6. Be polite
7. Be enthusiastic
8. Write a thank you note to your interviewer after your visit
9. Evaluate your performance the next day
10. Correct any mistakes before the next interview

DON'T:

1. Talk too much or too little
2. Be too cocky or conceited
3. Show up late unless you have called ahead
4. Try to influence the interviewer by whom you know
5. Make derogatory remarks about your high school or its teachers
6. Fail to get help after you arrive home if you feel the interview was a disaster

Acknowledgements

"Make The College Interview Work For You"
Alan Glous Associates, Inc., Needham, MA

Highly Selective Colleges

You are probably a student who has been used to excelling – being in the top few in your class – now you need to consider that you are competing with many students who are in the same group as you. Being Valedictorian alone is not always enough to get you into a highly competitive school.

The top schools in the nation know that most students who apply for admission are able to do college level work, so they need to look beyond ability. First, many divide their applicants into 4 categories from which they make their admission decisions separately:

- A. LEGACIES** – This group includes the children of alumni (i.e. a graduate of their institution). Sometimes this group expands to include grandchildren, nieces/nephews, and siblings. Private schools get much of their financial support from these people and they cannot be ignored. However, even though you may be a legacy, the school will expect you to meet their academic qualifications in order to admit you.
- B. MINORITIES** – As schools strive for a racially and ethnically integrated population, special consideration is often given to those with minority backgrounds.
- C. ACADEMIC SHINING STARS** – Institutions of this caliber have a large number of valedictorians who apply to their schools. Though, you would think they would get in easily, these schools want a diverse student body. Although it does increase your chances of admission if you are in this group, you still need things in your record that help you stand out in this group of stand-outs! You will find quarterback competing against quarterback, and bassoonist competing against bassoonist. This category changes from year to year. In one year a college may be looking to replace a swimmer who is graduating and in another year they may need volunteers. However, you can set yourself apart from the group will help you here.
- D. THE REST** – So you are a very good student, so are the rest of this very large group. The reality is that unless you are a part of the other three groups, your chance for admission decreases. The best approach in this case is to look for ways to help you stand out.

EXAMPLE: Let's say you are a very good student. You have no specific talent or ability, but you have been a member of a couple of clubs. Although you did not become a leader in the group, you were always there. You did the work that was needed- reliably, dependably. A recommendation from the club advisor may make you truly shine. Remember, they don't want a population of all leaders; they need a group of worker bees as well.

Students with Learning Disabilities

The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that all post-secondary institutions provide equal opportunity to all qualified students and must make all programs and courses readily accessible to them. It also requires that colleges make reasonable adjustments (smaller course loads, more test time) to permit students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements. They must ensure that the students are not excluded from programs because of the absence of facilities or services.

The legislation has caused many institutions to set up committees to evaluate their programs and facilities and make suggestions for change. Some of the features of these changes include:

- ☐ Pre-admission interviews
- ☐ Specialized orientation programs
- ☐ Individual study plans
- ☐ Expanded intramural/social activities

Information about specialized services can be found in the individual college catalogs or separate brochures. Please contact the college for more information.

Also, Lovejoys College Guide for the Learning Disabled Student or Peterson's Colleges With Programs for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Disorders are excellent reference books.

Students with learning disabilities and their families are encouraged to work closely with their school counselor and transition coordinator to learn about how services are offered at the college level and how to access them.

**Information the College-Bound Student with Learning Disabilities
Should Know About Their College Choices**

1. The number of students with learning disabilities on campus.
2. The approximate number of students in large and small lecture classes.
3. The name and telephone number of the Services for Students with Disabilities coordinator.
4. Who the class teachers are: professors or graduate students.
5. The office hours of the faculty.
6. Whether the people who provide support services are peer tutors or learning disability specialists.
7. The ratio of students with learning disabilities to learning disability teachers.
8. Whether or not recorded texts are available.
9. Whether or not there are extra costs for support services.
10. The availability of diagnostic testing services.
11. How many students there are per room in the dormitories, and if the dormitory atmosphere is conducive to proper study.
12. Data, if available, on how successful graduates with disabilities have been with respect to employment and graduate study.
13. Whether or not SATs/ACTs can be waived for students with learning disabilities.
14. Whether or not foreign language requirements can be waived for students with learning disabilities.

Getting Attention from College Coaches

The recruiting process for college coaches is difficult. Due to the fact that they have limited time, staff, budgets, and proximity to you depending on their school's location, a college coach will not contact many high school athletes. There are also numerous opportunities at the Division II and III levels at outstanding institutions. With these schools, it is a good idea to be proactive in "marketing" yourself in order to make yourself known to the coaches and get your name out there. To do this, you can put together a packet of information that can include the following:

LETTER/EMAIL:

Introduce yourself to the coach and tell him/her of your interest, and how you feel you can contribute to his or her program and school. Make it specific to each coach, don't just write one and photocopy it.

RESUME:

- ☐ Create resumes with all your contact information:
 - o Name, address, phone number, and your high school's name, address and phone number
- ☐ List your academic information:
 - o GPA, test scores, intended major, and career goals
- ☐ Include your athletic information:
 - o Height, weight, positions played, pertinent statistics, awards/honors, and other sports you play
- ☐ List your skills relevant to the sport you're interested in:
 - o Speed, strength, vertical leap for basketball, MPH for pitchers, bench press for football, number of goals in soccer or hockey, 40-yard dash time for most sports

GAME SCHEDULE/VIDEO:

- ☐ Send coaches your high schools and/or club team schedule. They will keep it on file and may pay you a visit to scout you if they are interested. You may consider sending along a video of yourself in action. A good coach will have you evaluated in person, knowing that no one is going to submit a video of a poor performance. A video may be another tool to move the process along.

REFERENCES:

- ☐ What can further separate you from the crowd are your references. List your team's coach or a scout or alumni member who can attest to your athletic abilities and personal characteristics.

CAMPS:

- ☐ Another way to gain exposure and get college coaches interested in recruiting you is by attending sports camps on college campuses. Coaches from various colleges staff many summer camps. It's an ideal time to make contacts and show off your stuff.

SHOWCASES:

- A recent phenomenon in recruiting is showcase camp. These often take place over a two day span and serve as an opportunity for coaches to see many players at once. You may get lost in the shuffle sometimes, but by participating in a reputable showcase, the letters may come.

NCAA ELIGIBILITY

All juniors wanting to play a college sport at the Division I or Division II level should register on the NCAA website during their junior year. Be mindful that while college coaches cannot contact a student until after their junior year, students can reach out to college coaches at any time. Students are encouraged to meet with college coaches when touring campuses.

NCAA DIVISION I AND II INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS - QUICK REFERENCE KNOW THE RULES:

Core Courses

- **NCAA Division I and II require 16 core courses.** See charts below.
- **NCAA Division I requires 10 core courses** to be completed **prior to the seventh semester** (seven of the 10 must be a combination of English, math or natural or physical science that meet the distribution requirements below). These 10 courses become “locked in” at the start of the seventh semester and cannot be retaken for grade improvements.
 - *It is possible for a Division I college-bound student-athlete to still receive athletics aid and the ability to practice with the team if he or she fails to meet the 10 course requirement, but they will not be able to compete.*

Test Scores

- **Division I** uses a sliding scale to match test scores and core grade-point averages (GPA). The sliding scale for those requirements is shown on a following page.
- **Division II** requires a minimum SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.
- The SAT score used for NCAA purposes includes **only** the critical reading and math sections. **The writing section of the SAT is not used.**
- The ACT score used for NCAA purposes is a **sum** of the following four sections: English, mathematics, reading and science.
- **When you register for the SAT or ACT, use the NCAA Eligibility Center code of 9999 to ensure all SAT and ACT scores are reported directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center from the testing agency. Test scores that appear on transcripts will not be used.**

Grade-Point Average

- **Be sure** to look at your high school's List of NCAA Courses on the NCAA Eligibility Center's website (www.eligibilitycenter.org). Only courses that appear on your school's List of NCAA Courses will be used in the calculation of the core GPA. Use the list as a guide.
- **Division I** students should use the below Sliding Scale to determine eligibility to receive athletics aid, practice and competition during the first year.
- **Division I** GPA requirement to receive athletic aid and to practice is 2.000-2.299 (corresponding test-score requirements are listed on Sliding Scale).
- **Division I** GPA requirement to be eligible for competition is 2.300 (corresponding test-score requirements are listed on Sliding Scale).
- **The Division II** GPA requirement to receive athletic aid and to practice is 2.000. (corresponding test-score requirements are listed on Sliding Scale).
- **The Division II** GPA requirement to be eligible for competition is 2.200. (corresponding test-score requirements are listed on Sliding Scale).

□Remember, the NCAA GPA is calculated using NCAA core courses only.

DIVISION I 16 Core Courses

- 4 years of English.
- 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
- 2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school).
- 1 year of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.
- 2 years of social science.
- 4 years of additional courses (from any area above world language, or comparative religion/philosophy).

DIVISION II 16 Core Courses

- 3 years of English.
- 2 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher).
- 2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school)
- 3 years of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science.
- 2 years of social science.
- 4 years of additional courses (from any area above, world language, or comparative religion/ philosophy).

For more information regarding the rules, please go to www.NCAA.org. Click on "Academics and Athletes" then "Eligibility and Recruiting." Or visit the Eligibility Center Web site at www.eligibilitycenter.org. Please call the NCAA Eligibility Center if you have questions:

Toll-Free number: 877-262-1492

VOCATIONAL, TECHNICAL OR TRADE SCHOOL BOUND

Many students will find that a specialized school fulfills their needs much better than a two-year or four year college. Investigation of job opportunities will reveal that many occupations require training that may be obtained through forms of learning such as career training. Specialized schools generally do not require an examination like the SAT or the ACT. Many will recommend that a test be taken at the school for placement purposes only. All career-focused schools require a transcript of the student's record, and often want teacher and counselor recommendations.

NOTE: Be sure to check whether the program you want is offered at a state-supported college. Before you pay for a private program, compare it to the state or local institution.

Some key factors to consider when choosing a specialized school include:

LOCATION

Where the school is located and how will you get there. If the school is not within commuting distance, what the living arrangements are.

EXPENSES

What the total expenses are to complete the program, including the costs of supplies, materials and travel.

ENTRANCE/PLACEMENT EXAMS

If exams are required and what you can do to prepare for them.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

If any special course requirements are needed in addition to a high school diploma (i.e. two years of college preparatory mathematics, etc.).

COSTS AND FINANCIAL AID

What the costs are and what kind of financial aid is available. Only government approved schools are eligible for government aid.

ACCREDITATION

This means that when you complete the program, you are eligible to take a licensing examination if one is required or receive a certificate granting you the right to practice your chosen career. ***THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.***

JOB PLACEMENT

Does the school have a good Placement Office? Check this out with recent graduates. A good placement officer will have established relationships with local businesses that rely on the school to provide candidates for entry-level jobs.

FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

Talk to prospective employers about the school's reputation within the company and their past experience with hiring graduates from the school.

Military Career Options

There are numerous job training opportunities in the military for both men and women. If you are concerned about the information that you are receiving or contacts that are being made by your recruiter, see your school counselor. Recruiting officers of all branches of the Armed Services visit the high schools regularly. You can also seek additional information by visiting the recruiting offices in your area.

Students planning to join a branch of the Armed Services upon graduation from high school are encouraged to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). This battery is given at the high school at no cost and with absolutely no student obligation to the military.

This test consists of a group of twelve sections that measure your aptitude in five separate career fields and provides an indication of your academic ability. It is not a pass or fail test. Your scores can help identify career fields worth exploring. This test is administered by appointment during the school year by military personnel in each high school. There is no cost to either the student or school district, nor does taking the test obligate the student to enlist. All branches of the service offer educational assistance programs.

When individuals who took the ASVAB as high school seniors seek to enlist in one of the military services within two years of having taken the test, their results from the school testing program will be used to determine job guarantees for the enlistee unless the job he/she is seeking is one of those few which require additional qualifications.

Military enlistees should also be aware of the fact that they are eligible for benefits under the Veteran's Educational Assistance Act, a voluntary program funded by the Veteran's Administration.

Your Options for Military Service

- ◆ Enlist in the military full time
- ◆ Join ROTC program while attending college:
 - Full scholarship programs
 - Programs without scholarship are also available
- ◆ Enlist in the military and take college courses at bases
- ◆ Attend a military academy:
 - West Point
 - Annapolis
 - Air Force Academy
 - Coast Guard Academy

Things to Find Out From Your Military Recruiter

- ◆ Education and skill training availability
- ◆ Number of years commitment
- ◆ Living/working conditions
- ◆ Change for advancement
- ◆ Travel
- ◆ Basic Training program
- ◆ Salary

Application Procedures

1. Direct Entrance

Junior/Senior year: Visit various recruiters and gather information about several branches of service. Get a guarantee in writing from the recruiter before you agree to sign up.

2. ROTC

Fall of Senior year: Apply for scholarship programs through your counselor.

3. Military Academy

Spring of Junior year: Begin process to seek a nomination from your Congressman.

Summer of Junior year: Arrange for medical and physical exams.

December/January of Senior year: Receive nominations.*

(refer to catalogues for specific guidelines)

R.O.T.C. Scholarship Programs

Reserve Officers Training Corps. College scholarships are competitive and the application process begins during the spring of the junior. Students considering ROTC should inform their school counselor during their junior year and obtain additional information. In addition to the written application, candidates must undergo a physical examination, formal interview, and a physical abilities test. The first step in the process is to write for an application:

Air Force ROTC
Maxwell Air Force Base
Alabama, GA 36112-6663
www.afrotc.com

Army ROTC
Box 9000
Clifton, NJ 07015
www.goarmy.com

Navy ROTC
Box 3060
Hyattsville, MD 20784
www.NROTC.navy.mil

Physical Fitness

During the application process you will be required to participate in two physical fitness evaluations – one for the nomination and one for the academy.

*Nominations

Most members of Congress use the competitive form of nomination, rather than the direct appointment method. This means that ten nominees will be chosen from all those applying for each vacancy available and that their names will be forwarded to the individual academies as the congressional nominees. The academies will evaluate the candidates and select one person from each group of ten to fill the available vacancy. The names of the other nominees are put into a qualified alternate pool from which the superintendent of the academy can select additional nominees. Thus, it is conceivable that all ten of the nominees for a particular vacancy can be offered appointments to an academy.

Military Service Academies

Students interested in the Service Academies should begin their research as soon as possible. Juniors need to pay close attention to the Application for nomination process to insure that they receive full consideration. Admissions to the Naval Academy, U.S. Military Academy, Merchant Marine Academy, Air Force Academy, and Coast Guard Academy are **highly competitive**. Students interested in applying to one or more of these academies should inform their counselor and work closely with the school counseling office throughout the application process.

This is a two step process. The first step in securing an appointment to one or more of the academies is to write and ask for a Pre-Candidate Questionnaire. Addresses can be found at the end of this section. The second step is to write to each of your senators and your congressperson and ask that they consider you as one of their nominees. In this letter you should indicate your first, second, third and fourth choices for academies as well as your name, address, telephone number, date of birth, social security number, high school name and year of graduation and names of your parents/guardians. See your school counselor if you need help writing your letter. Congressional representatives and Senators nominate students from their districts or states. Then the academies decide, from among those nominated, whom to accept. The time able is as follows:

Junior Year

April	Application for nomination available from district congressional office or call your congressional representative. Pre-candidate questionnaire filed at 1 st and 2 nd choice academies.
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Senior Year

November 1 st	Application Deadline
December	Nominations made to the academies and applicants so notified
Spring	Appointments to academies announced and applicants so informed
July	Classes begin

The Coast Guard Academy has an admissions procedure similar to other highly competitive colleges. There is no nomination process involved. Write directly for an application to: Admission Office, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, CT 06320

Admissions Office
US Air Force Academy
USAF Academy, CO 80840
www.usafa.af.mil

Admissions Office
US Military Academy
West Point, NY 10996
www.admissions.usma.edu

Admissions Office
Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD 21402
www.usna.edu

Admissions Office
Merchant Marine Academy
Kings Point, NY 10024
www.usmma.edu

Employment

How to Look for a Job

- Apply directly to Employers •Private Employment Agencies •School Placement Offices
- Ask Friends/Relatives •State Employment Services •Internet Websites
- Answer Newspaper Ads: Local and Non-Local

Prepare For Each Interview

- Find out all you can about the company, policies and product.
- Prepare questions about company and position to ask interviewer.
- Bring your resume or send one ahead if requested.
- Be prepared; answer questions simply and quickly; itemize your work experiences.
- Dress appropriately; use common sense and good taste.
- Arrive early for the interview. You may be asked to wait, but it will make an excellent first impression.
- If your interview is out of town, check mode of transportation to be used, and weather conditions for the day.

At the Interview

- When you are introduced, remember the interviewer's name.
- If requested to fill out additional papers or forms, be brief and simple. Use your resume or notes for reference.
- Be sure-footed, ask questions, talk about your goals, sell your skills and training.
- Relax, be yourself, honest, tactful; present yourself in a way that the employers think they need you.
- Be alive, indicate you know the company, business, etc., their product, their people, process and potential growth.
- Don't evade questions; answer them honestly and simply, look at your interviewer while talking.
- Your posture is important; don't slouch, chew gum or smoke.
- When questions are asked to which you do not know the answer, don't fake it; simply answer the questions as honestly as you can.
- The interviewer wants to talk to you. Do not bring anyone with you to a job interview.
- By all means, talk about your past work experiences; try not to brag or exaggerate. Try not to conceal previous work records (even though they may have been poor experiences) or complain about past employers or supervisors. If you were serious about your education while in high school, you should do very well. BE POSITIVE!!!
- Conclude the interview with an arrangement for finding out the perspective employer's decision on hiring. As a follow-up, write a note thanking the person who interviewed you for his/her time and consideration.
- Do not become discouraged if, during your first interview, you become nervous or fail to present yourself favorably. You will improve with time. Your counselor in your high school is there to help you. See him/her early in your senior year so he/she can work with you.

Interview follow-up

- Make notes on the interview as soon as possible after the appointment.
 - (1) Likes
 - (2) Dislikes
 - (3) Important points to remember
 - (4) Name and title of the interviewer
- Write a letter of appreciation.
 - (1) This shows thoughtfulness, courtesy, and maturity.
 - (2) It reinforces the interviewer's memory of you as an individual

Alternate Educational Programs for a Gap Year

If you are considering taking a year to explore your interests before college, we strongly recommend that you go through the college admissions process, wait for admissions offers, and then defer your entrance to the college of your choice for a year. Colleges are happy to support students making this choice and are happy to welcome students into their community who have had a rich and varied year off experience.

- ❖ **AmeriCorps** – 800-942-2677 – www.americorps.org – Intensive national service programs to meet critical needs in education, public service, health, and the environment. Programs include tutoring and mentoring youth, building affordable housing, teaching computer skills, cleaning parks and streams, running after school programs, and helping communities respond to disasters.
- ❖ **Audubon Expedition Institute** – <https://expeditioneducation.org> – Educational programs that focus on environmental issues. Interdisciplinary learning includes camping out and traveling in a bus classroom.
- ❖ **Castle Rock Institute** – www.castle-rock.org – Off-campus study programs for college students that combine coursework with backpacking, climbing, biking, and paddling with locations in North Carolina, Australia, and New Zealand.
- ❖ **Center for Interim Programs** – 617-547-0980 – www.interimprograms.com – Personalized programs for experiential learning. Internships, apprenticeships, volunteer work, cultural and academic programs, language courses, arts, animals, outdoors, and environmental programs designed from a 4,000 database of options.
- ❖ **City Year** – 617-927-2500 – www.cityyear.org – A national youth organization that provides services to US cities such as Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbia, Columbus, Detroit, New Hampshire cities, New York, Philadelphia, Providence, San Antonio, San Jose, Seattle, and Washington, DC.
- ❖ **Dynamy** – 508-755-2571 – www.dynamy.org – A year long program of internship where students live in apartments and participate in careers that are tied to areas of interest.
- ❖ **Earthwatch** – 800-776-0188 or 978-461-0081 – www.earthwatch.org – Scientific research expeditions from St. Croix to Madagascar.
- ❖ **English Speaking Union** – London telephone: +44 (0)20 7529 1550 – www.esu.org – An educational exchange program with boarding schools in Great Britain that focuses on the English Language and culture.
- ❖ **Gap Year** – www.gapyear.com – An opportunity to travel and volunteer in different countries.
- ❖ **Global Service Corps** – 415-551-0000 – www.globalservicecorps.org – Provides international volunteers worldwide to live and work abroad on projects in developing countries.

- ❖ **Habitat for Humanity** – 229-924-6935 – www.habitat.org – A volunteer organization that builds decent, affordable housing for poor families.
- ❖ **I-to-I Volunteer Abroad** –800-985-4852– www.i-to-i.com – Arranges unique volunteer, work, and teach abroad programs for students. Projects in 23 countries need help with conservation, care work, teaching, media, building, and health work.
- ❖ **National Outdoor Leadership School** – 800-710-NOLS – www.nols.edu – Offers courses in outdoor and leadership skills from 10 days to full semesters in wilderness classrooms.
- ❖ **National Society or Experiential Education** – 856-423-3427 – www.nsee.org – National resource center for experiential education programs.
- ❖ **Outward Bound** – 866-467-7651 – www.outwardbound.org – Offers courses in adventure education from 5-85 days.
- ❖ **Sea Education Association** – www.sea.edu – Provides academic study abroad programs called SEA Semester. Courses are available for high school and college students.
- ❖ **Semester at Sea** - 800-854-0195 – www.semesteratsea.com – University of Pittsburg offers semester at sea courses.
- ❖ **Serve Your World** – www.serveyourworld.com – An online database of volunteer organizations that provide volunteer opportunities for students to participate in around the world.
- ❖ **Student Conservation Association** – 603-543-1700 – www.thesca.org – Offers conservation service opportunities, outdoor skills, and leadership training. Students care for national parks and forests, historic and cultural resources, and urban green spaces.
- ❖ **United Nations Volunteers** – Germany telephone: (49 228) 815 2000 – www.onlinevolunteering.org – a UN organization that supports human development globally by promoting volunteerism and by mobilizing volunteers.
- ❖ **Up With People** – 877-264-8856 or 303-460-7100 – www.upwithpeople.org – World Smart Leadership Program offers a semester long study abroad program that includes entertaining opportunities in music.
- ❖ **Where There Be Dragons** – 800-982-9203 – www.wheretherebedragons.com – Learning opportunities through off-the-beaten path expeditions to China, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Tibet, India, Mongolia, Mexico, Guatemala, and Peru. Trips and rugged wilderness explorations.
- ❖ **World Learning**– 802-258-3212 – www.sit.edu – Schools for International Training offers a college semester abroad.

Four Categories of Financial Aid

1. **GRANTS** – funds that do not have to be repaid, usually given to the student because of financial need.
2. **LOANS** – money that must be paid back with interest.
3. **COLLEGE WORK STUDY** – money that the student earns through a campus job.
4. **SCHOLARSHIPS** – money that does not have to be repaid; awarded because a student is outstanding in some area.

Financial aid is usually awarded in the form of a “package”. A package is a combination of grants, loans, work study, and sometimes scholarships. Packages are awarded through the financial aid office and will vary from college to college.

Follow These Steps:

In the fall of your son/daughter’s senior year, complete the individual financial aid (and scholarship) application forms for each college to which the student is applying.

Complete the **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)** after **October 1st** of your **child’s senior year** at **www.fafsa.ed.gov**.

The FAFSA is a federal form that asks for information on income and assets. Approximately 1 week after you have submitted your FAFSA online, you will receive an SAR (Student Aid Report) which will inform you of your EFC (estimated family contribution). This is the amount the government determined you can afford to pay for your son/daughter’s education that year. If the cost of the college is more than your EFC, you have a demonstrated financial need and should be eligible for financial aid. Contact the college’s financial aid office for further information and assistance.

In addition to the FAFSA, some colleges also require the submission of the CSS/Financial Aid Profile. The Financial Aid Profile is a need analysis and there is a processing fee. This can be completed online at www.collegeboard.org.

Attend the Financial Aid Night at Hale-Ray, which is held in October of senior year.

Complete the FAFSA as soon after October 1st as possible. Still complete the FAFSA even if you know that you will not qualify for any need based aid because of your income. Colleges and organizations often want it verified that students are not eligible for need-based aid before they award non-need based aid. Completing the FAFSA is the only way to receive government-funded loans as well.

20 Questions to Ask About Financing College

Phase 1. Questions to ask during the application process

1. What are the average costs for tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, transportation, and other personal expenses for the first year? What are the ranges of room costs (single, double), board costs (21 meals?), and special tuition rates (flat rate for 15 -18 credits, etc.)? By how much will total costs increase each year? (A three- to five-year printed history of tuition and fee increases, as well as room and board increases, should be available.)
2. Does financial need have an impact on admissions decisions?
3. Does the decision to apply for Early Decision affect financial aid?
4. Does the institution offer financial aid programs as well as merit or other scholarships that do not include consideration of financial need? How and when should applications for need- and merit-based aid be completed?
5. What non-institutional sources of aid and information are available? (Check with the financial aid office regarding fee-based sources.)
6. What application forms are required for completing the financial aid process? What is the priority deadline for applying for financial aid? When will I be notified about financial aid decisions?

Phase 2. Questions to ask as you decide which college to attend

7. How much financial aid will I receive? Will I be billed for my share of the costs? Are there any other costs not accounted for in the aid offer that I should plan for, such as expenses for books, room and board, transportation, or personal needs?
8. If I and/or my family cannot meet the financial responsibilities with our current income or assets, what financing options are available to help us pay our share?
9. Will the financial aid office provide me with an explanation of how my expected family contribution, financial need, and award package were determined?
10. If the financial award package is insufficient, then under what conditions, if any, will the aid office reconsider its offer?
11. What are the terms and conditions of the aid programs included in my award package (e.g., treatment of outside scholarships, loan repayment policies, renewal criteria)? Regarding renewal, what are the academic requirements or other conditions for the renewal of financial aid, including scholarships?
12. How will my aid package change from year to year? Will loan amounts increase? What impact will cost increases have on the aid package? What will happen if my financial situation changes? What will happen if my financial situation changes? What will happen if my or another family member's enrollment status changes?

13. What amount of student loan debt does your typical student borrower have once he or she finishes college?

Phase 3. Making sure you understand the financial obligations of college

14. When can I/my family expect to receive bills from the college? How many times a year will bills be sent? If the bill is not paid by the deadline, will there be penalties? Does the college accept payment by credit card? Is there an option to pay monthly?

15. Is all financial aid credited to my account, or will I receive checks for some or all of the financial aid awarded? What about student employment earnings? If the aid exceeds billed charges, how do I receive the funds?

16. How much money will I need during the first week of school for necessities such as books and a parking permit? Can I use financial aid to pay for books and supplies? Can books and supplies be charged to my account? What typical out-of-pocket expenses do most students have during the year?

17. Is the information provided to students regarding budgeting resources, money management, and credit card usage?

18. Are there banking services with no-fee ATMs and/or check-cashing facilities on or near campus? Does the college have a debit card?

19. Will the college be responsive to midyear changes in family financial situations?

20. Regarding student employment, including the Federal Work-Study Program: How are jobs assigned? How many hours per week will a student be expected or allowed to work? How often and in what manner will I receive earnings payments? Will earnings be automatically credited to my account?

Source: The College Board

GLOSSARY

Accreditation – Recognized as maintaining standards that qualify the graduates for admission to higher or more specialized institutions.

AP Advanced Placement – The Advanced Placement Program gives students the opportunity to pursue college level studies while in secondary school and to receive advanced placement and/or credit, upon entering college.

Alumni/ae Interviews – Admissions interviews conducted by graduates of colleges to which you have applied. Often done locally when a student is unable to travel to a distant college for an interview.

ACT – American College Testing Program

Associate's Degree – A degree granted by most 2-year colleges and some 4-year colleges at the end of two years of study. A student may earn the Associates of Arts or Associates of Science degree, depending on the course of study.

Bachelor's Degree – A degree granted by 4-year institutions after completing four years (or in some cases, five years) of study. A student may earn a Bachelors of Arts or Bachelors of Science degree depending on the course of study.

Candidates' Reply Date Agreement (CRDA) – Originated by the College Board, this agreement establishes a common date, May 1st, that is the earliest a subscribing college may require an accepted applicant to say whether he or she plans to attend. About 300 colleges distribute acceptances in early April and have agreed to wait until May 1st to require an accepted candidate to reply to their offer. This allows students to make informed decisions when all alternatives are known.

Carnegie Units – One Carnegie unit is given for successful completion of one year's study of one academic subject in high school. Some colleges refer to these as "academic units". The name comes from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Class Rank – A student's standing based on an academic record compared with other members of the class. In a class of 100, the "best academic average" would be No. 1; the lowest would be No. 100.

CEEB (College Entrance Examination Board) – The CEEB is the organization that sponsors the most widely accepted battery of tests for college admissions. It is also commonly referred to as the College Board. Test preparation and registration materials are available in the School counseling Office. These Publications will be helpful to you and your parents in keeping track of registration dates, understanding the format of the tests and interpreting scores.

College Fair – A gathering of college representatives at a central location. Students can walk from booth to booth to collect information. Often accompanied by presentations on admissions, financial aid, etc.

CLEP - College Level Examination Program – Credit by examination is one way for students to receive college credit without taking a course. CLEP is a series of tests that allow students to show what they know in a variety of college disciplines. CLEP offers general examinations in five broad liberal arts areas; and it offers over 30 examinations in specific subjects, such as freshman English.

CSS - College Scholarship Service – The financial aid division of the College Board (CEEB). It provides a needs analysis service for financial aid applicants.

CSS Profile – A customized financial aid application required by some private schools. The college application indicates this requirement.

College Work Study Program – A government supported financial aid program coordinated through financial aid offices whereby an eligible student (based on need) may work part-time while attending class at least half-time, generally in college related jobs.

Consortium – Several colleges and universities in an area often join together in a consortium, or cooperative association, which gives students the opportunity to use the libraries or take courses at all member institutions. Consortium members often present joint lecture programs or unusual courses.

Cooperative Education – A program in which the student alternates between full-time college study and full-time paid employment related to the area of study. Under this plan, the bachelor's degree often requires five years to complete.

Core Curriculum – A group of courses, in varied areas of the arts and sciences, designed by a college as one of the requirements for a degree.

Credit By Examination – A program through which some colleges grant course credit based on results of the Advanced Placement Test scores, the ACT Proficiency Examination Program (PEP), the CEEB College Level Examination Program (CLEP), the New York College Proficiency Examination Program, or another examination developed by the college.

Deferred Admission – A college admissions plan whereby a student applies to a college and is notified of acceptance during senior year of high school. The student may take off a year for travel, work or other projects before attending college.

Early Action – This college admission plan allows highly qualified candidates who apply early to receive offers of admission by mid-December. Unlike the Early Decision Plan, the Early Action Plan does not allow an institution to request an applicant to make a prior commitment to matriculate, indicate college preferences, or make any response to an offer of admission until the traditional May 1st candidate's reply date.

Early Admission – This plan allows students to begin college work after their junior year of high school, usually without a diploma. This program is usually limited to exceptional students.

Early Decision – Some colleges offer to notify applicants of acceptance or rejection during the first semester of their senior year. There are two types of early decision plans: the single-choice plan and the first-choice plan. In the single-choice plan a student cannot apply to other colleges until (s)he has been notified by the early decision college. In the first-choice plan, a student may apply to other colleges but name the early decision college as their first choice college and agree to enroll in that college and withdraw all other applications if accepted.

ETS Educational Testing Service – The operational phase of many College Board programs, including the development and administration of the Board's major testing programs, are carried out by the Educational Testing Service. ETS is a separate and independently governed non-profit organization.

FAFSA Free Application for Federal Student Aid – A need analysis form developed by the College Scholarship Service (CSS) and completed by parents and students to provide colleges and agencies with an estimate of the parents' and student's ability to contribute toward the costs of post-secondary education. This form is available in the school counseling office or career center of your high school.

GED (General Educational Development Examination) – A series of tests that adults take to qualify for a high school equivalency certificate or diploma. Many colleges with accept satisfactory GED test results in place of a high school diploma.

Grade Point Average (GPA) – An indicator of the student's overall scholastic performance. The GPA is computed by totaling the number of grade points earned in each course (generally A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0) and dividing the sum by the total number of courses carried.

Language Proficiency Examination – An examination in a foreign language to determine whether a student has satisfied a college's foreign language requirement and, if not, which level of a foreign language course he or she should be placed in.

Official Transcript – Most colleges will only accept a transcript that bears the high school seal and is mailed directly from the high school to the college.

Open Admissions – The policy of some colleges of admitting virtually all high school graduates, regardless of academic qualifications such as high school grades and admissions tests scores.

Private College – Owned privately but often receives grants from public sources

Public College – Owned by a public entity (such as a state) and funded by a combination of public funds and tuition fees.

Qualified Acceptance – Occasionally an institution postpones action on an application and will suggest that the applicant pursue a particular course in its summer session or take a reduced course load in his/her freshman year. Upon satisfactory completion of this course, the college agrees to accept the student for its regular degree programs at the beginning of the first or second semester.

ROTC – Reserve Officers’ Training Corps – Programs conducted by certain colleges in cooperation with the United States Air Force, Army and Navy. This combines military education with baccalaureate degree study, often with financial support for those students who commit themselves to future service in the Armed Forces. Local recruiting offices of the services themselves can supply detailed information about these programs, as can participating colleges.

Rolling Admissions – A plan adopted by some colleges whereby students are notified of acceptances or rejection to that college usually within ten days after the receipt of a completed application. Colleges using rolling admissions continue to accept students until their freshman class is filled. Usually, it is wise to apply early to such colleges, since applications are normally not accepted after the admissions quota has been reached.

SAR – Student Aid Report – Detailed analysis from the Pell Grant Program of the applicant’s financial aid status based upon his/her filing of certain core data from the FAF.

SAT – Scholastic Assessment Tests – SAT I – Reasoning Tests and SAT Subject Tests

State Certification – State certification in a particular trade or profession specifies that you meet minimum competency requirements.

SDQ – Student Descriptive Questionnaire – A questionnaire that can be completed by students when they register for the Scholastic Assessment Test (SATI or SAT subject tests). It gives the student an opportunity to provide information about educational objectives, extracurricular activities, academic record and areas in which counseling or assistance may be needed.

SSS – Student Search Service – A College Board program designed to help colleges identify potential applicants with the particular academic or personal characteristics they are seeking. The service also provides students with an opportunity to learn about colleges with programs and characteristics they want. Information is gathered about students who wish to participate through the Student Descriptive Questionnaire of the ATP and the biographical section of the PSAT/NMSQT. The College Board then supplies each participating college with the names and addresses of students who have the particular characteristics they specify. The service is free to students.

PSAT/NMSQT – Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test

TOEFL Test of English as a Foreign Language – The TOEFL is designed for students for whom English is not a native language and whose scores on the SAT would obviously be affected by the language difference.

Transcript – A chronological listing of all subjects taken and grades received. Also may include standardized testing and other objective information. (See Official Transcript)

View Book – Short colorful booklet published by a college to highlight its programs, services and activities.

Waiting List – In addition to accepting and rejecting applicants, many colleges place students on a waiting list for admission. As accepted applicants decide to attend other colleges, the school will offer their places to students from the waiting list.

Websites to Explore

SAT/ACT Preparation Services

www.testprep.com

www.kaplan.com

www.collegeboard.org

www.princetonreview.com

www.barrontestprep.com

www.actstudent.org

www.khanacademy.org/sat

Career/College Search/On Line Campus Info

www.connection.naviance.com

www.campustours.com

www.collegeboard.org

www.collegeview.com

www.collegenet.com

www.petersons.com

www.schoolsintheusa.com

www.barronseduc.com

www.bls.gov/oco

www.careers-in-business.com

www.commonapp.org

www.princetonreview.com

Financial Aid-Scholarship Services

www.finaid.org

www.fastweb.com

www.fafsa.ed.gov

www.salliemae.com

www.collegeboard.org

www.ed.gov

www.nasfaa.org

www.ctdhe.org

www.chesla.org

www.ftc.gov

Student Athletes

www.ncaa.org

Military Academies

U.S. Navel Academy: www.usna.edu

U.S. Air Force Academy: www.usafa.edu

U.S. Military Academy (Westpoint): www.usma.edu

U.S. Coast Guard Academy: www.cga.edu

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy: www.usmma.edu