

James Caldwell High School

College Planning Guide



The college application process can seem overwhelming at first. With the help of this *Guide* and by working closely with your School Counselor, you can easily navigate the entire process, one step at a time.

The college application process is broken down by sections with several component parts. Each section is explained in detail. Please keep in mind that following ALL directions and meeting ALL deadlines is your responsibility and is critical to your success throughout the process.

We suggest that you read this *Guide* in its entirety before you begin this journey. Then, go back and consult each section as you approach and complete each step. Remember, your Counselor is available to assist you and answer any questions, or address any concerns.

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Reference Information

James Caldwell High School
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www.cwcboe.org

Naviance Student
<https://student.naviance.com/jameschs>

CEEB Code: 311578

SAT Test Center Code: 31865
ACT Test Center Code: 180720

Guidance Department Directory

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Preparing for College



HOW TO MAKE THE RIGHT COLLEGE DECISION

KNOW YOURSELF

One good way to begin your search is to start with yourself. What are your needs, preferences, interests, and requirements? If you are unsure of what career path you want to take, don't be alarmed! Many students change their mind about their career direction and college major at least once while in college.

GET A HEAD START

- Talk to your high school school counselor, teachers, parents, college students, alumni, and college admission counselors.
- Read college catalogs and search college websites. These sources will provide information such as admissions policies and procedures, course offerings, facts about student life, degree requirements, costs, financial aid, and all application deadlines.
- Talk to college representatives.
- Plan ahead and visit college campuses. If you are unable to visit a college, try to take a virtual tour of the campus on the college website.
- Make an appointment to speak to someone in the admissions office.

CONSIDER COLLEGE CHARACTERISTICS (from www.collegeboard.com)

The next step is to make a list of everything you would like to know about a college before you decide to apply. Some considerations may be unique to your situation—for example, the strength of a particular athletic program or access to private music lessons.

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION: While this is not a complete list, most students attend institutions in one of the following categories:

Liberal Arts Colleges focus on the education of the undergraduate students. Classes are generally taught by professors who see teaching as their primary responsibility. Most liberal arts colleges are smaller than universities, and classes tend to be smaller with more personal attention available. Students who attend liberal arts colleges are exposed to a broad range of courses in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. In addition, students choose at least one area of in-depth study, which is their college "major".

Universities are generally larger and include several colleges within the university (a liberal arts college, a business management college, a school of education, etc.) as well as professional and graduate programs. They offer a greater range of academic choices. Class size often reflects institution size. Some classes will be taught by graduate students. Professors at major universities are involved in research.

Technical Institutes and Professional Schools enroll students who have made clear decisions about what they want to study and emphasize preparation for specific careers. You will want to be quite sure of your future direction before selecting one of these options.

Women's Colleges, with their larger number of female faculty and administration, offer female students confidence-building role models, greater opportunities to serve in a full range of student leadership positions, and a heightened awareness of career possibilities for women.

Community or County Colleges generally offer the first two years of a liberal arts education in addition to specialized occupational preparation. At the end of the two-year program of study, an Associate's Degree is awarded. Many students continue their education for two or more years at a four-year college.

INSTITUTION SIZE will affect many opportunities and experiences, including the range of academic majors offered, the extracurricular possibilities, the amount of personal attention you'll receive, and even the number of books in the library.

LOCATION: Distance from home may be important. Will you want to visit home frequently, or do you see this as a time to experience a new part of the country? Some like an urban area with access to museums and other cultural experiences. Others hope for easy access to the outdoors or the serenity and safety of a small-town setting.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS: If you are undecided about a major, it is best to choose an institution with a wide range of majors and programs. Most colleges offer academic counseling to help undecided students find a focus. In considering academic programs, pick a school that offers many possibilities, such as Study Abroad, Domestic Exchanges (allows you to study at another U.S. college), Internships, and Cooperative Education Programs (offers you a chance to substitute class work with paid internships as a way of enhancing your education and job skills).

CAMPUS LIFE: Consider what your college life will be like beyond the classroom. What extracurricular activities, athletics, and special interest groups are available? What is the community around the college like? Are students welcomed by the community? How do fraternities and sororities influence campus life? Are there ethnic and religious groups on campus? Does the college require that you live on campus for one or more years? Is housing offered each year? If you plan to live on campus, be sure to look carefully at the quality of the dorm facilities.

COST is an important consideration for most students. At the same time, virtually all colleges work to ensure that academically qualified students from every economic circumstance can find financial aid that allows them to attend. If you have concerns about cost, contact the financial aid department at the college to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

DIVERSITY: Consider the geographic, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of the students as a means of learning more about the world.

HOW MANY APPLICATIONS ARE ENOUGH?

It is recommended that you apply to between five and eight colleges. By the end of your junior year, you should have five to ten schools under consideration. This range of schools should include "likely", "target" and "reach" schools with other options including major, financial aid and scholarship options, and career plans. We encourage you to focus on Five-First Choice Colleges.

Likely School is the term used to refer to schools whose requirements mean little chance of rejection. With a likely school, students have a high chance of acceptance. Most students choose to apply to one likely school.

Target (sometimes referred to as match) School is the term used when a student feels a particular school fits his/her needs even though it may not be the first choice all the time. The student fits the general admissions criteria in all areas. With a target school, students have a 75% chance of acceptance. The Five First Choice Colleges fit into this category.

Reach School is the term used when a school is least likely to accept a student because his/her qualifications do not meet or fall slightly below the standard admissions requirements. With a reach school, students have a 25% or less chance of acceptance. Students should have one or two schools in this category.

To be one of the **Five First Choice Colleges**, the following criteria must fit: the student's current academic profile must be within range of the college's profile, the student must have taken a look at the school's financial information, the social/cultural piece has to fit and the student has to be excited about the school. *If a student finds a school that fits the criteria, but he/she isn't interested in attending, then it doesn't go on the list.

WHY NOT TO OVERAPPLY

- Not only do application fees add up (most fees average \$50), but applications involve a lot of time and effort. Quality is always better than quantity.
- When application numbers are up, admission rates go down. Only apply to schools in which you are truly sure you want to attend especially since you may be taking a spot away from a student who really wants to attend the school. This is why you should focus on the Five First Choice Colleges.
- You may limit your chances of bargaining for a financial aid package.

WHAT DO COLLEGES LOOK FOR?

Below is a list of some of the important factors used in the college admissions process. Keep these in mind when applying to the colleges of your choice.

YOUR HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT is almost always the most important factor. Your transcript lists all of your high school courses and all final grades earned. How well did you perform? Remember that JCHS will provide a decile class rank.

GPA (GRADE POINT AVERAGE): Your GPA is the average of all final grades earned in all courses from grades 9-11.

SAT SCORES/ACT SCORES: Contrary to popular belief, colleges do not rely solely on SAT scores, which are only part of the big picture. Please remember that colleges look at the "whole person" when making their decisions among thousands of applicants. In many cases, the more competitive the college, the more important the SAT score. More and more colleges are now allowing applicants to apply SAT Optional, meaning SAT scores will not be used to determine applicant eligibility. Students who choose to apply SAT Optional may be required to submit an essay or graded assignment in its place. Please keep this option in mind if you do not feel your SAT scores accurately reflect academic achievement.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION: You want to make sure your counselor knows you, so don't be shy and stop in often. Your counselor will be happy to write you a letter when it is requested by you. It will be up to you to decide which teacher(s) should write your other letter(s). You don't have to get an "A" in a teacher's class in order to ask him/her for a letter, but the teacher should know you well. Do not ask more than two (2) teachers to write you a letter.

PERSONAL STATEMENT OR ESSAY: The essay is your opportunity to convey "who you really are" to an admissions officer. How do you spend your free time? What are your passions? What do you value? What obstacles have you overcome? Up until this point, your application consists of school and biographical data, and other people's perceptions of you. The essay is a great way to showcase your unique strengths, interests, and abilities.

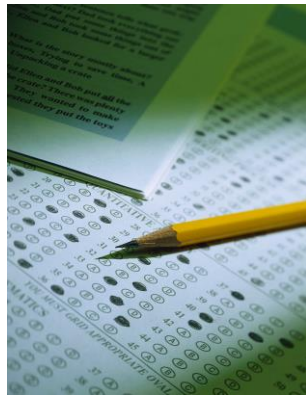
ACTIVITIES AND AWARDS: Colleges do not expect that students will have led every student organization, but they do look at the depth of your involvement. It's important to let them know WHY you're involved and not just WHAT you're involved in.

POINTS TO REMEMBER: Each college will evaluate these criteria differently, but remember that colleges look at the "whole person". Keep in mind that colleges also have other priorities that impact student admission, such as geographical mix, talent mix, athletes, and overall diversity of the student body.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR MANY COLLEGES

- 4 years English
- 3 years Math (4 years recommended)
- 3 years History (4 years recommended)
- 3 years Science (4 years recommended)
- 2 years World Language (3 years recommended)
- 3 years Academic electives (4 years recommended)
- 1 year Visual/Performing Arts (2 years recommended)

SECTION 1



Standardized Tests

Admissions tests are considered by many schools to be a significant part of the admissions process. These tests are taken by students across the nation and allow colleges to use comparative data when evaluating students from various high schools.

PRELIMINARY SCHOLASTIC ASSESSMENT TEST (PSAT)

The PSAT is a practice test for the SAT. It measures verbal reasoning, critical reading, math problem-solving and writing skills. Sophomores are offered the opportunity to take the PSAT so that they have the advantage of being exposed to this type of standardized testing a year in advance. All eleventh graders are required to take the PSAT. The PSAT score received in junior year is used as a means to enter the National Merit Scholarship Program.

SAT

The SAT is a college entrance exam which measures the students' math, critical reading, and writing abilities. Many colleges and universities use the SAT as one indicator of a student's readiness to do college-level work (other indicators would include high school GPA, extracurricular activities, personal essay, and recommendations). Most colleges will mix and match and take the highest combined scores. Each student receives two scores, one for math, one for reading and writing. The scores range from 200-800 for each section, for a total maximum score of 1600.

Do all colleges require the SAT? Most colleges require a college entrance exam (either the SAT or the ACT). There are a growing number of schools that do not require an entrance exam and/or will allow you to apply test optional. Visit www.fairtest.org/university/optional for a listing of schools. Since a number of schools still require the test, it is recommended that you take the SAT at least once.

When should I take the SAT? Most students take the SAT for the first time in the spring of their junior year. Many students also retake the SAT in the fall of senior year.

Should I take the SAT more than once? Since your reasoning abilities continue to develop as you get older, studies have shown that scores tend to increase from junior to senior year. Taking the SAT two times is the average.

Will colleges see all of my scores? You are responsible for making sure that score reports are sent to colleges. All scores will be reported. However, many colleges will consider your highest verbal and your highest math score-even if they are from different test dates. You may elect to choose Score Choice and choose from which test date(s) you want scores sent.

When will I receive my scores? Scores are available on the CollegeBoard website through your CollegeBoard account about three weeks after the test. Most score reports are mailed about 3-4 weeks after the test.

Important! Take advantage of the option of having up to four (4) free score reports sent to colleges by supplying their school codes on your registration form in the appropriate section. Otherwise, plan to pay a fee to have your scores sent. Don't forget to also put your high school code when registering for the exam.

SAT REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Students must register directly through the College Board.

- Online registration at www.collegeboard.org

To send scores to colleges, students can access the College Board website and request to have them sent for an additional fee.

ACT: THE AMERICAN COLLEGE TEST

The ACT is another type of college entrance exam. Some students choose to take the ACT instead of (or in addition to) the SAT. Virtually all U.S. colleges and universities accept the ACT, including Ivy League schools.

What is the ACT like? The ACT is a national college admissions exam that consists of multiple-choice questions in English, math, reading, and science. The ACT is not a reasoning test like the SAT. Questions on the ACT are directly related to what you have learned in your high school courses in English, math, and science. Because the ACT is based on what is taught in high school, some students find it more "user friendly" than traditional aptitude tests.

Can I prepare for the ACT? The ACT is utilized nearly as much as the SAT, and prep courses are readily available. The ACT website is the best place to learn about available test prep materials.

Will colleges see my scores? You may take the ACT more than once and you can choose which test date scores will be sent to colleges (unlike the SAT, in which all scores from all dates are sent).

When is the ACT given and where can I take it? The ACT is offered multiple times during the school year. If you are interested in taking the ACT, you may visit the ACT website at www.actstudent.org for registration information, test dates and locations, as well as information on scoring, national averages and frequently asked questions.

ACT REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Students must register online directly through ACT.

The following registration options are available:

- Online registration at www.actstudent.org

To send scores to colleges access the ACT website and follow the procedure and fee schedule.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)

Students, who complete AP courses, can take the AP examinations, which are scored on a 5-point scale. Scores of 4 and 5 may give credit and advanced standing at many colleges, depending on the college's policy.

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SSD)

The SSD is designed to provide services for students identified with modification needs. Eligible students need to complete the application for SSD to the College Board just once during grades 9-12. If approved, students can use this eligibility for the PSAT, SAT, and AP exams. Students need to apply for accommodations on the ACT each time they register to take the test. Detailed information about services for students with disabilities for both the ACT and SAT are available on the respective websites.

TEST OF ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TOEFL)

This is an internet-based test which assesses four skills that are important for effective communication: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The speaking and writing sections evaluate the student's ability to use spoken English and the student's capacity to combine information from more than one source and communicate it. Students can practice online at www.ets.org/toeflpractice.

SECTION 2



Researching Colleges

RESEARCHING COLLEGES is probably the most important step of the process. There is a wealth of information available to teach you about the unique aspects of each college or university and help you narrow your list of colleges before you apply.

Collegeboard.org is a great website to start your college search. This college search tool allows you to narrow down your search by the following categories: type of school, location, majors, cost & financial aid, admissions, sports & activities, housing & programs, and specialized options.

James Caldwell High School's Guidance Office is another good resource to start. Below is a listing of Guidance Office resources:

- **College Guides**- These guides contain a brief description of many colleges in the U.S. The information includes college location, phone number, web address, number of undergraduates, programs of study offered, SAT/ACT ranges for the previous year's freshmen, admission requirements, application deadlines, etc.
- **College Catalogs**- Every college also publishes a catalog, which includes detailed information such as tuition and fees, academic calendar, course descriptions and requirements for every major offered, campus policies, etc. Catalogs are available through each college's website.
- **Bulletin Boards**- The bulletin boards around the Guidance Office are used for various reasons during the school year including college open house information, testing information, and scholarship information.
- **Naviance Student**- a comprehensive website that you can use to help in making plans about future goals, colleges, and careers. Naviance is a service that we use in our office to track and analyze data about college and career plans, so it provides up-to-date information that's specific to our school.

College Representative Visits at JCHS

The fall semester is a great time for you to meet with the admissions representatives from various colleges and universities. These representatives visit JCHS so that students can meet with them and learn about the unique aspects of each college. The representatives will answer questions, put you on mailing lists, and keep a record of their contact with you. Dates and times of the college representative visits are posted in Naviance and announcements are made weekly. Juniors and seniors interested in attending a college visit must sign up in Naviance Student by clicking on the Colleges tab→upcoming college visits.

VISITING COLLEGES

WHY VISIT

Every college campus is unique. Visiting a college gives you the opportunity to interpret the institution; as well as a first-hand opportunity to learn about the college.

WHEN TO VISIT

Junior year is a good time to start visiting colleges. It is helpful to go when the colleges are in session so that you can get a feel for the student body. Winter and spring break are great times to visit. If you are unable to go during the academic year, summer is another option. When you visit a college, keep in mind the climate of the area. For example, if you plan on attending a school in Buffalo, New York then you should plan your visit during the winter months to get the right college experience. In addition, be aware that many colleges hold open house sessions for prospective students in the fall.

HOW TO SET UP A VISIT

Call the college's undergraduate admissions office or go online and see the schedule of the college's information sessions and tours. Also ask about availability of Saturday tours. Schedule the time properly to allow at least one hour and a half for a campus interview and campus tour.

WHAT TO DO ON THE VISIT

- Be sure to carefully view the college's campus map to ensure that you get to see every part of the school.
- Make sure to see a residence hall room, a look at the library, walk through an academic building and classrooms, and a dining hall (also try the food).
- Be social. Talk to students on campus. Visit the student union building.
- Try to sit in on a class in order to see the interaction between professor and students.
- Make an appointment with the department head in your major of interest. If you are unsure of your major, it is okay to visit several departments.
- Find out if the college offers the opportunity to spend the night on campus.
- Try to participate in or attend a college event: a sporting event, a school play, student activity, etc.
- Remember to ask a lot of questions!

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT ON A CAMPUS TOUR

A tour guide will take groups of parents and students on a walking tour of the campus (dress comfortably). The guide will provide a lot of information as your group visits classroom buildings, computer labs, dorms, athletic facilities, etc. Tours are approximately one hour long depending on the size of the campus.

WHAT IS AN INFORMATION SESSION?

This is a large group meeting with prospective students and parents which presents specific information about the college and its admission requirements. Many colleges offer an information session in addition to the campus tour.

HOW MANY COLLEGES SHOULD YOU VISIT IN ONE DAY? We recommend that you visit only one or two at most. Tours and information sessions provide a lot to absorb. Be sure to bring a notebook and pen and keep notes of important details that can be used to compare colleges.



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR TOUR GUIDE

Though guided tours are quite informative, tour guides are usually students who know what college life is really like and are happy to answer questions such as:

- What is the average class size?
- Do you feel safe on campus and in the dorms?
- Is there a lot to do outside of the classroom?
- What are the dorms like?
- Do students like the food?
- What do students like about the campus? Dislike?
- ...and anything else that comes to mind

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO ASK ON A COLLEGE VISIT

- What is the faculty/student ratio?
- What is the student body geographic distribution?
- How many students are in the largest lecture hall?
- What courses typically make up a freshman schedule?
- What is the core curriculum?
- What courses are frequently closed out?
- What tests are required for freshmen admission?
- Does this school participate in a year abroad program?
- Are there any student-run organizations on campus? If so, what are they?
- How is credit awarded for advanced placement courses?
- Do graduate assistants or professors teach the courses?
- (Referring to two-year schools)-What ratio of students transfer to four-year schools?
- Do you have a placement service after graduation?
- What percentage of students are accepted into the graduate school of their choice?
- Are you on rolling admissions?
- Do you have ROTC units on campus? If so, what branches of service?
- Do you participate in cross-registration with neighboring colleges? If so, which colleges?
- How accessible are the faculty members for individual help and counseling?
- Are there any counseling services available?
- Are freshmen students allowed cars on campus? What are the rules for bikes and cars, in general?
- What percentage of freshmen graduate in four years?
- What factors do you consider in the admissions process?
- What types of positions are graduates in my academic program getting?
- Which graduate schools have your alumni attended?
- What are the most active clubs or student organizations on campus?
- What types of social and cultural opportunities exist on or off campus?
- How many students reside on campus?
- What percentage of the student body goes home on the weekend?
- What are the housing requirements and policies?
- How are roommates selected? Can I change roommates?
- What are the typical weekend activities on campus?
- How many meals per week are on the meal plan?
- What athletic facilities are available to students?
- When does the college notify students of admissions decisions?
- What are my chances of admission?

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

Admissions offices use interviews differently from one college to another. Some colleges may require an interview with an admissions counselor. The interview may serve as a useful tool for the prospective student to gain useful information about the school. It may also serve as criteria to determine your acceptance eligibility.

If it is possible for you to interview, we recommend that you do so. The interview will rarely work against you and may work to your benefit. It's a great opportunity to show who you are not just what you've done.

INTERVIEW TIPS

Be yourself. Do not give answers just because you think it's what the person wants to hear.

Be prompt.

Be neat. Dress appropriately.

Be well-prepared. Do a mock interview with your counselor and read information about the school on the internet and from a catalog. Rehearsing can be extremely helpful-especially if you've never interviewed before.

Don't be shy! Be ready to volunteer information about yourself such as grades, test scores, and your accomplishments.

Expand your answers. For example, if asked what your favorite subject is, don't simply answer "Biology". Instead, begin to explain why Biology is your favorite subject. Provide examples that will illustrate your point.

Relax!

QUESTIONS TO ASK A COLLEGE ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR

- What kind of classes would I take if I majored in _____?
- If I am uncertain about my major, what should I do?
- What can I do with a major in _____?
- Why do students choose your school?
- What kind of job placement services do you offer?
- What types of financial aid do you offer?
- What kind of scholarships are available/and what are the criteria? (Need based/Academic achievement)
- If I have a learning disability, who do I contact?
- How is security on campus?
- What do students do on weekend?

QUESTIONS INTERVIEWERS MAY ASK YOU

- What extracurricular activities at your school are most important to you?
- What makes you think college is right for you?
- What can you tell me about yourself?
- What books have you read recently?
- Who is your favorite leader and why?
- Where else are you applying to college?
- What have been your most significant contributions to your school and/or community?

Important Information

FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Students with learning disabilities need to be aware of important information as they research colleges that will meet their needs.

A SHIFT IN RESPONSIBILITY

- In high school, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to provide all necessary assessments and accommodations for students to get special education services.
- IDEA does not apply to colleges and universities; however, colleges are prohibited from discriminating against a person because of learning disabilities.
- In college, even though it is your right to be accommodated, you have to ask for accommodations and provide documentation of your disability and needs.
- Colleges are not permitted to ask whether a student has a learning disability; it is up to each student to decide whether he/she will inform college of disability.
- It is also each student's responsibility to find out what documentation colleges require in order to demonstrate that you have a learning disability and are requesting services.
- Any documentation that you provide can be no more than three (3) years old.
- Although colleges must provide "reasonable accommodations" for their students with a learning disability, they do NOT have to change admission criteria in order to accommodate them.
- Colleges are not required to design special academic programs for students with disabilities.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

You must get permission from College Board or from ACT in order to take your college entrance exams (SAT, ACT) with accommodations. Your counselor or case manager has more information for you. Seeking accommodations takes a considerable amount of time and should be done well in advance of an anticipated test date.

LEVELS OF SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE AT COLLEGES

With increased awareness of LD, multiple intelligences, and different learning styles, colleges now provide a broad range of support. More than ever before, students who have learning disabilities are not only applying to, but entering and graduating colleges and universities with great success.

Structured or Comprehensive Programs: These programs have significantly more services for students with LD/ADHD. Because they offer more than what they are required to offer under the law, they have additional fees for services, which may include: Special admission procedures, specialized and trained professionals, one-on-one tutoring, and close monitoring.

Coordinated Services: These colleges have fewer services, but still more than the minimum required by law. There may or may not be a nominal fee. Services are usually less structured and programs may or may not be involved with admissions decisions.

Basic Services: These colleges comply with the law and provide minimal services. They rarely have specialized LD staff, do not monitor, and are completely dependent on student advocacy. There is no fee for services at these colleges.

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING YOUR RESEARCH

- What level of support, or what type of program, is available for students with LD?
- Do I need to apply to the college AND to the program?
- What documentation does the college require to receive services?
- Is there an additional fee for services?
- What specific accommodations, services, and equipment are provided?
- Does the college offer curriculum modification?

NCAA AND THE NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a voluntary organization through which the nation's colleges and universities govern their athletics programs. It comprises more than 1,280 institutions, conferences, organizations and individuals committed to the best interests, education and athletics participation of student-athletes.

Each student that is entering college and is interested in playing a Division I or Division II sport must meet NCAA eligibility standards. These standards are a combination of academic performance and standardized testing results. You should register with the Eligibility Center during your Junior year but no later than the beginning of your Senior year.

When registering with the NCAA Eligibility Center, you will be asked to complete the Domestic Student Release Form and the NCAA Amateurism Certification Questionnaire. Log onto <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/> and click on "Register" to get started with the process.

Transcripts and test scores must be sent directly to the Eligibility Center.

- You will be prompted from NCAA Eligibility Center to request your high school transcript at the END of your junior year. Transcripts will be submitted electronically by the Guidance Department.
- Test scores must be sent directly to the Eligibility Center. Use the code "9999" on your testing materials. If you have already taken the test, you can request additional score reports by using the "9999" code on the SAT or ACT additional Report Request Form. Go to www.collegeboard.org to request additional score reports.
- Athletes should take the SAT or ACT no later than the spring of their Junior year in order to have time to retake if necessary.

As a prospective student athlete, you will need to review the List of Approved Core Courses (Form 48H) and the Division I and Division II freshman eligibility standards. This information is available on their website.

ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR THE NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

DIVISION I ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS (minimum 2.3 cumulative GPA of these core courses)

16 Core Courses

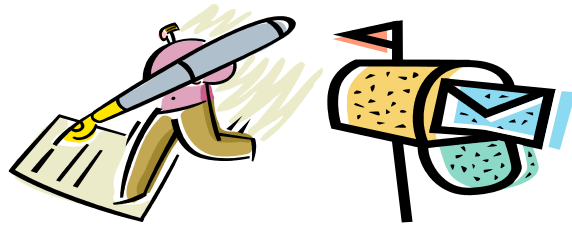
- 4 Years of English
- 3 Years of Mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
- 2 Years of Natural/Physical Science (one must be a lab science)
- 2 Years of Social Studies
- 1 Year of additional English, Math, or Science
- 4 Years of additional core courses (from any area listed above, World Language, Nondoctrinal Religion or Philosophy)

DIVISION II ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS (minimum 2.2 cumulative GPA of these core courses)

16 Core Courses

- 3 Years of English
- 2 Years of Mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
- 2 Years of Natural/Physical Science (one must be a lab science)
- 3 Years of additional English, Math, or Science
- 2 Years of Social Studies
- 4 Years of additional courses (from any area listed above or World Language)

SECTION 3



Applying to Colleges

ADMISSION DECISION OPTIONS

REGULAR DECISION

This is the term used for the standard application process at the majority of colleges. You will apply before the regular deadline, which is usually January 1st or later, and generally you will get a response in April. An accepted applicant will not be required to make a decision prior to May 1st, but is encouraged to do so as soon as a final college choice is made.

ROLLING ADMISSIONS

Colleges that use rolling admissions review applications on an ongoing basis. Acceptance letters will be returned within a short period of time as the college doesn't have to wait until they receive all applications before they decide on your status. Students will not be required to make a commitment prior to May 1st, but are encouraged to do so as soon as a final college choice is made.

EARLY DECISION

A term used to describe the application process when a commitment is made by the student to the institution, that, if admitted, the student will enroll. An acceptance from the institution means that your commitment to attend that college is "BINDING". You may apply to other colleges under the regular admissions process, but you may not apply to more than one college under an Early Decision plan. If you are accepted at your Early Decision School, you must immediately withdraw all other applications.

The institution in which you apply Early Decision will require a non-refundable deposit well before May 1st, the national reply date.

EARLY ACTION

This plan is NOT binding. Early Action permits the student to apply to a college of preference and receive a decision well in advance to the normal response dates in the spring. The student is NOT committed to enroll if accepted. However, some highly competitive colleges have an Early Action plan that does not allow you to apply Early to any other college. Make sure to carefully read each college's instructions.

SINGLE-CHOICE EARLY ACTION

This plan is similar to Early Action, but students may NOT apply to other schools under an early plan.

WAIT LIST

A list of students who meet the admission requirements but will only be offered a place in the class if space becomes available.

DOES APPLYING EARLY AFFECT FINANCIAL AID?

- If finances are a significant issue for you and your family, you may wish to reconsider whether early decision is right for you.
- Sometimes an early applicant may not receive as generous a package as a regular applicant. Since the early decision applicant is obligated to attend, the college has less incentive to provide more aid. If accepted under an Early Decision plan, you will receive an estimate of your financial aid package.
- If the estimate is not enough for you to go to your Early Decision College, you may no longer be obligated to attend.
- Under Early Action, Regular, and Rolling plans, you can wait until you receive all of your acceptances and financial aid packages from all colleges before you make up your mind. Colleges give you until May 1st to make your decision, including sending a deposit.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU SHOULD APPLY EARLY?

After you go through the process of researching and visiting colleges that are appropriate for you, if one college is clearly "the one", you may be a good candidate for early applications. You are encouraged to discuss this with your counselor. You should apply under an early decision or early action plan only if you are very sure of the college you want to attend. You should not apply under an early decision if you plan to weigh offers and financial aid packages from several colleges later in the spring. Also, you shouldn't apply early if it is advantageous to have more senior year work to show a college.

Here are some questions to ask yourself before you apply "early"

- Am I ready to commit to one college in November of my senior year?
- Am I ready, willing, and able to prepare my application and essays before November 1st?
- Am I prepared for the possibility of rejection so early in my senior year?
- Do I have "back-up" colleges in mind in case I don't get in?
- Am I applying early to this particular college for the right reasons?

REMEMBER...approximately 50% of early applicants are accepted. The remaining 50% are either deferred or denied. If you are deferred, your application will be moved to the regular decision pool with all applicants who apply under a college's regular decision plan. Regular decision has a later deadline and a later notification of whether you are accepted or denied. Though some students will be accepted from the deferred pool, most will not.

Note: Since each college offers different admissions plans, it is important to discuss them with your counselor to be sure that you understand the details and policies of each college...especially if you plan to apply early.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

SEND STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES DIRECTLY TO EACH COLLEGE

To avoid having to pay a fee to send your scores, be sure to supply school codes on your test registration forms, if that option is available. Colleges and universities want the official score report sent directly to them.

PREPARE YOUR ESSAY OR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Acceptance rates are becoming overly competitive; therefore, through your essay and/or personal statement you have the opportunity to set yourself apart from other applicants in the eyes of the admissions counselor. When writing your essay and/or personal statement you have the chance to showcase your personality and character, along with your ability to demonstrate your use of proper grammar and capacity to write well. This can be achieved by writing an essay that is lively, captivating, truthful, humorous, insightful, and to the point. Also, it may be the only place in the application in which you can add a personal touch to the more objective numbers in your transcript.

Remember to:

Relax: Writing your college essay doesn't have to be that complicated. Try not to put too much pressure on yourself. Start early to alleviate stress and to allow yourself plenty of time to complete the task. Take it seriously, but also try to have fun with it.

Be Yourself: Readers of your essay will be able to discern genuine feelings, interests, and thoughts from fabricated ones. They simply want to know about "the real you". Think of your college essay as an opportunity to give colleges a peek inside your head and heart—a glimpse of your goals, aspirations, experiences, or anything else of value to you.

Brainstorm: Typically, college essays (or personal statements) ask you to write about an event, person or experience that has influenced you in some way...or they may ask you about a difficult situation that you faced...or, simply, why you want to attend their college. Before you dive in, we recommend that you spend a good deal of time brainstorming.

Select a Topic: Ask yourself the following:

- Are you answering the question that was asked of you?
- Will your topic simply repeat information listed elsewhere? If so, change topics. Remember, colleges want to get a better understanding of who you are.
- Can you provide concrete examples to support your topic?
- Are you focusing too much on the details of "an issue" and not enough on YOU?
- What will be the admissions officer's lasting impression of you from your essay?

Edit, Revise, and Proofread: Ask for help from your parents, English teacher, counselor, friends, or anyone with whom you are comfortable. It is crucial that you have someone else proofread your writing.

Some Additional Tips:

- It is okay to write about personal tragedy, but it's more important to demonstrate your strengths. Experiencing something sad will not make you a good college student, but demonstrating positive outcomes from the experience will.
- Be willing to show your best side and speak positively about YOU, but don't exaggerate, and do not overuse a thesaurus.
- Be original. Write truthfully and make sure it's YOUR essay. Don't let well-meaning parents write for you.

Be positive and show your strengths!

PREPARE YOUR RESUME

A resume is a one- or two-page summary of your education, skills, accomplishments, and experience. The resume is a power tool that can be useful during your college planning. The resume makes the process of filling out applications much easier and can be used to set you apart from the rest.

The resume you write for college will be categorized according to information that is typically asked for on a college application. You will want to fill up each category with all relevant activities/accomplishments. Remember that a resume is a reflection of you and who you are. Be sure it is neat, error free, and printed on nice paper. Make sure to have a parent, counselor, and/or teacher check it over for you.

Note: When preparing your resume items should be listed from most significant to least significant. Keep in mind that work experience should be listed in chronological order, the most recent being the first one listed. You should utilize the Resume Builder in your Naviance Student account.

Resume Outline

Information you must include:

- Full Name
- Address
- Phone Number and/or Email
- High School Name and Address
- High School Code (JCHS CEEB Code 311578)

Categories you may want to include:

- Academic Honors and Awards
- Other Awards and Distinctions
- School Leadership and Extracurricular Activities
- Community Service and Leadership
- Summer Programs and Internships
- Work Experience
- Talents or Hobbies
- College/Career Goals

Resume builder in Naviance Student

- **All students are required to complete their resume using the Resume Builder in their Naviance Student account.** Go to "About Me"→My Stuff→ Resume to complete using the categories listed above as a guide. Teachers and counselors will be able to view your resume online and it can be printed.

Note: Please be mindful of the email address you post on your resume. Choose an address that is appropriate for college contacts and represents you in a professional manner.

Helpful Websites:

www.careerbuilder.com

www.collegeboard.org

www.resume.monster.com

Letter of Recommendation Request Procedure for Counselors and Teachers

- Students **MUST** speak with their teachers in person when requesting a recommendation and provide them with an updated resume. An email is permissible, but a face-to-face conversation is the preferred method.
- Log into **Naviance Student**
- Click the **Colleges tab**
- Look under **Apply to Colleges** section
- Locate the **Letters of Recommendation** area
- Click **add request**
- In the **Select Teacher** dropdown box, select the teacher(s)
- Add the teacher(s) (*You do not request a letter from your Counselor in Naviance*)
- In the Personal note to the teacher area, write the teacher a **THANK YOU NOTE (Required)**
- At the bottom of the page, click **Submit Request**
- Your Counselor anticipates writing a letter for you - just be sure to speak with him/her in person or send an email and provide a copy of your resume
- Complete your resume in the "About Me → My Stuff" section of your Naviance account

SAMPLE Thank You Note

Dear (Name of the Teacher),

Thank you for writing a letter of recommendation for me. I realize the time and the effort you put into this task and I sincerely appreciate your support of my college applications.

Sincerely,
(Student's name)

REMINDER:

Students **MUST ALWAYS** speak with the teachers from whom they are requesting a recommendation **prior** to making the request in Naviance. Teachers will receive the student's Thank You Note in their school email account. Teachers will submit letters of recommendation electronically. Colleges using the Common Application may limit the number of letters of recommendation you are allowed to submit. **DO NOT REQUEST MORE THAN TWO (2) TEACHER LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION!!** Your counselor does not count as a teacher. Do not ask an administrator.

SECTION 4



Paying For College

FINANCIAL AID

FINANCIAL AID is monetary assistance given to students to help them meet the cost of college, vocational or trade school education. There are various types of financial aid such as:

- **Grants and Scholarships**- This is money given to the student and does not have to be paid back. The criteria for receiving a scholarship is based on the student's need, academic achievement, or special talents.
- **Loans**- This is money that is issued to a student with the understanding that the loan needs to be paid back. Loans can either be issued to the student or the parent. Student loans tend to be lower in interest and the student usually is not responsible to pay back the loan until after graduation.
- **Work Study**- Students can arrange job placement at the college that they are going to attend. Funds will be issued accordingly.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Fill out the **FAFSA (Free Application for Student Aid)**. The forms can be obtained online from the FAFSA website: www.fafsa.ed.gov. When you fill out the FAFSA online, you will need to obtain an FSA ID, which will be used to electronically sign the form. You can apply for an ID by visiting www.studentaid.ed.gov. The form can not be filled out before October 1st, but should be completed and submitted online soon thereafter.

Special note: Students filling out the FAFSA will need to have parental assistance.

The **CSS (College Scholarship Service)** profile is required by some colleges. The CSS is a form that requires the student to provide more detailed information. This form can be filled out as early as October 1st. You can complete this form online by logging on to www.collegeboard.org.

In addition to filling out the FAFSA and the CSS profile, some colleges may require that you fill out their application for financial aid. It is important to check with the college that you are planning to attend and find out if they require this.

ALL ABOUT THE FAFSA

The FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, is the financial aid application form you will need to apply for federal and state aid, including grants, loans, and work-study. In addition, it is used by most states and schools to award non-federal student financial aid. While the FAFSA may seem lengthy and complex, there are many free resources, online and offline, to help you navigate the application process.

Where is the FAFSA located?

FAFSA on the Web: You can complete, submit, and track your application using FAFSA on the Web (www.fafsa.gov). This is the easiest way to apply for federal aid. Most importantly, your data is checked before it is transmitted to the processing center, so there's less chance of making an error. Applying online can reduce processing time by 1-2 weeks.

What do you have to do before you apply?

Have your income tax return available for reference: Filling out the FAFSA online can reduce processing time by 1-2 weeks. Please note that you will use your prior years' submitted income tax return with the IRS to fill out the FAFSA. You can find a list of documents you'll need to get started at the FAFSA on the web site (www.fafsa.ed.gov)

Get an FSA ID: In order to submit your FAFSA through FAFSA on the Web, you must obtain a U.S. Department of Education FSA ID. The ID will serve as your electronic signature and gives you the fastest way to submit your application. To get your ID, you should simply fill out the brief application at www.studentaid.ed.gov/.

Completing the Application: Here are some reminders and resources to help you:

- October 1st will be the first day that you are eligible to file the FAFSA. You should try to file as close to this date as possible, as school, state, and private aid deadlines may be much earlier than federal deadlines. You should pay attention to your colleges' priority financial aid deadlines.

What if you need help with the FAFSA?

If you have questions about your application or about federal student financial aid in general, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) at 1-800-4-FED-AID (433-3243) /TTY 1-800-730-8913.

What happens after you apply?

Once you submit the FAFSA, it goes to a large processing center that handles about 9 million forms each year. This is where your family information is passed through the federal need formula.

What is the Student Aid Report (SAR)?

You will receive either an email or a paper form from the Department of Education's Central Processing System within a few days to four weeks after submitting the FAFSA. The form is called the Student Aid Report (SAR) and contains the data you entered on the FAFSA. Review the SAR carefully for errors (the form will highlight items that didn't pass the edit) and follow directions for making and submitting corrections. Submit corrections promptly to avoid long delays in processing your application. Make sure to keep a copy of the SAR for your records.

What is Expected Family Contribution (EFC)?

At the upper right of the front page of the SAR you will find a figure called the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The EFC is a preliminary estimate of the amount your family will be expected to contribute to college costs. The EFC is sent electronically to your state scholarship agency as well as the colleges you listed on your FAFSA. State agencies and colleges will use the EFC to determine the size of your aid award. There are currently two main formulas used to determine the EFC. The Federal Methodology is used by the federal government to calculate eligibility for federal aid. The Institutional Methodology is used by many colleges to calculate eligibility for institutional aid programs.

How is the EFC calculated?

The Expected Family Contribution is calculated by considering the family's financial strength—their income and assets. Other factors that are considered include the number of family members and the number of family members in college.

How is the EFC used to determine eligibility?

The EFC is subtracted from the cost of attendance at the college. The result is a calculation of the student's "financial need" or eligibility for financial aid. Aid eligibility at a particular college is a function of both the cost of attendance and the Expected Family Contribution.

What is the Federal Methodology (FM)?

The Federal Methodology (FM) is a need analysis formula used by the federal government. Based on the information captured on the FAFSA, the FM is used to determine eligibility for federal and state financial aid, as well as for institutional aid at some colleges. Use the [EFC Calculator](#) to estimate your Expected Family Contribution using the FM formula.

What is the Institutional Methodology (IM)?

The Institutional Methodology (IM) is a need analysis formula developed and maintained by the College Board to assist colleges, universities, and private scholarship programs in determining eligibility for institutional and private financial aid funds. The IM relies on information collected on the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE® Application for its calculations. Use the [EFC Calculators](#) to estimate your Expected Family Contribution using the IM formula.

What costs does the financial aid office take into account in determining eligibility for aid?

The financial aid office will take into account the average cost-of-attendance, which includes tuition, student fees, room and board, as well as estimated expenses for books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation to and from campus.

What if your EFC is really high? Is there an appeal process?

If you decide to appeal the college's determination of your EFC, you will need to contact the college financial aid office to find out about the appeal process. Most financial aid administrators will require that you put your appeal request in writing and that you document the special circumstances or changes in income that have occurred since the time of the original application for aid.

Even if you can determine your need for additional aid, there may be other families with greater financial need who must be served. You shouldn't approach your appeal as a "lets make a deal" negotiation, since most colleges will listen only to a data-based appeal.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO FILL OUT THE FAFSA

- Your FSA ID
- Social Security Card and Driver's License
- Forms or other records of income earned
- Your Federal Income Tax Return
- Your parents Federal Income Tax Return
- Records of other untaxed income received, such as, welfare benefits, social security benefits, veteran's benefits, or military allowances
- Current bank statements or any other records of stocks, bonds, and other investments
- Your alien registration card (if you are not a U.S. citizen)

Information from www.collegeboard.org

OTHER HELPFUL FINANCIAL AID WEBSITES

www.fastweb.com

www.finaid.org

www.scholarships.salliemae.com

www.citibank.com

www.ed.gov/proginfo/SFA

SCHOLARSHIPS

HOW TO FIND COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Develop your scholarship strategy

Although most student aid comes in the form of federal education loans and grants from colleges, scholarships—with their lure of free money—get a huge amount of attention from students and their parents. If you decide to invest your time in a search for scholarships, it's important to have an organized system to find, apply for, and win scholarship money.

Start with a personal inventory

The smaller the geographical area a scholarship covers, the better your chances are of winning. Most of the information you will be asked on a scholarship search questionnaire will be easy to come up with—year in school, citizenship, state of residence, religion, ethnic background, disability, military status, employer, membership organizations, and so forth.

Beyond those questions, you will have to give some thought to your academic, extracurricular, and career plans. You should ask yourself:

- Do I want to participate in a competition? If so, what are my talents and interests?
- What subject do I plan to major in?
- What career do I plan to pursue?
- Do I want to apply for all types of aid or only scholarships?

Your answers to these questions will help determine your scholarship eligibility. Take your time brainstorming and don't overlook anything—the more personal characteristics you discover, the more scholarships you could potentially apply for.

Research local scholarships first

Begin with your high school guidance office. Counselors will know about scholarships for students graduating from your high school. They may also be aware of scholarships for residents of your town, county, and state.

Your next stop should be the college aid section of your public library. Most libraries will have a number of books about financial aid, including scholarship guides such as the College Board's *Scholarship Handbook*. They also may have information on local scholarships.

Then it's time to start looking at large national scholarships such as Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), National Merit, Gates Millennium, Intel Science, Coca-Cola, and Robert Byrd.

Check membership organizations and employers

You should never have to pay for scholarship information. Organizations of all types and sizes sponsor scholarships—leave no stone unturned. Explore categories you might not have considered, such as religious, community service, fraternal, military, union, and professional.

And don't forget your parents. Many large companies offer scholarships or tuition programs for children of employees. If you are uncertain, ask your parent to check with his or her human resources department.

Don't overlook student jobs. Employers like fast food chains, department stores, and supermarkets often give scholarships. Awards related to student employment can come from unexpected sources. For example, there are a number of scholarships for golf caddies.

Use a free scholarship search service

A scholarship search company collects information on hundreds of awards and compares your student characteristics with scholarship restrictions. Based on your answers to a questionnaire, you will receive a list of possible scholarships. It is up to you to decide which ones you will try for.

Contact your state department of higher education

Almost every state has a scholarship program for residents—keep in mind, however, that awards are usually limited to students who attend college in-state.

Research institutional scholarships

Since the vast majority of all scholarship money is disbursed by colleges, it makes sense to research what kinds of scholarships are available at the schools that interest you. Check out college websites, catalogs, and financial aid offices for this information. Institutional awards can be offered on a university-wide basis, or within a particular college or major. Eligibility for such awards can be based on merit, financial need, intended major, ethnicity, or a variety of other factors. Here are some questions you might want to ask about these awards:

- Are scholarships awarded automatically if a student matches certain criteria (GPA, SAT, etc.)?
- What is the application procedure? What materials are required?
- Is the award renewable? What are the requirements to maintain the award?

Information from www.collegeboard.org

HOW TO APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP

Start your research early

The more time you can put into your scholarship search, the more options you'll have. You'll need time to research scholarships, request information and application materials, and complete your application.

Read eligibility requirements carefully

If you have a question about your eligibility for a particular scholarship, contact the scholarship sponsors.

Organize all scholarship materials

Many scholarships require you to provide them with one or more of the following pieces of information:

- Transcript
- Standardized test scores
- Financial aid forms
- One or more essays
- One or more letters of recommendation
- Proof of eligibility
- Interview

Don't leave items blank

Contact scholarship sponsors if you aren't sure how to fill out any part of the application.

Follow instructions carefully

Avoid going over the length limit for the essay and resist the temptation to send supporting materials that are not requested in the application.

Make copies of everything you send

If application materials are lost, having copies on hand will make it much easier to resend your application quickly.

Double-check your application

If you're reusing material (such as a cover letter or essay) from another scholarship application, be especially careful you haven't left in any incorrect names or blank fields. Don't forget to sign and date your application. Don't forget to proofread!

Information from www.collegeboard.org

Get your applications in early

You'll miss out if you miss deadlines. Consider using certified mail or return receipt.

SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS

How to know if it's a scam

According to the Federal Trade Commission's Scholarship Scams, if you hear these lines from a scholarship service, you may be getting duped:

- **"The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back."** No one can guarantee that they'll get you a grant or a scholarship. Refund guarantees often have conditions or strings attached. Get refund policies in writing-before you pay.
- **"You can't get this information anywhere else."** There are many free lists of scholarships available. Start researching scholarships at the high school or library before you decide to pay someone to do the work for you.
- **"I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship."** Never give out a credit card or bank account number on the phone without getting information in writing first. It may be the set-up for an unauthorized withdrawal from your account.
- **"We'll do all the work."** You **MUST** apply for scholarships or grants yourself.
- **"The scholarship will cost money."** Don't pay anyone who claims to be "holding" a scholarship or grant for you. Free money shouldn't cost a thing.
- **"You've been selected by a national foundation" to receive a scholarship or "You're a finalist" in a contest you never entered.** Before you send money or apply for a scholarship, check it out. Make sure the foundation or program is legitimate.

Information taken from www.collegeboard.org

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION FROM THE GUIDANCE OFFICE

Naviance Student is a great place to begin your search for scholarships. We update this page often as we receive new information. You will find scholarship opportunities from national, state, and local organizations.

JCHS Senior Awards Program

Each year in Caldwell-West Caldwell, local organizations provide scholarship opportunities for seniors at our high school. A Senior Awards Program is held each year to present students with their awards.

The Guidance Office starts receiving local scholarship information as early as January of your senior year. All local scholarship information is located in Naviance→Colleges→Scholarships. This page is updated quite frequently and should be checked daily.

All applications for local scholarships listed in Naviance are readily available in the Guidance Office for you. All you have to do is come into the office and look through the file box labeled Scholarships...and remember never to take the last copy. Always ask for assistance.

Supporting documents for scholarship applications

Some scholarships, whether national, state, or local, will require copies of items (such as transcripts and letters of recommendation) that you **must** get from the Guidance Office. If you need one or both of these items, you must complete a TRANSCRIPT RELEASE form. This form is located in the Guidance Office.

Remember that there is a ten (10) day turnaround period for each transcript request. **Do not request a transcript the day a scholarship application is due as your request will not be processed in time.** Please also indicate on your transcript request if you need copies of a letter of recommendation. Letters of recommendation will be provided, when requested, in an officially sealed envelope.

What Happens Next?



WHAT IS SENIORITIS? The art of "taking it easy" senior year.

According to reports from The College Board, "as many as half of all college students do not have adequate academic preparation, and are required to take remedial courses" and "More than one quarter of the freshmen at four-year colleges and nearly half of those at two-year colleges do not even make it to their sophomore year".

Keep this in mind: College admissions officers pay attention to your grades senior year and may deny you admittance or take away an acceptance if your performance has dropped significantly from your original application. Not only does your transcript show information about course levels and grades from grades 9-11, it also shows the courses you are enrolled in for senior year. It is obvious from the start of your senior year how you plan on spending your time. Many colleges also require a mid-year grade report. This report shows your first semester grades, including mid-term exams, and may be the deciding factor in the college admissions process.

Your final transcript: You may receive a college acceptance letter that states you are accepted upon your continued successful performance. This means that the college has the right to deny you admission if your grades drop senior year.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SENIOR YEAR

- Go above and beyond the minimum requirements for graduation (take additional courses in math, science, social studies, world language). Filling your schedule with academic courses shows a college that you are ready for college level work.
- Continue your involvement in school and community activities (community service, employment, clubs, athletics, etc.)
- Think about exploring college early. Look into summer programs before your senior year or special programs throughout the school year.

Information from www.collegeboard.org

YOU'VE BEEN ACCEPTED!

If you've been accepted to more than one college, it is important to take some time to look at them side-by-side in order to find the best fit. Use the College Comparison Worksheet at the end of this guide to help. Here are some important things to consider:

- Location
- Size
- Academics
- Activities
- Facilities
- Financial Aid Package
- Housing

Choosing a college is a big decision and a personal one at that. However, it is important to seek advice from the people you trust. Talk to your parents, teachers, coaches, mentors, and your guidance counselor.

Visit Campuses: You may have already visited each campus, but you should do so again. If you have yet to visit, now is the time! Your visit now will focus on how you feel on the campus instead of facts about the school. There is a feeling you will get on a campus and most students say they feel it in their gut. Go with your instincts!

You have time to decide! Most colleges don't require a decision until May 1st, so don't rush your decision.

Once you make your decision: Send in your deposit. Make sure to tell the other schools that offered you admission of your final choice as you're holding someone else's spot. A brief letter of thanks is all that is needed.

IF YOU ARE WAIT-LISTED

You may be placed on a college waiting list if you meet the requirements but they've already filled all their spaces. You'll be offered a place if/when space becomes available. Make sure to find out if there are any stipulations to being placed on a waiting list (housing availability, financial aid options, etc.). If you decide that this college isn't right for you, notify them immediately so they can take you off the list.

The following may help your chances of being accepted (not guaranteed):

- Find out how the wait-list works: Does the college rank their waiting list? Is it a priority list?
- Consider writing a letter to the admissions office stating your case and why the college is such a good "fit".
- Keep your grades up throughout senior year. The college may want to see your second semester grades before making a final decision.
- Continue involvement in all school and community activities.
- Ask to interview with an admissions counselor, especially if you haven't done so already.

Plan on sending a deposit to your second choice. Students on a waiting list are not considered until after the May 1st deadline has passed as schools need to see who declines an admission offer. If you know you'll be happy at another school, send your deposit there in order to meet the May 1st deadline. If you are accepted off a waiting list, you will be able to send your deposit; however, you will be forfeiting the first deposit you sent.

IF YOU ARE DENIED

Please do not take a rejection as a personal failure. There are many factors in the college admissions process and there is more to a decision than student merit alone. Schools have to address their own needs as well which includes creating a diverse population, strength of sports teams, and specific degree programs.

What if you're not accepted ANYWHERE? This may happen to students who only apply to "reach" schools, apply to too few schools, or if senior grades drop significantly. If this happens to you, consider the following:

- Remain calm!
- Ask for an explanation.
- Consider applying to schools that have a late deadline or have rolling admissions, including county colleges.
- Contact the admissions office to find out if it will be beneficial to take a standardized test again or if your senior grades improve greatly.
- Consider transferring after you spend a semester or full year elsewhere.

Making an appeal: If you are denied you can try to appeal it in writing, but keep in mind that the majority of students don't win. You will need to contact the admissions office to find out the appeal process.

YOUR FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE

It is important to wait for all award letters from all colleges before making a decision. Keep deadlines in mind because if you are not on time the award may go to another student. If you miss a deadline, the college does not have to honor your financial award. If you are unsure, you can ask the financial aid office to extend the deadline.

Compare awards: Make sure you look at each school's package and make comparisons. If you have questions, ask!

What if you still can't afford the school? Contact the school's financial aid office. If your financial situation has changed since you first applied, be ready to provide that information. If you will still have trouble paying the difference between your award and the cost, you may be able to inquire about additional loans.

Financial decisions about your college choice are a family matter. If you have a question about your financial aid package or financial aid options, contact the school's financial aid office directly. Financial aid officers will be able to assist you and your family on how to handle the cost of a college.

Accepting a financial aid package: Make sure to carefully read all materials and return required materials by the deadline date. Keep all financial aid materials in a file. Don't throw anything away! Make sure to notify other colleges that you are declining their package so that aid is then available for other students.

YOUR DEPOSIT IS IN, NOW WHAT?

Congratulations! You're on your way! You've already sent in your deposit and made a decision about financial aid. What else is there to do?

- Along with your acceptance letter you probably received information on orientation, financial aid, housing, meal plans, etc. Read through all materials thoroughly.
- Take care of additional loan paperwork, if needed.
- Think about housing options. Freshmen typically live on-campus (unless you'll be commuting). There is usually a roommate questionnaire which helps to match you up with another student with similar interests.
- Once you receive your housing information, contact your roommate! Depending on the type of housing in which you are placed, you may have anywhere from one to five roommates. It's a good idea to connect with your roommates, introduce yourself, and talk about what you may be bringing (who is bringing the television, etc.). It's a great opportunity to make a connection before you even arrive on campus.
- Choose your meal plan option.
- Consider buying a computer if you don't own one, unless your school supplies them to students.
- Fill out the "Senior Plans" form in the Guidance Office. This form acts as your final transcript request. Your transcript will automatically be sent to your chosen school when the school year ends as long as this form has been turned in.
- Schedule a physical. Most colleges require proof of vaccinations from a current physical.
- Attend pre-orientation and orientation programs. This is a good opportunity to meet other incoming freshmen.
- Placement exams: you may need to take a placement exam to determine placement in math, English, science, or language classes.
- Go shopping! Create a list of everything you need for your first year of college, especially if you plan to live away from home. Check out the "Off-to-College Checklist" from www.collegeboard.org for ideas on what you may need.
- Say thank you to everyone who has helped you with the college application process-parents, counselors, teachers, coaches, scholarship sponsors, etc.

GOOD LUCK! WE WISH YOU LOTS OF LUCK FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE. WE HOPE THIS GUIDE HAS HELPED YOU ALONG THE WAY!

Appendices

GLOSSARY OF COLLEGE TERMS

ACT or SAT: The American College Testing Program (ACT) and the Scholastic Assessment test (SAT) are the examinations most frequently recommended or required for college admission or placement.

Advanced Placement Courses (AP): Advanced Placement gives high school students an opportunity to take college-level courses in 18 subject areas, offered by approximately 14,000 high schools worldwide.

Advanced Placement Exams: Any student who feels prepared by independent study or other preparation, as well as by students who complete AP courses, can take the AP examinations, which are scored on a 5-point scale. Students can sign up and pay to take the exam. Scores of 4 and 5 can give credit and advanced standing at many colleges.

Associate's Degree: An academic degree conferred by a two-year college after the prescribed course of study has been successfully completed.

Bachelor's Degree: An academic degree conferred by a college or university upon those who complete the undergraduate curriculum. Also called a baccalaureate degree.

B.A.: Bachelor of Arts degree

B.S.: Bachelor of Science degree

Calendar Plan: Describes the number and length of terms per year: semester (2 terms), trimester (3 terms), quarter (4 terms and 1 summer session), and various plans such as "4-1-4" (meaning a 4 month term, followed by a one month term, followed by another 4 month term), etc.

Coalition Application: A standard form used by participating colleges throughout the country. In addition to having an application portal in which students submit their application, there are other college planning tools within the platform.

College: An institution of higher learning that grants the bachelor's degree in liberal arts or sciences or both. It is an undergraduate division or school or university offering degrees in a particular field.

College Work-Study Program: This a program that provides part-time jobs to assist students who need help to pay college costs. A maximum of 10 to 15 hours of work per week is recommended. Jobs are arranged through the school's financial aid office.

Common Application: A standard form used by participating colleges throughout the country. It allows students to complete the forms one time and apply to an unlimited amount of member colleges. The common application is available in many high school guidance offices with the list of participating colleges as well as on-line.

Community College: A junior college without residential facilities that is often funded by the government.

Cooperative Education: Terms of study alternated with terms of work with an outside employer.

CSS (College Scholarship Service): A service of the College Board that assists post-secondary institutions, state scholarship programs, and other organizations in the equitable distribution of student financial aid funds. By measuring a family's financial strength, and analyzing its ability to contribute to the college cost, the CSS need-analysis service offers a standardized method of determining a student's need.

Deferment: A policy by which a college will allow you to defer your enrollment for one year, if you notify them accordingly, reserve a space with a tuition deposit, and do not use the year for academic study elsewhere.

Dependent Students: Those who are at least partially dependent on their parents for financial support. Parents of dependent students must submit parental information on a FAFSA for the student to be considered for financial aid.

Early Action: The student is permitted to submit an application to a college and receive a decision well before spring of the senior year. This type of plan is not binding and the student is not committed to enroll at that particular college.

Early Decision: Students can apply early to a college. If accepted, the student's commitment to attend that college is binding. Therefore, the student may only have one early decision application pending at a time, but they can apply to other colleges under the regular decision plan. The student must withdraw all other applications and make no subsequent applications after they have been accepted.

Equivalency Examinations: A test (e.g. GED) which measures competencies equal to a high school graduation. It can be used in lieu of a diploma or graduation certificate.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid are forms similar to Federal Income tax form 1040, containing all facts about a family's financial condition usually required of students applying for financial aid.

GPA: Grade Point Average; numerical average of accumulated grades.

Grant: A non-repayable form of financial aid.

Independent Students: Those who are: (1) 24 years of age; (2) an orphan or a ward of the court; (3) a veteran; (4) a graduate, professional, or married student not claimed on a parental tax return; (5) a student who has legal dependencies.

Interview: A recommended (but not required) part of the admission process. It is an opportunity to exchange information with an admission officer.

Liberal Arts: Academic disciplines, such as languages, literature, history, philosophy, mathematics, and science, that provides information of general cultural concern.

Likely School: Any school in which a student applies knowing that the odds of acceptance are high for him/her.

Master's Degree: An academic degree conferred by a college or university upon those who complete at least one year of prescribed study beyond the Bachelor's degree.

National: Majority of students attending come from outside the state or region of the college. They have a high geographical diversity and are more selective in their admission process.

NCAA Eligibility: There are specific requirements for the NCAA Division I and II Schools for practice, competition, and financial aid eligibility. Certification by the Eligibility Center is necessary. Go on-line to www.ncaa.org, or contact your school counselor.

Need: (financial) Demonstrated by FAFSA. Information parents present on FAFSA form, which determines all financial aid received based on need.

Parent Loan to Undergraduate and Graduate Students (Plus): A loan made to financially dependent undergraduate, graduate, or vocational school students. The parents assume the responsibility for repaying the loans.

Pell Grant: Financial assistance given directly to the student from the federal government, need-based, demonstrated on the FAFSA.

Perkins Loan: Formerly the National Direct Student loans (NDSL), funded by the Federal government, and processed by the educational institution. The loans have low interest rates and are repayable over an extended period of time.

PhD: An American doctorate degree usually based on at least three years of graduate study and a dissertation; the highest degree awarded by a graduate school.

Private: Vary widely in their focus, size, and mission. Expenses are covered mostly by private sources (tuition charges, donations, and interest on school's endowment). Most private colleges offer financial aid beyond what is offered by federal and state government.

Professional Colleges: These types of colleges offer specialized curricula for students who have definite career plans in specific fields, such as bachelor of fine arts (BFA), architecture (B.Arch), music (B.Mus), culinary schools, nursing, pharmacy, and mortuary science.

PSAT: Pre-Scholastic Achievement test; a test available at high schools to give students preparations for SATs. Test score results determine National Merit awards. Must be taken junior year for National Merit consideration.

Public: Are subsidized by tax revenues, generally less money than private, but charge higher tuition for out-of-state students. They offer a comprehensive curriculum.

Reach School: Any school in which a student applies knowing that the criteria for admission exceed his/her academic standings.

Recommendation: Evaluations by teachers, counselors, headmasters, etc., which are an important part of the admission decision.

Regional: Most public colleges are regional schools. This type of school usually offers few housing options for students, so the majority of students are commuters.

Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG): The Federal funds available through institutions to a limited number of undergraduate students with financial need.

Technical School: A school teaching mechanical, industrial arts, and the applied sciences.

University: An institution for higher learning with teaching and research facilities constituting a graduate school and professional school that award Master's degrees, doctorates, and undergraduate division that awards Bachelor's degrees.

Vocational School: A school, especially one on a secondary level, that offers instruction and practical introductory experience in skilled trades such as mechanics, carpentry, plumbing, and construction.

3-2 Program: This type of program is designed for students who want a major that might be offered only at specialized colleges or large universities yet want the advantages of smaller, less specialized colleges. Students spend three years at a liberal arts or a smaller college, and the next two years at a larger, more specialized school. They usually earn two degrees: B.A. and B.S.

INTERNET RESOURCES

RESEARCHING COLLEGES

The College Board	www.collegeboard.org
Common Application	www.commonapp.org
Peterson's	www.petersons.com
Princeton Review	www.princetonreview.com
College Net	www.collegenet.com
U.S. News and World Report	www.usnews.com
NJ Transfer	www.njtransfer.org
New Jersey State Colleges and University directory	http://www.nj.gov/highereducation/colleges/index.html
New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities	http://www.njascu.org/
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities	www.hacu.net
Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life	www.hillel.org
Universities	www.universities.com
Art Colleges	www.aicad.org
International Colleges	www.ies-ed.com
Jesuit Colleges	www.ajcunet.edu
Nursing Colleges	www.aacn.nche.edu
Trade and Vocational Schools	www.overview.com/colleges
SAT Optional Colleges	www.fairtest.org/univ/optional.htm
Campus Tours	www.campustours.com

FINANCIAL AID

Free Application for Federal Student Aid	www.fafsa.ed.gov
New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority	www.HESAA.org
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators	http://nasfaa.org
Apply for your FSA ID	www.fsaid.ed.gov
Student Aid	www.studentaid.ed.gov
CSS Profile	http://profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp
United Negro College Fund	www.uncf.org
American Student Assistance	www.amsa.com
Fin Aid	www.finaid.org
Fast Aid	www.fastaid.com
Fast Web	www.fastweb.com
Direct Loans	www.ed.gov/directloan
Project Scholarship Scam	www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams
International Education Financial Aid	www.iefa.org
Hispanic College Fund	www.hispanicfund.org
Sallie Mae	www.salliemae.com
Citibank	www.citibank.com
College Scholarships	www.college-scholarships.com/100college.htm
Student Loans	www.studentloanfunding.com

CAREER RESEARCH

Careers.org www.careers.org
Career Planning www.fastweb.com
Monster www.monster.com
Career Guidance Foundation <http://www.cgf.org>
Career Builder www.careerbuilder.com
Occupational Outlook Handbook www.bls.gov/oco
Bureau of Labor and Statistics <http://stats.bls.gov/>

GENERAL INFORMATION

Social Security Administration www.ssa.gov
Selective Service www.sss.gov
Study Abroad www.studyabroad.com
Title IV Institution Codes <http://www.finaid.org/fafsa/tiv.phtml>
EFC Estimator <http://www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml>

TEST PREPARATION

College Board www.collegeboard.com
ACT www.act.org
AP www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html
PSAT www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about/html

RESOURCES FOR THE LEARNING DISABLED

American Counsel of the Blind www.acb.org
Americans with Disabilities Act www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm
Children and Adults with
Attention Deficit Disorder www.chadd.org
Learning Disabilities Association www.ldanatl.org

RESOURCES FOR ATHLETES

National Collegiate Athletic Association www.ncaa.org
NCAA Eligibility Center www.ncaaeligibilitycenter.com
Athletic Scholarship Information
Search Techniques www.athletes.com
National Scouting Report www.nsr-inc.com/

STUDY SKILLS

Self-Help Information <http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html>
Study Strategies <http://www.d.umn.edu/kmc/student/loon/acad/strat/>

COLLEGE COMPARISON WORKSHEET

COLLEGE NAME			
LOCATION -Distance from home			
SIZE -Enrollment -Physical size of campus			
ENVIRONMENT -Type of school (2, 4 year) -School setting (urban or rural) -Religious affiliation			
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS -Deadline -Tests required -Average test scores, GPA, rank -Special requirements -Notification			
ACADEMICS -Major offered -Special requirements -Accreditation -Student/faculty ratio -Typical class size			
COLLEGE EXPENSES -Tuition, room and board -Estimated total budget -Application fee, deposit			
FINANCIAL AID -Deadline -Required forms -Percent receiving aid -Scholarships			
HOUSING -Residence hall requirement -Availability -Types and sizes -Food plan			
FACILITIES -Academic -Recreational -Parking -Other			
ACTIVITIES -Clubs, organizations -Greek life -Athletics, intramural			

