

# HWRHS

## Post-Secondary Planning Guide

### For The Class of 2017



# Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School

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## **Post-Secondary Planning**

This Guide is designed to help you explore your post high school options. The process will be different for each of you. Whether you are looking to attend a college, a technical school, the military, take a year off or seek employment, it is our hope that the following information will make the transition easier. We encourage you to speak with your parents, counselor, teachers and friends about your future plans.

The information included in this material has been gleaned from a variety of sources and condensed into one packet to simplify the process of applying for admission into post-secondary institutions. By following the suggested procedures outlined here, you can be confident that you will have the best chance of being accepted at the school or program for which you qualify. Share this information with your parents and continue to talk with your counselor about transition planning. Keep this manual handy as a guide, but remember to use your guidance counselor as a resource person who is well informed and able to assist you in the transition process. Good luck!

You and your parents are encouraged to meet with your counselor who will help you with your transition planning. In addition to offering individual meetings with students and parents, the Guidance Department sponsors a series of presentations for parents and their college-bound students. A panel of college admissions representatives will share its insight into the college search, visitation and application processes in the winter of junior year. Counselors will also present an informational evening for seniors and their parents in the fall of senior year. A financial aid evening will be hosted by the Department in cooperation with the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority in the winter of the senior year.

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Post-Secondary Options.....   | 4  |
| Gap Year.....   | 5  |
| Co-curricular Activities Resume.....  | 8  |
| Factors About Yourself to Consider When Choosing a College.....   | 10 |
| Questions to Evaluate Your College Preferences.....   | 12 |
| College Planning Timeline.....  | 15 |
| Resources   |    |
| Naviance.....   | 16 |
| Reference Handbooks and Guides.....   | 17 |
| College Catalogues and Websites.....  | 17 |
| College Representative Visits.....  | 19 |
| College Fairs and College Nights.....   | 19 |
| Campus Visits.....  | 19 |
| HWRHS Guidance Department Website.....  | 22 |
| Admissions Test Information.....  | 23 |
| Information for Students with Disabilities .....  | 33 |
| Information for Student Athletes.....   | 34 |
| Information for Students Pursuing the Arts.....   | 35 |
| Service Academies.....  | 35 |
| The ROTC Program.....   | 36 |
| College Admission Criteria.....   | 37 |
| Massachusetts State Colleges and Universities Minimum<br>Admission Requirements.....                          | 37 |
| Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities in the<br>College Admissions Process .....                 | 40 |
| The Application Process.....  | 42 |
| Types of Admissions Programs.....   | 42 |
| Application Procedures.....   | 45 |
| Transcript Package Processing.....  | 46 |
| Top 10 (+2) Things that Seniors and Their Parents Need to Know<br>About the College Application Process ..... | 47 |
| Transcript Release Authorization.....   | 48 |
| Letters of Recommendation.....  | 49 |
| Recommendation Information Form.....  | 50 |
| Summary of College Application Procedure.....   | 51 |
| The Admissions Interview.....   | 51 |
| Writing Your College Essay.....   | 53 |
| How Admission Decisions are Made.....   | 55 |
| Financial Aid: Step by Step.....  | 57 |

# Post-Secondary Options

## Preparatory Schools

Some students may want to consider an additional year of secondary school prior to attending college. Students typically look for a PG year to improve study skills or improve their academic record. Often times college coaches suggest a PG year for athletes. Some students apply to both colleges as well as a PG year at a preparatory school. Decisions and deposits are typically not required until May 1<sup>st</sup>. Additional information with respect to prep schools can be found at [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com).

## An Alternative Year

Some students may choose not to go directly to college after high school. Some will seek alternatives for a year such as travel or an internship experience. Students may request to defer their admissions to a college for one semester or one year, to explore other avenues. See more information on page 5 (Gap Year).

## Business, Trade or Technical Programs

The training provided by schools that offer specific programs, prepares students for employment in those fields. The length of a program varies from several weeks to several years. Costs also vary depending on the type and length of the program.

## Apprenticeship Training

An apprenticeship is a formal way of learning a trade or a skill by working with someone who works at that particular job. Programs typically include class work in addition to full time work. Apprenticeships usually cover periods of time specified by the labor union or government. Programs vary in length from a couple years and up to six years. An advantage to an apprenticeship is that rather than paying for the training, a student is being paid while learning a skill. The number of openings is limited and not all qualified applicants can enter such programs. Exams and interviews are often required.

## Military Training

Branches of the military offer training in almost 1500 different occupations. The training varies in length of time and may include classroom study, on-the-job training, or both. Enlistees are paid while in training. For more information go to [www.myfuture.com](http://www.myfuture.com).

## Correspondence Study

This is a way of continuing education if a student cannot or does not wish to attend formal classes. Many courses help an individual learn a specialized skill. The student is required to pass tests before receiving credit. Students can work full time while studying in their spare time. Jobs are as diverse as accountant, radio/TV repair, locksmith, gem identification, appliance repair and legal assistant.

## Working Full Time

The North Shore Career One Stop offices ([www.nscareers.org](http://www.nscareers.org)) in Salem, Lynn and Gloucester offer a wide range of no-cost services to meet the employment needs of job seekers.

Additional websites: [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com), <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/> (Occupational Outlook Handbook)

## Gap Year

It is becoming more common for a student to take a break after high school instead of going directly off to college. Some students do volunteer work, while others take time to learn a new skill or learn about another culture. As college admissions have become increasingly competitive, a number of students opt to defer admission and explore other avenues for a year before attending college. If you are considering taking a break, we recommend you go through the college application process in your senior year. At the same time you pay a deposit to a college, you may request that the college delay your entry for up to one year. Many colleges support this idea. The following list of programs highlights a few of the options available, including two services that match students with appropriate options. The Guidance Department has a more thorough list available for students interested in investigating this opportunity. The website [www.gapyear.com](http://www.gapyear.com) also provides information on an assortment of programs that are available to students after graduating from high school.

## Examples of Interim Programs

AFS (American Field Service) Intercultural Programs, Inc.

Provides intercultural learning opportunities abroad with the aim of promoting a more just and peaceful world. Students age 18 and over work in over 50 countries in community service organizations or businesses in countries abroad while learning new skills, the language and culture.

\* Telephone: 800-876-2377

\* Website: [www.afs.org](http://www.afs.org)

Americorps Corporation for National Service

A national initiative involving people of all ages in community services through full and part time programs. In exchange for service, participants receive education awards. The typical commitment is 10 months.

\* Telephone: 800-94-ACORPS

\*

Website: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps>

City Year

Putting idealism to work – City Year, an AmeriCorps program, is a national service organization which unites young adults ages 17-24 from diverse racial, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds for a demanding year of full-time community service, leadership development and civic engagement.

\* Telephone: 617-927-2600

\* Website: [www.cityyear.org](http://www.cityyear.org)

CIEE

The Council on International Educational Exchange provides quality programs and services for students. \* Website: [www.ciee.org](http://www.ciee.org)

#### Dynamy Internship Year

A semester or year of education in the form of nine week, full time internships in Worcester businesses and organizations. The program fees include local housing and a three week Outward Bound experience at the start of the Program.

\* Telephone: 508-755-2571

\* Website: [www.dynamy.org](http://www.dynamy.org)

#### Earthwatch Institute

Founded in 1972, this non-profit organization matches paying volunteers with scientific and conservation projects around the world. The cost range is \$500 to \$3000 depending on distance and length of stay. The average length of stay is a few weeks to a month.

\* Telephone: 978-461-0081

\* Website: [www.earthwatch.org](http://www.earthwatch.org)

#### Habitat for Humanity

Volunteers build housing for low income families. Typically volunteers work for a few days a week on construction projects at hundreds of sites around the country. They take volunteers for up to one year. There are also international projects in which people work for two weeks.

\* Telephone: 800-HABITAT

\* Website: [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)

#### Outward Bound

Outward Bound is a non-profit educational organization offering challenging outdoor programs for nearly 60 years. Programs range from three weeks to a semester.

\* Telephone: 800-779-7935

\* Website: [www.outwardbound.org](http://www.outwardbound.org)

#### National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)

NOLS is a wilderness education school offering expedition courses in eight countries from ten days to a full semester in length. Students learn leadership skills, wilderness first aid and outdoor skills while learning about responsible outdoor recreation.

\* Telephone: 307-332-5300

\* Website: [www.nols.edu/NOLSHome.html](http://www.nols.edu/NOLSHome.html)

#### Rustic Pathways

Rustic Pathways provides quality travel and service programs for students and families in some of the world's most welcoming countries.

\* Telephone: 800-321-4353

\* Website: [www.rusticpathways.com/gap](http://www.rusticpathways.com/gap)

#### School for Field Studies, Environmental Field Studies Abroad

Students will conduct hands-on, community-focused environmental fieldwork on programs in Australia, Canada, Kenya, Costa Rica, Mexico and the British West Indies.

\* Telephone: 800-989-4418

\* Website: [www.fieldstudies.org](http://www.fieldstudies.org)

### Sol Abroad

A study abroad experience with a genuine cultural immersion through housing with carefully chosen local host families, quality Spanish Language classes, unique travel excursions, and an array of cultural activities.

\* Telephone: 512-380-1003

\* Website: [www.solabroad.com](http://www.solabroad.com)

### The Experiment in International Living

This international nonprofit organization promotes intercultural learning through home stays, educational group travel, study abroad, language training, au pair and other cultural immersion programs in over 25 countries.

\* Telephone: 800-345-2929

\* Website: [www.experiment.org](http://www.experiment.org)

### The Center for Interim Programs (charges a fee)

Founded in 1980, with offices in Massachusetts and New Jersey, Interim is a service that enables people to pursue structured alternatives to formal education or work by matching clients' interests with over 2,500 internships, volunteer positions and cultural study programs worldwide.

\* Telephone: 413-585-0980

\* Website: [www.interimprograms.com](http://www.interimprograms.com)

## Co-curricular Activities Resume

Potential employers and colleges like to know about a student's activities. The first step in preparing an activities record or resume is listing the things you have done. Any productive use of time applies. The following categories will help you organize your list. **Hint: Take advantage of the resume builder on Naviance. The information you enter can be accessed by your counselor to support the processing of your secondary school report.**

### Academic Honors

Department awards: what and when

NHS

Other: title, description, year

### Athletics

Sports: position, leadership, year

Honors and Awards: title, description, year

### Co-curricular activities in school

List in order of significance either in terms of time commitment or achievement

Position, activity, time (hrs/wk), year

Special Honors and Awards

### Co-curricular Activities outside of school

Volunteer or community service: activity, year

Number of hours: brief description

### Work Experience

Job title (most recent first): duration, position, responsibilities, year

### Non-work summer experiences

Summer school, camp, etc

Experience, description, duration, year

### Travel

Location, duration, brief description

### Interest and hobbies

Skills acquired, duration, level of involvement, year

**A NOTE OF CAUTION:** All students should be aware of the implications of the image that they portray on the internet. A NACAC article stresses the importance of projecting a professional impression through voice mail messages, e-mail account titles, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or other social networking sites.



## Sample Resume

Ima B. Student  
Class of 2017  
Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School  
South Hamilton, MA 01982

**Home Address**

10 Main St.  
Hamilton, MA 01982

**Date of Birth**

April 25, 1999

**Student Activities**

Class Secretary  
Reporter for School Newspaper  
CARE member  
Yearbook Staff

**Grade**

11-12  
11  
10-12  
11-12

**Athletics**

Varsity Track  
Varsity Soccer  
Varsity Basketball

10-11  
11-12  
10-12

**Employment**

Childcare for two summers  
Clean houses  
Cashier at Stop & Shop  
Office Assistant Stop & Shop

9-10  
9-10  
11  
12

**Awards**

CAL conference basketball  
Boston Globe Scholastic Art Award  
NHS

11-12  
11  
11-12

**Other**

Baby-sit for younger sister  
Tutor math at HWRHS

10-12  
11-12

**Personal**

Play Piano

5-12

Hobbies: biking, reading, skating

## **Factors about Yourself to Consider When Choosing a College**

Examine your interests, abilities, goals and expectations. It is crucial that you conduct a Self Assessment.

There are a series of questions listed below that may help you focus on your college selections. The process really begins and ends with you. An honest appraisal of your interests and personality will help you choose colleges which fulfill your needs. We have adapted the following from and gratefully acknowledge the work of Elizabeth Scheibe, former Associate Dean of Admissions, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT., A College Admissions Workbook. This process is not designed to overburden you but to bring to your attention the fact that an honest and deliberate self-appraisal sets the foundation to the college search process.

### **Your Goals and Values**

- What part of your high school experience have you enjoyed the most? What did you miss out on? What would you do differently if you could?
- What do you value? What do you care most about? What concerns occupy your time, effort and energy?
- How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
- What kind of person would you like to become? Of your unique gifts and strengths, which would you most like to develop? What would you most like to change about yourself?
- If there was a year to go anywhere and do whatever you wanted, how would you spend this year? Is there anything you have secretly wanted to do or be?
- What events or experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

### **Your Education**

- What are your academic interests? Which courses have you enjoyed the most? Which courses have been the most difficult for you?
- What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own? Consider any interests which you have pursued beyond the classroom. What topics have you chosen for a research project? Which lab reports, independent projects, outside reading or school activities have you chosen? What jobs or volunteer work have you done? What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?
- How do you learn best? What methods of teaching and style of teaching engage your interest and effort the most?
- How would you describe your school? Have you invested yourself in learning and academic success? Have you worked to develop your interests, talents and abilities? Have you felt encouraged to produce quality work? Have you produced quality work?
- What has been your most stimulating learning opportunity? How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss issues and exchange ideas?

- How well have you worked with your school to prepare yourself for college? In what areas of skills or knowledge do you feel confident? Is there any area in which you feel inadequately prepared for college study? Have you been challenged by your courses? Is there some course planning that you need to do with your counselor in order to be better prepared?
- Have you worked up to your potential in high school? Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? Are your SAT scores an accurate reflection of your ability? What do you consider the best measure of your potential for college work?
- Are there any outside circumstances that have interfered with your academic performance? Consider the following factors: after school job, home responsibilities, personal difficulties, excessive school activities, illness or emotional stresses, outside pressures, inadequate language preparation, problems scheduling courses.

### **Your Activities and Interests**

- What activities do you enjoy outside the daily routine of school and other responsibilities? Which activities have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made different choices?
- Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence or contribution?
- How would others describe your role in your school or home community? What do you consider your most significant contribution?
- After a long, hard day, what do you most enjoy doing? What do you do for fun; for relaxation?

### **The World around You**

- How would you describe your school, family and hometown? Has your environment influenced your way of thinking? Have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited in any way?
- What do your parents and friends expect of you? Have their expectations influenced the goals and standards that you set for yourself? What pressures have you felt to conform?
- What has been the most controversial issue in your school or community? How does this issue concern you? What has been your reaction to the controversy? What is your opinion about this issue?
- Have you ever encountered people who thought and acted differently than you did? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?
- What distresses you most about the world around you? Assuming the obligation and the opportunity to change the world, where would you start?
- Do you have any current heroes or heroines? Historical ones? Literary ones?
- What books have you read that have challenged your way of thinking?

## **Your Personality and Relationship to Others**

- How would someone who knows you well describe you, i.e. your finest qualities; your most conspicuous shortcomings? Would you agree with their assessment?
- Which relationships are most important to you and why? Describe the people whom you consider to be your best friends. Your best critics? In what ways are they similar or different from you?
- Describe the groups in your school. Which ones do you feel you belong to? Which ones do you feel alienated from? What kind of people do you associate with and admire? Generally, how do you respond to people who think and act differently from you?
- How are you influenced by others who are important to you? What pressures have you felt to conform? How important to you are approval, rewards and recognition? How do you respond to pressure, competition or challenge? How do you react to failure, disappointment or criticism?
- How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself? What are the best decisions that you have made recently? How much do you rely on direction, advice or guidance from others? Have you ever chosen anything because it was new or interesting?

## **Questions to Evaluate Your College Preferences**

- What satisfactions and frustrations do you expect to encounter in college? What are you looking forward to? What worries you the most? What do you hope to gain from college? What is your overriding consideration in your choice of college?
- Why do you want to further your education? Why are you choosing to attend college?
- How do you want to grow and change in the next few years? What kind of environment would stimulate or inhibit the growth you would like to see?
- Which interests do you want to pursue in college? Do your interests require any special facilities, programs or opportunities? Consider all your interests in terms of fields of study, activities, community and cultural opportunities. Are you more interested in career preparation, technical training or general knowledge and skills of inquiry thinking?
- What degree of academic challenge is best for you? What balance of study, activities and social life suits you best? How interested are you in the substance of intellectual life: books, ideas, issues and discussion? Do you make respectable grades without knocking yourself out? How important is it to perform at the top of your class or would you be satisfied to be in the middle or bottom of your college class? How well do you respond to academic pressure and competition from others?
- How would you feel about going to a college where you were rarely told what to do? How much structure would you need?

- How would you enjoy living in a different part of the country? How often do you want to be able to go home? What kind of change in your lifestyle and perspective might be exciting? Distressing? Overwhelming?
- What type of surrounding is essential to your well-being? Are there certain places, activities, countryside terrain, weather or pace of life which would make you happy? Do you prefer a fast paced environment where something is happening most of the time or an organized environment where you can join a wide variety of planned activities? Would you prefer a more relaxed and serene environment where you can go your own way?
- How would you feel about going to college where the other students were quite different from you? How would you react? Would you find it exciting or intimidating? Would you prefer to be with people who share your viewpoints and lifestyle, or who challenge and make you question your values?
- How free do you feel to make your own college decisions? Do you and your parents agree about your plans for college? How important to you are the opinions of your parents, counselor and friends? What about considerations of prestige or reputation in your community?

Your plan of action will require that you review many factors in order to create the right fit between you and the college or university that you choose to attend. There will be many specific interests that you will want in your environment, yet there are some basic considerations to review initially. The following chart may help you focus on more objective information as you prepare for college.

## ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

- What high school courses are required?
- What entrance exams are required?
- What scores are acceptable?
- Is a certain grade point average or rank required?
- Will my activities and school involvement be considered?
- Is there an essay on the application? Is it read?
- Is there an early decision or early action plan?
- On what basis are applications accepted?
- Are personal interviews or letters of recommendation required?
- Do certain majors have special requirements?
- What percent of applicants are accepted?
- What are the application filing dates?

## COLLEGE CHARACTERISTICS

- Where is the college located (city, suburb, small town or rural setting)?
- What is the surrounding community like?
- Is the college public, private, or church affiliated?
- What is the current student enrollment?
- What special or unique programs are offered?
- Does the college have general education/course distribution requirements? What are they?
- Does the college have special programs for transfer students?
- What is the academic calendar (semesters or quarters)?

## ACADEMICS

- What is the average classsize? Largest? Smallest?
- How many students in last year's freshman class returned for their sophomore year?
- What was the grade point average for the freshman class last year?
- What is the college's procedure for student orientation, class placement, and scheduling? Are classes guaranteed?
- How is a faculty advisor assigned to students?
- What services does the school offer for the student who is undecided about a major?
- How many students complete a degree?
- What are the most popular majors?
- Are students taught by fulltime faculty members, graduate assistants, or a combination of both?
- What types of additional services are provided by the school at no additional cost to the student (e.g. tutoring, career and personal counseling, developmental reading and study-skills workshops, job placement)?
- Is there an honors program? What are the qualifications for entry?

## SOCIAL LIFE

- What is the average age of the student body?
- What percentage of students reside on campus?
- Are dorms co-ed or single sex?
- Is it a "suitcase college" where all the students leave on the weekends?
- What are the procedures for selecting a roommate?
- What are some of the rules and regulations that govern campus and dormitory life?

## STUDENT POPULATION

- Where do the majority of students come from?
- Do most students commute or live on-campus?
- What student activities are there?
- Are sororities and fraternities on-campus?
- What athletic programs are available?
- Is the surrounding community supportive of the college?
- Does the college have a campus visitation program?
- Is housing available/guaranteed for freshman?
- Is housing available for all four years?

## COST

- What is the tuition?
- Room and board? Are there other fees?
- How much did costs increase from last year to this year?
- Is there a difference in cost for in-state and out-of-state applicants?
- Are accepted students required to place deposits for tuition and housing? Are these refundable?
- By when must accepted students decide whether they will attend?
- Are deposits required each year for returning students?
- When do the bills have to be paid?

## FINANCIAL AID

- \$ What percent of students receive need-based financial aid?
- \$ What percentage of students receive merit scholarships?
- \$ What would be a typical freshman financial aid package?
- \$ What percentage of those who apply for financial aid receive it?
- \$ Will my financial aid be adjusted if my need increases?
- \$ What are the financial aid application procedures and deadlines?
- \$ When are financial aid applicants notified of their awards?
- \$ How long do they have to respond?
- \$ Is there a tuition payment plan?
- \$ Are there campus jobs available? Are there off-campus jobs as well?

## College Planning Timeline

| March  | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March | April | May |
|--|-------|-----|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|
| Research, Visit & make a list of Colleges                                  |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Make summer enrichment plans   |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Choose challenging senior year schedule                                    |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Take SAT and/or ACT Tests  |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Remnest letters of Recommendation  |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Obtain Applications  |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Military & ROTC interest tell counselor                                    |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Take additional SAT and/or ACT Tests if necessary                          |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Register for CSS Profile*  |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Student Athletes for D I & D II Colleges complete NCAA Clearinghouse Forms |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Fill out and submit Applications   |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Submit CSS Profile*  |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Submit FAFSA*  |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| Wait for College Responses   |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |
| May 1 <sup>st</sup> Choose   |       |     |      |      |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |       |       |     |

**These time frames are general suggestions. Pay close attention to specific deadlines for testing, admissions and financial aid.**  
 \* CSS Profile and FAFSA forms relate to the financial aid process

## Resources

### Naviance

We are pleased to introduce Family Connection from Naviance, a Web-based service designed especially for students and parents. Family Connection is a comprehensive website that you can use to help in making decisions about courses, colleges, and careers. Family Connection is linked with Counselor's Office, 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. Family Connection will allow you to:

- **Get involved in the planning and advising process** – Build a resume, complete on-line surveys, and manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges and careers
- **Explore Careers** – get helpful information about particular careers such as job descriptions, necessary skills, what tasks are performed and typical wages earned to name a few.
- **Research colleges** – Compare GPA, standardized test scores, and other statistics to actual historical data from our school for students who have applied and been admitted in the past

Family Connection also lets us share information with you about up-coming meetings and events, local scholarship opportunities, and other Web resources for college and career information. You can also use the site to send us an e-mail message. Some of the features are listed below.

### College Search

Students can search for colleges based on numerous qualifications like location, size of student body, majors offered, cost, etc. Naviance includes colleges from all over the world in its database. Counselors have found this search engine to be easy to use and to yield quality results.

### College Lookup

It's easy to look up information on any college of interest to you. Students can find out admission requirements, majors and activities offered and statistics about the student body at the click of a button. It is easy to research colleges as current college information is readily available, including a direct link to the college homepage.

### College Match and College Compare

Because we use Naviance to keep track of our applications and admissions decisions, students can access statistics that represent past year's HWRHS applicants to specific schools. This data shows SAT (or ACT) scores and GPA's of applicants (without names) and indicate whether the student was admitted, waitlisted or denied. This data will allow students to have an understanding of how their stats match up to previous applicants. **YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO USE THESE FEATURES IN CONJUNCTION WITH CONSULTATION FROM YOUR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR.**

### Career Interest Profiler

The Career Interest Profiler is a tool that can help you discover the types of work activities and careers that match your interests.

### Cluster Finder

The Cluster Finder will help you learn what career clusters may be a good match for you based on activities that interest you, personal qualities that you have and subjects that you enjoy studying in school.

You have been provided with a **personal access code** for accessing Family Connection. You need that code to create your own Family Connection account. To access Family Connection go to <http://connection.naviance.com/hwrhs> . Enter your registration code in the space provided under the NEW USER section and click REGISTER. Enter your email address and create a password. Complete the registration procedures as instructed. You may access Naviance Family Connection as frequently as you wish. Use the links on the left side of the page to navigate through the various features. If you need any assistance accessing Naviance, please contact Mrs. Adamo in the Guidance Office: phone - 978-468-0480, e-mail – [a.adamo@hwschools.net](mailto:a.adamo@hwschools.net).



## Reference Handbooks and Guides

Reference guides present factual information about schools and colleges. These guides will be an excellent source in which to begin your information search. Guides are also available in the guidance office, the libraries and most popular bookstores.

### Frequently Utilized Resources Include:

Barron's Profile of American Colleges  
Barron's Index to Major Areas of Study  
Barron's Guide to Two-Year Colleges  
Fiske's Guide to Colleges  
Lovejoy's College Guide  
Lovejoy's Career and Vocational Guide  
College Board's Index of Majors  
College Board's College Handbook  
Peterson's Annual Guide to Undergraduate Study  
Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges  
Peterson's Guide to Two-Year Colleges  
Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges

## College Catalogs and Websites

The primary source of information about a college is its catalog or website. They will offer the student the basic information provided in any college reference guide but in much greater detail. Everything you will want to know about a college will be included in its catalog and website except for facts about the character and atmosphere of the school. They are particularly useful in comparing the breadth and depth of major fields of concentration in describing the specific educational programs offered by the school. Most colleges make their catalogues available online. Most colleges distribute to the prospective student a view book which presents the basic information of the school in much more detail than the college reference guides, but in less detail than the catalogue. The colleges will also provide to the prospective student pamphlet materials describing individual programs and services offered by the school. Catalogs can be found in school guidance offices, school libraries and public libraries. There are many search engines that will allow you to access particular college websites including our own, <http://hamilton.ccsct.com/page.cfm?p=1994>

***A NOTE OF CAUTION:*** All students should be aware of the implications of the image that they portray on the internet. A NACAC article stresses the importance of projecting a professional impression through voice mail messages, e-mail account titles, Facebook or other social networking sites.

## Other On-Line College Searches

**The College Board Online** <http://www.collegeboard.com>

The College Board is a national membership association of schools and colleges devoted to guiding the transition from secondary to higher education. It offers programs, services, and information regarding scholastic assessment, guidance, admission, placement, financial aid, curricula, and research.

**Educational Testing Service (ETS)** <http://www.ets.org>

The largest institution in the world that develops achievement, admissions, and occupational placement tests for educational and governmental bodies as well as business. ETS is aimed at helping with decisions about education and careers. The site is constructed of several areas. Among those most relevant to the prospective college student are: admission to college, test registration, test preparation, financial aid, and links related sites.

**Petersons** [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

College search, financial aid, test preparation and related links

**Princeton Review** [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)

College Search, financial aid, SAT preparation and related activities.

**College NET** [www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)

College Search, financial aid, scholarships, and links to related sites.

**College View** [www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)

College search, virtual tours, career center and financial aid information

**Go College** [www.gocollege.com](http://www.gocollege.com)

College search, financial aid, test prep, free practice SAT & ACT, articles and related information.

**The New England Board of Higher Education's Regional Student Program**

[www.nebhe.org](http://www.nebhe.org) Provides New England residents with a tuition break when they study certain majors – not available at public colleges in their home state – at public colleges and universities in other New England States.

**Canada** [www.studyincanada.com](http://www.studyincanada.com) Information and links to colleges and universities in Canada.

[www.braintrack.com](http://www.braintrack.com) Links to over 6900 institutions of higher education in 189 countries.

## **College Representative Visits**

Throughout the fall months college representatives come to the high school to meet with students. This is a great way to learn more about the schools and colleges and the specific programs they offer. In addition to listening to a general presentation by the admission officer, the student will have the opportunity to ask questions, discuss programs, and secure applications, catalogs, view books, or pamphlet material. A schedule of planned conferences is published and posted in the guidance office as well as on the bulletin board in the main hallway outside the guidance office. The most complete and updated list is available in Naviance. To attend a conference, the student must sign up through their Naviance account at least one day in advance of the conference in order that we may plan adequate space; then stop by the guidance office to obtain a college visit pass. The pass must be signed by the appropriate block teacher in order for the student to be released from class to attend the conference. Students are reminded to check Naviance for the complete list which is frequently updated.

## **College Fairs and College Nights**

College Fairs and Nights afford the student another opportunity to speak directly with college and school recruiters and to obtain the various forms of information about the school and the programs they offer. These events are very well attended by students. Ideally, the student needs to prepare in advance to ask specific questions of the recruiters representing the colleges in which the student is interested. College Fairs and Nights will allow a one-stop shopping approach if the student comes prepared. These occasions also present the less well-prepared student with an opportunity to collect information and leave their name with college admissions representatives. Walking into a field house filled with hundreds of colleges, and not having any idea how to proceed can be an overwhelming experience. Prepare...find out which colleges will be at the fair and target the ones you want to hit. They are usually placed in alphabetical order. Prepare a list of questions that are important to you (cars on campus, a radio station, meal plan, internship opportunities). Bring an empty backpack. You'll acquire a bunch of catalogs, view books or other handouts. Bring a notebook to jot down impressions and the name of the representative you met. Bring your parents but you don't have to hang out with them the whole time. Make a good impression...you can send a thank you for their time. Further information can be obtained at [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org) and [www.neacac.org](http://www.neacac.org).

Information about these events is read in the daily announcements before school and can be found on our website. This information can also be found on cable TV and in our local newspapers.

## **Campus Visits**

Once the student has identified colleges or schools which are of interest, it is essential to visit the campus. The major advantage of a campus visit is the first hand experience and the ability to ask specific questions. As a result, glossy pictures in a school publication become replaced by realistic, personalized experiences. The visit allows you to experience the character and atmosphere of

the school and identify those schools which are the right fit. The guidance staff highly encourages you to take advantage of visitations during April vacation, summer vacation and during the early fall weekends which are set up specifically to respond to the needs of prospective students. When you plan a campus visit, the following suggestions may prove helpful:

- ✓ Check with your counselor regarding the procedures for making college and school visits during the school day. A College Visit Form must be filled out and signed by your parents confirming that you are using the time out of school to have an official visit with the college. This form needs to be completed with all necessary signatures and returned to the guidance office prior to your admissions visit. Three (3) college visitation days is the maximum number allowed to each student according to the Student Handbook. The form can be picked up in the Guidance Office or downloaded from our website in the Forms and Publication section.
- ✓ Telephone, write or e-mail the Office of Admissions requesting an appointment to visit the campus.
- ✓ When you've decided to visit a campus call the admission office. Ask them for their campus tour schedule. Tell them the date you'd like to come and the approximate time you expect to arrive. If you want to stay overnight in a residence hall, ask if they can make arrangements. Some colleges also can arrange for you to meet a professor who teaches a subject you enjoy, or a coach of a sport you play.
- ✓ In some cases, you may want to go prepared with an unofficial copy of your transcript, a copy of your SAT Reasoning test and/or SAT Subject tests and scores, and a student resume. You may request an unofficial copy of your transcript through our guidance records secretary.
- ✓ Use your counselor as a sounding board before and after your visit.
- ✓ Try to visit the campus when school is in session.
- ✓ Use or identify the public transportation opportunities for visiting the campus.
- ✓ Be part of an organized campus tour and be sure to speak with the students as you travel throughout the campus.
- ✓ Eat in the dining hall or campus center.
- ✓ Visit those facilities of most concern to you, in areas of your intended major and sports facilities.
- ✓ Write a note of thanks to those students and admissions staff that assist you during your visit.

- ✓ Make sure to take down some notes concerning your visit shortly after your time on campus. If the school is at a distance, take pictures to record your impressions.
- ✓ People's views about a college or university can vary widely, so try to talk to as many people as possible. Whether your visit lasts an hour or a day, you should get all your questions answered. You already may have thought of many questions. Here are some you might want to add to your list.

### When You Talk to Students, Ask...

1. How many hours a week do you study? Is that typical of students here?
2. Are campus jobs readily available?
3. Are faculty members interested in students and accessible outside of class?
4. Do many students go home on weekends?
5. Is the food good?
6. Is it possible to study in your dorm room?
7. What's the library like as a place to study?...to do research?
8. What do you like most about this college?...least?
9. How easy is it to get the classes you want at registration?
10. If you had it to do again, would you still choose this college?

### If You Attend A Class, Ask Yourself...

1. Are students interested in the material?
2. Is there time for questions and discussion? Do students participate?
3. Are students prepared for the class?
4. Am I intellectually challenged by what is taking place in the class?
5. Do I feel that the students are learning, either new facts or new ways of thinking about a subject?
6. Is there good rapport between professors and students?
7. Would I feel comfortable as a student in this setting?

### As You Tour The Campus, Ask Yourself...

1. Are the older buildings in good repair?
2. Are there new buildings as well as older ones?
3. Is lab equipment up-to-date and plentiful?
4. Are rooms in residence halls pleasant?...quiet enough to study in?
5. Are common areas in the residence halls attractive? Are there laundry and kitchen facilities?
6. What's the cafeteria like?
7. Are the grounds well-kept?
8. Is the setting and architecture appealing?
9. What's the surrounding town or city like? Would I feel comfortable here?

## When Your Visit is Over...

Try to write down your impressions of the college while they're still fresh in your mind. These questions may help you assess your visit.

1. Were the people you met friendly and did they answer your questions fully and candidly?
2. Did you feel that the students were the kind of people you'd like to get to know?
3. Did you sense that the college was interested in having you as a student?
4. Did you like the social atmosphere?
5. Did the campus itself impress you in any way?
6. What do you think about the quality of instruction?
7. What do you feel about the academic demands and atmosphere?
8. Would you like to spend more time there?

## If You Cannot Visit...

Sometimes it's impossible for you to visit a campus. You can still get the feel of a college by talking to recent graduates or current students who are from your area. The college's admission office can give you the names of these people. See your guidance counselor for the names of recent high school graduates who may be attending the colleges on your list.

Many college representatives travel to interview students in their homes or at schools or hotels nearby. Call the admission office to find out when a representative will be in your area and to make an appointment to see him or her.

Many colleges and universities have virtual tours on their websites. There are two computers in the guidance office available to students for college research.

**Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District website:** [www.hwschools.net](http://www.hwschools.net)  
(click links to get to hwrhs, then guidance)

**Guidance Department website:** <http://hwrhs.hwschools.net/page.cfm?p=1994>  
(direct link to Guidance)

Visit our website to explore the most recent information relating to college open houses, local college fairs, financial aid information, scholarship searches, college admissions, special programs and internships and access to Naviance. The *College Impressions Newsletter* is updated on a monthly basis with timely, thorough and pertinent post-secondary planning information.

# Admission Test Information

## College Entrance Exams

Most colleges require standardized testing as part of the admissions process. Students should carefully review the admissions requirements of each college to which they plan to apply. Many of you have already taken the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). Other tests you are likely to take are the SAT Reasoning Test and the SAT Subject Tests. All of these tests are published by the College Board in Princeton, NJ. Some of you will choose to take the ACT from the American College Testing Program which is the competitor to the College Board.

\* Fee waivers permit eligible students to submit college applications or test registration forms without the fee. A limited number are available through guidance counselors and educational agencies for students who qualify.

Link: [www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/sat/sat-fee-waivers-guidelines-for-students.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/sat/sat-fee-waivers-guidelines-for-students.pdf)

## SAT Reasoning Test

If you're planning to take the SAT in March 2016, or any time after, you'll be taking the "new" test. Listed below are some of the key changes the College Board has made to the SAT to make it more focused, clear and useful.

- It better reflects what you learn in class. The best way to practice for the redesigned SAT is to take challenging courses in high school and work hard in those courses.
- SAT vocabulary words are gone.
- There's no penalty for guessing. You'll receive points for the questions you get right, but won't be penalized for choosing the wrong answer.
- It focuses more on the math that matters most for college and a wide variety of careers.
- Free practice for all students. College Board has partnered with Khan Academy to provide free SAT practice materials that can be personalized for you.

**Timing:** 3 hours; 3 hours 50 minutes with the optional essay

- 1 Evidence-Based Reading and Writing Test – 65 minute Reading section, 35 minutes Language and Writing section.
- 1 Math test – 55 minute section with calculator, 25 minute section without calculator.
- 1 Essay – **optional – 50 minutes**

**Scoring:**

- No wrong-answer penalty
- Score is based out of 1600; 800 for Math, 800 for Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, optional Essay will receive a separate score
- Sub-scores and insight scores are available

## **Reading & Writing**

- Reading and Writing are combined into “Evidence-Based Reading and Writing”
- Reading section does not contain sentence completion
- The section tests understanding from US and World Literature, History/Social Studies, and Sciences
- Writing and Language section tests “Expression of Ideas” and “Standard English Conventions” through passages relating to Careers, History/Social Studies, Humanities, and Science.

## **Math**

- Concentrated focus on problem-solving and data analysis, “the heart of Algebra”, “Passport to Advanced Math”
- Real-world problem solving accompanied by informational graphics
- Calculator permitted for 37 questions, not permitted for 20 questions
- Multiple choice and grid-in questions, 1 enhanced grid-in question

## **Essay**

- Essay is optional
- Students have 50 minutes to analyze a 650-750 word document and draft an essay
- Tests reading, analysis, and writing skills; requires students to analyze a source document and explain how the author builds an argument
- Facts matter

## **SAT Subject Tests**

SAT Subject Tests are one-hour exams designed to measure knowledge and the ability to apply knowledge in specific subject disciplines. A student may select up to three tests on any one test date. The SAT Subject Test in Writing is no longer administered because the SAT Reasoning Test includes a writing test. This change has led some colleges and universities to change their admission policies on SAT Subject Tests. A booklet, “Getting Ready for the SAT Subject Tests” is also available in the Guidance area. Like the SAT, scores range from 200-800. Tests are given in a wide range of math, science, social studies and world language areas. Since these tests measure what you have already learned in a given subject, it is best for students to take them as late as possible in the year. Colleges use SAT Subject Tests for admissions and placement purposes. As some colleges require these tests, it is important that the student fully research the requirements of the colleges of their choice. Your selections at the time of registration are not binding; you may change your mind on the day of the test and select from any of the Subject Tests offered on that day. It is extremely important to be aware of the testing deadlines for registration as the cost increases significantly for late or walk-in registrations and the student cannot be assured that there will be room in their first choice testing site.



## SAT and SAT Subject Testing Dates 2016-2017

| NATIONAL TEST DATES                              | TESTS ADMINISTERED | U.S. REGISTRATION DEADLINE-REGULAR | U.S. REGISTRATION DEADLINE-LATE |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> May 7, 2016  | SAT / SAT Subject  | *                                  | *                               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> June 4, 2016 | SAT / SAT Subject  | *                                  | *                               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oct 1, 2016  | SAT / SAT Subject  | *                                  | *                               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nov 5, 2016  | SAT / SAT Subject  | *                                  | *                               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dec 3, 2016  | SAT / SAT Subject  | *                                  | *                               |
| Jan 21, 2017                                     | SAT / SAT Subject  | *                                  | *                               |
| March 11, 2017                                   | SAT                | *                                  | *                               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> May 6, 2017  | SAT / SAT Subject  | *                                  | *                               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> June 3, 2017 | SAT / SAT Subject  | *                                  | *                               |

***January test date was changed after initial publishing of this guide. New date is shown but, according to the College Board website, all test dates are anticipated and \* deadlines are yet to be determined.***

Offered at HWRHS May, June, October, November and December

**HINT: When registering for the May, June, October, November or December test dates, be sure to register early to get a seat at HWRHS.**

**Fair Test** [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org)

Fair Test is the National Center for Fair and Open Testing. Fair Test's College Admissions Test Score Optional List now includes over 850 schools.

## **The ACT**

Another testing program which is frequently used for college admissions is offered by the American College Testing Program (ACT). This testing system is separate from the College Entrance Examination Board which offers the SAT. It is primarily used by schools in the mid-west, west and south. Students applying to colleges in these geographical areas are advised to carefully research which testing program is required by the schools of their choice. The American College Test, ACT, is a battery of tests consisting of four exams in the academic areas of English Usage, Mathematics Usage, Social Studies Reasoning, and Natural Sciences Reading. Four separate scores, plus a composite score average of the tests, are given. The ACT offers an optional Writing Test that should be taken if a student intends to apply to a college/university that requires it. Students should visit [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) to determine if any of the colleges that they are considering require a writing test. Dates for administration do not conflict with the College Board SAT exams. Some colleges will accept either the ACT or the SAT scores; others will specify which test is required. Students, again, should check the specific requirements of each college. Students may obtain information about the ACT in the guidance office, or online at: [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

### **ACT Testing Dates 2016 - 2017**

| <b>NATIONAL<br/>TEST DATES</b> | <b>U.S. REGISTRATION<br/>DEADLINE-REGULAR</b> | <b>U.S. REGISTRATION<br/>DEADLINE-LATE</b> |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| April 9, 2016                  | March 4, 2016                                 | March 5 - 18, 2016                         |
| June 11, 2016                  | May 6, 2016                                   | May 7 - 20, 2016                           |
| September 10, 2016             | August 5, 2016                                | August 6 - 19, 2016                        |
| October 22, 2016               | September 16, 2016                            | Sept 17 - 30, 2016                         |
| December 10, 2016              | November 4, 2016                              | November 5 - 18, 2016                      |
| February 11, 2017              | January 13, 2017                              | January 14 - 20, 2017                      |
| April 8, 2017                  | March 3, 2017                                 | March 4 - 17, 2017                         |
| June 10, 2017                  | May 5, 2017                                   | May 6 - 19, 2017                           |

## Other Types of Tests

### **AP (Advance Placement) Tests**

AP tests are designed to measure, in depth, a student's proficiency in a given subject area. Each exam is three hours in length. Students who demonstrate a sufficiently high level of achievement on the tests may be granted college credit for work they have completed in high school, or they may be excused from a freshman course requirement in a specific subject.

### **TOEFL**

Students whose native language is not English should consider taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language. THE TOEFL measures ability to understand spoken English, ability to recognize language that is appropriate for standard written English and ability to understand non-technical reading matter. Students can refer to [www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl) or speak with a counselor for more information.

### **Test Reminders**

- Check each college for specific requirements about the SAT or ACT. Make sure that you familiarize yourself with the requirements of your schools-of-choice regarding the SAT Subject Test. Plan to take those tests as soon as possible after you have finished that area of study.
- See the student bulletin for SAT and SAT Subject Test registration deadlines. Applications must be postmarked by this date to avoid late registration fees. For on-line registration, sign on to: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).
- Remember that it may take up to six weeks from the test date before you receive your test results. Make sure that your schools-of-choice receive your test results on time.
- You must request that the College Board or the American College Testing Service forward your test scores directly to your schools of choice. Only the student can request that the scores be sent. As a junior, do not feel compelled to send your scores to colleges as your college search may just now be starting.
- Students eligible for testing accommodations but who haven't done so already are reminded to complete the Request for Accommodations as soon as possible.
- If you have more schools or scholarship programs to send your scores to than the first four that are free of charge, answer the appropriate item on the registration form that you receive in the mail, visit their website, or use the Additional Report Request Form. Copies of this form are available in the guidance office.
- For a fee, students may request rush reporting of their scores to colleges. The student must provide the College Board with the following information:
  1. The most recent date on which the student took the test
  2. The registration number on their admission ticket
  3. The code numbers and names of the colleges

*See your counselor if you require assistance.*

- The Score Choice policy will give students the option to choose to send SAT scores by sitting (test date) and SAT subject Test scores by individual test, at no additional cost. Score Choice is optional, and if students choose not to use it, all scores will be sent automatically.
- Remember, the score reports given to students and counselors will contain current test scores and all previous SAT and SAT Subject test scores. Score Choice will only affect scores submitted to colleges and universities.
- Students may request the Question and Answer Service of The College Board for a fee. See your student bulletin for further details.
- **You cannot take both the SAT and SAT Subject Test on the same day.**
- SAT Subject Tests are not offered on all testing dates. Please be sure to register for appropriate dates.
- Important College Board numbers for Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School students to know are:

|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| HWRHS Test Center Number | 22408  |
| HWRHS Code Number        | 222010 |

- Students may cancel test scores on the day of the test by filing a cancellation form at the test center, or after the test by writing or telephoning the College Board and asking for a score cancellation. This can also be done electronically at the College Board website, [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). The request must be received in writing by Wednesday of the week following the testing date.
- Allow at least two testing dates for the SAT: one in the spring of your junior year and one in the fall of your senior year. Liberal Arts candidates need to review the requirements of their colleges-of-choice for the Foreign Language SAT Subject test
- It is recommended that the SAT Subject tests be taken as soon as possible following your completion of study. Subject tests should be taken in the May or June of the year that you completed the course.

### **How do I know which college admission test to take?**

Students should take either the SAT or the ACT at least twice. Many colleges will accept scores from either test and you may attain an acceptable score on one test and not on the other. To find out which test a college would prefer, refer to one of the several college resource books, the specific college catalog, or contact the college admissions office. Most Hamilton-Wenham students who will be applying to 4-year colleges take the SAT Reasoning Test at least two times.

### **How do I prepare for the tests?**

Actually, you have been preparing throughout your entire life. Students who have done an extensive amount of reading for pleasure and who have taken challenging courses, especially while in high school, are usually well prepared. A free SAT prep

course is available through The Khan Academy. Additionally, if students took the PSAT they have access to My College Quickstart through The College Board. The publications entitled "Getting Ready for the SAT" or "Preparing for the ACT Assessment" are available in the guidance office. Each of these publications describes the test, gives test-taking tips, and contains an actual test that was given previously. You should take the test using the time allotted for each section and then score yourself using the answer table provided. Students are also encouraged to visit [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) and [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) for preparation resources.

### **What about taking admission test preparation courses?**

In general, preparation courses will review skills in math and language arts topics. The course may also help you to identify or improve test-taking skills and become familiar with the format of the test. Short-term "cram courses" are not likely to improve abilities. Your abilities are relative to the effort and time you spend on the subject matter. Long-term courses that develop abilities in a particular area may have a greater effect on test results. There are also computer programs and test preparation books that some individuals find helpful.

### **When should I take the tests?**

Take the SAT's for the first time in the spring of your junior year in high school. If you are not able to take the tests at these times, plan on taking them in the fall of your senior year. Most colleges and universities expect you to take the SAT's in October or November of your senior year, if they require SAT's at all.

Students may choose to take the SAT Subject Test after completing a yearlong course. For example, some sophomores may want to take the SAT Chemistry Subject Test in June. Students and their parents are encouraged to speak with their guidance counselor.

### **May I only take the tests once?**

No, you may take them as often as you wish. In fact, most colleges will accept your best composite score on the ACT or your best critical reading, math and writing score on the SAT, even though the scores may be from different test dates.

### **How do colleges receive my scores?**

When completing the registration form you may identify the colleges where you want your scores sent. If you would prefer to have your scores sent at a later date, contact your guidance counselor for an additional score report form, or access your account at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). There will be an additional expense if the scores are forwarded at a later date. Most colleges have access to scores through a computerized database.

### **How are the tests given?**

The tests are given nationally on specific dates available from your guidance office, or online. Registration deadlines are well in advance of the test dates. The registration deadlines are available at their respective websites.

## **SAT & ACT Score Comparison**

| <b>SAT Score<br/>CR + M</b> | <b>ACT<br/>Composite<br/>Score</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1600                        | 36                                 |
| 1540-1590                   | 35                                 |
| 1490-1530                   | 34                                 |
| 1440-1480                   | 33                                 |
| 1400-1430                   | 32                                 |
| 1360-1390                   | 31                                 |
| 1330-1350                   | 30                                 |
| 1290-1320                   | 29                                 |
| 1250-1280                   | 28                                 |
| 1210-1240                   | 27                                 |
| 1170-1200                   | 26                                 |
| 1130-1160                   | 25                                 |
| 1090-1120                   | 24                                 |
| 1050-1080                   | 23                                 |
| 1020-1040                   | 22                                 |
| 980-1010                    | 21                                 |
| 940-970                     | 20                                 |
| 900-930                     | 19                                 |
| 860-890                     | 18                                 |
| 820-850                     | 17                                 |
| 770-810                     | 16                                 |
| 720-760                     | 15                                 |
| 670-710                     | 14                                 |
| 620-660                     | 13                                 |
| 560-610                     | 12                                 |
| 510-550                     | 11                                 |

# Compare the New SAT to the ACT

Taking the SAT is the best way to show colleges you have the skills and knowledge they want most. Find out how the new SAT, launching in March, compares to the ACT.\*

| <b>Test Snapshot</b>                                |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Features</b>                                     | <b>New SAT</b>  | <b>ACT</b>   |
| <b>Widely accepted</b>                              | All U.S. colleges   | Almost all U.S. colleges   |
| <b>Major redesign</b>                               | 2016 SAT is based on the latest research on the skills colleges value most. | No recent significant revisions.   |
| <b>Tests the vocabulary you'll use</b>              | Yes   | Yes  |
| <b>Everyday math formulas provided</b>              | Yes   | No   |
| <b>Essay is optional</b>                            | Yes   | Yes  |
| <b>Penalty for guessing</b>                         | No  | No   |
| <b>Cost</b>   | \$54.50 (\$43 without essay)  | \$56.50 (\$39.50 without essay)  |
| <b>Free Practice</b>                                |   |  |
| <b>Resources</b>                                    | <b>New SAT</b>  | <b>ACT</b>   |
| <b>Free daily practice questions</b>                | Yes, the free mobile app, Daily Practice for the New SAT.                   | Yes  |
| <b>Free comprehensive test practice</b>             | Yes, through Khan Academy®, with over 4,000 questions and video lessons.    | No   |
| <b>Free, downloadable practice tests</b>            | Yes   | No   |
| <b>Mobile app that instantly scores paper tests</b> | Yes, Daily Practice for the New SAT.  | No   |
| <b>Flexibility</b>                                  |   |  |
| <b>Schedule</b>                                     | <b>New SAT</b>  | <b>ACT</b>   |
| <b>Test days</b>                                    | 7 times a year  | 6 times a year   |
| <b>Regular registration deadline</b>                | About 4 weeks before test day. You pay a late fee for registering later.    | About 5 weeks before test day. You pay a late fee for registering later. |
| <b>Late registration closes</b>                     | About 11 days before test day   | 20+ days before test day   |
| <b>Fee Waivers</b>                                  |   |  |
| <b>Benefits and Rules</b>                           | <b>New SAT</b>  | <b>ACT</b>   |
| <b>Test fees waived for eligible students</b>       | Yes   | Yes  |
| <b>Waivers cover late fees</b>                      | Yes   | No   |

|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| Four college application fee waivers sent directly to eligible students | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|

| Test Format            |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Structure and Timing   | New SAT   | ACT   |
| Testing time           | 3 hours<br>+ 50-minute essay (optional)   | 2 hours 55 minutes<br>+ 40-minute essay (optional)  |
| Structure              | 3 tests + optional essay  | 4 tests + optional writing test   |
| Number of questions    | 154   | 215   |
| Time per question      | 1 minute, 10 seconds  | 49 seconds  |
| Score range            | Composite 400–1600 (SAT Essay: reported in 3 dimensions, each 2–8)  | Composite 1–36 (writing domain scores: 2–12)  |
| Test length and timing | <b>Reading Test</b><br>65 minutes<br>52 questions<br><b>Writing and Language Test</b><br>35 minutes<br>44 questions<br><b>Math Test</b><br>80 minutes<br>58 questions | <b>Reading Test</b><br>35 minutes<br>40 questions<br><b>English Test</b><br>45 minutes<br>75 questions<br><b>Math Test</b><br>60 minutes<br>60 questions<br><b>Science Test</b><br>35 minutes<br>40 questions |

Chart copied from The College Board website:  
<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/inside-the-test/compare-new-sat-act>

## Information for Students with Disabilities



Students with identified physical or learning disabilities may want to investigate the programs and services which are specifically designed to meet their post-secondary educational needs. Students may want to make use of preparatory programs which help them to identify individual learning styles and develop organizational and study skills that maximize their strengths. Within a four-year college there are often special programs for students with learning disabilities which provide academic advising, tutorial support, and help in coordinating special services necessary for the student to function in regular classes. There is often a separate admission process to enter an LD program. Even in colleges which provide no special programs for students with learning disabilities, individuals with learning disabilities may take advantage of tutorial or other support services which are available to all students and students may request appropriate modifications such as extended time or taping of lectures.

As students explore post-secondary options, they should raise questions in each college setting about the availability of support services, the presence of trained LD specialists, and the provision for classroom modification, if necessary. In most instances, students should indicate in the application process the nature of accommodations that will be necessary in college, if any. If the school has a special learning support program, the student should also be in contact with the director of that program during the admissions process. Colleges which have a program for students with learning disabilities frequently require professional assessments which document and identify the specific learning disability of the student.

Students should seek help from their guidance counselor or academic support teacher about specific programs and application procedures.  
<http://www.ldonline.org/indepth/college>

### **Guidelines for Special Administration of PSAT, SAT, AP, and ACT for Students with Disabilities**

Students may be eligible for untimed and extended time on standardized tests based on documented special learning needs. Typically, these needs would be described in an IEP. They may also be found on signed documents from any of the following: physician, psychologist, or learning-disability specialist. The documents must adhere to the guidelines established by The College Board Program or the ACT Testing Program as described in their brochures. **Students must receive the same accommodations in school as they are requesting of The College Board or ACT.** There are opportunities for both extended time and untimed tests.

If you have a documented disability, you may take the test with accommodations appropriate to your disability which is called non-standard administration. To receive testing accommodations you must meet eligibility criteria established by the College Board. More detailed information is available on the College Board website: [www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html).

## Information for Student Athletes

Athletics is an area of special talent that can make a difference in the college's admissions and financial aid process. At most colleges, athletics are regulated by the rules established by the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) which divides all college sports programs into three divisions known as Division I, Division II, and Division III. Institutions are members of one or another division according to the size and scope of their athletic programs and whether they provide athletic scholarships. The recruitment and enrollment of college athletes are governed firmly by the NCAA's rules for each division. To be eligible to participate at the Division I or II level, where full athletic scholarships are awarded, students must be certified as eligible by the NCAA Eligibility Center. The Center ensures consistent application of NCAA initial-eligibility requirements for all prospective student athletes at all member institutions.

To register, prospective student-athletes should access the registration materials by visiting the Center's Web site at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). Additionally, send all standardized test scores (SAT or ACT) directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center by indicating its code (9999) on your SAT/ACT registration form.

The NCAA is not the only game in town. Many colleges are members of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org).

### Suggestions for the Student Athlete

- Inform your high school coach that you are interested in playing a sport in college. Ask the coach if he or she is available to college coaches.
- Prepare and mail a short letter of introduction and athletic resume to college coaches.
- Be familiar with the NCAA rules regarding the recruitment of athletes.

## Information for Students Pursing the Arts

Students interested in studio art, music, architecture, dance, ceramics, photography or drama, have a number of options open to them. Students may choose to pursue their studies within the framework of a liberal arts education or they may wish to enter a specific school or program in their area of interest. Students who intend to major in art will often be required to submit a portfolio of their work to the college admission office or art school. Students contemplating this are encouraged to begin their portfolio in the spring of junior year and take the Portfolio course offered by the Art Department. Those music and drama students applying to pre-professional programs may need to plan an on-campus audition and should contact the school directly to determine when audition dates occur. If you are applying to a liberal arts program, it is unlikely that a portfolio or audition will be required. [www.aicad.org](http://www.aicad.org) displays information about Art and Design Schools.

## Service Academies

Unlike applications to other colleges or universities applications to Service Academies need to be initiated during the junior year in high school. Any junior student who is considering a Service Academy must complete the following steps prior to their second semester in order to ensure full consideration.

The **first step** in securing an appointment to one of the academies is to write and request a pre-candidate questionnaire. This places the student at the start of a lengthy process which requires attention to detail and strict adherence to all deadlines. The addresses of the academies are as follows:

United State Military Academy  
Admissions Office  
West Point, NY 10996  
<http://www.usma.edu/>

United States Air Force Academy  
Admissions Office  
USAF Academy, CO 80840  
<http://www.usafa.af.mil/>

Admissions Office  
U.S. Coast Guard Academy  
31 Mohegan Avenue  
New London, CT 06320  
<http://www.cga.edu/>

United States Naval Academy  
Office of Admissions  
Annapolis, MD 21402  
<http://www.usna.edu//homepage.php>

United States Merchant Marine Academy  
Admissions Office  
Kings Point, NY 10024  
<http://www.usmma.edu/>

The **second step** is to write to each of your senators and congressmen to ask that they consider you as one of their nominees. In these letters, you should indicate your choice or choices of academies. You should also include the following personal information:

- Name/Address/Telephone Number
- Date of Birth
- Social Security Number
- Name of High School
- Year of Graduation
- Name of Parents

The Coast Guard Academy has an admission procedure similar to other highly competitive colleges. There is no pre-candidate questionnaire to be completed, nor is there a nomination process. Contact the Coast Guard Academy directly for an application.

## **The ROTC Program**

This is a program which allows students to attend a four year college and combine college courses in military science with summer training in order to develop candidates for positions of responsibility as officers in the U.S. Armed Forces. Students who qualify academically and physically for ROTC, Reserve Officers Training Corps programs receive benefits that include tuition, the cost of textbooks and a monthly allowance. A ROTC scholarship is not based on need and can be worth thousands of dollars. The ROTC program is offered by the Army, Navy and Air Force and is taken as a college elective. ROTC scholarships provide money to college students as they train to be officers in exchange for students' commitment to serve in the armed forces. Students who have an interest in applying for a ROTC Scholarship should begin the process in the spring of their junior year.

The ROTC selection process is competitive. Four-year scholarships are awarded to seniors in high school based on a national competition. The selection process is based on a number of factors including grades, college entrance examination scores, recommendations, extra curricular activities, athletics, and community work.

If you are intelligent and industrious and think ROTC makes sense for you, consider applying to colleges where these programs are offered. Some ROTC programs require you to major in a specific area such as engineering or nursing. The ROTC program will help develop confidence, self-discipline, and leadership skills for success in college and beyond.

Each service also has two and three year scholarships for students already in college. If you receive a two or three year scholarship your active duty obligation is for four years. It is also possible to serve in the Guard or Reserves.

You may also join a ROTC unit after you get to college even if you are not a scholarship recipient.

For more information about **Air Force ROTC** programs call 1-800-423-8723

For more information about **Army ROTC** programs call 1-800-USA-ROTC

For information about **Navy ROTC** call 1-800-327-NAVY.

Students should also take note that individual ROTC programs must be listed as a test score recipient from the College Board. Codes for the individual programs are as follows:

- 0454 ARMY ROTC
- 0656 NAVY/MARINES ROTC
- 0548 AIR FORCE ROTC

## College Admission Criteria

Students often ask which criteria are most important to college admission committees. According to *Trends in College Admission* by the College Board the following represents a list of factors that will likely determine your chances of admission:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Grades/Grade Point Average           | 7. Personal Essay   |
| 2. Rigor of Academic Program            | 8. Recommendations  |
| 3. SAT/ACT Scores                       | 9. Interview  |
| 4. SAT Subject Test Scores, if required | 10. Co-Curricular Activities                                  |
| 5. Special Talents                      | (including athletic, employment, clubs and summer activities) |

The emphasis placed on each factor will vary among colleges. Students should remember that the final selection process is based upon the goals of a specific college community. Some colleges, particularly the very selective schools, are trying to “build” a balanced entering class that will allow them to have a range of athletic teams, organizations, and student backgrounds. Information about the importance of various criteria can be found in college view books. Some schools have very specific admission requirements set by state public accrediting boards.

## Massachusetts State College and Universities Minimum Admission Requirements

The admissions standards for the state universities and UMASS emphasize a strong academic high school background so that students enter college ready to learn. These standards represent minimum requirements; meeting them does not guarantee admission, since campus officials consider a wide range of factors in admissions decisions. Students shall have fulfilled all requirements for the high school diploma or its equivalent upon enrollment. It is important to note that admissions standards for the state’s community colleges differ. Community colleges may admit any high school graduate or GED recipient.

### Freshman Applicants

The new admissions standards for freshmen applicants have two main parts:

1. 17 required academic courses.
2. A minimum required grade point average earned in college preparatory courses completed at the time of application.

Applicants must also submit an SAT or ACT score.

## Academic Course Requirements

Sixteen college preparatory courses distributed as follows are required. (A course is equivalent to one full school year of study. Courses count toward the distribution only if passed.)

- ◆ English 4 courses
- ◆ Mathematics 4 courses (Algebra I & II and Geometry or Trigonometry or comparable coursework)  
(a full math course beyond Algebra II is required during senior year)
- ◆ Sciences 3 courses (including 2 courses with Laboratory work)
- ◆ Social Sciences 2 courses (including 1 course in U.S. History)
- ◆ Foreign Languages 2 courses (in a single language)
- ◆ Electives 2 courses (from the above subjects or from the Arts & Humanities or Computer Sciences)

(\* Effective with the college freshman class entering fall 2016, the number of required courses will increase to 17 with an additional year of math.)

Minimum Required Grade Point Average (GPA) must be achieved based on all college preparatory courses completed at the time of application and should be weighted for accelerated (Honors or Advanced Placement) courses. The required minimum weighted high school GPA is 3.0 for the four-year public campuses.

## SAT Scores

Applicants who meet the GPA requirement do not have to use the sliding scale for admission, but still must submit SAT or ACT test scores for consideration if they are applying to a state university or UMASS within three years of high school graduation.

Sliding Scale (used when GPA is lower than the minimum required GPA)

If an applicant's GPA falls below the required minimum, a sliding scale will apply. This scale should be used only when an applicant's GPA falls below the required 3.0 minimum for admission to the state universities or UMass.

Scores on the new writing section of the SAT will not affect the sliding scale for freshman applicants to the Massachusetts state universities and to the University of Massachusetts at this time. The sliding scale, used in making admissions decisions for students with high school grade point averages falling below the required minimum, will continue to be based upon the combined critical reading (verbal) and math sections of the SAT.

### Sliding Scale for Freshman Applicants to UMASS

| <b>High School GPA</b> | <b>Combined SAT CR&amp;M Must Equal or Exceed</b><br>(ACT Equivalent in parentheses) |
|------------------------|--|
| 2.51-2.99              | 950 (20)   |
| 2.41-2.50              | 990 (21)   |
| 2.31-2.40              | 1030 (22)  |
| 2.21-2.30              | 1070 (23)  |
| 2.11-2.20              | 1110 (24)  |
| 2.00-2.10              | 1150 (25)  |

No Applicant with a High School GPA below 2.00 may be admitted to a State University or University of Massachusetts Campus.

### Sliding Scale for Freshman Applicants to a State University

| <b>High School GPA</b> | <b>Combined SAT CR &amp; M Must Equal or Exceed</b><br>(ACT Equivalent in parentheses) |
|------------------------|--|
| 2.51-2.99              | 920 (19)   |
| 2.41-2.50              | 960 (20)   |
| 2.31-2.40              | 1000 (21)  |
| 2.21-2.30              | 1040 (22)  |
| 2.11-2.20              | 1080 (23)  |
| 2.00-2.10              | 1120 (24)  |

More information can be found at the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education website, [www.mass.edu](http://www.mass.edu).

Most very selective colleges recommend a more rigorous course selection, which usually includes courses taken at the highest end of a discipline's sequence, such as:

- **English** – 4 courses
- **Mathematics** – 4 courses (Including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II & Precalculus)
- **Sciences** – 4 courses (including 2 courses with laboratory work)
- **Social Sciences** – 4 courses (including 1 course in U.S. History)
- **Foreign Languages** – 4 courses (in a single language)

# **Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities in the College Admissions Process**

## **When you apply to colleges and universities you have rights.**

### **Before You Apply**

- You have the right to receive factual and comprehensive information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial costs, aid opportunities, practices, and packaging policies, and housing policies.
- If you consider applying under an early admission or early action decision plan, you have a right to complete information from the college about its processes and policies.

### **When You Are Offered Admission**

- You have the right to wait to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission and/or financial assistance prior to May 1<sup>st</sup>, must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1<sup>st</sup>. They must grant you this extension and your request may not jeopardize your status for admission and/or financial aid. (This right does not apply to candidates admitted under an early decision program)

### **If You Are Placed On A Waiting List or Alternative List**

- The letter that notifies you of that placement should provide a history that describes the number of students on the wait list, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing.
- Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of remaining on a wait list.
- Colleges are expected to notify you of the resolution of your wait list status by August 1<sup>st</sup> at the latest.

## **When you apply to colleges and universities you have responsibilities.**

### **Before You Apply**

- You have a responsibility to research and understand the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships and housing. You should also be sure that you understand the policies of each college/university regarding deposits that you may be required to make before you enroll.

### **As You Apply**

- You must complete all material that is required for application, and submit your application on or before the published deadlines. You should be the sole author of your applications.



- You should seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. Follow the process recommended by your high school for filing college applications.
- It is your responsibility to arrange, if appropriate, for visits to and/or interviews at colleges of your choice.

### **After You Receive Your Admission Decisions**

- You must notify each college or university which accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting its offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision as to the college that you wish to attend, but no later than May 1<sup>st</sup>. It is understood that May 1<sup>st</sup> will be a postmark date.
- You may confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on a wait list by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify a college or university at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll.
- If you are accepted under an early decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications. If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.

If you think that your rights have been denied, you should contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date. In addition, you should ask your counselor to notify the president of the state or regional affiliate of the National Association for College Admission Counseling. If you need further assistance, send a copy of any correspondence you have had with the college or university and a copy of your letter of admission to: **NACAC, 1631 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2818**

This policy is endorsed by the National Association for College Admission Counseling, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. For a copy of the Student's Rights and Responsibilities brochure, contact:

National Association for College Adm. Counseling  
 1631 Prince St.  
 Alexandria, VA. 22314-2818  
 (800)-822-6285  
 (703)-836-8015 FAX  
[www.nacac.com](http://www.nacac.com)

## The Application Process

The process of choosing a school or college is one of the most important that you will make over the next several months. Not a simple task, it will take time, effort and careful planning for you and your family. It is a process that requires research, discussion, interviews and the ability to compare and contrast what you know about yourself and what you discern about the polished marketing of a college or university.

Make use of all the resource materials in the guidance office. Be sure to check the college's website to gather more information, take a virtual tour, check out academic departments, activities, admissions requirements, etc. Write, call or e-mail each college for more information when needed. By the beginning of your senior year, you should narrow your choices down to several colleges.

## Types of Admissions Programs

**Non-Restrictive Application Plans:** These plans allow students to wait until May 1 to confirm enrollment.

- **Regular Decision** is the application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction.
- **Rolling Admission** is the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are completed and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admission cycle. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction. Frequently, the student will be asked to secure a place in the incoming freshman class through a non-refundable deposit. If the applicant is waiting to hear from another college, this may present some questions. Your options may include: 1) Pay the deposit and secure your place in the freshman class; 2) Disregard the acceptance and take a calculated risk while waiting to hear from other colleges; 3) Contact the accepting college to see if they adhere to the Candidate Reply Date. This allows the student until May 1<sup>st</sup> to retain a position in the freshman class. If possible, the student may request information regarding an extension policy. This will allow the student to hear from their first choice college; 4) Request that your counselor call your first choice college, explaining your situation and request a verbal statement concerning your admission status.
- **Early Action (EA)** is the application process in which students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Students admitted under Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1. Under non-restrictive Early Action, a student may apply to other colleges.

**Restrictive Application Plans:** These plans allow institutions to limit students from applying to other early plans.

- **Early Decision (ED)** is the application process in which students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. While pursuing admission under an Early Decision plan, students may apply to other institutions, but may have only one Early Decision application pending at any time. Should a student who applied for financial aid not be offered an award that makes attendance possible, the student may decline the offer of admission and be released from the Early Decision commitment. The institution must notify the applicant of the decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time after the Early Decision deadline.

The Admissions Committee either accepts or denies admission to the candidate, or defers the application to the regular admissions process. It is important to note that not all colleges will reconsider with the regular applicant group. If you are to be an Early Decision candidate, please notify your counselor of your intent as soon as possible. The following are some questions to consider when investigating Early Decision as an option for admissions.

Am I prepared to make this commitment?

What type of Early Decision program does the college sponsor?

Am I obligated to accept admission if the financial aid package is insufficient to my needs?

Will my application be deferred to regular admissions if I am not accepted under the Early Decision Plan?

What type of financial aid forms must I file? When should these forms be processed, and to whom?

Are there other restrictions to this Early Decision program?

Does the admissions office recommend that I apply as an Early Decision candidate?

What are the deadlines for application and financial aid?

- **Restrictive Early Action (REA)** is the application process in which students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Institutions with Restrictive Early Action plans place restrictions on student applications to other early plans. Institutions will clearly articulate these restrictions in their Early Action policies and agreements with students. Students who are admitted under Restrictive Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Open Admissions**

The college with this program admits all applicants.

## **Joint Admissions**

The Joint Admissions program is an exciting opportunity available to Massachusetts community college students who are enrolled in an approved academic program. Joint Admissions guarantees participating students admission to the University of Massachusetts and most Massachusetts State Colleges.

The Tuition Advantage Program (TAP) is an additional benefit for students enrolled in the Joint Admissions Program. This program awards qualified students a waiver for one-third off the in-state tuition rate. See your counselor for more information.

## **Candidate's Reply Date**

May 1 is the common date by which accepted applicants must indicate their intention to enroll at the college they choose to attend. By use of a common reply date, students may evaluate all notices of admission and financial aid awards before deciding on any one college, allowing students to make informed decisions.

## **Application Procedures**

Once you have selected the schools in which you are interested, you should request applications and catalogues from those schools. Many applications are available in the Guidance Office. For those we do not have, you should write, call or request them electronically.

It is extremely important that you read and follow directions contained in the information you receive from schools. You will receive instructions on how to fill out application forms and will be told exactly what materials you need to support your application. You are responsible for knowing specific details applicable to each school to which you are applying. You must check deadlines, admission requirements, tests to be taken, etc.

Fill out application legibly. Use your computer or use blue or black ink. Give yourself time to complete the application procedures by starting as early as possible.

### **The College Application**

There are two parts to the application package; the student portion and the high school portion. The student should fill out his/her portion and submit it to the college. Students are also responsible for submitting their essay (if required), application fee\*, and any other supplemental information such as an art portfolio, CD's, DVD's, graded writing samples or resume. The Guidance Office is responsible for submitting the school portion, a.k.a. the Transcript Package.

\* Fee waivers permit eligible students to submit college applications or test registration forms without the fee. A limited number are available through guidance counselors and educational agencies for students who qualify.

Link: [www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/sat/sat-fee-waivers-guidelines-for-students.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/sat/sat-fee-waivers-guidelines-for-students.pdf)

### **Common Application**

The Common Application greatly simplifies the college application process for students by allowing them to use one form to apply to many schools. The Common Application is accepted by hundreds of colleges. A student fills out the application once, then submits copies electronically to each of his/her colleges. It is available online at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). Many colleges using the common application will require a *supplement* to be completed by the student. Students need to follow the directions for submitting the common application very carefully.

## Transcript Package Processing

### Procedure:

1. Fill out a "Transcript Release Authorization" form with your guidance counselor **at least ten school days prior to your earliest application deadline.** (See sample on page 46.)
  2. Students are responsible for entering the colleges they are applying to in Naviance. Common Applications linked to Naviance will transfer colleges you're applying to, to your Naviance account. THIS IS A ONE WAY STREET – if you remove a college from your Common App list it does not automatically remove from your Naviance list. You MUST go to your Naviance list and remove it there as well. Always make sure your Naviance list is up to date.
  3. Guidance prepares the transcript package. The transcript package consists of the following:
    - a. Transcript of grades 9-11\*
    - b. Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School Profile
    - c. Secondary School Report (includes counselor's recommendation)
    - d. Letters of recommendation, if available
- \* First quarter senior grades & semester one senior grades are **automatically** forwarded to the colleges when available.
4. The guidance counselor will electronically submit or mail hard copies of the transcript package and log out this information. Students can follow this process via their Naviance account.

### Students, please be reminded:

- If, after you enter your initial college list into Naviance, you make changes to it i.e. change a deadline, add/delete colleges, file through Common Application or not, file electronically or paper mail - you must notify your guidance counselor.
- Seniors who are applying EA or ED are reminded to list the names of all colleges/universities to which they plan to apply. Keep your counselor informed of your EA/ED status.
- Most colleges will require an official score report sent directly to them by The College Board or American College Testing. It is the student's responsibility to request this information be sent from College Board or ACT.
- Notify your guidance counselor of all college admission decisions, as well as your decision of which college you will be attending next fall. Students can enter their decision results in Naviance by clicking on the "Edit" pencil icon next to the "Results" column.
- In June, final transcripts will be mailed to the college that you indicate you are planning to attend.

- Final transcripts will also be sent to the NCAA Eligibility Center for all students who have submitted a request.
- Students are charged \$2 per transcript package to cover the cost of processing. Students are billed in the spring.

## **Top Ten (+2) Things that Seniors and Their Parents Need to Know About the College Application Process:**

1. Students are responsible for submitting the actual application, application fee and any college-specific requirements, i.e. art portfolio, etc. Carefully read the instructions as they vary from one institution to another.
2. Students are responsible for signing a Transcript Release Authorization Form with their guidance counselor at least 10 school days in advance of the specific college's application deadline.
- 3 The \$2 fee for each package prepared is collected in the spring. You will not be charged for any requests that are cancelled before processing.
4. Students must indicate in Naviance if they are using the Common Application.
5. If a student decides to apply in a different format i.e. paper vs. on-line, Common Application vs. non-Common Application or makes changes to their college list or deadlines, they **MUST** stop in to the Guidance Office or email their counselor.
6. If students are submitting letters of recommendation from coaches or others outside of the HWRHS faculty, please email or give a hard copy of these letters to the guidance secretary. Keep copies for future reference such as scholarship applications.
7. Students must request teacher letters of recommendation in a timely manner and be sure that teachers are aware of your earliest deadline. This request must be done through personal contact, not an e-mail.
8. On the Common Application, students must fill out the Privacy Notice (FERPA) form, thus allowing us to forward your transcript package electronically.
9. Common App exclusive colleges must be listed in your Common App account to enable your counselor to send the Transcript Package electronically.
10. Parents and students are assigned their own distinct and unique Naviance accounts and should use their own accounts as permissions differ. Students must use a student account to see certain information in Naviance.
11. As the Guidance Office frequently sends updates and reminders to students & parents, you should check your e-mails regularly.
12. Parents are reminded that the college application process needs to be a student driven experience.

# Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School

## Transcript Release Authorization 2016-2017

**This Authorization must be signed in duplicate by both student and guidance counselor.**

In order for the Guidance Office to send my transcript packages (which include my transcript and supporting documents) to the colleges I apply to, I acknowledge that I understand the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ It is my responsibility to enter the colleges I am applying to into the "colleges I'm applying to" section of my Naviance account.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is my responsibility to check the deadlines of the colleges I enter in Naviance and if I later decide to change any deadlines or if I add or delete any colleges, I will notify my guidance counselor either by email or in person.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ If I apply through the Common Application I must complete the FERPA waiver and match my Common App account to my Naviance account. In the "Applying via Common App" column in Naviance, click on any that are "Unknown" and change to yes or no. *(The colleges on your Common App list will automatically be entered in the "colleges I'm applying to" section of Naviance once you match your Common App to Naviance.)*
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ In order for my guidance counselor to process my transcript packages in a timely manner I must have all colleges I am applying to entered into the "colleges I'm applying to" section of my Naviance account AT LEAST TEN SCHOOL DAYS PRIOR TO EACH APPLICATION DEADLINE. I further understand that failing to abide by the ten school day obligation may prevent my guidance counselor from being able to send my transcript package by the deadline. Lists will be printed in the Guidance Office on the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> school day before each deadline indicating all timely entered transcript package requests for that deadline.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Entering a college into the "colleges I'm applying to" section of my Naviance account constitutes the granting of permission for my guidance counselor to process a transcript package on my behalf to that college.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am obligated to pay two dollars (\$2.00) for each transcript package processed on my behalf. (See Student Handbook section "STUDENT SERVICES/TRANSCRIPTS") Bills will be generated in May and are considered a school obligation which must be paid prior to participating in senior week activities and graduation. (See Student Handbook section "GRADUATION/Senior Graduation Obligations")
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is my responsibility to remove any college I decide not to apply to from my "colleges I'm applying to" list prior to their being processed by my guidance counselor in order to avoid being charged the fee as outlined above. I further understand that counselors may need to process packages several days prior to each deadline due to heavy volume or to avoid internet slowdowns, so it is my responsibility to remove those colleges as soon as possible.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is my responsibility to order official standardized test scores to be sent directly from the testing agencies to the colleges I am applying to.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ I need to fill out the Counselor Recommendation Form in Naviance as soon as possible.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is my responsibility to speak to my guidance counselor about my college application intentions.

I have asked the following teachers for a letter of recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed and signed with Guidance Counselor on: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Student Name (please print legibly)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Guidance Counselor Signature



## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

*Letters of recommendation are often required when you apply to college. The following are some strategies to help you select those that will write appropriate letters of recommendation for you.*

### Select your “recommenders” carefully

- Make a list of people who know you the best, those who can offer a testimony from their own personal experience such as teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, coaches, employers or community service supervisors.
- The purpose of the recommendation is to help the admissions officers know you better as a person. Be sure to include at least one academic teacher who has had you in class.

### Focus your list

- What would you like the colleges to know about you that your school records will not communicate? What makes you special; sets you apart as a student? Who can define and describe you most insightfully?
- Choose people you believe can write well, since the way a person puts something on paper is important.
- Begin thinking about prospective “recommenders” in the spring of junior year.

### Request, don’t demand

- You need to ask if this person is willing to write a letter of reference for you.
- Spend some time with your “recommender” and let he/she know where you are applying and why.
- Seek a spirited writer who can provide an accurate description of your abilities, talents and attitude.
- Ask well in advance of your earliest deadline as it takes a good deal of thought and time to write a good letter.

### Help your “recommender”

- Some teachers may request specific information. You are responsible for providing the requested information, usually an unofficial transcript and the attached Recommendation Information Form.
- Most often, teachers will submit their letter to the Guidance Office to be included in the transcript package. Therefore, it is **very important** to remind teachers that the Guidance Office will need their letter **at least one week prior** to your earliest application deadline.
- If a teacher prefers to mail the letter directly to the college/university, you must provide him/her with a stamped, addressed envelope for each school.
- You must also provide envelopes if the teacher is unable to complete and submit the letter to the Guidance Office **at least one week prior** to your earliest application deadline.
- If your applications contain separate Teacher Recommendation Forms, please be sure to give those forms to your recommending teachers.

### Say Thank you

- Be sure to send a note of gratitude to the person who wrote the recommendation. This will be very much appreciated.

## Recommendation Information Form

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Earliest Application Deadline Date: \* \_\_\_\_\_

**\*NOTICE TO TEACHER:** The Guidance Office **MUST** receive your letter at least one week prior to this date.

Thank you for your willingness to write a letter of recommendation for me. The information provided on this sheet is intended to assist you in writing the letter. Please forward my letter to the Guidance Office for inclusion in the transcript package. Thank you so much for your support!

I was in your \_\_\_\_\_  
class(es) and my semester grades(s) were \_\_\_\_\_

I've asked you to write this letter for me because...

The most memorable moment in your class for me was...

The most challenging part of your class was...

### Some suggested guidelines for writing the Teacher Recommendation

- How long and in what context have you known the student?
- Please feel free to write whatever you think is important about the student, including a description of academic and personal characteristics.
- Colleges are particularly interested in the student's intellectual promise, motivation, relative maturity, integrity, independence, work habits and the like.

## Summary of College Application Procedure

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Complete the Transcript Release Authorization Form with your Guidance Counselor. This provides for a release of transcripts to all designated colleges and universities.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ It is your responsibility to request recommendations.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Do not submit mid-year grade report forms to the Guidance Secretary as these are sent out automatically to every college to which the student has applied.

## The Admissions Interview

The trend at colleges and universities is moving away from the one time all important interviews toward a more relaxed, general information meeting. Yet, some colleges require an interview. If the college requires or recommends one, schedule it during your campus visit. Some schools will not be able to grant a personal interview; they rely on alumni interviews which are arranged after an application is on file.

As with any interview, be on time. If you know you'll be delayed, call ahead. Also, review the information and notes you have on the college and prepare a list of questions ahead of time. Take the list so you're sure to cover everything you want to find out.

In your interview, you'll probably be asked about your background, interests, hobbies, goals, and why you're applying to the college. It's natural to be a little nervous. Try to relax and enjoy the experience.

**The following suggestions may help to make your interview as positive as possible:**

- Be prepared to answer questions and ASK questions.
- Discuss the interview with your guidance counselor; request a copy of your transcript to bring with you to the interview.
- Pay particular attention to your appearance, grooming, and conduct.
- Arrive on time.
- KNOW YOUR COLLEGE. Your knowledge of the college is an indication of your interest. Read the catalog of the college carefully.
- Be as natural as possible.
- Be honest, sincere and interested.
- Be confident. Speak directly and distinctly. Make eye contact with the interviewer.
- Be prepared to answer questions about your personal goals, high school & community, career plans, leisure time pursuits, reading habits, issues that concern you, academic preparation and achievement, people or events that have influenced your life, family background, and reasons for selecting the college.
- In your interview, bring out what you as an individual can bring to the college.
- Send a Thank You note to the interviewer to show your appreciation of the time spent with you.

### **In Your Interview, You Could Ask...**

- What is distinctive about the college?
- Will I have easy access to computers? Where are terminals located? Will I have to pay extra for computer time?
- Will I have access to special equipment (such as an electron microscope) as a freshman?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the college's advising system?
- What kinds of campus jobs can I get if I qualify for work-study?
- Are there new programs or facilities that will be available in the next couple of years?
- What are the college's recent graduates doing now?
- How does my profile compare to the typical applicant pool?

### **At Your Interview, An Admission Counselor Could Ask...**

- How did you first hear about the college?
- What are both your long-term and short-term career goals?
- How did you become interested in majoring in the field of study that you have chosen?
- What kind of activities are you involved with outside of school?
- What accomplishments have you achieved or what activities have you participated in that have had an effect on you?
- What do you feel are your academic strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your priorities in selecting a school?
- If you could live your high school years over again, what changes, if any, would you make?
- Where do you see yourself in four years?
- Discuss your most stimulating intellectual experience.
- Name the last four books you have read. What magazines do you enjoy?
- What is the most significant contribution that you have made to your school?
- What fears, if any, do you have about attending college?
- What do you most look forward to about college?

### **Sample Letter to Interviewer**

Office of Admissions  
Name of College  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Your street address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Date

Dear (Name of interviewer):

I was very pleased to meet with you on (date of interview) and would like to thank you for the time and consideration you gave to me during my admissions interview at (name of college).

I particularly enjoyed (add points which impressed you).

Sincerely,  
(Signature)  
Your name

## Writing Your College Essay

If you are like most students, you see the college essay as another hurdle on the way to being accepted at the college of your choice, however the essay is an opportunity for you to "talk" directly to the college's admissions committee. It is your chance to share your thoughts, insights, and opinions, to highlight your accomplishments and to convey your maturity and outlook on life.

### Purpose of the Essay

The college essay is extremely important for two major reasons:

1. It enables the college admissions office to evaluate your ability to use standard written English that is correctly written, punctuated, and contains correct grammar, usage and syntax. Through your essay they can assess the clarity and coherence of your thinking and your ability to convey your thoughts in written form.
2. It enables the admissions office to learn more about you as a person, beyond what grades and standardized test scores can convey. A well-written essay can speak worlds about your attitudes, feelings, personal qualities, imagination, and creativity. For the admissions staff, it adds another important piece to the puzzle because it distinguishes you as an individual, different from any other student who is applying. Whether you write about a hobby, a personal experience, someone you know, a belief, or an opinion, you reveal yourself in everything you say.

### Choosing a Topic

The choice of a topic is frequently not an issue. Many colleges and universities will either give you a topic to write about or present several topics from which you must choose. Other colleges may simply "suggest" broad general topics or give you total freedom to write about something that interests or concerns you. Regardless of whether you must respond to a prescribed topic or come up with one on your own, here are a few general hints about the most effective way to approach your topic:

1. Narrow your topic and try to be as specific and illustrative as possible. In most cases, the less abstract and vague your writing, the more interesting and revealing it will be.
2. The easiest topic to write about is you. No one knows more about you than you. Since one important purpose of the essay is self-revelation, it is no place to be shy or modest although you should not exaggerate. If you choose to write about yourself, remember that little incidents and facts are often the most revealing of character and outlook.
3. Do not be afraid to write about something you think is a little different. A unique topic or approach is often refreshing to a college admissions officer who has been reading applications all day. Further, an unusual or offbeat essay is an excellent way to show your creativity.

## **Preparing To Write**

Before actually sitting down to write a first draft of your essay, spend some time organizing your thoughts. Develop a framework for your essay so it will have a smooth and logical progression from one idea or incident to the next. Consider your purpose in writing, what you want to convey, and the tone that you think is most appropriate for the topic. Decide on a style that is comfortable for you, not one that you think the college admissions committee prefers. Leave room for flexibility and creativity as you actually begin writing.

## **Writing the Essay**

You do not have to get it right the first time! Instead, write the first draft of your essay with the main focus on content and communicating your thoughts. Then set it aside for a day or two, re-read it with a fresh perspective, and make any necessary changes. This is also the point at which you should consider matters of organization, style, grammar, spelling, and tone. Once you have rewritten your first draft, you may wish to try it out on your family, friends, English teacher, or guidance counselor. While the final product and final "voice" should be yours, they may be able to offer helpful suggestions for technical or other improvements.

## **Do's and Don'ts of the College Essay**

### **Do's**

- \*Do think "small" and write about something that you know about.
- \*Do reveal yourself in your writing.
- \*Do show rather than tell. By giving examples, you help bring it to life.
- \*Do write in your own "voice" and style.

### **Don'ts**

- \*Don't write what you think others want to read.
- \*Don't exaggerate or write to impress.
- \*Don't use a flowery, inflated, or pretentious style.
- \*Don't neglect the technical part of your essay (grammar, spelling, sentence structure).
- \*Don't ramble--say what you have to say and conclude.

Your college essay, along with your high school record, standardized test scores, co-curricular involvement, recommendations and interview, will provide the basis upon which the college makes its admissions decision. A thoughtful, well-written essay can affect that final decision in a very positive way. Keep this in mind and take full advantage of the opportunity that the college essay affords you.

## **How Admissions Decisions Are Made**

When a student applies to a college, the college admission office collects a folder of information about the applicant to consider as it makes a decision. You should be aware of what goes in to this all-important folder.

### **Application**

The application includes simple biographical information such as birth date and family information. Frequently, students are asked to write essays which are intended to acquaint the admission committee with certain student experiences, strengths and weaknesses, and writing ability. This is where students have the power to present themselves in the best possible light.

The single most important step in completing the college application is also the simplest:

### **READ THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY**

For the student, the application is like a final test. While it is true that the greatest emphasis will be placed on courses, grades, and in some cases, the test scores, colleges want to know about you as a person. The application, essay, and interview (if available) are opportunities to profile yourself.

Students should consult their high school counselor and college admission counselor if they have any questions about the competitiveness of their application.

### **Academic Record**

The most important factor in the applicant's folder is the academic record in high school. Many consider it to be the best indication of later college success.

The program of study, specific courses, and the grades the student received are aspects of the record that admission officers will consider in appraising the student's transcript. Colleges pay special attention to the challenging courses the student has successfully taken.

A student's academic performance in relation to his/her classmates is a means of showing admission officers the level of competition the student has encountered and how well he or she achieved relative to the competition.

### **Admissions Test Scores**

Colleges that still require standardized tests will use the scores in several different ways. First they may look at the scores as one way of predicting if a student will succeed in college. Secondly, colleges may use scores to compare students who come from similar backgrounds and schools. Finally, colleges may use test scores to help place students in appropriate courses.

## **Recommendations**

The recommendations prepared by teachers, the counselor and others represent a very important part of the admission folder. They tell about the student's classroom and life experiences in terms that are not represented by grades.

Teachers may comment on the type of contributions the student made to the class, the written and oral work that has been presented.

The counselor can highlight strengths that may not be otherwise worked into the official application and comment on the student's potential for studying at a particular college.

The recommendation allows the writer to go beyond the information requested in the general application and describe the student's unique qualities and characteristics.

## **Student Activities and Employment**

The student's record of involvement in activities can be a significant supporting credential. Out-of-school activities such as work, scouting, church groups, and community volunteer work should not be overlooked.

Mere membership is not the important factor. Rather, it is the level of involvement and accomplishment that is important. Better to be involved in one activity and to be a significant contributor to the activity than to be superficially involved in a number of organizations.

## **Responses from Schools**

When the college or university has reviewed the application, a number of possible responses can come back to the student. They are:

**Admit** - Full admission offered to the student.

**January Admit** – Full admission offered to the student beginning during the college's 2<sup>nd</sup> semester.

**Deny** - Application for admission has not been accepted.

**Deferral** - Early Decision/Early Action applicants are placed in the regular application pool for later consideration.

**Conditional Admit** - Student may need to demonstrate further evidence of skills and abilities through successful completion of specific course work prior to receiving admission.

**Wait list** - Student's application has received provisional acceptance with full admission pending space availability.

Once you notify a college that you are accepting an admission offer, you should also notify any other colleges that offered admission that you will not be attending. This allows the college to extend their offer to another student who may be on their waiting list. Under no circumstances should a student indicate an intention to enroll at more than one college.

## **Delayed Admission**

Most colleges allow an accepted candidate to postpone enrollment in a college, generally for one semester or one year. The accepted student must send a letter to the college of his/her choice requesting deferred enrollment and must send in a deposit by May 1, to hold his/her place.



# Financial Aid: Step by Step

## Step 1: Definition

Financial aid is a combination of funds (i.e., grants, loans, and work awards) from a variety of sources (federal, state, institutional), which supplements the financial contribution that a student is able to make toward meeting the costs of a college education. The estimated family contribution (EFC) is estimated according to a standard formula. The EFC is then subtracted from the total cost of the institution. The difference between the institution costs and the estimated family contribution determine the amount of financial aid award eligibility. Awards of need-based aid are based solely on financial criteria.

(Merit-based aid is awarded in the form of scholarships based on some type of competitive criteria, such as outstanding academic performance, noteworthy achievement in co-curricular or extracurricular activities, etc.)

## STEP 2: Application

Never be embarrassed to apply for financial aid. The information you provide is always kept strictly confidential. Need-analysis documents should be submitted by the application deadline. Virtually all colleges/universities require that you submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Fortunately, this form need only be completed once; you can designate the schools that you wish to receive the information. The service processing the document will automatically send to each designated school an analysis of your estimated family contribution. Do not file the FAFSA before January 1. However, actual deadlines for submission of the need-analysis document vary—make sure you know the deadlines for the schools to which you are applying.

- Complete the form(s) that establish your eligibility for state grant aid. Information for your specific state is available from your guidance office. Most colleges require that you complete the appropriate application for state grants.
- Documentation: Your family financial records and income tax forms are the basic documentation that supports your case for financial aid. Many colleges require copies of your parents and your own Federal tax returns (IRS 1040) for their financial records. On occasion, additional supplemental data may also be requested, so be prepared. File your income tax early, and make extra copies of all pertinent documents for future use.

In addition, the CSS/Financial Aid Profile is a program of the College Scholarship Service (CSS), the financial aid division of the College Board. Many colleges, universities, graduate and pre-professional schools and scholarship programs use the information collected on Profile to help them award non-federal student aid funds. CSS does not award scholarship money or any other financial aid. A list of colleges and universities that require the Profile is available online. You need to register to receive your

application packet and may do so on line [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). Click on CSS/Profile under “pay for college” on the student homepage. Registration booklets are available in the Guidance Office.

### **STEP 3: Eligibility**

Many students and parents assume that a high family income makes them ineligible for need-based aid. This is not necessarily true. Situations such as a large family, more than one child in college at one time, or parents nearing retirement will all affect estimated need.

Some schools offer no-obligation early estimation programs. An initial estimate of the family contribution is prepared from a simple form that requests basic family financial information about income, assets and liabilities. Ask admissions or financial aid representative at the schools in which you are interested if they offer this service—the information can give a preliminary indication of your eligibility for financial aid and the approximate amount you might receive.

You can go to FAFSA.ed.gov and use their FAFSA4caster to estimate your eligibility for federal student aid. <https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm?execution=e1s1>

You can go to MEFA.org for an explanation of how to use the net price calculator found on most college websites: <http://www.mefa.org/using-net-price-calculators/>

### **STEP 4: The Financial Aid Award**

- Colleges and universities review the information provided by the need analysis service and the state grant agency and prepare a financial aid “package.”
- Different institutions may interpret the data from the need analysis service differently. The estimated family contribution may be higher or lower than that originally reported by the need analysis service. The financial aid office at each college has the final authority to create a financial aid package.
- A typical financial aid “package” includes a combination of nonrepayable federal and state grants (if applicable), loans, work-study, and non-repayable grants from the college or university. When you are admitted, you will be notified of the aid you are eligible to receive shortly after the admissions announcement.

*The Guidance Department offers general financial aid information for the convenience of students and their families, but in no way should this information take the place of expert, comprehensive, individualized financial analysis.*

## **How Can Outside Grants Affect Financial Aid Awards Given By Institutions?**

**My institutional financial aid brochure refers to “self-help” and “financial aid package.” What do they mean?**

The financial aid package is the combination of aid being awarded through gifts (grants and scholarships that don't have to be repaid), loans (money that must be repaid over time), and/or employment (earnings from work). The self-help part of the financial aid package refers to the non-gift items: loans and employment.

**If I receive financial aid from the college I'm planning to attend and then am awarded a scholarship from a civic group or business organization, how do I know if the college will change its financial aid award?**

The only way to be sure if your financial aid award will be adjusted is to check the policy of the institution you plan to attend. The financial aid officer at the college or university is your best source of information. A quick review of the institution's financial aid materials might also provide the answers. Remember: policies differ greatly from one institution to another. What may be true for your classmate's college may not be true for yours.

**What if I decide to avoid all this and don't report an outside scholarship to my college?**

That's a bad idea. Institutional policies and state and federal regulations require that, if you are a candidate for financial aid, you must report your outside scholarships to the financial aid office of the institution you're planning to attend. **Remember:** The information you and your parents provide about your financial situation and your outside scholarships must be complete and accurate. If it is not, you risk losing your entire financial aid package.

## **Financial Aid Preparation**

The College Scholarship Service (CSS) advises high school counselors and college financial aid administrators to be careful about firms offering to help parents prepare applications for financial aid.

"There's a cottage industry out there," explained Kathleen Brouder, former director of CSS information services and association affairs. "Some of the companies are legitimate, but some are not." Ms. Brouder explained that some of these companies are engaged in the practice of teaching families how to hide their income and assets--in essence look poorer than they are--to gain more financial aid.

"When you distort your ability to contribute in order to get more money back in financial aid," Ms. Brouder observed, "that money is coming out of the pockets of those who truly need it." Parents might be drawn into these schemes in good faith, according to Ms. Brouder, who said there is a fair amount of honest misunderstanding. But people should also understand that at least 30 percent of all applicants for financial aid have their records verified against tax returns; some colleges now verify all applications. The penalties for falsifying information include being denied financial aid or even having to refund aid already received.

## **CSS Guidelines**

Some companies charge a fee for supplying information that is readily available to parents at no charge.

Matching services use computer databases to find financial aid sources. "Although they don't teach parents to hide anything," Ms. Brouder said, "students and parents should establish the credibility of such operations."

The CSS Student Advisory Committee has issued a set of guidelines for those considering using a financial aid computer search company. The committee suggests finding the answers to these questions:

1. The company suggests that large amounts of aid currently are not being used, how does it document the statement?
2. How many financial aid sources exist in the company's computer file? Does the company maintain its own file of sources, or does it use the file of some other company or service?
3. Is there a minimum number of sources provided by the company? Are the listings in the form of scholarships, work, loans, or contests? Do they include federal and state programs for which the student will be considered through the regular financial aid application process?

4. How often does the company update its list of aid sources? Does the company check to confirm that the source still exists, and that data concerning application deadlines and eligibility criteria are current?
5. Can students apply directly to the aid sources provided by the company, or must they be recommended for consideration by some other person or group? Are there application fees for the sources provided?
6. How long will you have to wait for the information? Will the list of aid sources be received prior to application deadlines?
7. What characteristics are used to match students with aid sources?
8. How successful have previous participants been in obtaining funds from aid sources identified by the company?
9. Will the company refund the program fee if aid sources are incorrectly matched with your qualifications, if aid sources no longer exist or fail to reply, or if application deadlines for aid sources have already passed when the information is received?

In addition to consulting these guidelines, the CSS Student committee suggests that parents and students refer to publications that list sources of financial aid, and consult high school guidance counselors, local libraries, college financial aid offices, or academic departments for other resources. The Boston Public Library has a data bank available for public use.

## **Financial Aid/Scholarship Information on the web**

**The Financial Aid Information Page (Fin Aid)** <http://www.FinAid.org/> This is a valuable resource for any aspect of higher education finances and financial aid.

**The Student Guide** <http://www.ed.gov> This is an essential and excellent guide to all forms of federal financial aid for higher education.

**Scholarship Foundation of America Home Page** [www.scholarshipamerica.org](http://www.scholarshipamerica.org) Specializes in providing information on scholarships and advising high school students on college choices and applying for the relevant scholarships among those the Foundation monitors.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) Interactive web version of the FAFSA Form.

**Expected Family Contribution** [www.mefa.org](http://www.mefa.org) Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority website that estimates expected family contribution.

**FastWeb** [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) A free, searchable scholarship service with college search information.

**Sallie Mae** [www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com) Sallie Mae provides information on student loans, scholarships and grants.

**Mapping Your Future** <https://www.mappingyourfuture.org/> Information on financial strategies, career options and college planning.

### **Local Scholarship Information**

Every year many scholarships are available to Hamilton-Wenham's youth. They include awards based on financial need as well as ones that are based on specific qualifications such as outstanding scholarship or contribution to the community. A list of these scholarships is available on the Guidance Webpage in mid to late February of the senior year. Applications and information will be posted in student's Naviance accounts. Students may apply for an unlimited number of scholarships provided they meet the criteria set forth. Sometime in February, all seniors are given hard copies of the scholarship listing as well as the high school's Common Scholarship Application.

We would like to extend our appreciation to the following individuals and organizations whose professional commitment to excellence in secondary education contributed to the publication of this Guide for students and their parents. Their collaboration is genuinely appreciated.

The Guidance and Counseling Staff at Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School

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The New England Association of College Admissions Counseling

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The Guidance & Counseling Staff at Andover High School

The Guidance Department at Lexington High School

The College Board

ACT Educational Services

North Shore Guidance Directors Association

Massachusetts School Counselors Association